

## REND YOUR HEART, AND NOT YOUR GARMENTS

John Edwards

*“Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil” (Joel 2:12-13).*

The book of Joel is a call to repentance. A plague of locusts, described as the Lord’s army of invaders, brings desolation and devastation to the land of Judah (Joel 1:7; 2:3). This terrible day of the Lord’s judgment is designed to bring the people to repentance. In order for the Lord to remove His army and bring blessing and restoration to the land, the people must do as the Lord says: “...turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning” (Joel 2:12). When Joel called the people to repentance, he said, “...rend your heart, and not your garments...” (Joel 2:13). What is meant by this contrast?

**FIGURE OF SPEECH.** This statement of Joel contains a figure of speech called Syllepsis; or, Combination, in

which there is the repetition of the sense without the repetition of the word. E.W. Bullinger notes: “Here the word ‘rend’ is used only once, but with two significations: in the former sentence it is used figuratively; in the latter literally—the heart not being rent in the same sense in which garments are rent” (*Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, p. 296).

### RENDING GARMENTS.

“Rend” is used of garments to describe the ancient practice of tearing one’s clothes in grief. This action was often accompanied by putting on sackcloth. When Jacob believed his son, Joseph, had been rent in pieces, he “rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days” (Gen. 37:34). When Abner was killed by Joab, David ordered, “Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner” (2 Sam. 3:31). When King Ahab heard the word of the Lord, “he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth” (1 Ki. 21:27). When great famine was in Samaria, the king “rent his clothes; and... he had sackcloth within upon his flesh” (2 Ki. 6:30). When Hezekiah heard Rabshakeh’s blasphemous speech, “he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth” (2 Ki. 19:1-2). When Mordecai knew of the

decree against the Jews, he “rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes” (Esther 4:1-2). Esther 4:3 states, “there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.”

### NOT PROHIBITING

**RENDING GARMENTS.** Joel was not prohibiting rending one’s garments in repentance, anymore than Jesus condemned working for perishable food in John 6:29 or Peter forbade women from wearing clothing in 1 Peter 3:3. To the contrary, Joel 2:12 says, “...turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning.” This shows the Lord wanted both the inward turn and the outward expressions that accompanied such. “Tear your hearts, *not just* your clothes...” “And tear your heart and *not merely* your garments.” The lesser is denied (rending garments) to affirm the greater (rending the heart).

**TRUE RENDING OF THE HEART.** Outward expressions mean nothing, unless the heart is broken (Ps. 34:18; 51:17). One could go through the outward motion of rending the garment, without correcting the heart, and such would avail absolutely nothing! The point is: God doesn’t want an outward show only; He wants genuine repentance.

## DO YOU LOVE GOD?

Nicolas Edwards

There's no doubt we are commanded to love God. The Lord said, *"and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment"* (Mk. 12:30). Many would claim to love God, but really do not. John penned, *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth"* (1 Jn. 3:18). Many are like the scribes and Pharisees who, *"draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me"* (Mt. 15:8). Your actions reveal whether or not you love God! Love for God is seen by:

**HATING EVIL.** *"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked"* (Ps. 97:10). Do you hate evil? *"The fear of the Lord is to hate evil..."* (Prov. 8:13). We are to *"Hate the evil, and love the good..."* (Amos 5:15). One who hates evil will *"Eschew evil"* (1 Pet. 3:11).

### ENDURING TEMPTATION.

James connects love for God with enduring temptation in James 1:12. *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."* The crown of life, promised to them that love the Lord, is conditioned upon enduring temptation! The key to temptation enduring is having the word hid in your heart (Ps. 119:11) that you may say, as the Lord, *"It is written"* (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10) and do the will of God (1 Jn. 2:17).

**RICH FAITH.** *"Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"* (Jas. 2:5). It takes faith to love Him whom we have not seen. *"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls"* (1 Pet. 1:8-9).

### COMMANDMENT

**KEEPING.** *"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him"* (1 Jn. 2:5). *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous"* (1 Jn. 5:3).

### LOVING YOUR BROTHER.

*"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also"* (1 Jn. 4:20-21). Love for our brother is known by loving God and keeping His commandments (1 Jn. 5:2).

**NOT LOVING THE WORLD.** *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1 Jn. 2:15). To be a friend of the world is to be the enemy of God (Jas. 4:4).

Do you love God?

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