

REPENTANCE AND LORDSHIP – A WHOLE BIBLE ISSUE

AN OLD TESTAMENT PRECEDENT

Pharaoh represents the issue perfectly. Here was a man that was never truly repentant and refused to acknowledge the LORD.

“And Pharaoh said, ‘Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD...’ (Ex. 5:2). As the plagues evolved Pharaoh was forced to acknowledge the reality of the LORD and even seemed repentant saying, “I have sinned this time. The LORD is righteous, and my people and I are wicked.” (Ex. 9:27). However, this was not SAVING faith from the heart. It was demon-like faith (Ja. 2: 19) that has an intellectual component (believes), and an emotional component (trembles), and yet the will was still in rebellion to His LORDSHIP.

In Isaiah 55 the wonderful truth of salvation by God’s GRACE is clearly in view. Verse one says, “HO! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters...without money and without price.” Indeed, it is a FREE GIFT! However, verse one is not in conflict with vv. 6-7 where it says, “Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD and He will have mercy on him, and to our God for He will abundantly pardon.” NOTICE: The message is one of GRACE but that does not negate the necessity of REPENTANCE and recognition of God’s LORDSHIP. REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP go together!

As Jonah preached to Nineveh the people “believed God” (Jon. 3:5) The whole context is one of genuine repentance and yet the text says they “believed”. Obviously “belief” here included the concept of REPENTANCE. Jonah 3:10 says, “Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way...”

Clearly the concept of REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP are in view.

REPENTANCE AND LORDSHIP - A NEW TESTAMENT PACKAGE

John the Baptist came to “**prepare the way of the LORD**”. (Mt. 3:3) In conjunction with that mission he came preaching, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand**”. (3:2) REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP went together. Jesus began His public ministry with the same message (Mt. 4:17).

But what did Jesus mean by “Repent”? In Matthew 12:41 He defined REPENTANCE in terms of what the people of Nineveh did saying, “...they

repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.” The concept is consistent! Repentance involves turning from sin and recognition of His LORDSHIP!

Jesus came to call “sinners to repentance” (Lk. 5:32). Indeed, He told the people they were all equally sinners and “unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Lk. 13:1-5). He further commissioned that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations” (Lk. 24:47).

To all of this, the “Lordless Gospel” advocate says, “But the word REPENTANCE is not found in John, the gospel of BELIEF.” This is a shallow argument. The concept is certainly there (Jn. 3:19-21, etc.), and there is overwhelming emphasis on Christ’s Lordship which in fact is the MAJOR theme of the book.

The climax of the book presents Thomas as the premier illustration of New Testament saving faith when he says “**My Lord and my God!**” (John 20:28). In response Jesus told Thomas “**you have believed**” (Jn. 20:29).

The text then goes on to say, “**Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**” indicating that those who would afterward believe would do so in this same way only without seeing. This is what it means to BELIEVE in a saving way.

NOTE that phrase: “**My Lord and my God!**” Saving faith must be personal as seen in the word “My” and it must recognize Christ’s Lordship as seen in “My Lord”.

CONCLUSION: Sometimes the emphasis is LORDSHIP (John) and sometimes REPENTANCE (Luke) but the issue is always SAVING FAITH in the person and work of Christ.

On the day of Pentecost Peter preached Christ as Lord (Acts 2:36). The people asked what shall we do and Peter said “Repent” (Acts 2:38). REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP went together. Paul said God now “commands all men everywhere to repent” because God is going to judge the world by the resurrected Christ (Acts 17:30-31). REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP go together.

Paul in summarizing his gospel ministry said that he preached to the Gentiles to “**repent, turn to God and do works befitting repentance**” (Acts 26:20). Peter in a LORDSHIP context that emphasizes coming judgment said, God is “**not willing that any should perish but all should**

come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). In the "**Day of the Lord**" the issue will certainly be REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP (Rev. 16:9-11).

In both the O.T. and the N.T. (from Matthew to Revelation) REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP go together. Paul preached "**Christ Jesus the Lord**" (2 Cor. 4:5) and his converts "**received Christ Jesus the Lord**" (Col. 2:6). The message is clear: "**Let everyone who names the name of Christ [the Lord — NASB] depart from iniquity** (2 Tim. 2:19).

Many on judgment day will say to Jesus, "**Lord, Lord**" but only those who actually KNOW Christ as Lord enter the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 7:21-28). Many "**profess to know God, but in works they deny Him**" (Titus 1:16). REPENTANCE and LORDSHIP go together!

Saving faith involves REPENTANCE and embraces Christ as Lord and Savior. As Paul so aptly said, "**I know WHOM I have believed**" (2 Tim. 1:12