

TRUE REPENTANCE GLORIFIES GOD

REVELATION 16:9 • TV149B

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Revelation 16:9

“And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.”

I’m speaking today from the **Book of Revelation chapter 16:9**. Here is the subject and I could give this message one of two titles; the first is: **“HAVE YOU REPENTED”** or the second title is: **“TRUE REPENTANCE GLORIFIES GOD ALMIGHTY.”**

Now, let me read from **Revelation Chapter 16:9**; it says: *“Men were scorched with great heat and they blasphemed the name of God who hath power over these plagues, (who sent the plagues, who has power to give them or withhold them, to stop them) and they repented not to give God the glory.*

Now, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ our Lord came preaching repentance. That was his message; *“bring forth fruits meet for repentance.”* Repent; that’s what he came crying.

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The Scripture says that our Lord Jesus Christ began to preach and to cry; *“except you repent you shall all likewise perish.”* That was one of His first messages, *“repent or perish.”* The apostle Paul wrote: *“God commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”*

Once in a while we will see cartoons of strange, weird looking characters, dressed in long white gowns carrying signs which read: “repent; repent or perish, repent.”

What is repentance? Let’s see if we can find out today from the Word of God what this thing called repentance really is. I believe the first thing that ought to be done in defining repentance or any other Bible term, (especially in our day), is to state what it is not, what repentance is not.

If you want to jot these things down; I would like for you to do so because I have given this some careful, prayerful, thought and I’m interested in the subject of **repentance!**

I’m interested to know if I’ve repented or if you have repented or if any of us have repented. Our Lord said: *“Except you repent you will perish.”* *“God commands all men everywhere to repent.”*

First of all: What repentance is not!

It is not a sorrow over sin because we are afraid that we are going to be punished. Now, that’s not repentance. It’s not (I’m going to put this in plain, old, every day, language) repentance is not a sorrow for sin that is born of a fear of punishment.

Now, that was Cain’s repentance, do you remember? Cain brought a sacrifice, an offering of his works, of the fruits of his field. He rejected God’s sacrifice; he rejected the blood. He rejected the type of Christ. He brought his own thoughts of an offering before God on the altar.

His brother Abel brought the *“firstling of the flock,”* the lamb, and shed the blood, it was a blood sacrifice. *“God had respect for Abel’s offering but Cain’s offering he had no respect.”*

Cain got angry. He became envious of his brother and rose up and killed his brother. Then, God came to him and said: *“Cain, where is your brother?”* He said: *“Well; I don’t know where he is, am I my brother’s keeper?”*

God said: *“Your brother’s blood crieth to me from the ground.”* He said: *“You have killed your brother.”*

Now, he put a judgment upon Cain and Cain started weeping and wailing and gnashing his teeth and crying: *“My punishment is greater than I can bear.”* He began to repent, why, because he was afraid of what he was going to have to endure; he was afraid of the punishment that God had put upon him.

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It wasn't true repentance. It wasn't sincere repentance. It wasn't Scriptural repentance. It wasn't repentance that glorified God; it was repentance that was born out of fear of punishment and it was no good.

Now, preaching on hell doesn't produce repentance. I think that we ought to preach on death and preach on judgment and preach on hell but it does not produce true repentance. You can't scare people into repentance; it can't be done.

You can scare them into religious decisions; you can scare them into religious, emotional experiences, but you cannot scare a man into true repentance; it cannot be done.

I know that they have a movie today called: "The Raging Inferno." I haven't seen it and we wouldn't have it in the place where we worship. But, I know they are getting a lot of people to make decisions because of that movie.

They are showing people in hell and folks come running down the aisle and weeping and wailing. They do not want to go to hell. Well, who does want to go to hell? I don't want to go to hell but that doesn't bring forth repentance.

That's the same thing that Cain experienced; it's fear of punishment. Cain said: "*What you have put on me is more than I can bear God.*" But, he didn't repent; he went right on despising and hating the truth and hating God.

I will tell you something else that repentance is not! If you only run to God because you are scared that you are going to hell you haven't repented.

Secondly: Repentance is not a temporary reformation, temporarily turning over a new leaf and changing your ways and changing your style of life because of some misfortune or some sickness or the death of a child or the death of a loved one; that's not repentance; I guarantee you that's not repentance.

Moses went down into Egypt to deliver Israel and God said; "*let my people go.*" Pharaoh laughed at him and said; "*well, who's the Lord that I should obey him? I've got a good thing going here. I'm not going to let these folks go.*"

God sent a plague on him. He said: "*I just might let them go.*" God sent another plague on him and he said, "*Why don't you just take your people and leave the kids here and leave the cattle here.*" Moses said, "*No; everybody is going out.*" Pharaoh said, "*No they are not.*"

Finally, God killed the first born and Pharaoh broke down and wept; his son was dead. God had hit him in his sore spot. God had hit him where he hurt and he said, "*Ok; get out of here; take these people and go.*"

When he got over his mourning, when he got over his sorrow, he got his army together and headed out after Moses and the people.

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That's what happens today, people today are quick to get religion when they get sick. They take them to the hospital and the doctor comes in and tucks his tongue in his cheek a little bit and says; "I believe that you have cancer; send for the preacher; let's have the preacher. We are going to have to get right with God because we just might die."

Well, the only thing wrong with that is that 99 % of them when they get well don't remember what they did; they repent when they are sick and they just go right back where they were when they get well.

Sorrow and sickness and trial will not give birth to repentance because when the trial is over, just like Pharaoh of old, (I'm telling you the truth); men forget the God they have bowed to serve.

When I was in the Navy in World War II, and was in the battle of the invasion of Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and several others invasions, every time we would start toward the beach, every marine and soldier and sailor on the ship would get religion.

They would start singing songs like "Amazing Grace" and "Stand Up For Jesus" and just about anything they could sing, "Jesus Loves Me," and about anything they could think of. They would all get religion.

But, when the battle was over and you hit the liberty ports you wouldn't know it was the same fellows talking. Too many death-bed-penitents forget their words when they get well. That's not repentance.

I'm not saying that a man can't repent under great trial and sorrow; I am saying that the majority of cases is not so, it's just not so. True repentance is not born of sickness, sorrow, or death, no sir, it is not.

Thirdly: Repentance is not quitting a few sins, and stopping short of the vital issues!

Now, repentance has something to do with God. It has something to do with the will. It has something to do with the attitude and it has something to do with the heart.

A man hasn't repented because he has quit getting drunk. A man hasn't repented just because he has quit running around on his wife. A man hasn't repented just because he's quit cheating on his Income Tax.

A man hasn't repented just because he has quit stealing; that doesn't constitute repentance, to quit a few sins and stop short of the vital issue.

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Herod is a good example of this; Herod admired John the Baptist. He went all the way out into the wilderness to hear him preach. The Scripture said: *“He did many things.”* He admired John and went up to hear him preach.

He did many things, Herod straightened up his life to a certain extent but one day, John pointed his finger in his face and said: *“King Herod; it’s not right for you to have your brother’s wife. You can’t continue to have your brother’s wife and know God.”*

That’s where he crossed his will. He wanted God but he wanted to continue or remain in his own way of life. He doesn’t mind taking God and heaven and these things but he wanted to stay in his old way.

That’s the rich young ruler. He came to our Lord and said: *“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* Our Lord talked about some things and he says; *“I’m all right on that score; I’m ok.”* The Lord said: *“You go sell what you have and give it to the poor.”*

“Your problem is covetousness. Your problem is selfishness. Your problem is greed. Now, you go sell what you have and give it to the poor and come and take up your cross and follow me.”

He walked away with his head bowed, sorrowful because he loved his riches. He was willing to do a lot of things but he wasn’t willing to meet God where God crossed his will.

Now, old Felix; *“he trembled under the preaching of Paul”* the Scripture said. He remained on his throne. He remained in the place where he was when he met the preacher of God. He remained.

That’s what a lot of these folks are doing today in the music field, in the movie field, in the entertainment field, and all of these other fields. They are meeting these preachers and they are getting religion and they are staying right where they were, doing the same things that they were doing, running with the same crowd, saying the same thing, and claiming that they know God.

Repentance is not quitting a few bad habits and holding on to your point of rebellion and serving yourself and living in luxury and splendor and denying the teachings of God’s Word; that’s not repentance; I beg your pardon; that’s not repentance.

Fourthly: True repentance is not simply mourning over the loss of some blessings, mourning over the loss of some benefits; that’s not repentance, not at all.

Esau is an example of this: Esau had the birthright; it was his because he was the first-born son. It would have been his but he sold it; he sold his birthright.

Now, that’s more than just an inheritance, that’s more than just a little cash and a few cows. That birthright was his right to reign and rule as a spiritual head of that family and that tribe.

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He didn't regard it with enough interest; he didn't regard it with enough enthusiasm to care about it and he sold it. When he found out what all was involved in losing his birthright he wept and cried and begged. He sought repentance with tears but it was too late.

What was he weeping about? Was it because he denied God? No sir! Was it because that he had done the wrong thing? No sir! It was because he had lost some blessings, he lost some benefits.

That's what the rich man in hell said; he said: "*Father Abraham; send Lazarus back to the earth to warn my brothers.*" Why do you want to warn them? "*So they won't come to this awful place.*"

He wasn't sorry because he sinned against God. He wasn't sorry because his brothers were sinning against God. He wasn't weeping over the fact that they didn't give God His place of preeminence and omnipotence, majesty, and worship.

He said: "*Just don't let them come to this place.*" That's not repentance. It's not repentance just to mourn over losing some benefits and blessings.

I will tell you something else!

Fifthly: True repentance does not lead to despair, no it doesn't; it leads to faith in Christ!

True repentance does not lead to despair and to suicide, it leads to faith. A man hasn't repented just because he has his face down in the ground. A man hasn't repented just because he walks around crying all the time.

A man hasn't repented just because he walks around mourning about how ungodly he is. Repentance does not lead to despair.

Judas is an example of this! He came back and took the 30 pieces of silver which he had received for betraying the Son of God and threw them on the floor and he said: "*I have betrayed innocent blood*" and then he went out and hanged himself.

That is not repentance. Repentance doesn't lead to the end of the road; repentance leads to Calvary. Repentance doesn't lead to falling off a cliff and dashing your bowels out on the rocks below in despair. Repentance leads us to look up to the throne of God's grace and mercy and receive that mercy and that grace.

Trials: What use are trials? What use are afflictions? Well, I will tell you this: trials make believers better and make bad men worse; that's right; that's what a trial will do.

A trial will come into the life of a believer and it will make him a better man. It will increase his faith, it will strengthen his confidence, it will strengthen his faith, it will teach him patience and it will teach him all of these things.

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But, a trial in the life of an evil man will make him worse. That's right; afflictions harden rebels and teach sons. How do I know that is true? Satan, he is no better as a result of his misery. He has been in misery for thousands and thousands of years, and he is no better.

That's what our text is saying: *"In the last days God pours out scorching heat, (from the wrath of God is poured out upon the world) and men are scorched with great heat but they did not repent to give God the glory."*

Instead of repenting they blasphemed God, Him who hath the power over these plagues, instead of repenting, they blasphemed.

All right, that is what repentance is not. Now, what is repentance? What is a repentance that glorifies God? What is a repentance that results in saving faith? What is repentance that results in a right relationship with God?

True repentance and faith are inseparable. Somebody said: "Preacher; which comes first, repentance or faith?" I really don't know; I think they go together; you can't have one without the other.

Repentance and faith are like a sheet of paper, there are two sides. You can't have a sheet of paper with one side; you have to have two sides. I don't believe a man can truly repent who does not believe and a man cannot truly believe who does not repent.

Let me give you several things about true repentance. Like I say; it has something to do with my attitude towards God. It has something to do with my attitude toward sin, toward myself and towards God.

Somebody said, "That repentance is a change; it's a change of masters; it's a change of manners; it's a change of our methods of life. It is a turning." But now, let's bring it down a little better than that.

True repentance glorifies God; that's the key; true repentance glorifies God. These people repented not to glorify God. True repentance does not glorify the flesh, it glorifies God. It has something to do with how I feel about God.

First of all: True repentance will glorify God by believing and acknowledging His majesty and His sovereignty; that's where it starts!

Job was a man who truly repented; we know that and we are sure of that. When it came to Job and it was told him that everything he had was gone, his cattle, his horses, his donkeys, his sheep, even his ten children swept away; he was now a man of poverty and a man of lowliness and a man with no family.

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This is what he said, *“The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away: Blessed be the name of the Lord.”* Now; that’s acknowledging God’s majesty and God’s sovereignty over all things. That’s where repentance starts; God has a right to do with His own what He will.

They came to Eli and Samuel told him that God was going to destroy his sons because his sons had not honored the Lord and he had not rebuked them for their sins. Do you know what the old man replied? He said: *“It is the Lord; let him do what he will.”*

Our Lord Jesus Christ in **Matthew 11** said: *“Father; I thank thee, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so Father, it seemed good in thy sight.”*

That’s where repentance starts, acknowledging God’s right to reign, acknowledging His majesty and His sovereignty. I will say this to you, the only place that a man will really worship is at the throne of a sovereign, almighty God.

The only place that a man will find salvation is at the throne of a God who is able to save, keep, raise and glorify him. The only place that a man will find any comfort, any real comfort, is at the throne of a sovereign God, *“who works all things according to the council of his own will,”* (for His glory and our good). That’s where repentance starts, my attitude toward God, His sovereignty and majesty.

Secondly: True repentance glorifies God by admitting the holiness of God, the absolute, infinite, unchangeable, holiness of God; God is holy!

My friend, you don’t repent by bringing God down; you repent by exalting and magnifying His omnipotent name. He’s righteous and holy. When I see the holiness of God I see my sin and I admit my sinfulness.

Do you see that? Now let me give you some examples:

In the book of **Job**; the Lord appeared to Job several times and showed His power and His awesome majesty. Do you know what Job said? He said: *“Lord, I’ve heard of you by the hearing of the ear and now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore, I abhor myself; I hate myself.”*

That’s the result of seeing God’s holiness, when we see God’s holiness, we see our sin. It’s like seeing the beautiful, brilliant, white snow that covers the hillside. When you see that beautiful, brilliant, white snow against the hillside, every little speck, every little dark and dirty speck is made more prominent than ever.

When everything was dirty around it you couldn’t see it but boy, when everything became snow white, that black speck just stood out like a sore thumb.

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That's the way it is; the more we see of the holiness of God, of the righteousness of God, the awesome, infinite, infallibility of God's holiness, we are made to cry "what wretched sinners we are."

Like Job said: *"I have spoken once; I won't speak again."*

Isaiah said: *"I saw the Lord and I cried, O woe is me; I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell amidst a people of unclean lips."* That's repentance that continues not only acknowledging God's majesty and sovereignty but His holiness and my wretched sinfulness.

Thirdly: True repentance glorifies God by confessing the justice of God's judgments!

Now, will God punish sin, come on now; will God punish sin? Well, yes he will and you know he will. He said he would.

You can go back to the Garden of Eden, go back to Sodom and Gomorrah, go back to Noah's day, go back to Babylon and go back to all of these places. You can go back to Jerusalem in 70 A.D. God will punish sin, He has and He will.

The second question: Is God just to punish sin? Well, don't hesitate now; is He just and righteous to punish sin? Well, yes He is; God is righteous; He ought to punish sin.

All right; you are getting close to repentance but now here is the acid test! Is God just to punish my sins and your sin? Now, that's the question. You haven't repented, no you haven't, until you can answer yes to that question! Is God just to punish my sins?

If God didn't save me, if God didn't forgive me, if God sent me to eternal damnation, would He be just, would He? That's repentance when you can say yes, when you can say with David in **Psalm 51:4**: *"O Lord against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight that you might be justified when you speak, and clear when you judge."*

David said again in **Psalm 130:3**: *"O Lord if thou shouldest mark iniquity who could stand?"* This repentance is a whole lot more than just crying a few tears because you got caught and crying a few tears because you lost something, and crying a few tears because you are scared to go to hell, and crying a few tears because of this, that, and the other, because somebody died or you got sick and got scared.

Repentance is the right attitude toward God. Is He just to punish sin? We have to take sides with God in His holiness, not only against other people's sin, but against our sin. That's the acid test; that's the test of repentance. Have you repented and have I repented?

When the Canaanite woman came to the Lord, at first He did not even answer her, but she kept on begging for mercy.

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The Lord said: *“I’m come to feed the children of Israel; I’m sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* and she kept crying. He said: *“It’s not right to give the children’s bread to dogs.”* She said: *“That’s so.”* She still cried for mercy. Our Lord showed mercy to her.

Fourthly: True repentance glorifies God by acknowledging that it lies with His sovereign mercy to save us!

Now, are you with me? *“Salvation is of the Lord; it is the gift of God.”* Isn’t that what the Scripture said? *“Eternal life is the gift of God. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Now, my friend; God is not obligated to you and me. God is not indebted to us. Our Lord taught that bunch of religious people in **Luke Chapter 4** and it is true. He said: *“Because you have a religious background and religious ancestors and religious heritage and religious ceremonies does not mean that God is obligated to you.”*

In the land of Israel there were many lepers and God didn’t heal any of them but one, a Gentile in the land of Israel, and there were many widows and God didn’t heal a one of them but fed a Gentile and they rose up in anger and would have killed him.

They thought that God was obligated to them and some of us think the same thing. *“Hath not the potter power over the clay to make of the same lump, one vessel to honor and one to dishonor? Can I not do with mine own what I will?”* God said. *I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”*

The leper came to our Lord and falling down worshipping him, He said: *“Lord, if you will, you can make me clean, if you will.”* I am telling you this: you can talk about free will, man’s will, this will, that will, all you want to but I know that salvation is by God’s will!

“It’s not of him that willeth or him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy. He will show mercy to whom he will show mercy.” You are bordering on repentance if you can come to that place where you acknowledge that it is up to God and His sovereign pleasure to show mercy to you.

Fifthly: True repentance glorifies God by bowing to and submitting to the claims of King Jesus, the royal claims of King Jesus, receiving the mercy of God as given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord!

I like what the Centurion said: Our Lord came to him about his son who was sick and the Lord said: *“All things are possible to them that believe.”* He said: *“Lord; I believe, help thou my unbelief.”*

Can you say that, *“I do believe?”* I bow to the Word of God. I bow to the truth of God. I’m just a beggar at the door of mercy. I need help: *“Lord I believe; help thou my unbelief.”*

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Last of all: True repentance glorifies God by living the rest of my life walking in fellowship with Him and submission to Him!

Repentance that does not keep on repenting is not true repentance. This is not a once for all deal. We have repented, we are repenting, and we shall repent. Faith that does not keep on believing is not saving faith.

Actually, that preaching which leads to true repentance is the preaching of God's holiness, man's sin and Christ's redemptive work and we preach that every Sunday and we keep repenting, keep repenting; we keep walking before Him in humility and submission and repentance!