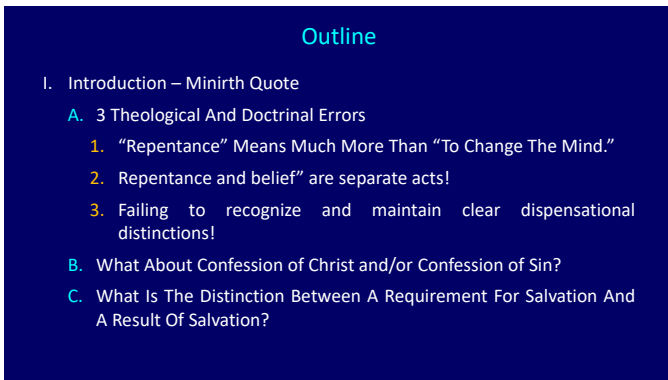


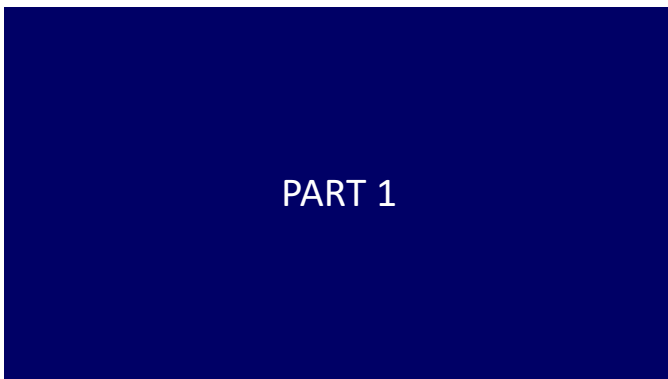
Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023



1



2



3

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Outline

I. Introduction – Minirth Quote

A. 3 Theological And Doctrinal Errors

1. "Repentance" Means Much More Than "To Change The Mind."
2. Repentance and belief" are separate acts!
3. Failing to recognize and maintain clear dispensational distinctions!

B. What About Confession of Christ and/or Confession of Sin?

C. What Is The Distinction Between A Requirement For Salvation And A Result Of Salvation?

4

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF LORDSHIP SALVATION
FRANK B. MINIRTH

Untold psychological damage is done when an individual feels he is accepted on a conditional basis. This may be expressed in a contradictory message, such as "I love you, but you must..."

It produces a paradox that makes choice impossible. It is a "double-bind" message to combine grace with merit. **This message asks a person to do two conflicting things.** By definition, grace is God's unmerited favor, a free gift (eternal life—Rom 6:23). This means that one cannot earn grace because this, would contradict the definition. Thus, when a minister or priest asks someone to do something for the grace of God, **he has just presented the individual with an impossible choice.** If the individual chooses grace, he cannot do anything for it. Yet, the minister has told him that he must do something. **The person cannot win!**

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society, Autumn 1993—Volume 6:11 <https://faithalone.org/journal/1993i/111-93c.htm> 5/10

5

Outline

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A. 3 Theological And Doctrinal Errors

1. "Repentance" Means Much More Than "To Change The Mind."
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C. What Is The Distinction Between A Requirement For Salvation And A Result Of Salvation?

6

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

1. The **Theological** And **Doctrinal** Error That "Repentance"
Means Much More Than "To Change The Mind."

7

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

This is a basic tenet for both Reformed Theologians and Lordship advocates. **According to this view**, one is saved by repenting which **always** means **a turning from sin**.

Some illustrative quotes from the Lordship camp:

- The necessary element in salvatory repentance is a true recognition of one's evil state and **a decided resolve to forsake sin** and thrust oneself at Christ's mercy. (emphasis mine).

Ken Gentry, "The Great Option," BaptistReformation Review 5:60.

8

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

Some illustrative quotes from the Lordship camp: (cont'd)

- **Repentance is related to the issue of sin**, which also includes unbelief in Christ (emphasis his).

Marc Mueller, "The Lordship Syllabus," 21.

- The primary New Testament word, **μετανοέω**, "**always speaks of a change of purpose, and specifically a turning from sin**" (emphasis his).

John MacArthur Jr., The Gospel According to Jesus, 178.

9

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

Some illustrative quotes from the Lordship camp: (cont'd)

"Repentance is a supernatural and inward revelation from God, giving a deep consciousness of what I am in His sight, which causes me to **loathe and condemn myself**, resulting in a bitter sorrow for sin, a holy horror and hatred for sin, and a turning away from or **forsaking** of sin." (emphasis mine).

W. Pink, The Doctrine of Salvation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 58.

As stated, these definitions make turning away from sin an **essential** and **necessary** component of repentance and ultimately of salvation.

BUT IS THIS LEXICALLY ACCURATE?

10

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

The key question that must be addressed is; **Is the word repentance (to repent) correctly defined as – "a turning from sin?"** A brief look at two of the most authoritative Greek Resources indicate that indeed, this is **NOT** the case!

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BAGD) indicates that the Greek word "μετανοέω" is used:

to translate the English verb "repent" and means "to change the mind." (see BAGD, s.v. "μετανοέω," 513.). **Moreover, this is a compound verb made up of the preposition μετα, "after",** (BAGD pg. 636) **and the verb, νοέω, "to grasp or comprehend something on the basis of careful thought, to perceive, think"** (BAGD pg. 674). Thus, "to perceive afterwards," or "to change the mind."

11

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

Additionally, the **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament** states:

In pre-biblical and extra-biblical usage μετανοέω and μετάνοια are **not** firmly related to any specific concepts. At the first stage they bear the intellectual sense of "subsequent knowledge." With further development both verb and noun then come to mean "change of mind."

...The change of opinion or decision, the alteration in mood or feeling, which finds expression in the terms, **is not in any sense ethical**. It may be for the bad as well as for the good...

12

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
“Requirements” for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament states: (cont’d)

For the Greeks **μετάνοια** **never** suggests an alteration in the total moral attitude, a profound change in life’s direction, **a conversion which affects the whole conduct...** (bold mine)

Johannes Behm and E. Würthwein, “μετανοέω, μετάνοια” in *TDNT*, 4 (1967): 979.

That the Greek word “μετανοέω” means “to change the mind” is the consistent judgment of all lexicographers!
So why is there a problem?

13




Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?

The problem arises from the fact that Lordship Theology (*a distinctly Reformed structure*), presupposes a **theological construct** which in turn dictates to the text! (eisegesis) For example, notice John MacArthur’s response when asked about his “personal theology”:

“I was raised in a dispensational environment; there’s no question... But, as I got into seminary, I began to test some of those things. I have been perhaps aptly designated as a **leaky dispensationalist**.... Here’s my dispensationalism – I’ll give it to you in one sentence: there’s a difference between the Church and Israel – period!... At the same time in seminary, I began to be exposed to reading Reformed theologians . . .

14



Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?


. . . And over the years of exegeting the scripture, it has again yielded to me a Reformed theology.... I was convinced of it (*Reformed theology*) when I started and I’m more convinced of it now as I’ve gone through the text. ***I was convinced of it when I started because I read so many noble men who have held that view*** (*Reformed Theology*). It was more at that point hero worship, and now it’s become my own.” (bold mine)

Transcribed from tape, #GC 70-15, entitled “Bible Questions and Answers.” A copy of the tape can be obtained by writing, Word of Grace, P.O. Box 4000, Panorama City, CA 91412. Copyright 1994 by John MacArthur Jr., All Rights Reserved.

15

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?




I want to make it very clear that my point here is to demonstrate how John MacArthur, who claims to be a dispensationalist, has arrived at his position on Lordship salvation.

It is **not** my intention to attack John MacArthur personally nor should my remarks be construed as a comprehensive disapproval of his ministry or teachings on other doctrinal matters, it is not.


However, given the eternal ramifications of at minimum, **a misleading Gospel presentation** and at worst, **a perversion of the Gospel presentation**, his teaching on the matter of Lordship Salvation must be denounced.

16

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?




It is alarming and frankly astonishing to me that in spite of the undisputed lexical meaning of the word "μετανοέω" (and it's derivatives) , Lordship adherents, like John MacArthur, insist on changing the basic meaning to include concepts **beyond** the clearly established lexical meaning to make it fit in with their preconceived, Reformed, perspective. This is eisegesis at it's worst.



17

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?



Some examples:

In *The Gospel According to Jesus*, John MacArthur Jr. initially argues for the basic meaning of "change of mind" then later says, "**but biblically its meaning does not stop there.**"

John MacArthur, Jr.
The Gospel According to Jesus, 162.

Echoing this sentiment, Marc Mueller declares, "**Repentance is far more than a 'change of mind' about who Christ is.**"

Marc Mueller "Lordship Salvation Syllabus," 21.
Grace Community Church, 1981, 1985.

18

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

But Richard C. Trench deals a fatal blow to this idea of a "greater meaning" demonstrating that these added concepts have been forced upon the text. He states:


"It is only after μετάνοια has been taken up into the uses of Scripture...that it comes predominantly to mean a change of mind, (with the added idea of) taking a wiser view of the past, ...a regret for the ill done in the past, and out of all this a change of life for the better; ... This is all imported into, does not etymologically nor yet by primary usage lie in, the word" (bold mine)

Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, pg. 242

19

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

Did you get that? This so-called "greater meaning" for μετανοέω came into the picture only after certain theologians "added to" its legitimate, received definition!



20

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

Conclusion:

Both the Non-Lordship and the Lordship camps agree that the Bible, specifically the New Testament, teaches that repentance is necessary for salvation. However, the Lordship view that repentance *always* involves sin and that repentance *is turning from sins or the resolve to turn from sins* is not supported from the lexical and biblical evidence.

On the other hand, the Non-Lordship view holds that *repentance is a change of mind, attitude, and disposition* which implies and normally leads to an outward change in life and conduct, though *the latter is not essential* to the term itself. *The focus of repentance must be determined by the context.* In regards to salvation, repentance is implied in the call *to believe* in Christ.

21

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
“Requirements” for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

THE LORDSHIP CAMP’S ARGUMENT FOR A SO-CALLED
GREATER MEANING FOR μετανοέω



22

Outline

I. Introduction – Minirth Quote

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C. What Is The Distinction Between A Requirement For Salvation And A Result Of Salvation?

23

Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?

2. The Theological And Doctrinal Error That “Repentance And Belief” Are Separate Acts!

24

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

Lordship advocates consistently declare that repentance and faith are **two distinct and necessary requirements** for salvation. Note for example this statement made by a prominent Reformed Theologian:

The demand is for repentance as well as faith. It is not enough to believe that only through Christ and His death are sinners justified and accepted.... Knowledge of the gospel, and orthodox belief of it, is no substitute for repentance.... Where there is ... no realistic recognition of the **real claims that Christ makes**, there can be no repentance, and therefore no salvation. (bold mine)

J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1961), 72-73

25

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

According to Lordship Theology, these, "**real claims that Christ makes**" refers to a **repentance** which is **a commitment to**, or at least **a sincere willingness to**:

- **Obey** Christ's commands
- **Take up** one's cross
- **Forsake** sin, etc.,

The failure of one witnessing, to declare these **precursors** in a gospel presentation, and a failure on the part of the sinner to willingly **commit** to them, means that the sinner **CAN NOT** be saved!

26

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

The question that must be laid at the feet of Lordship proponents is: **How can one who is unregenerate, dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1,5), and blinded by the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), possibly make such a commitment?!**

Ephesians 2:1-5
1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,... 3 even when we were dead in our transgressions,...


2 Corinthians 4:4
...in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.



27

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
“Requirements” for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?



On the contrary, this is an impossibility as Lewis Sperry Chafer correctly points out:


No unregenerate mind is prepared to deal with the problems of true Christian living. These problems anticipate the new dynamic of the imparted divine nature, and could produce nothing but hopeless discouragement when really contemplated by an unregenerate person.

Salvation: God’s Marvelous Work of Grace, pg. 48

28


Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?

In contrast to the teachings of Lordship Theology that “repentance and belief” are separate acts, it must be recognized that when the words “**believe and repent**” are found together, they are **never** used in a manner that would suggest two separate requirements for salvation. **On the contrary**, when salvation from eternal condemnation is in view, repent (*a change of mind*) and believe are in essence used as **synonyms**.



29

Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?



Chafer again notes:

... it is as dogmatically stated as language can declare, that repentance is essential to salvation and that none could be saved apart from repentance, **but it is included in believing and cannot be separated from it.** (bold mine)

Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Vital Theological Issues*, Roy B. Zuck, General Editor, Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1994, p. 119).

30

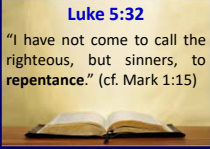
Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

A few examples where repentance is equivalent to belief in the person and work of Christ, include:

- Luke 5:32 (*Jesus speaking*) - Here repentance is evidently a **synonym** for faith (or salvation through faith). The whole tenor of Jesus' ministry was to call men to faith in the gospel, thus He says, "Repent and believe in the gospel".

Luke 5:32
"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to **repentance**." (cf. Mark 1:15)




31

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

- Acts 11:18 – (*The apostles speaking*): It is clear from the context that "**repentance to life**" refers to the Gentiles' **faith in Christ** (10:43; 11:17).

Acts 11:18
"God has also granted to the Gentiles **repentance** to life."

"**repentance to life**" is equivalent to, or synonymous with, **faith in Christ**

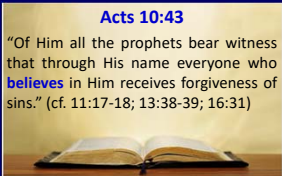


32

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

- Consider also: Acts 10:43 with 11:17-18; 13:38-39 with 2:38 also note 16:31 which uses "believe" alone.

Acts 10:43
"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who **believes** in Him receives forgiveness of sins." (cf. 11:17-18; 13:38-39; 16:31)



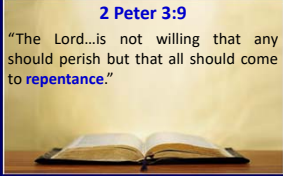
33

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

- 2 Peter 3:9 – Here one clearly sees the convergence of repentance and faith. Men will perish unless they come to faith in Christ, but men will not come to faith in Christ unless there is a change of attitude (mind) about Him and His promises.

2 Peter 3:9
"The Lord...is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to **repentance**."



34

Are Repentance and Confession "Requirements" for Salvation?

Conclusion:

Clearly, in passages **where salvation is in view**, "to repent" is equivalent in meaning with, "to believe or trust in" and always involves, "a change of mind" from any form of self-trust in human works, (good deeds, religious tradition, etc.) to trust in the finished work of Christ which alone has the power to save us.

Simply stated, "to repent" means a turning from self-trust to trust (belief) in Christ.

35

THE LORDSHIP CAMP'S ARGUMENT THAT REPENTANCE AND BELIEF ARE SEPARATE ACTS



36

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
"Requirements" for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Outline

- I. Introduction – Minirth Quote
 - A. 3 Theological And Doctrinal Errors
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 - C. What Is The Distinction Between A Requirement For Salvation And A Result Of Salvation?

37

CONCLUSION

38

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 - C. What Is The Distinction Between A Requirement For Salvation And A Result Of Salvation?

39

Dr. Jim McGowan
Are Repentance & Confession
“Requirements” for Salvation? – Part 1
09-27-2023

Are Repentance and Confession “Requirements” for Salvation?

Recommended Reading :

- Various Articles from The Biblical Studies Foundation - www.bible.org
- Lordship Salvation: An Evaluation and Response – Charles Bing
- True Evangelism: Winning Souls Through Prayer – Lewis Sperry Chafer
- Salvation: God’s Marvelous Work of Grace – Lewis Sperry Chafer
- Systematic Theology: 8 Vols in 4 - Lewis Sperry Chafer
- So Great Salvation: What It Means to Believe In Jesus Christ – Charles Ryrie
- Balancing the Christian Life – Charles Ryrie
- The Gospel Under Siege – Zane Hodges
- Absolutely Free – Zane Hodges

See also:

- www.bible.org
- www.gracelife.org
- www.faithalone.org
- www.middletonbiblechurch.org
