

**REPENTANCE
and
WATER BAPTISM**

The inspired apostle Peter said, "*Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). In so saying, he inseparably connected repentance and water baptism. The design and purpose of one is the design and purpose of the other. Water baptism is "for" the very same thing repentance is "for."

Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a changed way of life. Repentance unto salvation must always follow faith in Christ and precedes being baptized into Christ. It is impossible for the sinner to repent before he has faith in God. "*Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him*" (Hebrews 11:6). The person who believes is pleasing to God, but the person who repents will not perish. (Luke 13:3). If one is to repent before faith, he would not perish but would not be pleasing to God.

There are a few passages of scripture where repentance is mentioned before faith (Acts 20:21; Hebrews 6:1). The order of mention in the Bible is not always the order of occurrence. Example: Romans 10:9. "*That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*" It is impossible to confess something before you even believe it. It is unscriptural, unreasonable and illogical to think that a sinner would be moved to repent with "godly sorrow" (2 Corinthians 7:10) before there was any faith in that sinner's heart. Paul says it is the "*kindness of God that leads you to repentance*" (Romans 2:4). A sinner must know something about God and believe before the "kindness of God" would have any suasive power at all. Repentance is the outgrowth of true faith.

Repentance is "for" or in order to obtain the forgiveness of past sins. It is making up one's mind to quit sin and do whatever is necessary to get rid of it. The Lord told His disciples "*that repentance for forgiveness of sins*" was to be preached among all nations, "*beginning from Jerusalem*" (Luke 24:47). Repentance is designed to bring one unto remission of sins, not "because" sins are already

forgiven. Our English preposition "for" is translated from a Greek preposition that means "in order to, into, or unto." Repentance is "in order to, into, or unto" the forgiveness of sins. Please also read Acts 11:18.

Water baptism is a burial of a penitent believer under the water and is "*for the remission of sins*" also. It is called a "burial" in Romans 6:3-4 and Colossians 2:12. Horatio B. Hackett comments on Acts 22:16 in *A Commentary on Acts of the Apostles*. It has the sanction of the Southern Baptist Convention and was edited by Alvah Hovey. These two men rank among the finest Bible scholars of a generation ago and so recognized by the Baptist denomination. Regarding Acts 22:16, "*And now why do you delay? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.*" Hackett said:

"This clause states a result of baptism in language derived from the nature of that ordinance. It answers to *for the remission of sins*, in Acts 2:38 – i.e. submit to the rite in order to be forgiven."

Acts 22:16 is itself a good commentary on Acts 2:38. Hovey acknowledges the true meaning of the preposition translated "for" in the King James Version of Acts 2:38.

Baptism and repentance are "for" the same thing. It is scripturally wrong and grammatically incorrect to say that repentance in Acts 2:38 is "for" the remission of sins and water baptism is "because" one has already been forgiven of sins. What is said of repentance must be said of baptism because of the linking word "and". If you deny that baptism is "in order to be forgiven", then you are obliged to deny that repentance is "in order to be forgiven." If you say that repentance is "in order to be forgiven" then you are likewise obliged to say that water baptism "is in order to be forgiven." They are tied inseparably by the coupling conjunction, "and."

Life is too short and serious for people to continue quibbling about such an important matter as repentance and water baptism. If you were baptized for the wrong purpose, make the change now. No

one would say you are wrong for making corrections of errors you may have become involved in. Do it now.

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