



WORLDWIDE
CHURCH OF GOD

Living and Sharing the Gospel

GC2
equipper

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Dear child of God:

This issue of *GC2 equipper* continues our discussion of Trinitarian Christ-centered theology. The April issue summarized eight key points of this theology. We received several comments and questions in response. This issue presents Dan Rogers' answer to questions concerning repentance.

This month, our attention also turns to several seasonal celebrations:

- **Ascension Sunday** (May 4). Many churches celebrate the ascension of Jesus to the Father. The doctrine of the bodily ascension of Jesus is a vital reminder of the truth that Jesus' incarnation continues now and forever. The one seated at the right hand of the Father is fully God and still fully human (now glorified). *Jesus is our place in heaven!* (see John 14:2).

We have posted a couple of Ascension Sunday sermons on the *GC2 equipper* web site at <http://fly2.ws/cZmZswm> (scroll down to the lower right corner of the page).

- **Pentecost Sunday** (May 11). Many churches celebrate the sending of the Spirit to form Jesus' body, the church. *Happy birthday church!*
- **Mother's Day** (May 11). In the United States, this Sunday is an annual occasion for honoring all mothers. Because the day often brings increased church attendance, it is an opportunity for special church ceremonies that honor mothers in particular and women in general. *Thanks ladies for all you are and do!*
- **School graduations**. Many schools hold graduation ceremonies in May. Churches often respond by honoring graduates and their families in church. *Honor to whom honor is due!*

May you and your congregation be encouraged as you celebrate these important manifestations of the life and love we share with Jesus.

Blessings,
Ted Johnston, editor
GC2 equipper



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WHAT ABOUT REPENTANCE?

By Dan Rogers, CAD director

Some have asked about the meaning of repentance in the framework of Trinitarian theology. If all humanity is included already in Jesus' love and life—what place is there for repentance?

I give a brief answer here and provide references to sources of additional helpful information. I also address the issue of repentance as part of my presentation at our 2008 regional conferences. I encourage your participation.

Defining repentance

In English, “to repent” is sometimes understood as meaning, “to turn.” The English term actually is derived from a Latin root that means “to feel regret” or “to be penitent.” However, the New Testament is written in Greek. The Greek word in the New Testament that is translated into English as “repent” is *metanoia* (μετάνοια). Literally, the prefix *meta* means “after” or “again,” and the root *noia* means “think.” So, a literal translation from the Greek would be “after-think” or “think-again.” The idea is that of a “change of mind.”

The New Testament passages where “repent” occurs can often be better understood if one interprets the meaning as “change your mind.”

The logical question would follow: “Change your mind about what?” The clear implication in these biblical passages is that we are called to change our minds about God, about Jesus, and about our relationship with Jesus.

Scripture tells us that God has forgiven humanity in Jesus from the foundation of the world—indeed, Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and Christ died for sinners while they were still sinners (Rev. 13:8; Rom. 5:8). Though already forgiven, we still need repentance (a change of mind). This repentance is itself a gift from God (Romans 2:4). It is not something we do in terms of beginning to do good works. It is not something we do in which we turn from all our sins (who among us has ever accomplished that?). It is not a “requirement” we must fulfill by our good works. Rather repentance is a changing of one's mind about God. It is a positive response to the love God has already extended to us (Rom. 5:8). In Christ, the Light of the world, the Father has freed us from the bondage of sin, which keeps us in darkness.

When freed by the Father, in Christ, through the Spirit, we find our place for repentance. Repentance is a change of mind, by the gift and grace of God, regarding what we think about God. When our minds (“ears” and “eyes”) are opened, we realize that God loves us, that Jesus is indeed our Savior, and that we are forgiven. We come to see God for who he really is, and ourselves for who we really are in him.

Imagine your relationship with someone who has done you great wrong. The person may fear you and avoid you, believing you have every right to hate them and maybe even seek revenge in return for what they have done to you.

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**a change
of mind**

WHAT ABOUT REPENTANCE?

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However, what if you have forgiven them completely and have nothing but love in your heart toward them? If they do not know this, they likely will still fear you and avoid you until such time as they come to the understanding and belief that you have forgiven them. Their “repentance” and “faith” (changing their mind about how they think you feel about them and believing that you really do love them) means they have accepted the truth, which in turn means the end of their self-imposed barriers to having a positive relationship with you.

Some may ask how Mark 4:11-12 may be understood:

He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!’”

The Jewish religious leaders could have asked Jesus the meaning of his parables as did his disciples. Of course, they were not about to do that, so Jesus quoted the Old Testament poem to highlight the fact that the Jewish leaders persisted in their refusal to come to him to have life. Their self-imposed blindness prevented them from turning and being forgiven. They insisted on not receiving their own Messiah (and his forgiveness) even though he was plainly in front of their eyes and in the hearing of their ears.

Some may also ask about Luke 13:2-3 with regard to repentance:

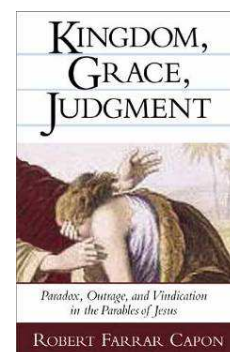
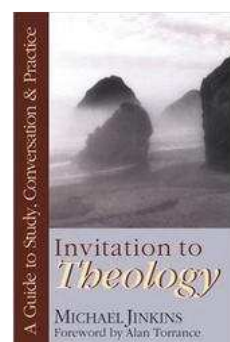
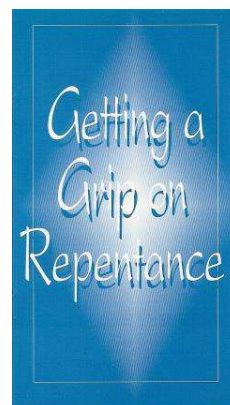
Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Jesus’ point in this passage is that everyone is a sinner and needs to turn to him. The magnitude of your sins is not the issue, the issue is that you need to respond to God’s love, turn to God (again, turning to God is turning from selfishness and sin), realizing that he has already forgiven your sins (few, many, great, small) and wants you to love him just as he loves you, despite all you have done (and will continue, sadly, to do).

Additional resources

For more information concerning repentance as viewed in the light of a Trinitarian theology, I recommend reading:

- ***Getting a Grip on Repentance*** (a WCG booklet posted online at <http://wcg.org/lit/gospel/repentance.htm>)
- ***Invitation to Theology*** (a book by Michael Jenkins on systematic theology organized around the core doctrines of the Christian faith)
- ***Kingdom, Grace, Judgment*** (a book by Robert Capon that discusses the parables of Jesus)



Copies of *Invitation to Theology* and *Kingdom, Grace, Judgment* are being given to all WCG senior pastors and pastoral team leaders who attend one of the 2008 regional conferences.