

ARE YOU SAVED?



ARE YOU SURE?

## **ARE YOU SAVED? ARE YOU SURE?**

What would you think if you found out that half of all the people who attend Church were not really Christians? As startling as this idea may appear, recent research indicates it is a hard reality for American Churches. Researcher George Barna has discovered the disturbing fact that one half of all adults who attend Protestant churches on a typical Sunday morning are not truly Christian. If this was not shocking enough, we are confronted with the fact that out of the 83% of Americans who claim to be Christian, only about 10% are truly saved. It is little wonder that one Southern Baptist Minister recently said:

"The greatest mission field on the face of the earth is [the] Churches" -Paul Washer, President of Heart Cry Ministries

It is a sad and sobering fact to realize that millions of professing Christians are dying utterly lost, not knowing true salvation or how to truly be saved. This booklet combats this vast deception by leading the reader into seven Biblical tests of salvation, by which they can examine themselves to see if they are truly in the faith or not. Plainly written and easy to understand the reader will walk away with a greater insight of what it means to be a Christian

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## ARE YOU SURE?

By Pastor Martin Bledsoe

Dear friend I have an important question for you; and in a booklet this small I must be straight forward and to the point, so here it is. Do you think that it is possible for men to have sincere confidence that they are saved and on their way to heaven, and yet die and go to hell? When confronted with the question, there are several common answers, but one you do not often receive is, “Yes Pastor, many are deceived about their salvation and shall be eternally lost”. Yet this is the very answer that the Lord Jesus Christ gave us in the Bible. Here are his exact words:

*“**Many** will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.**” – Matthew 7:22-23*

Here we have people who are emphatically proclaiming that Jesus is Lord and doing many wonderful works in his name, yet they never were truly saved. These are not ‘backsliders’, these are false converts who thought that they were saved and were not. You can find examples of this through out the New Testament. For instance there is Simon the Sorcerer, who believed the preaching of the Apostles, and was baptized and desired the power of the Holy Spirit in his life [Acts 8:13, 19], yet we are told that he was still in the “bond

of iniquity”, or in other words he was still lost [Acts 8:23].

The Bible teaches that you can be baptized and still be lost. You can say a prayer and still be lost. You can even “believe” and call Jesus “Lord” and still go to hell. You can be a member of every Church in your state, and still not have your name written in the Lamb’s book of life. Some may ask, “Why would God deceive these people into thinking that they were saved when they were not?” But it is not God who deceives them, God doesn’t want any one deceived. He tells us over and over again in his Word “Be Not Deceived”! Yet people ignore his warnings against deception and fall headlong into perdition.

**So how can we be sure that we are saved?** Some ministers may ask you if you have ‘felt’ a certain way in your heart? Or if you have ever said ‘the prayer’? Or if you have been ‘baptized’? Or if you ‘believe’ there is a Jesus? But none of these things are Biblical proofs of salvation. A mere intellectual belief in Jesus has never saved anyone, the Devil himself believes there is a Jesus, he even believes in his death, burial and resurrection, yet he is lost and hell bound.

Remember Simon the Sorcerer? He BELIEVED the facts about Christ, but he was lost. So how can we really know that we are saved? The Bible tells us how we can be sure of our salvation. And here is how:

***“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”*** – 2 Corinthians 13:5

The Apostle Paul is telling us that we should do an examination of our own selves to see if we are really true Christians and the way we examine ourselves is by putting our lives to the test. When he tells us to “Prove” ourselves, it literally means we should test ourselves. If we pass the test, then we can have confidence that we are truly Christ’s, but if we fail we should know that our faith is not REAL saving faith.

But where can such a test be found? Of course it has to be a test from GOD, it has to be Divine, inspired by his Spirit and not from the mere intellect of men, for man has really no authority in this matter. So where do we look for such a test? I am thankful to day that God did provide such a test in his Word. Since God wishes no man to be deceived, but to come to the knowledge of the truth, he placed a standardized test [*his Word is the Standard*] in the midst of his Bible, where we can know for ourselves if we have eternal life or not. Do you know where this test is found? It is the 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle of John, the little book toward the end of the Bible.

Within these five chapters there are a number of tests where by Christians are exhorted to examine themselves. Here are the words of John himself:

***“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life...”*** – 1 John 5:13

“These things” that John wrote is the test of faith, and with it you can see if your faith is saving faith, or dead faith. To

see if your professed relationship with Christ is real, or imaginary. With these tests you can know that you truly have eternal life or if you have been deceived.

Now the question is: Are you ready for the test? It is extremely important that you examine yourself in the light of God's word. If you pass you can know that your confidence is real and is based upon the eternal Rock of God's word; and if you fail, at least you can know your true state before God and do something about it while there is time. You have absolutely nothing to lose, but everything to gain by obeying God and examining yourself in the light of these Scriptures.

The Exam now begins and I ask you to prayerfully consider each Test.

## **SEVEN TESTS OF RELATIONSHIP**

**THOSE WHO SAY THEY HAVE NO SIN ARE NOT  
SAVED.**

**1<sup>st</sup> John 1:8** *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

**1<sup>st</sup> John 1:10** *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

Those who know Christ know two things: That before they came to him they were sinners. No man is born a Christian.

And God has no grandchildren. All come into the world as sinners and all choose to sin, and live a life against the will of God. And ALL that are truly Christians have recognized their sinfulness and have come to Christ in repentance and sorrow and in belief that he will forgive them and save them.

Also all Christians, no matter how long they have been saved, still have a sinful nature to contend with. Sin is an intricate part of our human nature, and even the best of Christians must struggle against it. Those who say that they no longer have a sin nature to wrestle against are deceived and the truth is not in them. Those who have been born of God and have received the divine nature into their hearts know the warfare that takes place in them. We must constantly yield ourselves to God, to the Holy Ghost, that the lusts of the flesh may be overcome and the fruits of the Spirit may be born in our life.

Thus true Christians have sinned by action, and they contend still with a sin nature of which they were born.

### **THOSE WHO CONTINUE IN SIN ARE NOT SAVED.**

**1<sup>st</sup> John 3:5-9** *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him... He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil...*

Some wicked professors find relief in hearing that the poor saints of God continue through out their life battling the sinful nature, because they use this as an excuse for living in blatant sin. Yet if we live in willful, even habitual sin, it is proof that there is no battle raging in us, but rather we have never entered the fray. If the Holy Ghost lives in us then we cannot live in habitual sin. Those who do so are not children of God, but rather children of the devil no matter their profession. True Christians have in them the very presence of Christ, which convicts them over sin, and empowers them to overcome sin.

Their affection for Christ will not allow them to continue grieving his Spirit. And the chastening rod of the Father will always be there to correct his children. Christians are not perfect, sometimes they stumble and fall. But they grieve over their sins, confess them and forsake them. Where as false converts live and practice sin and then try to justify them, and make excuses for them. There is a distinct difference in their nature which can be easily seen.

Dear children, how can we say that we have been ‘saved’, and yet remain slaves to Satan? What have we been saved from? Christ comes to save his children FROM their sins. To deliver them from the bondage of the devil, and to release them into the glorious light of his gospel. Those that remain slaves of Satan, cannot be twice born children of God and cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

*1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:9-10* Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators [people who have sex outside of marriage], nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [men who act like



women], nor abusers of themselves with mankind [homosexuals], Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

**Revelation 21:8** *But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers [pharmakeus-drug dealers and abusers] , and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*

According to the Bible if you are living in any of these sins you are lost and except you repent you will have your part in hell.

## **THOSE WHO REFUSE TO PRACTICE RIGHTEOUSNESS ARE NOT SAVED**

**1<sup>st</sup> John 3:7** *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

**1<sup>st</sup> John 3:10** *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*

The practice of righteousness is a mark of a true Christian. Many feel that by merely abstaining from wrong doing proves their piety, but not with Christ. His Commands are mostly positive and involve action. He does not say to us, “Don’t do to others what you would not have them do to you”, but rather, “DO unto others what you would have them do unto you”. The Christian is saved by the grace of God unto good works, works which can be seen by men, and who in return will glorify God the Father. Those who are born of God are constrained by the Spirit of God to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.

A life void of good works, is certain to be a life void of the Good Spirit, which worketh hitherto.

I fail to see how one can say that he is a Christian who does not pray. It would be like a man saying a corpses is alive even though it does not breath.

I fail to see how one can say he is a Christian, if he sees a man in true need and shuts up his bowels of compassion.

I fail to see how one can say he is a Christian, and yet fails to ever support the outreach of the gospel, through his time, energy and goods.

There is a work for every saint of God, and if we are truly Saints, then we must be working while it is day.

## THOSE WHO REFUSE TO PURIFY THEMSELVES ARE NOT SAVED

**1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2-3** *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

The blessed hope of the Children of God is the second coming of Christ, where the dead shall rise and the living saints shall be changed, and we all shall be like Christ. It is under the influence of this hope of being like the Saviour, that we put forth the efforts of purification, that is why we struggle against sin, and strive to overcome our evil habits, and do all that is necessary to make us pure. The apostle would not deny that for the success of these efforts we are dependent on Divine aid; but he brings into view, as is often done in the sacred writings, the agency of man himself as essentially connected with success.

IF we truly have this hope, and all twice born Children of God do, then we will purify ourselves, we will seek to be holy and set apart from sin. And by the indwelling Power of God we shall have results which are real. Those who do not seek after righteousness and purity truly do not have the hope in them.

## **THOSE WHO REFUSE TO OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS ARE LOST.**

**1<sup>st</sup> John 2:3-4** *And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

As the Children of God seek to separate from sin and all that defiles him, he must then become obedient to the Commandments of God, for sin is the transgression of God's moral law. The Law of God is righteous, and unrighteousness is living contrary to the law.

Yet foremost in the thought of the twice born is not the pursuit of holiness, but rather the love of the Savior. Seeing Christ has said, "if you love me you will keep my commandments", and seeing that by disobedience we grieve his Spirit and injure him afresh. It is foremost the love for our risen Lord that causes us to obey, yet the process is a work of sanctification upon us; it is a work of holiness, conforming us into the image of Christ, within whose bosom was the law, and his desire was to do the will of the Father. Those who refuse to yield to the Commands of our faithful God are faithless, loveless and are liars if they say that they know him.

## **THOSE WHO REFUSE TO HEAR THE APOSTLES ARE LOST**

**1<sup>st</sup> John 4:5-6** *They are of the world: therefore speak they*

*of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*

All that have a true acquaintance with God will receive the doctrine of the Apostles. Their teachings are found throughout the pages of the New Testament. They are authoritative in the lives of believers. From them they learn of Christ and the doctrine of the Church.

These doctrines would include the Divinity and Sonship of Christ [John 1:1-3, 14, 3:16]. Christ's death upon the cross as our substitute, his burial and his resurrection [1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:1-4]. Salvation by grace through faith alone [Ephesians 3:9] and repentance toward God [Acts 20:21].

Whatever pretensions a person might have for piety, for John it was clear that if they did not embrace the doctrines taught by the true apostles of God, they could not be regarded as his friends; that is, as true Christians.

It may be added that the same test is applicable now. They who do not receive the plain doctrines laid down in the word of God, whatever pretensions they may make to piety, or whatever zeal they may invoke in the cause which they have espoused, can have no well-founded claims to the name Christian. One of the clearest evidences of true piety is a readiness to receive all that God has taught.

Those who ignore clear precepts of the Apostles, be it John,

Peter, Paul, ..etc and even teach against them have the Spirit of error working in them.

## **THOSE WHO WALK IN THE DARKNESS OF HATE ARE LOST**

**1<sup>st</sup> John 1:6** *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth*

**1<sup>st</sup> John 2:9-11** *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*

This darkness that John refers to doesn't speak of merely living a sinful life, but it is more specific, it is living in hate. The first command of Christ is "Love one another". And Christ said, "This is how all men shall know that you are my disciples, because you have love one for another". Love for the brethren is seen in many ways.

If we say we love our brethren, yet we refuse to keep the Commandments of God, we lie according to Scriptures.

**1<sup>st</sup> John 5:2** *By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.*

Love does no harm to your neighbor, thus love causes you to fulfill the law. Both the Old Law with its negative commands of “Thou Shalt not”, and the law of Christ with its positive commands. I fear that many are in churches today who are in fact in total darkness. They commit adultery, they defraud their brothers, they steal and lie and gossip and backbite and defame; they are filled with strife, hatred, envy, jealousy, and covetousness and yet they say they love? Then there are men who say they know Christ, yet are prejudice toward those of a different race or nationality. How can we say we are children of light and have such in us? Not only this, but of sinners in general. The Children of GOD are to HATE sin, but we are to have compassion upon the sinners, loving them, and attempting to pull them from the fire.

There are many more admonitions in the book of John concerning this topic, but we will cease with these principles for now. And close with a few questions: If you tested your own Christian course against these seven principles, where would you stand? Would you be found guilty of being a true saint of God? Or would you be found to be a mere professor?

**What is the missing element in the lives of those who are mere professors and are not saved?** It is usually

repentance. To be saved one has to “Repent and believe the Gospel” -Mark 1:15. Without genuine repentance no one can be saved. The following section is given to describe the attributes of true Repentance. And we should ask ourselves, “Has there been true repentance in my life?”

## **FIVE PRINCIPLES OF TRUE REPENTANCE**

John the Baptist was chosen and anointed by God to be his prophet to usher in the time of Messiah. It was John the Baptist who for six months preached a message that was created to prepare the hearts of the people to receive Jesus Christ as Lord. What was his message? His message was simply a call to repentance. Day after day, week after week, and month after month John preached that the Kingdom was coming and that men everywhere should repent. This was the message of John the Baptist and it certainly should be the message of every man that is called by God to preach. Seeing how John the Baptist was one of the greatest prophets there ever was, we should by studying his message learn what true repentance consists of. I believe there are at least five principles of true repentance as given by John, let’s examine these together.

### **#1. ONE MUST REALIZE HIS SIN.**

**Luke 3:4-6** *As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;*



*And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.*

The first call is to make the pathway of the Lord straight. What pathway is he talking about? Spiritually the pathway is through the wilderness of the heart. The imagery is speaking of the wickedness of man's heart.

The valley that must be filled is the base and dark things of the heart, and they must be brought up to the light of the Gospel.

The mountains and the hills are the high things of the heart that exalts it's self against God: pride, self-will, self-seeking, self-exaltation, greed and covetousness. All of these things must be brought low.

Then you have the crooked things, which represents things that are perverse, twisted, deceitful, and devious in our life. And these things must be made straight.

All these things must be dealt with, every thing must be cleared out of the way for the Lord's entrance into the heart. And thus by the preaching of John men would search their own heart, and they would consider their own sin. And after searching their hearts they would see the monstrosity of their sin, which hinders them from receiving the good things of God.

True repentance requires a complete and full admission of

one's sinfulness, when one does this he will not say, "I have sinned a little" but rather, "I am a very great and wicked sinner". And that's essential to real repentance. Sin in all of its darkness must be recognized in one's own life.

## **#2. ONE MUST REALIZE THE WRATH OF GOD AGAINST SIN.**

**Luke 3:7** *Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*

**Luke 3:9** *And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

John now calls the group of men who came to be baptized of him a "generation of vipers", why? He is still pushing them to do an honest search of their heart. They must be sure that they realize who they are. They are not 'saved', they are not the children of God, they are not 'good', they are the children of the serpent, their father is the devil, they are children of wrath by nature and by choice.

And except their sin is dealt with they shall be hewed down and cast into the fires of hell. He wanted them to know that they needed to flee the wrath that was to come, for the wrath of God was being stored up against them. And God would soon wet his glittering sword and punish them for their wicked sins.

John is saying: Deal with your sin because it has awful and eternal consequences. Men do not seek a Savior until they realize they need saving! Men do not come to true repentance until they learn to fear the divine wrath. It is the grace of God that teaches the heart of men to fear hell.

All the prophets preached judgment. John preached judgment. Any true preacher preaches judgment. And when you give a witness for Christ to another individual, you have to talk about the wrath to come. The wrath to come is speaking of the final eternal judgment.

Jesus made hell a theme of His preaching. He preached more on hell than He did on heaven. He preached more on hell than anybody ever preached on hell. Why? Because He wanted to warn sinners. And one of the things that you must preach when you preach true repentance is the seriousness and the suffering of hell. There is a hell, it is a lake of fire and it alienates you from God forever. And that's what makes forgiveness good news. Thus for there to be true repentance one must realize his sinful condition, and he must realize that wrath is coming upon him.

### **#3. ONE MUST REJECT RITUALS AND GENEALOGY**

**Luke 3:8** *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*

Now the Jews of Christ's day knew the preaching of John

was true. They had read in Malachi about the day of Judgment that was coming, that would burn like an oven, and many people came to John willing to be baptized by him. You know when there is a forest fire the creatures usually run toward the nearest river. The snakes crawl out of their dens and they squirm down to the water. When John saw this great crowd it reminded him of that and he wanted them to know that merely being baptized by him would not save them from the fires that were coming.

There is no right, there's no ceremony, there's no ritual, there's no baptism that can save anybody from wrath. There's no salvation in baptism then and there's none in it now. Jesus taught in Mark 16:16 that you may be baptized and still be damned, if that baptism is not accompanied with saving faith.

In fact, when Jesus preached His great Sermon on the Mount he destroyed all their hope in ritual. He attacked their prayers and said it's nothing but vain repetition. He attacked their alms giving and said it's nothing but parading your self-righteous pride. He attacked their sacrifices. He attacked their oaths. He attacked their vows. He attacked everything they were ceremonially and ritualistically hanging on to. And in a sense He said to them, "All of that stuff is manure."

The churches are full of people who are depending on rituals to be saved. People who were baptized as babies, people who were baptized as young people, people baptized as adults. There are people who go to the church and go through whatever ordinances their churches call for them to go through. They get confirmed, they say so many 'Hail

Marys'. They pray their beads, they cross their chest, they eat their wafers, they bow to images, they wear certain clothes, they light candles, burn incense, they do penance and the list goes on and on. Yet in the end it has nothing, absolutely nothing to do with gaining salvation.

## **YOUR ANCESTORS CANNOT SAVE YOU.**

Not only are rituals powerless to save you, but your ancestry cannot save you. As John told the Jews, "Don't think that because you are descended from Abraham that you are going to be saved".

The Jews thought that they didn't have anything to fear from the wrath to come, because they were the children of Abraham. They thought that salvation was genetic! That it got passed down from one generation to another. And that is a false doctrine, and if you trust in your ancestry you will be damned.

God said this about ancestry:

*Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*

*Ezekiel 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

You have to come to the place if you want to truly repent where you don't base your relationship to God on any ritual or anything ancestral. It doesn't matter what your father believes or what your mother believes, their salvation doesn't pass to you. I don't think there are people who understand that. There's a whole world of Greek orthodox people, a whole world of Russian orthodox people who believe that salvation is generationally passed down. There are people in the Reform Movement, people in the Roman Catholic Church, who believe somehow that rites which they engaged in as infants passed salvation down from the parents to them. They actually think at infant baptism the parents' faith is counted for the salvation of the infant. My friends to come to repentance we must reject all these things. We must count all these things as dung.

#### **#4. REPENTANCE IS REVEALED BY YOUR WORKS.**

**Luke 3:8** *Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance*

How do we know our repentance is real? It is by our fruits. John is telling us that if the repentance is real it will show up in your conduct, it will show up in your behavior, it will show up in your life style. It will show up in your attitudes. It will show up in your actions. John wanted to see the fruit.

Some men may say that is 'works', that that isn't a part of the Gospel of Christ, but my friends it certainly is! Paul said that he preached this message to the Gentiles:

***“that they should repent and turn to God, and do works***

*meet for repentance.*” – Acts 26:20

If your repentance is real then let's see it manifest in your life. If your repentance is real then it is a work of God; God leads men to repentance and grants men repentance, and regenerates men at repentance. Where there is true salvational repentance there must also be regeneration, and regeneration is reflective in the new life and the new attitude and the new conduct of the one who believes.

The Jews understood this, just listen at what God said to them through Isaiah.

***“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”*** – Isaiah 1:16-17

You also have the call to repentance found in 2nd Chronicles 7:14 which reads: "If My people who are called by My name would humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways. Then I will hear from heaven and will heal their land."

It's when there's a turning. It's when there's a rejection of sin and there's a pursuit of righteousness that there is evidence of the real working of God.

One other passage along this line is Ezekiel 33:19 which reads: "When the wicked turns from his wickedness and

practices justice and righteousness, he will live."

And this is what John was preaching, this is what Paul was preaching! Notice the directions of John.

**Luke 3:10-14** *And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.*

True repentance is always shown in these things. Let's start from the bottom: There is contentment [content with wages], there is honesty [no false accusations], there is gentleness [no violence], there is equity [exacting no more], there is sympathy, and most of all there is love that is shown in our deeds [giving to the needy]. When God is doing the work of conversion, transformation, and regeneration, the repentance is going to show up in a changed life. Repentance is revealed in spiritual transformation.

## **#5. RECEPTION OF CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR.**



**Luke 3:15-16** *And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:*

So we have seen that in true repentance you find: #1. Realization of sin. #2. You realize the wrath of God. #3. You have a rejection of rituals and genealogy. #4. You have a changed life.

And yet there is one other thing missing. And the one thing missing is the fifth and final element in true repentance, which is: we must receive the true Messiah. We must receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Some men may say that we have the order reversed, that one must receive Christ before he can repent. Yet according to the Bible saving faith in Christ cannot be born without repentance.

Jesus said: *“repent ye, and believe the gospel.” – Mark 1:15*

Paul said: *“repent and turn to God”*. – Acts 26:20

Peter said: *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted”* – Acts 3:19

How can we receive Christ as Lord if we are bound and determined to reject his Lordship? How can we be saved from sin, if we are determined to continue in our sin? It isn't possible. Thus we must repent and trust in Christ.

Yet without Christ all the rest is insufficient. Without receiving Christ personally as Lord and Savior, the most moral life will be condemned as pure wickedness. There is but one name under heaven whereby men must be saved, and that is the name of Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life, and no man can come to the Father but through him.

Dear soul have you repented of your sins? Have you turned from your idols to trust the true and living God and to wait for his Son who shall come from heaven? Or have you simply mouthed a prayer, simply gone through a ritual, without ever having a heart transplant?

God wants you to turn to him in humility and brokenness over your sins, God wants you to turn from your sins and to ask Jesus to save you from them, to forgive you for them, and to come and abide in your heart. Will you do that? If you will escape the wrath to come, then you must.

SINCERELY

**Pastor Martin Bledsoe**

