



## Repentance And The Responsibility Of Holy Living For Believers

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**Abstract:** *Repentance is needed because humans realize that they are sinners. Sinful people must be saved through repentance, without repentance sinful humans cannot be saved. Thus repentance has a strong connection with the salvation of believers. Salvation in the concept of the Old Testament people was to turn around and live in God's law. If they repent and obey, they will be saved, that is, they will be blessed with physical blessings such as victory over war, successful harvests, and being able to perform worship. On the other hand, if they do not repent of their sins, they will be condemned or cursed by God. This understanding of repentance and salvation has been adopted by adherents of prosperity theology. They say that Christians who have had their sins forgiven through repentance will be saved and live abundantly with physical blessings, success and prosperity. For the New Testament people, the goal of repentance and salvation is to achieve physical blessings like the Old Testament people or adherents of prosperity theology. This research tries to research and find the correct understanding of repentance and salvation which has implications for the responsibility of believers to maintain the holiness of their lives every day because humans are the holy image of God on this earth. The aim of this research is to find the true understanding of repentance and salvation in Christianity which has implications for the responsibility of Christians to live without falling into sin again or to live in the morality of God's holy holiness. The research in this paper uses a qualitative approach with the technique of writing a literature review or literature study. The research results show that the understanding of repentance and salvation to achieve the image of God who is in the image and likeness of God has implications for the responsibility of the congregation to achieve the morality of holiness like God. This research also shows that repentance is the renewal of the mind until it has thoughts and feelings like Christ. This research also found that the notion of repentance and salvation only by God's grace alone on the basis of damage to God's image in humans based on God's absolute sovereignty has no implications for the believer's responsibility to strive to live without sin or without blemish. Repentance is completely a gift where humans cannot exercise their free will to choose so that believers are not required to take a proportional responsibility to change their character based on individual decisions in order to live a holy life. Repentance in Christianity is no longer focused on physical blessings but on the restoration of God's image with the responsibility of the believer's holy life*

**Keywords:** *Repentance and Salvation, Image of God, Responsibility for holy living.*

## INTRODUCTION

What is the meaning of repentance in Christianity? If there is no sin there is no need for repentance. So repentance is necessary because man realizes that he is sinful. If a person does not feel guilty then he does not need repentance. Almost all believers realize that they are sinners and need repentance. Like it or not, we have to understand "sin" so that we can define repentance specifically repentance in Christianity. By understanding what sin is in Christianity, we must also understand the purpose of repentance in Christianity. Call to repent in Matthew 4: (17) Since that time Jesus preached: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!" Acts 3: (19) Therefore be aware and repent, so that your sins may be wiped away. Revelation 3: (19) Whoever I love, I rebuke and chastise; therefore relax your heart and repent! What if believers do not respond to the call to repent then their lampstands will be pulled and they will live in darkness and will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Revelation 2: (5) Therefore remember how

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deep you have fallen! Repent and do again what you originally did. If it is not so, I will come to you and I will take your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. Matthew 18: (3) then said: "Truly, I say to you, unless you repent and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Because humans have fallen into sin, meaning humans do not carry out God's commands or words. Therefore, humans need to be saved through repentance. So repentance is necessary so that sinners become saved or sin no more.

For those new covenant people who do not repent, they are not saved, meaning they will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Thus repentance has a strong connection with the meaning of salvation. For PL believers, repentance means turning around (like someone doing a U-Turn), turning back to the right path, turning back to God who provides forgiveness for acts that violate God's law. The Hebrew verb -repent- is SHUV, found in Jeremiah 3:14 translated turn back and Psalm 78:34 "turn and Jeremiah 18:8, Ezekiel 33:11 "repent". (Revelation , 2007 ). So salvation in the concept of the Old Testament people is to turn around and live in God's law. If they repent and obey, they will be blessed with physical blessings such as victory over war, successful harvests. The understanding of repentance and salvation to obtain physical blessings in the context of the Old Testament people becomes the guide of the New Testament people, namely those who adhere to prosperity theology. Success theology teaches that people who believe will definitely experience a life full of blessings, wealth, success and abundance. John 10:10b, 3 John 1:2 and 2 Corinthians 8:9, are verses that are interpreted as instructions that Christians have the right to be rich, live in material and worldly abundance, which means lots of money, live in abundance and live in all pleasures .

The understanding supported by the verses above shows that repentance and the gift of salvation have a direct and strong relationship with physical blessings and if they have not been physically blessed there is something wrong with their faith. This understanding was developed by those who adhere to prosperity theology (Lincoln, 2004). The differences between the concepts of repentance and the understanding of salvation above, this research aims to find the true understanding of repentance and salvation in Christianity which has implications for the responsibility of Christians to live a sinless or holy life.

Several views regarding the meaning of repentance and salvation for the New Testament people.

### **Lutheran view**

The subjective carrying out of the work of redemption in the sinner's heart is a work of Divine grace, but they lay the primary emphasis on what is done on the part of man and not on what is done on the part of God. Although they knew that original faith was a gift from God,

they made faith (as an active principle in man and as a human act) the most decisive factor in the order of their salvation. In the Lutheran reformation the doctrine of justification by faith was greatly emphasized. Lutherans take their starting point from the fact that in Christ, God is reconciled to the world, calling, illumination, conversion and regeneration are actually only preparations, not blessings of the covenant of grace.

In this case man is given saving faith by which man obtains the forgiveness or justification objectively given in Christ, is adopted as a child of God, is united with Christ and receives the spirit of renewal and sanctification, the principles of obedience. If man continues to believe, he will find peace and joy, life and salvation, but if he no longer believes all this will be doubtful, uncertain, and perhaps useless.

### **Roman Catholic View.**

Free will was not abolished after falling into sin. So humans have the possibility and necessity to cooperate with God's grace. One must acknowledge grace and cooperate with it, then one is justified. This justification is the forgiveness of sins and also the sanctification and renewal of the human interior through the voluntary acceptance of grace and gifts. Justification is a process of sanctification and justification. Justification is not given, but is received by grace and also by preparation. Justification grows by good works. The measure of forgiveness of sins is related to the degree to which sins are actually overcome. Grace is tied to the sacraments. Grace is objective, and in human cooperation grace becomes subjective. The result is that there is no certainty about safety. The gift of justification can be lost, not only by unbelief but also by sin leading to death.

### **Armenian view**

Repentance and salvation are God's work, but depend on human attitudes and work. God opens up the possibility of salvation for humans but it depends on humans whether they want to increase that possibility. According to Armenian, humans by nature are not totally damaged. Even though human nature is wounded and damaged as a result of man's fall into sin, man is still capable by his nature of doing what is spiritually good and can turn to God. However, because it was bent by Satan and also by the indolence of man's sinful nature. Allah gives help to humans. He bestowed sufficient grace on all humans to enable them, if they so choose, to obtain the fullness of spiritual blessings and thereby receive salvation. According to Armenian forgiveness of sins is based on the merits of Christ, but acceptance by God rests on human obedience to the law or obedience to the Gospel. Faith not only justifies, but also regenerates sinners. However, God's grace can always be accepted and rejected (Busnitz & et al, 2021).

### **Calvin's view**

In Calvin's theory, living righteously is the basis of actions as a guarantee for living in holiness, because living in holiness is part of Christ, because we cannot have Christ without being part of holiness, to describe the relationship between believers and Christ. The aspect of sanctification or purification (Sanctification) has occupied an important domain in Systematic Theology, especially the doctrine of salvation (Soteriology) in Christianity in addition to other aspects regarding predestination/election (election), grace (grace), rebirth (regeneration), faith (faith), justification (justification), adoption and glorification. Sanctification has also become an important discussion and debate in church history and various theological formulations, because some understand sanctification as the fruit of salvation, but others understand sanctification as a prerequisite for salvation. Discussions and debates regarding sanctification have produced a variety of understandings and teachings in the church. Therefore, the doctrine of sanctification needs to receive attention and research, so that a complete understanding will be obtained which will ultimately be realized in the lives and ministries of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's letter to the Romans (chapter 1:16-17) regarding the terms God's justice and righteousness (*justitia dei*) are key terms in the teaching regarding human justification (justification). In His justice, God does not judge man fairly according to his deeds so that he will surely perish, but frees him from punishment due to sin because of the merits of Jesus Christ. A person who entrusts himself by faith alone (*sola fide*) to God who is full of grace, will be justified, considered and declared righteous because the righteousness of Christ is counted by God as the righteousness of believers. Thus, the justification for human sin is not caused by human effort but by God's grace alone as the source of human salvation. Some of the relevance of the doctrine today can be described as follows: First, sanctification is a work of God's grace like other aspects of the doctrine of salvation. Teaching about salvation is a very important doctrine in the Bible and for the church throughout the ages up to the present because it concerns the eternity of humans before God. The Bible clearly confirms the existence of humans who are sinful by nature and actually, the reality of God's grace which has been revealed through the person and atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and the importance of faith as a means of receiving salvation. Like other aspects of salvation, sanctification is a work of God's grace that needs to be emphasized by the teaching and preaching of the church today amidst the currents of religiosity, spiritualism and ritualism which emphasize human aspects that determine God's approval.

Calvin's views strongly rejected Pelagianism. In today's church, the influence of Pelagianism's teaching which emphasizes 'good deeds', work and the holiness of the human person which makes humans saved must be answered by Reformed theological teachings regarding the work of God's gift of salvation (Sola Gracia/Grace Alone) which is biblical and remains relevant. Second, the emergence of a pessimistic attitude in the world towards believers (Christianity/church) today which shows that the lives of believers are not commensurate with the values of the Bible. Aren't believers based on the Bible called saints according to the essence of their definitive sanctification? However, it seems that believers still repeat the same sins and mistakes of the past after receiving salvation. Hasn't every believer been adopted as a child of God and the Holy Spirit has lived in his life? Therefore, the doctrine of the sanctification of believers must be emphasized even more today. The emphasis on God's purpose in choosing people in Christ is that they be holy and that they express the holy image of Jesus Christ which is manifested in everyday life. The church today must place greater emphasis on teaching that believers who have been justified by God in Christ must live their lives differently (separately) from others. On the basis of justification in his life, he must live to express the justification he has received by living in sanctification (Zorgdrager, 2014). The Bible clearly confirms the existence of humans who are sinful by nature and actually, the reality of God's grace which has been revealed through the person and atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and the importance of faith as a means of receiving salvation. Like other aspects of salvation, sanctification is a work of God's grace that needs to be emphasized by the teaching and preaching of the church today amidst the currents of religiosity, spiritualism and ritualism. Therefore, the doctrine of the sanctification of believers must be emphasized even more today.

### **Comparison of Armenian and Calvin**

In the Journal, Micahel says that there are differences between Calvinist and Armenian teachings regarding repentance and salvation. Calvinists claim that grace brings salvation while Armenians claim that grace brings free will, where in Calvin salvation is God's prerogative to provide salvation for mankind and it is a gift for humans, while in Armenian God's grace is for all humans without exception and salvation can be obtained from human free will in accepting salvation itself. Calvinism holds to the principle of "total fall" while Arminianism holds to the principle of "partial fall." The total fall states that all aspects of humanity have been polluted by sin, therefore humans cannot come to God based on their own will. The fall in part implies that every aspect of humanity was tainted by sin, but not to the extent that humans could not have faith in God of their own free will. Calvinism holds to the principle of "unconditional

election” while Arminianism holds to the principle of “conditional election.” Unconditional election believes that God chooses saved people based on His will alone, not based on what individuals do. Conditional election believes that God chooses individuals for salvation based on God's knowledge of who will accept Jesus as Savior.

Calvinism holds to the principle of “limited atonement,” while Arminianism believes in the principle of “unlimited atonement.” Of the five different principles, this is the most controversial. Limited atonement understands that Jesus' death is only limited to the chosen people. Unlimited atonement believes that Jesus died for everyone, but His death will not be effective until the person concerned believes. Calvinism holds to the principle of “irresistible grace” while Arminianism holds to the principle of “irresistible grace.” Irresistible grace believes that when God calls a person to salvation, that person will surely come to salvation, sooner or later. Irresistible grace says that God calls all people to salvation, yet many people persist in rejecting this call.

Calvinism holds to the principle of “perseverance of the saints,” while Arminianism holds to the principle of “conditional salvation.” The perseverance of the saints refers to the concept that a person who has been chosen by God will persist in his faith and will never reject Christ or turn from Him. Conditional salvation understands that a person who believes in Christ, can, of his free will, turn from Christ and therefore lose salvation (Jura, 2017).

### **Erastus Sabdono's view**

Salvation according to Erastus uses the principle that the sin committed by the first human was a fall or *hamartia* and the fall did not cause the human to be totally or partially damaged but to lack glory (Romans 3:23). Salvation in Jesus is of course closely related to Adam's mistake in the garden of Eden. God gives us grace by forgiving our sins and giving us the potential to never make mistakes in our choices, or the potential to obey in order to create a harmonious relationship with God again. If you do not respond to the salvation given by this gift until you have the intelligence or sensitivity to carry out the Father's will, what is good (not evil), pleasing and perfect, then the opportunity for salvation may be lost. The intelligence to choose what is truly true is a responsibility that we must achieve on earth so that safety becomes a definite possession.

The certainty of a believer's salvation is not enough to be built on the basis of belief alone in the Lord Jesus as the Savior who has forgiven sins. But the certainty of salvation must be built with the understanding that our existence must be acceptable (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). Favored means that we already have the divine nature; everything we do is always in

accordance with God's thoughts and feelings, like Jesus (Philippians 2:5). The certainty of salvation is when every human being exists according to God's design, namely in the image and likeness of Jesus. Erastus said that soteriology is related to human responsibility, to form the divine nature. Therefore, soteriology cannot be separated from the change in human nature from a sinful nature to a divine nature. Salvation in Jesus Christ is God's effort or process to build a divine conscience or divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), to restore the image of God or return to God's original design .

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods with research techniques, namely literature *review* or library study. This technique is used because this research uses theoretical studies to understand the meaning of repentance and salvation and its implications for changes in the character and proportional responsibilities of believers.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The understanding of repentance and salvation according to Calvin and Armenian does not link salvation to returning humans to God's original image, with a change in nature as Erastus views. Erastus said that salvation is God's effort to return humans to God's original design which is in the image and likeness so that a response is required as a responsibility to live obediently, without blemish. Meanwhile, according to Calvin, the meaning of repentance and salvation is that no human effort is needed to achieve salvation because all humans have experienced total corruption. Thus there is no need for human responsibility to achieve salvation. God determines in His sovereignty those people who are predestined to salvation, and to them God gives the ability to obey and be responsible, or the perseverance of the saints, and it is not given to people who have not been predestined to salvation. Thus the responsibility to survive is considered an act that violates God's sovereignty.

The understanding of safety taught by Armenian applies to everyone. Everyone can survive because humans are not completely damaged but partially damaged, so humans can still survive according to their free will. Believers who believe in justification in Christ can become unsaved if they reject the grace of Christ. Irresistible grace says that God calls all people to salvation, yet many people persist in rejecting this call. So the responsibility of the people according to the meaning is completely dependent on humans without any attempt to return to God's original design. Human beings who believe in the grace of Jesus as long as they faithfully and consciously, in their free will, continue to believe in Jesus, then the people will

be saved. The responsibility of sinners or the mechanism of salvation is not explained in this sense.

According to the author, repentance and salvation in Jesus Christ not only forgives sins which cause humans to experience total or partial damage, but also salvation changes the character from human nature or sin nature to divine nature as God originally designed. The meaning of salvation must be complete, not only restoring humans who are totally or partially damaged due to sin, but also restoring the character or nature of sin. The definition of safety if it is only built on the basis of total damage and partial damage will be incomplete. So that the meaning of salvation is complete and has a clear direction, the meaning of salvation is built on the basis of Adam's failure to achieve conformity to the image of God. Salvation in Jesus Christ is an opportunity given by God to return to God's likeness and the consequences of sin have been resolved on the cross.

Thus, how important it is to have a correct understanding of the different meanings of *tselem demuth*. By dissecting the meaning of *tselem* and *demuth* and we understand which is part of God and which is part of humans, so that humans who are given the gift of salvation do not waste that gift by responding and taking responsibility to achieve likeness to God whose model is the Lord Jesus. The meaning and significance of *tselem demuth* clearly shows that there is a human responsibility to achieve the likeness or quality of being like God because the basic elements or divine nature are within humans (*tselem*), without human responsibility it is impossible to achieve likeness to God.

Therefore, *the platform* for repentance and salvation must include responsibility, in this case the response to the gift of the cross so that believers can be returned to God's eternal design for humans, namely in the image and likeness of God who has the same nature or nature as God (divine nature). ). New covenant people need to understand that the standard for entering heaven is the divine nature, a life without blemish and this is the responsibility of each believer. The responsibility to attain the divine nature (divine nature) is the human part. Salvation is changing the sinful nature into the divine nature (in the image and likeness) of God and the example is Jesus Christ. Because, in the end, it is actions that are judged, not beliefs.

## CONCLUSION

The research results show that the understanding of repentance and salvation to achieve the image of God who is in the image and likeness of God has implications for the responsibility of the congregation to achieve the morality of holiness like God. This research also shows that repentance is the renewal of the mind until it has thoughts and feelings like Christ. The meaning



of repentance is a change in character to become like Christ so that he is worthy to enter the Kingdom of God.

This research also found that the notion of repentance and salvation only by God's grace alone on the basis of damage to God's image in humans based on God's absolute sovereignty has no implications for the believer's responsibility to strive to live without sin or without blemish. Repentance is completely a gift where humans cannot exercise their free will to choose so that believers are not required to have a proportional responsibility to change their character based on individual decisions in order to live a holy life.

Repentance in Christianity is no longer focused on physical blessings but on the restoration of God's image with the responsibility of the believer's holy life

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