

## David – Repentance

©2023 Mike Whyte

**Copyright Notice:** this document may be used freely for personal study, preaching, and teaching.

No part of it may be used under any circumstances for commercial purposes or to attain personal gain or advantage.

One of the main reasons **David** was considered “**a man after God’s own heart**” was that **he was always ready to repent**. When confronted with a sin, he recognized it and quickly and deeply repented. (At13:21-22, 1Sm13:13-14, Ps51:7,9-11)

**The Failure of Saul:** **Saul did NOT cooperate with Samuel** – it is NOT clear what actually happened: Saul may have performed some impropriety in the offering, but there seems to be a deeper problem. **Samuel had previously established a protocol to meet with Saul**, and now he was delayed. Most likely Samuel was to deliver to Saul instructions from YHWH for the war. When Samuel was delayed, **Saul panicked and took matters into his own hands**. Then **attempted to justify his actions**. (1Sm10:7-9, 11:15, 13:5-14) In Contrast, when confronted with his sins, **David repented quickly and deeply** (2Sm12:7,9a,13, 24:10,17)

**What is “Repentance”?** The Hebrew root שׁוּב - shuv means “to turn”, “to return”, “to turn back”, “to change one’s mind”; hence, it includes “**to repent**” – **to turn from evil and to turn to good**. **Jeremiah uses shuv more than any other Old Testament author** (Jr3:12b-14a,22a, 4:1, 15:19). David uses *shuv* only once with respect to repentance (Ps7:12). However, David frequently expresses his **acknowledgment of sin and need for forgiveness**: repentance (Ps31:10, 38:4,17-18, 6:1-2a, 41:4, 25:7, 32:1-5, 39:7-8a).

David identifies some characteristics of repentance:

- **Recognize sin**, “my iniquities have gone over my head” (Ps38:4)
- **Acknowledge sin to God**, “I confess my iniquity” (Ps38:18)
- **Appeal to God’s grace**, “O LORD, be gracious to me” (Ps41:4)
- **Understand the depths of sin**, “I have sinned against you” (Ps41:4)
- **Understand the Nature of God**, “according to your *hesed*, your goodness” (Ps25:7)
- **Be thankful for forgiveness**, “transgression is forgiven, sin is covered” (Ps32:1)
- **Do NOT try to hide sin**, “I did not cover my iniquity” (Ps32:5)
- **Avoid future sin**, “deliver me from all my transgressions” (Ps39:8)
- **Do NOT resist**, “If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword” (Ps7:12)

**Greek Words for Repentance:** Greek is much more expressive than Hebrew. **The composition of the words is illustrative:**

- **νοέω - noeō**, verb, “consider well”, “understand”, “imagine”: the full range of cognitive awareness
- **νοῦς - nous**, masculine noun, “mind”, “understanding”, “practical judgement”, “resolve”, “thought”: the object of volition
- **μετά - meta**, preposition, “with”, “among”, “against”, “after”, etc.; frequently compounded, for example, μεταμορφόομαι - metamorphoomai, verb, “transform”, “transfigure”: “**metamorphosis**” – visible change of form
- **μετανοέω - metanoeeō**, verb, “change one’s mind”, “feel remorse”, “repent”, “be converted”: used 34 times in the New Testament
- **μετάνοια - metanoia**, feminine noun, “turning about”, “repentance”, “conversion”: used 22 times in the New Testament

**The Septuagint uses metanoeeō and metanoia for the various expressions of repentance in the Old Testament**

**The Gulf Between Man and God:** God the Father is the supreme, all powerful, Creator (Ps19:1-4a). **As human beings we are less than nothing compared to God** (Job 25:4-6). Repentance, truly seeing oneself in relation to God, is **the necessary step to start to bridge the gulf** (Ps8:4-5). The objective of repentance is to bring a person to a frame of mind with which God can work. Then, God can make the person into someone he wants in his family. **In the resurrection, we will be “crowned with glory and honour”**.

**Repentance in the New Testament:** **John the Baptist** was the last Old Testament Prophet – he preached and baptized for “repentance”. His role was to prepare as many people as God was calling to be ready to be converted once the Holy Spirit became available – repentance was the basis of this calling (Mt3:1-2,7-8,11). Throughout his ministry, **Jesus’ call to repentance** was the same as John the Baptist: to prepare people for conversion (Mk1:14-15, 6:7a,12, Lk24:46-48). The fruit of John’s and Jesus’ preaching was **realized in the early Church** (At2:38,41, 3:19-21). **Repentance was extended to the Gentiles** (At10:44-48, 11:1-2a,4,18). This was a watershed in the growth of the Church – it prepared for **the mission of Paul** (At17:22,29b-30, 20:17-21, Rm2:1,4, 2Cr7:8-10, 2Tm2:24-25). **Repentance is a life-long process from which there is no turning back** (2Pt3:9, Hb6:1,4-6a, 12:15-17). Jesus implores **the Churches in Revelation** to repent (Rv2:1a,5,12a,15-16a,18a,20-22, 3:1a,3a,14a,19).

**Back to David:** Psalm 139 seems to be **David’s summary of his relationship with YHWH**: he has learned the life lessons laid on him; the repentance reflected in Psalm 51 has shaped him to know God; he looks to the promise of God (Ps139:1-3,6-7,17,23-24). David seeks “**the way everlasting**”, **the Way of God**, which prepares a person to be **a candidate for the gift of eternal life**.

**Repentance is NOT a “one time” thing.** The objective of the Christian life is to grow to become like God. As with David, we need to **deeply understand the vast gulf** that exists between us as human beings and the Great Creator who inhabits eternity. As we understand our true nature and what God wants us to become, we come to **understand what “repentance” is all about**. We must completely change our mind/attitude/perspective to become like God. We must **repent of everything we are as sinning human beings** so that God can look on us as potential sons and daughters. **Then God can consider granting us the gift of eternal life**.

This material is based on the paper “**David – a Man After My Own Heart**” available at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/>

The PowerPoint slides are available at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>