## Repentance

### А. Terminology

Repentance is turning from sin to God. The Old Testament has many ways to express the concept of repentance. For example, we find such phrases as: “Incline your hearts to Yahweh” (Josh 24:23), “Circumcise yourselves to Yahweh” (Jer 4:4), and, “Break up your fallow ground” (Hos 10:12).[[1]](#footnote-1)

For the most part, the Old Testament idea of repentance is expressed by the verb שׁוּב (*shuv*). This term basically means “turn” or “return.” Such a meaning is found in Genesis 22:5, where Abraham said, “I and the lad will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.” Therefore, in contexts that refer to repentance, the word שׁוּב (*shuv*) describes an action when a person turns from sin and turns to the Lord.

Other key texts include: Jeremiah 25:5: “Turn (שׁוּב) now everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds,” Isaiah 44:22: “Return (שׁוּב) to Me, for I have redeemed you,” and Ezekiel 18:27: “When a wicked man turns away (שׁוּב) from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life.” Here we see that a person is directed in life either toward righteousness or unrighteousness. Repentance relates to both turning from sin and turning to God.

Dement comments on the meaning of שׁוּב (*shuv*) – it is “a radical change in one’s attitude toward sin and God. The term implies a conscious, moral separation and a personal decision to forsake sin and enter into fellowship with God.”[[2]](#footnote-2) On the other hand, Thompson notes that the same term is used when people turn away from the Lord (e.g. Jer 34:16; 8:5). It also describes the instances when God cancels punishment, that is, “turns away from it” (e.g. Hos 14:5).[[3]](#footnote-3)

In Isaiah 45:22 another word relates to the concept of repentance – פָּנַה (*pana*): “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.” The significance of this word is that the Hebrew word for “face” comes from this verb root. This demonstrates that God invites people to stand face to face with Him, and to turn their backs on sin. Repentance, then, is an act that leads to an overall life orientation of living for the Lord. Interestingly, this word is also used when Yahweh turns to His people to bless them (Lev 26:9).

A less commonly found term for repentance is נָחַם (*naham*). Its basic meaning is “pant,” “exhale,” or “groan.” It usually applies to compassion or suffering. The term often describes God’s compassion, but refers to human repentance only in Job 42:6 and Jer 8:6; 31:19.[[4]](#footnote-4) The word נָחַם (*naham*) can be found together with שׁוּב (*shuv*) in the sense of “turn and relent” (see Jonah 3:10).[[5]](#footnote-5)

In the New Testament, the primary term for repentance is μετάνοια (*metanoia*), which consists of two elements: μετα (*meta*), which means “after,” and νοια (*noia*) from the word νοῦς (*nous*) or “mind.” Therefore, its basic denotation is “after thought” in the sense of “reconsider” or “change one’s mind.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

For the Greeks of antiquity, μετάνοια (*metanoia*), i.е., a change in thinking, was accompanied with sorrow only in the sense that a previous intention or direction turned out to be unsuccessful or incorrect. The word for the Greeks, however, lacked the idea of a complete change in one’s life direction. Therefore, the biblical conception of repentance was foreign to the Greeks.[[7]](#footnote-7)

The Septuagint lacks the noun μετάνοια (*metanoia*), but the verb form μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) is used to translate the Hebrew נָחַם (*naham*), but not שׁוּב (*shuv*). In most cases, μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) reflects the idea of “regret.” The Septuagint translators preferred to translate שׁוּב (*shuv*) with the Greek verbs ἀποστρέφω (*apostrepho*) or ἐπιστρέφω (*epistrepho*). Nevertheless, when μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) is in parallel with ἀποστρέφω (*apostrepho*) or ἐπιστρέφω (*epistrepho*), it can refer to repentance.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The New Testament writers, however, did not follow the Septuagint, but preferred the term μετανοέω (*metanoeo*).[[9]](#footnote-9) Goetzmann comments that in this way they emphasized a change of mind and will, and not a physical change of direction.[[10]](#footnote-10) Kromminga states that μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) refers to a change of inner disposition while ἐπιστρέφω (*epistrepho*) indicates a change in one’s direction is life, yet the difference in meaning here is actually slight.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The terms μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) and μετάνοια (*metanoia*) are found most frequently in Luke’s writings and in the Book of Revelation. Dunnett highlights several key passages in Luke where Jesus calls people to repentance (Lk 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 17:3–4) or where repentance in associated with forgiveness of sins (Lk 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 26:18, 20).[[12]](#footnote-12) The words μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) and μετάνοια (*metanoia*) are rare in Paul and are completely absent in John’s Gospel and epistles.[[13]](#footnote-13)

### B. Biblical Survey and Intertestamental Period

**1. Old Testament**

We will begin our survey of the Old Testament with the Torah and the book of Job. The book of Job is well known for Job’s dialog with his “friends,” who are trying to lead him to repentance for sins that supposedly led to his ruin. Job is open to God’s reproof and asks to be shown his sin (Job 13:23). In the end, Job says, “I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:6), but his repentance was not for personal sin, but for doubting God.

The book of Genesis contains an interesting example when the brothers of Joseph repented of their wicked treatment of him (Gen 44). Joseph tested them to convince himself of the sincerity of their repentance (Gen 42). In the next Pentateuchal book, we see an example of insincere repentance when Pharaoh repented under Yahweh’s chastisement, but relented when the Lord withdrew His punishments and gave him relief (Ex chp. 6ff).

The Law of Moses prescribed confession of sin and restitution if necessary when offering a sacrifice for sin (Lev 5:5; 26:40-42; Num 5:5-8). Forgiveness was not extended to the proud or unrepentant (Deut 29:19-21).

At times, Israel repented at Yahweh’s rebuke (Ex 33:4-6), but sometimes they went to the extreme of overcorrecting their mistake in violation of God’s command (Num 14:39-45). God predicted that by means of His discipline, Israel would eventually acknowledge their pitiful spiritual condition (Deut 31:17) and would turn to Him in sincerity during the exile (Deut 4:29-30; 30:2) and receive restoration (Deut 30:3-5).

In the historical books, we encounter similar episodes of both repentance and unrepentance. At times, people repent at the rebuke of the Lord or His prophets (Judg 2:3-4; 2 Sam 12; 1 Kin 21:28), or after a manifestation of His power (1 Kin 18:36-39). More frequently, though, people turn to Yahweh during times of distress (1 Chr 21:8ff, 1 Kin 14:1-3; 2 Chr 15:3-6), which is especially featured in the book of Judges. Judges records a repeating cycle: Israel forsakes Yahweh, the Lord sends punishment, Israel repents, and God delivers His people. Israel’s persistence in disobedience eventually led to their exile (2 Kin 17:14-15; 2 Kin 25).

The Old Testament recorded cases of people hardening their hearts to the Lord’s rebuke (2 Chr 36:11-13) to the extreme of killing His prophets who are delivering the rebuke (e.g. 1 Kin 11:40). On the other hand, even those who are farthest from the Lord can repent, as in the case of Manasseh (2 Chr 33:12-13). David also serves as an example of sincere repentance and rededication after God’s rebuke of his transgressions (2 Sam 12:19-21).

In some instances, repentance is incomplete. Although Jehu served Yahweh, he failed to remove the idolatrous golden calves (2 Kin 10:29). Jeroboam’s repentance resembled Pharaoh’s. He turned to God in trouble, but never really changed his direction in life (1 Kin 13:6, 33).

People engaged in sincere repentance confess their sins to God (1 Kin 8:33-36; 2 Chr 6:24-25), abandon them, (1 Sam 7:3-5), and sometimes perform some external expression of their remorse, such as tearing their clothes (2 Kin 22:11; 2 Chr 34:19-28) or putting on sackcloth (2 Kin 6:29-30). After repenting, people may make a covenant of rededication to the Lord (2 Kin 23:3).

As a result of repentance, God annuls the prescribed punishment (e.g. 2 Chr 12:6-7; 32:26) and restores the repentant one (1 Sam 12:10-11; 1 Kin 8:46ff, 2 Chr 7:14).

In the Old Testament poetical books, people seek forgiveness from the Lord (Ps 39:8; 51:1-4), confess sin (Ps 32:3-6; Ps 38:18), and abandon it (Prov 28:13). They turn from their own way to seek the Lord (Ps 50:23; 119: 26, 30, 59). God regards the broken in spirit (Ps 51:17). The Psalms also warn of insincere repentance (Ps 78:34-37) and of punishment for unrepentance (Ps 7:12-13; 106:43). An inner renewal is needed (Ps 51:10), which only God can accomplish (Ps 80:3, 7, 19).[[14]](#footnote-14) God’s chastisement can result in repentance (Ps 83:16).

The book of Proverbs often comments on people’s failure to correctly evaluate their lives, thinking themselves righteous (Prov 16:2; 21:2; 14:12; 16:25; 28:14; 30:12). Therefore, the reader is exhorted to receive God’s correction (Prov 3:11-12; 15:10-12; 13:1; 29:1).

The Old Testament prophetic books abound in calls to repentance in view of the coming punishment of exile. Yahweh calls both the Northern Kingdom (Hos 14:1-2) and the Southern Kingdom (Jer 6:8, 26; 26:3) to repent. Ezekiel invites those already in exile to repent so that God may restore them (Ezek 33:10-11). Isaiah calls people to prepare for the Lord’s coming (Isa 40:3-5). The Lord commissioned Jonah to preach repentance to the people of Nineveh.

Along with sorrow for sin, God calls the repentant to change their behavior (Hos 10:12; 12:6), which at times involved destroying idols (Isa 30:22; 31:7). Isaiah writes the following well-known summons to repentance:[[15]](#footnote-15)

- Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless, defend the orphan, plead for the widow (Isa 1:16-17).

- Seek Yahweh while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to Yahweh, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon (Isa 55:6-7).

As we saw in the other sections of the Old Testament, God often leads people to repentance through chastisement (Isa 26:16; Jer 2:27). If people are not willing to listen to the Lord in times of peace, He will send calamity (Jer 22:20-23). When troubles comes, God makes it known whether it is from Him or not (Isa 1:5-8).[[16]](#footnote-16) Israel acutely experienced the Lord’s discipline during the exile, which resulted in their repentance (Jer 24:7; 50:4; Ezek 6:8-10; 7:16-19; 16:41-43). Thus, Yahweh draws His “unfaithful bride” back to Himself (Hos 2:7, 14). After the exile, a faithful remnant will return (Isa 4:3-4). Hosea writes about this time:

Come, let us return to Yahweh. For He has torn {us,} but He will heal us; He has wounded {us,} but He will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before Him (Hos 6:1-2).

God responds to repentance with mercy (Isa 30:19) and offers forgiveness: “Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool” (Isa 1:18; сf. Jer 36:3; Ezek 33:13-16). Consequently, repentance leads to deliverance (Isa 30:15; 55:7) and redemption (Isa 59:20) from the Lord. The repentant acquire life and blessing (Ezek 18:21-31; Jer 7:3-7; Amos 5:4-6). Their punishment in annulled (Jer 18:7-8).

However, in most cases Israel did not listen to Yahweh or repent (Isa 65:2, 12; Jer 5:3; 15:7; 18:12). They rejected the message of rebuke by the prophets (Ezek 3:4-7; Amos 2:12). Jeremiah devotes much attention to this theme.[[17]](#footnote-17) Israel also rejected the discipline of the Lord (Isa 9:8-13; 42:25; Amos 4:6-11). Even when they witnessed God’s punishment of others, they were not moved (Jer 44:7-10). Instead, they were not even ashamed of their ways (Jer 3:3; 6:15) and rejected God’s messengers of correction (Amos 5:10; 7:10-13).

The prophets warned that people can harden their heart to the point that they can no longer repent. Isaiah wrote that Israel became as hard as iron or bronze (Isa 48:4). Jeremiah states that God’s people are blind (Jer 5:21). Hosea reveals that Israel is not able to recognize their sin (Hos 12:8; сf. Jer 8:5-7; 8:12). Micah describes Israel’s condition as an incurable illness (Mic 1:9). God stands aloof from such persons (Zeph 2:1-3; Lam 3:42-44; Amos 8:11-13). This well-known saying in Isaiah’s prophecy speaks directly to this condition: “

Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed (Isa 6:10).

As was noted previously, the prophets also decry incomplete repentance: “Yet in spite of all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to Me with all her heart, but rather in deception” (Jer 3:10). Repentance can be insincere (Hos 7:10, 14). Even when people fast, it does not necessarily mean that they have truly repented (Isa 22:12-14; Zech 7:5-6). God calls people to repent with a whole heart: “Rend your heart and not your garments” (Joel 2:13; сf. Ezek 14:6; Jer 4:4, 14).

Finally, the Old Testament predicts God’s intervention to deliver His people from disobedience and unrepentance. God predicts through Hosea, “I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely” (Hos 14:4; сf. Isa 57:18), and through Ezekiel, Yahweh promises, “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezek 36:26).

**2. Intertestamental Period**

In the intertestamental literature, the word μετάνοια (*metanoia*) can carry the sense of overall repentance and total commitment to the Lord, but more often it relates to overcoming specific vices or observing specific commandments. Repentance also has an eschatological application – in the future, God will act to draw His people to Himself.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Philo sometimes employed the word μετάνοια (*metanoia*) in the secular sense of “rethink,” but included also a religious and moral element, that is, turning from sin to God. Josephus used it in a similar way. In his understanding of repentance, Philo also borrowed a nuance from Stoicism of harmonization of word and thought.[[19]](#footnote-19) Also significant is that Philo used μετάνοια (*metanoia*) to describe Gentiles turning to God.[[20]](#footnote-20)

At Qumran, emphasis was placed on turning from all evil (1QS 5:1) and observing the Mosaic Law (1QS 5:8). Members of this community considered themselves “converts of Israel” (CD 4:2) and their covenant with the Lord a “covenant of conversion” (CD 19:16).[[21]](#footnote-21)

**3. New Testament**

According to New Testament teaching, all people must repent. Paul announced to the people of Athens, “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all {people} everywhere should repent” (Acts 17:30), and Jesus said to His disciples, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Lk 13:3, 5).

Therefore, when John the Baptist came he baptized not only “sinners” in Israel, but also the most religious among them, i.е., the Pharisees (Matt 3:7). This general call to repentance was associated with the proclamation, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2). Therefore, everyone must ready themselves for this new stage of God’s plan (Mk 1:2-3). After John, and for the same purpose, Jesus also preached repentance (Matt 4:17). When the Lord sent His disciples on their mission, He directed them to preach repentance (Lk 24:47; сf. Acts 3:19). The New Testament Church considered repentance one of the foundational truths of Christian faith (Heb 6:1).[[22]](#footnote-22)

As it was in the Old Testament, repentance was a call to turn from sin (Acts 8:22; 2 Cor 12:21; Rev 2:21-22) and turn to God (Acts 20:21; 26:20; Rev 16:9).[[23]](#footnote-23) In preaching repentance, Jesus and John meant a complete change in life direction. Jesus illustrated this by comparing repentance to becoming a child again: “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven”(Matt 18:3), and, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matt 19:14). Also significant is that at the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus revealed that God’s kingdom consisted of the “poor in spirit,” the “meek,” and those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt 5:3-6).

Repentance results in salvation, forgiveness of sins, and deliverance from God’s wrath (Lk 3:3; Matt 3:7). When Jesus sent His followers on their mission, He repeated the promise of forgiveness through repentance (Lk 24:47). Consequently, Peter preached repentance to the crowd on Pentecost Day (Acts 2:38-39), to the people of Jerusalem after healing the lame man (Acts 3:19), and to the leaders of Israel (Acts 5:31).[[24]](#footnote-24)

Along with these, Paul also proclaimed “to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21). In Athens he declared, “Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all {people} everywhere should repent” (Acts 17:30).[[25]](#footnote-25)

The New Testament sometimes speaks of repentance as a gift from God.[[26]](#footnote-26) Paul counseled Timothy, “…with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim 2:25). God “exalted (Jesus) to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31). The leaders of the Jerusalem church concluded, “God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance {that leads} to life” (Acts 11:18).

In the New Testament, repentance is associated not only with confession of personal sins (Matt 3:6; Acts 19:18; 1 Jn 1:9), but also with recognition of one’s fallen condition (Lk 5:8). It was sometimes associated with water baptism (Mk 1:4).[[27]](#footnote-27) In addition, James exhorts his readers, “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed” (Jam 5:16). Zacchaeus was prepared to make restitution (Lk 19:8). Furthermore, both John the Baptist (Lk 3:8) and Paul (Acts 26:20) required acts corresponding to repentance. The new converts of Ephesus destroyed their books of magic (Acts 19:19).

Often, the repentant show deep emotion. Peter wept after He denied the Lord (Matt 26:75). After His encounter with Christ on the Damascus road, Paul did not eat for three days (Acts 9:9). At the same time, Paul cautioned that sincere repentance involves not only regret, but also motivates to action (2 Cor 7:9-11). For example, the prodigal son announced, “I will get up and go to my father” (Lk 15:18). Judas, though, went in the opposite direction: “He threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself” (Matt 27:5).

As it was in the Old Testament, in Jesus’ ministry many of His hearers failed to repent. Those who did repent, both at Jesus’ preaching and John’s, tended to be common people and “sinners” (Lk 7:29-30). The Pharisees and religious leaders, as a rule, did not sense a need to repent and rejected the call (Matt 21:28-32; 22:1-5; Acts 7:54-58). There were times when an entire town rejected Jesus or His disciples (Matt 11:20-24; Lk 8:37).

Jesus revealed that some people will not repent in any case (Matt 11:16-19), even after seeing miracles (Lk 16:27-31; Jn 11:47-53) or experiencing harsh chastisements (Rev 9:20-21; 16:9-21). Both Herod (Mk 6:20) and Felix (Acts 24:26) enjoyed hearing the Word, yet did not repent. Paul stated that such people fail to realize that “the kindness of God leads you to repentance” (Rom 2:4).

Repentance, of course, relates to the unbelieving world, who must “turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God” (Acts 26:18; сf. 1 Thes 1:9). Yet, it applies to believers in Christa as well. Jesus called the churches in Asia Minor to repentance (Rev 3:3, 19; 2:5, 16, 21). The author of Hebrews warns that persistence in sin may hinder one’s ability to repent (Heb 6:4-8).[[28]](#footnote-28)

### C. Theological Considerations

**1. Element of Repentance**

**а. Participation of the Mind**

The Bible speaks of various elements found in the repentance experience. First, the mind is involved in confessing sins to God. God says through Hosea, “I will go away {and} return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face” (Hos 5:15). The Psalmist confesses his sins to Yahweh: “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to Yahweh’; And You forgave the guilt of my sin” (Ps 32:5). Mueller concurs that true repentance includes the involvement of the mind in acknowledging our need for forgiveness: “True contrition may be said to exist in every case where a penitent sinner regards himself as eternally lost on account of his sins.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

God’s law plays a special role in this regard. Romans 3:20 reveals that “through the Law {comes} the knowledge of sin.” When the Law convicts of sin, a person acknowledges his or her transgression before the Lord and the need for forgiveness. Correspondingly, Mueller correctly observes that for effective preaching of the gospel, people should also hear the Law so that they recognize their need for the good news of the gospel.[[30]](#footnote-30) So then, it is through the Law that people learn the truth about themselves and confess their sinfulness before God. Only then are they ready to hear the gospel. Only then does it become Good News to them.

We can cite the following comments on the role of the mind in repentance:[[31]](#footnote-31)

Repentance is that change of a sinner’s mind that leads him or her to turn from evil ways and live. Intellectually, human beings must apprehend sin as unutterably heinous, the divine law as perfect and binding, and themselves as falling short of the requirements of a holy God.

But the exhortations of the ancient prophets, of Jesus, and of the apostles show that the change of mind is the dominant idea of the words employed, while the accompanying grief and reform of life are necessary consequences.

**b. Participation of the Emotions**

Emotions also play a role in repentance. In a true experience of repentance, one not only acknowledges sin, but also has a feeling of shame for it. The sinner regrets their action. Bromiley writes, “Repentance, however, is more than recognition of sin. It is recognition that this sin is under the judgment of God.”[[32]](#footnote-32) It is often thought that the regret that the sinner experiences should be not because of the negative consequences of sin, but for the violation of God’s law and the insult to His nature.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The Bible speaks of instances when gospel preaching brought about a feeling of regret for sin. When Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, his hearer’s response was one of contrition: “When they heard {this,} they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’”(Acts 2:37). The word “pierced” is κατανύσσομαι (*katanussomai*), which is located only here in the New Testament. Its basic meaning is a sharp pain associated with anxiety or regret. In Acts 2:37, this term relates to regret in association with sin. When Peter’s audience became aware of their rejection of Messiah Jesus, this feeling of remorse led to their repentance.

We also encounter examples where people did not repent. In Acts 5:33, the apostles testified before the Sanhedrin. Having heard the word, “they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them” (Acts 5:33). This word, διαπρίω (*diaprio*), literally means “saw in half” and is found with that meaning in 1 Chronicles 20:3 when David defeated the Ammonites: “He brought out the people who {were} in it, and cut (διαπρίω) {them} with saws and with sharp instruments and with axes.” In response to Stephen’s testimony, his hearers “were cut to the quick (διαπρίω), and they {began} gnashing their teeth at him” (Acts 7:54).

It is clear that the preaching of the gospel can effect both the mind and emotions. For those who respond positively to the Good News, the experience is described as κατανύσσομαι (*katanussomai*), i.е., “pierce” or “strike.” For those who reject God’s salvation plan, it is described as διαπρίω (*diaprio*), or “saw in half.”

David provides us a good example of the emotion that accompanies repentance. After his sin with Bathsheba, he earnestly prays in Psalm 51, “Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight.” David experienced shame for his sin and repented not only in mind, but also in soul.

We can compare David’s example with that of Saul. In 1 Samuel 15, King Saul failed to carry out Yahweh’s commission to exterminate the Amalekites. God had commanded, “Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has” (v. 3). However, Saul spared the Amalekite king Agag and the best of the herds. When he met Samuel, he declared, “I have carried out the command of Yahweh” (v. 13). After Samuel reproved him, Saul continued to defend his innocence: “I did obey the voice of Yahweh, and went on the mission on which Yahweh sent me” (v. 20). After another correction from Samuel, Saul admitted, “I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of Yahweh and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice” (v. 24). Here, Saul repented in mind by acknowledging his sin.

Yet, it seems that Saul had not yet repented in feeling. Later, he requested of Samuel, “I have sinned; {but} please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship Yahweh your God” (v. 30). He apparently had not taken his transgression seriously. He was more concerned about his reputation than his position before the Lord. Saul’s repentance appears incomplete – in mind, but without an accompanying sense of shame.[[34]](#footnote-34)

Dement and Smith make the following comment:

A change in emotional attitude is necessarily involved in genuine repentance. A penitent cannot be emotionally indifferent to sin. Before there can be a hearty turning away from unrighteousness, there must be a consciousness of sin’s effect on humanity and its offensiveness to God.[[35]](#footnote-35)

At the same time, Chafer makes an important clarification.[[36]](#footnote-36) He warns that if we require deep emotion or tears in connection with repentance, we may actually hinder a person’s conversion. Emotions are not subject to the will, and the will is the primary component in true repentance. Chafer cites Matthew 21:28-29, where he claims that in this parable, the most important thing was that the son *did* the will of his father.[[37]](#footnote-37) An overemphasis on emotion is also problematic in that a person is looking not to Christ for salvation, but within himself or herself in introspection for feelings of regret and sorrow.

Erickson also observes that the Bible records a variety of emotional responses. On the one hand, after encountering the Lord, Paul prayed and fasted for three days. On the other hand, Lydia simply opened her heart to the Lord (Acts 16:14). Erickson advises, “It is important not to insist that the incidentals or external factors of conversion be identical for everyone.”[[38]](#footnote-38)

**c. Participation of the Will**

The third aspect of repentance is the involvement of the will. Repentance consists not only in acknowledgement of sin and feelings of remorse, but also in action. It invariably leads to a change in behavior. A key verse for this concept it found in 2 Corinthians 7:9, where Paul refers to a rebuke he delivered to the church in Corinth: “I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to {the point of} repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to {the will of} God.” Verse 11 defines what that “sorrow” consisted of: “For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong!”

Sorrow in accordance with the will of God motivates a person to correct his error and overcome his sin. Genuine repentance not only leads to acknowledgement of sin and remorse for it, but also to turning to the Lord for forgiveness and power to overcome sin.

In Luke chapter 3, John the Baptist laid stress on the fruit of repentance, or the actions resulting from it: “Bear fruits in keeping with repentance” (v. 10). When the people asked John what they should do, he responded, “The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise,” “Collect no more than what you have been ordered to," and, “Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse {anyone} falsely, and be content with your wages” (v. 11-14). John expected that repentance would lead to life change.

Contrasting the behavior of Peter and Judas is of special interest. Peter denied Jesus three times. After this, “Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, ‘Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly” (Matt 26:75). Clearly, Peter experienced repentance in mind and emotion. He remembered what Jesus had predicted he would do, and wept out of shame for it. Judas also admitted his wrongdoing: “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood” (Matt 27:4). The Bible also records that he “threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and departed.” He apparently also felt remorse for what he had done.

However, the difference between Peter and Judas was that the former returned to the Lord, while Judas “went away and hanged himself.” Peter’s repentance motivated him to receive forgiveness and restoration from the Lord. Judas, though, did not experience a complete repentance, but rather, in Paul’s words, “the sorrow of the world” (2 Cor 7:10), which leads to death. The “sorrow of the world” drives a sinner away from the Lord, while true repentance brings him or her to the Lord. The “sorrow of the world” leads to despair, while genuine repentance bring hope. The “sorrow of the world” may involve mind and emotions, but lacks the motivating power that true repentance provides.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Dement and Smith offer the following conclusion:

But the type of grief that issues in repentance must be distinguished from that which simply plunges into remorse. There is a godly sorrow and a worldly sorrow; the former brings life, the latter death…. True repentance involves not only a conviction of personal sinfulness but also an earnest appeal to God to forgive according to His mercy.[[40]](#footnote-40)

Finally, Grudem makes a helpful distinction between repentance as a specific act and the fruit of repentance that issues from it.[[41]](#footnote-41)

**d. Summary**

We will attempt to summarize the above considerations in hopes of arriving at a general definition of repentance. An individual becomes aware of their sin, confesses it, experiences shame and remorse for the offense and turns to the Lord for forgiveness and the power to overcome sin. Kromminga proposes a similar definition:

Generally, however, *metanoia* can be said to denote that inward change of mind, affections, convictions, and commitment rooted in the fear of God and sorrow for offenses committed against him, which, when accompanied by faith in Jesus Christ, results in an outward turning from sin to God and his service in all of life.[[42]](#footnote-42)

Grudem so understands repentance as well:

Repentance, like faith, is an intellectual *understanding* (that sin is wrong), an emotional *approval* of the teachings of Scripture regarding sin (a sorrow for sin and a hatred of it), and a *personal decision* to turn from it (a renouncing of sin and a decision of the will to forsake it and lead a life of obedience to Christ instead).[[43]](#footnote-43)

**2. Extent of Repentance**

As far as the extent of repentance, that is, who needs to repent, the Bible clearly indicates that repentance is for all. The preaching of repentance in the New Testament began with John the Baptist. His teaching revealed that a new epoch was beginning in God’s plan: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2). God was about to give new revelation through His Son and through the gospel. He will establish a new covenant and a new order among His people.

The appropriate response to the opening of this new epoch is repentance. John called both tax collectors and Pharisees to repent. In preparation for Messiah’s coming, sinners must forsake their waywardness, and those who suppose themselves righteous – from their self-righteousness.

When Jesus came, He also preached repentance: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17). He applied repentance to all people again in Luke 13:4-5: “Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were {worse} culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Jesus’ disciples also preached repentance. When the Lord sent them to preach, the Bible records, “They went out and preached that {men} should repent” (Mk 6:12). In addition, after His death and resurrection, Jesus commissioned his followers to preach repentance: “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Lk 24:46-47).

In the book of Acts, the disciples continued in this same spirit. Peter declared to the people of Jerusalem, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). Furthermore, Paul spoke to the inhabitants of Athens, “Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all {people} everywhere should repent” (Acts 17:30). The apostle to the Gentiles was “solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Therefore, the Church’s message to the unbelieving world is, first of all, a message of repentance, i.е., a determination to forsake one’s old ways and center one’s life in God.

Jesus compared repentance with the condition of a child: “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 18:3). In repentance, an individual turns not only from wrong behavior, but also from old ways of thinking, relating to others, etc., and becomes like a child again, ready to learn a new way of life. In other words, this person is ready to become a new creature in Christ.

Repentance applies to believers as well. The New Testament testifies of this, especially in the book of Revelation. In the seven letters to the churches of Asia Minor, we encounter five calls to repentance. In addition, the epistle to the Hebrews speaks of the Lord’s discipline: “For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives” (Heb 12:6). Grudem writes in this regard, “It is important to realize that faith and repentance are not confined to the beginning of the Christian life. They are rather attitudes of heart that continue throughout our lives as Christians.”[[44]](#footnote-44) Therefore, repentance serves both for conversion of sinners and purification of the Church.

In the Gospels and book of Acts, the call to repentance is a general one. For example, John the Baptist announced, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 3:2). Peter proclaimed, “Repent, and be baptized” (Acts 2:38). Paul declared, “God is now declaring to men that all {people} everywhere should repent” (Acts 17:30). In these passages, no mention is made of specific sins. God’s call to the unbelieving world is to alter one’s entire worldview and lifestyle.

For those who have already turned to Christ, repentance involves specific areas of failure. In these cases, God is not calling to a radical reorientation of life, but to specific changes. Therefore, when we see in Scripture a call for believers to repent, the area in need of repentance is indicated. In the book of Revelation, for example, the Lord calls attention to the loss of “first love,” entertaining false teaching, and adultery as areas in need of repentance.

Jesus illustrated the difference between repentance for the unbelieving world and for the Church when He washed the disciples’ feet. In John 13:10, He stated, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean.” When persons turn to the Lord, they do not need to repeat their initial act of repentance. They are already clean. Yet, from time to time, they will need to confess and forsake certain sins in order to continue to grow in the Lord and enjoy free fellowship with Him.[[45]](#footnote-45)

God desires that repentance in the life of believers would result in their spiritual growth. Jesus said, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent” (Rev 3:19). In addition, repentance can prevent believers from falling away from the Lord. In Paul’s words, “But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world” (1 Cor 11:32).

Erickson comments,

There may be other points when believers must abandon a particular practice or belief lest they revert to a life of sin. These events, however, are secondary, reaffirmations of the one major step that has been taken. We might say that there may be many conversions in the Christian’s life, but only one Conversion.[[46]](#footnote-46)

**3. Relationship of Repentance to Salvation**

We affirm Erickson’s summation of the relationship of repentance to salvation: “Conversion is a single entity which has two distinguishable but inseparable aspects: repentance and faith. Repentance is the unbeliever’s turning away from sin, and faith is his or her turning toward Christ.”[[47]](#footnote-47) He adds, “The large number of verses and the variety of contexts in which repentance is stressed make clear that it is not optional but indispensable.”[[48]](#footnote-48)

It is also worth clarifying that repentance alone is inadequate to receive salvation. Sometimes we hear the expression “I repented” as a synonym for “I was saved.” The Bible, however, makes clear that both repentance and faith are required to receive eternal life. They are separate steps in the conversion event (Mk 1:15; Acts 20:21). The New Testament even distinguishes repentance from conversion (Acts 3:19; 26:20).[[49]](#footnote-49)

Calvin defends this distinction between repentance and faith: “But although they cannot be separated, they ought to be distinguished. As there is no faith without hope, and yet faith and hope are different, so repentance and faith, though constantly linked together, are only to be united, not confounded” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.3.5).[[50]](#footnote-50)

Several key texts link repentance with salvation. We again refer to Peter’s preaching on Pentecost Day: “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). Later he declared, “Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away” (Acts 3:19). Jesus Himself said, “Repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations” (Lk 24:46-47). Finally, we cite Acts 11:18: “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance {that leads} to life.”[[51]](#footnote-51)

Nevertheless, it is important to consider that the number of verses that link faith with salvation is much more than those that link repentance with faith. The New Testament contains about 140 texts that connect faith with salvation, in most of which no mention is made of repentance. For example: “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God” (Eph 2:8); “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16); “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1); and, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31).

Chafer also notes that in the Gospel of John, which was written to bring people to faith in Christ, the term “repentance” is absent. In addition, in the epistle to the Romans, where Paul exhaustively details God’s plan of salvation, the word “repentance” is found only once (2:4-5).[[52]](#footnote-52) Therefore, it is fair to conclude with Mueller that the primary requirement for salvation is faith: “A person is truly converted only when he believes that God has graciously forgiven his sins for Christ’s sake.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

Moreover, we must keep in mind that individuals receive salvation in a moment of time, in an instant. Persons are either saved or not saved. Either they are in God’s kingdom, or that are not. There is no middle ground between the two positions.

We appeal to Mueller for confirmation that salvation is received in a moment of time: “Conversion does not take place by stages, or degrees, but instantaneously.”[[54]](#footnote-54) Moreover, “According to Scripture, it is impossible for a person to be in a middle state even for a moment, for there is no middle ground between belief and unbelief, between life and death.”[[55]](#footnote-55) Therefore, we must determine the exact moment when a person transfers from death to life. Based on the evidence presented, we conclude that this occurs at the moment of belief.

Chafer makes an interesting observation about the relationship of repentance and faith.[[56]](#footnote-56) He claims that in conversion, people not so much turn from sin to God, but rather turn to God from sin. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9, Paul writes, “You turned to God from idols.” Consequently, some teach that faith precedes repentance and that the latter is the fruit of the former.[[57]](#footnote-57) On the other hand, we also encounter the opposite order in Scripture – from sin to God (Acts 26:18). Erickson agrees that “In a sense, each is incomplete without the other, and each is motivated by the other.”[[58]](#footnote-58)

It is important to emphasize this relationship because a person could turn from sin, but still not receive salvation, unless this individual believes in Christ as well. Acts 20:21 speaks of both “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

So then, the primary requirement for salvation is faith. What, then, is the role of repentance in God’s salvation plan? Without repentance, someone cannot truly believe. Repentance prepares the individual for belief. Mueller writes, “Contrition belongs to conversion only for the reason that faith cannot find entrance into the proud and secure heart; it is ‘the indispensable preparation for conversion.’”[[59]](#footnote-59)

The word “gospel” means “good news.” The good news is the Jesus died for our sins. For the unrepentant, though, the gospel does not seem to be so good. The unrepentant person does not value Christ’s death because he or she is not aware of their need for forgiveness. The repentant, on the other hand, experiences the weight of sin’s guilt and desires liberation from it and from slavery to sin. For such a person, the gospel is truly good news.

Corresponding to the above, Erickson comments, “If there is no conscious repentance, there is no real awareness of having been saved from the power of sin. There may be a corresponding lack of depth and commitment.”[[60]](#footnote-60) Jesus said, “He who is forgiven little, loves little” (Lk 7:47).

Evangelical writers note still one other important feature of the relationship between repentance and salvation. Kromminga believes that we may consider repentance a *condition* for receiving eternal life, but not its *basis*.[[61]](#footnote-61) In other words, although it is imperative that repentance precedes faith, people are not saved by their repentance, but by their faith alone. McGowan confirms that repentance should be considered “a non-meritorious, but necessary accompaniment to faith.”[[62]](#footnote-62)

### D. History of the Doctrine

Very early in its history, the Church embraced the understanding that water baptism provided forgiveness of sins committed before that time. If believers sinned after receiving baptism, they received further forgiveness through repentance.[[63]](#footnote-63) Repentance involved not only confession of sin, but also “weeping and wailing.”[[64]](#footnote-64) The Church began to distinguish “venial sins” from “mortal sins.”[[65]](#footnote-65) The latter required public repentance, while the former required only personal confession.[[66]](#footnote-66)

John Chrysostom lists five ways to express repentance (presumably, private repentance): condemnation of one’s sins, forgiving the sins of others, prayer, alms, and humility.[[67]](#footnote-67) The Eastern Church holds to this teaching to this day. Palachovsky and Vogel assert that venial sins can be forgiven by reading Psalm 51, giving alms, and fasting.[[68]](#footnote-68)

Public repentance also involved a period of church discipline, which restricted the participation of the offender in church affairs. The period of discipline could last years. From the third century, the Church accepted that the intercessors of confessors (those threatened with martyrdom, but not executed) was a way to shorten the sentence.[[69]](#footnote-69) In *The* *Pastor of Hermas*, we read about this disciplinary measure:

“Is repentance possible for all those stones which have been cast away and did not fit into the building of the tower, and will they yet have a place in this tower?” “Repentance,” said she, “is yet possible, but in this tower they cannot find a suitable place. But in another and much inferior place they will be laid, and that, too, only when they have been tortured and completed the days of their sins (*Visions*, 3.7).

The Early Church also held to the notion that after water baptism, a person could be afforded only one repentance (presumably, public repentance). Tertullian writes,

These poisons of his, therefore, God foreseeing, although the gate of forgiveness has been shut and fastened up with the bar of baptism, has permitted *it* still to stand somewhat open. In the vestibule He has stationed the second repentance for opening to such as knock: but now *once far all*, because now for the second time; but never more because the last time it had been in vain. For is not even this *once* enough? (*On Repentance*, 7).

The *Pastor of Hermas* also comments on this:

And therefore I say to you, that if any one is tempted by the devil, and sins after that great and holy calling, in which the Lord has called His people to everlasting life, he has opportunity to repent but once. But if he should sin frequently after this, and then repent, to such a man his repentance will be of no avail; for with difficulty will he live (*Commandments,* 4.3).

Later on in its history, the Christian Church did allow more than one repentance, and replaced public repentance with a private act. One reason for this was scandals that arose as a result of public reproof.[[70]](#footnote-70) Another change was that believers could confess their sins not only to priests, but to monks as well.[[71]](#footnote-71)

The Eastern Church continues to practice confession of sin and the sacrament of penance. The priest’s prayer of absolution effects the forgiveness of sins. Repentance consists of acknowledgement of one’s offense, remorse for it, intention to mend one’s ways, faith in forgiveness through Christ, and reconciliation with others and restitution if needed. The officiating priest may require acts of penance such as prayer or good works. He may also give counsel for overcoming future sin.[[72]](#footnote-72)

However, in Orthodox theology, the question of one forensic position before God is not primary. Consequently, this sacrament has a different nuance than in the West, and the disciplines applied are less severe. According to Meyendorff, “For this reason, confession and penance, at least ideally, persevered the character of liberation and healing rather than that of judgment.[[73]](#footnote-73)

The Western Church developed a more extensive penitential system.[[74]](#footnote-74) In Catholicism, in order to obtain forgiveness one must make confession to a priest, who has authority from God to forgive sins. Although Catholics recognize that “only God forgive sins,” they also claim: “By virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name.”[[75]](#footnote-75) In particular, they assert that Christ gave to the successors of the apostles, especially to Peter’s successor, authority to “bind and loose” people’s sins. This authority now resides in the Roman Catholic Church with the Pope at its head.

So then, through the sacrament of penance the repentant sinner received reconciliation with God and the Church: “Reconciliation with the Church is inseparable from reconciliation with God.”[[76]](#footnote-76) Confession before a priest is mandatory for mortal sins, while it only recommended for venial sins. Nevertheless, the Roman Church requires all Catholics to come to confession at least once a year. Before absolution of mortal sins, the offender is denied the Eucharist. Excommunication can only be annulled by the bishop.

Another method of receiving forgiveness for mortal sins is by means of “perfect repentance.” This means that the individual regrets their sinful act not because of its negative consequences, but out of love for God who was offended by it. Regret only for sin’s consequences characterizes “incomplete repentance,” which is adequate for remission of venial sins, but not for mortal ones without confession to a priest.

Forgiveness for venial sins is offered during special worship services dedicated to that purpose. During such services, the congregation members examine themselves and personally confess their sins to the Lord. The priest then declares the remission of their sins.

According to the Catholic view, true repentance is characterized by inner remorse for one’s sins. After confession to a priest, the latter may require some act of penance, which usually consists of prayer, but may include fasting, giving alms, or other acts of mercy. Reconciliation with others and restitution may be required.

A unique feature of the Catholic system is the distinction between forgiveness of the eternal consequences of sin and experiencing temporal punishment for sins. It is taught that “the forgiveness of sin and restoration of communion with God entail the remission of the eternal punishment of sin, but temporal punishment of sin remains.”[[77]](#footnote-77) Therefore, individuals must make “redemption” for sins committed, even those remitted by a priest. They accomplish this “redemption” either in this life, or after death in purgatory.

As mentioned above, after confession to the priest, the latter may require some act of penance to redeem the temporal consequences of the confessed sin. Along with this, the Catholic Church offers its adherents another means to escape punishment in purgatory through the use of indulgences, which provides redemption of the temporal consequences of sin.

The Church supposedly extends the grace of indulgences to its members from the so-called “Treasury of Merit.” This consists of the merit that Jesus received from the Father for His sinless life and voluntary suffering, along with the merit earned by the prayers and good works of Mary and the Saints.

An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Indulgences are given for special acts of dedication, including prayer, good works, and participation in the Eucharist.[[79]](#footnote-79) Catholics can obtain indulgences not only for themselves, but also for departed members. This is possible because:

…a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is, too, an abundant exchange of all good things.[[80]](#footnote-80)

The practice of indulgences dates back to the eleventh century. In the Middle Ages, the sale of indulgences prompted a hostile reaction against them that eventually led to the Reformation and birth of Protestantism.

In assessing the Catholic penitential system, we note the following features. Some positive elements include the shame a repentant believer may experience in confessing sins before a priest, which may deter future sin. In addition, the individual may receive helpful counsel from the priest. James also speaks of confession of sin between church members (Jam 5:16).[[81]](#footnote-81)

On the other hand, some serious weakness are also apparent. First, the Bible nowhere mentions appealing to church leaders to receive forgiveness of sins. For example, in Acts 19:18 and James 5:16 no confession is made before church hierarchy.

Second, the Bible does not make a distinction between venial and mortal sins. According to Scripture, even the smallest transgression leads to condemnation (Jam 2:10). Therefore, all persons are under condemnation for their misdeeds (Rom 3:23) and stand in need of forgiveness and the gift of righteousness in Christ. These benefits come not through a supposed mediatorial function of the Church, but through personal faith in the redemptive work of Jesus (Rom 3:24-26).

Moreover, the Bible does not support the view that so-called “temporal consequences” remain after sin is forgiven. When persons receive remission of sins, they receive complete forgiveness. The blood of Jesus cleanses us “from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9). Therefore, there is no need for “redemption” of personal sins through prayer, good works, or receiving indulgences.

Another error in this system is the teaching on purgatory as a place of temporary punishment, from which persons may be delivered through the prayers of the Church. It is even offensive to suggest that the sacrifice of God’s Son on the cross is somehow insufficient for complete redemption. The idea of a “self-redemption” through good deeds on earth or temporary punishment in purgatory directly contradicts the gospel message.

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6. Behm J. *metanoéō, metánoia*// Kittel G., Friedrich G., Bromiley G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985. – P. 639. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
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8. See Jer 31:19; Isa. 46:8 (Dement, v. 4, p. 136); also Behm, p. 639. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Goetzmann introduces an example where μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) and ἐπιστρέφω (*epistrepho*) run parallel – Acts 3:19; 26:20 (Goetzmann, p. 359). The word is also found in Acts 9:35; 11:21; 1 Thes 1:9 (Dement, v. 4, p. 136). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
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15. Kromminga, p. 1012. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Würthwein comments that when any calamity occurred, Israel often (and sometimes mistakenly) assumed that Yahweh sent it as a punishment (Würthwein, p. 640). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See Jer 6:10, 16-19, 28-29; 7:13,24-26,27; 25:3-7; 26:5; 29:19; 44:4, 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Behm, p. 641-642. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Dement, v. 4, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
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26. Behm, p. 643. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
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29. Mueller J. T. Christian Dogmatics. – St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1934. – P. 350. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid., p. 347-348. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
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34. Dement and Smith offer other examples of incomplete repentance: Pharaoh (Ex 9:27) and Balaam (Num 22:34). See Dement, v. 4, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid., v. 4, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Chafer L. S. Systematic Theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993. – V. 3. – P. 372-374. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. In this case, Erickson reaches a contrary conclusion – emotions motivated the second son to repent (Erickson, p. 948). The word μεταμέλομαι (*metamelomai*), i.е., “repented” can mean either “rethink” or “regret” (Arndt W., Danker F. W., Bauer W. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. – Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000. – P. 639. This resource is abbreviated BDAG). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Erickson, p. 947. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Grudem also cites the example of Esau, who repented in emotion, but not in will (Grudem, p. 713). [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Dement, v. 4, p. 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Grudem, p. 713. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Kromminga, p. 870. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Grudem, p. 713. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid., p. 717. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Chafer, p. 375. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Erickson, p. 308. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ibid., p. 307. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid., p. 309. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Kromminga, p. 1012. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Calvin J. Institutes of the Christian Religion. – Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Comparing Acts 11:18 with 11:17, Chafer concludes that in 11:18, the word “repentance” is a synonym of “believed.” He also sees this connection in Luke 24:46-27, since forgiveness of sins is usually associated with faith in Christ (Acts 10:43). See Chafer, p. 377. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Chafer, p. 376. Outside the epistle to the Romans, the words μετάνοια (*metanoia*) and μετανοέω (*metanoeo*) are found in Paul’s writings only in 2 Corinthians 7:9-10; 12:21; 2 Timothy 2:25 (Dunnett, p. 672). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Mueller, p. 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid., p. 339. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid., p. 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Chafer, p. 374-375. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
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60. Erickson, p. 309. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
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