

DO YOU KNOW: REPENTANCE'S ROLE IN SALVATION?

David Halbrook

No one is saved without repenting. Repentance is more than sadness; it is a change of mind (2 Corinthians 7:9). When you believe that Jesus is God, you will quickly learn that you have disobeyed Him. In Acts 2, sinners were told to repent if they desired the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The willingness to leave sin is often a difficult step, but it is an essential step in receiving God's offer of salvation. One man who was taught of his need to repent, was afraid of being punished but still refused to repent (Acts 24:25).

Beware of those who say "faith is repentance." Faith is accepting what is true. Repentance is turning from sin. In Acts 8:18-19, a man named Simon (who previously believed and was baptized, verse 13) returned to his old sinful ways. Peter did not tell him to "have faith" (he already did!) but to repent of his wickedness (v22). You cannot "have faith of your wickedness," but you can repent of your wickedness.

Will you change your life? If so, you understand repentance, but you are still lost. Read more about your need in next week's article available now at our website.

Editor's Note: If you know someone who believes in "salvation by faith alone," then hand them or help them to find this article in *Arkansas Weekly*. I am sure that you know *someone* who could benefit from thinking about this subject. Maybe this article can be an "icebreaker" for someone you know who needs the gospel of Christ.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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MUST ONE UNDERSTAND THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM?

Robert Turner

It was in 1825, eleven years after his baptism, that Alexander Campbell concluded that baptism was for the remission of sins. Austin McGary established the Firm Foundation in 1884 with the intention of discussing this subject. His firm "yes" caused many to think him an extremist; and he and David Lipscomb (who answered with the then popular "No") engaged in journalistic cross-fire on the subject for several years (*Search for Ancient Order*, West; vol. 2, p. 405-f); which proves nothing scriptural, but may prompt a more objective look at matters.

Forgiveness of Sins Many denominations teach that somewhere along the line of hearing the gospel, learning, believing and obeying, we have remission of sins. Now ask, "At what point along the line?" and let the scriptures answer. They affirm it is at the point of baptism (Acts 2:38, 22:16). This is when forgiveness does take place, regardless of what Campbell, McGary or anyone else thought about it.

Knowledge and Submission Must the candidate know that he or she must be baptized? Must implies submission to an authority and suggests an adverse effect should he or she fail to comply. The scriptures say the Lord is that authority -- not some "church regulation" or accepted social practice. Frequently people equate the "doctrine of the church" with the teaching of the Lord -- when in reality they *may* have little in common. If one's allegiance, and hence one's submission, is actually "to the church" -- having little or no knowledge of the teaching of Christ -- how can their baptism be "to obey the Lord."

Why Baptism? Try honestly to consider the passages that teach that you *must* be baptized and see if you can avoid the WHY? Consider such phrases as: to "fulfill righteousness" lest you "reject the council of God" against yourself; "shall be saved" or "make disciples, baptizing" "for the remission of sins" or to "wash away thy sins", etc. The details, the fine and technical points, might easily be missed -- but by the time one has learned that he or she *must* be baptized, he or she would have learned enough of the reason to make baptism valid.

Conclusion The matter hinges on -- was the subject properly taught, so that he or she came to *Christ* as a result of being taught, hearing, and learning Christ. This is the only valid way (John 6:45) to be baptized. The subject's understanding, not the preacher's, is the key. (www.westmainchurchofchrist.org/articlelibrary.html)

"I HAVE HEARD THE REPROACH OF MOAB"

Profiting From the Prophets by Steven J. Wallace

Zephaniah 2:8-9 "I have heard the reproach of Moab, And the insults of the people of Ammon, With which they have reproached My people, And made arrogant threats against their borders. Therefore, as I live," Says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, "Surely Moab shall be like Sodom, And the people of Ammon like Gomorrah- Overrun with weeds and saltpits, And a perpetual desolation. The residue of My people shall plunder them, And the remnant of My people shall possess them."

Moab and Ammon were two contemporary countries with Old Testament Israel. Their originator was a man named "Lot," Abraham's nephew. Lot had two sons, Moab, and Ben-Ammi, who were born shortly after God had destroyed the immoral cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:30-38). Their history with Israel was filled with distrust, violence and heated hatred. The amazing thing in Zephaniah's day is that Moab and Ammon were headed towards a history that they had so long known and feared in reference to their forefather—they were headed for *Sodom's fate!* Previously, Lot was a resident of Sodom (Gen. 14:12). In fact, at one time he was rescued by Abraham when he and others from Sodom were taken captive by a foreign confederacy of kings. Subsequent to that he was rescued by two angels when they led him out of the wicked city. This escape was followed by an overthrow of fire like no city has ever since seen (Gen. 19). Sodom and Gomorrah were left for all men as an example of God's vengeance upon a sinful society (Jude v. 7). God promised to make Moab like Sodom . . . so, where is Moab today?

The apostle Peter spoke of Lot's deliverance in the New Testament, saying, "*and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)*" (2 Pet. 2:7, 8). Yet, Zephaniah wrote to Lot's descendants in the seventh century B.C. warning against their "lawless deeds."

There are several profound points that stand out from the above.

1. Cities and nations may have a righteous element in their beginning, but they can become thoroughly corrupt in time. God still reigns despite such, however.
2. Children do not inherit the righteousness or the wickedness of their forefathers. Lot was righteous but these descendants were wicked. In accordance with this, Ezekiel penned, "*The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself*" (Ezek. 18:20).
3. God hears what we say! God heard the reproach and insults uttered by the nations of Moab and Ammon regarding His people. Some people today do not know how to disagree with each other in an honorable way. It is a temptation that many fall for by reducing a controversy to merely hurling insults. I ask, "Does God not hear our insults too?"
4. There can be major consequences from the way we talk. These two nations were doomed because of what they were saying. "*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people*" (Prov. 14:34). Sometimes we minimize sins of the tongue, yet, where are Moab and Ammon today among the lot of nations? We too shall be judge by our words (Matt. 12:26). What does the Lord hear from our lips? What are we saying about God's church? Is our speech any better than Moab's?

Be careful what you say and do; begin honoring God with your life, your tongue and your deeds. God destroyed these nations because they spoke and acted arrogantly. What will He do to us on judgment day? "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). "Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden in the day of the LORD'S anger" (Zeph. 2:3).

www.sunnysidechurchofchrist.com/articles/I%20have%20heard%20the%20reproach%20of%20Moab.pdf