

Repentance: Building on Joel 2

Joel 2:12–13 (NKJV)

12 “Now, therefore,” says the Lord, “Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.”

13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

“No more poignant expression of repentance occurs in Scripture than Joel’s admonition to Israel to ‘turn to Me with all your heart’ and to ‘rend your heart, and not your garments.’” **–The Believer’s Study Bible**

Not only is this one of the most **POIGNANT** expressions of repentance but also one of the most **PIVOTAL** found in the Word of God. The concept of repentance is found in Joel in connection with the introduction of the “The Day of the Lord” theme which is prominent throughout the book. The day of the Lord judgment is near (Joel 1:15, 2:1) and therefore this calls for repentance. If the people don’t REPENT the WARNING is that God’s judgment is coming.

Clearly, there is a “Historical Day of the Lord Judgment” in view in Joel related to OT times. However, there is also a “Prophetic Day of the Lord Judgment” coming in which God will judge the whole world which is also referred to by Joel (cf. 2:30-32, 3:9-16).

After introducing “The Day of the Lord” theme in 1:15 and calling for Repentance in 2:12-17, Joel 2:32 then builds on this by saying, **“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”**

This then becomes a KEY statement in the N.T. regarding salvation, but what is often overlooked is that it is couched in a context of warning concerning “The Day of the Lord” judgment that calls for REPENTANCE. The repentance called for in Joel 2 is in keeping with “calling on the name of the LORD” in Joel 2. This is a PACKAGE, both of which are tied to “The Day of the Lord” theme.

Building on the concept of Repentance being called for in the context of coming judgment as found in the book of Joel, the NT repeatedly quotes from Joel or builds on this concept as it develops the theme of SAVING FAITH in the N.T. Clearly, we see that REPENTANCE is an essential element in saving faith tied to “whoever calls on the name of the Lord”.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter in proclaiming the gospel message quotes Joel 2:32 in Acts 2:21 and then goes on to call for repentance in Acts 2:38 which is in keeping with the same emphasis of Joel. 2.

In Acts 17:30-31 Paul is warning of a coming Judgment Day (i.e., The Day of the Lord) and says that God is commanding all men everywhere to repent. In Romans 10:9-10 Paul stresses the proper HEART response as does Joel in 2:12-13 and then in Romans 10:13 Paul quotes Joel 2:32 as the condition for salvation.

In 2 Peter 3:9-10 in a “Day of the Lord” context Peter explains that God is “not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” In the book of Revelation in which the ultimate “Day of the Lord Judgment” is in view, the called for response is one of repentance (cf. Rev. 9:20-21, 16:9, 11).

Therefore, we see a UNIFIED theme between the OT and the NT regarding the nature of saving faith involving repentance. The nature of saving faith has always been the same (cf. Heb. 11). Revelation has been progressive, but the saving faith response which God demands from the HEART has never changed. It essentially involves REPENTANCE which in essence is a change of mind/attitude with regard to God’s LORDSHIP (The key concept tied with the Day of the Lord) and correspondingly with regard to sin. This is a PACKAGE!

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone but it must be the right kind of faith and the right kind of faith involves the element of repentance!