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## SALVATION

If you are not a believer in Jesus Christ, or aren't sure and would like to become one, then you need to believe that Jesus Christ was and is the Son of God, that he was God who became a man, that he lived a sinless and perfect life, keeping the Law of God perfect in every way, that he kept faith perfectly, and that he was crucified on that cruel cross for your sins, mine and the entire world- he died for our sins! His death on the cross paid the penalty fully, one time for all sins that we have ever committed and that we will ever commit. He died; he went down into the bowels of the earth, even into Hell, and was raised from the dead on the third day in a resurrected, eternal body. He ascended back into heaven, was seated at the right hand of God, and is now Lord over heaven and earth. He is coming again to judge the world, to raise the dead, where he will give an eternal, resurrected, glorified body to everyone that has believed on him as their Lord and Savior, and to establish his kingdom one earth.

You come become a Christian right now as you read this, by personally placing your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior; believing that he is God's only begotten Son, that he died on the cross for you and that he was raised from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.."* Acts 16:31a And when you do trust Christ, and Christ alone, as your Lord and Savior, then go to God the Father in heaven in prayer and tell him so. Tell him that you have believed on his Son, thank him for his Son, and thank him for forgiving your sins and saving you! *"That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* Romans 10:9,10 *"For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* Romans 10:13 *"Therefore, being justified by faith (declared righteous), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 5:1

## Turning To Christ

### Intro:

The expression of turning to Christ, or in some circles, converting to Christ or Christianity, has been used down throughout the centuries. But in the past few years it seems to have been replaced by the phrases of, “asking Jesus into your heart”, which in itself is totally unbiblical, or, “asking Jesus into your life”.

These concepts are completely misleading and they take away the force of what needs to take place and what actually takes place in the unbelieving sinner's heart when they come to Christ for forgiveness.

It's not my intention to correct all the errors found in present day Christianity concerning the presentation of the gospel, but I will address one major error manifested in pulpit after pulpit throughout the land and that is where they direct the unbeliever to “Ask Jesus to come into their heart”!

First of all, one does not get saved by asking Jesus into your heart. There is not one place in the OT or NT where we can have forgiveness of sins and the guarantee of eternal life by asking Jesus into our hearts!

The Bible is quite clear on the matter when it states that we must **believe** on Christ to be saved! “*And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*” Acts 16:30,31

Every single place in the Bible where the subject is salvation the message is always the same; it is through faith in Christ we are saved, and not by asking Jesus into the heart. The problem is that they take a passage out of the book of Revelation, misinterpret it and misapply it to the saving of unbelievers!

The passage of Scripture that they misinterpret and misapply is Revelation 3:20, “*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*”

This passage in the Bible deals with believers in the Laodicean phase of the Church Age who have rejected the Word of God in their lives and in their church services. It is Christ who is standing **outside** the church seeking to be let in through the sound teaching of His Word! For a more in depth study of the concept go to my On line book studies on the Laodicean Church in [www.pacificrimbible.com](http://www.pacificrimbible.com).

Now *strepho* or *epistrepho*, **to turn**, have the ideas of: to turn, to turn to, to turn around; a turning of the body or one's thoughts to a person or a thing, a change of the mind or a course of action, (for the better or the worse), an inner change; a change in the unbeliever's relationship to God.

It was used of turning to the brightest star in the sky and going toward it, or following it, and it came to speak of turning to God. It came to be known as a technical term, (t.t.), for religious conversion, for getting right with God. If one was an unbeliever, it came to be known as a turning to God or Christ. If one was a believer in Christ and had got caught up in the things of the World, the flesh, or the devil, then it came to be known as a returning to God.

But with *apo*, **from**, prefixed to it, *apostrepho*, it meant to turn away from, to turn away from a person, to turn away from God, to turn away from the truth. As believers we are not to turn away from God, his Word, those who are walking in his Word, and those who teach his Word. Although we should turn away from those believers who are living lives that are blatantly contrary to Doctrine as Paul has instructed.

But just as in *strephe*, to turn to, if we are to turn to something, then it also tells us that we must **turn from something or someone**. And so in *apostrepho*, to turn away from, if we **turn away from something**, it tells us that we are turning to something!

When we talk about coming to Christ for salvation, it needs to be made very clear that they will be turning from their old life as they come to Christ, that they will be leaving their old life and all that which goes with it behind. All too often Christ is presented as an addition to their life, or an enhancement of their life, but not as their life now!

This **turning to** God, through faith in Christ, entails a turning from everything in their life; it's all left behind in one's thinking and heart as they come to Him. Their old lifestyles, their running with the crowd, their old friends and pursuits, their being wrapped up in the world system and their local communities, (part of the world system), their goals, their designs on their lives, their ambitions, their plans, even their family members are all left behind as they turn to Christ for forgiveness and salvation.

It's true that Christ accepts us just as we are when we come to him in faith, but he doesn't accept all the other stuff; he only accepts **you and you alone!** Remember that this is a personal matter; it is a personal matter between just you and Jesus Christ. And when you turn to him you are turning from everything else in life!

It's the same idea with faith. When it says to believe on Jesus Christ in Acts 16:30, it's really talking about **trust**. Trusting is different than faith in the sense that one may believe that a rope bridge is strong enough to support your weight, **but you're not trusting that it will until you walk on it!**

When one comes to Christ in faith, it is at the same time saying that you are no longer trusting in anything that you had trusted in before to save you. Not your church membership, not any fraternal organizations, not your personal *righteousnesses*, not the good things you have done, not your family members, or race, or relationships. Whatever it is that you might have been trusting in before are, all left behind as you turn from them to turn to Christ. This is a part of the heart of turning to Christ for salvation; you turn from all that to turn to him!

## A. Salvation, or a turning to God through Christ.

**1. Like A Child** - *“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* Matthew 18:3

Christ is addressing adults in the matter of salvation. As people get older they become involved in all sorts of things that they think will gain them entrance into heaven or eternal life. Some become involved in religious practices, others into turning over a new leaf and becoming good, some get involved in doing good things, while others try all sorts of oriental or new age concepts.

Yet the Lord rejects all concepts that men turn to and says that **one must turn from these things and become like a child**. He uses the word *ginomai*, to **become**, to show that this is something that they are not doing and that they will have to become like this, they will have to change and become like a child. But how so?

The word for **as** is *hos* and is used for a comparison to something else highlighting the idea of manner or procedure or living. It's not saying that we have to act like little children, but that we must become like little children in **how we live life**.

There are three ways that we perceive life and relate to it: **empiricism**, through the five senses of sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing; **rationalism**, the reasoning ability of the mind; and **pisticism**, faith.

Little children have one system that they operate by and that is faith. They operate on the principle of trust. They have trust in their parents and family in everything in life. And it is this element of trust that Christ is referring to here in the matter of salvation.

So to be saved, the unbeliever must turn from anything and everything that he or she might be holding onto, or leaning on, or depending upon and turn to Christ in simple childlike faith!

**2. A False Hope** - *“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;”*  
1 Thessalonians 1:9

Here's a clear example of what is entailed in turning to Christ, in that **one must turn from something to turn to someone**. Paul said that they turned from their idols to God. πως επεστρεψατε προς τον θεον απο των ειδωλων . The aorist tense of to turn, *epistrepho*, reveals that this was a clear break they made from their idols. There needs to be a clean break, for how can one turn from something, if they're still hanging on to it?

We need to remember that an idol was not only an object of worship it was an object of security! Their faith and trust was in these idols and to be saved one has to turn from them, what they're presently trusting in, to come to Christ.

**3. The Need For A Change Of Mental Attitude** - *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come*

*from the presence of the Lord;” Acts 3:19*

Both the words to **repent** and to be **converted** are in the aoist imperative, which is a command to begin an action. Put together it shows that they are both necessary and are a part of the concept in this matter of having one's sins forgiven.

The use of the word **repent** for the Greek *metanoeo* is a poor choice of words that was taken from the Latin language for the KJV translation. The word repent means to feel pain in the soul, or to feel sorry. But the word *metanoeo* actually meant to change the mind, or to have a change of mental attitude.

And we can see how this works with to convert, or to turn to God. When one is presently holding onto an idol, or any thing else in life, they have to have a change of mental attitude about all this. They have to see that none of these things will help them and they are still on the path to Hell.

They also begin to realize that Christ paid the penalty for their sins and that he accepts anyone who will come to him in faith, so they have this change of mental attitude, **turn from everything in their life and turn to Christ in faith for salvation**.

When John the Baptist was baptizing in the Jordan river many Pharisees and Sadducees came out to where he was at; presumably to be baptized. But John didn't trust them; he saw through their religious veneer; the same religious hypocrisy that is so common today. So he told them, *“Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:”* Matthew 3:8 In effect he's saying, “You say you want to be baptized because you're turning to God? Then let me see proof. Let me see fruit that is equivalent of this change of mental attitude.”

**4. The Need For Faith** - *“And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.”* Acts 11:21

When the gospel was presented to the Greeks living in Antioch, many of them believed on Christ as their Savior. The Greek has it as, πιστευσας επεστρεψεν επι τον κυριον, having believed they turned to the Lord.

And as a change of mental attitude is a part of this matter of turning from everything in life to turn to the Lord, so is faith in Christ a part of it. All three ideas are present in the one single concept: faith, a change of mental attitude and turning to the Lord. Just as there are two ideas found in the one concept of turning; a turning from and a turning to!

But tragically this concept of turning is omitted in so many churches today. They offer Christ to be an addition to their life, but have no real change of their life centered around Christ and his Word. They replace emotions for having a total change of mind. There are many who confuse the issue of works with faith. And for conversion they turn people to their religious program, rather than to the Savior himself.

When one **turns to** Christ for forgiveness and eternal life, he is also **turning from** everything else! I cannot emphasize how important and pivotal this concept is! If one has just “added him to their life”, **where is the turning to him and him alone? Where is the**

## turning from idea?

If we are to turn to Christ, we must go to where he's at. And where is he at? He's outside the **camp!** "*Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.*" Hebrews 13:13 Christ was crucified outside the city of Jerusalem and if you want him, that's where you'll have to go.

This is figurative language telling us that inside the camp, or city, is where you will find your friends, your family, your jobs, your home, the religions of your people; inside the city is everything connected to our lives. And **to turn to him**, you must **turn from** all that as you come to him in faith.

I think this is one of the reasons why so few professed Christians have a love for the Word and the things of the Lord. Oh, they are excited about the religious program that their church has, usually music and some form of entertainment, but really no love for the teaching of the Word of God. How many of them can say, as the disciples did, "*We have left all, and have followed thee.*"? Mark 10:28

In secular Greek the word *strephe*, or *epistrephe*, was used of the turning of the soul to the deity, or to God. And it was quickly adapted into the NT community as the idea behind spiritual or religious conversion. Today many people have adopted the phrase of, "getting right with God", but the idea of turning to the Lord, or returning to the Lord is a much better term because it really defines what must take place.

In this turning in faith to Christ certain things will occur: 1) there will be a change of attitude; 2) there will be a change of behavior; 3) there will be a change of priorities in life; 4) there will be a change of who your Lord is in life; 5) there will be a turning away from, a turning your back on your past life, as you turn to the Lord.

**The stress on this is not to be on what one is turning from, but on what, or whom, one is turning to, namely the Lord.** And when one used this term, and understanding it as they did, nothing more needed to be said, as in the case of the conversion, *epistrophe*, of the Gentiles. "*And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the **conversion of the Gentiles:** and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.*" Acts 15:3

We have seen that in this matter of turning to God, **trust** is involved, as with the little children, Matthew 18:3. **Turning from idolatry** and any other object of security that one is depending upon is involved, 1 Thessalonians 1:9. That a **change of mental attitude** is involved, Acts 3:19. And that **faith** in Christ is involved, Acts 11:21. But there is **also** involved **a turning from** one's nation, tribe, culture, community, people, family, friends and everything else in life to turn to Christ. **It is you that is getting saved!** It is **you** that is turning your back on all these things **as you turn to Christ for salvation.**

Listen to what Peter said to the Lord, "*Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.*" Mark 10:28. And then listen to what the Lord said to Peter! "*And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands,*

*for my sake, and the gospel's," Mark 10:29* And what he told the disciple who wanted to go back home to bury his father, "*But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and **let the dead bury their dead.***" Matthew 8:22

This idea of turning from something or someone, to turn to someone is also found in the idea of *hagiozo*, **separation**, which is translated as being *holy* or *sanctified*. The noun *hagios* is rendered as holy, while the verb *hagiozo* is translated as sanctified.

In this concept there are three ideas found: 1) the idea of being separated **from** the world and its people; 2) separated **unto** God; and 3) for the **purpose** of serving him and fellowshiping with him.

And we have similar ideas found in **conversion**, or turning to Christ. 1) there is that **turning away from** everything and everyone in this life. 2) there is the **turning to** Christ. And 3) for the **purpose** of coming to him for forgiveness and salvation.

It must be made clear to people in the gospel message, along with his atoning death on the cross for our sins, his burial and resurrection from the dead, and the need for faith in him without any works, that they will be turning from their present life and all that goes with it as they turn to him for salvation.

Now they may go back to the old house, and the old job, and to the same friends and family members, but something has changed. They were in that and of that at one time, but when they turned to Christ, they turned from all that.

Many believers in Christ tend to forget that we live in the devil's world; he is the god of this age and the ruler of this world, and everyone born on this planet is born into slavery under his rule. The religious, political and economical systems of this world are under his rule. The nations and kingdoms of this world were handed over to him. And all the people born physically into this life are born under his dominion and are on the highway to Hell, unless they turn to Christ for salvation!

This is the goal of the communicators of the Word of God, that through the preaching of the gospel of Christ the unbeliever may see his need of forgiveness and turn to Christ! "*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*" Acts 26:18

The question people need to ask themselves is have they turned to Christ? Or is Christ something that they have just added to their lives? Or so they think. Throughout the OT and the NT the concept of **turning to God and a turning from the world** is a resounding theme that seems to be lacking in so many *churches* today.

## B. Reversionism, or a turning from God.

Some schools of thought refer to this as backsliding, but the term reversionism is more accurate. It comes from the Latin, *revertere*, to turn back. It meant to return to a former condition, practice, subject, or belief. It describes Christians, who have been truly saved,

but who leave off their intake of the Word of God; they stop attending Bible teaching local churches and go back into the world system to follow after their lusts and the allurements of the world.

In other words, they have turned from living the spiritual life dynamic of the filling of the Holy Spirit, living in the new nature, living by faith and the faith rest dynamic of believing the Word of God. In essence they have **turned away from** the Lord.

Now these believers may attend a religious organization called a “local church” to “save face”, but they have turned away from the Word and the true spiritual life. This was a constant problem with God's OT people, who honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from him because they were back in Egypt, a type of the world. *“To whom our fathers would not obey, but **thrust him from them**, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,”* Acts 7:39

And it's still a problem with God's NT people today as Paul warned Timothy and Titus about using the word *apostrepho*, to turn away from. *“And **they shall turn away their ears from the truth**, and shall be **turned unto fables**.”* 2 Timothy 4:4 *“Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that **turn from the truth**.”* Titus 1:14 As all of us today are warned about turning away from the truth, *“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we **turn away from him that speaketh from heaven**.”* Hebrews 12:25

Hebrews 6:6, *“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”*, speaks of the same phenomenon only it uses a nautical metaphor. The word **fall away** is *parapipto* and it meant to drift off course. It refers to the believer in Jesus Christ who has drifted off course from living by faith in the Word under the filling of the Holy Spirit and following God's plan for their lives.

One of the phenomena that will, or is, occurring in the Last Days is that there will be a great falling away, or **apostasy**, of the Church. *“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;”* 2 Thessalonians 2:3

*Apostasia* was the term used to describe the departure of God's people from living the spiritual life that he ordained for them. Christ also mentioned it in Matthew 24:12, *“And because iniquity shall abound, the love, agape, of many shall wax cold.”*, where he said that the *agape* love, (the spiritual love that only believers in Christ can have), will grow cold, which describes the ebbing of the spiritual life in believers. In fact, he says that **the love of the majority of believers** will grow cold!

### C. Reversionism recovery, or a returning to the Lord.

Reversionism recovery deals with the believer in Christ, who at one time was positive to Bible Doctrine, living by faith and in the spiritual dynamic, but due to one reason or another neglected or rejected the discipline of the spiritual life and went wandering off in the pursuit of their lusts or for something the world system had to offer.

These believers in Christ were at one time unbelievers, like all of us, and had turned to Christ for salvation. But somewhere down the road of life something happened to them that they reacted over, became bitter about, were arrogant over, enticed by, lusted after, etc., etc.. So they drifted off course, or made a flat out decision to go after something and they went away from the doctrinal teaching of their right Pastor-Teacher in their right local church.

They turned away from grace, the doctrinal teaching of the Word of God and the spiritual dynamic and in so doing turned away from the Lord. They are still saved and will live forever with all believers, but they have turned away from him. Now they need to turn back to the Lord, which entails once again a change of mental attitude toward the Word of God, orientation to grace, living by faith in his Word and reidentifying themselves under the teaching and authority of a Pastor-Teacher in a local church.

In the OT Israel's constant state with *Yahweh* was one of apostasy and he was continually ordering them to return to him. *“Even from the days of your fathers ye are **gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?”*** Malachi 3:7

One can be so permeated by evil, though, that he resists returning to God. *“And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.”* 2 Chronicles 36:13, *“They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the LORD.”* Hosea 5:4  
Perhaps the spirit of the world, *spiritus mundi*, has infected their minds!

When the NT believer turns from God, *apostrepho*, by turning from the Word and the spiritual life dynamic God has provided for us all, he will not only come under the control of his flesh nature, with its lusts and emotions, but he will also come under the influence of Satan who has taken them captive to do his will. These believers are now doing Satan's will, not God's! *“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”* 2 Timothy 2:26

The NIV has the passage as, *“And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, **in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.”*** 2 Timothy 2:24-26

To return to God and escape from all this takes a change of mental attitude, *metanoeo*, which only God can grant. The believer might have to petition God earnestly and fervently in their prayers to get back to living life in the filling of the Holy Spirit and by faith in the promises. *“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”* 2 Tim. 2:25

It must be made clear that the believer who has turned away from walking with the Lord can return to God, but it is God who brings him back. *“For ye were as sheep going*

*astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” 1 Peter 2:25*  
The passive voice of *epistrepho*, to return or to turn, tells us that the believer received the action of the verb and that God did it for him.

Many believers have misinterpreted a passage in Peter's writings concerning the dog and the sow to support their mistaken belief that believers in Christ can lose their salvation – which they can't! *“But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The **dog** is turned to his own vomit again; and the **sow** that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” 2 Peter 2:22*

Peter uses three different animals metaphorically in his letter: the **dog**, the **sow** and the **sheep**. And these three animals represent three types of people. The **dog** represents unsaved men who have rejected the gospel of grace after being exposed to it; the **sow** represents unsaved women who have rejected the gospel of grace after being exposed to it; but only the **sheep** refers to saved believers in Christ!

There are three verbs used for each animal divided into two categories. The dog turns to his vomit. In this we find the active voice is used to denote that the **dog**, the unsaved man, after hearing the gospel of salvation by grace, through faith in Christ, of his own free will rejects it and produces the action of the verb turning back to the life that he had before.

The next animal is the **sow** who returns to her wallowing in the mud. Again this is in the active voice showing that she produces the action of the verb. This speaks of the unsaved woman, who after hearing the gospel of grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, rejects it of her own free will and produces the action of turning back to the life that she had before.

In both cases the active voice is used to show that they turn back to their former life as the result of their own negative decision. But when we come to the sheep in 1 Peter 2:25 we find that the passive voice is used denoting that **the subject does not produce the action of the verb, to return, but is the one who receives the action of the verb**. What this reveals is that the sheep of Christ who have wandered off are returned to the Lord!

This being returned to the Lord entails such things as a change of mental attitude, living in the filling of the Holy Spirit once again, living in the new nature, sitting under the teaching of the Word, and being renewed by the process of faith in the Word.

Pastor Mike