



Repentance

Much confusion has resulted by an improper interpretation of this word. Repentance is not a separate step in salvation. There are no steps in salvation. When a person believes, they repent. When they repent, they believe. Repentance is not sorrow for sin. It is a change of mental attitude toward Jesus Christ. Repentance is a complete change of mental attitude. The following original words are translated "repentance" in the Word of God.

The Hebrew word נחם (nâcham) is used in connection with God. It is an anthropopathism, which is a human characteristic ascribed to God to express divine attitude. The object varies, but God is always the subject. In Genesis 6:6, the subject is creation. In Exodus 32:14, the subject is Israel. In Judges 2:18, the subject is groanings. In 1 Samuel 15:35, the subject is Saul.

"The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart." (Genesis 6:6, NASB)

"So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people." (Exodus 32:14, NASB)

"When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them." (Judges 2:18, NASB)

"Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel." (1 Samuel 15:35, NASB)

In Psalms 90:13, the subject is servants. In Jeremiah 15:6, the subject is the Jews. In Amos 7:3 and Amos 7:6, the subject is divine discipline.

"Do return, O LORD; how long will it be? And be sorry for Your servants." (Psalms 90:13, NASB)

"You who have forsaken Me," declares the LORD, "You keep going backward. So I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you; I am tired of relenting!" (Jeremiah 15:6, NASB)

"The LORD changed His mind about this. "It shall not be," said the LORD." (Amos 7:3, NASB)

"The LORD changed His mind about this. "This too shall not be," said the Lord GOD." (Amos 7:6, NASB)

The Greek word μετανοέω (metanoeō) always means complete change of mental attitude. The connotation is always mental, never emotional. It is used under two categories. The first category is toward the unbeliever. In the following verses, the subject is always the unbeliever. Christ is always the object. The unbeliever is the one doing the repenting. The unbeliever changes their mental attitude toward the person and work of Christ. Matt. 12:41; Mark 1:15; Luke 13:3; Luke 15:10; Luke 16:30.

"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here." (Matthew 12:41, NASB)

"and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:15, NASB)

"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3, NASB)



"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." " (Luke 15:10, NASB)

"But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' " (Luke 16:30, NASB)

Repent and believe are always synonymous in salvation. Acts 17:30; Acts 26:20; Heb. 12:17; 2 Peter 3:9.

""Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent," (Acts 17:30, NASB)

"but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance." (Acts 26:20, NASB)

"For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears." (Hebrews 12:17, NASB)

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9, NASB)

The repentance or change of mental attitude toward the work of Jesus Christ results from the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit. John 16:8-11.

"And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged." (John 16:8-11, NASB)

The second category is toward believers where the subject is the believer either stated or implied. The object varies. In Hebrews 6:2, the object is dead works. In Revelation 2:5, Revelation 2:16, Revelation 2:22, and 2 Corinthians 12:21, the object is carnality.

"of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment." (Hebrews 6:2, NASB)

"Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent." (Revelation 2:5, NASB)

"Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds." (Revelation 2:22, NASB)

"I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced." (2 Corinthians 12:21, NASB)

The Greek word μεταμέλλομαι (metamellomai) is translated “regret” in Matthew 21:29 and 2 Corinthians 7:8, and “remorse” in Matthew 21:32 and Matthew 27:3. It has an emotional connotation. It is to feel sorry in one’s emotional pattern. Judas was sorry that he had betrayed the Lord, However, he did not ever repent.

"And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he regretted it and went." (Matthew 21:29, NASB)



"For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—" (2 Corinthians 7:8, NASB)

"For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; and you, seeing this, did not even feel remorse afterward so as to believe him. " (Matthew 21:32, NASB)

"Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders," (Matthew 27:3, NASB)