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Dear Associates and Friends,

September 2017

Two articles by Dr. Ernest Martin are combined this month into one article: "[The Repentance of God and Influencing God](#)." Repentance is the act or process of repenting. With people the word "repent" means, "**to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life**" ([Miriam-Webster Dictionary](#), 2017).

Biblically, the terms "repent" and "repentance" do not exclusively have a relationship to sin. Of course, God does not sin, but God does repent. In the New Testament, the words simply mean, "to change one's mind," sometimes with reference to sin, and sometimes with regret. Let me give an example not mentioned in this month's article, an example from the Old Testament.

Does God Repent?

Yes He does. King Saul received explicit instructions from YHWH through the prophet Samuel:

"Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

• 1 Samuel 15:3

The Amalekites were enemies of Israel since Moses (Exodus 17:8–16). They attacked Israel and God gave Saul a great victory but Saul disobeyed and kept alive the Amalekite king, along with the best animals:

"Then came the word of YHWH unto Samuel, saying, 'It repents me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and has not performed my commandments.' And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto YHWH all night."

• 1 Samuel 15:10–11

YHWH was sorry (He repented) that He made Saul to be King of Israel (at the request of the people of Israel, by the way). God had changed His mind about Saul, and Samuel was so grieved about God's decision that, he cried out to YHWH all night. Samuel was not only grieving for Saul, but also for the people of Israel who would suffer because of the sins of their king.

Saul meets Samuel, and like a child, he lies to Samuel, saying he obeyed God's command: "**I have performed the commandment of YHWH**" (verse 13). Then he blames the people (verses 15 and 21). Saul also lied in verse 20. God knew Saul lied, Samuel knew he lied, Saul knew he lied, and it is likely the people knew Saul lied. Then Samuel spoke what became a classic statement of what God desires from His people:

"And Samuel said, Has YHWH as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of YHWH, he has also rejected you from being king."

• 1 Samuel 15:22–23

Saul was stunned and admitted his sin, though he had little choice:

"Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of YHWH, and your words: [why?] because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray you, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship YHWH."

• 1 Samuel 15:24–25

Saul begs Samuel to plead with YHWH on his behalf, even asking Samuel to pardon him. Samuel tears himself from Saul saying:

“Samuel said unto him, YHWH has rent the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, that is better than you. And also the Strength of Israel [YHWH] will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.”

• 1 Samuel 15:28–29

Well, what is going on here? What do the words of verse 29 mean? As you will learn in Dr. Martin’s article, while God Himself does not lie because He does not sin, He does, however, commission others to mislead sinners. Man sins, God is righteous. God already told Samuel earlier in the verse that He repented (changed His mind, regretted) that he made Saul to be King of Israel.¹

“Then he [Saul] said, I have sinned: yet honor me now, I pray you, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship YHWH your God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped YHWH.”

• 1 Samuel 15:30–31

Saul’s actions seemed to be those of a person who repented, yet Saul does not grieve over his sin, as much as Samuel grieved over Saul. The text never says Saul repented. Did he go through the motions of worshipping YHWH? Perhaps God accepted Saul’s worship personally, but not as a disobedient King.

Samuel, by necessity and probably with great grief, never saw Saul again before he died.

“And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and YHWH repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.”

• 1 Samuel 15:35

Thus ends the account of how King Saul lost his kingdom because of disobedience and YHWH’s repentance of making Saul to be king. These events led to King David’s anointing and reign as king over all Israel. The legal lineage of Jesus was from King David.

Thank You

I am constantly surprised, though I suppose I should know better, that so many believers simply ignore the fact that the information recorded in the Word of God is the most essential thing in the world to learn and understand. Believers I know (and even friends) who say they love God, believe in Christ’s resurrection, and that He is their Savior, all too often are prone to ignore or set aside the Scriptures in their lives. They never seem to go beyond the most basic information.

This too comes from God, as you will learn in this month’s article. Some people think it is too hard to learn what the Scriptures teach. Others think the Scriptures have gross contradictions or should be left to “experts.” One of the prime reasons ASK exists and continues is to make available and to share the teaching of God’s Word to all people God brings to ASK. Our purpose is not to stir up your emotions so you can be happy in the present evil age (Galatians 1:4). We endeavor to educate you with God’s truth from the Scriptures, giving you knowledge and understanding about your future in the plan of God.²

You participate with us by financially supporting this teaching ministry, by encouraging us, and by praying for ASK. Thank all of you who contribute willingly, however small an amount, so we can continue to produce and publish unique but accurate scriptural teaching each month. I pray that God’s blessings will be upon each of you, now and in the future, as we present substantive biblical teaching to the world.

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¹ Didn’t God know Saul would do such a thing? Yes, but the events needed to play out. Although God’s will was disobeyed, God’s purpose was fulfilled, as you will understand from Dr. Martin’s article.

² See my August 15, 2017 Commentary “[You As a Child of God](#)” and my 2009 article “[YOUR Resurrection](#).”