

Zahakiel: Let's begin. Pastor, please offer an opening prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Heavenly Father we thank You for this sacred time created for our communion with Heaven. May Your Spirit attend us with inspiration as we praise Your holy name. In Yahshua's name we pray, Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Barb: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Elyna: Amen

Kim: Amen

Marie: Amen

Zahakiel: Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight I would like to talk about why people change their behavior; that is, the reasons why someone who once did evil things may begin to do good ones instead. The three main factors that contribute to this each begin with an "R," and so I am calling this study "Regret, Remorse, and Repentance."

The Scriptures speak of each of these concepts, although translation conventions and the ages at which the text was rendered into English leads to different words being used in some cases. In a few passages, one of these words is used when another of them would be more appropriate for the meaning being conveyed.

The word "repentance" in particular may be used for any of the three, and it is the context that must be used to determine the distinctions that we would find valuable. One clear example of this is this lead-up to the Flood, of which we read,

"And Yahweh saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented Yahweh that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." (Gen 6:5, 6)

Because of the way we have come to understand the concept of repentance in a sanctified context, this verse clearly means that Yah felt "regret" about mankind's actions, and His creation of them. Even this is just an approximation in human language, of course, because if Yah had truly changed His mind, or felt that He had erred in the creation of mankind, then this would conflict with our understanding of His divine nature with regard to foreknowledge.

To that end, another passage tells us, "Elohim is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? (Num 23:19)

We see that "repent" is being used in two different ways, with the Numbers passage closer to how we would use it today, and the one in Genesis an indication of disapproval, a response to the circumstance of mankind's fallen state, rather than the outworking of a principle. There is also the fact that we are still here, when He would simply have unmade humanity at that point if He had truly "repented" of His creation of Adam.

The first of our "R's," then, is Regret.

As the passage in Genesis makes clear, when this word or its equivalent is used, it means an emotional response to making a mistake or finding one's self in an unpleasant situation. It is a reaction to the realization that things did not go as intended. Regret may not alter behavior, and even if it does, the change may not be for any spiritually significant purpose.

Let's look at some examples of this reaction. We read:

"And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that Elohim led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for Elohim said, 'Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.'" (Exo 13:17)

"Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god; their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips." (Psalm 16:4)

Here we find that "repent" and "sorrows" are used in precisely the same way. They speak of the dislike of difficulty or punishment. The Israelites, should they be attacked on the way out of Egypt, might wish they had never left, not because it was more praiseworthy to remain a slave, but because of the difficulty of obtaining their freedom.

Likewise, an idolater who is judged by Yah does not suddenly come to love His Law and character, neither is he sorry for the example he has set before his community, family, and friends; rather, his sorrow is based upon the reality of his punishment, upon the Creator's rejection of his soul. Thieves and murderers may experience regret when they are caught and punished for their actions, but this does not mean they have a true sense of their sin.

Some may, of course, but those who simply regret being caught, or the mistakes they made that led to their apprehension, feel no weight of their impact on society, and little if any sympathy for their victims. Those who are ultimately lost in the judgment will be shown the consequences of their sinful nature, that is true... and they will not be able to deny the justice of their condemnation; however, if this revelation led to real repentance, if its knowledge could genuinely convert them and save them for Heaven at even that late stage, then the lake of fire would be entirely empty of human beings.

Unfortunately, this is not the case... even though the unredeemed will feel the weight of their transgressions against the law, at most they will feel regret, but will have no

opportunity or true desire to apply the sacrifice of Yahshua to their redemption. As it is written, "Behold, now is the day of salvation." (2Cor 6:2)

Now is the opportunity for the sinner to repent, and for those who have resisted the covenant of salvation to draw near, to be joined to the Commonwealth of Israel, the little company of those who overcome sin and self with Elohim, the Almighty One. If one hears the word of salvation, and begins to understand the demands of righteousness, but merely regrets, and says something like the popular, "I am not where I need to be, but at least I am not where I used to be," then he remains a stranger to the infinite power to save that the Father has given us through the Son.

The second "R" is Remorse.

We read, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, 'What have I done?' Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle." (Jer 8:6)

Here is Yah looking for something more than regret from sinners. This usage of the word "repented" does not necessarily depend upon punishment, but rather a change of mind based on understanding the consequences of the transgression. While it is not sufficient for conversion on its own, it is more virtuous than mere regret, because it is a reaction to the action itself, and perhaps the violated principle, rather than merely its consequences.

At times remorse strikes when the punishment is applied, and as such might not be distinguishable outwardly from regret, but remorse is based on a different motive.

Here is another familiar example: "Now when they heard [the preaching about Yahshua], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37)

Peter's sermon on that day did not speak of hellfire, or judgment, or condemnation. Instead, in a wonderful display of holy power, he spoke of the nature of Christ Yahshua, as the Son of Yahweh sent to bring salvation and hope. He spoke of this loving Messenger being taken, and crucified by unmerciful hands, and it was not the fear of punishment, but rather a true sense of guilt, a conviction from the Holy Spirit that they had become corporately accountable for the actions of the leaders whom they supported with their time, tithe, obedience, and respect.

Peter's sermon gives to us a template for speaking to an audience that has some chance to hear the voice of Yah. There are times when it is necessary to speak of Yah's anger, of His judgment and wrath. Indeed, the Third Angel of Revelation bears a vital portion of the Everlasting Gospel, but here, among those who had been faithful to what they had known,

it was sufficient only to educate them, and they experienced genuine remorse for the way that the Heir to the Vineyard had been mistreated.

"Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." (Jer 31:19)

Here again we see remorse arising as a result of instruction. For those being sanctified, there is never any need for regret – regret by itself is an impotent emotion that has no power to change the heart.

When errors in judgment are revealed, however... when a saint comes to understand that a thought or action has not been according to Yah's perfect will, remorse may arise, which will then give way to repentance, our third and final "R."

I say "give way," because while remorse is a more spiritually significant reaction than regret, there are some who may feel remorse and yet make no change. They may struggle with conviction for a time, and shrug it off, failing to bring it to true repentance.

In this generation, some have heard the Gospel from its messengers. They have heard, and seen from the Scriptures, and understood from the Holy Spirit, that Yahshua the Messiah offers them a life of victory over sin. They have heard, and seen from the Scriptures, and understood from the Holy Spirit, that there is a Church, a little Church atop spiritual Zion, calling out in the voice of Moses and the Lamb, "Who is on Yahweh's side? Let him come unto me." (Exo 32:26)

And yet, while the conviction weighs upon them, they seek an escape other than through the Narrow Way. They go to their priests and pastors, and ask, "Can these things be true?" Inspiration has revealed to us that these leaders, fearing loss of influence and Yah's judgment in their own right, calm the concerns of those who come to them for advice regarding their soul's eternal destiny, and soothe conscience back to sleep. They will have a part in the judgment of those whom they deceive, in addition to their own just reward.

But let us now speak of Repentance, the third and final "R," the last of the reactions.

Repentance is the kind of "sorrow" that Paul speaks of in this verse:

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (2Cor 7:10)

The sorrow of the world is merely regret, or remorse that does not grasp Yah's promises of forgiveness and restoration. It is natural to "feel bad" for transgression if one has any spiritual life within, but it is the saint, the child of Yah's covenant, that can be purged of both the sin, and the guilt of that sin, and experience the joy of true salvation. It is the

genuine, born-again, spirit-filled Christian that has cause for rejoicing even when shown a spiritual fault, for he knows that it is Yah's love that has revealed it. It is not because he is being rejected, but because his Father is saying to him, "Come up higher. Come up closer to my Throne."

We read of Nineveh, the city to which the prophet Jonah was sent with a message of warning:

"And Elohim saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and Elohim repented of the evil, that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not." (Jonah 3:10)

Yahshua references this passage here: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a Greater than Jonas is here." (Mat 12:41)

This is repentance as we have come to understand it through the lens of Christ and His ministry. It is not merely a dislike of punishment, nor a sorrow for wrongdoing. It may begin as the latter of these (and for some, as the first) but it is then mixed with faith in Yahshua's promises.

Remember, the process of conversion is repentance, then faith, then baptism. Repentance that does not become faith is ineffective, just as faith that does not lead to baptism falls short of Yah's plan. Attempting to turn away from sin by one's own power rarely lasts very long, and even if it does, it is merely the behavior that is arrested. The guilt remains, and the sin continues to contaminate the soul and character in less apparent ways.

Paul speaks again of genuine repentance, of this "godly sorrow."

We read: "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2Cor 7:11)

Repentance allows Yah to render us "clear" in the matter of our sins.

A similar idea is expressed by John when he wrote, "If we confess our sins, [Yah] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1John 1:9)

Cleansed, cleared, redeemed, restored, atoned... these are words dear to our Father's heart, and they are what He does for us when we repent, when we turn away from sin with perfect faith that He will preserve us in righteousness. Unity in this righteousness is Yah's ultimate goal for His people.

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: He does not desire that those who would be His people remain separated from one another. He seeks a single, saintly people, led by one Angel, bearing His name, through the wilderness as they seek their heavenly home. This is the day of salvation, the day of the spiritual Exodus, but only those who repent of their bondage in Egypt, not merely feeling sorry that they are there, but those who stand, break their chains, and come forth to walk with those who are departing... only these will be led by the Third Angel of Revelation 14, and will be found following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

May the saints rejoice in the knowledge of these things, and may all who are struggling with conscience, and facing a decision to unite in covenant relationship with Yah and His people, "Repent," and receive the fullness of Yah's promises, "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Mat 4:17)

May this indeed be the day of salvation for those who hear and read these words. Are there any comments or questions about the study tonight?

Adriel777: Amen

If there are none, then I'll ask Bro. Luke to offer a closing prayer.

Lucan: Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for the gift of repentance, and the blotting out of sins. We thank you that you have taken from our lips the excuses that constitute false gods. And, have delivered us from bondage into the power and victory of your Son. May your Spirit be with us as we testify to your victory in name and in life. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Elyna: Amen.

daphna dee: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Kim: Amen