

Gospel Letter

The Bible tells “the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth” (Rom 1:16). “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom 10:13). And God “commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

Repentance is from a Greek word “metanoes” meaning to have another mind, to change the mind. It is used in the New Testament to indicate a change of mind and heart, in respect to sin, God and self. Repentance is not an act separate from faith, but saving faith includes and implies that change of mind, which is called repentance. See Acts 17:30, 31. Feelings relative to repentance are diverse. One is contrite about sin and failure, and glad about change of mind and heart in regard to same. (Ps 34:18; 51:17; Isa 66:2).

Why repent? Because without repentance, a change of mind and heart (about sin, God, and self), the Lord Jesus stated ye shall perish (remain separated from God forever) - see Luke 13:1-5; John 3:18, 36. There must be faith, trust, submission of mind and heart unto God for salvation. The change is from trusting self and distrusting God, to distrusting self and trusting God (a complete turn-around/change). Salvation is from the penalty of sin forever, from the dominion of sin in this life as the believer is yielded unto God, and ultimately from the very presence of sin when the believer reaches Heaven. Salvation involves reception of the living Lord in His Person, not simply in acknowledging certain facts about Him. “As many as received Him (put trust and hope in Him, and submitted unto Him), to them gave He power to become the sons of God” (Jn 1:12). He is to be received as Savior and Lord (Master of Life).

The Bible tells that God created man as innocent, without sin. Read the story in Genesis chapters 1-5. However, in the garden of Eden man sinned, by disobedience of God's rules. By Adam's disobedience, all born thereafter received a sinful nature, and commit sins in their lives (Rom 5:12-21). The Bible says that in God's sight “there is none righteous, no, not one, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:10, 23). That we are sinners and do sin are self evident truths. The consequence of sin is separation between man and a holy, righteous God. This separation is referred to in the Bible as being lost or condemned. (Read John 3:16, 18, 36.) “It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb 9:27). This Judgment is for unbelievers, who have not put their trust in Jesus Christ as Savior. You may read about it in Revelation 20:11-15. All unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire separated forever.

God is love and desires that no one will be lost (Rom 5:6, 8; 2 Pt 3:9). He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim 1:15). The Lord Jesus Himself said “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost” (Lk 19:10). On the cross “Christ died for our sins.”

(1 Cor 15:3; 1 Pt 2:24). The Bible says we need only believe or put our trust in Him as Savior (Acts 16:31).

There is nothing man can do to be saved, for “by the deeds of the law (doing good) there shall no flesh be justified in His sight” (Rom 3:20). This salvation is a rescue, a deliverance, a saving

operation. It is given freely on the basis of simple trusting faith. Christ is the One “in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace” (Eph 1:7). When a believing Christian dies, the Apostle Paul says death is “absent from the body . . . present with the Lord” (2 Cor 5:6), “which is far better” (Phil 1:23). The Lord Jesus ascended to Heaven (Acts 1:9-11) after resurrection, but He has promised to “come again” to receive the Christians unto Himself, that where He is, there they may be also” (Jn 14:1-3). This is the blessed hope of all believers . . . some day in Heaven forever with the Lord.

Conscience can convict of sin (see Jn 8:9), but conviction is spiritually meaningful only when of the Holy Spirit of God (Jn 16:7-11), who will not always strive with man (try to convince)—see Genesis 6:3. “Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).

Salvation is the great inclusive word of the Bible, gathering into itself all the redemptive acts and processes. “Born again” (new birth) is a Greek word, which in English is also translated as “regeneration”. Therefore, “being born again” or “regenerated” (Ti 3:5, 6), is a creative act of God the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:3-8), within one who believes. Although one may not have great understanding, one can trust and know through believing faith (see Eph 2:8, 9). Like the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:30-34), one may be saved on the basis of very simple knowledge. But faith and belief in the Person and Work of Christ on Calvary are essential. Romans 10:9, 10 indicates believing involves trust, assent of the mind and the heart.

Salvation involves trusting and not feeling. We can be sure! The Psalmist spoke great truth (130:5) “In His Word do I hope.” The Apostle John says “These (the Scriptures) are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name” (Jn 20:31). These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 Jn 5:13). “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom 10:17). It is not the amount or strength of our faith—what counts is the worthiness of Him, the object of our faith. (1 Pt 2:24; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 7:25).

Only one sin separates from salvation through Christ—unbelief. Failure to believe God will be disastrous forever and forever. (Read John 3:18, 36). During a great storm at sea the Apostle Paul received word from God, and declared to his shipmates, “I believe God” (Acts 27:25). God speaks to you through the Bible—do you believe God?