

Essentials To Conversion: Repentance

Hearing, faith, and confession are necessary to salvation (Rom. 10:9-17). Repentance is no less necessary. Peter told sinners in the first century to "Repent...and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19). If we were in the audience, would he have told us anything different?

Repentance is not sorrow, in-and-of itself. Paul said sorrow led the Corinthians to repentance (2 Cor. 7:9). This sorrow is a godly sorrow, a sadness at the realization that you have violated God's will and spurned His love (2 Cor. 7:10).

Repentance is not a change in life, in-and-of itself. John told men to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Lk. 3:8). Paul commanded the Gentiles to "do works befitting repentance" (Acts 26:20). Repentance will bring about a change in one's behavior, thoughts, and words.

Repentance, strictly speaking, is a change of mind. Jonah said God "repented" concerning His dealings with Nineveh (3:10). God did not have sin, but simply changed His mind about destroying the city. When the New Testament speaks of man's repentance, it is addressing man changing his mind about sin--godly sorrow leads him to repentance and repentance leads to a change of life.

Repentance is essential to conversion, as Peter declared on Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). If a man does not repent, he will not receive the remission of his sins. This is why Jesus said, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:47).

The above facts put the denominations in a fix. They say all one must do is believe to be saved. Yet, the Bible declares belief alone is not enough. When a man learns of his the Christ Who died for him, he must believe, confess this belief, turn from his sins, and be immersed into Christ (Acts 3:19; 16:30-34; 22:16).

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