

Is Biblical Repentance Necessary?

“Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them – do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Luke 13:4-5 (NIV)

“For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

Matthew 21:32 (NIV)

“...and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Luke 24:47 (NIV)

Certain Bible teachers enjoy novelty of expression in their teaching. One such teacher insisted that because repentance is not mentioned in the Gospel of John people may become Christians without repenting. But John’s Gospel does not refer to the virgin birth. Can a person deny this truth and yet be a child of God? We need to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture.

When we search the Old Testament for teaching about the Messiah, we start in Genesis 3 where we are told the Promised One will be a man and though wounded will rise victorious. As we progress through Scripture, we learn more and more detail about Messiah such as ancestry, place of birth and so on. Scripture uses what we call “progressive revelation”.

So, we must not try to formu-

late doctrine by “cherry picking” certain verses but instead craft our doctrine using the entire revelation on the subject in the Bible (Acts 20:27).

Jesus made it clear that we must repent or else die in our sins (Luke 13:4-5). Also, the Gospel message is a message of repentance (Luke 24:47). So, is repentance necessary to become a Christian? Absolutely!! May the words of Cowper’s wonderful hymn be your prayer today.

Oh! for a closer walk
with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness
I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the
soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours
I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left
an aching void,
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return!
Sweet the messenger of rest!
I hate the sins
that made thee mourn
And drove thee
from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate’er that idol be,
Help me to tear it
from thy throne,
And worship only thee.

So shall my walk
be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light
shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

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