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BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

A Study of the Articles of Faith



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Session 40



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In this session, participants will discuss: Article VIII. OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

VIII. OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH

We believe the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest and king, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.¹

According to Article VIII.

1. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties.
2. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God.
3. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that *where there is* repentance and faith *we are* deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness.
4. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that *where there is* repentance and faith *we are* deeply convinced of the way of salvation by Christ.

¹ [Articles-of-Faith.pdf \(nationalbaptist.com\)](https://www.nationalbaptist.com/articles-of-faith.pdf)

5. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger and helplessness and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy.
6. **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that *where there is* repentance and faith we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our prophet, priest and king, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

BASIC CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE AND FAITH



Introduction:

In our previous study, participants learned that where there is either faith or repentance, the other is also present. Some, as was discussed, experience a distress in the soul causing them to have ears to hear Gospel truth. These ones display “signs” of repentance prior to having an informed faith. Their anguish of soul, their distress of soul, causes them to seek God, whom they know exist, but do not know. In distress, seeking peace, seeking comfort, seeking a reason for hope, turn from their way of life or their situation causing distress, and lift their eyes to Him Whom they do not know...hoping that even through their ignorance they encounter Him and experience relief. This anguish, Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf, readies souls to hear the Gospel and respond “yes” to faith in Christ and ultimately, an authentic enlightened repentance grounded in an understanding of God’s will revealed in His Word. Others, as we learned, were brought to faith in Christ first...this faith led to repentance.ⁱ

John Calvin, argued persuasively that faith precedes repentance and that without faith one can never be brought to repentance...that faith in the virgin birth, the sinless life, the substitutionary death, the victorious resurrection, the glorious ascension, the overwhelming proof of Him being the only Lord and Savior, His immanent return, the certainty that without Him none can be saved, and the awareness of a coming judgement that will usher some into the Kingdom and others into eternal damnation, brings one to repentance, to turn from living in violation of God’s expressed will for one’s life.ⁱⁱ

Both Zinzendorf and Calvin, while differing on which precedes which, argue that where there is repentance, there is faith, as we also observed in numerous Bible passages (Matt. 3:7-12; 9:10-13, 32-38; 12:9-14; 23:1-36 Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:7-8; 15:1-7; 19:1-8; 24:36-49; Acts 2:37-42; 5:26-32; 10:44-48; 11:12-18; 13:16-43; 19:18-20). In the previous study, it was emphasized that faith and repentance are sacred duties, responsibilities that reveal whole-hearted devotion

and commitment to God. These two, faith in the Gospel and repentance, are undeniable evidence of a heart, whose confidence and trust are in the Living God and the finished work of Christ on the cross through which accomplished our redemption (freedom from captivity to through the payment of the ransom price – His blood), our reconciliation (peace with God), our justification (declaration of not guilty of sin), our adoption (into the family of God)...our salvation (eternal life as children of God).

In this study, participants will discuss the means through which one is brought to repentance and faith...faith and repentance. What causes these things to occur in someone's life?

Based on the Article under study:

- **Baptists believe** that the Scriptures teach that repentance and faith are inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God.

The noun “graces,” remind us that while “repentance and faith” are actions in the life of a believer, they are the result of the actions of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. They’re “graces,” **actions** in the life of the believer prompted by **actions** of the Holy Spirit, as we shall see.

The adjective “Inseparable,” reiterate the point well established that the Scriptures teach that where there is faith there must also be repentance. The two are unable to be separated or treated separately. They’re united as one resulting in conversion. Neither can be separated from the other. Where one exists, the other also does. They’re inseparable graces which should be taught together and clearly communicated that conversion to the Lord Jesus is the result of not one, but both being present in the life of a believer.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified.” (**This is faith**)

“**37** Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what are we to do?” **38** Peter *said* to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far away, as many as the Lord our God will call to

Himself.” **40** And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on urging them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” **41** So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. **42** They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:36-42). **This is repentance and faith.**

Question: Should the actions of repentance and faith in the life of the be attributed to actions of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

Consider the following Scriptures:

John 3:1-8:

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; **2** this man came to Jesus at night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” **3** Jesus responded and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless someone is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**”

4 Nicodemus **said* to Him, “How can a person be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother’s womb a second time and be born, can he?” **5** Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless someone is born of water and *the* Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.** **6** That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ **8** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it is coming from and where it is going; so is everyone who **has been born of the Spirit.**”

Points:

- Through the Holy Spirit one is born again.
- Through being born again, by the Holy Spirit, one can see/understand the Kingdom of God.
- Through being born again, by the Holy Spirit, one can enter the Kingdom of God.

John 15:23-26

²³ The one who hates Me hates My Father also. ²⁴ If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have [Ⓛ]sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. ²⁵ But *this has happened* so that the word that is written in their Law will be fulfilled: ‘THEY HATED ME FOR NO REASON.’

²⁶ “When **the Helper** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, *namely*, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, **He will testify about Me**, ²⁷ and you are testifying as well, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

John 16:7-11

7 But I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I am leaving; for if I do not leave, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. 8 And He, when He comes, will convict the world regarding sin, and righteousness, and judgment: 9 regarding sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 and regarding righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you no longer *are going to see Me*; 11 and regarding judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

Points:

- Through the Holy Spirit believers testify concerning Christ.
- Through the Holy Spirit, individuals are convicted of their sin regards to not having faith in Christ, convicted of righteousness – that they’ve not met God’s standards for right living, and convicted of judgement – that all will be judged for sin and not conforming to the righteousness of God.

Acts 2:14-42

- Through the Holy Spirit, Peter testified concerning Christ.
- Through the Holy Spirit, the hearers were convicted of their sin, guilt, the danger of being lost, and the gravity of their sin.
- Through the Holy Spirit, the hearers were brought to faith and repentance.

Acts 11:11-18:

- Through the Holy Spirit, Peter was led to go to the home of Cornelius to share the Gospel.

- Through the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel, the hearers came to faith, and were baptized as evidence of repentance.

Acts 15:

Therefore, after being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the **conversion of the Gentiles**, and they were bringing great joy to all the brothers *and sisters*. **4** When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church, the apostles, and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. **5** But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to keep the Law of Moses.”

6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. **7** After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. **8** And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them **the Holy Spirit**, just as He also did to us; **9** and **He made no distinction** between us and them, **cleansing their hearts by faith**. **10** Since this *is the* case, why are you putting God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our forefathers nor we have been able to bear? **11** But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.

Points:

- Gentiles were experiencing conversion (faith and repentance).
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the word was preached to the Gentiles.
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Gentiles came to faith and were brought to repentance revealed through baptism.
- Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Gentiles were saved and turned from sin to faith in Christ.

Point: Salvation, ultimately is God’s accomplishment in the life of the believer through the power of the Holy Spirit...Who moves upon the hearts of the hearers

when Holy Spirit filled believers testify to the work of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord! The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians conveying this reality.

And you were dead in your offenses and sins,² in which you previously walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.³ Among them we too all previously lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the rest.⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,⁵ even when we were dead in our wrongdoings, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the boundless riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.⁸ **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;**⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Point:

Salvation is not a personal accomplishment. Rather, salvation is an accomplishment of God in the life of one who was lost and has been found or has been saved! Thus, no one can boast, about salvation other than to boast about the ability of God to atone for our sin through Christ and rescue us from eternal condemnation.

1 John 5:1-12

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ **has been born of God**, and everyone who loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. **2** By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and follow His commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. **4** For whoever **has been born of God** overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world: **our faith**.

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. **7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.**

9 If we receive the testimony of people, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son. **10** The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. **11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12** The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Points:

- The one who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Holy Spirit in one's life, one comes to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (**1-3**). Faith is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit in a believer...a gift of grace...a move of the Spirit...opening our eyes, our mind, and heart to comprehend the work of Christ and then to fully trust that work for salvation.
- The Spirit, the water, and the blood are in agreement, testifying that Jesus is the Christ, the One sent by God into the world, proving His love, as a propitiation for our sins.
- The testimony of the Spirit, the water and the blood, is that God has given us eternal life in His Son. Believing this is the result of being born of God through the Power of the Holy Spirit. This is God's accomplishment. Those who have this faith, repent and obey the commandments of God!

ENDNOTES

- ⁱ No man can create faith in himself. Something must happen to him which Luther calls “the divine work in us,” which changes us gives us new birth and makes us completely different people in heart, spirit, mind, and all our powers. This is *fides*, faith properly speaking. If this is to begin in us, then **it must be preceded by distress**, without which men have no ears for faith and trust...The distress which we feel is the distress of our soul when we become poor, when we see we have no Savior, when we become palpably aware of our misery. We see our corruption on all sides and are really anxious because of it. Then afterward it happens as with patients who have reached the point of crisis; they watch for help, for someone who can help them out of their distress, and accept the first offer of aid without making an exact examination or investigation of the person who helps them. That is the way it went once with the woman whom the Savior healed. For twelve years she had gone to see all kinds of physicians and had endured much from them. And finally she came upon him too and said, “If only I would touch that man’s clothes, it would help me; even if I could not get to the man himself, if I could only get hold of a bit of his garment, then I would be helped” (**Matt. 9:21**). This is faith-in-distress. And here I can never wonder enough at the blindness and ignorance of those people who are supposed to handle the divine Word and convert men...who think that if they have them memorize the catechism or get a book of sermons into their heads or, at the most, present all sorts of well-reasoned demonstrations concerning the divine being and attributes, thus funneling the truths and knowledge into their heads, that this is the sovereign means to their conversion. But this is such a preposterous method that if one wanted to convert people that way, reciting demonstrations to them, then it is just as if one wanted to go against wind and current with full sails, or as if one, on the contrary, would run one’s boat into an inlet so that one could not find one’s way out again” (**The Christian Theology Reader, Edited by Alister E. McGrath, Copyright 1995, reprinted 1999, pgs. 237-239**).

Zinzendorf believed that without distress in the soul men have no ears for faith *in the Gospel* or trust *in God and Christ*. It is this distress which causes us to realize our need for a Savior. We realize our poverty and become vividly aware of our misery. We see our corruption *in character* on every side becoming

anxious...worried...fearful because of this corruption. Then like patients in hospital in a crisis, without any examination investigation of a physician's background or credentials we gladly receive aid. In ignorance of who we are yielding our lives to, we accept help. Like the woman who went various physicians for twelve years, in distress, going from one doctor to the next, in our distress of soul, in ignorance of faith in the gospel, we go from one thing to another, until like the woman, we come to Christ. He argues that those entrusted with the divine Word, attempting to bring about conversions to faith, without a distress in the soul of the hearers, are wasting their time...they're like people who believe if they can get you to memorize a catechism or sermon or bible passage, if they can funnel scripture into you, like one pouring oil through a funnel into an engine, if they can pour divine things into a soul, conversions will occur without distress of soul. He argues, that is preposterous! Conversions do not happen this way! Only a distress of soul, an awareness of one's poverty and misery, can give anyone ears to have faith in the Gospel and trust in God and Christ. He further believed that knowledge of the truth without distress in the soul causes a person to be puffed on knowledge and nothing comes out of that. Conversions never happen where there is not first this distress that produces a repentance causing one to have ears for faith!

- ii "Even though we have taught in part how faith possesses Christ, and how through it we enjoy his benefits, this would still remain obscure if we did not add an explanation of the effects we feel. With good reason, the sum of the gospel is held to consist in repentance and forgiveness of sins (**Lk. 24:47; Ac. 5:31**). Any discussion of faith, therefore, that omitted these two topics would be barren and mutilated and well-nigh useless. Now, both repentance and forgiveness of sins—that is, newness of life and free reconciliation—are conferred on us by Christ, and both are attained through faith. As a consequence, reason and the order of teaching demand that I begin to discuss both at this point. However, our immediate transition will be from faith to repentance. For when this topic is rightly understood it will better appear how man is justified by faith alone and simple pardon; nevertheless actual holiness of life, so to speak, is not separated from free imputation of righteousness. Now it ought to be a fact beyond controversy that repentance not only constantly follows faith, but is also born of faith. For since pardon and forgiveness are offered through the preaching of the gospel in order that the sinner, freed from the tyranny of Satan, the yoke of

sin, and the miserable bondage of vices, may cross over into the Kingdom of God, surely no one can embrace the grace of the gospel without betaking himself from the errors of his past life into the right way, and applying his whole effort to the practice of repentance. There are some, however, who suppose that repentance precedes faith, rather than flows from it or is produced by it as fruit from a tree. Such persons have never known the power of repentance, and are moved to feel this way by an unduly slight argument.

Christ, they say, and John in their preaching first urge the people to repentance, then add that the Kingdom of Heaven has come near (**Matt. 3:2; 4:17**). Such was the command the apostles received to preach; such was the order Paul followed, as Luke reports (**Acts 20:21**). Yet while they superstitiously cling to the joining together of syllables, they disregard the meaning that binds these words together. For while Christ the Lord and John preach in this manner: “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand” (**Matt. 3:2**), do they not derive the reason for repenting from grace itself and the promise of salvation? Accordingly, therefore, their words mean the same thing as if they said, “Since the Kingdom of Heaven has come near, repent...when we refer the origin of repentance to faith we do not imagine some space of time during which it brings it to birth; but we mean to show that a man cannot apply himself seriously to repentance without knowing he belongs to God. But no one is truth persuaded that he belongs to God unless he has first recognized God’s grace” (**Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion I, pgs. 593-594**).

Calvin believed that repentance is dependent on faith, that it flows from faith, that it is born out of faith. He believed that as a result of hearing preaching of the Gospel, the promise that one’s sins are pardoned through Christ, that sinners are freed of the tyranny of Satan, the yoke of sin, miserable bondage of vices, and that people can cross over into the Kingdom of God, that having this faith, is the only thing that produces repentance. He further argued that where John, Jesus, and the Apostles appear to preach repentance precedes faith...it’s to the contrary...that because of faith one is led to repentance...that no one can seriously apply himself to repentance without knowing himself to belong to God. One first recognizes the grace of God and is then led to repentance. Calvin argued that “no one will ever reverence God but him who trusts that God is propitious to him. No

one will gird himself willing to observe the law but him who will be persuaded that God is pleased by his obedience” (**Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion I, pg. 594**).