

THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF FALSE TEACHING ON REPENTANCE WITH THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:8, 9.

"The word Metanoia is in every instance translated repentance. The word means a change of mind. The common practice of reading into this word the thought of sorrow or heart anguish is responsible for much confusion in the field of Soteriology ... This definition of this word as it is used in the New Testament is fundamental. Little or no progress can be made in a right induction of the Word of God on this theme, unless the true and accurate meaning of the word is discovered and defended throughout." Chafer, Lewis Sperry. Systematic Theology, Vol. III. (p. 372).

"Often the idea of believing is expressed by the word, repent (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20) ... The word means to change one's mind, and by its usage in the Book of Acts it means to change one's mind about Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah. This involves no longer thinking of Him as merely the carpenter's son of Nazareth, an imposter, but now receiving Him as both Lord (Jehovah) and Messiah. Thus, repentance as preached by the apostles was not a prerequisite to nor a consequence of salvation, but was actually the act of faith in Jesus which brought salvation to the one who repented." Ryrie, Charles. Biblical Theology of the New Testament. (p. 116, 117).

"What place has repentance in salvation? Should we tell people to repent of their sins to be saved? The Gospel of John is the Holy Spirit's Gospel Tract, written that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing they might have life through His name (20:31). And it does not mention the word 'repentance'. But that is only because repentance is a necessary part of saving faith. Strictly speaking, the repentance means a 'change of mind'. It is by no means the same thing as sorrow (II Corinthians 7:10). Since it is not possible to an unbeliever to become a believer without changing his mind, it is therefore unnecessary to say anything about it. The only thing for a man to do in order to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: and to believe on Him is the same thing as receiving Him (John 1:11-13)." Pettingill, William. Bible Questions Answered. (p. 215-216).

"But in order to clarify the subject, it may be well to observe carefully what repentance is not, and then to notice briefly what it is. First, then repentance is not to be confounded with penitence... penitence is simply sorrow for sin... Nowhere is man exhorted to feel a certain amount of sorrow for his sins in order to come to Christ. Second, penance is not repentance. Penance is the effort in some way to atone for the wrong done... In the third place, let us remember that reformation is not repentance... Need I add that repentance then is not to be considered synonymous with joining a church or taking up one's religious duties, as people say. It is not doing anything. ...the Greek word, metanoia, which is translated 'repentance' in our English Bibles, literally means a change of mind." Ironside, Harry. Except Ye Repent. (p. 12-15).

"When thinking of the word repent or repentance, there are at least two general ideas that are not repentance. Repentance does not mean to be sorry for some wrong I have done... Some may think repentance is promising to do good. I do not want to seem to be too harsh, but how much good is it going to do for anyone to promise to do good? ...Repentance is primarily a judgment about myself. The expression is often used which has an awkward translation into English is 'repenting of our sins'. Actually this is not a sound idea. The reason it is so awkward to say is that man does not 'repent his sins' nor does he 'repent of his sins', he repents himself. Repentance is judgment upon myself whereby I admit that I am not good... Repentance is a very important matter. Because it is not until I am willing to acknowledge before God that I am nothing in myself that I will believe the Gospel." Gutzke, Manford. Plain Talk About Christian Words. (p. 122, 123).

"It is our purpose to discuss the Scriptural doctrine of repentance. It is important because so many minds have been confused concerning the **simplicity** of salvation by the perversion of the Scriptural teaching of this important doctrine... The doctrine has suffered tremendously from an erroneous concept held by most men, for when the word 'repent' is used, it brings to mind of the average individual the thought of sorrow for sin... And this sorrow for sin is usually called 'repentance'. But there could be nothing further from the concept of the Word of God than the idea that repentance means sorrow for sins. From the Word of God we discover that the word translated 'repent' means 'a change of mind'... Now, such as change of mind as the Scripture enjoins when it speaks of repentance may produce a sorrow for sin, but it will be the result after one has seen his sin in the light of holiness of God and has changed his attitude toward it." Pentecost, J. Dwight. Things Which Become Sound Doctrine. (p. 61, 62).

"Repent of Sin." This often-quoted phrase does not even occur in the Bible. Most people are quite shocked to find that it does not appear in the Scriptures. Nowhere does the Scripture use the phrase, "repent of sin" to be saved. Scripture does say in Acts 20:21, "repentance toward God" ("change of mind", and "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ").

Repentance is the translation of the Greek word "metanoia". The literal meaning of "metanoia" is "a change of mind". "Meta" means, "change". "Noia" means "mind". So, therefore, "meta-noia" means a "change of mind". Before learning about metanoia, I am sure that you are already familiar with a Greek word with the prefix "meta". That word is "metamorphosis". "Meta" means "change", and "morphosis" means "form or structure". This word metamorphosis is used to describe the change a caterpillar goes through to become a beautiful butterfly. I am sure that you have studied about this change of form. Repentance, therefore, (metanoia) is a change of mind.

This misuse of the word repentance has caused untold confusion among believers and unbelievers alike. Satan, the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33), has delighted in this misuse of the word repentance. One of the counterfeits Satan is using today is the misuse of the word repentance. To insist upon repentance that in any sense includes a demand for a change of conduct either toward God or man is to add an element of works or human effort to faith.

Let's define. Penance is payment for sin. Penitence is sorrow for sin. Works and something of self is turning from sin. But repentance (metanoia) means a change of mind. Man's great need is to understand God's way of salvation and accept His sacrifice. Repentance in salvation means a change of mind from any idea of religion that man might have and accepting God's way of salvation. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16)."

Why do we have the problem? The problem has come about because "metanoia" should never have been translated in the English word "repent". "Repent" (English word) does not mean the same thing as "metanoia" (Greek word). Perhaps what the translators should have done is a "transliteration" of the Greek word. For example: the translators of the King James Bible took the Greek word "baptizo"-they dropped the "o" and replaced it with an "e". They brought the new word "baptize" into the English language. This is called a transliteration. They should have done this with "metanoia" and the problem would have been eliminated. Can you imagine preachers saying "metanoia" to their congregations? At least the correct meaning would be known.

Understanding the doctrine may relieve some of the confusion you or your friends may have had concerning repentance. Here is a way to get a handle on it. Remember this, "A person may 'repent' without 'believing', but a person can't 'believe' without 'repenting'." A person may "repent" (change their mind) without "believing" (trusting Christ), but a person can't "believe" (trust in Christ) without "repenting" (having changed their mind).

Repentance is necessary for salvation, but keep it in mind that it means "a change of mind". Dr. C. I. Scofield, in the Scofield Reference Bible (copyrighted in 1909) has the following footnote, "Repentance is the translation of a Greek word (metanoia-metaneo) meaning 'to have another mind', 'to change the mind', and is used in the New Testament to indicate a change of mind in respect of sin, of God and of self. This change of mind may, especially in the case of Christians who have fallen into sin, be preceded by sorrow (II Corinthians 7:8-11), but sorrow for sin, though it may 'work' repentance, is not repentance. The son in Matthew 21:28, 29 illustrates true repentance. Saving faith includes and implies that change of mind which is called repentance." Dr. Scofield clearly points out that "saving faith" includes and implies that change of mind, which is called repentance.

One misunderstanding is to say that the word repentance must be used in order to be teaching repentance. If that were true, we would have thrown out the gospel of John from the New Testament. Think of this in the light of why John's gospel was written, "But these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through His name (John 20:31)."

Repentance, you see, is taught in John 3:16. A person can't believe (trust) in Christ as taught in John 3:16 without repenting (changing his mind) in the process. "Repentance, as it relates to Christ, means to change our minds about Him, who He is and what He's done to provide forgiveness, and deliverance from our sins. When we place faith in Jesus as having taken our place personally on the cross and borne the penalty due our sins, then we're automatically repenting, because we couldn't accept Him in this way without having had to change our minds in some way concerning Him." Hal Lindsey. *The Liberation of Planet Earth*. (p. 133).

Salvation is by faith and not by works according to the Scriptures (Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:5). Let's not become tools of the devil to add works to salvation in a subtle way by the misuse of repentance. Let's give out a clear message! (I Corinthians 14:8).