

Revelation 13:1-10—The Antichrist—Part 4

Again we continue our study of the antichrist. Why does the bible have so much to say about this one man? Because it's not just the man, it's also the empire that he represents and the terrifying influence he will have over the whole world.

Summary of the four kingdoms including symbols used in chapter 8.

| Four Kingdoms of Daniel | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | Chapter 2 | | Chapter 7 | | Chapter 8 | |
| Babylon 606 B.C. Mobility King humbled |  | Head of Gold |  | Winged Lion Eagles wings Stood like a man | | |
| Medo-Persia 538 B.C. 2 Nations Persia dominant Persia younger | | Breast & 2 Arms of Silver |  | Bear 2 Sides raised up on 1 side 3 Ribs |  | Ram 2 Horns 1 Horn higher Highest horn up last 3 Directions |
| Greece 333 B.C. Fast conquest Alexander Four generals Antiochus IV | | Belly & Thighs of Brass |  | Leopard Given dominion 4 Wings 4 Heads |  | He Goat Over all the earth Touched not the ground 1 Notable horn 4 Notable horns Little horn arising |
| Rome 63 B.C. East/West division | | 2 Legs of Iron |  | Monster | Uncut Stone | Ancient of Days Second Coming |
| Future 10 Kings Antichrist | | Feet of iron/clay | | 10 Horns Little horn | Great Mountain | Everlasting Dominion Millennial Kingdom |

Summary from last week

In Daniel 8:1-8 we have the Medo-Persian empire represented by the Ram, who is then defeated by the Grecian empire, represented by the goat. Last week in Daniel chapter 8 we saw that God predicted that there would be a madman, who we know as Antiochus Epiphanes, that would come against Israel and stop temple worship for 2,300 evenings and mornings or 1150 days.

We also saw that this old testament Grecian king was a type or picture of the coming Roman antichrist in several ways. We'll go through the "fill in the word" quiz again now.

Just as Antiochus Epiphanes rose to power with force and intrigue, so will the **Antichrist**. As he persecuted the Jews, so will the **Antichrist**. As he stopped sacrifice and desecrated the temple, so will the **Antichrist**. As he seemed to be a complete success, so will the **Antichrist**. "From what Antiochus did to Jews in his day, therefore, one may know the general pattern of what the **Antichrist** will do to them in the future."

This week, we will go through one more very short section of Daniel that describes the antichrist before we start in Revelation 13.

Remember that Daniel chapter 8 focused down on two of the four world empires, and then focused down even further, skipping almost 200 years, to describe the evil exploits of one wicked king who was a type or picture of the antichrist. Of course this evil king was Antiochus Epiphanies.

Daniel 11 also starts out with the kingdoms of the Medes and Persians and the Greeks. But it is different from chapter 8. Instead, Daniel chapter 11 predicts and describes each king from the start of the Medo-Persian empire to the reign of Antiochus Epiphanies. After predicting the how and when (how many more kings) of the downfall of the Medo-Persian empire, it gives a “Days of our Lives” rundown of the northern and southern Grecian kingdoms. It chronologically outlines, covering a period of over 300 years; various marriages, intrigues, battles and who wins them and how they win or lose. It’s simply amazing.

A marriage between the families of the kings of the North and the kings of the South (Daniel 11:6)—an example of the numerous exact and detailed prophecies in Daniel 11.

For example, it predicted that at a certain time, one of the kings of the south would make peace with king of the north by giving his daughter in marriage to the northern king. But when the southern king died, the peace agreement would fall apart, and the daughter, her son, and the northern king she married would be killed (Daniel 11:6).

As we read the verse, there are many more details, and, we will see that every single detail played out. This chapter really confounds the skeptics.

Daniel 11:6 AMP

6 At the end of some years they [the king of the North, Syria, and the king of the South, Egypt] shall make an alliance; the daughter of the king of the South shall come to the king of the North to make [a just and peaceful marriage] agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her might, neither shall he and his might endure. She shall be handed over with her attendants, her child, and him who strengthened her in those times.

Here’s a summary of the historical events. Notice how every detail of the verse was exactly fulfilled:

v 6 **At the end of some years they [the king of the North, Syria, and the king of the South, Egypt] shall make an alliance:** Joined by a marriage, the kings of the North and South would be allies for a while, but the arrangement would not last.

v 6 **The daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement:** This was fulfilled in the marriage between Antiochus II (of the Seleucids) and Berenice (daughter of Ptolemy II). There was peace for a time because of this marriage, but it was upset or reversed when Ptolemy II died.

v 6 **Shall not retain the power of her authority:** Once Ptolemy II died, Antiochus II put away Berenice and took back his former wife, Laodice. (Antiochus II had to divorce Laodice to marry Berenice when the agreement was made—no wonder she was bitter.)

v 6 **Neither he nor his authority shall stand:** Laodice didn't trust her husband Antiochus II; so she had him poisoned.

v 6 **She shall be handed over with her attendants, her child:** After the murder of Antiochus II, Laodice had Berenice, her infant son, and her attendants killed.

I couldn't even make such a story up. It sounds unreal. I haven't even watched a movie with so many twists and turns. But it all turned out, in fact the entire histories of the southern and northern Greek kingdoms, exactly as predicted in Daniel chapter 11.

The jump to the future Roman antichrist in verse 36—a description of who he is, he methods, and his resources.

In the first 35 verses there is prophecy after prophecy that has been exactly fulfilled down to the last detail. Then suddenly in verse 36 there is a dramatic but subtle change. We suddenly are transported thousands of years ahead where we are told in specific detail what the future Roman antichrist will do, the battles he will fight, where he can and can't go, and his final demise. Some call this a prophetic parentheses. Let's have a very quick look:

Daniel 11:36 AMP

36 And the king shall do according to his will; he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god and shall speak astonishing things against the God of gods and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished, for that which is determined [by God] shall be done.

v 36 **He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god:** The angel explained to Daniel that this king would blaspheme God and exalt himself until **the wrath has been accomplished** and **what has been determined shall be done**. That is, until all the plagues described in Revelation are finished (**the wrath has been accomplished**), and Jesus comes back (the second coming—**what has been determined shall be done**). This is clear evidence that this section refers to the end times, the tribulation.

He shall exalt and magnify himself above every god: Antiochus Epiphanes certainly did this in the general sense that all sinners oppose God. Yet he remained loyal to the Greek religious tradition, which revered the entire Olympian pantheon (all the Greek gods). Antiochus Epiphanes put a statue of Zeus in the temple, not of *himself*. This statement will be far more precisely fulfilled in the Antichrist, who *sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God* (2 Thessalonians 2:4).

Let's move on to verses 37-39:

Daniel 11:37-39 AMP

37 He shall not regard the gods of his fathers or Him [to Whom] women desire [to give birth—the Messiah] or any other god, for he shall magnify himself above all. 38 But in their place he shall honour the god of fortresses; a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold and silver, with precious stones, and with pleasant and expensive things. 39 And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god. Those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with glory and honour, and he shall cause them to rule over many and shall divide the land for a price.

How the antichrist overcomes opposition

There are two things I would like to point out here that are very interesting. Firstly, there is how the antichrist overcomes opposition.

v 38 **He shall honour a god of fortresses:** The Antichrist will take and hold power with military might and the shrewd use of great riches. The word “**fortresses**” used represents “strength”, and is often associated with military forces (see Isaiah 23:14 and 30:2). He will use his military might to intimidate and coerce people to do what he wants, and when necessary, use his forces to crush any resistance.

39 **And he shall deal with the strongest fortresses:** This simply means that the antichrist will be able to defeat even the strongest military, any resistance.

v 39 **By the help of a foreign god:** “**Foreign**” also means “alien” or “a strange or unknown thing.” Could this be a reference to aliens or UFO’s? Consider the following facts:

- The belief in the supernatural and the occult is increasing exponentially today.
- There are many real or validated UFO sightings, but their origin is not from outer space. How do I know? Because when these things manifest they move, stop, and change direction or turn in ways that is physically impossible for something that has mass. For example there have been reliable sightings of these unidentified flying objects doing 90 degree turns while travelling at thousands of kilometres an hour. Again, it’s physically impossible for something with mass or something physical to do that. These UFO sightings are best explained by the supernatural—demons.
- The message that people receive from these so-called aliens are always demonic.
- More and more people are believing in the existence of UFO’s.

We know that Satan will give the false prophet immense power to do incredible miracles. This also includes the power to materialise things. All he would have to do is materialise an alien coming out of a so-called space craft who would speak and confirm the antichrist’s message. Or, just as one angel killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers in one night, these demonic angels could be unleashed to attack opposing militaries. Anything is possible. Remember that Satan will not be restrained during the 7 year tribulation like he is now (see 2 Thessalonians 2). Satan has tremendous power and he will be allowed to use it during the 7 year tribulation.

Q According to Daniel 11:39, how will the antichrist defeat his enemies? *He will “**deal or defeat the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god.**”*

Revelation 13:13-14a

He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. ¹⁴ And he deceives those who dwell on the earth—by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast.

Q According to Revelation 13:13-14a, how does the false prophet deceive the world? *By the miracles or signs which is is given authority to do.*

Just imagine the power trip the antichrist and false prophet will have. He will be drunk with power as he either controls people or destroys them.

The second thing I would like to point out is how the antichrist will manipulate people to get his own way.

Daniel 11:39b AMP

Those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with glory and honour, and he shall cause them to rule over many and shall divide the land for a price.

v 39 **Those who acknowledge him he shall magnify with glory and honour, and he shall cause them to rule over many:** Notice how the antichrist uses the same tactics as Antiochus Epiphanes—bribery and flattery. He buys people’s allegiances and sets them up in powerful positions. It’s the oldest trick in the book. He is appealing to our sinful or human nature—as long as a person gets what they want, then they are happy and content and will submit themselves to Satan. This is how Satan fools and controls people today. He gives them what they want so they don’t complain and don’t want to change.

Q According to Daniel 11:39, what does Satan promise to those who will acknowledge or submit to him? ***he shall magnify with glory and honour, and he shall cause them to rule over many.***

This even applies to believers, and they become sleepy, compromising and deceived christians, content with their comfortable life as they willingly become slaves to sin. A common example today is the desire to have a boy or girlfriend and experience physical pleasure. They get what they want, but are rendered useless for the kingdom of God because they are trapped in lust, bound by the physical attraction to the other person. This is called infatuation.

Their sin has broken their relationship with God on a practical level, and they are practically out of fellowship with God. They are still a part of the family of God, but are choosing not to experience relationship with God. They are a sleeping soldier, who is no threat to satan’s kingdom. It’s no wonder Satan doesn’t want them woken up. Other things that Satan uses to distract people are money or careers, drugs, gaming, porn, social media, and sports. There are so many sleepy, compromising christians who have chosen to allow their sinful nature to dominate them (Romans 8:5-6) and are not willing to give up what is in reality destroying them and stealing their joy.

Q In contrast, what do you think Satan does to christians who are living in obedience to God and are not compromising or bound by habitual sin, and are shining as a light in this dark world? *He will attack them.*

Q How will Satan attack us? *Discouragement, slander, temptation, complacency/laziness, pride, neglecting our relationship with God by neglecting the word of God, sickness, loss of financial security, loss of family, loss of jobs, loss of reputation, all these things and more.*

Daniel 11:40-45—The Battle of Armageddon

Now we move on to Daniel 11:40-45, which describes the battle of armageddon. At the end of the tribulation the antichrist is suppressing rebelling countries, but they all end up in Israel, all united together, with all their guns pointed at Jesus. It’s not like they all started out to the middle east to fight God, but that’s how it turned out. They actually started out fighting each other.

I would like to point out one thing from these verses which relates to Revelation chapter 12. Remember that Satan will go after the Jews, but God will protect and nourish them for the last 3 1/2 years of the 7 year tribulation. We found that the location will be in the mountains of Moab and Edom, which is modern day Jordan, and also where the rock city Petra is. Now let's read Daniel 11:41:

Daniel 11:41 AMP

41 He shall enter into the Glorious Land [Israel] and many shall be overthrown, but these shall be delivered out of his hand: Edom, Moab, and the main [core] of the people of Ammon.

Amazingly, the antichrist will not be able to conquer the territory east of the Jordan River, Edom and Moab, what is now the country of Jordan. Why not? Because God will protect the nation remnant of the nation of Israel there, right till he comes back and they receive Him as their Messiah.

Q Where did God tell the Israelites to flee to, where they would be protected? *The mountains of Edom and Moab, now the modern country of Jordan.*

Q According to Revelation 12:13-14, how long will God protect them there? *3 1/2 years.*

Q Is it during the first or second half of the tribulation? *Second half.*

Application from Daniel 11:45

Daniel 11:45 finishes with **Yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him:** In the end there is no hope for the Antichrist or for any of his followers, no matter how strong they seemed. *What a sad close to the reign of the antichrist. If there is no one to help him, then there will be no one to help those who trusted him either. This is the epitome of hopelessness.* Imagine yourself as someone who has taken the mark of the beast, who was amazed at how powerful this world ruler was, captivated by his power and miracles. This man just seemed unstoppable, unbeatable. Remember the news report from:

Revelation 13:4 NKJV

So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

Again, just pretend that you are in the tribulation and you were deceived by the antichrist's lies and the false prophet's miracles. Imagine the sadness and regret when you realise that your messiah was a false messiah, and that what the two witnesses, the angels, and the 144,000 Jewish witnesses said was true. You thought that they were fools because most of them ended up dead—Jesus wasn't turning up to help them. But He's back now, and with a vengeance. You now know that the Great White Throne judgement is coming, and that you will end up in the Lake of Fire forever—you will soon follow the antichrist and the false prophet, whom you have just seen thrown into the Lake of Fire. *Now you are saying, “Who is like Jesus? Who is able to make war with the Son of God?” Oh, but it's too late.*

Revelation 14:9-11 NLT paraphrase

Then a third angel followed them, shouting, “Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand ¹⁰ must drink the wine of God’s anger. It has been poured full strength into God’s cup of wrath. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulphur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹ **The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night, for they have worshiped the beast and his statue and have accepted the mark of his name.**”

v 45 **Yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him** sums up the futility of rejecting Jesus. What is comes down to is that people are really selling their soul to the devil for the sake of a little pleasure, which doesn’t even satisfy while you are on earth.

Don’t be deceived. Look where your decisions will lead you. Chose carefully what you chose to enjoy down here on earth. Don’t be entrapped by Satan’s lies. His promises are empty, his motives bad. Remember that all he wants to do to you is kill steal and destroy your relationship with God, and in doing so take you out of the fight. Don’t be yet another sleeping, compromising soldier in God’s army. Wake up. Get up. Start fighting the good fight. No mater how you started, what matters is that you finish well. You don’t want to be doing things that you will be ashamed of when Jesus comes for you. *Live as though Jesus could come back today, because he just might.*

Q Explain what the following phrase means:

Short term gain for long term pain

or

Short term pain for long term gain

The whole point of it is: what is your reason for living? Do you have your eyes on the world, looking for satisfaction from the world? Or, are you looking to eternity, remembering that you are a citizen of Heaven, and looking to your eternal reward?

Revelation 13:1-10—The antichrist

We now come to the book of Revelation chapter 13. Revelation 13 is one of those explanatory or parenthetical chapters that explain the origins, history, movements, personalities, and other important information regarding the main people, organisations or groups of people who will be around during the 7 year tribulation. Revelation 13:1-10 is the main section in the book of Revelation that explains who the antichrist is.

Revelation 13:1-10 NKJV

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. ² Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. ³ And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. ⁴ So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?”

⁵ And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. ⁶ Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. ⁷ It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. ⁸ All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. ⁹ If anyone has an ear, let him hear. ¹⁰ He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Revelation 13:1 NKJV

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

v 1 **Sand of the sea:** here the sea is symbolic of the nations. For example, the invading armies who defeated Babylon were described as “the sea”. You could picture the destruction resulting from the armies conquering Babylon as being like that caused by a tsunami crashing through the city:

Jeremiah 51:42 NKJV

The sea has come up over Babylon;
She is covered with the multitude of its waves.

Another proof that the **sea** is symbolic of the nations is what we read in Daniel 7:3, 17.

Daniel 7:3, 17 NKJV

³ And **four great beasts** came up from the sea, each different from the other.

¹⁷ **Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings** (kingdoms) which arise out of the earth.

Here Daniel describes 4 kingdoms or world empires that come out of the “sea”, in verse 3, but then it is interpreted by the angel as being from the earth. I.e. it refers to empires that arise from the people living on the earth.

Refer to chart of Daniel 2, 7 and 8

Q According to Daniel 2 and 7, what were last four kingdoms or empires that would rule the world from the time of Daniel? *Babylonian empire, Medo-Persian empire, Grecian empire, and the Roman empire.*

Q What does the image in Daniel 2 tell us about the last world empire, the Roman empire? *It's in two stages. The two legs of iron represent the historical Roman empire, and the feet of iron and clay represent the revived roman empire which will be destroyed only when Jesus comes back.*

Q From what we learned over the last two weeks going through Daniel, what kingdom or empire do you think this beast represents? *The revived Roman empire represented by the 10 toes, 10 horns or 10 kings. The revived Roman empire is the government that will rule the world during the 7 year tribulation.*

Comparing Revelation 12:3 and 13:1

A few weeks ago I promised that I would explain Revelation 12:3 when we came to Chapter 13. So here we go. First, let's look at any similarities and differences.

Revelation 13:1 NKJV

Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw **a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.**

Revelation 12:3 NKJV

³ And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, **a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.**

As you can see, the sign from Revelation 12:3 is similar to but slightly different to Revelation 13:1. They are both similar in that they both have seven heads and ten horns. For now, just understand that the 7 heads and 10 horns represent the government or empire that will rule the world during the 7 year tribulation. First we will look at the difference between the two verses.

In Revelation 12:3 the government or seven heads and ten horns come out of **a great, fiery red dragon**, who we know is Satan (see Revelation 12:9). Whereas in Revelation 13:1, the government or seven heads and ten horns come out of a beast that came out of the sea.

So who is this beast that comes out of the sea. Is it the antichrist or the revived Roman empire? Yes, or both. They are really synonymous terms. Why can it be referring to both the antichrist and the revived Roman empire? Walvoord puts it this way:

“The person is often the symbol of the government, and what is said of the government can be said of him.”

The revived Roman empire is ruled by the antichrist, so what he wants or does is what the empire wants or does. Here is an example to help us understand.

Imagine this, our prime minister decides to go to war with China. One newspaper reports that Scott Morrison is at war with China, while another newspaper reports that Australia has gone to war with China. Who is right? Both. Remember our quote: *“The person is often the symbol of the government, and what is said of the government can be said of him.”*

The same is also true when it comes to Satan. Revelation 13:2b tells us that Satan gives **his power, his throne, and great authority** to the beast. So in a similar way we can say that, since the antichrist is ruled by Satan, then what the antichrist wants or does is what Satan wants or does.

Concerning the second half of the tribulation we can ask a similar question. Who is persecuting the saints?

Revelation 12:17 NKJV

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 13:7 NKJV

It was granted to him [the antichrist] to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation.

Q According to Revelation 12:17, is Satan persecuting the saints? **Yes.**

Q According to Revelation 13:7, is the antichrist persecuting the saints? **Yes.**

Q Is the revived Roman empire or government persecuting the saints? **Yes. *It will be following orders given by the antichrist.***

You see, the person, or in this case the persons, Satan and the antichrist, are the symbols of the government. Concerning the government, the antichrist, and Satan, we can definitely say that what is true for one is also true for the others. Satan and the antichrist are both symbols of the government or revived Roman empire, represented by the 7 heads and ten horns.

The ten horns

I'll explain the seven heads next week. But for now we can easily understand the ten horns from what we learned in Daniel over the last two weeks. Revelation 17:12-15 confirms what was written about the 10 horns in Daniel 7 as being 10 kings who rule with the antichrist in the final 3 1/2 years of the tribulation and will fight with the antichrist against Jesus when He returns. Remember that in the bible, horns represent power.

Revelation 17:12-14 NKJV

¹² **“The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast.** ¹³ These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴ These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; and those who are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful.”

Notice how Revelation 17:12 makes clear that the 10 horns represent 10 individual kings who will rule and reign with the antichrist, the small horn, or the beast. The ruling for **one hour** refers to the very short 3 1/2 year reign that they will have.

Some questions to finish off.

Daniel 11:38-39 NKJV

But in their place he shall honour a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honour with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. ³⁹ Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain.

Q What does it mean when it says that the antichrist “**shall honour a god of fortresses**” (Daniel 11:38)? *He will use the threat of military strength or power to achieve his goals.*

Q What might it refer to when it says in Daniel 11:39, “*He will “**deal or defeat the strongest fortresses by the help of a foreign god.**” Aliens or UFO’s (speculation)*”

Q According to Daniel 11:39, what does Satan promise to those who will acknowledge or submit to him? *He shall magnify with glory and honour, and he shall cause them to rule over many.*

Q Revelation 13:2b tells us that Satan gives **his power, his throne, and great authority** to who? *The beast or antichrist.*

Q Who ends up controlling the revived Roman empire? *The beast or antichrist.*

Q How much of the world will the revived Roman empire control? *All of it.*

Q How long will the revived Roman empire control the world? *7 years.*

Q According to Revelation 14:9-11, what happens to those who take the mark of the beast and worship his image? *Tormented forever in the Lake of Fire.*

Q According to Revelation 14:9-11, are there any second chances for those who take the mark of the beast and worship his image? *No.*

Q What are the two basic choices that every person has in this life? *Worship God or worship Satan (see John 8:44)*

We will continue our study of the book of Revelation next week in chapter 13.

Communion—Confession and Repentance

God’s gift of salvation is Jesus’ death on the cross as the payment for our sins. But how does a person receive it?

This morning as we come to the Lord’s table, I would like to focus on confession and repentance. You probably understand that we need to confess our sins before God will forgive us. To confess simply means to agree with. We are saying to God, and to the person we sinned against, “yes, I know that what I did was wrong, I agree with you that what I did was wrong, please forgive me.”

1 John 1:9 NKJV

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

But what about repentance? Consider what Jesus said in:

Luke 13:1-5 NLT paraphrase

About this time Jesus was informed that Pilate had murdered some people from Galilee as they were offering sacrifices at the Temple. ² “Do you think those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other people from Galilee?” Jesus asked. “Is that why they suffered? ³ Not at all! **And you will perish, too, unless you repent of your sins and turn to God.** ⁴ And what about the eighteen people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Were they the worst sinners in Jerusalem? ⁵ **No, and I tell you again that unless you repent, you will perish, too.**”

What Jesus is saying is that if there is no repentance, then there is no salvation. Jesus makes it clear here what repentance is. It's turning away from sin and turning to God. What's important is that we must remember that repentance starts as a change of mind or heart which leads to a change in action or behaviour. It's more than just changing our behaviour. It all starts with us being sorry for the way our sin hurts God.

Here is an example of repentance from the old testament.

Ezra 10:2-4, 10-12 NLT paraphrase

We have been unfaithful to our God, for we have married these pagan women of the land. **But in spite of this there is hope for Israel.** ³ Let us now make a covenant with our God to divorce our pagan wives and to send them away with their children. We will follow the advice given by you and by the others who respect the commands of our God. **Let it be done according to the Law of God.** ⁴ Get up, for it is your duty to tell us how **to proceed in setting things straight.** We are behind you, so **be strong and take action.**”

¹⁰ Then Ezra the priest stood and said to them: “You have committed a terrible sin. By marrying pagan women, you have increased Israel's guilt. ¹¹ **So now confess your sin to the Lord, the God of your ancestors, and do what he demands. Separate yourselves from the people of the land and from these pagan women.**”

¹² Then the whole assembly raised their voices and answered, “Yes, you are right; **we must do as you say!**”

Notice what it says in Ezra 10:11 NLT paraphrase:

So now **confess your sin to the Lord**, the God of your ancestors, and **do what he demands. Separate yourselves from the people of the land** and from these pagan women.”

This is a clear call to both *confession* and *repentance*. The people in Ezra's time made the effort to confess because they were serious about renewing their relationship with God. They were willing to do whatever it took to come back into relationship with God. Listen again to what they said,

Ezra 10:3-4 NLT paraphrase

Let it be done according to the Law of God. ⁴ ... be strong and take action.”

Now, is there anything in our lives that we need to confess and repent of? If you are truly sorry for your sin then you will want to change. If you confess but don't change then it's an empty or meaningless confession. This is why there are so many false converts—there has never been any genuine repentance or turning away from sin.

This is also why there are so many carnal or immature Christians in the church. They have initially confessed their sins and had a genuine attitude of repentance. But when they confess their sins now there is no conviction or change; they know deep down that they don't really want to give some or all of their sin up. It's just words. They are not putting their relationship with God first.

This doesn't mean that if you repeat a sin again that your confession and repentance was not genuine. If I lie and am truly sorry, it doesn't mean that I will never lie again. But it does mean that I will be making a genuine effort, by God's grace and strength, not to. The result is that I will lie less often. But if I lie and keep on lying over and over again without any change, then I know that I'm not serious about changing. I'm not really ready to give that sin up for the sake of my relationship with God.

Here's two quotes from David Guzik and Spurgeon that sum it up nicely:

"We might even say that their *confession* would be vain (or empty) without corresponding *repentance*. This repentance (the decision to stop one's sinful behaviour and to **do His will**) is an essential element of the Christian life." (David Guzik)

Spurgeon puts it like this:

"Perhaps you have the notion that repentance is a thing that happens at the commencement of the spiritual life, and has to be got through as one undergoes a certain operation, and there is an end of it. If so, you are greatly mistaken; repentance lives as long as faith. Towards faith I might almost call it a Siamese twin. We shall need to believe and to repent as long as ever we live." (Spurgeon)

As Spurgeon said, faith and repentance go hand in hand. To be living by faith means to be living by the power of the Holy Spirit. He will give us both the desire and strength to repent (change—turn from sin and turn to God).