

# Repentance

***Mark 1:15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News."***

Have we repented? Have we come to Christ and ask God for forgiveness of our sins? Repentance; the power of repentance has been used for thousand's of years by false religion to enforce the authority of the church over its members.

Yes, some are so foolish to believe that a force repentance matters to a God of love! The very law of love forbids such a evil wicked thought. Governments on the other hand, which are accounted in our bibles as beast, they uses such forced servitude, and they practiced is as a patriotic right! False religion has always been in a long lasting deep intimate relationship with the world governments that we are told by God. So we should not be surprised that they share each others common characteristics?

Rom.13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.

## **Godly Repentance**

To repent means to *change*, or "have a change of mind." W.E. Vine states, "In the N.T. the subject [repentance] chiefly has reference to repentance from sin, and this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God" (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 953).

1.

Repentance is a very serious subject for Christian's, however, repentance has often been used for good and evil over the thousand's of years Christianity by those holding power by some religious organization over its members. But for true Christian's it is the very first step in coming to Christ, it is one of the primary doctrines of the Christ.

Moreover, of greater concern is the fact that we need to move on from the primary teaching of the Christ into the full love of our Father YHWH. Furthermore, such moving forward can't be done unless God himself permits us to move forward.

Heb.6:1 Therefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on to perfection--not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith toward God.

Frankly, godly repentance isn't an important subject for most Christian's today, not unless they are using it to judge by their a rules what godly repentance is? However, we are going to talk about a much more sinister motive that religious people often practice unwittingly by mote, that is, through a false understanding of godly repentance, which creates a nightmare of abuses of God's love.

### **The Journey of Guilt**

First, let us start with the subject of guilt. Guilt is a power tool, a tool that has offend been used for good and bad in society. We would have to agree without guilt people can hardly change, they can't move forward, and improve their lives, and their relationships with others. In other words, guilt is a touch stone of improvement, it keeps a person from hurting others, it helps a person be honest and so on. . .

Philosophically we had a push a number of years back against any guilt a grand experiment that has failed society miserably.

2.

A healthy guilt is part and partial of life on this earth something parents have used since forever to control and discipline their children.

We know for example that Adam and Eve first felt guilt upon sinning against God. They tried to hid themselves from God, feeling shame and guilt. But did that guilt change them into better person? No it did not, it certain did not because they had become less, they had come to lack the most important things, the love of God, which was their light; they had become darkness, so no amount of additional guilt was going to changed Adam and Eve's into a non-sinner again. It was sin causing their guilt. In other words, sin that would never go away, they could never stand in the present of God again, that is, light of God, without the guilt, they now had a foreboding feeling of condemnation, from guilt.

1 John 1:5 This is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

### A New Kind Created

When we realize that sin changed Adam and Eve into a new kind something that had never before, that is, a new species, one that God did not create, lets clarify this point?

1 John 3:9 Whoever is born of God doesn't commit sin, because his seed remains in him; and he can't sin, because he is born of God.

God created Adam and Eve in his image, which His image is love, when Adam and Eve took what was God's they became a god onto themselves in their own image, something, God did not create, it was new, not good, but instead new outside of God nonetheless.

1 John 3:4 Everyone who sins also commits lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness.

3.

Something God never intended. So we then as Christians must understand this fundamental truth of our bibles so we don't imply evil to God? We must understand that sin has defining characteristics found common in all mankind every since Adam sinned. Moreover, the field of sin, has been growing ever since Adam and Eve sinned, it has not improved, but spread into a world creating darkness that alienated all of us from God. The truth of this subject is the fruit of mankind's best efforts under sin to improve themselves, what are its fruit? Sin has not been removed sin, it is still here, it has stayed with us causing death, sickness, and pain for every person since.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned.

What truth do we get from such a basic understanding? It is that sin produces more sin, not less sin, and sin is corruption which cannot create something incorruptible. We learn that a field was planted by the first sin (a seed) which was not of God (but outside of God), but that seed had very similar values that God had created in Adam and Eve a good field, but sin corrupted God's field, and darkness spreads like weeds into all mankind thinking, dealing, and fruit, which weeds of darkness cannot know God in their sinful flesh.

1 John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and don't tell the truth.

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

Moreover, having said that, one of the primary characteristics of sin is guilt something we are all born into, so we can say it is part of life, it can be used for good and bad in our world. Guilt is used wickedly by those seeking unrighteous power over others, while those using the power of love (righteously) remove guilt.

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls.

Matt.17:3 Be careful. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him.

17:4 If he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times returns, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

17:5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

For example if a parent continues to use guilt on adult children they are not a friend of their adult children they are still an authoritarian, and not loved by the children, the adult child obeys out of guilt the parent. Such guilt is effective tool, but its also an admission that their children has not moved on into adulthood doing things for parents out of love. Hence, the job is not completed into mutual respect out of love for each other.

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God.

Adam and Eve did not progress forward after sin. No! They digressed into more sin, sin did not improve them at all! Subsequently, that statement is a truth for all Christian's to understand; guilt is a proof of lack of love for God, and ultimately is a lack of faith in God's love.

1 John 4:8 He who doesn't love doesn't know God, for God is love.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear has punishment. He who fears is not made perfect in love.

### Purpose of godly Repentance

The first step is not the final step, or is it, the only step, it is the first step in coming to Christ. Staying on the first step means what we do for Christ is out of guilt, a legal obligation, and that type of relationship for those in Christ proves they are still a child, an immature person that only does things for Christ out of fear of punishment and/or the rejection of people in power over their faith. Godly repentance bring us to God, we are cut to our hearts because we have come to the knowledge we have sinned against God's love, like Adam and Eve sinned against God's love!

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice{"atoning sacrifice" is from the Greek "hilasmos," an appeasing, propitiating, or the means of appeasement or propitiation--the sacrifice that turns away God's wrath because of our sin.} for our sins.

That repentance is not fabricated, it is a real heart condition that we don't care what anyone thinks of us when we find we have sinned against a good and wonderful Father, God; we know we have sinned against God, we have wronged his good name. It is not a bartering session for us to gain something we want from God, where we give a little, and he gives us what we want.

Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Luke 15:7 I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

We then turn away from our former way of conduct into a new living way of life. We here are not talking about a human transformation practiced by every type of institution which demands certain rules and laws be meant, and kept, for us to be a part of their group.

That is how all profession work, don't be fooled! They make a person into a new person, a professional for their business, government, and/or religion. They do that by training, by teaching, by word usage. In every form of the person life, they must be transformed into what that profession demands of them, or be rejected.

2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow works repentance to salvation, which brings no regret. But the sorrow of the world works death.

Such is not godly repentance at all! However, that is what false religion practice, most often, which causes great confusion over this subject. So when speaking of this subject those practicing flesh repentance revert back to the original sin thinking sin can be removed after the fact, by some good work our religion holds as a doctrine of fleshly cleanness, which means, standing away from Christ teaching creating a greater field of weeds, not removing sin.

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on to perfection--not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith toward God,

### **Religion of The Flesh**

The sinful flesh started with the first lie, thus, it should be of little surprise that false religion is our flesh, which was created from the first lie (false against God a form of worship without God).

Moreover, false religion practices repentance of the flesh dead works because the flesh is dead to God (primary doctrine of Christ) the first step, the first lie, which lie states repentance improves the flesh like a worldly profession does, which once again has nothing to do with Christ. ( a false better life here and now, not eternal life)

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding.

Ephesians 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;

One must understand Christ has nothing to do with our flesh, nothing! If we can't get passed our flesh we are not into Christ. We are stuck in the first step of false repentance doing nothing more then trying as we do, to improve upon our flesh (Something Adam and Eve could not do once they sinned). Subsequently, not only our own flesh by a lie, that is, to boast of a better flesh, but sadly we teach and reprove others to make them into a better flesh for Christ, a false teaching!

Romans 8:7 because the mind of the flesh is hostile towards God; for it is not subject to God's law, neither indeed can it be.

Romans 8:8 Those who are in the flesh can't please God.

### The Truth if God Permits



If we think our flesh will be made righteousness by repentance, or it can be made righteous by power of guilt through laws and commandments of our bible, i.e., works of guilt/law, we are living a lie. In fact, we are living the first lie in daily repentance of our dead flesh believing we can improve sin by guilt. What we will find is we can shame someone by guilt, but guilt will not remove sin!

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Heb.6:1 Therefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on to perfection--not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith toward God,

6:2 of the teaching of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

6:3 This will we do, if God permits

Guilt brings us to the solution, it does not keep us in guilt, in a state of constant repentance. The solution isn't what most Christian's think it is, and that is why they end up in a constant state of guilt (repentance daily) as a Christian's slaving for some group, or a person they are getting the guilt from.

Romans 6:17 But thanks be to God, that, whereas you were bondservants of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto you were delivered.

Romans 6:18 Being made free from sin, you became bondservants of righteousness.

Romans 6:20 For when you were servants of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

Furthermore, this is why Christ is not of our flesh, our flesh is dead to God in Christ.

9.

Moreover, after Adam and Eve's sinned their flesh was dead to God, that is, in their flesh they could not live for ever, they lived in death because sin is death to God, the sins of their flesh. Now stop and think? They became disassociated alienated from God by the darkness of their sin. Nothing they could do would make them non-sinners after the fact! Nothing we can do can makes us a non-sinner no matter what false religion tells us we must do to make God happy in our flesh such teaching are dead works because the flesh is dead to God and Christ.

Romans 6:22 But now, being made free from sin, and having become servants of God, you have your fruit of sanctification, and the result of eternal life.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God must permit us forgiveness by His solution (life), His guilt offering found in the righteousness of his Son Christ Jesus indestructible life. It is God's solution that gives us a new life, a new personality, not one made with human hands from guilt of the flesh. It is our faith in accepting the love of God that allows us a relationship with God, the same relationship that Adam and Eve lost for us by their sinning. (being made a son of God, i.e, without sin)

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death.

The first step is us, it is us coming to God in repentance, but every other step is of God's power, and none of us; our power. If we are stuck is a constant state of guilt, that is, repentance (daily) where we do things and think we are in a better position one-day over the next we have not been permitted into Christ by the life of Christ indwelling us.

Romans 8:10 If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

1 John 3:6 Whoever remains in him doesn't sin. Whoever sins hasn't seen him, neither knows him.

We cannot get there by our flesh (from Adam and Eve sin), our flesh must be accounted dead in Christ that is the first step to coming into the love of God. The rest is the wicked ground of false religion and of this world outside of God's love, outside of the paradise Adam and Eve lost and was put out of. The world is a lie ,and hoax, which uses the power of labels, that is, labeling things with words, and then teaches we will become the thing by speaking the label.

Matthew 15:8 'These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

John 5:23 that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who doesn't honor the Son doesn't honor the Father who sent him.

But Christ is the truth, he is not a word we repeat, saying we are in the truth. That is a label which does not honor Christ our truth. We ourselves are given the truth because we are in the truth, Christ, such is a living life not a not a label, it is the living the proof of Christ life in us, not in words found in our bibles where we try to convince others of an intellectual truth, instead being in the living truth of Christ life working in us.

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.

James 1:18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Ephesians 4:21 if indeed you heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus:

2 Corinthians 11:10 As the truth of Christ is in me, no one will stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

Christ is our life, Christ is life, and he is indestructible life that give us life, and his personality (truth). More guilt does not improve upon being sinless in Christ, nor does it make us more acceptable to Christ because we never have had anything good dwelling in us from Adam's sin. Our being in sin did not make us worthy of life just as Adam and Eve found out after sinning they were unworthy of life.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God;

It took another life given us freely from God's love to bring us to life, i.e., God's love. Guilt is the primary first step to coming to God's love, so he can express the living life of Christ to us, that is, having Christ indestructible life in us so we might know the love of God.

Hebrews 7:16 who has been made, not after the law of a fleshly commandment, but after the power of an endless life:

2 Peter 1:3 seeing that his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue;

Ephesians 1:4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love;

Ephesians 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Ephesians 3:19 and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

### Once For All Times

Once for all times means the Christ is the everlasting covenant that sets all things unrighteous into God's righteousness everlastingly. There is nothing beyond Christ he alone is the everlasting solution for all humans that are in darkness not knowing the love of God because of inherited sin from Adam.

Ephesians 4:16 from whom all the body, being fitted and knit together through that which every joint supplies, according to the working in measure of each individual part, makes the body increase to the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 5:2 Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance.

We will not find the word repentance after a person receive the Holy Spirit, that is, Christ in them. The Greek words changes into a word which means, change of mind, and not repentance. (See research below this article)

Hebrews 7:27 who doesn't need, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices daily, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. For he did this once for all, when he offered up himself.

One cannot keep turning from their sins once they are forgiven once for all times. One cannot be dead in their flesh and accounted alive in Christ still having sins of their flesh accounted against them.

Romans 6:4 We were buried therefore with him through baptism to death, that just like Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:13 Neither present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Romans 7:4 Therefore, my brothers, you also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you would be joined to another, to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit to God.

Romans 8:10 If Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

What they can have is, a change of mind, a change of mind from fleshly thinking (daily), back into our new mind, the mind of Christ. That process of death and life is always at work in God's children on earth still left in their flesh.

1 Corinthians 2:16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?"{Isaiah 40:13} But we have Christ's mind.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Be perfected, be comforted, be of the same mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Ephesians 4:23 and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind.

Philippians 2:2 make my joy full, by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind;

Colossians 3:2 Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth.

Romans 8:7 because the mind of the flesh is hostile towards God; for it is not subject to God's law, neither indeed can it be.

Romans 8:27 He who searches the hearts knows what is on the Spirit's mind, because he makes intercession for the saints according to God.

Repentance from the dead works of our flesh can only happen once, and that is for all times. That is why we must comprehend the truth of Christ as our life, not in guilt of doing good one day and bad the next. The guilt is false religion, and it is used as an unrighteous tool to enslave God's children back into the flesh dead in Christ in our efforts of perfect the flesh as a righteous holy thing. That is false religion greatest tool to enslave us to dead works put away in Christ, once for all times and forever!

1 Peter 3:21 This is a symbol of baptism, which now saves you--not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Our thinking must constantly be readjusted into the mind of Christ it is that war that brings Satan system of things to an end. It is that purpose that God has children on earth in the fallen flesh whom are in a war with wicked spirits mightily exposing them as darkness, as lies, to break up the works of the Devil.

2 Corinthians 10:3 For though we walk in the flesh, we don't wage war according to the flesh;

Ephesians 6:12 For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world's rulers of the darkness of this age, and against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:6 and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 3:10 to the intent that now through the assembly the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places.

Our thinking must be in Christ the Spirit and the truth to battle against wicked spirit forces in heavenly places. If it is upon personal worthiness the Devil has us in a state of constant guilt and repentance which guilt has nothing to do with the power of Christ indestructible life living in us.

Hebrews 13:6 So that with good courage we say, "The Lord is my helper. I will not fear. What can man do to me?"{Psalm 118:6-7}

We must account ourselves dead to our flesh, that is, to sin, because of Christ life in us, and not by anything good or bad we have done. False religion is a religion of works of law (guilt must of necessity be it's great tool), we too can become works of law because we have what is common in the first lie (guilt), our flesh, which flesh is not created in God's likeness.

Yes, daily our mind goes from death, flesh, into life, Christ. So let us not lie or be fooled about that, let us speak truth one with another so we can understand Christ is our truth, not us, we are not trying to look good in our flesh, to sell it as false religion practices. No! We are enduring in it for God's glory.



Ezekiel 36:22 Therefore tell the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord Yahweh: I don't do [this] for your sake, house of Israel, but for my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations, where you went.

1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, let it be as it were the very words of God. If anyone serves, let it be as of the strength which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

2 Peter 3:18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Jude 1:25 to God our Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.

Revelation 19:1 After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation, power, and glory belong to our God:

Completed: May 26, 2018

by: Daniel a Slave of Christ Jesus

**Research of Biblical Repentance**  
**by Robert N. Wilkin**

### **3. New Testament Repentance: Lexical Considerations**

#### **I. Introduction**

There he was again. I'd seen him on telecasts of baseball and football games.

Now here he was on a PGA golf tournament telecast somehow repeatedly getting on camera with his rainbow Afro wig and his evangelistic T-shirt.

What did he mean with his one word message, REPENT? What did he hope that some of the millions of TV viewers would do?

What does the term *repent* mean according to the NT? Does it refer to *turning* from one's sins? If so, are all sins or only major sins in view? Or, does it mean a *willingness* to forsake one's sins--or even something else again?

Sincere Christians are sharply divided on this question. However, surprisingly very little has been written about NT repentance. I wrote my doctoral dissertation on this subject partly because it is a crucial and rather overlooked issue.

## The NT Words in Question

There are two NT Greek words which are translated *repentance* in modern English translations: *metanoia* (and its verbal counterpart *metanoëo*) and *metamelomai*. The former term is so translated fifty-eight times in the NT; the latter only six times. The much wider use of *metanoia* has led me to give it greater attention in this article.

## The Pre-Christian Meaning of *Metanoia*

In Classical Greek *metanoia* meant changing one's mind about someone or something. For example, Thucydides used the term when writing about the response of the Athenian council to a revolt. The council decided that all of the men of the city of Mytilene were to be put to death--not merely those who participated in the revolt. However, on "the next day a *change of heart* came over them."<sup>62</sup> The Athenian council changed its mind. It decided that only those who participated in the rebellion should be put to death.

Another example is found in Xenophon's use of our term. He wrote:  
18.

We were inclined to conclude that for man, as he is constituted, it is easier to rule over any and all other creatures than to rule over men. But when we reflected that there was one Cyrus, the Persian, who reduced to obedience a vast number of men and cities and nations, we were then compelled to change our opinions and decide that to rule men might be a task neither impossible nor even difficult, if one should only go about it in an intelligent manner.<sup>63</sup>

During the pre- and early Christian period of Koine Greek (ca. 300 BC-100 AD) *metanoia* continued to carry the sense of a change of mind about someone or something. For example, Polybius (ca. 208-126 B.C.) used *metanoia* to refer to the Dardani, a people who had decided to attack Macedonia while Philip was away with his army. However, Philip caught wind of it and returned quickly. Even though the Dardani were close to Macedonia, when they heard that Philip was coming, *they changed their minds*. They broke off the attack before it even began.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, Plutarch, who lived and wrote in the late first and early second century A.D., wrote:

Cypselus, the father of Periander . . . when he was a new-born babe, smiled at the men who had been sent to make away with him, and they turned away. And when again *they changed their minds*, they sought for him and found him not, for he had been put away in a chest by his mother.<sup>65</sup>

Notice that in all of the cases cited the individual or people in view had thought one thing or made one decision and then, based on further evidence or input, changed their minds.

Thompson suggests that two other nuances emerge during this period: change of purpose and regret.<sup>66</sup> However, the evidence does not substantiate her claim. On both counts she is guilty of "illegitimate totality transfer," that is, the unwarranted transfer of the meaning of a phrase containing a given word to that word when it stands alone.

She fails to show any examples where either *metanoia* or its verbal counterpart was used absolutely in the senses which she suggests. Rather, it is other words in the context which indicate that the change of mind in question concerned sinful practices or was accompanied by grief or sorrow.

*Metanoia* and *metanoeo* occur twenty times in the canonical books of the Greek OT (Septuagint) and seven times in the apocryphal books. They retain the meaning of *a change of mind about someone or something* in the LXX.<sup>67</sup> The following examples are representative.

When the Lord decided to take the kingdom from King Saul He instructed Samuel to say, "He will not turn nor change His mind, for He is not as a man that He should change His mind" (I Sam [1 Kingdoms in the Septuagint] 15:29; translation mine).

Likewise, [Prov 20:25](#) speaks of how foolish it is for a man to rashly promise to give something to the Lord, because after such a hasty vow the man may come to change his mind.

Similarly, the Ninevites believed in the Lord and turned from their sinful ways in the hopes that the Lord might change His mind and not destroy them and their city ([Jonah 3:9-10](#)). From a human perspective God did indeed change His mind and withhold the judgment He had planned.<sup>68</sup>

Behm disagrees. He argues that *metanoeo* in the Greek OT "approximates" *shub* of the Hebrew OT.<sup>69</sup> However, I believe he fails to prove his point. The term *shub* was used 1,056 times in the Hebrew text. None of those occurrences is translated by *metanoeo* in the Greek OT. Not one. This is inexplicable if the translators of the LXX felt that *metanoeo* was a good translation of *shub*. Rather, the translators routinely used *strephe* and its various compound forms to translate *shub*.

In the OT pseudepigrapha *metanoia* and *metanoeo* nearly always occur in contexts dealing with the need to abandon sinful practices in order to escape God's judgment. Behm concludes from this that *metanoia* had thus come to refer to turning from sins. He too, however, is guilty of illegitimate totality transfer. *Metanoia* did not come, by itself, to refer to a turning from one's sins. Rather, words in the context inform the reader that the change of mind in view would include a resolution to cease the sinful practices mentioned. In summary, the pre-Christian meaning of *metanoia* was a change of mind about someone or something. When the context specifically mentions sinful practices about which one was changing his or her mind, the translation "repentance" is acceptable.

## **The History of NT Translations of *Metanoia***

### ***The Old Latin***

The Latin Fathers translated *metanoia* as *paenitentia*, which came to mean "penance" or "acts of penance." They felt that in order to obtain eternal salvation men had to perform righteous acts of penance as prescribed by one's confessor priest.

### ***The Latin Vulgate***

Jerome established this Old Latin translation as authoritative when he retained *paenitentia* as the translation of *metanoia*. The system of penance became an established pathway whereby one hoped to obtain grace.

### ***Early English Versions***

John Wycliffe, "the Morning Star of the Reformation," pioneered the first complete English Bible in the late 1300's. Unfortunately his work was not based on the original Greek and Hebrew, but was a very literal translation of the Vulgate.

Hence we should not be surprised that he translated the Latin *agite paenitentiam* as "do penance." This was adopted in 1609-1610 in the Roman Catholic Douay Version.

William Tyndale produced the first printed English NT in 1526. He used repent and repentance for *metanoia* and *metanoeo*, a great improvement over "do penance," but still misleading in many contexts.

Later English versions, including the Authorized or King James Version of 1611, were deeply indebted to Tyndale's phraseology, including his repent and repentance.

Repentance as a translation seems to keep the idea that one must turn from his sinful deeds to obtain God's favor. However, it eliminates the notion that, in addition, one must confess his sins to a priest and do prescribed good works before he can obtain (or regain) grace.

### ***Modern Translations***

Modern translators also generally translate *metanoia* as repentance. While this is an improvement over the Latin translation "penance," it is in most cases, as we shall now see, a poor reflection of its meaning in the NT.

## **II. Meaning of *Metanoia* in the NT**

### **Basic Sense: Change of Mind**

The pre-Christian meaning of *metanoia* as a change of mind is its basic NT sense as well. This can readily be seen in [Heb 12:17](#) which reads: "For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit a blessing, he [Esau] was rejected, for he found no place for *metanoia*, though he sought it diligently with tears." What was it that Esau could not find? It was not a turning from sinful behavior. It was not penance.

What he could not find was *a way to change his father's mind*. The matter was settled. No matter how much he pleaded, he couldn't change Isaac's mind.

All NT uses include the sense of a change of mind present. However, if the context clearly indicates what one is changing his mind about, it could be that a more polished English translation can be found. For instance, if one is to change his mind about his sinful deeds, the term repentance conveys that thought nicely.

There are four specialized types of uses of *metanoia* in the NT. We will now consider these.

### **A Synonym for Eternal Salvation**

In a few passages *metanoia* is used via metonymy as a synonym for eternal salvation. These cases involve a metonymy of cause for the effect. The cause is a change of mind about Christ and His Gospel. The effect is eternal salvation. Thus when we read in [2 Pet 3:9](#), "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish but that all should come to *metanoia*," the idea is the same as [1 Tim 2:4](#), "[God] desires all men to be saved."

[Luke 5:32](#) illustrates this same usage: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to *metanoia*." That is, Jesus is affirming that He didn't come to call those who think that they are righteous, but those who know themselves to be sinners, to salvation. *Metanoia* is used as a synonym for eternal salvation.

### **A Change of Mind Regarding Sinful Behavior =Repentance**

On some occasions *metanoia* is used in contexts where the change of mind in view is clearly indicated as having to do with one's sinful practices. For example, in [Luke 17:3-4](#) Jesus taught the disciples that they were to forgive all who sinned against them if they came and indicated that they had changed their minds regarding their sin.

In this case and others like it "repentance" would be a good translation choice. We are to forgive anyone who sins against us and then repents.

It is important to note, as shall be brought out further in future articles, that eternal salvation is never conditioned upon changing one's mind about (i.e., repenting concerning) his sinful practices.

### **A Change of Mind Regarding Self and Christ**

Many NT passages use *metanoia* in contexts where what one is to change his mind about is himself and Christ. For example, in [Acts 2:38](#), after having indicted his Jewish audience for crucifying their Messiah and in response to their question "What shall we do?" Peter called them to change their minds about Jesus Christ. They had rejected Him. Now they could accept Him. They were to believe that He is the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world. Such a mindset includes a recognition that one is a sinner in need of the Savior. Self-righteousness is clearly antithetical to faith (cf. [Luke 18:9-14](#)).

In this use *metanoia* occurs as a virtual synonym for *pistis* (faith).

### **A Change of Mind Regarding Idols and God**

In one passage the object of *metanoia* is stated as idols and God ([Acts 17:29-31](#)). Paul told the Athenian philosophers that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and that He would be coming back to earth as Judge. He told his listeners that in order to escape eternal condemnation they had to change their minds about their idols and about God and the Man whom He had sent and would send again. They had to transfer their faith from their idols to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Summary**



*Metanoia* is used in the NT in a number of different ways, all of which have the idea of a change of mind at the root. In a few contexts it is used via metonymy as a synonym for eternal salvation. When it is used in contexts dealing with temporal salvation from life's difficulties, a change of mind about one's sinful ways (i.e., repentance) is given as the condition. However, when used in contexts dealing with eternal salvation from hell, a change of mind about oneself and Christ (or, in one passage, regarding idols and God) is given as the condition. In such contexts *metanoia* is used as a synonym for faith.

### III. Meaning of *Metamelomai*

The basic meaning of *metamelomai* is "to feel regret." In [2 Cor 7:9](#) Paul indicates that he no longer regretted sending them a letter which made them sorry, though at first he did regret sending it.

Regret usually carries with it the idea of a change of mind. In [Matt 21 :29](#) Jesus told the Parable of the Two Sons. Both were told to go work in the vineyard. One said he would not, but later changed his mind (or regretted his decision) and went. The other said that he would go, but did not.

After betraying Christ, Judas regretted what he had done, gave back his blood money, and hanged himself ([Matt 27:3](#)). Judas "repented" in this sense; or more precisely, he "was remorseful" (NKJV). Yet he did not come to faith in Christ. He never changed his mind about Christ being His Savior. He rejected Him to his death.

While it is commonly translated in that way, there are no uses of *metamelomai* in the NT where "repentance" is a good translation. It always refers to regret, remorse, or to a change of mind. It never refers to turning from one's sins.

### IV. Meaning of Strepho Compounds

While they are never translated as "repentance," the compounds of *strepho* in some contexts carry the idea of turning from sins. The basic sense of these compounds is turning from or to someone or something. These compounds are the true corresponding terms to the OT word *shub*.

"Turning to the Lord" is used in the NT, as it was in the OT, as an expression for faith and conversion.<sup>70</sup> When Paul reported in [Acts 15:3](#) that Gentiles were turning to the Lord, he was simply saying that Gentiles were coming to faith in Christ, were being saved.

Nowhere in the NT are these verbs used to indicate that one must turn from his sins to obtain eternal salvation.

## V. Conclusion

I'm still not sure what the man at the athletic events meant by his one-word message on his T-shirt. The word repent has a well-defined meaning in English. However, not all who use it mean the normal dictionary definition. Some mean merely a recognition of one's sinfulness. Others mean a change of thinking about Jesus Christ. Still others mean turning from one's sins, a willingness to do so, or a sense of remorse over one's sins.

I wish we could retranslate the NT. It would make teaching and preaching passages using *metanoia* simpler. It would eliminate the confusion many have when they read their Bibles and see the word repent. However, this is not likely to happen. It seems that "repentance" as a translation for *metanoia* (and *metamelomai*) will probably be with us for a long time.

In most cases when the English word repent occurs in the NT it is translating *metanoia*. *Metanoia* is not the equivalent of the OT term *shub*. It certainly does not mean "penance." Nor does it normally mean "repentance." Rather, in the NT it retains its pre-Christian meaning of a change of mind.

The English reader thus generally needs to read "change of mind"--not turn from sins--when he sees the word "repent" in the NT. The context must be consulted to determine the object of a person's change of mind.

The only times repent is actually a good English translation is when the object of *metanoia* is sinful deeds. A change of mind about sinful behavior is equivalent to repentance.

Nearly a century ago, in *The Great Meaning of Metanoia*, Treadwell Walden decried the Latin and English translations of *metanoia* as being "extraordinary mistranslations."<sup>71</sup> I would agree.<sup>72</sup>

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62 Thucydides, *Thurydides* 3. 36. 4. Compare 3. 37. 1. Author's translation, emphasis supplied.

63 Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1. 1. 3. Translation by Walter Miller, Loeb Classical Library, emphasis supplied.

64 Polyblus *The Histories* 4. 66. 7.

65 Plutarch, *Moralia* 163 F. Translated by Frank Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library, emphasis supplied.

66 Effie Freeman Thompson, 'METANOEO' and 'ME TAMELEI' in Greek Literature Until 100 A.D., Including a Discussion of Their Hebrew Equivalents (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 14.

67 Cf. [1 Sam 15:29](#); [Prov 14:15](#); [20:25](#) (19); 24:24 (29:27), 47 (32); [Isa 46:8](#); [Jer 4:28](#); [8:6](#); [18:8](#); [Joel 2:13, 14](#); [Amos 7:3, 6](#); [Jonah 3:9, 10](#); [4:2](#); [Zech 8:14](#).

68 In a number of OT passages God is said to have changed His mind, relented, or repented of calamities which He had planned to send. The Hebrew word used is *naham*.

27.

In each of these cases God did not actually change His mind, relent, or repent.

God is omniscient and thus nothing which happens ever takes Him by surprise. The so-called "repentance of God" is actually a figure of speech known as an antropomorphism. At times the Scriptures speak to us as though God were a man. For example, we read of His strong arm ([Exod 6:6](#); [Ps 77: 15](#); [Jer 21:5](#)), His hand [John 10:28-29](#)), and the like, as figures of His might and ability to deliver us from difficulty and protect us. So, too, from a human perspective it appears at times that God has changed His mind. In reality, He knew all along what the final outcome would be. The change of mind is apparent, not actual. For further discussion of this subject see H. Van Parunak, 'The Repentance of God in the Old Testament,' unpublished Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975, and "A Semantic Survey of NHM," *Biblica* 56 (1975): 512-32.

69 Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "metanoeo, *metanoia*," by J. Behm, 4 (1967): 989-90.

70 E.g., [Matt 13:15](#); [Mark 4:12](#); [Luke 1:16](#); [John 12:40](#); [Acts 9:35](#); [1 5:3](#); [28:27](#); [1 Pet 2:25](#).

71 Walden, *The Great Meaning of Metanoia* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1896), p.24.

72 Upcoming articles in this series will deal with "Repentance in the Gospels and Acts," "Repentance in the Epistles and Revelation," and "Suggestions on the Practical Preaching of Repentance."

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