

The image features three black crosses of varying heights on a rocky, brownish hill. The background is a dramatic sky with soft, pinkish-orange and purple clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The scene is framed by dark, jagged rock formations on either side. The overall mood is solemn and spiritual.

Terms of Salvation

**Repentance: A Separate
Requirement for
Salvation, or a Synonym
for Faith? Pt. 2**

Charles Ryrie, from *Balancing the Christian Life*: “The message of faith only and the message of faith plus commitment cannot both be the gospel; therefore one of them is a false gospel and comes under the curse of perverting the gospel or preaching another gospel (Gal 1:6–9), and this is a very serious matter.”

I. The Words for Biblical Repentance

- ✓ *Metamelomai*: The word expresses emotional sorrow over a past decision or stance. It is not used of the gospel message so it is not very relevant to our study.
- ✓ *Metanoia* (and its verb form *metanoeo*). It literally means, “to know after” with the idea of reflection and thus a changed mind. This is the word related to salvation and used most often.

I. The Words for Biblical Repentance

- ✓ *Epistrepho*: “turn someone or something.”
Some people try to associate this word with the last one, and so prove that repentance involves turning from sin (commitment), but it is significant to note that it is never translated “repent.” Because of this, we will not be considering this word either.

I. The Words for Biblical Repentance

II. The Source of Biblical Repentance

A. Repentance Is a Gift of God (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25; Acts 5:31)

B. Repentance Is Effected through the Means of Preaching and Teaching (Lk. 24:47; 2 Tim. 2:25)

III. The Nature of Biblical Repentance

A. It Is Not Reformation

B. It Is Not Contrition (Matt. 27:3)

C. It Is Not Penance

D. It is a Change of Mind

1. The Consistent Meaning

a. Non-Biblical Usage

- ✓ **Classical Greek (1000 B.C.-330 B.C.)**
- ✓ ***Koine* (Common) Greek (330 B.C.-A.D. 330)**

b. Biblical Usage

2. The Biblical Examples

- ✓ **Acts 2:22-38**
- ✓ **Acts 17:30-31**
- ✓ **John 20:31**
- ✓ **Acts 20:20-21**
- ✓ **1 Thess. 1:9**

G. Michael Cocoris wrote...

When John the Baptist preached "repent," he meant change your mind about trusting your merit to enter the world to come and trust the Christ who is about to come.

When Jesus proclaimed, "repent," He meant change your mind from trusting yourself that you are righteous to trusting God's mercy (Lk. 18:9-14) or change your mind concerning who He is.

When Peter urged people to "repent," he meant change your mind about Christ from thinking of Him as a common criminal to Him being the Messiah, the One to trust for the forgiveness of sins.

When Paul admonished people to 'repent,' he meant change your mind from trusting an idol and to trusting Jesus Christ.

When John the Apostle wrote 'repent,' he meant change your mind from trusting idols with the attending immorality to trusting the true God, Jesus Christ.

The message of repentance to unbelievers was that they had to change their minds. Depending on their mindset, they needed a shift in thinking about their merit to enter the world to come, their righteousness, their works, the nature of God and who Jesus Christ is. In other words, repentance is changing ones mind from trusting one's merit, righteousness, works or idols to trusting Jesus Christ.

Tom Stegall: “According to the *new and improved* gospel, someone doesn’t need to believe in Christ’s deity, substitutionary death for sin, or bodily resurrection to be truly born again. As long as that person believes in the name of 'Jesus,' even without an understanding of who He is or what He’s done, such a 'believer' will receive eternal life and become justified by God’s grace—just as long as he believes this 'Jesus' can guarantee him eternal life.”

Harry Ironside was 100% correct when he wrote, “No man preaches the Gospel, no matter what nice things he may say about Jesus, if he leaves out His vicarious death on Calvary’s Cross.”

AN ISSUE TO CONSIDER

SOME QUESTIONS FOR THE LORDSHIP SALVATIONIST

by Dr. Charlie Bing

Followers of Lordship Salvation insist that a person is eternally saved not only by believing in Jesus Christ as Savior, but also by committing completely to Him as the Lord or Master of one's life. Thus salvation also depends on repenting from all sins and giving subsequent evidence of changed conduct and good works. Those who do not persevere in good works and faithfulness till the end of life prove that they were never really saved to begin with. Adherents to Lordship Salvation teach that we are saved by "costly grace" which means they interpret the commands for discipleship (e.g., deny yourself, take up your cross, follow Jesus, etc.) as the price that must be paid for eternal life. Here are some key questions for those who hold to Lordship Salvation, asked in love of course!

How do you know when you've really believed? Since your idea of "genuine faith" must be proved by works and obedience, how do you know your faith qualifies as the real thing, since you can always do and obey more? What is it that really saves you anyway, your faith, or Jesus who is the object of your faith? How can your faith be validated by subjective introspection when your feelings and experiences fluctuate? And if the object of your faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, saves you, shouldn't you validate your faith only by whether it rests in Him?

How do you know when you've thoroughly repented? Since you are not conscious of every sin (cf. Lev. 4:2; 5:15), what if some sins are overlooked and not repented of? At what point do you think you've adequately repented: When your attitude changes about the sin? When you resolve to change your conduct? When your conduct actually changes? When you make restitution or ask for forgiveness? Or when you are sure that there will be no repetition of the sin? And if repentance is not just a change of attitude but a turning from sins and a change in conduct, then why does Jesus tell people to "*bear fruits worthy of repentance*" (Luke 3:8)?

How do you know when you're completely committed to Christ's Lordship? How much commitment is enough to secure your salvation? Is the willingness to commit enough, or must you actually commit everything? And how would you know what everything involves, especially as an unbeliever? Since you believe the commitments required for discipleship are also commitments needed for salvation, and they are ongoing (e.g., deny yourself, take up your cross daily, follow Jesus, abide in God's Word, love Christ supremely, etc.), how do you know when you have fulfilled them?

How do you know when you're completely committed to Christ's Lordship?

How can you expect an unbeliever to make spiritual decisions that reflect spiritual maturity and an understanding of God's will? Aren't you getting the cart before the horse? If an unbeliever is dead in sin, how can that unbeliever know and desire what God wants him or her to do and obey? Isn't knowing and obeying God's will the essence of the Christian's life *after* one believes?

Have you remained completely committed to Christ's lordship? If you haven't, isn't that an indication that you were never fully committed? And wouldn't that mean you were never really saved? Or is it an admission to the reality and power of sin, a reality that would make it impossible for anyone to make the full commitment demanded by your view of salvation?

Which sins disqualify a person as a true believer? Again, is there a list of certain sins that prove one is not saved? What about King David's sins of murder and adultery? Since he was surely saved, do sins have to be worse than his to prove one is unsaved? How much sin is a Christian capable of? Since you undoubtedly agree that Christians do sin, how much is too much before you deny he or she is a true Christian? Where do you draw the line? Why does the Bible instruct church discipline for *Christians* who sin?

If salvation depends on your perseverance in faithfulness and good works, how can you know for sure you are saved? Though you may be living faithfully now, how do you know what tests or temptations you will face tomorrow? If you can not predict the future, isn't there a chance you could sin and die before you repent? As long as that is possible, how can you say with certainty that you are a true Christian and that you have any assurance of eternal life? How could you honestly give assurance of salvation to anyone who says he or she believes the Gospel?

Where is there room to grow? If your saving faith included obedience, forsaking all sins, a committed life, and a guarantee of faithfulness, what is left to do? Why are there so many ethical demands in the Bible addressed to Christians? Aren't they unnecessary if a godly life is inevitable?

Did the apostle John preach a false Gospel? Since the Gospel of John does not mention repentance, or submission, or commitment to Jesus as Lord as

conditions for salvation, but does mention believe as the condition for salvation 98 times, would you call that "easy believism?" Do you think John was ignorant or irresponsible (But I know you believe that is impossible since this is God's inspired Word)? Since his is the only book of the Bible that claims it was written to tell people how to be saved John 20:31, shouldn't it determine what you believe about the condition for salvation?

And by the way, isn't your "costly grace" a contradiction in terms? If grace is a free gift to you paid for by Jesus Christ, how can it cost you anything? If you do anything or make any commitments to merit God's grace,

doesn't that compromise and cancel it (Rom. 4:4; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9)? How then can you receive the grace of salvation by any way other than simple faith? ■

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