

January 5, 2014 THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD (Part IV)

Godly repentance

Acts 2: 38; 17: 30-31; Luke 24: 46-47; 13: 1-5

II Peter 3: 9

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD (TROG) is the MOST important (single) piece of information sinners need to know and understand because: **TROG** is the ONLY thing that will bring a sinner to **GODLY Repentance**.

It is not often in life that we are **UTTERLY** (and totally) deceived. **We** may (often) be a little off course. **We** may (often) be in need of a little correction. **But**, we are **NOT** (often) **ABSOLUTELY** deceived. **Not** often are we **SO** deceived that we have to **ABANDON** what we (thought) we knew for what we learned. **But**, we all **ARE** in the matter of salvation. **Our** own hearts deceive us.

Let me show you God's description of us all on the matter of salvation. **We** usually read verse 9 only. **But**, let's go back to the start of this thought in Jeremiah.

Look at Jeremiah 17: 5 "**Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.**"

Now, Jeremiah 17: 7 "**Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.**"

Look at Jeremiah 17: 9 "**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**"

The (natural) hearts of fallen humanity are our own **WORST** enemies in the matter of salvation. **By** nature we think we are doing that which is **PLEASING** to God, when, (in reality) we are doing that which is an **ABOMINATION** to God. **We** **THINK** we are (truly) trusting in the **LORD** (His blood, His cross, His death). **We** would say we are resting in Christ **ALONE**.

But, (in reality) we are looking to the **lord** (plus) something in ourselves. **We** are looking to a **lord** whose death **ALONE** did not save anyone. **It** is a **lord** whose death leaves multitudes perishing under the eternal wrath of God **UNLESS/UNTIL** they respond with **THEIR** part. **If** you have **EVER** looked to a **savior** whose death left **ANY** sinner he died for in **ANY** danger of perishing, you have looked to a counterfeit, and **NOT** the Christ of the scriptures.

By nature **ALL** are caught up in a **sin** that we **DO NOT** recognize as sin. **It** is **THE** sin that deceives us. **We** are in bondage and don't know it. **We** are **committing** sin, and don't know it. **Committing** sin in the scriptures means, we are **NOT** resting our entire salvation (beginning to end) **ENTIRELY** in the finished work of Christ **ALONE**.

Christ addressed this issue in His day. **Look** at John 8: 32 "**Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.**"

“**Committing** sin is trying to work out our own righteousness before God. **ALL** (without exception) are guilty of committing sin. **Although** NONE of us knows (or will admit), that’s what we are doing.

Paul addressed this issue. Look at Romans 6: 17-18 “**But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.**”

We are in bondage. **And**, we are deceived. **It** takes the TROG revealed in the Gospel to uncover this sin and expose this deception. **Neither** will be made known apart from the Gospel. **And**, NO sinner will be delivered apart from the Gospel.

That is why the Gospel (wherein TROG is revealed), is a CONFRONTATION to the sinner who (truly) hears what is being declared. **The** Gospel CONFRONTS a sinner with the knowledge of a Just God and a Savior. **The** Gospel CONFRONTS a sinner with the knowledge of the God who blesses sinners on the basis of what Christ has done FOR those sinners, and NO OTHER reason.

This is the true and living God. **He** is the God of the scriptures (beginning to end). **But**, as we saw in our last lesson, He is the God (previously) UNKNOWN to any of us by nature. **The** Gospel confronts us with a God we never heard of; a Christ we never trusted; **and** a righteousness we were TOTALLY ignorant of. **BEFORE** the Gospel we did NOT know God. **We** did NOT know how God could bless a sinner like us and be Just (i.e. doing RIGHT) when He did so.

This GOSPEL confrontation MUST take place. **I** have said before and I will say it again, “The GREATEST (immediate) need in the life of any sinner is for that sinner to be sat down under the preaching of God’s Gospel.” **When** this (Gospel) CONFRONTATION occurs, a CHANGE is needed. A change is DEMANDED.

Think about it! **When** you are brought face to face with a God you had not worshipped, a Christ you had not served, and a Gospel you had not believed, a CHANGE is necessary.

This is not a SMALL change (i.e. not a slight veering to the right or left). **This** change is RADICAL. **This** change is tantamount to an about-face. **This** radical change is reasonable. It is logical. **It** is scriptural. **God** COMMANDS it. **Thirty-four** times in the New Testament, this radical change is called REPENTANCE.

GODLY Repentance is a CHANGE of MIND; a CHANGE of ACTION; a CHANGE of DIRECTION; a CHANGE of LIFE. **BUT**, it is a CHANGE of mind and direction that is brought on by the testimony of God. **It** is a CHANGE that is COMMANDED by the Gospel. **And**, it is a CHANGE that is INITIATED (specifically) by TROG revealed in the Gospel.

Here is what I am saying! **Godly** Repentance will not come, (indeed, it CANNOT come), apart from the Gospel wherein TROG is revealed. **TROG** is the ONLY thing that will bring a sinner to GODLY Repentance.

And, Godly Repentance WILL come. **It** WILL come to those who have (truly) EMBRACED God’s Gospel. **It** WILL come to those who have turned to a Just God and Savior. **It** WILL come to

every sinner who finds salvation in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE. **It** will come to those who are convicted of the evil of imagining that they had ANY part in CAUSING God to bless them.

Why? Why will Godly Repentance come to THESE sinners? **Why** (will) THESE sinners repent of their former idolatry and dead works? **FIRST**, because God COMMANDS it.

Look at Acts 17: 30 “**And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:**”

Up to this point, (under the Old Covenant), God had not addressed the idolatry of the Gentiles. **But**, now (in this Gospel age), He is commanding ðall men everywhereö (Jews and Gentiles) ðto repentö. **Why? Godly** Repentance BEGINS with HOW (upon what basis) God saves and declares righteous otherwise ungodly sinners.

Look at verse 31 “**Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**”

The command is REPENT. **Why** should (why MUST) men repent? Because God's STANDARD of Judgment is RIGHTEOUSNESS. **It** is the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the God-man. **God** ASSURES all men that the righteousness Christ worked out by His obedience unto death is His STANDARD of judgment. **He** assures them of that fact by Christ's resurrection from the dead.

Why should men repent at the preaching of TROG? **Because** TROG is NOT our STANDARD of Judgment (by nature). **REPENT** now!

REPENT because the Gospel has shown you something you had NEVER seen before. Godly REPENTANCE is repentance commanded ONLY by the Gospel, because it is repentance commanded in LIGHT of TROG. **I.e.** WITHOUT an understanding of TROG, a sinner has nothing to repent of (i.e. no RIGHT reason to repent). **UNTIL** God changes a sinner's STANDARD of judgment, that sinner has no need to CHANGE. **The** NEED to repent is created by (i.e. It BEGINS with) an understanding of and a submission to God's STANDARD of judgment.

UNTIL a sinner is convinced that God judges men justified or condemned (saved/lost) on the basis of the righteousness of the God-man FREELY imputed to his/her account, **UNTIL** then, that sinner has no need to repent. **That** works in reverse as well. **The** sinner who refuses to repent has NOT changed his/her STANDARD of judging saved and lost.

Why do ALL sinners need to REPENT of (their) STANDARD of judgment? **It** is because (our) STANDARD of judgment and (God's) STANDARD of judgment are NOT the same. **You** might say, ðYou don't know MY standard of judgment.ö **I** don't. **But**, I know God's STANDARD. **And**, I know that NONE of us (by nature) judge by God's STANDARD. **Remember** Jer. 17: 9, “**The heart is deceitful ...**”

So, the ONLY reason any sinner would REPENT of (their) STANDARD is because they have seen and are convinced of God's STANDARD.

The question THE Gospel ALWAYS answers is: **How** can God save those who are sinners in all that we do? **How** can He save those whom He (Himself) declares ungodly? **How** can He do that AND, be JUST/RIGHT when He does it?

What makes it RIGHT for God to save and eternally bless ONE sinner, and yet, condemn and eternally punish ANOTHER sinner, when BOTH are sinners; **BOTH** are EQUALLY deserving of God's eternal wrath.

And, BOTH are EQUALLY unable to deliver themselves from condemnation or gain the least of God's favor? **UNTIL** God's STANDARD of Judgment (TROG) is revealed in the Gospel, no sinner knows the RIGHT answer to that question.

God's people WILL acknowledge that the God they NOW worship is the God who was UNKNOWN to them by nature (even by this world's religion). **They** WILL acknowledge that they did not come to HIM (until) God brought them to the Gospel, (until) He revealed Christ's righteousness imputed as His STANDARD of Judgment.

God's people WILL do that (in each successive generation) because the command of the scriptures is REPENT. **REPENT** of the ðgodö you worshipped BEFORE God brought you to the Gospel, TROG, and the knowledge of the God who was UNKNOWN to you by nature. **REPENT** of the ðdead worksö by which that *so called* ðgodö accepted your worship. **Thus**, Godly REPENTANCE becomes one of the GREATEST evidences that a sinner is born of God.

That brings to our SECOND reason why BELIEVING sinners WILL repent: **First**, because God COMMANDS it. **Second**, because Godly Repentance is the first (and main) EVIDENCE that your faith is GENUINE.

Having preached the Gospel at Pentecost, Peter commanded repentance (on the basis of) sins REMITTED.

Look at Acts 2: 38 "**Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**"

Having opened their understanding, Christ commanded His disciples to preach repentance AND remission of sins.

Look at Luke 24: 46-47 "**And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:**

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

REPENT because you NOW see the truth about the REMISSION OF SINS. **The ONLY** basis for the REMISSION of sins is the blood of Christ. **I.e.** By the blood of Christ, the sins He bore have ALREADY been REMITTED. **They** have ALREADY been PAID FOR. **They** have ALREADY been PUNISHED.

God has ALREADY forgiven and Christ's blood will CONTINUE to cleanse those whose sins have ALREADY been fully punished and paid for in the death of Christ. **CHRIST** is God's

provided propitiation (penalty bearing, justice satisfying sacrifice) for those He was given. **Christ** paid their debt of punishment IN FULL.

But, without TROG NONE of us knows that. **By** nature we are not looking to a Savior whose death ALONE has paid for and (fully) put away EVERY sin He bore in His body on the tree. **We** believe that multitudes will (yet) perish for whom Christ died. **It is** not UNTIL God brings us to the Gospel (and TROG), and teaches us of (true) REMISSION that we see otherwise.

Look at Hebrews 10: 16-18 “**This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; 17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. 18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.**”

First, a sinner is sat down under the Gospel (wherein TROG is revealed). **Next**, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, the sinner is given life. **The** first EVIDENCE of that life is faith. **I.e.** Under the Gospel, TROG is ðrevealedö OUT OF faith and INTO faith. **The** regenerate sinner believes the Gospel (I.e. he/she embraces TROG). **And**, they REPENT of (they RENOUNCE) the ðgodö they worshipped BEFORE they heard the Gospel and TROG.

Further, those sinners EMBRACE the faith that sees sins REMITTED in the death of Christ ALONE. **And**, they REPENT of (i.e. RENOUNCE) the ðfaithö that saw itself completing (or at least having some part in bringing about) the remission of sins. **In** FAITH regenerate sinners believe the new. **And**, in REPENTANCE they renounce the old. **They** EMBRACE and RENOUNCE.

Godly repentance (truly) IS a CHANGE in the direction you are going. **BUT**, it is MORE than that. **Godly** Repentance is ALSO a RENOUNCING of your (former) direction. **It IS** a CHANGE in your thoughts about how God saves a sinner. **But**, it is (also) a RENOUNCING of the way you (formerly) thought God saved a sinner.

I.e. In faith regenerate sinners EMBRACE a NEW way. **In** repentance they EXPOSE their old way (concerning salvation) as a false way, the ðbroad wayö, the way which ðseems right to men but ends in deathö. **God** given faith EMBRACES a (new) God, a (new) Christ, a (new) a Gospel, a (new) righteousness. **And**, it RENOUNCES its (old) ðgodö, etc. **Without** this RENOUNCING, there is NO God-given faith. WITHOUT Godly Repentance there is no EVIDENCE that faith is GENUINE.

This RENOUNCING is what makes God’s Gospel offensive to the natural (unregenerate/unconvicted) mind. **As** long as you allow your family and friends to think that the Gospel you NOW believe is just a BETTER , or more SCRIPTURAL, or more REASONABLE way of stating things, they won’t be offended. **As** long as you allow your family and friends to think that the God you NOW worship is just a better UNDERSTANDING of the (same) God you ALWAYS worshipped, they won’t get angry. **There** will be no Gospel CONFRONTATION. **But**, as long as you do these things, you are AVOIDING Godly repentance, **AND**, giving no EVIDENCE that you have EMBRACED the Gospel (its God or its Christ).

Godly Repentance is not the ONLY evidence of salvation. **There** are other evidences. **But**, without Godly Repentance, (i.e. UNTIL a sinner repents of their former idolatry and dead works), all other evidences are just EMPTY claims.

Repent because God COMMANDS it. **REPENT** because repentance is the FIRST (and main) EVIDENCE that your faith is GENUINE. **Third**, REPENT because the unrepentant will PERISH.

Look at Luke 13: 1-5 “**There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.**

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Look at Luke 13: 4-5 “**Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?**

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

The sinners in these two incidents OBVIOUSLY died horrible deaths. **Was** the MANNER of their death an indication of the DEGREE of their sinner hood? **Was** God PUNISHING them for the greatness of their sin? **Although** not stated, that is the issue Christ seems to be addressing (thinking more highly that you ought).

By nature where do sinners think more highly of themselves MORESO than in the matter of salvation? **I** thought MY believing made the difference between saved and lost. **I** thought MY religious zeal was PROOF (positive) that I was headed for heaven. **And**, everybody in my former religion encouraged me in that thinking.

It is my faith in Christ ALONE and my repentance of such thinking that gives me confidence that I am NOW being led by the Spirit of God.

Paul called himself the chief of sinners. **Was** he just verbalizing false humility? **NO!** **He** was stating what every regenerate sinner knows (and OWNS), that we are UNWORTHY of the LEAST of God's favor; totally UNDESERVING of any blessing from God. **And**, we can see that truth in ourselves far better than we can see it in anyone else. **The** BEST thing any one of us can say about ourselves is that we are sinners saved by the mercy and grace of God; **saved** by the doing and dying of Christ ALONE, and NOT by anything found IN us.

If a sinner is saved BECAUSE (they) do something; **if** a sinner is saved because of ANYTHING found IN them (EVEN faith), those sinners are justified by their works. **And**, those sinners RIGHTLY have room to boast (but not before God).

The horrible deaths these suffered, won't hold a candle to death the UNREPENTANT sinner will suffer. **The** UNREPENTANT will perish (eternally). They will suffer full and final separation from God. **Does** that mean repentance is a CONDITION for salvation? **NO!** **There** are NO conditions on sinners. **Godly** repentance is the (main and necessary) EVIDENCE that your faith is in the just God and Savior who saved you for Christ's sake ALONE (based on His righteousness imputed ALONE).

Repent of your dead works and idolatry because the UNREPENTANT will perish.

The FOURTH (and last) reason every regenerate sinner WILL repent: **Because** NONE of God's elect will perish, but come to repentance.

Look at II Peter 3: 9 "**The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**"

The ONLY reason for God's delay in Christ's second coming is His "longsuffering" toward His elect. **That** event will not take place until EVERY "sheep" has been brought into the fold, until every CHOSEN sinner has been given faith and Godly repentance. Repent, because NONE of God's elect will perish with the unrepentant.

SUMMARY. In every successive generation those sinners CHOSEN by God, those REDEEMED by Christ, those REGENERATED by the Spirit WILL repent of their former idolatry and dead works because:

1. **God** COMMANDS repentance.
2. **Repentance** is the first (and main) EVIDENCE that faith is genuine.
3. **The** unrepentant will perish.
4. **None** of God's elect will leave this world without Godly Repentance.

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