

aired on KALS February 11, 2003

Luke 3:7-14

7. “So he *began* saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, ‘You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’

8. ‘Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham for our father,” for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

9. ‘Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.’

10. And the crowds were questioning him, saying, ‘Then what shall we do?’

11. And he would answer and say to them, ‘The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.’

12. And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’

13. And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.’

14. *Some* soldiers were questioning him, saying, ‘And *what about* us, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages.’”

In this passage John specifically answers what people

are to do, in order to repent.

In verse 10, the multitudes ask John, “Then what shall we do?”

This question indicates repentance, or the command to “bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance” requires doing something! As a matter of fact, true Biblical repentance is a call to do things much differently! It involves changes in our behavior and habits.

When asked, “Then what shall we do?” John would answer and say to them, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise.”

Repentance here involves sharing with those in need--thinking of others rather than being selfish. Jesus would later teach, “Love your neighbor as yourself” as the “golden rule.” People are naturally self-centered. We are to repent and become others-centered.

Verses 12 and 13 read, “And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what you have been ordered to.’”

Even today tax-gatherers, or I.R.S. agents are known for their craft and corruption that their position of power can afford. Repentance for these people is a call to honesty and lawfulness to collect no more than the law requires.

Verse 14 reads, “*Some* soldiers were questioning him, saying, ‘And *what about* us, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Do not take money from anyone by force, or

accuse *anyone* falsely, and be content with your wages.””

Occupation armies throughout history have used physical force to steal and plunder the civilians under their charge. The charge to repentance here involves personal and professional self-control and restraint “to be content with your wages.”

By definition then, repentance is a call to common decency! Respect for others in the fear of God. No big deal . . . but for us, who are surrounded by a culture that believes in “survival of the fittest” and “it’s a dog-eat-dog world”--repentance is certainly in order!

1. Doctors need to protect life and heal rather than hurt and destroy.

2. Government officials need to serve citizens rather than exploit them.

3. Law enforcement officers need to protect lives and property of neighbors.

4. Moms need to be workers at home and realize that their children are their primary ministry.

5. Dads need to work to provide for their families and lead by example spiritually by self-sacrifice and compassion, not brute force.

6. Children need to obey their parents in the Lord.

Repent and truly live.