Chapter 36 Conversion (Faith and Repentance)

What is true repentance? What is saving faith?
Can people accept Jesus as Savior and not as Lord?

Definition: A willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation.

A. True saving faith includes knowledge, approval, and personal trust
   1. Knowledge alone is not enough. (Rom. 1:32; James 2:19)
   2. Knowledge and approval are not enough: (John 3:2; Acts 26:27-28)
   3. I must decide to depend on Jesus to save me personally.
   4. Saving faith: To trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God. Includes:
      a. Understanding the facts of the gospel.
      b. An approval of, or agreement of these facts – plus a conviction/desire to be saved by Christ.
      c. A personal decision to put my trust in Christ as my Savior.
         (John 3:16; John 6:37; John 7:37; Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 7:25)

      BDAG Greek-English Lexicon, pisteūō (meaning 2, with persons): “to entrust oneself to an entity in complete confidence, believe (in), trust, with implication of total commitment to the one who is trusted.”

   5. Faith should increase as our knowledge increases: (Rom. 10:17)

B. Faith and repentance must come together
   1. Repentance defined: A heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ.
   2. Repentance includes: (note similarity to elements of saving faith)
      a. Intellectual understanding that sin is wrong
      b. An emotional approval of the teachings of Scripture regarding sin (including a heartfelt sorrow for sin and fear that one has offended a holy God)
      c. Personal decision to turn from sin and seek forgiveness from God

   3. Scripture requires both faith and repentance for salvation: sometimes both are mentioned
      (Isaiah 55:6-7; 2 Cor. 7:9-10; Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1)

      BDAG Lexicon on metanoia, “repentance”: “a ‘change of mind’ . . . Also with the nuance of remorse (as regret for shortcomings and errors). . . . With a focus on the need for change in view of responsibility to deity . . . repentance, turning about, conversion; as a turning away [Heb 6:1] turning away from dead works”

   4. Sometimes only faith is mentioned (John 3:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9; Eph. 2:8-9)
   5. Sometimes only repentance is mentioned
   6. Examples from Jesus’ encounters with people:
      a. Rich young ruler, asking him to give up his possessions (Luke 18:18-30)
      b. Zacchaeus, declaring that salvation had come to him that day because he had given half his goods to the poor and repaid fourfold anything he stolen (Luke 19:1-10)
      c. Woman at the well, asking her to call her husband (John 4:16)
      d. Nicodemus, rebuking his rabbinic unbelief and pride in his own knowledge (John 3:1-21)

   7. Faith and repentance are one act, a turning from sin in repentance and a turning to Christ in faith.

C. Both Faith and Repentance Continue Throughout Life (Matt. 6:12; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 2:20; Rev. 3:19)

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