

# Article: Is Repentance Necessary For Salvation? ...

## Product Description

### Is Repentance Necessary For Salvation?

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*The "repentance in salvation" question is hotly debated between the dispensationalists and covenant theologians. The idea of "salvation without repentance" understandably sends many into fits of rage. But is salvation without repentance even possible?*

The Greek word for "repent" can be used as a noun or a verb so it is imperative to look at the context of the verse to determine how it is being used.

The Greek word for "repent" is metanoia (noun) or metaneo (verb). It means "to change your mind"

and the context must determine what is involved in that change of mind. Does it mean repent for salvation (addressing non-Believers) or repent from error or sin (addressing Believers)?

Strong's defines the two words this way:

1. (NOUN) meta $\zeta$ noia metanoia, met-an'-oy-ah; from 3340; (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication, reversal (of (another's) decision): - repentance.

2. (VERB) metano $\epsilon$ =w metaneo, met-an-o-eh'-o; from 3326 and 3539; to think differently or afterwards, i.e. reconsider (morally, feel compunction): - repent.

When the word repent was used in the Gospels, speaking to the Jews under the law (i.e. Mark 2:17; Acts 3:19) who had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, the word used was the verb "metano $\epsilon$ " ... they needed to think differently/reconsider what they thought about who Jesus was. The same is true in 1 Thess 1:9 when they had to change their previous conception about God and turn from idolatry.

But in, for instance, 2 Cor 7:10, a different Greek word was used, the verb "metano $\epsilon$ " -- and used interchangeably with "believe." They "changed their mind" about trusting self, good works or tradition and instead trusted the "finished" work of Jesus on the cross.

**Nowhere in the Bible are "believe" and "repent" used together to teach two different requirements for salvation.**

Therefore, when salvation from the sinful state is in view, "repent" (a change of mind) and "believe" (a change of what you're trusting) are in essence used as synonyms.

In Acts 20:21 the two words, repentance and faith, are joined by one article in the Greek text which means that the two are inseparable, although each focuses on a different part of the single requirement of needing a saving faith in the Gospel.

**Lewis Chafer** wrote:



**Chafer**  
1871-1952

"Too often, when it is asserted-as it is here-that repentance is not to be added to belief as a separated requirement for salvation, it is assumed that repentance is not necessary to salvation. Therefore it is as dogmatically stated as language can declare, that **repentance is essential to salvation** and that none could be saved apart from repentance, but **it is included in believing** and cannot be separated from it" (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Vital Theological Issues*, Roy B. Zuck, General Editor, Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1994, p. 119).

**Roy B. Zuck** writes:  
**"Repentance is included in believing.** Faith and repentance are like two sides of a coin. Genuine faith includes repentance, and genuine

repentance includes faith. The Greek word for repentance (metanoia) means to change one's mind. But to change one's mind about what? About sin, about one's adequacy to save himself, about Christ as the only way of salvation, the only One who can make a person righteous." ("Kindred Spirit," a quarterly publication of Dallas Seminary, Summer 1989, p. 5).  
Luke substituted repentance in place of belief in Luke 24:46-47.



Zuck 1932-

*"and He said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'" Luke 24:46-47*

**Dr. Charles Ryrie** says of this verse, *"Clearly, repentance for the forgiveness of sins is connected to the death and resurrection of Christ."* (Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great Salvation*, Victor Books, p. 98).



Charles Ryrie 1925-2016

**Dr. John Ankerberg** stated at a *Steeling the Mind Bible Conference*, Vail, CO, 1997, *"It's not 'faith' that saves you, but rather, the 'object of your faith.' You can have faith*

*that your good works will save you, but they won't. The only thing that can save you is your faith and belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ."*

**The object of your faith must be the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone.**

Other passages clearly support the fact that repentance often means faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. (Acts 10:43 with 11:17-18; Acts 13:38-39 with 2:38; and Acts 16:31 uses only



Ankerberg 1945-

"believe")

Ryrie also points out that in some 50 uses of "faith" or "believe," the Gospel of John never uses the word repent, and bringing men to faith is the written purpose of the Book of John. Did John miss something? Did he give only half the gospel? If Nicodemus needed to repent, "believe" is used interchangeably in place of "repent."

Neither did Jesus tell the woman at the well in Samaria to repent. When she recounted her story, the other Samaritians didn't "repent," rather they "believed."

*"Belief in Christ, as an expression of a change of mind, focuses on the new direction that change about God must take, namely, trusting in Christ, God's Son, as personal Savior. Jews needed to change their minds about Jesus and realize that He is their true Messiah" (Ryrie, p. 98).*



And finally there is, of course, repentance needed in our Christian walk in relation to specific sins we may/will commit (2 Cor. 7:9; Rev. 2:5, Rom 7).

**Christians do sin** and when we are convicted about that sin, we need to repent, or change directions, away from the sin toward God's way. But this repentance has nothing to do with

salvation. It's simply a Believer maturing in his/her faith.

Also it is worth noting that both Nicodemus (John 3:2) and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38) were secret Believers. On the outside they appeared like all the other non-believing Jews. But on the inside they had saving faith in Jesus.

In conclusion, when a non-Believer puts their faith and trust in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they have changed directions/repented of their faith in something that would not save them, or, lack of faith in the only thing that can save them.

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