

(Column # 21, for June 20, 2016.)

Repent and Be Converted

No rational person would prefer eternal death over eternal life in paradise. However, Satan with his deceptions, makes us think that temporary satisfaction of the moment is preferable to eternal paradise.

Satan is the chief trickster, liar, and deceiver in the universe. One-third of the angels of heaven followed him in his attack against Christ and the perfect peace and joy of heaven. (Revelation 12:4.)

Some humans who fell for Satan's deceptions were: Eve, Adam, Saul, David, Solomon, Judas, the Pharisees, and, yes, even you and I have been fooled, deceived by the master deceiver!

Therefore, just as sinners of old needed to be forgiven and brought to salvation through Christ, so you and I need that same salvation, which comes only through Christ, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6.)

Therefore, we sinners need to repent and be converted because we have all sinned and come short of God's desires for us. (Romans 3:23.)

Let's consider what God's word teaches about repentance and conversion: Acts 3:19-21 reads as follows: "¹⁹ Repent therefore and be converted (changed from serving self and Satan to serving Christ) that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,²⁰ and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,^[a]²¹ whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (NKJV).

What does God mean by “repentance”? A simple definition includes two requisites; they are “to turn from evil, and to turn to the good.” Most critical is the idea of returning to God or turning away from evil. If one turns away from God, apostasy is indicated. Ezekiel repeated God's call to the people of Israel: "Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!" What an appropriate message this is for our generation, today, also!

Under inspiration Ezekiel records: "Therefore I (God) will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct,"

God continues, "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you. Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, declares the Lord GOD. Therefore, repent and live."(Ezekiel 18:30-32.)

Now, let's consider the spiritual meaning of “conversion.” [James 5:19-20](#). “My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” Therefore, the sinner is to change direction and return to God.

[Matthew 13:15](#). “For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

Matthew 18:3. “Verily I say unto you, except ye be **converted**, and become as little children (humility, teachability), ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” So, we see that conversion means turning from a life of sin (ignoring God’s instruction) and turning to God by following His instruction. (1 John 3:4.)

Please allow me to close this column with a touching example of conversion. In South Africa, God brought a fine Dutchman under conviction of sin. The next morning the man went to the beautiful home of another Dutchman and said to him, "Do you recognize that old watch?"

"Why, yes," answered the other. "Those are my initials; that is my watch. I lost it eight years ago. How did you get it, and how long have you had it?"

"I stole it," was the reply.

"What made you bring it back now?"

"I was converted last night," was the answer, "and I have brought it back first thing this morning. If you had been up, I would have brought it last night." Gipsy Smith, the Bible Friend.

Have you repented of all sins and been converted? If not, I invite you now, silently, to tell Christ that you are sorry for your sins and to ask Him to give you power through the Holy Spirit to experience conversion, which will lead to peace now and eternal life with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.

**Contact: fhevener@oilart.com; (434) 392-6255;
www.guthriememorial.org. (Spiritual counseling is always free.)**

© Fillmer Hevener, 2016

-30-