

WHAT DO YOU MEAN 'REPENT'?

INTRODUCTION

In the world the word "repent" is often associated with religious fanaticism. It conjures up cartoons of a bearded man carrying a sign reading, "Repent, The End is Near." Sometimes religious people, and even professing Christians, confuse the word with "faith" or "prayer." As with all Biblical words, this one was intended to convey a specific meaning. Its proper understanding can affect our relationship to God. This should cause us to want to know what it means and how it relates to our personal lives.

I. THE MEANING OF THE WORD "REPENT"

A. What does it say in Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words (page 525)? (This is a standard references work on the meaning of Biblical words)

(1) "Repent" comes from the original Greek word "metanoeo" which means, literally, "to change one's mind or purpose."

(2) "Repent" is an action word. This "change of mind" involves a change of conduct, for the better. That is, a person repents FROM doing wrong things, TO doing right things. Let's see if that meaning is borne out in its usage in the New Testament.

II. THIS MEANING ILLUSTRATED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

A. What did the people DO when they were told to "repent" by Jonah? Compare Jonah 3:10 with Matthew 12:41.

B. How did John the Baptist describe the "fruits" which were to result when people repented? Luke 3:8-14

C. What did the apostle Paul were appropriate for people who had repented? Acts 26:19-20

D. Do you know of any evidence in the New Testament where people "repented" and yet did NOT change their lives for the better?

III. WHAT PRODUCES REPENTANCE?

- A. How are "preaching" and "repentance" related? Luke 24:46-47
- B. How are the "kindness of God" and "repentance" related? Romans 2:4
- C. How are a genuine sorrow for displeasing God and "repentance" related? II Cor. 7:8-10
- D. How are "judgment" and "repentance" related? Acts 17:30-31

IV. HOW NECESSARY IS REPENTANCE?

- A. A. What did Jesus say happens to people who do not repent? Luke 13:3
- B. What does God require of all people everywhere? Acts 17:30
- C. What is God's desire for all people "to come to"? II Pet. 3:9
- D. Along with baptism, what else is necessary for the forgiveness of sins? Acts 2:38

Other discussion questions:

1. How can you tell whether YOU have repented? Whether OTHERS have repented?
2. What should be done if a person says he has repented and yet still persists in glaring sinful habits?
3. What do you think are hindrances that keep people from repenting?