

**CONVERSION (1):
REPENTANCE**

歸信(上):悔改



John 約翰福音 3:14-16

Maryland Gospel Church 馬利蘭福音教會 8-15-21

約翰福音 三：14 - 16



14 摩西在曠野怎樣舉蛇、人子也必照樣被舉起來。

15 叫一切信他的都得永生。

16 神愛世人、甚至將他的獨生子賜給他們、叫一切信他的、不至滅亡、反得永生。



John 3 : 14 - 16



14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

15 that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only
begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should
not perish but have eternal life.



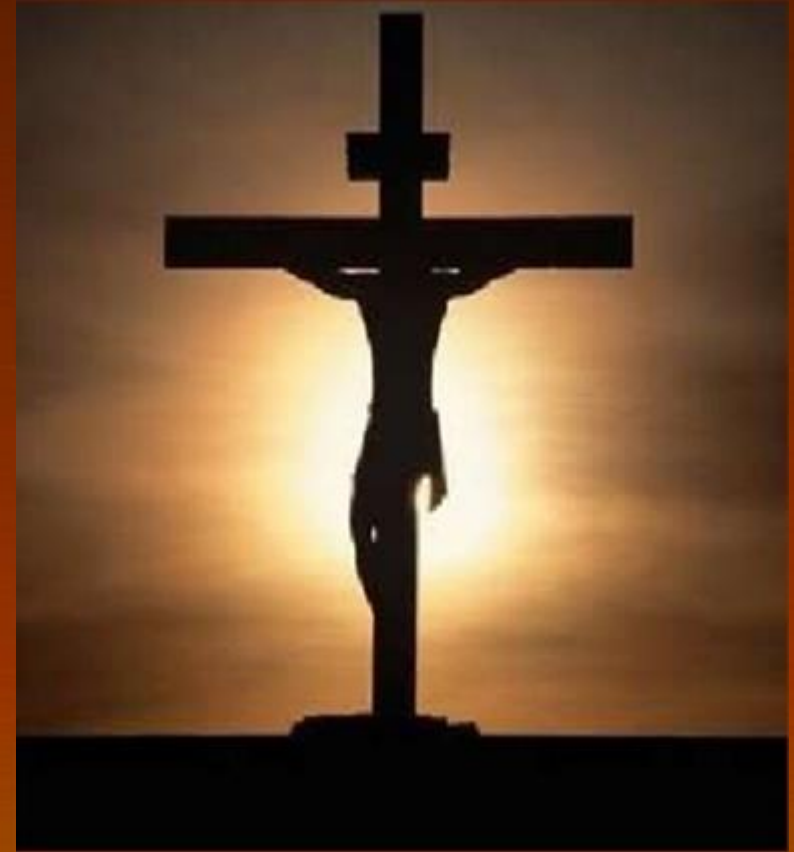
The Metaphor in an Old Testament Story

一個舊約故事中的隱喻

Numbers 民數記 21: 4-9



John 約翰福音 3: 14 - 16



Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert , so the Son of Man **MUST** be lifted up. 摩西在曠野怎樣舉蛇、人子也**必**照樣被舉起來

The Story in Numbers 21: 4-9

The curse

The Israelites sinned against God and caused God to send fiery serpents with deadly venom among them; the snakes bit the people and many Israelites died.

Repentance

The people acknowledged their sins and pleaded with the LORD to send the serpents away.

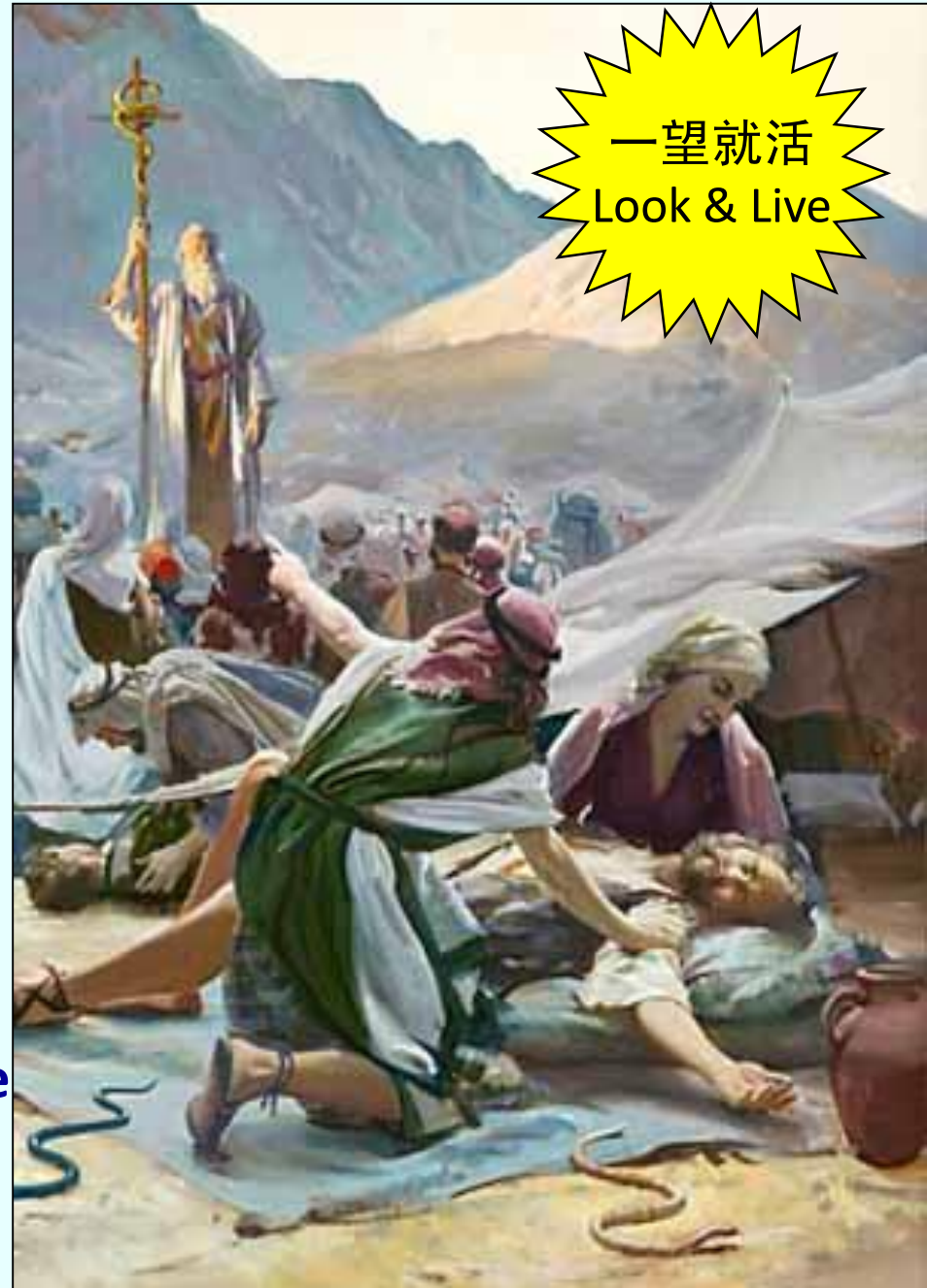
The Remedy

The LORD had mercy on them and devised a remedy to save them. He instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and raise it up on a pole.

Faith

Anyone bitten by the snakes and **LOOK**ed at the bronze snake would be healed and lived.

It seems silly that a **LOOK** at a bronze snake would cure & save life; but trusting God's word & faith in His means of cure is the only way to live



一望就活
Look & Live

Metaphor of the Story in Numbers 民數記 21: 4-9 故事的隱喻

The curse Mankind and the whole creation are under curse ever since sin entered the world thru the serpent's (Satan) temptation of Adam & Eve. Sin is like the venom of those fiery serpents that lead to death (both physical & spiritual) and afterlife punishment in hell.

The Remedy

God so loved the world (mankind) that He sent His only Son Jesus to become man, sacrificed His sinless life as an atonement for man's sins to pay off our debts & declare us "not guilty & owe no debt" to God

Repentance & faith (conversion)

God's salvation for man is free but can only be appropriated thru our repentance & faith in our only savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

Like the Israelites, if we turn our eyes upon Jesus who was lifted up and hung on the cross to die for us, we would be saved thru that "**LOOK** of faith"



But people won't accept Jesus as their savior and God's simple free Salvation. They won't **TRULY** believe and repent

They are dead in sin and irresponsible to God

They are blind & cannot see the gospel light

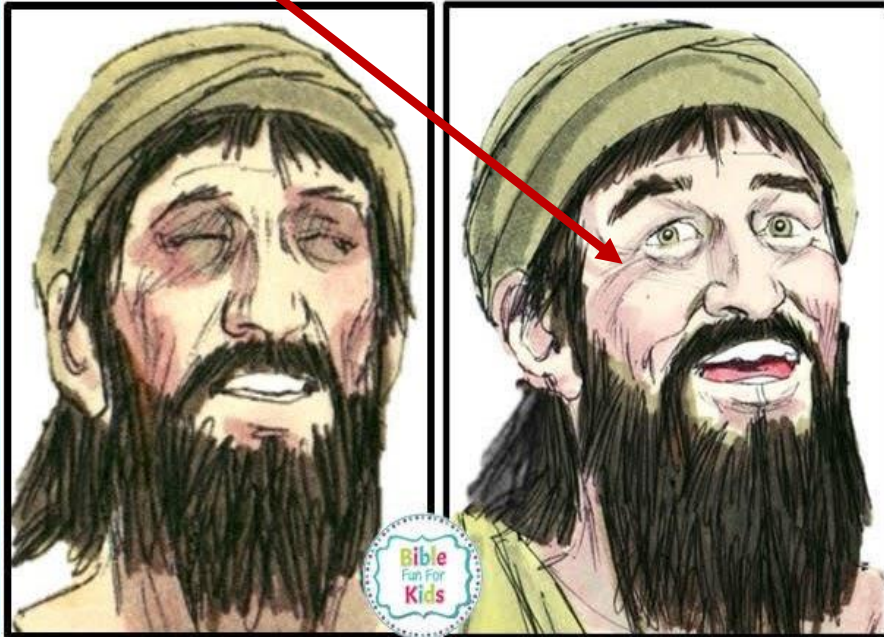
They need help. They need to be raised from the dead and have their eyesight restored



People have to be made alive in Christ to be responsive, to repent and believe (Eph 弗 2: 1-6)

The dead need **“REGENERATION”**, or to be **born again** by the Holy Spirit

Was blind but **now can see**



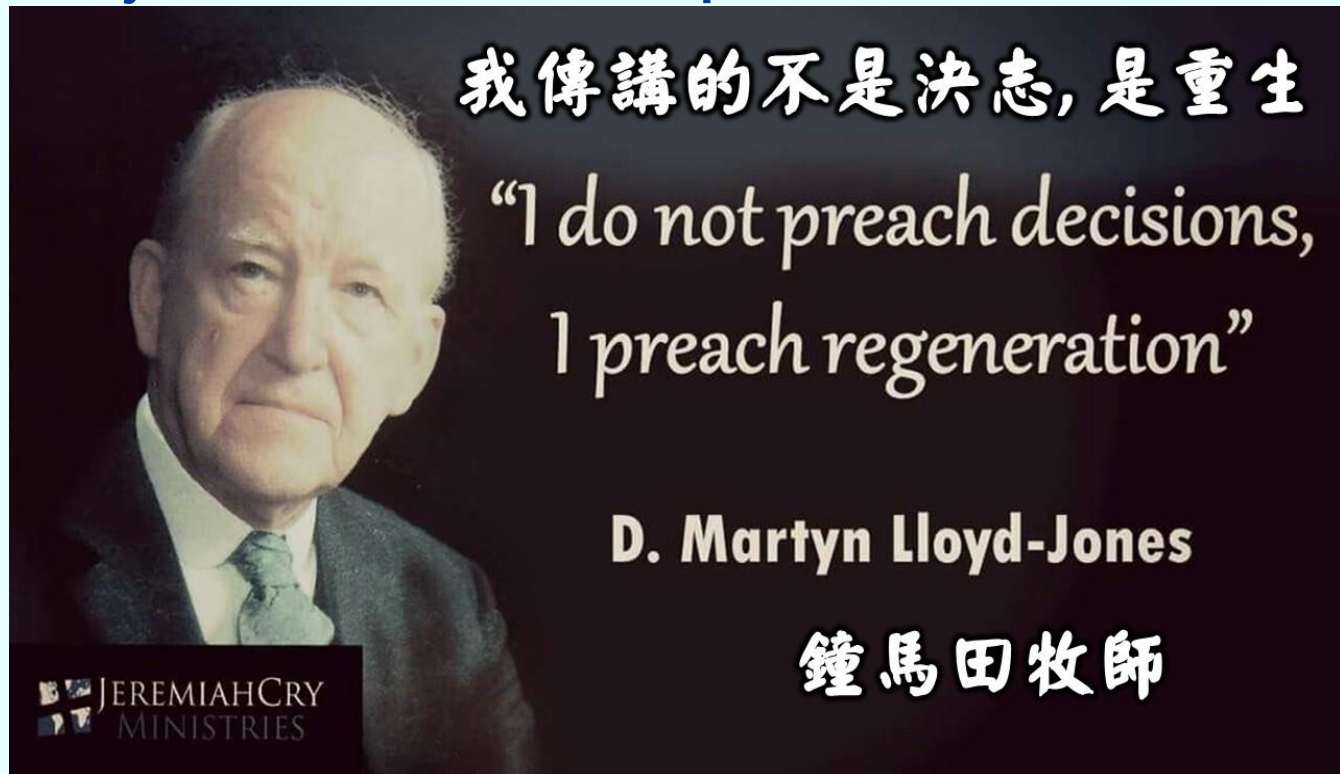
The **MUST** of Regeneration 重生的必要

This is why “Regeneration” is so critically important. Jesus treated the subject of regeneration very seriously. He said :“Truly, truly I tell you, unless one is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” Also He said: “you **MUST** be born again” (John 約 3: 3,5,7)

There is **another MUST** in John 3:14 Jesus **MUST** be lifted up (on the cross)). **MUST** in original Greek – **a necessity, no alternative, no options.**

That’s also why I preached on regeneration last time. Today I am continuing with the subject of God’s salvation processes down the road

Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones, the renowned British preacher in the last century said :



我傳講的不是決志, 是重生

“I do not preach decisions,
I preach regeneration”

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

鐘馬田牧師

4 categories of believers in the church

教會裏四類信徒

(Pastor Ming Tao Wang 王明道牧師)

1 – Those who understand what born again means and they are very sure and clear they have been born again. (**the confident**)

2 – Those who don't understand what born again means and not sure they have been born again when actually they have been born again. (**the fuzzy**)

3 – Those who understand what born again means and think they have been born again when they actually haven't been born again. (**the self-deceivers**)

4 – Those who don't understand what born again means & they haven't been born again & they don't care. (**the careless**)

Which category do you belong to?

John 3:1-16 showed us 3 of 8 processes in God's salvation program



God's Calling
神的召喚

Regeneration
重生

Conversion { 悔改 Repentance
歸信 } 相信 Faith

John 約 3:2

John 約 3:3-13

John 約 3:14-16

So the next step after regeneration is conversion

Many people get confused about regeneration & conversion. When they give their testimonies, they often say, "I was born again on such a date and year".

That person was actually testifying to a conversion experience. They may have been regenerated earlier than that but only became aware of their state of conversion at a later time.

Many believers are very unclear about regeneration & conversion

Conversion Different from Regeneration

歸信有別於重生

Regeneration 重生

Impartation of spiritual life by God
神賜予屬靈的新生命

Involves God's creation
涉及神的創造

Makes one a child of God
使人成為神的兒女

The condition for conversion
重生是歸信的因素

Man is passive in the process
人在其中是被動的

Irresistible by man
人不可抗拒

Complete in each child of God
是神在祂兒女中完成了的工

Conversion 歸信

Manifestation of God's given
spiritual life 彰顯神賜的屬靈生命

Involves man's conviction
涉及人的信服

Manifests one as a child of God.
彰顯人是神的兒女

The evidence of regeneration.
歸信是重生的証據

Man participates in the process .
人在其中有參與的角色

Resistible by man
人可以抗拒

Variously partial in each man
完成的部份因人而異

Regeneration and Conversion

重生與歸信

Regeneration and Conversion are extremely important. As Michael Lawrence (pastor & author) pointed out Regeneration and Conversion are **the processes God creates His people.**

Many “believers” just have a notion of God, but have no personal relationship with Him. 許多“信徒”只是對神有一個概念，但沒有和神的個人關係。

Some other believers regularly read the Bible, do devotions and may even serve in the church, but their relationship with God is limited to the physical, intellectual and emotional levels.

As a pastor, Michael Lawrence shares the concerns of many parents in his church about their grown up children.

These young adults were brought up in church and Christian homes and they are “nice kids”; they are extremely successful in school and they have good relationships with family members & peers.

They don’t do “partying”; they have good moral behaviors; they regularly attend church even after college; some even serve in church. If you were their parents, you would be very proud of them.

Regeneration and Conversion

重生與歸信

So what is the problem? And what are the parents worrying about?

The parents noticed that their children **basically left Jesus behind**. The children are convinced **“they already have Jesus”**.

They didn't abandon the name of “Christian.” They simply stopped showing interest in the Christian life.

As these parents watch their children's adult lives unfold, the less and less confident that their children even **know Jesus at all**.
(know = have personal relationship with Jesus)

Pastor Michael sees **the problem**. These church grown ups are **“nice” but they are not “new”**, namely they are **not regenerated and converted**.

Pastor Michael also realized the problem came from the church's theology, particularly in regeneration and conversion, and how that theology was practiced.

[Conversion] by Michael Lawrence

[歸 信] - 迈克尔.劳伦斯 著

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CONVERSION

HOW
GOD CREATES
A PEOPLE

健康教會九標誌

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IX 9Marks 建造健康教會

CONVERSION

归 信

神如何招聚
祂的百姓

It is extremely important to get
our theology right.

正確的神學觀念極其重要

MICHAEL LAWRENCE

邁克爾.勞倫斯 Michael Lawrence 著
王飛雪 譯

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- Conclusion 结论

Book Review : [Conversion] by Michael Lawrence

書評：[歸信] - 勞倫斯著

“Conversion is essential and misunderstood, Lawrence understands this. With theological precision, but with plain and accessible language, Lawrence guides us through the Scriptures to help us understand what true conversion is and explains what the Bible teaches about conversion, simply and compellingly. “

“歸信極其重要，卻常常遭人誤解。勞倫斯明白這一點。勞倫斯以其準確的神學理解和平實、易懂的語言，引導我們通過聖經了解什麼是真正的歸信，他簡單而有說服力地解釋聖經有關歸信的教導。”

“Real conversion is not just being ‘nice’ on the outside, nor does it depend on a decision made once years ago. True conversion is nothing less than regeneration, new creation, and new life in Christ.”

真正的歸信並非徒有“不錯”的外在表現，也不是依靠多年前做過的一個決志。真正的歸信就是在基督裡重生，成為新造的人、擁有新的生命。

Book Review : [Conversion] by Michael Lawrence

書評：[歸信] - 勞倫斯著

“Lawrence hits the nail on the head when it comes to the conversion experience. Being born again is not the result of a superficial, emotional, and man-motivated prayer. Conversion is a divine work from beginning to end.”

“勞倫斯一語擊中：重生並非膚淺的、情緒化的或出於人意的禱告結果。歸信從頭到尾都是出於神的工作。”

Conversion begins with God (regeneration) and bears fruit in men (repentance and faith)

Conversion requires repentance, and repentance requires the work of the Holy Spirit.

歸信是由神開始(使人重生), 並在人身上結出果子(悔改和信心)。歸信需要悔改, 而悔改需要聖靈的工作。

You may buy this book from [Amazon](#) or [Crossway](#)

「归信」中文简体版可在以下网址阅读: [「归信 \(中文简体版\)」](#)



YouTube



Biblical Understanding of **Conversion**

聖經中的「歸信」

【歸信 - 健康教會九標誌 - 四】4. Conversion (9Marks)



0:04 / 2:35

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFt7D-ekHNY>

What is Conversion ?

什麼是歸信？

The short definition of conversion is :

It is a U turn back to God



Come back !
Come back !
回來吧 !
回來吧 !



Jesus, here
I come, I come
耶穌，
我來，我來

Repentance & Faith

悔改與信心

Conversion is that voluntary change in the mind of the sinner, in which he turns, on the one hand, from sin, and on the other hand, to Christ.

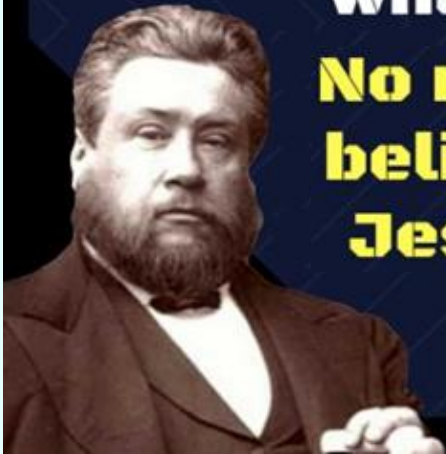
The former or negative element in conversion, namely, **the turning from sin, we call repentance.**

The latter or positive element in conversion, namely **the turning to Christ, we call faith.**

Faith & Repentance are born as twins (悔改和相信是雙胞胎)

Faith and repentance are born together, live together and thrive together. Let no man put asunder what God has joined together.

No man can repent of sin without believing in Jesus, nor believe in Jesus without repenting of sin.



C.H. Spurgeon

司布真

Every coin
has two sides:

Conversion is just like
a coin, it also has 2
sides. On one side is
repentance and on
the other is **faith**.



The apostle Paul articulate (清楚說明) just that in Acts 20:21 :

“I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must
turn to God in repentance and have **faith in our Lord Jesus**”

“(我)又對猶太人、和希利尼人、證明當**向神悔改**、**信靠我主耶穌基督**。”

Unfortunately, there has been a misunderstanding of the doctrine of conversion among many who called themselves “Evangelical Christians”. They attempt to separate repentance from faith and even to say that repentance has nothing to do with saving faith.

Ex.: Zane C. Hodges (1932 – 2008) in his "Free Grace theology" holds the view that eternal life is received as a free gift only through faith in Jesus Christ for eternal life and it need not necessarily result in repentance or good works; therefore, one need not preach repentance when preaching the message of salvation. This sounds “Biblical” to naive Christians when they first hear it.

However the proper meaning of Biblical faith includes and even presupposes repentance. When the apostles taught the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, they had in mind a repentant faith.

Famous contemporary theologian Wayne Grudem (古德恩) defines conversion as “our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation” (Systematic Theology, p. 1238).

Nowadays, more and more theologians and church leaders **advocate that sin should not be emphasized** when preaching the gospel, **or even to be mentioned at all**. For example, The former president of Hong Kong's Alliance Seminary (前香港建道神學院院長) said this about sin:

“Many people mistakenly believe that the central message of Christianity is to declare that all people have sinned and that everyone is a sinner. There is no doubt that everyone is a sinner, but this assertion is only a premise of the Gospel of Christ, not the content of the Gospel itself. Jesus said that He did not come to condemn man, but to forgive man's sins and to save those who are trapped in it.” **(so far sounds OK)**

But then he continued with these words: “It is meaningless to prove that everyone is a sinner. ..., we don't need to prove the existence of sin at all, and we don't need to point out that people are sinners. No one doubts the existence of sin.” *

[*] 梁家麟：《信主之後》(香港：基道出版社，2003) 第 71 頁

Modern liberal “evangelicals” downplay conviction of sin because they want to “attract seekers” and make them feel comfortable to attend their meetings, so they **deemphasize sin (淡化罪)**.

The result of downplaying sin results in worldly churches filled with unrepentant sinners as pointed out by Pastor Bin Yu (于斌牧師) (Far East Gospel Broadcasting, West Canada 加拿大西部遠東福音廣播)



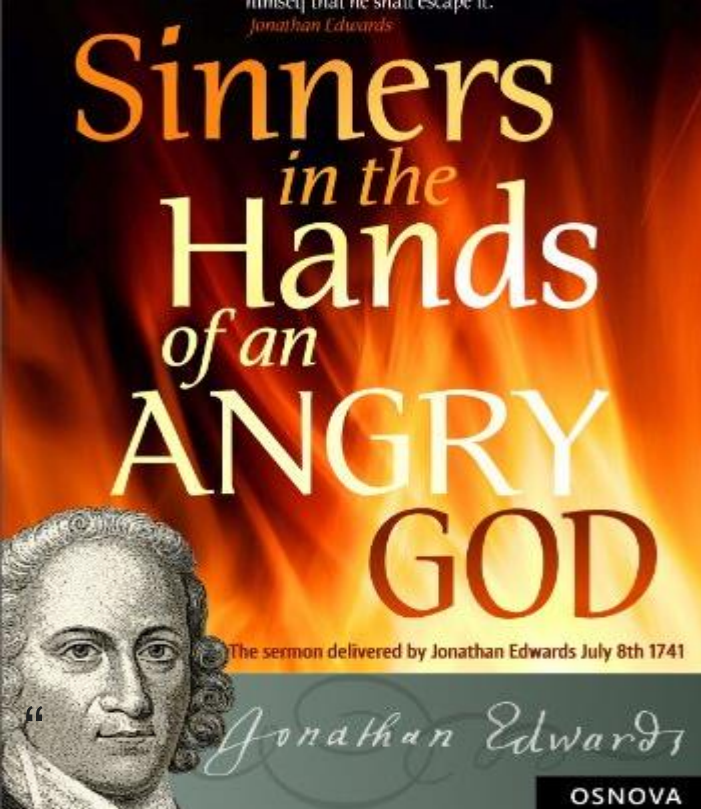
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教會裡發生了一件非常可怕的事情 - 信徒沒有真正悔改！
在今天的教會當中



“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” is a very famous sermon written by the

American theologian Jonathan Edwards. Edwards first preached this sermon to his own congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts with profound effect. Later, he was invited to preach this message to a church in Enfield, Ct. on July 8, 1741. The preaching of this sermon was the catalyst for the “**First Great Awakening**”.

The sermon emphasize God’s wrath upon unbelievers after death to a very real, horrific, and fiery Hell. The underlying point is that God has given man a chance to confess their sins & repent, It is God’s will that man be kept from overtaken by the devil and cast into hell.

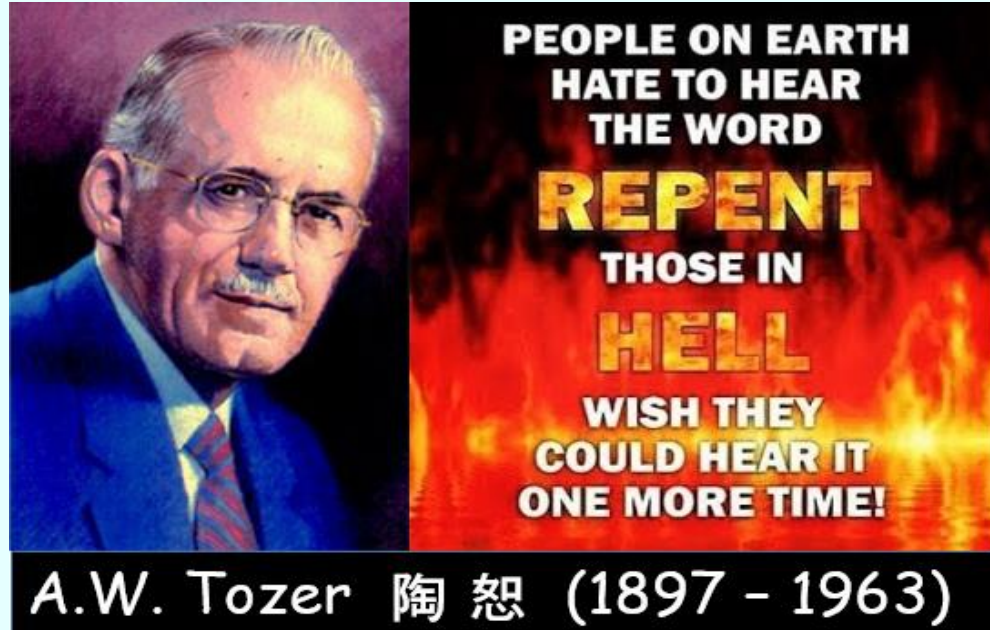
"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

罪人在忿怒的神手中

Despite the apparent pessimistic notion of an angry and terrifying God in the sermon, that pessimism is overcome by the comforting hope of salvation through a triumphant, loving savior.

Edwards was interrupted many times during his preaching by an audience moaning and crying out, "What shall I do to be saved?".

Edwards' sermon contrast sharply with today's evangelistic messages which only highlight God's love and the benefits of salvation while avoid mentioning God's wrath and punishment of sinners in hell



A.W. Tozer, a much respected (C&MA 宣道會) pastor & author said

地上的人憎厭聽到悔改這個字
但地獄裏的靈魂恨不得他們可以
再聽到悔改一次

What is Conviction of Sin

什麼是悔罪

The Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit comes to **convict** the world of sin (John 約翰福音16:8) :

“When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment”

祂(聖靈)來了, 就要在罪、在義、在審判各方面**指證**世人的罪(新譯本)

To understand what **conviction** of sin is, let us first look at what it **is not**:

#1 It is not just knowing & agreeing with the Bible's teaching about sin.

#2 it is not simply a guilty conscience or even shame over sin.

#3 it is not a sense of fear God's punishment.

The word **convict** in original Greek means “to convince someone of the truth; to reprove; to accuse, refute, or cross-examine a defendant.”

(希臘文原意是使人相信真相; 控訴、反駁和盤問被控人)

The Holy Spirit acts just as a prosecuting attorney who exposes evil, reproves evildoers, and convinces people that they need a Savior.

Conviction of Sin by the Holy Spirit

聖靈領人悔罪

We will be convicted of our sin when:

- 1) We are shown, under the Holy Spirit's enlightenment, our true sinful and dreadful conditions

how God sees me

照
我
本
相

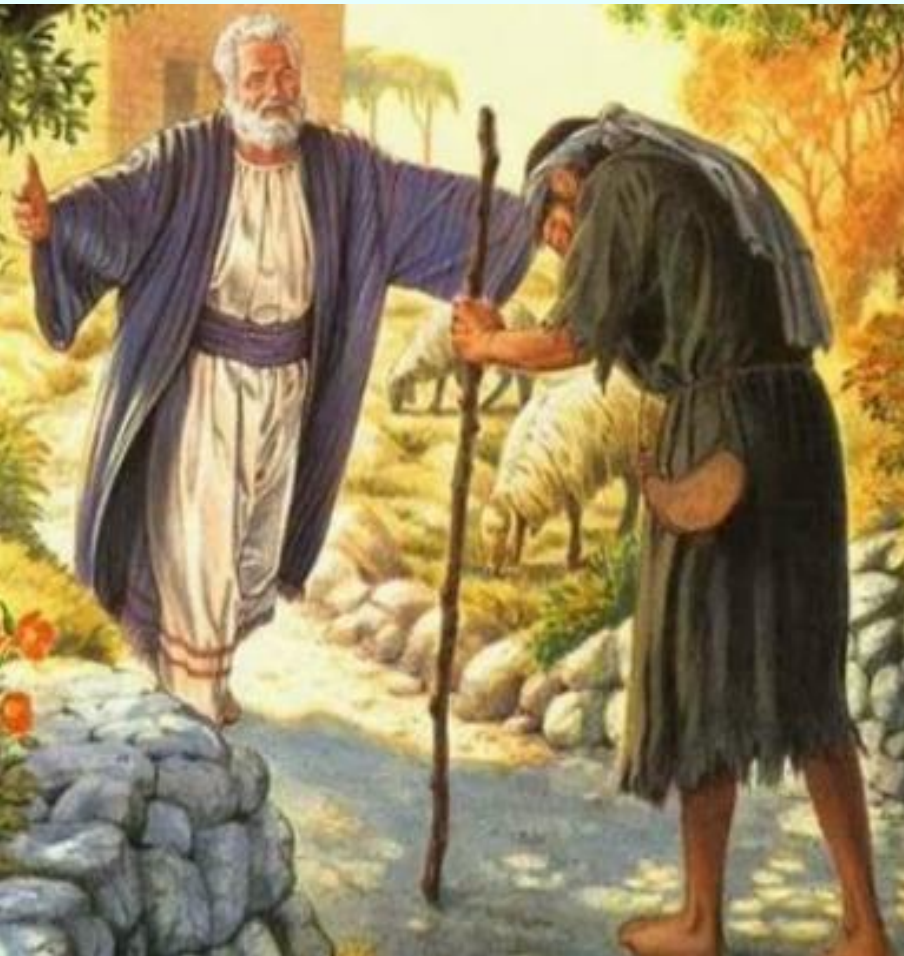


- a) King David had to fall into grave sins to discover his sinfulness and wickedness.
- b) Paul had to fail in his struggle against sin (Romans 7) to discover his inability to fight against sin.
- c) I am no exception. I had always been praised and looked at as a “good boy” in my childhood and I considered myself better than most other kids. So God had to let me fail to show me I am just as bad and sinful as others.

Conviction of Sin by the Holy Spirit

聖靈領人悔罪

- d) Likewise, the prodigal son had to fall into sins & very pitiful conditions to get a true picture of himself and to appreciate the love of his father whom he took for granted



I come broken to be mended
I come wounded to be healed

帶著破碎來得修復
帶著傷痛來得醫治

Conviction of Sin by the Holy Spirit

聖靈領人悔罪

We will be convicted of our sin when:

2) We are shown God's holiness and realize we cannot face God's glory.

This was the case when Isaiah entered God's temple & saw God's glory. He immediately became aware of his sinfulness and filthiness and exclaimed: "Woe to me, I am a man of unclean lips...and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty" (Isaiah 6:5).



3) We become mindful of how much our sin dishonors God.
When King David was convicted of his sins, he cried out "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Psalm 51:4)

Conviction of Sin by the Holy Spirit

聖靈領人悔罪

We will be convicted of our sin when:

4) when we become intensely aware of the wrath sin exposes our souls to (Rom 1:18; 2:5).

When the Philippian jailer fell at the apostles' feet and cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he was under strong conviction (Acts 16:30). He was sure that, without a Savior, he would die.

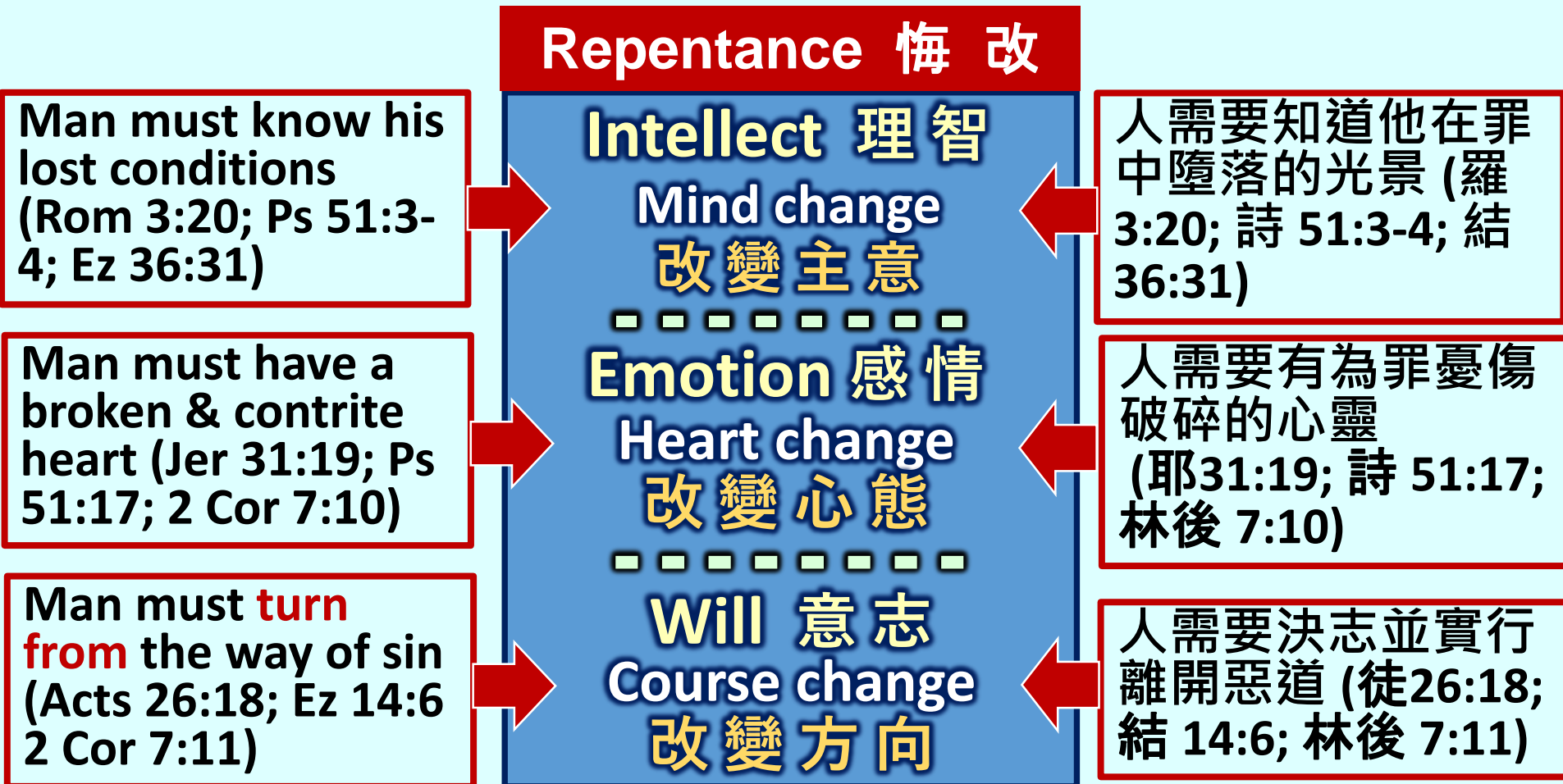


The Holy Spirit not only convicts people of sin, He also brings them to repentance (Acts 17:30; Luke 13:5); He brings to light God's way of salvation and opens their hearts to receive God's grace (Eph. 2:8)

Repentance – What Does It Involve

悔改涉及到什麼

Repentance involves our intellect, our emotion and our will. The most important is involvement of the will's, which comes from the heart (spirit). Any “**repentance**” without involvement of the will, is incomplete.



Pathway to True Repentance

真正悔改的途徑

Holy Sprit's
Enlighten-
ment

Sight of Sin
& Self

Sorrow for
Sin

Confession
of Sin

Turning
Away from
Sin

Hatred of
Sin

Shame of
Sin

聖靈
光照

看見罪和
自己真相

為罪
憂傷

認罪

轉離
罪惡

恨惡
罪惡

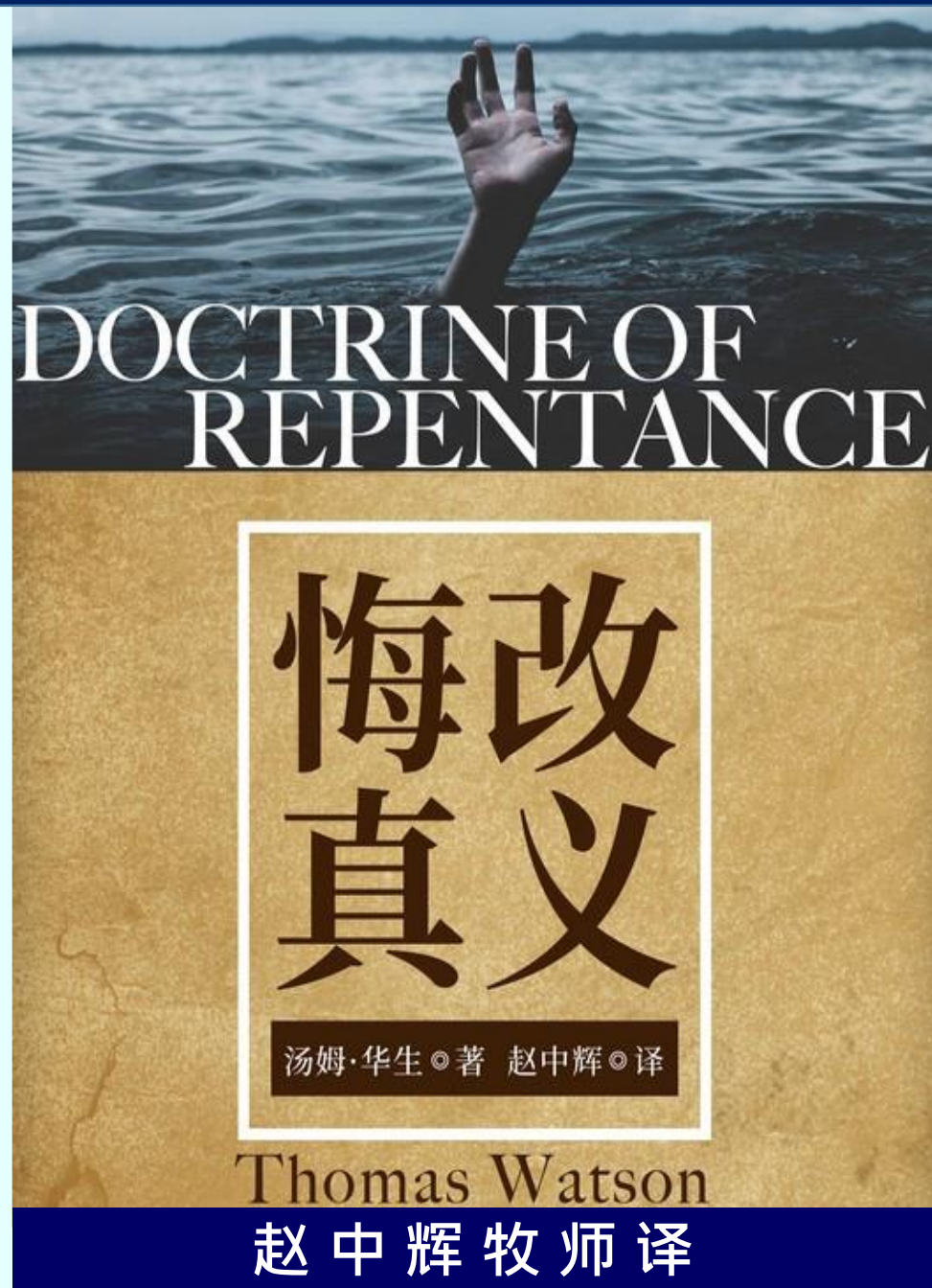
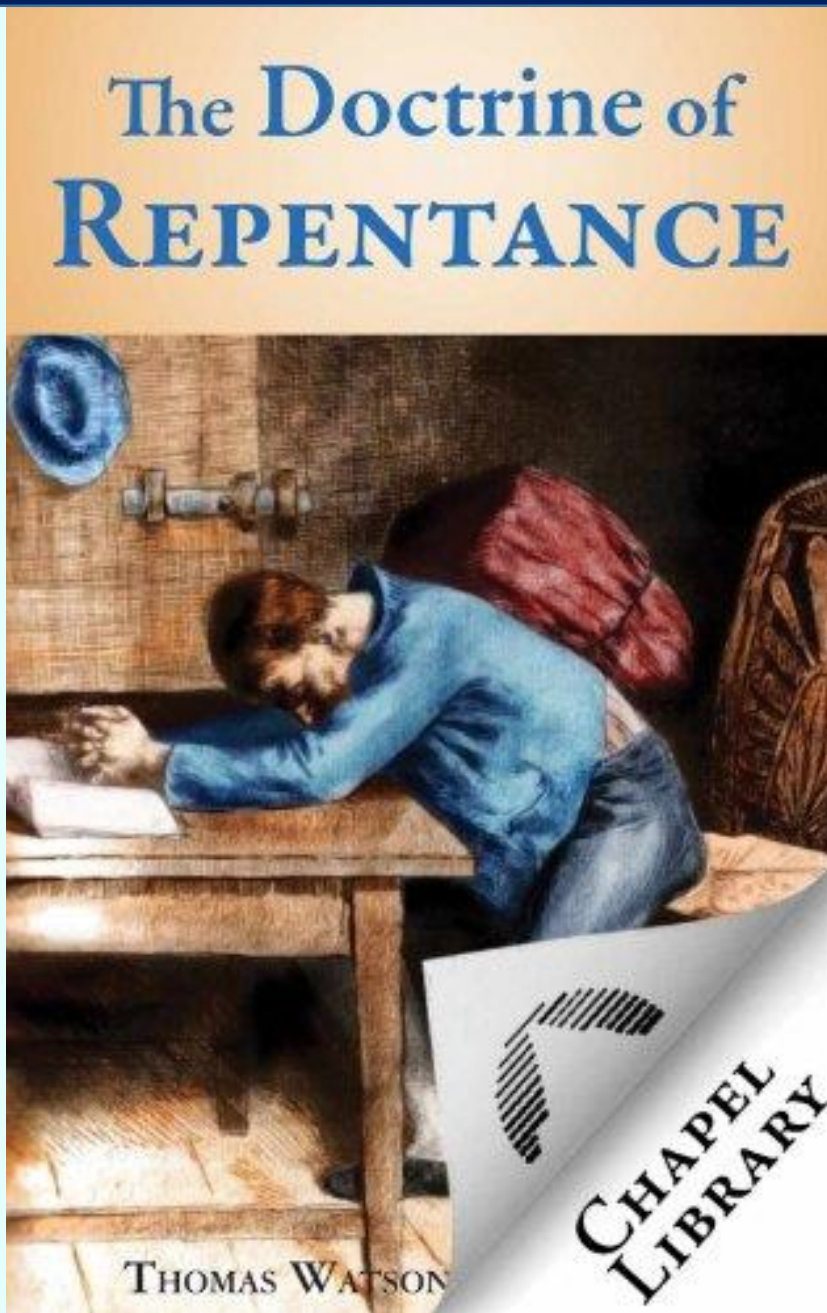
為罪
羞恥

Today's message merely **introduce us to the subject of REPENTANCE** which is only half of the broader topic of **CONVERSION**.

We all need to understand these vital subjects in greater details for our spiritual needs

Thomas Watson 湯姆華生 has written an excellent book (a classic) more than 300 years ago. The book is called "The Doctrine of Repentance". The book gives us much greater details on repentance. The Chinese version is called 「悔改真義」

Both the English and Chinese books can be downloaded free. I hope we can all take time to study it for our benefits.



The Doctrine of Repentance.

Thomas Watson c. 1620—1686

Modernized American-English, formatting, corrections,
and additional notes (in blue)

William Gross www.onthewing.org May 10, 2011

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第八章 赶快悔改

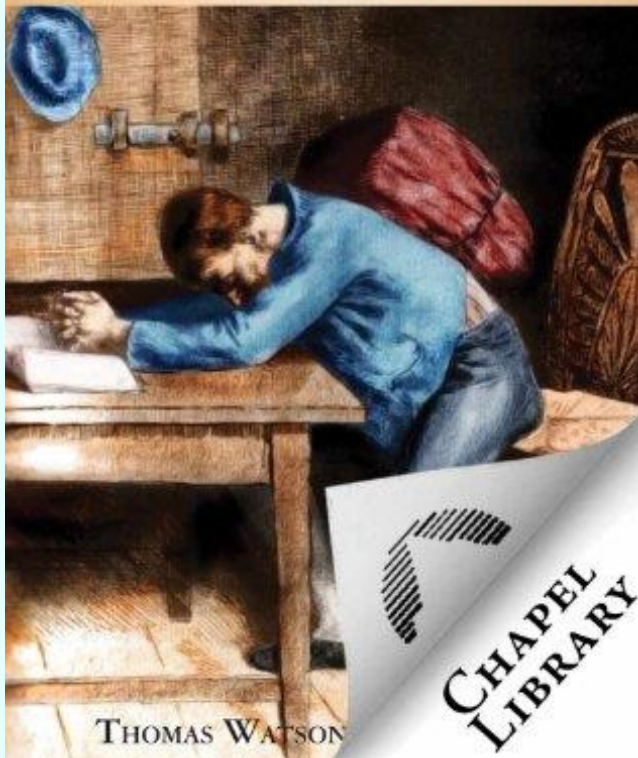
第九章 悔改的试炼与安慰

第十章 除掉悔改的障碍

第十一章 悔改良方 (一)

第十二章 悔改良方 (二)

The Doctrine of REPENTANCE



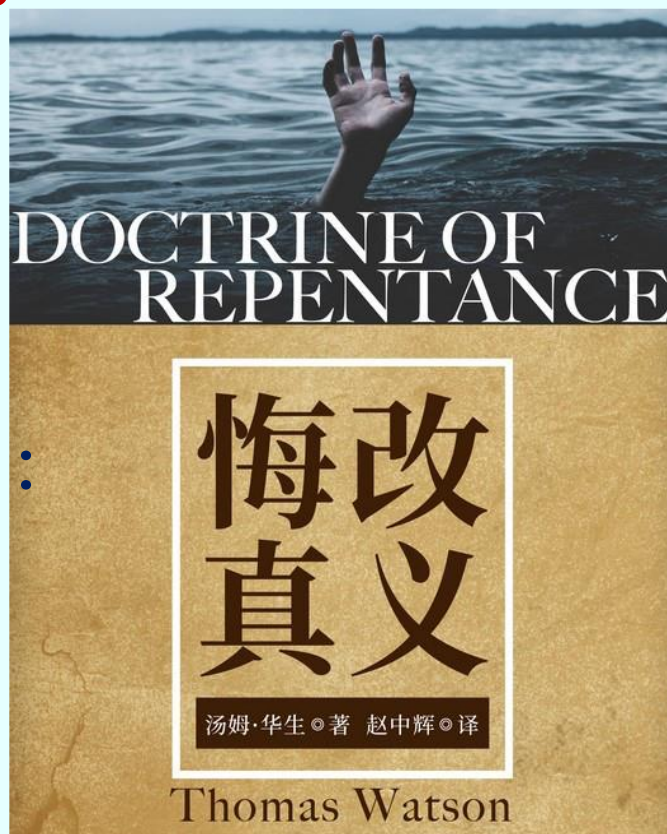
The Doctrine of Repentance
by Thomas Watson can be
downloaded free from this link:



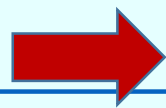
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The book was written > 300 years ago
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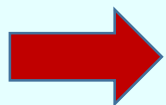
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Chinese website)

Response Song

回應詩歌

我懺悔



by
Steve
Green

I REPENT



I Repent

**CONVERSION (1):
REPENTANCE**

歸信(上):悔改



John 約翰福音 3:14-16

Maryland Gospel Church 馬利蘭福音教會 8-15-21