

Repentance and Baptism: How to Become New

Isaiah 42:5-10

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- “Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: 6 ‘I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, 7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house. 8 I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. 9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, And new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.’ 10 Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise from the ends of the earth, You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, You coastlands and you inhabitants of them!”

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- Phil. 3:12-14 - “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

A New Creature

- Rom. 6:3-5 - “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

A New Creature

- Baptism is the mark when we end our slavery to sin and begin a new life.
 - Rom. 6:8-11 - “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

A New Creature

- It is a sign of our covenant with the Lord.
 - Col. 2:12-13 - “Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

A New Creature

- All past sins are washed away.
 - Acts 22:16 - “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

A New Creature

- But that mark of transition doesn't have meaning if we don't let go of the past.
 - Rom. 6:12-13 - “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”

A New Creature

- Paul introduced this matter by asking about the change.
 - Rom. 6:1-2 - “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”

A New Creature

- Peter introduced the world to the Gospel with the word for change -- “repent.”
 - Acts 2:38 - “Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

A New Creature

- Repentance is turning away from the past; it is a reversal of moral purpose. Baptism doesn't motivate or propagate our change.
- We change our hearts and minds first by faith; our life view changes.
- We continue that change with repentance; resolving to life differently.
- We declare that change with confession, by acknowledging the change in our belief and in our life.
- We mark that change with the action of baptism, at which point our sins are washed away.

A New Heart And Mind

- Acts 26:20 - “But declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.”
- The word “repent” comes from metanoeo, a compound word of meta (change) and noeo (to use the mind). It originally was used for hindsight, to reflect back on what one has done, to change one’s mind about past choices, to reconsider past thoughts, words, or actions with regret.

A New Heart And Mind

- “Turn” comes from epistrepho; a compound of epi (on) and strepho (turn), meaning “to turn around, do an about face, to be converted.” The emphasis is on a change in behavior, a return to one’s original state.

A New Heart And Mind

- “Let us go again” - Acts 15:36
- Conversion implies that one was once righteous and with God, but had left and is now returning - Rom. 7:9-11
- We don't begin life sinful, but righteous; we then lose our way - Ecc. 7:29
- God calls us back - Acts 3:19
- We return to the shepherd - 1Peter 2:25

A New Heart And Mind

- Why two different words?
 - Because sin begins in our thoughts and comes out in our words and deeds.
 - Mark 7:21-23 - “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”
 - Therefore, change must also start in our minds and come out in our words and actions.
 - Repentance is saying “No” to sin.
 - Conversion is saying “Yes” to righteousness.

A New Spirit

- Repentance opens the way for a new spirit.
 - Ez. 18:30-31 - “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?”

A New Spirit

- The Gospel reached the hearts of the Jews; they asked what to do and were told to begin with repentance - Acts 2:37-38
- They gladly received this word and immediately performed it - Acts 2:41
- Their former spirit toward Christ was animosity - Acts 2:22-23, 36

A New Spirit

- Sorrow over the past isn't just about changing our hearts, minds, and actions; it is about changing who we are and where we are relative to all matters of life.
- Our spirit is completely different; we do not look the same way at the Lord, the world, and our place in it.
- When we hear the commands of God, rather than grumbling over the restrictions, we are excited to do righteousness.
- When confronted by old temptations, rather than getting excited about indulging, we are repulsed by the prospect.
- When thinking about losses we experience in this world, rather than becoming angry or sad, we praise God that we are that much closer to seeing His face in the world to come. A new spirit!

A New Spirit

- Godly sorrow is a blessing designed to change how we think and feel about sin, transforming our spirit.
 - 2Cor. 7:9-11 - “Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. 11 For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”
- It is the transformed spirit that enables a permanent change in behavior.

A New Spirit

- Often in our rush to baptize people, we under-emphasize the importance of repenting before baptism.
- Someone who has no plans to change his current behavior should not be baptized until he eagerly abandons his practice of sin.
- Baptism does not stop us from sinning; repentance does.
- Therefore, the penitent condition is an ongoing state; we spend the rest of our lives in a lifelong commitment to the process of change.
- Baptism simply gives a clean slate from which to work on our new life.

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- Warning: repentance doesn't get easier over time.
- The longer you wait, the harder it becomes.