

Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*.

**REPENTANCE** Literally a change of mind, not about individual plans, intentions, or beliefs, but rather a change in one's attitude about God. Such repentance accompanies saving faith in Christ (Acts 20:21). It is inconsistent and unintelligible to suppose that anyone could believe in Christ yet not repent. Repentance is such an important aspect of conversion that it is often stressed rather than saving faith, as when Christ said that there is joy in heaven among the angels over one sinner who repents (Lk 15:7). The apostles described the conversion of the Gentiles to Christ as God granting them "repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18). Evangelical repentance and faith in Christ are in fact inseparable, though a convert may be aware of one aspect more than another.

Such penitence is not an isolated act but a disposition of the mind, providing a spur for behavior that accords with God's declared will. Recognition of daily sins and shortcomings provides the occasion for renewed acts of penitence and for fresh exercises of faith in Christ. One of the deepest and most noteworthy expressions of such penitence is David's account of his adultery with Bathsheba (Ps 51). Whole churches are, on occasion, called to repent (Rv 2:5). Second Corinthians 7 contains an interesting and full description of such corporate repentance involving the elements of sorrow for sin and a determined resolve to forsake old sinful ways and to behave properly. While repentance is often accompanied by deep feelings, it is not equivalent to such feelings but is rooted in convictions about the sinner's own need before a holy God.

Both John the Baptist (Mt 3:2; Mk 1:4) and Christ (Mk 1:15) were preachers of repentance, calling not the righteous but sinners to repent. And in accordance with the Great Commission (Lk 24:44-49), the apostles continued the same kind of preaching—beginning with Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), with noteworthy results.

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**SALVATION** *God's way of providing people deliverance from sin and death. Scripture reveals God but it also reveals his plan to save the human race. In that sense, salvation is a major theme in both the OT and NT.*

**In the Old Testament** The concept of salvation is represented by various terms and situations in both Testaments. Among several Hebrew words that mean “deliver” or “save,” the Hebrew verb *yasha*’ and derivatives are most frequently translated by English versions as “save” or “salvation.” Frequency in the English Bible depends upon the version considered. For example, in the OT “salvation” is found 74 times in the NLT, 80 times in the NIV, 90 times in the RSV, 111 times in the NASB, and 119 times in the KJV. Salvation is not used as a technical term in the OT and is ascribed to both individuals and God. Leaders like Samson (Jgs 13:5) or David (2 Sm 8:6) are used of the Lord to bring deliverance to God’s people.

Israel’s concept of salvation was rooted in the historical experience of the exodus. This momentous occasion was an opportunity to witness the salvation of the Lord (Ex 14:13) firsthand. Poets (Ps 106:8) and prophets (Is 43:3; Hos 13:4) later reiterated God’s salvation when recalling the exodus experience. Israel’s understanding of salvation was worked out in historical instances like Sennacherib’s attack on Jerusalem in 701 BC, when the Lord declared that he would save the city for his name’s sake (2 Kgs 19:34; cf. 18:30, 35). Israel’s opportunity to see God’s salvation through various leaders and situations corroborated this understanding of God as the God of salvation.

Israel’s response to God’s deliverance was primarily praise, as evidenced so often in the psalms (Pss 3:8; 9:14; 21:1) and earlier poetic passages (Ex 15:2; 1 Sm 2:1). In addition, they directed petitions and pleas for help to the Lord for his salvation—whether from enemies (Pss 35:3; 38:22), sickness (69:29), or battle (140:7; 144:10–11)—and in faith expected his deliverance (35:9; 65:5).

The prophets emphasized the eschatological (end-time) aspect of salvation. God’s ability to save was revealed by his great works in the past, which thus promoted the anticipation of his work of deliverance in the future. This future hope was for the nation of Israel (Is 45:17) but anticipated universal deliverance (49:6). The prophets looked forward to deliverance and return from exile in Babylon (Is 49:25–26; Jer 46:27), yet they also spoke of an abiding future salvation (Is 45:17; 51:6–8). The messianic hope is indicated in passages that speak of an individual who will bring God’s salvation. Isaiah speaks of the Servant who brings salvation to the ends of the earth (49:6), while Jeremiah writes of deliverance by God’s righteous Branch (Jer 23:5–6). The mention of the king who brings salvation in Zechariah 9:9 reflects this messianic theme and is applied to Jesus Christ in Matthew 21:4–5.

**In the New Testament** In classical Greek the verb *sozo* (“to save”) and noun *soteria* (“salvation”) are used for the concept of “rescue,” “deliverance” or “salvation,” and even “well-being” or “health.” The Septuagint most frequently uses *sozo* to render the Hebrew *yasha*’ (“to save”), and the NT primarily employs *sozo* and its derivatives for the idea of salvation.

These Greek terms are generally used theologically in the NT, but examples of nontheological usage occur. In Acts 27, these words refer to the threat and deliverance of the

soldiers, sailors, and prisoners from shipwreck (vv 20, 31), as well as their well-being (v 34).

In the Gospels “salvation” is clearly connected with the OT concept of salvation; it is applied to the coming of Christ in Zechariah’s prophecy (Lk 1:69, 71; cf. Pss 106:10; 132:17) and in Simeon’s hymn of praise (Lk 2:30). While *soteria* does not occur frequently in the Gospels, the concept of salvation is implied in Jesus’ statement about entrance into the kingdom of God (Mt 19:24–26) and his miracles of healing (Lk 17:19; 18:42).

The NT teaches that salvation has its source in Jesus Christ (2 Tm 2:10; Heb 5:9), who is the “author” and mediator of salvation (Heb 2:10; 7:25). Salvation is God’s work (1 Thes 5:9) and is offered by his grace (Eph 2:8–9). The message of salvation is contained in the Scriptures (2 Tm 3:15) and is carried by those who proclaim the word of truth (Eph 1:13). The appropriate response is repentance (2 Cor 7:10) and faith (2 Tm 3:15; 1 Pt 1:9). This was the preaching of the early church as it proclaimed the Savior Jesus (Acts 4:12; 13:23–26; 16:30–31). Paul especially proclaimed the universality of God’s offer of salvation (Rom 1:16; Ti 2:11). His desire was for Jews to be saved (Rom 10:1), though he primarily preached the message of salvation to the Gentiles (11:11–13).

Within the Scriptures there are many other terms associated with the concept of salvation. The new birth speaks of being made alive in Christ (“born again,” Jn 3:3). Justification envisions one’s legal standing before God, while redemption speaks more of the means of salvation—the payment of a price to bring one back to God. Reconciliation speaks of a change in relationship and propitiation, which evokes the OT sacrificial system and points to the turning away of God’s wrath. These terms and others share some common ground with the biblical concept of salvation, but all point to the person and work of Jesus Christ the Savior.

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**CONVERSION** Total change in one's direction in life or moral orientation. For Christians this means a change from an orientation that does not take God into account to one in which the person is submitted to Christ. Conversion is the result of repentance.

In the OT conversion is basically a turning or returning from one's former course of life toward the Lord, the God of Israel. Israel often had to return to their God (Dt 4:30), either as individuals (Ps 51) or as a nation (Jer 4:1); foreign nations needed to turn to God for the first time (Ps 22:27). The characteristic feature is that one turns from wickedness (Jer 26:3; 36:3; Ez 18:21, 27; 33:9, 11), from a life of disloyalty to God to a life of obedience to God (Is 10:20–21; 14:2; Jer 34:15; Hos 14:4). Conversion means a change in inward orientation that finds expression in a changed lifestyle.

In the NT John the Baptist begins the call to conversion (Mt 3:2; Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3), giving a prophetic call for people to change their minds (which is the root meaning of the Greek term) in the light of the nearness of God's kingdom. This change of life must include a change in actions to prove its reality (Mt 3:8; Lk 3:8). Jesus preached the same message (Mt 4:17; Mk 1:15), adding that since the kingdom had arrived in his person, obedience to him was part of the good news of conversion. Yet it could also be bad news, for one would be damned if he failed to make this radical change (Mt 11:20; Lk 13:3–5). Conversion is radical but also simple, for it requires the simplicity of a child who commits his whole self, not the calculating self-protectiveness of the adult (Mt 18:3).

Outside the Gospels, "conversion" is not a frequently used term except in the book of Acts, where it forms the call to commitment climaxing evangelistic sermons (2:38; 3:19; 8:22), describes the commitment of new Christians to the Lord (9:35; 11:21), and pictures the change of life as a turning from darkness to light (26:18–20). Later writers look back upon conversion (2 Cor 3:16), worry about Christians converting to paganism or Judaism (Gal 4:9), and call for the reconversion of Christians who have left the faith and are in danger of judgment (Jas 5:19–20; Rv 2:5, 16, 22; 3:19).

As in the OT and in the preaching of John and Jesus, conversion has three factors. First, it is a turning *from* something, which includes specific sins, false gods, or simply a life lived for oneself (1 Thes 1:9; Rv 9:20–21; 16:11). Second, conversion is a product of the will of God and his gracious working in the world (Acts 11:18; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:10; 2 Tm 2:25; 2 Pt 3:9). Third, conversion is a turning *to* someone, a commitment of one's whole life to God in Jesus Christ (Acts 14:15; 1 Thes 1:9; 1 Pt 2:25). It is thus a total reorientation, whether spectacular or undramatic, sudden or gradual, emotional or calm, in which a person transfers his or her total allegiance to God.

Hodge, C. (1997). *Systematic theology*. Originally published 1872.

### *The Lutheran Doctrine as to the Plan of Salvation.*

It is not easy to give the Lutheran doctrine on this subject, because it is stated in one way in the early symbolical books of that Church, and in a somewhat different way in the "Form of Concord," and in the writings of the standard Lutheran theologians. Luther himself taught the strict Augustinian doctrine, as did also Melancthon in the first edition of his "Loci Communes." In the later editions of that work Melancthon taught that men cooperate with the grace of God in conversion, and that the reason why one man is regenerated and another not is to be found in that cooperation. This gave rise to the protracted and vehement synergistic controversy, which for a long time seriously disturbed the peace of the Lutheran Church. This controversy was for a time authoritatively settled by the "Form of Concord," which was adopted and enjoined as a standard of orthodoxy by the Lutherans. In this document both the doctrine of cooperation and that of absolute predestination were rejected. It taught the entire inability of the natural man for anything spiritually good; and therefore denied that he could either prepare himself for regeneration or cooperate with the grace of God in that work. It refers the regeneration of the sinner exclusively to the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit. It is the work of God, and in no sense or degree the work of man. But it teaches that the grace of God may be effectually resisted, and that the reason why all who hear the gospel are not saved is that some do thus resist the influence which is brought to bear upon them, and others do not. While, therefore, regeneration is exclusively the work of the Spirit, the failure of salvation is to be referred to the voluntary resistance of offered grace. As this system was illogical and contrary to the clear declarations of Scripture, it did not long maintain its ground. Non-resistance to the grace of God, passively yielding to its power, is something good. It is something by which one class is favourably distinguished from another; and therefore the reason why they, rather than others, are saved, is to be referred to themselves and not to God, who gives the same grace to all. The later Lutheran theologians, therefore, have abandoned the ground of the "Form of Concord," and teach that the objects of election are those whom God foresaw would believe and persevere in faith unto the end.

According to this scheme, God, (1.) From general benevolence or love to the fallen race of man, wills their salvation by a sincere purpose and intention. "Benevolentia Dei universalis," says Hollaz, "non est inane votum, non sterilis velleitas, non otiosa complacentia, qua quis rem, quae sibi placet, et quam in se amat, non cupit efficere aut consequi adeoque mediis ad hunc finem ducentibus non vult uti sed est voluntas efficax, qua Deus salutem hominum, ardentissime amatam, etiam efficere atque per media sufficientia et efficacia consequi serio intendit." □<sup>1</sup> (2.) To give effect to this general purpose of benevolence and mercy towards men indiscriminately, God determined to send his Son to make a full satisfaction for their sins. (3.) To this follows (in the order of thought) the purpose to give to all men the means of salvation and the power to avail themselves of the offered mercy. This is described as a "destinatio mediorum, quibus tum sterna salus satisfactione Christi parta, tum vires eredendi omnibus hominibus offeruntur, ut satisfactionem Christi ad salutem acceptare et sibi applicare queant." □<sup>2</sup> (4.) Besides this, *voluntas generalis* (as relating to all men) and *antecedens*, as going before any contemplated action of men, there is a *voluntas specialia*, as relating to certain individual men, and *consequens*, as following the foresight of their action. This *voluntars speciale* is defined as that "quae peccatores oblata salutis media amplectentes sterna salute donare constituit." □<sup>3</sup> So Hutter

□<sup>4</sup> says, "Quia (Deus) praevidit ac praescivit maximam mundi partem mediis salutis locum minime relicturam ac proinde in Christum non credituram, ideo Deus de illis tantum salvaudis fecit decretum, duos actu in Christum credituros praevidit." Hollaz expresses the same view: □<sup>5</sup> "Electio hominum, peccato corruptorum, ad vitam aeternam a Deo misericordissimo facta est intuitu fidei in Christum ad finem usque vita. perseverantis." Again: "Simpliciter quippe et categorice decrevit Deus hunc, illum, istum hominem salvare, quia perseverantem ipsius in Christum idem certo praevidit." □<sup>6</sup>

The Lutheran doctrine, therefore, answers the question, Why one man is saved and another not? by saying, Because the one believes and the other does not. The question, Why God elects some and not others, and predestinates them to eternal life? is answered by saying, Because He foresees that some will believe unto the end, and others will not. If asked, Why one believes and another not? the answer is, Not that one cooperates with the grace of God and the other does not; but that some resist and reject the grace offered to all, and others do not. The difficulty arising from the Lutheran doctrine of the entire corruption of our fallen nature, and the entire inability of the sinner to do anything spiritually good, is met by saying, that the sinner has power to use the means of grace, he can hear the word and receive the sacraments, and, as these means of grace are imbued with a divine supernatural power, they produce a saving effect upon all who do not voluntarily and persistently resist their influence. Baptism, in the case of infants, is attended by the regeneration of the soul; and therefore all who are baptized in infancy have a principle of grace implanted in them, which, if cherished, or, if not voluntarily quenched, secures their salvation. Predestination in the Lutheran system is acnfined to the elect. God predestinates those whom He foresees will persevere in faith unto salvation. There is no predestination of unbelievers unto death.

### ***The Remonstrant Doctrine.***

In the early part of the seventeenth century Arminius introduced a new system of doctrine in the Reformed churches of Holland, which was formally condemned by the Synod of Dort which sat from November 1618 to May 1619. Against the decisions of that Synod the advocates of the new doctrine presented a Remonstrance, and hence they were at first called Remonstrants, but in after years their more common designation has been Arminians. Arminianism is a much lower form of doctrine than Lutheranism. In all the points included under Anthropology and Soteriology it is a much more serious departure from the system of Augustinianism which in all ages has been the life of the church. The Arminians taught, —

1. That all men derive from Adam a corrupt nature by which they are inclined to sin. But they deny that this corruption is of the nature of sin. Men are responsible only for their own voluntary acts and the consequences of such acts. "Peccatum originale nec habent (Remonstrantes) pro peccato proprie dicto.... nec pro malo, quod per modum proprie dicta poenae ab Adamo in posteros dimanet, sed pro malo infirmitate." □<sup>7</sup> Limborch □<sup>8</sup> says, "Atqui illa physica est impuritas (namely, the deterioration of our nature derived from Adam), non moraliis et tantum abest ut sit vere ac proprie dictum peccatum."

2. They deny that man by his fall has lost his ability to good. Such ability, or liberty as they call it, is essential to our nature, and cannot be lost without the loss of humanity. "Innatam arbitrii humani libertatem (*i. e.*, ability) olim semel in creatione datam, nunquam.... tollit (Deus)." □<sup>9</sup>

3. This ability, however, is not of itself sufficient to secure the return of the soul to God. Men need the preventing, exciting, and assisting grace of God in order to their conversion and holy living. "Gratiam Dei statuimus esse principium, progressum et complementum omnis boni adeo ut ne ipse quidem regenitus absque praecedente ista, sive praeviente, excitante, prosequente et cooperante gratia, bonum ullum salutare cogitare, velle, aut peragere possit." □<sup>10</sup>

4. This divine grace is afforded to all men in sufficient measure to enable them to repent, believe, and keep all the commandments of God. "Gratia efficax vocatur ex eventu. Ut statuatur gratia habere ex se sufficientem vim, ad producendum consensum in voluntate, sed quia vis illa partialis est, non posse exire in actum sive effectum sortiri sine cooperatione liberae voluntatis humanae, ac proinde ut effectum habeat,.... pendere a libera voluntate." □<sup>11</sup> This grace, says Limborch, "incitat, exstimulat, adjuvat et corroborat, *quantum satis est*, ut homo re ipsa Deo obediat et ad finem in obedientia perseveret." And again: □<sup>12</sup> "Sufficiens vocatio, quando per cooperationem liberi arbitrii sortitur suum effectum, vocatur efficax."

5. Those who of their own free will, and in the exercise of that ability which belongs to them since the fall, cooperate with this divine grace, are converted and saved. "Etsi vero maxima est gratia disparitas, pro liberrima scilicet voluntatis divinae dispensatione tamen Spiritus Sanctus omnibus et singulis, quibus verbum fidei ordinarie praedicatur, tantum gratiae confert, aut saltem conferre paratus est, quantum ad idem ingenerandum, et ad promovendum suis gradibus salutarem ipsorum conversionem sufficit." □<sup>13</sup> The Apology for the Remonstrance, and especially the Remonstrant Theologians, as Episcopius and Limborch, go farther than this. Instead of limiting this sufficient grace to those who hear the gospel, they extend it to all mankind.

6. Those who thus believe are predestinated to eternal life, not however as individuals, but as a class. The decree of election does not concern persons, it is simply the purpose of God to save believers. "Decretum vocant Remonstrantes decretum praedestinationis ad salutem, quia eo decernitur, qua ratione et conditione Deus peccatores saluti destinet. Enunciatur autem hoc decretum Dei hac formulá Deus decrevit salvare credentes, non quasi credentes quidam re ipsa jam sint, qui objiciantur Deo salvare volenti, sive praedestinati nihil minus sed, ut quid in iis, circa quos Deus praedestinans versatur, requiratur, ista enunciatione clare significetur. Tantundem enim valet atqui si diceres, Deus decrevit homines salvare sub conditione fidei.... Etiam si hujusmodi praedestinatio non sit praedestinatio certarum personarum, est tamen omnium hominum praedestinatio, si modo credant et in virtute praedestinatio certarum personarum, quae et quando credunt." □<sup>14</sup>

### ***Wesleyan Arminianism.***

The Arminian system received such modifications in the hands of Wesley and his associates and followers, that they give it the designation of Evangelical Arminianism, and claim for it originality and completeness. It differs from the system of the Remonstrants, —

1. In admitting that man since the fall is in a state of absolute or entire pollution and depravity. Original sin is not a mere physical deterioration of our nature, but entire moral depravity.

2. In denying that men in this state of nature have any power to cooperate with the grace of God. The advocates of this system regard this doctrine of natural ability, or the ability of the natural man to cooperate with the grace of God as Semi-pelagian, and the doctrine that men have

the power by nature perfectly to keep the commandments of God, as pure Pelagianism. □<sup>15</sup>

3. In asserting that the guilt brought upon all men by the sin of Adam is removed by the justification which has come upon all men by the righteousness of Christ.

4. That the ability of man even to cooperate with the Spirit of God, is due not to anything belonging to his natural state as fallen, but to the universal influence of the redemption of Christ. Every infant, therefore, comes into the world free from condemnation on the ground of the righteousness of Christ, and with a seed of divine grace, or a principle of a new life implanted in his heart. "That by the offence of one," says Wesley, □<sup>16</sup> "judgment came upon all men (all born into the world) unto condemnation, is an undoubted truth, and affects every infant, as well as every adult person. But it is equally true, that by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men (all born into the world —infants and adults) unto justification." And Fletcher, □<sup>17</sup> says, "As Adam brought a general condemnation and a universal seed of death upon all infants, so Christ brings upon them a general justification and a universal seed of life." "Every human being," says Warren, "has a measure of grace (unless he has cast it away), and those who faithfully use this gracious gift, will be accepted of God in the day of judgment, whether Jew or Greek, Christian or Heathen. In virtue of the mediation of Jesus Christ, between God and our fallen race, all men since the promise Gen. iii. 15, are under an economy of grace, and the only difference between them as subjects of the moral government of God, is that while all have grace and light enough to attain salvation, some, over and above this, have more and others less." □<sup>18</sup> Wesley says, "No man living is without some preventing grace, and every degree of grace is a degree of life." And in another place, "I assert that there is a measure of free will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world." □<sup>19</sup>

According to this view of the plan of God, he decreed or purposed, (1.) To permit the fall of man. (2.) To send his Son to make a full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. (3.) On the ground of that satisfaction to remit the guilt of Adam's first transgression and of original sin, and to impart such a measure of grace and light to all and every man as to enable all to attain eternal life. (4.) Those who duly improve that grace, and persevere to the end, are ordained to be saved; God purposes from eternity, to save those whom He foresees will thus persevere in faith and holy living.

It is plain that the main point of difference between the later Lutheran, the Arminian, and the Wesleyan schemes, and that of Augustinians is, that according to the latter, God, and according to the former, man, determines who are to be saved. Augustine taught that out of the fallen family of men, all of whom might have been justly left to perish in their apostasy, God, out of his mere good mercy, elected some to everlasting life, sent his Son for their redemption, and gives to them the Holy Spirit to secure their repentance, faith, and holy living unto the end. "Cur autem non omnibus datur donum fidei, fidelem movere non debet, qui credit ex uno omnes esse in condemnationem, sine dubio justissimam ita ut nulla Dei esset justa reprehensio, etiamsi nullus inde liberaretur. Unde constat, magnam esse gratiam, quod plurimi liberantur." □<sup>20</sup> It is God, therefore, and not man, who determines who are to be saved. Although this may be said to be the turning point between these great systems, which have divided the Church in all ages, yet that point of necessity involves all the other matters of difference; namely, the nature of original sin; the motive of God in providing redemption; the nature and design of the work of Christ; and the nature of divine grace, or the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in a great measure, the whole system

of theology, and of necessity the character of our religion, depend upon the view taken of this particular question. It is, therefore, a question of the highest practical importance, and not a matter of idle speculation.

1 *Examen Theologicum Acroamaticum*, Leipzig, 1763, p. 599.

2 Hollaz, *Examen*, III. i. cap. 1, quaest. 6; edit. Jeller, Holmiae et Lipsiae, 1750, p. 589.

3 *Ibid.* III i. 1, 3; p. 586.

4 Hutter, *Soci Communes. Tract. Artic. Praescient. Prov. Decr.*, etc., vii.; edit. Wittenberg, 1619, p. 793, b.

5 Holland, *Examen*, edit. 1750, *ut supra*, p. 619.

6 Hollaz, *Ibid.* III. i. 2, 12, prob. c., *ut supra*, p. 631.

7 *Apologia pro Confessione Remonstrantium*, edit. Leyden, 1630, p. 84.

8 *Theologia Christiana*, v. xv. 15, edit. Amsterdam, 1715, p. 439.

9 *Confessio Remonstrantium*, vi. 6; *Episcopii Opera*, edit. Rotterdam, 1665, vol. ii. part 2, p. 80.

10 *Ibid.* xvii. 6; *ut supra*, p. 88.

11 *Apologia pro Confessione Remonstrantium*, p. 162.

12 *Theologia*, iv. xii. 8; p. 852.

13 *Confessio Remonstrantium*, xvii. 8; p. 89.

14 *Apologia pro Confessione Remonstrantium*, p. 102.

15 W. F. Warren, *System. Theologie, Erste Lieferung*, Hamburg, p. 145.

16 *Works*, vii. p. 97.

17 *Works*, i. pp. 284, 285.

18 Warren, p. 146.

19 *Works*, vii. p. 97; vi. p. 42. Fletcher, i. p. 137, ff. etc.

20 Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, VIII. 16; *Works*, edit. Benedictines, vol. x p. 1361, c.