

Soteriology – The Doctrine of Salvation

Repentance -The Greek words are *metanoia* and *metanoeo* and have the basic meaning “to change one’s mind”. *meta* = *after*, *noeo* = *to think*. Put together they mean to think after or have a reversal of opinion.

Three theological ideas are offered:

1 – Repentance is necessary, along with faith, for justification. Repentance is re-defined to mean “feel sorry for sin” and “turn and go the other way and do the opposite thing”. Evidence of true repentance is a sorrow for sin, a confession of sin, and the forsaking of sin.

“Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ”. “Repentance from sin and faith in Christ are two sides of the same coin, two aspects of the same decision of the heart”.¹ (Wayne Grudem)

Some ways you may hear this presented:

-If you are not willing to forsake (name the sin) then you can’t be saved!

-Jesus must be Lord of all or He’s not Lord at all!

-Turn or burn!

-If good works are not present in your life then you did not truly repent and you are not saved.

2 – Repentance is necessary for justification but is simply a change of mind about what you are trusting for salvation. You must change your mind about whatever you have been trusting or what you thought was necessary to be saved and trust in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life. Many in the Free Grace camp hold this position.

3 – Repentance is not necessary for justification but is the call to right relationship with God. Both unbelievers and believers can repent. Repentance in this view is seen as a change of mind but it goes a little further. Dave Anderson suggests we define repentance as:

“An internal resolve to turn from one’s sins”.

Repentance is not = to turning from sin but carries more weight than just a change of mind.

Repentance in the Old Testament

Two words are used that are similar:

shub – to turn or turn around

niham – to be sorry or to comfort oneself

The LXX never translates *shub* as *metanoeo*. Only 14 times is *niham* translated by the verb *metanoeo*. Very rarely does an individual repent in the Old Testament.

Repentance in the New Testament

Metanoia and *metanoeo* occur 56 times in the NT

Matthew, Mark & Luke = 24 times

Acts = 11 times (6 by Peter & John, 5 by Paul)

Paul – 5 times:

Romans = 1 time (2:4)

2 Corinthians = 3 times (7:9, 10; 12:21)

2 Timothy = 1 time (2:25)

John = 12 times – all in Revelation

Hebrews = 3 times

Peter = 1 time

Israel as a nation is called to repent. “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2). “Israel

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Free Grace Theology, 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel*. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2016), 43.

was looking for an ideal king to be their Messiah. Yahweh was looking for an ideal generation which would be faithful to the stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant".² The call to repentance was a call to a nation that was already in covenant relationship to God. The turning was a call to return to fellowship with God with whom they already had a relationship. Failure to repent would result in temporal judgment.

Repentance and the invitation to believe in Jesus for eternal life

The silence is deafening:

Repentance is never mentioned in John

Repentance is only mentioned once in Romans (2:4)

Repentance is never mentioned in Galatians

Repentance and the enjoyment of life

"Repentance is not about relationship, but it is about fellowship. In order to 'get right with God,' one must repent. If an unbeliever is in view, he must believe to receive the free gift of eternal life. He might repent before he believes or after he believes. It is faith that saves him eternally, but it is his repentance which allows him to enjoy his faith. Repentance concerns fellowship... Repentance is for all men. But repentance is not a condition for salvation; it is a condition for sanctification. To establish an eternal relationship with God, one must believe only once. But to enjoy ongoing fellowship with God, one needs to live a life punctuated by repentance."³

Dave Anderson

² Dave Anderson, *Free Grace Soteriology*. (Xulon Press, 2010), 145.

³ Anderson, *Soteriology*, 140-141.