

# Repentance

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## Introduction

Repentance basically means to turn, change, convert, transform, to change the mind, to regret, to be sorrowful for something done in the past. When we look at this word in the bible, you will see that it has great significance in the life of a new Christian Believer and also for established Christian Believers.

As a new Christian Believer, repentance comes into play after the individual has:

- firstly, been convicted of his sins; and
- secondly, has submitted himself/herself to God.

It is important to note that one cannot truly believe in God, and be converted, unless that person is prepared to change his mind in relation to the relationship that he had prior to his conversion; and the relationship that he now has with God, through Jesus Christ (Romans 12 verses 1-2).

In Acts 9 verse 6, Saul said, "What wilt thou have me to do?" the question was a clear indication of Saul's change of mind and attitude towards God and the Christians. He had encountered God, submitted to God and converted his mind to the things of God, which was later demonstrated in the book of Acts of the Apostles.

Repentance must be seen, in the spiritual sense, as a forward move. Turning to God can only be seen as a substantial move of progression in the right direction (St Matthew 6 verse 33); but repentance is only effective if the individual is true to himself and God (Acts 9 verses 9-23). Jesus spoke, in St Matthew 18 verses 3-4 and St Luke 13 verses 3 & 5, emphasising the need for true repentance and the benefits available to that repentee.

It should be noted that, although a very personal event, it is not only reserved for individuals, as it was a special feature in the life of the Israelites as a nation in their relationship with God. On numerous occasions, repentance was the key to the development/progression in their relationship with God, which consequently brought about an improvement in their status (1 Samuel 7 verses 3-11 & Ezekiel 18 verses 30-32).

The first message that Peter preached in Acts 2 verses 37-38 was followed by a question from the crowd "What shall we do". Peter promptly told them that they need to repent, need to change their minds towards God. This they did, resulting in them having a new life in Christ and the early Church being increased dramatically by over 3,000 souls.

As we have pointed out earlier, repentance is an important ingredient in the new life of the Christian Believer as it is that act that provides the complete remission of sins. To believe is not enough. Repentance at some stage in the early part of the new Christian Believer's life will have to be made for that relationship with God to be truly effective, e.g. take Peter, he believed, he followed Christ everywhere Christ went; but right up to his denial of Christ, he had not truly repented from his sins St Matthew 26 verse 31-35 & 69-75 & St John 21 verses 15-19.

Repentance is not just reserved for an individual that initially finds Christ; but is relevant for an established Christian Believer who may have committed sin. The examples of this can be found in the acts of King David who was a godly man but had done wrong to both man and God (Psalms 51 verse 1-7).

Repentance brings about the following:

- a new spirit and a new heart (Ezekiel 18 verse 31 and Psalms 51 verse 10);
- forgiveness/removal of sins (St Mark 1 verse 4);
- restitution (restoration) (Luke 19 verse 8-9, Acts 3 verse 19, Exodus 22 verse 3-12);
- there is a Godly sorrow for sins committed in the past (2 Corinthians 7 verse 9-10);
- reconciliation and progression (2 Chronicles 7 verses 14-15)

## **Conclusion**

It is a true saying that having a mere belief in God is not enough to be truly saved. Yes, the scriptures in Romans 10 verse 9 does say that confession of Christ and belief in the heart will enable us to be saved. However, it is in that belief that the individual has of God, and more importantly of Jesus Christ as his/her Saviour, that he/she must reach the state of repentance; recognised through the conviction in his heart, brought about by the Holy Spirit. The believer recognises that the lifestyle in the past was wrong and that the intention for the future is not to continue in sin presumptuously.

Paul asks the question “do we continue to live in sin? If so, why? especially if we that are in Christ are supposed to have suffered death with Christ. Simon the Sorcerer demonstrated in Acts 8 verses 21 & 22, the lack of humility and submission, which is to be avoided if repentance, growth, formation of a relation with God and prosperity is to take place in the life of a Christian Believer.

**God bless you**

**COGIC Aston**