

Repentance and Baptism

The Door

Introduction

We have been discussing the coming kingdom, knowing that this is the Kingdom of God, and it was forged by God's great love. We saw that the human family was expelled from this kingdom, doomed to death. No creature can have eternal life outside of this kingdom. So, God made a way for the human race to be reconciled to this kingdom through Jesus Christ. He paid the penalty for rebellion against the kingdom of God. But as a man he also lived out its law perfectly so that as a man He could represent all mankind before the perfect law of that kingdom, which was its condition for being an inhabitant.

We looked at how Jesus took our sin and imputed (or accredited) his perfect life before the law of that kingdom on our behalf so that we may be reconnected to God's Kingdom.

Provisions have been made for the human race to re-enter God's Kingdom now. When that kingdom physically shows up, we will have a room with our name already waiting for us. He has promised He will come again. "That where I am you may be also."

Enter Through the Door

To be part of this coming kingdom, the three Angel's Messages are preparing us. We must enter through "The Door."

Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 1The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. John 10: 6-10

The world is fascinated with the idea of doors, portals, mystical openings in which we enter into a new world. Jesus says, "I am the door and you must enter into this door if we are to have eternal life."

More than eternal life, through the door is a new life.

So how do we enter through this door that is called Christ? Jesus made it clear to someone else seeking the same answer 2000 years ago. When a Pharisee by the name of Nicodemus came to him one night and started a conversation with Jesus about the mighty signs that Jesus was doing, Jesus cut right to the chase.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3

To enter the Kingdom of God we must be born again.

I saw a bumper sticker that said, "Born OK the first time." But is this true?

having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, 1 Peter 1:23

We were born of the loins of Adam and out of him came the entire human race. And from him comes nothing but death because of sin.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned Romans 5: 12

For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Romans 5: 17-19

So Jesus says we need rebirth. Nicodemus was confused.

Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' John 3:4-7

Jesus is telling him this being born again is being born of the spirit. His is a spiritual rebirth. So what does it mean to be born of the spirit?

Of the Water and the Spirit

Water baptism is a symbol of entering into God's kingdom by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1: 12-13

Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. John 1: 24-26

I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' John 1: 33

But this is not some sort of magical rite. The act of baptism is symbolizing a heart's decision.

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:1-4

The Tragedy of Baptism

Baptism is a burial and a funeral. It is death to self. A death to an old life. It is recognition that we are dead in the first Adam and have been living like dead men live. We want to be dead to the old man.

knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Romans 6:6

Before there can be a rebirth there must be a death. A spiritual funeral stating to the world that the intent of my heart is to be buried with Christ in baptism.

It is a renunciation of the old man and his sinful ways.

But it means more than just dying to the old man and dying to the world. It is more profound when relating to the everlasting gospel in the Three Angel's messages.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. Galatians 2:20

Baptism is a proclaiming that you have imputed your sentence of death to Christ and this way, you have been crucified with him. This means that the penalty of death has been satisfied in Christ. In the judgment when the law demands death, Jesus says it has been satisfied because He has been crucified with me.

What comes after spiritual death? The life we live now, we live by faith in the Son of God. In that judgment, the law is also going to be looking for a perfect obedience that will endure the scrutiny of the law down to the jot and tittle.

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Matthew 5:18

In the judgment we are covered with the robe of His righteousness. That answers all the demands of the law.

That is what baptism is proclaiming. That is why we must enter through the door.

That righteousness covers us at baptism and can now be imparted to me. We are resurrected into a newness of life and now live by the spirit.

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:1

This is why the WAY we baptize is so important. It is a symbol of an internal decision of the heart. It demonstrates that one understands the demand of the gospel in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Water is a symbol of the grave. Eyes close and breathing stops. One now becomes figuratively dead, but then he is raised out of the water. The eyes open, the lungs breathe in that first breath of air. It is a symbol of the new birth.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Genesis 2:7

This is Jesus' point to Nicodemus.

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:8

God breathes into us a new life.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Paul says the sin of the old man, the sinful habits, the old life of mistakes has no power over you because you have a new power operating in you. You can live a different life than ever before.

Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:11

The real baptism is the power from God that allows you to finally stop fighting with your spouse, to finally be the kind of parent to your children. It is the power to be that friendly and benevolent neighbor and coworker. It is the power of God to finally overcome the addictions of life. The sins that brought you nothing but misery and suffering can be overcome.

Your sins can be washed away. The sin that has shut you out of God's kingdom, the sin that has identified you with Adam, the sin that you are ashamed of can be removed.

But there is a condition. This condition is central to the idea of baptism. Baptism is nothing more than expression of repentance.

Repentance

Repentance is a conditional step if baptism is to be legitimate. It is the prerequisite for the forgiveness of sins.

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:38

Repentance is the same as dying to self. It is just a more detailed idea of dying to self. The word for Repentance is an old English word that means "to stop." In Greek it is a compound word that means "with the mind."

The idea is to stop sinning. But there must be an understanding of the mind about what we are to repent of!

It is the job of the Holy Spirit to convict you of what sin God wants you to stop or what right thing He wants you to do and when you are convicted, you repent. Meaning you stop.

And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: John 16:8

But repentance is more than just stopping. It is also confession.

He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Proverbs 28: 13

In the Old Testament, sin was transferred to the animal by confession of that sin. The same way, when we sin, we make confession of that sin to Jesus. That sin is transferred from us to Him.

For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:10

The death-to-self concept is inherent within repentance and confession. When one repents of a sin, it must be with the intentions of not returning to it. This is repentance that heals. Not like the sorrow of the world that once the consequence passes, we go back to it, and it destroys our life.

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11

Repentance must be genuine. You have to really want to turn from sin before your confession can be accepted before God. What do you do if you don't feel repentant?

in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, 2 Timothy 2:25

Repentance is a gift from God. When you make the decision to be baptized, to die to self, you are buried beneath those waters and come up as a new creation with a new power operating within you. Now the holy spirit has permission to begin conviction, digging around and it is His job to lead you to true repentance from the heart.

This is why baptism of the Holy Spirit is so important and why it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of heaven without it.

This is the door. This is the union with Christ. This is entering into the door of the sheep pen. In Steps to Christ, Ellen White says:

"A repentance such as this, is beyond the reach of our own power to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high and has given gifts unto men... we can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ" SC 24.3

Baptism is opening the door. It is an invitation to the Holy Spirit to lead you into deepening your repentance. It is accepting what He has already shown you and the convictions you already feel. Your thoughts of need, salvation, forgiveness and judgment are all the world of the spirit on your heart. Baptism is accepting and surrendering to Jesus Christ. It is accepting his death as your death. It is accepting His life as your life. It is giving Jesus permission to stand in your place in the judgment. Baptism is death to the world. It is the desire to live now for Jesus with a new life.

So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And

he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Acts 8: 27-38

With such blessings as this, what hinders you from being baptized? Do you believe? Now you know what it is that is meant by baptism.

Maybe you were baptized as a child 30 years ago. Or you didn't really know what it was about. You can be rebaptized.

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Acts 19: 1-5

Giving God Glory

This is the condition that the First Angel's Message is calling the world to.

saying with a loud voice, "Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water." Revelation 14:7

The phrase "Give Glory to God" does not mean just simply say with some kind of emotion, "God I give you glory." But giving God Glory has always meant one specific thing as it relates to HOW we give him glory.

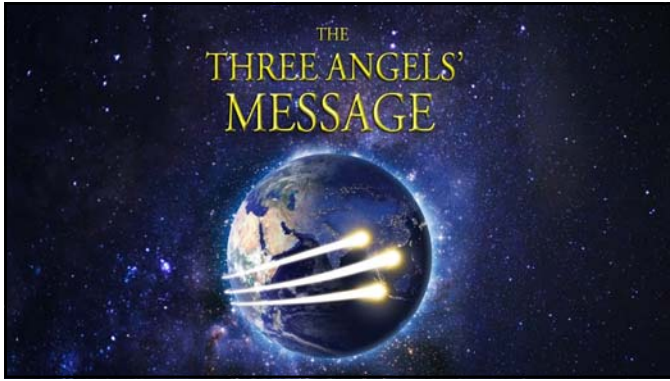
Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me." Joshua 7:19

Giving God glory is the act of making confession to Him. It is acknowledging that you are guilty as charged and deserving of the punishment that is due to you. What could bring greater glory to God than your baptism?

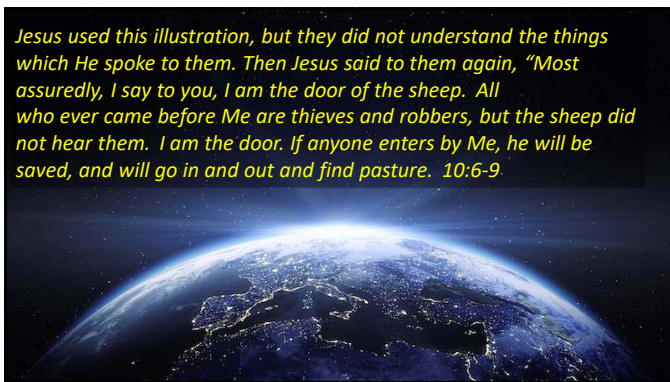
Why are you urged to give God glory, confess and repent? Because it is the hour of His judgment. The books of records are being examined. The Lord is determining who has laid hold of the Everlasting Gospel.

They are looking at who has confessed their sin and laid hold of the righteousness imputed to them. Who, by faith, has laid their transgressions on the lamb of God. Who, by faith, has been cut loose from the old Adam, died to their old man and been raised into new life where they are new creations in Christ. Who, by faith, allowed the Holy Spirit to recreate them and like David of old, had that broken and contrite heart.

Do you want to enter through the door?



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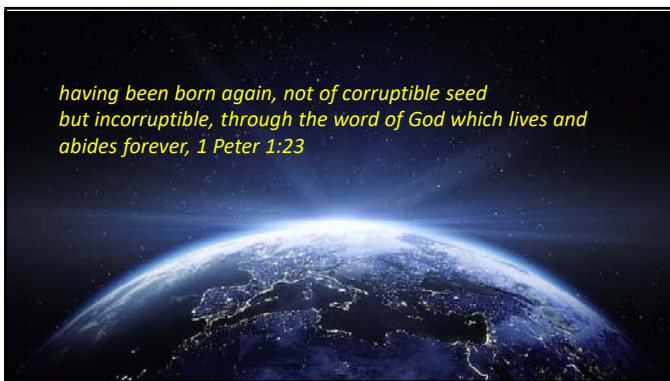


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John 3:3*

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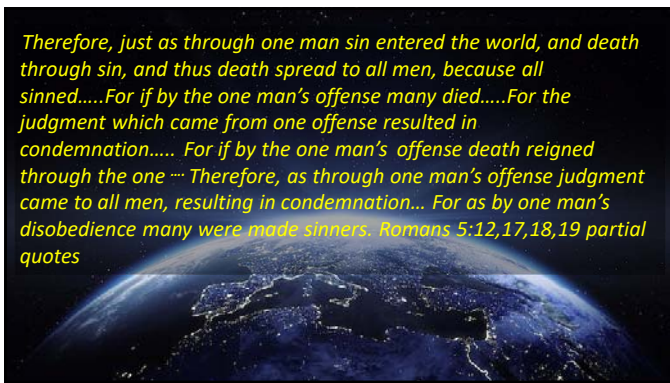


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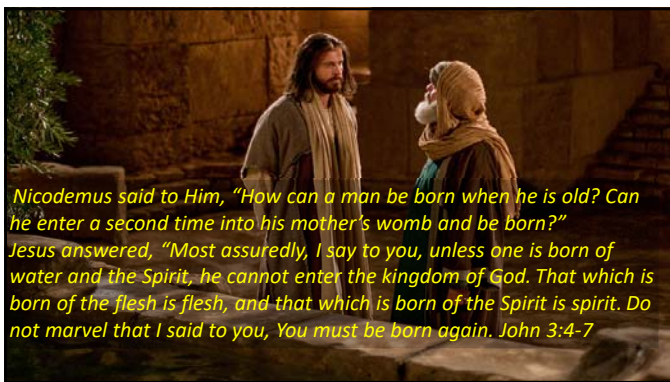
having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, 1 Peter 1:23

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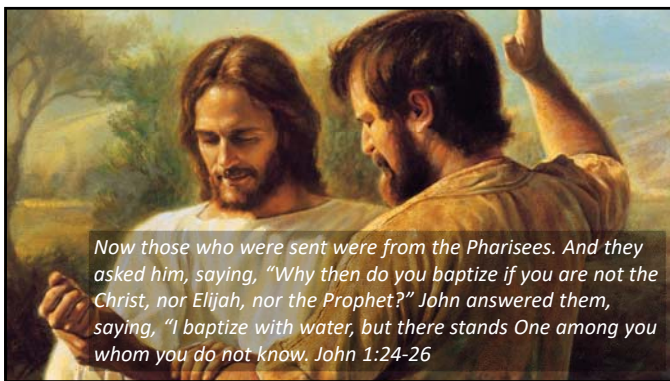
Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.....For if by the one man's offense many died.....For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation..... For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one ... Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation... For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. Romans 5:12,17,18,19 partial quotes

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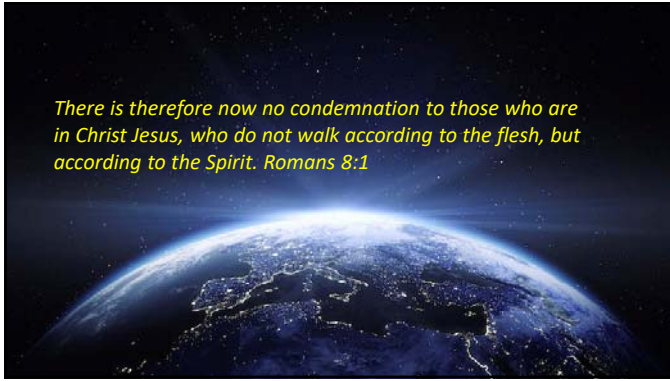
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knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. Romans 6:6

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Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4

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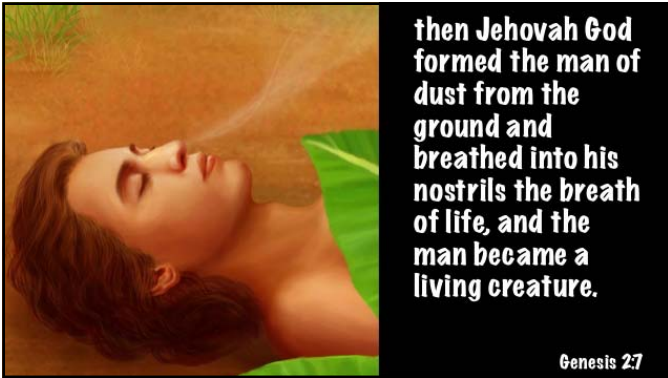
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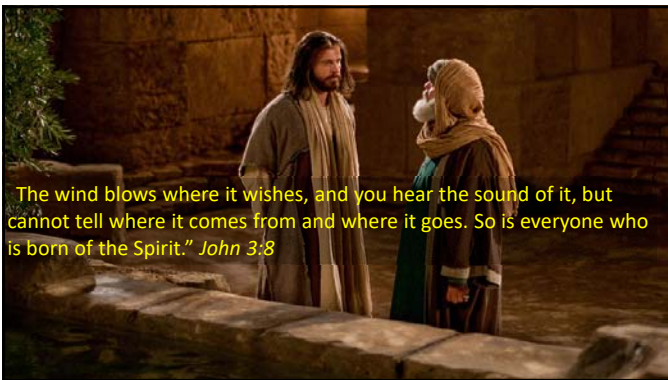
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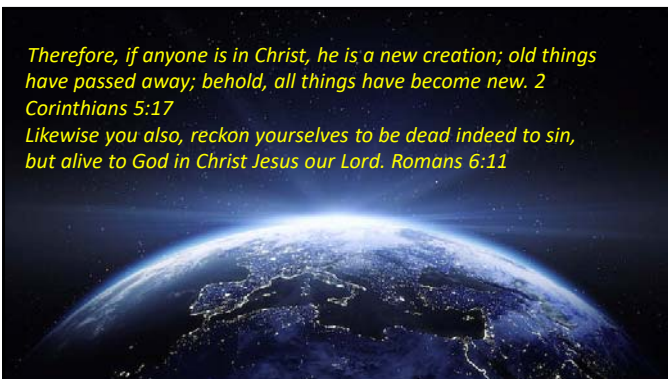
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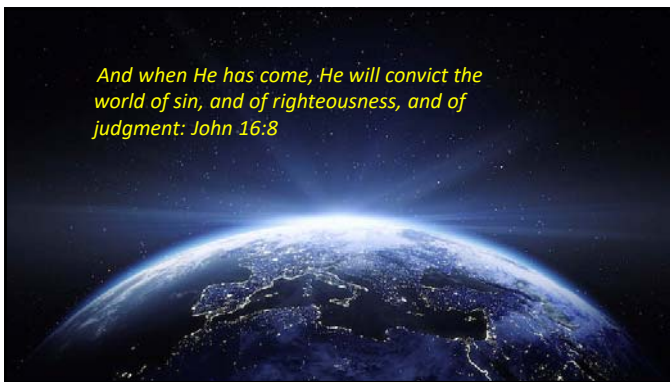
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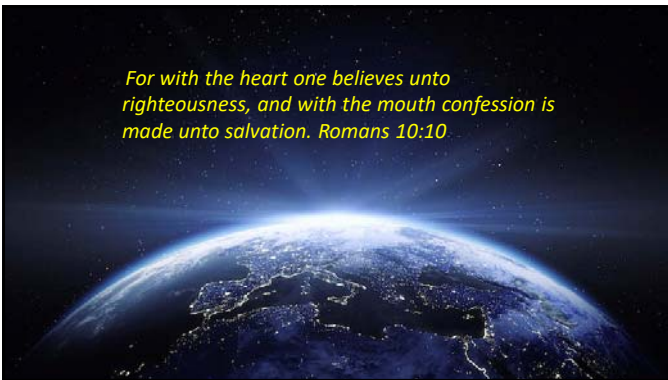
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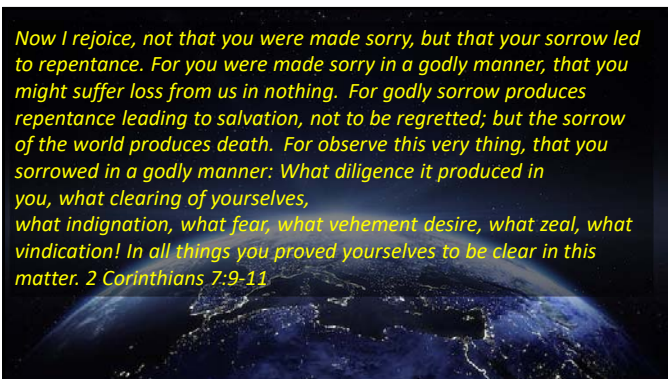


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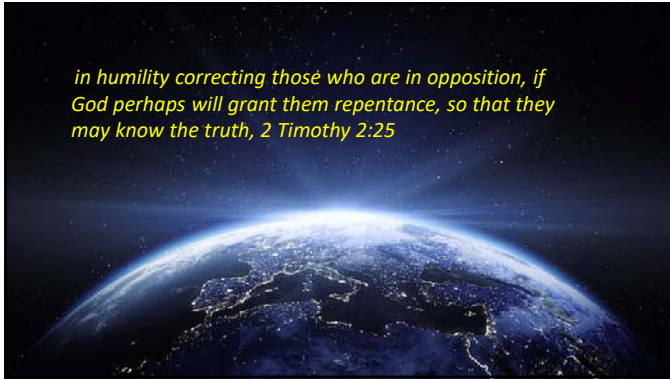
For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:10

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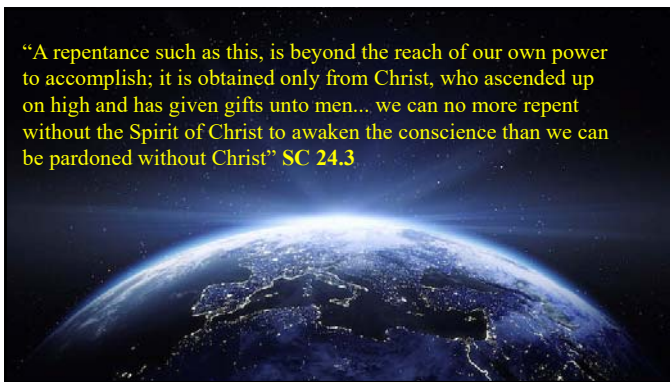


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