

## REPENTANCE

**Request:** “I heard an internationally famous preacher teach on repentance. His entire sermon was on repentance as an essential element of the gospel of salvation. He explained it as “turning from sin to Christ for forgiveness”. He quoted a lot of Scriptures to prove his point. What is your opinion on repentance?”

The question worth asking is why is the Greek word (metanoia) never mentioned in the Gospel of John and only five times in all of Paul’s writings (Rom.2:4; 2 Cor.7:9-10; 12:21; 2 Tim.2:25)? These men are known as the great teachers of Christian Soteriology. Why would these two great Christian theologians not establish repentance as an essential element of the gospel of salvation? In fact, it is rarely used outside the synoptic gospels and Acts.

**This lesson will study five aspects of repentance (metanoia) to help us understand it proper use.**

### **1. The English word for repentance is derived from Latin and not Greek.**

The English defines repentance as “an exercise of penitence.” As a result of the English, the idea of grief and sorrow over sin got attached to repentance (change of mind).

The NT concept of repentance is found in the Greek word (metanoia) [to perceive afterward; to adopt another view]. **Metanoia** means to realize that a previous held view was wrong. Greek repentance is a mental, not an emotional exercise (2 Tim.2:23-25; Luke 15:7, 10, 17, 24, and 32).

### **2. There is also another important point about metanoia.**

Whenever metaneo is used as a transitive verb, the subject changes it mind (repents) about the object. Transitive verb requires the object to complete its meaning.

An example is the parable of the Lost Sheep. “There will be more joy in heaven over **one sinner** who **repents** (metaneo / p.a.ptc) than over 99 righteous persons who need no repentance (metanoia).” (Luke 15:7)

- Subject     one sinner (lost and dead)
- Verb        repents (metaneo / change of mind)
- Object     message of grace salvation in Jesus Christ (found and alive).

**Point** – Repentance is necessary in the subject when a change of mind is required regarding a previous held wrong view about the object of grace salvation (Jesus Christ/ 1 Cor.15:3-4).

### **3. Both John the Baptist and Jesus Christ preached a change of mind towards the offering for the forgiveness of sin to Israel (Mark 1:4; John1:25-34).**

The baptism of repentance was a sign of the interruption of the Jewish Age by the Coming of Jesus Christ (Acts 19:4; Mark 1:14-15; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 13:23-26; 19:4)

“It should be noted that there is not one word in the gospel preached by John of Jesus of faith in a crucified and risen Savior. Instead we are told that when Jesus did mention His impending death, ‘they understood none of these things’ (Luke 18:31-34).” (Dispensation Theology, pg.322)

They were preaching a repentance or a change of mind with a view to the offering of sin (Mark 1:4; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 4:12)

#### 4. With the historical Coming of Christ, repentance was no longer associated with the Law and Prophets.

(Luke 24:46-47) [**prophetic gospel**] but with the person and work of Jesus Christ (Matt.4:17; Acts 3:18-19; 5:30-31; 19:4 [**historical gospel**]).

“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance (change mind) **for** (with the view to) forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:47; 1 John 2:2)

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent (change mind), and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ **for** the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” (Acts 2:38; 4:12)

The gospel of Jesus Christ was the object of the change of mind with a view to the offering of sin for forgiveness to Israel – “Jesus came to Galilee preaching the gospel of God saying, ‘The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the gospel.’” (Mark 1:14-15)

Therefore repentance is only necessary when there is a need to change the mind with a view to the object of mechanics of grace salvation (Acts 11; 17-18; 13:47-48; 17:30-31; 20:21; 26:20-23). “Metanoia does not emphasize emotion nor stand beside faith as an essential for salvation.” (Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, pg.522)

“A serious error occurs when it is added to faith as an essential condition of salvation.” (Chafer)

#### 5. The Bottom line:

The unbeliever cannot exercise penitence to cleanse or forgive himself of sin, whether AOS or personal sin.

This is the reason God required His Only Begotten Son to suffer the cross, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9).

The unbeliever cannot cleanse himself from sin that is why he must believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ to receive forgiveness of all sin (past, present, and future):

“And the blood of Jesus His Son cleanse us (katharizo / p.a.ind 3ps) [constant cleansing / extension of propitiation to believer in time] Rom.3:25; 1 John 2:2) from (apo+ablative of separation) **all sin**.” (1 John 1:7b)

When it is penitence, it becomes a meritorious step in salvation. **Metanoia does not stand besides faith as an essential step for gospel salvation.** Repentance meaning to feel sorrow for sin or to give up sinning as a prerequisite to believing in order to be saved is not biblical.

The object of salvation is the gospel of Jesus Christ and **not sin** (1 Pet.2:24; 3:18; 2 Cor.5:21)

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” (Rom.1:16)**