

Repentance Defended Against Antinomian Heresy—  
A Brief Defense of the Indubitable Biblical Fact that Repentance is a  
Change of Mind that Always Results in a Change of Action

For approximately the first two-thousand years of Baptist history, Baptist churches—the churches established by the Lord Jesus Christ—have defended the fact that when a lost sinner repents and is born again, a change of action will necessarily follow. The fact that repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action is the historic Baptist position.<sup>1</sup> There are no Baptist confessional statements that deny that repentance will result in a change of action or that positively affirm that repentance is only a change of mind that may or may not result in a change of action. The idea that repentance is only a change of mind that may or may not result in a change of action is a new and different gospel (Galatians 1:8-9) from the one that has been preached by Baptists throughout the course of the church age, for it is a different gospel from the one taught in the Bible.

The historic Baptist doctrine that repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of action will be referenced below as the *RAC* (Repentance Always results in Change) position, and the new position that repentance is a change of mind that may not result in a change of action will be referenced below as the *RNC* (Repentance does Not always result in Change) position.

Old Testament Evidence Affirms the *RAC*

Briefly, the verbs *shub*<sup>2</sup> and *nacham*<sup>3</sup> are used in the Old Testament for the concept of repentance. *Nacham* emphasizes the emotional aspect of repentance,

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<sup>1</sup> See “Appendix: The *RAC* Position as Historic Baptist Doctrine” below.

<sup>2</sup> The verb appears 1,075 times in 956 verses, listed here in the order they are found in the Hebrew Bible: Gen 3:19; 8:3, 7, 9, 12; 14:7, 16–17; 15:16; 16:9; 18:10, 14, 33; 20:7, 14; 21:32; 22:5, 19; 24:5–6, 8; 26:18; 27:44–45; 28:15, 21; 29:3; 30:31; 31:3, 13, 55; 32:6, 9; 33:16; 37:14, 22, 29–30; 38:22, 29; 40:13, 21; 41:13; 42:24–25, 28, 37; 43:2, 10, 12–13, 18, 21; 44:8, 13, 25; 48:21; 50:5, 14–15; Ex 4:7, 18–21; 5:22; 10:8; 13:17; 14:2, 26–28; 15:19; 19:8; 21:34; 22:26; 23:4; 24:14; 32:12, 27, 31; 33:11; 34:31, 35; Lev 6:4; 13:16; 14:39, 43; 22:13; 25:10, 13, 27–28, 41, 51–52; 26:26; 27:24; Num 5:7–8; 8:25; 10:36; 11:4; 13:25–26; 14:3–4, 36, 43; 16:50; 17:10; 18:9; 22:8, 34; 23:5–6, 16, 20; 24:25; 25:4, 11; 32:15, 18, 22; 33:7; 35:25, 28, 32; Deut 1:22, 25, 45; 3:20; 4:30, 39; 5:30; 13:17; 17:16; 20:5–8; 22:1–2; 23:13–14; 24:4, 13, 19; 28:31, 60, 68; 30:1–3, 8–10; 32:41, 43; Josh 1:15; 2:16, 22–23; 4:18; 5:2; 6:14; 7:3, 26; 8:21, 24, 26; 10:15, 21, 38, 43; 11:10; 14:7; 18:8; 19:12, 27, 29, 34; 20:6; 22:8–9, 16, 18, 23, 29, 32; 23:12; 24:20; Judg 2:19; 3:19; 5:29; 6:18; 7:3, 15; 8:9, 13, 33; 9:56–57; 11:8–9, 13, 31, 35, 39; 14:8; 15:19; 17:3–4; 18:26; 19:3, 7; 20:48; 21:14, 23; 1 Sam 1:19; 3:5–6; 5:3, 11; 6:3–4, 7–8, 16–17, 21; 7:3, 14; 9:5; 12:3; 14:27; 15:11, 25–26, 30–31; 17:15, 30, 53, 57; 18:2, 6; 23:23, 28; 24:1; 25:12, 21, 39; 26:21, 23, 25; 27:9; 29:4, 7, 11; 30:12, 19; 2 Sam 1:1, 22; 2:26, 30; 3:11, 16, 26–27; 6:20; 8:3, 13; 9:7; 10:5, 14; 11:4, 15; 12:23, 31; 14:13, 21; 15:8, 19–20, 25, 27, 29, 34; 16:3, 8, 12; 17:3, 20; 18:16; 19:10–12, 14–15, 37, 39, 43; 20:22; 22:21, 25, 38; 23:10; 24:13; 1 Kings 1:16–17, 20, 30, 32–33, 41, 44; 8:33–35, 47–48; 9:6; 12:5–6, 9, 12, 16, 20–21, 24, 26–27; 13:4, 6, 9–10, 16–20, 22–23, 26, 29, 33; 14:28; 17:21–22; 18:43; 19:6–7, 15, 20–21; 20:5, 9, 34; 22:17, 26, 28, 33; 2 Kings 1:5–6, 11, 13; 2:13, 18, 25; 3:4, 27; 4:22, 31, 35, 38; 5:10, 14–15; 7:8, 15; 8:3, 6, 29; 9:15, 18, 20, 36; 13:25; 14:14, 22, 25, 28; 15:20; 16:6; 17:3, 13; 18:14, 24; 19:7–9, 28, 33, 36; 20:5, 9–11; 21:3; 22:9, 20; 23:20, 25–26; 24:1; Is 1:25–27; 5:25; 6:10, 13; 9:12–13, 17, 21; 10:4, 21–22; 12:1; 14:27; 19:22; 21:12; 23:17; 28:6; 29:17; 31:6; 35:10; 36:9; 37:7–8, 29, 34, 37; 38:8; 41:28; 42:22; 43:13; 44:19, 22, 25; 45:23; 46:8; 47:10; 49:5–6; 51:11; 52:8; 55:7, 10–11; 58:12–13; 59:20; 63:17; 66:15; Jer 2:24, 35; 3:1, 7, 10, 12, 14, 19, 22; 4:1, 8, 28; 5:3; 6:9; 8:4–6; 11:10; 12:15; 14:3; 15:7, 19; 16:15; 18:4, 8,

conveying the idea of “to be sorry, to come to regret something,”<sup>4</sup> and is found with reference to human repentance in texts such as Job 42:6: “Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.” *Shub* means “to turn back . . . turn back to God . . . turning around . . . be converted . . . turn away from, abandon . . . a course of action . . . to desist . . . from doing wrong.”<sup>5</sup> It is a very common verb, appearing in passages such as the following representative texts:

Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent (*shub*, Qal<sup>6</sup>), and turn yourselves (*shub*, Hiphil) from your idols; and turn away (*shub*, Hiphil) your faces from all your abominations. . . . But if the wicked will turn (*shub*, Qal) from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. . . . Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: *and* not that he should return (*shub*, Qal) from his ways, and live? . . . Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent (*shub*, Qal), and turn yourselves (*shub*, Hiphil) from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart

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11, 20; 22:10–11, 27; 23:3, 14, 20, 22; 24:6–7; 25:5; 26:3; 27:16, 22; 28:3–4, 6; 29:10, 14; 30:3, 10, 18, 24; 31:8, 16–19, 21, 23; 32:37, 40, 44; 33:7, 11, 26; 34:11, 15–16, 22; 35:15; 36:3, 7, 28; 37:7–8, 20; 38:26; 40:5, 12; 41:14, 16; 42:10, 12; 43:5; 44:5, 14, 28; 46:16, 27; 48:47; 49:6, 39; 50:6, 9, 19; Ezek 1:14; 3:19–20; 7:13; 8:6, 13, 15, 17; 9:11; 13:22; 14:6; 16:53, 55; 18:7–8, 12, 17, 21, 23–24, 26–28, 30, 32; 20:22; 21:5, 30; 27:15; 29:14; 33:9, 11–12, 14–15, 18–19; 34:4, 16; 35:7, 9; 38:4, 8, 12; 39:2, 25, 27; 44:1; 46:9, 17; 47:1, 6–7; Hos 2:7, 9; 3:5; 4:9; 5:4, 15–16:1; 6:11; 7:10, 16; 8:13; 9:3; 11:5, 9; 12:2, 6, 9, 14; 14:1–2, 4, 7; Joel 2:12–14; 3:1, 4, 7; Amos 1:3, 6, 8–9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 4:6, 8–11; 9:14; Obad 1:15; Jonah 1:13; 3:8–10; Mic 1:7; 2:8; 5:3; 7:19; Nah 2:2; Hab 2:1; Zeph 2:7; 3:20; Zech 1:3–4, 6, 16; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 7:14; 8:3, 15; 9:8, 12; 10:6, 9–10; 13:7; Mal 1:4; 2:6; 3:7, 18; 4:6; Psa 6:4, 10; 7:7, 12, 16; 9:3, 17; 14:7; 18:20, 24, 37; 19:7; 22:27; 23:3, 6; 28:4; 35:13, 17; 44:10; 51:12–13; 53:6; 54:5; 56:9; 59:6, 14; 60:0–1; 68:22; 69:4; 70:3; 71:20; 72:10; 73:10; 74:11, 21; 78:34, 38–39, 41; 79:12; 80:3, 7, 14, 19; 81:14; 85:1, 3–4, 6, 8; 89:43; 90:3, 13; 94:2, 15, 23; 104:9, 29; 106:23; 116:7, 12; 119:59, 79; 126:1, 4; 132:10–11; 146:4; Job 1:21; 6:29; 7:7, 10; 9:12–13, 18; 10:9, 16, 21; 11:10; 13:22; 14:13; 15:13, 22; 16:22; 17:10; 20:2, 10, 18; 22:23; 23:13; 30:23; 31:14; 32:14; 33:5, 25–26, 30, 32; 34:15; 35:4; 36:7, 10; 39:4, 12, 22; 40:4; 42:10; Prov 1:23; 2:19; 3:28; 12:14; 15:1; 17:13; 18:13; 19:24; 20:26; 22:21; 24:12, 18, 26, 29; 25:10, 13; 26:11, 15–16, 27; 27:11; 29:8; 30:30; Ruth 1:6–8, 10–12, 15–16, 21–22; 2:6; 4:3, 15; Song 6:13; Eccl 1:6–7; 3:20; 4:1, 7; 5:15; 9:11; 12:2, 7; Lam 1:8, 11, 13, 16, 19; 2:3, 8, 14; 3:3, 21, 40, 64; 5:21; Esth 2:14; 4:13, 15; 6:12; 7:8; 8:5, 8; 9:25; Dan 9:13, 16, 25; 10:20; 11:9–10, 13, 18–19, 28–30; Ezra 2:1; 6:21; 9:14; 10:14; Neh 1:9; 2:6, 15, 20; 4:4, 12, 15; 5:11–12; 6:4; 7:6; 8:17; 9:17, 26, 28–29, 35; 13:9; 1 Chr 19:5; 20:3; 21:12, 20, 27; 2 Chr 6:23–26, 37–38, 42; 7:14, 19; 10:2, 5–6, 9, 12, 16; 11:1, 4; 12:11–12; 14:15; 15:4; 18:16, 25–27, 32; 19:1, 4, 8; 20:27; 22:6; 24:11, 19; 25:10, 13, 24; 26:2; 27:5; 28:11, 15; 29:10; 30:6, 8–9; 31:1; 32:21, 25; 33:3, 13; 34:7, 9, 16, 28; 36:13.

<sup>3</sup> The verb appears 108 times in 100 verses, listed here in the order they are found in the Hebrew Bible: Gen 5:29; 6:6–7; 24:67; 27:42; 37:35; 38:12; 50:21; Ex 13:17; 32:12, 14; Num 23:19; Deut 32:36; Judg 2:18; 21:6, 15; 1 Sam 15:11, 29, 35; 2 Sam 10:2–3; 12:24; 13:39; 24:16; Is 1:24; 12:1; 22:4; 40:1; 49:13; 51:3, 12, 19; 52:9; 54:11; 57:6; 61:2; 66:13; Jer 4:28; 8:6; 15:6; 16:7; 18:8, 10; 20:16; 26:3, 13, 19; 31:13, 15, 19; 42:10; Ezek 5:13; 14:22–23; 16:54; 24:14; 31:16; 32:31; Joel 2:13–14; Amos 7:3, 6; Jonah 3:9–10; 4:2; Nah 3:7; Zech 1:17; 8:14; 10:2; Psa 23:4; 69:20; 71:21; 77:2; 86:17; 90:13; 106:45; 110:4; 119:52, 76, 82; 135:14; Job 2:11; 7:13; 16:2; 21:34; 29:25; 42:6, 11; Ruth 2:13; Eccl 4:1; Lam 1:2, 9, 16–17, 21; 2:13; 1 Chr 7:22; 19:2–3; 21:15.

<sup>4</sup> *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, M. Richardson, J. J. Stamm. New York: Brill, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, M. Richardson, J. J. Stamm. New York: Brill, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Speaking simply, the Qal is the basic Hebrew verb stem, while the Hiphil is often causative.

and a new spirit:<sup>7</sup> for why will ye die, O house of Israel? . . . Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn (*shub*, Qal) from it; if he do not turn (*shub*, Qal) from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. . . . Say unto them, *As I live*, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn (*shub*, Qal) from his way and live: turn (*shub*, Qal) ye, turn (*shub*, Qal) ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Ezekiel 14:6; 18:21, 23, 30-31; 33:9, 11)

It is obvious that the *RAC* is the Old Testament doctrine of repentance—and the gospel is received in the same manner in both the Old and New Testament (Hebrews 11:1-2; Romans 4). The *RNC* finds no support from the first three-fourths of the Word of God.

### New Testament Evidence Affirms the *RAC*

One Greek verb for *repentance* is *metamelomai*, meaning “to have regrets about something . . . be very sorry, regret . . . to change one’s mind.”<sup>8</sup> *Metamelomai* bears some similarities to the Old Testament verb *nacham*. The Greek verb appears in New Testament texts such as: “He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented,

<sup>7</sup> Exhortations such as this one make it clear that Ezekiel is calling unconverted Israelites to salvation, not simply calling backsliders among the true people of God to live up to their privileges. Ezekiel calls the Israelites to enter into the promises of the New Covenant of a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:25-27). Similarly, the fact that Ezekiel calls on the “wicked” to turn from his evil ways proves that the prophet exhorts the lost to turn from their sins in order to be saved. Ezekiel never employs the word “wicked” for a saved person (3:18-19; 7:21; 13:22; 18:20-21, 23-24, 27; 21:3-4, 25, 29; 33:8-9, 11-12, 14-15, 19); he uses the word for lost people, such as the idolatrous Babylonians who destroyed the Jerusalem temple (7:21). Indeed, not one of the 264 references to this Hebrew word for “wicked” (*rāšāʿ*) in the Old Testament is clearly to a saved person—the wicked are uniformly those headed to damnation, who are “turned into hell” (Psalm 9:17) under the curse and wrath of God, in contrast to those who trust in the Lord, (by grace) are righteous, and receive salvation (Genesis 18:23, 25; Exodus 2:13; 9:27; 23:1, 7; Numbers 16:26; 35:31; Deuteronomy 25:1-2; 1 Samuel 2:9; 24:13; 2 Samuel 4:11; 1 Kings 8:32; 2 Chronicles 6:23; 19:2; Job 3:17; 8:22; 9:22, 24; 10:3; 11:20; 15:20; 16:11; 18:5; 20:5, 29; 21:7, 16-17, 28; 22:18; 24:6; 27:7, 13; 34:18, 26; 36:6, 17; 38:13, 15; 40:12; Psalm 1:1, 4-6; 3:7; 7:9; 9:5, 16-17; 10:2-4, 13, 15; 11:2, 5-6; 12:8; 17:9, 13; 26:5; 28:3; 31:17; 32:10; 34:21; 36:1, 11; 37:10, 12, 14, 16-17, 20-21, 28, 32, 34-35, 38, 40; 39:1; 50:16; 55:3; 58:3, 10; 68:2; 71:4; 73:3, 12; 75:4, 8, 10; 82:2, 4; 91:8; 92:7; 94:3, 13; 97:10; 101:8; 104:35; 106:18; 109:2, 6-7; 112:10; 119:53, 61, 95, 110, 119, 155; 129:4; 139:19; 140:4, 8; 141:10; 145:20; 146:9; 147:6; Proverbs 2:22; 3:25, 33; 4:14, 19; 5:22; 9:7; 10:3, 6-7, 11, 16, 20, 24-25, 27-28, 30, 32; 11:5, 7-8, 10-11, 18, 23, 31; 12:5-7, 10, 12, 21, 26; 13:5, 9, 17, 25; 14:11, 19, 32; 15:6, 8-9, 28-29; 16:4; 17:15, 23; 18:3, 5; 19:28; 20:26; 21:4, 7, 10, 12, 18, 27, 29; 24:15-16, 19-20, 24; 25:5, 26; 28:1, 4, 12, 15, 28; 29:2, 7, 12, 16, 27; Ecclesiastes 3:17; 7:15; 8:10, 13-14; 9:2; Isaiah 3:11; 5:23; 11:4; 13:11; 14:5; 26:10; 48:22; 53:9; 55:7; 57:20-21; Jeremiah 5:26; 12:1; 23:19; 25:31; 30:23; Ezekiel 3:18-19; 7:21; 13:22; 18:20-21, 23-24, 27; 21:3-4, 25, 29; 33:8-9, 11-12, 14-15, 19; Daniel 12:10; Micah 6:10; Habakkuk 1:4, 13; 3:13; Zephaniah 1:3; Malachi 3:18; 4:3).

Compare also Isaiah 65:2, which does not just contextually refer to idolatrous and unconverted Israelites (65:2-7), but is employed by Paul of the unregenerate Jews who reject the gospel (Romans 10:21), in contrast with those Gentiles who believe it (Isaiah 65:1; Romans 10:20)

Thus, it is clearly erroneous to assume that every passage in which the Lord addresses His chosen nation refers to those who truly belong to Him because Israel was, in a national sense, the people of God. Rather, texts warning sinning Israel frequently refer to the unconverted, rather than merely to those who are not properly obedient (cf. Romans 9), and Ezekiel’s repeated calls to the “wicked” in Israel to “repent . . . turn from all [your] sins . . . [c]ast away from you all your transgressions . . . and make you a new heart and a new spirit” is a call to saving conversion for those headed to hell, not a call to people who have eternal life to just get various sins out of their lives.

<sup>8</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.), W. Arndt, F. Danker, & W. Bauer. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

and went” (Matthew 21:29).<sup>9</sup> The central words for the New Testament doctrine of repentance, however, are the verb *metanoeo* and the noun *metanoia*.

The standard New Testament Greek lexicon BDAG<sup>10</sup> lists all verses with *metanoeo* in the New Testament<sup>11</sup> under the definition “feel remorse, repent, be

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<sup>9</sup> The complete list of New Testament references is: Matt 21:29, 32; 27:3; 2 Cor 7:8; Heb 7:21.

<sup>10</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.), W. Arndt, F. Danker, & W. Bauer. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> The kind of shallow abuse of lexica that is sadly characteristic of “Baptist” advocates of the *RNC* heresy could appear were a *RNC* to note BDAG definition 1 for *metanoeo*, “change one’s mind,” and the fact that, while *metanoia* is defined as “repentance, turning about, conversion,” the words “primarily a change of mind” are also present in the lexicon. The *RNC*, assuming that the lexical definition of the word as “change of mind” proves that the word means *only* a change of mind, and a particular kind of change of mind, one that may result in nothing, could then pretend to have support from BDAG for the *RNC* position. Such a conclusion represents an extreme misreading of the lexicon, for: 1.) The lexicon places none—not a single one—of the 34 New Testament uses of *metanoeo* underneath the definition in question. It gives no indication that this is a use that is found in the New Testament at all. 2.) References listed under definition #1 in BDAG in extrabiblical Greek, whether to the *Shepherd of Hermas*, Diodorus Siculus, Appian, Josephus, and so on, actually refer to a change of mind that results in a change of action—the *RAC* position—as is evident if one actually looks at the passages. The *RNC* needs to demonstrate that at least one of the texts referenced in BDAG actually is a clear instance of its doctrine—which has not been done.

The *RNC* could also appeal to the Liddell-Scott lexicon of classical or pre-Koiné Greek for alleged evidence, noting the definition in the lexicon of “perceive afterwards or too late.” Here again the entire lack of any evidence for this meaning in the New Testament must be ignored. It is also noteworthy that, with one exception, the listed examples of this definition are from the Greek of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B. C. (Epicharmus, Democritus). Similarly, the examples for “change one’s mind or purpose,” which, in any case, suit the *RAC* position, as one who changes his purpose will actually act differently, are all from the 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century B. C., while the definition “repent,” which the lexicon presents as that of the “NT,” and which includes a good number of examples from Koiné Greek that is contemporary with the New Testament, is certainly an affirmation of the *RAC* position. Liddell-Scott defines *metanoia* as “change of mind or heart, repentance, regret,” placing the New Testament examples in this category, and categorizing the meaning “afterthought, correction” as one restricted to rhetoric and cited as present only in an extrabiblical rhetorical treatise. The history of the development of *metanoeo* and *metanoia* is traced in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Kittel; cf. also *Μετανοεω and μεταμελει in Greek Literature until 100 A. D., Including Discussion of Their Cognates and of their Hebrew Equivalents*, Effie Freeman Thompson, pgs. 358-377 of *Historical and Linguistic Studies in Literature Related to the New Testament Issued Under the Direction of the Department of Biblical and Patristic Greek*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vol. 1. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1908. Thompson, who made a “[d]iligent search . . . for all the instances of the words under consideration, with a view to including all the works of all the known authors in each period” (pg. 353), noted that *metanoeo* and *metanoia* moved away from a purely intellectual sense that was present, although not exclusively so, in early Greek. In relation to Greek that is contemporary with the New Testament, he notes:

[In] non-Jewish post-Aristotelian writers to about 100 A. D. . . . passages containing *metanoeo* show that . . . there is no instance of . . . purely intellectual action. The change is that of feeling or will . . . In the Old Testament Apocrypha and other Jewish writings to about 100 A. D. . . . *metanoia* means change of purpose . . . this change is (a) moral; (b) from worse to better; (c) internal; (d) necessarily accompanied by change of conduct” (pgs. 362, 368-9).

Philo is cited as affirming: “[T]he man has lost his reason who, by speaking falsely of the truth, says that he has *changed his purpose* (μετανενοηκέναι [a form of *metanoeo*, “to repent,” in this tense and sentence, “says that he has repented”] when he is still doing wrong” (pg. 369)—the *RAC* exactly. In contemporary “Palestinian writers, there is no instance of the intellectual simply; but there are abundant instances of both the emotional and volitional action” (pg. 375). Coming to the New Testament usage, Thompson writes:

An examination of the instances of *metanoeo* shows that . . . the verb is always used of a change of purpose which the context clearly indicates to be moral . . . this change is from evil to good purpose . . . is never used

converted,” including the mention of repentance “of . . . immorality . . . of . . . sins . . . repent and turn away.”

The Louw-Nida Greek lexicon defines *metanoëo* and *metanoia* as: “[T]o change one’s way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with regard to sin and righteousness — ‘to repent, to change one’s way, repentance.’ . . . Though in English a focal component of repent is the sorrow or contrition that a person experiences because of sin, the emphasis in *metanoëo* and *metanoia* seems to be more specifically the total change, both in thought and behavior, with respect to how one should both think and act. Whether the focus is upon attitude or behavior varies somewhat in different contexts. . . . Though it would be possible to classify *metanoëo* and *metanoia* in [the category of words for] [t]hink[ing], the focal semantic feature of these terms is clearly behavioral rather than intellectual.”<sup>12</sup>

Thayer’s Greek lexicon defines *metanoëo* as: “to change one’s mind, i.e. to repent (to feel sorry that one has done this or that . . . used especially of those who, conscious of their sins and with manifest tokens of sorrow, are intent on obtaining God’s pardon . . . to change one’s mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one’s past sins . . . [leading to] conduct worthy of a heart changed and abhorring sin.” *Metanoia* is defined as: “a change of mind: as it appears in one who repents of a purpose he has formed or of something he has done . . . especially the change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds. . . that change of mind by which we turn from, desist from, etc. . . . used . . . of the improved spiritual state resulting from deep sorrow for sin.”

The *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* affirms: “In the NT, *metanoëo* and *metanoia* . . . form an essential part of the kerygma [preaching] lexicon, urging ‘conversion’ to Christianity. There is no longer any question of distinguishing between change of thoughts, of heart, of actions. The change is that of the soul, of the whole person (the new creature), who is purified of stains and whose life is transformed, metamorphosed.”<sup>13</sup>

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when the reference is to change of opinion merely . . . is always internal, and . . . results in external conduct . . . *metanoia* reveal[s] a meaning analogous to that of the verb . . . *metanoia* does not strictly include outward conduct or reform of life . . . [but] this is the product of *metanoia* . . . *lupe* [sorrow] is not inherent in *metanoia*, but . . . it produces the latter[.] . . . The New Testament writers in no instance employ [repentance] to express the action solely of either the intellect or of the sensibility, but use it exclusively to indicate the action of the will” (pgs. 372-373).

Thompson concludes:

In the New Testament, *metanoëo* and *metanoia* . . . are never used to indicate merely intellectual action. . . . [T]hey are always used to express volitional action . . . the change of purpose . . . from evil to good. . . . [T]hey always express internal change . . . [and] they require change in the outward expression of life as a necessary consequent . . . [t]he fullest content [is] found in the . . . radical change in the primary choice by which the whole soul is turned away from evil to good” (pgs. 376-377).

The *RAC* is obviously validated by a historical study of the development of the meaning of *metanoëo* and *metanoia*, while the *RNC* is obliterated.

<sup>12</sup> *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. J. P. Louw & E. A. Nida. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996.

<sup>13</sup> *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, C. Spicq & J. D. Ernest. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994.

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* affirms concerning the New Testament usage of *metanoeo* and *metanoia*: “*Metanoeo* . . . [is] radical conversion, a transformation of nature, a definitive turning from evil, a resolute turning to God in total obedience . . . [i]t affects the whole man, first and basically the centre of personal life, then logically his conduct at all times and in all situations, his thoughts, words and acts.”<sup>14</sup>

Christendom continued to speak of *repentance* as a change of mind that results in a change of life. The standard *Patristic Greek Lexicon* edited by G. W. H. Lampe,<sup>15</sup> despite large pages of references to *repentance* (*metanoia*, *metanoeo*) in the patristic writers, never gives a single reference where *repentance* refers to a change of mind that does not result in a change of action, while it provides overwhelming evidence for the historic Baptist doctrine of repentance in vast numbers of passages in the writers of the early centuries of church history.<sup>16</sup>

The lexica provide overwhelming evidence in favor of the *RAC* and against the *RNC*. Were the *RNC* true, all standard lexica would have to be in error.

Furthermore, New Testament usage provides crystal-clear evidence for repentance as a change of mind that results in a change of action. Consider the following representative texts with *metanoeo*:

Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they **repented** at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here.

Christ refers to what took place in Jonah 3:5-10:

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw

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<sup>14</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964. *TDNT* provides a detailed diachronic study of the words in addition to a synchronic study of the New Testament evidence.

<sup>15</sup> *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G. W. H. Lampe. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> The *RNC* could seek to abuse Lampe in the same way as BDAG by simply quoting Lampe’s definition A for *metanoeo*, “change of mind,” and definition A for *metanoia*, “change of mind, afterthought,” and then reading the *RNC* definition of a “change of mind” into the lexicon. Were a *RNC* to actually look at the texts referenced by Lampe in his definition, he would discover that they all refer to a change of mind that results in a change of action—that is, the *RAC* position. For example, under *metanoeo* definition A Lampe refers to the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 9:2; 11:2 and the *Shepherd of Hermas* 15:3; the Shepherd speaks of people who repent “and return again to their evil desires”—an obvious change of action—while the references in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* record a call by a Roman official to Polycarp to repent of his Christianity, renounce Christ, and worship Caesar—a very radical change of action. Overwhelming evidence in the usage of early church history establishes the *RAC* position, while not a single instance of *metanoeo* or *metanoia* out of the hundreds of passages referenced by Lampe establishes the *RNC* position.

their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

When the Lord Jesus spoke of *repentance*, he spoke of the kind of change of mind or heart of the kind that took place at Nineveh, when the Ninevites “believed God . . . and . . . turn[ed] every one from his evil way,” where “their works” were evidence that they had “turned.” Christ’s doctrine of repentance was the *RAC*, not the *RNC*.

Luke 15:7, 10: I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that **repenteth**, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no **repentance**. . . . Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that **repenteth**.

In the single parable (Luke 15:3) of Luke 15, Christ illustrates the conversion of publicans and sinners (15:1-2) by the restoration of a lost sheep, coin, and son, while the unconverted and self-righteous Pharisees who thought they did not need to repent (Luke 15:2; cf. 5:31-32; 19:7-10) are illustrated by another son (cf. Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1; Romans 9:4) who was not willing to enter his father’s house but greatly dishonored his father because of his perceived superiority to the restored lost son (15:25-32). When Christ spoke of repentance, he spoke of the attitude expressed by the words of the son that was lost but then found: “I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants” (Luke 15:18-19). Such an attitude expresses the *RAC* doctrine of repentance.

Acts 26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should **repent** and turn to God, and do works meet for **repentance** [*metanoia*].

When the Apostles preached repentance, they preached that repentance results in “works meet for repentance.” They also connected repentance with *turning* or being *converted*; cf. Acts 3:19, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” To *turn* or be *converted* is to “change direction, turn around . . . to change belief or course of conduct . . . to change one’s mind or course of action . . . turn, return.”<sup>17</sup> Paul explains what takes place when men repent, are converted, and are born again: “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; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, *even* Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10). Conversion is to turn to God and to turn away from idolatry and other sins. It is to turn to God from sin with the purpose of serving the living and true God and waiting for the return of His Son. Such a doctrine is plainly the *RAC*.

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<sup>17</sup> *Epistrepho*, in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature* (3rd ed.), W. Arndt, F. Danker, & W. Bauer. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000. The complete list of *epistrepho* texts is: Matt 9:22; 10:13; 12:44; 13:15; 24:18; Mark 4:12; 5:30; 8:33; 13:16; Luke 1:16–17; 2:20, 39; 8:55; 17:4, 31; 22:32; John 12:40; 21:20; Acts 3:19; 9:35, 40; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19, 36; 16:18; 26:18, 20; 28:27; 2 Cor 3:16; Gal 4:9; 1 Th 1:9; James 5:19–20; 1 Pet 2:25; 2 Pet 2:21–22; Rev 1:12.

Revelation 2:5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and **repent**, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou **repent**.

The Apostle John recorded Christ's message that when one repented he would "do . . . works" as a result. Christ commanded that one "repent of her fornication" (Revelation 2:21) and warned that those who do not "repent of their deeds" would enter "into great tribulation" (Revelation 2:22). That is, those unsaved people who do not "repent of their deeds" will miss the Rapture and enter into the "great tribulation" (Revelation 7:14; Matthew 24:21) with the rest of the unsaved, those who "repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Revelation 9:20-21), those who "blasphemed the name of God . . . and . . . repented not to give him glory. . . . blasphemed the God of heaven . . . and repented not of their deeds" (Revelation 16:9, 11). The Apostle John taught, through the inspiration of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit, the *RAC* position on repentance, not the *RNC*.

The noun *metanoia* likewise provides clear evidence for the *RAC*. Matthew 3:1-12 records the preaching of John the Baptist on repentance:

1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, **Repent** [*metanoeo*] ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for **repentance** [*metanoia*]: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto **repentance** [*metanoia*]: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire: 12 Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

The first Baptist preacher taught that repentance resulted in visible "fruit" (v. 8) without which there was no evidence that conversion had taken place and therefore without which baptism should not be administered, as baptism was on account of (*eis*, "unto") repentance (v. 10). Repentance results in "mak[ing] straight paths for your feet . . . [and] follow[ing] . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:13-14; Matthew 3:3; Isaiah 35:8; 40:1-3). Repentance results in fruit, because everyone that has not repented and received a new heart so that he is a good tree that brings forth good fruit will be cast into hell fire (v. 10). Such teaching was the repentance preached by the first Baptist and also by Christ (Matthew 3:2; 4:17), and all Baptists today should preach—indeed, are commanded to preach (Luke 24:47), the same message as Christ and John—the *RAC* doctrine.

The Apostle Paul wrote:



9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to **repentance** [*metanoia*] for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh **repentance** [*metanoia*] to salvation not to be repented<sup>18</sup> of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 11 For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, *what* clearing of yourselves, yea, *what* indignation, yea, *what* fear, yea, *what* vehement desire, yea, *what* zeal, yea, *what* revenge! In all *things* ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter (2 Corinthians 7:9-11)

Paul taught that repentance, a result of godly sorrow over sin, leads to people being careful to avoid sin, clearing themselves from it, having indignation against it, being afraid of it, being indignant against it, being afraid to commit it, having vehement desire to avoid it, being zealous for righteousness, and a desire to revenge themselves upon it.<sup>19</sup> Paul clearly taught that repentance leads to a change of action—the *RAC* position.

Many texts with *metanoeo* and *metanoia* in the New Testament fit the *RAC* position. Thus, the burden of proof is on the *RNC* position to prove that one can repent without a change of action following. However, not a single text in the New Testament speaks of a “repentance” that does not result in a change of action.<sup>20</sup> The *RNC* position is completely absent from the pages of the New Testament.

Advocates of the *RNC*, in light of the overwhelming case against them from the lexica and from the uses of *metanoeo* and *metanoia* in the New Testament, make several arguments for their position that they hope will overturn the crushing weight of Biblical usage. First, they argue that the *RAC* is an affirmation of justification by works. Only on the *RNC* position is salvation allegedly by faith alone. Faith is affirmed to be an absolute synonym with repentance, and faith is said to exclude any trust in Jesus Christ to make one different, despite the fact that Biblical *faith* or *belief* clearly involves surrender and commitment.<sup>21</sup> Supposedly one trusts Christ only to escape from hell, not to get a new

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<sup>18</sup> The adjective *ametameletos*, related to the verb *metamelomai* (not *metanoeo*) for *repentance* in the sense of regret or remorse; cf. 2 Corinthians 7:7, where “repent” is *metamelomai*.

<sup>19</sup> The context is the individual who was under church discipline for immorality; the desires to oppose sin mentioned in the passage are connected to the concrete manifestations of sin in persons involved in it.

<sup>20</sup> Note the complete list of *metanoeo* texts: Matt 3:2; 4:17; 11:20–21; 12:41; Mark 1:15; 6:12; Luke 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; 17:3–4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20; 2 Cor 12:21; Rev 2:5, 16, 21–22; 3:3, 19; 9:20–21; 16:9, 11. Also note the complete list of *metanoia* texts: Matt 3:8, 11; 9:13; Mark 1:4; 2:17; Luke 3:3, 8; 5:32; 15:7; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 13:24; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20; Rom 2:4; 2 Cor 7:9–10; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 6:1, 6; 12:17; 2 Pet 3:9.

<sup>21</sup> The idea of committal or entrustment in the New Testament verb *to believe*, *pisteuo*, is exemplified in Luke 16:11 (committing or entrusting true riches to a person); John 2:24 (Christ’s not committing Himself to the unregenerate); Romans 3:2 (the Word of God being entrusted or committed to Israel); 1 Corinthians 9:17; Galatians 2:7; 1 Timothy 1:11; Titus 1:3 (an administration of the gospel being committed or entrusted to Paul, or (1 Thessalonians 2:4) to Paul and his associates.

Furthermore, the common Biblical phrase for saving faith in Christ, *pisteuein eis auton*, involves submission and surrender. In the words of a standard Greek grammar:

Deissmann in *Light From the Ancient East* gives several convincing quotations from the papyri to prove that *pisteuein eis auton* meant *surrender* or *submission to*. A slave was sold *into the name of the god of a temple*; i. e., to be a temple servant. G. Milligan agrees with Deissmann that this papyri usage of *eis auton* is also found regularly in the New Testament. Thus to believe on or . . . into the name of Jesus means to renounce self and to consider oneself the life-time servant of Jesus. (pg. 105, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, H. E. Dana & Julius R. Mantey. New York, NY: MacMillan, 1955. Greek characters have been transliterated.)

heart and life. Christ is divided; He is not received as the Mediator who is at once Prophet, Priest, and King, one undivided Person who is both Savior and Lord. Rather, faith allegedly picks and chooses among Christ's offices and roles and receives only those of them that promise escape from hell, not those that promise freedom from the dominion of sin. However, such a *RNC* argument is nonsense. The *RAC* does not affirm that the sinner is justified through the instrumentality of a "repentance" that is actually some sort of process of doing good deeds. On the contrary, the *RAC* affirms that repentance is not good works, but that repentance results in good works. The *RAC* recognizes the Biblical fact that repentance and faith take place at the same moment in time, so that a sinner cannot savingly repent without repenting of his sin of unbelief, and a sinner cannot believe in Jesus Christ without trusting Christ for both deliverance from hell and a new heart. The New Covenant or Testament promises both the forgiveness of sin and freedom from sin's dominion: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:10-12). The New Covenant privilege of forgiveness of sins and the New Covenant privilege of having God's laws in one's mind and heart are indissolubly connected. Justification is certainly by faith alone (Romans 3:20-28), but saving faith will always lead to a change of heart and action (James 2:14-26). The *RAC* is salvation by works only if Paul taught salvation by works when he included Ephesians 2:10 after Ephesians 2:8-9, Titus 3:8 after Titus 3:5-7, Romans 6-8 after Romans 3-5, or 2 Timothy 1:9a before 2 Timothy 1:9b. The *RNC* must not only ignore the New Testament usage of *metanoeo* and *metanoia* but also cut out of the Bible the context of many of the precious declarations in the New Testament that salvation is not based on works. Indeed, the *RNC* even needs to purge the very promises of the New Covenant itself (Hebrews 8:10-12). The *RAC* is not salvation by works, but a glorious salvation by faith alone that does not leave the sinner in his sin but actually saves the sinner from sin by shattering sin's dominion. On the other hand, the *RNC* actually is antinomianism.

Second, the *RNC* points out that the word *repentance* does not appear in the gospel of John. Since, the *RNC* affirms, John promises salvation simply to *belief*, and *belief* does not involve trusting in Christ for deliverance from the dominion of sin, but only for freedom from hell, the *RAC* must be an erroneous definition of repentance, all the lexical and Biblical evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. However, John's gospel is filled with evidence that saving faith always results in a changed life. For example, the classic presentation of salvation by faith in John 3:1-3:21 indicates both that salvation is by faith alone (3:15-18) and that saving faith and regeneration lead to a changed life (John 3:8, 19-21). When Christ won to Himself the Samaritan woman (John 4:4-42), He explained to her that salvation leads one to true worship of the Father (John 4:23-24). Her life also became strikingly different, as evidenced by her actions (John 4:28-29). In chapter five, John recorded Christ's preaching both "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting

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For a detailed exposition of the Biblical doctrine of *faith*, see "The just shall live by faith"— A Study of Faith's Connection with Salvation in All Its Justifying, Sanctifying, and Glorifying Fullness" at <http://faithsaves.net/just-faith/>.

life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24) and “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29), almost in the same breath. In John six, Christ preached: “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life” (6:29, 47), and the chapter concludes with the fact that those who go back and turn away from Christ (6:66) are people who have not really believed (6:64, 69). One could go through practically every chapter and discourse of Christ in John’s gospel and see both the fact that eternal life is received by the instrumentality of faith alone and the fact that faith receives Christ both for salvation from sin’s penalty and salvation from sin’s power, that Christ is received as a Savior both from sin’s eternal consequences and sin’s inward corruption. The gospel of John is filled with the doctrine of the *RAC*, and contains no evidence whatsoever for the *RNC*.

Third, the *RNC* advocate will mention that various Biblical texts speak of God’s repentance (e. g., Genesis 6:6). Since God is sinless and does not need to turn from sin, the *RNC* avers, the *RAC* view is an error and repentance is simply a change of mind that may not result in any change of action. However, the fact is that just as God has no sin to turn from, so He never changes His mind; He is immutable (Malachi 3:6; 1 Samuel 15:29). Texts that speak of God’s repentance are examples of the many verses where anthropomorphic language, or other similar sorts of language from the created order, are employed to figuratively describe God. When the prayer of a believer enters into God’s ears (Psalm 18:6), Scripture means that God hears the prayer of His own, just like a man hears when sounds enter into his ears. When a believer is hidden under the shadow of God’s wings (Psalm 17:8; 36:7), the believer is protected by God, just as baby birds are protected under the wings of a mother bird. When God rides upon a cherub to deliver His people (Psalm 18:10), he provides help for His own like a man or an army that ride upon horses to come to the aid of their friends. When God is said to repent, He does not cease being immutable, literally change His mind, or turn from sin, but people are treated differently as a result of His repentance—His figurative change of mind results in people experiencing His acting differently towards them, just as a man who repents acts differently as a result. When God repented of making the human race, He changed His gracious ways towards humanity and destroyed mankind with a flood (Genesis 6:6-7). When the Lord repented of the bondage to foreign powers He had laid upon Israel for the nation’s sins, He delivered Israel by raising up judges (Judges 2:18-19). When God repented of making Saul king, He changed His actions toward Saul, deposed him, and set up David (1 Samuel 15:35-16:1). There are no examples in Scripture where God repented and nothing changed. The anthropomorphic language predicating repentance in God supports the *RAC*, not the *RNC*.

The theological, non-grammatical and non-lexical arguments for the *RNC* are entirely unconvincing. Indeed, they actually provide further support for the *RAC*. The overwhelming grammatical and lexical evidence for the *RAC* remains untouched, and is actually strongly supplemented by theological support from invalid *RNC* argumentation.

## Conclusion

The Bible clearly teaches that repentance is a change of mind that always results in a change of action (the *RAC* position). The idea that repentance is a change of mind that may or may not result in a change of action, the *RNC* position, is totally unbiblical. The *RNC* is a very serious, very dangerous, and Satanic corruption of the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Its advocates should consider the warning of Galatians 1:8-9, and tremble: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9 As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Anyone who seeks to bring the *RNC* heresy into one of Christ’s churches should be immediately confronted. Believers should not give place to such false teachers, “no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue” (Galatians 2:5). Christians who are being led astray and confused by attacks on the gospel such as the *RNC* should be immediately confronted, and those who are making room for such error by their teaching should be immediately, specifically, strongly, pointedly, publicly, and directly confronted by name (Galatians 2:4-14; Acts 15:1-2). True churches must warn against assaults on the gospel such as the *RNC* and maintain strict and total ecclesiastical separation from its advocates (Romans 16:17; Ephesians 5:11; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11). They must also boldly preach repentance and faith to every creature, so that they not only negatively oppose error, but by their true doctrine and practice adorn the truth (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47).

#### Appendix: The *RAC* Position as Historic Baptist Doctrine

The testimony of all of Baptist history favors the fact that repentance is a change of mind that always results in a change of action. The *RNC* doctrine has infiltrated Baptist churches largely as a result of the replacement of Biblical evangelism<sup>22</sup> with carnal techniques of salesmanship and marketing techniques, very inappropriately called “soulwinning,” that have led to only a tiny percentage of those who are “saved” ever showing evidence of the new birth in their lives (2 Corinthians 5:17).<sup>23</sup> The quotes

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<sup>22</sup> For an exegetical study of Biblical methods of evangelism, see “The Biblical Mandate for House to House Evangelism” at <http://faithsaves.net>.

<sup>23</sup> David Cloud, on pgs. 37-40 of *Repentance and Soulwinning*, notes:

It is obvious that fundamental Baptists have traditionally defined repentance as a radical change of mind that results in a change of life. They have defined it as turning to God from sin and idolatry. . . . [T]he change in the definition of repentance among some fundamental Baptists is the product of the change in evangelism methodology that has spread widely throughout fundamental Baptist circles. It is a justification for an unscriptural, manipulative, man-centered, pressurized, numbers-oriented methodology of soul winning that is more akin to salesmanship than to anything we see in the New Testament. If a man boasts that thousands are getting saved when only a tiny percentage of them demonstrate any evidence of regeneration, it is not surprising that he would want to redefine repentance to mean a mere change of mind without any necessary change of life.

The late Jack Hyles said that repentance as defined traditionally (as a change of mind in relation to God and sin so radical that it results in a change of life) is one of the enemies of soul winning. He redefined repentance to mean a mere change from unbelief to belief.

The late Curtis Hutson, who assumed the editorship of *the Sword of the Lord* following the death of its founder, John R. Rice, boldly claimed in 1986 that repentance is *not* to turn from sin and is *not* a change of mind that leads to a change of action.

These two men have had a vast influence on the thinking of fundamental Baptists in the matter of repentance. Most others who have changed the traditional biblical definition of repentance have done so upon the “authority” of these two men.

below, reproduced from pgs. 64-69 of the fine book *Repentance and Soul Winning* by David Cloud,<sup>24</sup> are only representative of historic Baptist confession of the *RAC*. While certain antinomians outside of true churches held the *RNC* heresy in earlier times, the view that repentance only potentially results in a change of action is absent from Baptist confessional and doctrinal life until very recently, since God in His great mercy has kept His churches from falling into and adopting this dangerous heresy.

“Unfeigned repentance is an inward and true sorrow of heart for sin, with sincere confession of the same to God, especially that we have offended so gracious a God and so loving a Father, **together with a settled purpose of heart and a careful endeavor to leave all our sins**, and to live a more holy and sanctified life according to all God’s commands” (The Orthodox Creed, Baptist, 1679).

“This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person, being by the Holy Spirit made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, doth, by faith in Christ, humble himself for it with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency; praying for pardon and strength of grace, **with a purpose and endeavor by supplies of the Spirit to walk before God unto all well-pleasing in all things**” (Philadelphia Confession of Faith, Baptist, 1742).

“Repentance is an evangelical grace, wherein a person being, by the Holy Spirit, made sensible of the manifold evil of his sin, humbleth himself for it, with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrence, **with a purpose and endeavor to walk before God so as to please Him in all things**” (Abstract of Principles, Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1859).

“**Just now some professedly Christian teachers are misleading many by saying that ‘repentance is only a change of mind.’** It is true that the original word does convey the idea of a change of mind; but the whole teaching of Scripture concerning the repentance which is not to be repented of is that it is a much more radical and complete change than is implied by our common phrase about changing one’s mind. The repentance that does not include sincere sorrow for sin is not the saving grace that is wrought by the Holy Spirit. **God-given repentance makes men grieve in their inmost souls over the sin they have committed, and works in them a gracious hatred of evil in every shape and form.** We cannot find a better definition of repentance than the one many of us learned at our mother’s knee: **‘Repentance is to leave the sin we loved before, and show that we in earnest grieve by doing so no more’**” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “The Royal Saviour,” Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England, Feb. 1, 1872).

“**[R]epentance ... is a turning from sin, a loathing of it; and if thou hast that, thou hast sure repentance; but not else.** Repentance is also a sense of shame for having lived in it, and a longing to avoid it. **It is a change of the mind with regard to sin—a turning of the man right round.**”

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How did Dr. Hyles and Dr. Hutson get to that point in their thinking? . . . By changing the doctrine of repentance and by calling the old doctrine of repentance the “enemy of soul winning,” . . . Dr. Hyles was acknowledging that a biblical understanding of repentance got in the way of his methodology. The old doctrine of repentance is not the enemy of biblical soul winning; it is the enemy of the Jack Hyles type soul winning.

A traditional biblical understanding of repentance does not allow a man to claim that thousands of sinners are being saved when most of them show no evidence of regeneration. A traditional biblical understanding of repentance does not allow a man to count a mere sinner’s prayer as salvation. It is one thing to say that 100 or 1,000 people prayed a prayer; it is another thing to say that those people are saved. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17). . . . The idea that you cannot tell if someone is saved is unscriptural nonsense. It is possible, of course, for a person to show false signs of salvation and to deceive those who observe him, as Judas did the other apostles; but on the other hand, if someone is genuinely saved, there will definitely be some evidence of it in his or her life. Profession is not the same as possession. “They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate” (Titus 1:16).

<sup>24</sup> *Repentance and Soul Winning*, David W. Cloud. Port Huron, MI: Way of Life, 2008 (5<sup>th</sup> ed.).

That is what it is; and it is wrought in us by the grace of God. Let none therefore mistake what true repentance is” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Mistaken Notions about Repentance,” Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, England, April 20, 1879).

“Repentance is a change of mind or purpose. Until a man repents he commonly feels comfortable about himself and his ways; but when the Saviour, through the Spirit, gives him repentance, **he changes his mind about himself**, and seeing nothing good in his heart or in his works, his whole soul cries out, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner” (Lk. 18:13)” (William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, 1881).

“**Repentance and the firstfruits of repentance** [baptism and other steps of discipleship mentioned in Acts 2:38-42] **were generally inseparable**. The former could not be genuine without manifesting itself in the latter. And in the circumstances of that day a willingness to be baptized was no slight evidence of a new heart” (Horatio Hackett, *Commentary on Acts*, American Baptist Publication Society, 1882).

“To repent, then, as a religious term of the New Testament, is to change the mind, thought, purpose, as regards sin and the service of God—a **change naturally accompanied by deep sorrow for past sin, and naturally leading to a change of the outward life**” (John A. Broadus, *An American Commentary on the New Testament*, Matthew, 1886).

“The preacher who leaves out repentance commits as grave a sin as the one who leaves out faith. **I mean he must preach repentance just as often, and with as much emphasis, and to as many people as he preaches faith**. To omit repentance, to ignore it, to depreciate it, is rebellion and treason. Mark its relative importance: You may make a mistake about baptism and be saved, for baptism is not essential to salvation. You may be a Christian and not comprehend fully the high-priesthood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 5:11), but “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” So said the Master Himself. Repentance is a preparatory work. For thus saith the Lord: “Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns.” **I submit before God, who will judge the quick and the dead, that to preach faith without repentance is to sow among thorns**. No harvest can be gathered from an unplowed field. The fallow ground needs to be broken up. The most striking instance on record of repentance as a preparatory work was the ministry of John the Baptist. He was sent “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” He did it by preaching repentance, and Mark says his preaching was “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” Here is the true starting point. **Whoever starts this side of repentance makes a false beginning which vitiates his whole Christian profession. When true repentance was preached and emphasized, there were not so many nominal professors of religion. TO LEAVE OUT OR MINIMIZE REPENTANCE, NO MATTER WHAT SORT OF A FAITH YOU PREACH, IS TO PREPARE A GENERATION OF PROFESSORS WHO ARE SUCH IN NAME ONLY. I give it as my deliberate conviction, founded on twenty-five years of ministerial observation, that the Christian profession of today owes its lack of vital godliness, its want of practical piety, its absence from the prayer meeting, its miserable semblance of missionary life, very largely to the fact that old-fashioned repentance is so little preached**. You can’t put a big house on a little foundation. **And no small part of such preaching comes from a class of modern evangelists who desiring more for their own glory to count a great number of converts than to lay deep foundations, reduce the conditions of salvation by one-half and make the other half but some intellectual trick of the mind rather than a radical spiritual change of the heart**. Like Simon Magus, they believe indeed, but “their heart not being right in the sight of God, they have no part nor lot in this matter. They are yet in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” Such converts know but little and care less about a system of doctrine. They are prayerless, lifeless, and to all steady church work reprobate” (B.H. Carroll, Baptist, *Repentance and Remission of Sins*, 1889).

“**Repentance being, as it is, an inward change of purpose resulting in an outward change of life**, cannot be performed by one person for another. **Repentance is a turning from a life of self and sin to a life of submission and obedience to God’s will**. Repentance, as used in the New

Testament, means a change of mind, but it is a word of moral significance and does not mean merely a change of opinion. Such a change often takes place without repentance in the New Testament sense. The will is necessarily and directly involved, as well as the emotions, but **in scriptural repentance there is a change of mind with reference to sin, a sorrow for sin and a turning from sin.** Repentance means sins perceived, sins abhorred and sins abandoned. This change is wrought by the power of God through the Holy Spirit, the word of truth being used as a means to convict the sinner of sin and lead him to forsake it and to resolve henceforth to walk before God in all truth and uprightness” (W.D. Nowlin, *Baptist Fundamentals of the Faith*, c. 1897).

“The New Testament emphasizes repentance and faith as fundamental conditions of salvation. Repentance is a change of mind toward sin and God, and **a change of will in relation to sin and God.** Repentance is not merely sorrow. It is rather godly sorrow which turns away from all wrong doing and enters upon a life of obedience. Faith is belief of God’s Word concerning his Son, and trust in his Son for salvation” (E. Y. Mullins, DD., LL.D., Late President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, published by The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1920).

“We believe 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 Saviour” (Baptist Faith and Message, Southern Baptist Convention, 1925).

“To repent literally means **to have a change of mind or spirit toward God and toward sin.** It means to turn from your sins, earnestly, with all your heart, and trust in Jesus Christ to save you. You can see, then, how the man who believes in Christ repents and the man who repents believes in Christ. The jailer repented when he turned from sin to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ” (John R. Rice, *What Must I Do to Be Saved?* 1940).

“We believe that Repentance and Faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted 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 and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Saviour” (Baptist Bible Fellowship, Articles of Faith, 1950).

“Repentance is a godly sorrow for sin. Repentance is a forsaking of sin. **Real repentance is putting your trust in Jesus Christ so you will not live like that anymore.** Repentance is permanent. It is a lifelong and an eternity-long experience. You will never love the devil again once you repent. You will never flirt with the devil as the habit of your life again once you get saved. You will never be happy living in sin; it will never satisfy; and the husks of the world will never fill your longing and hungering in your soul. Repentance is something a lot bigger than a lot of people think. It is absolutely essential if you go to heaven” (Lester Roloff, *Repent or Perish*, 1950s).

“Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. **Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God.** Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior” (*Baptist Faith and Message*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1963).

“What do I mean by repent? I mean to turn your heart from your sin. Turn from sin in your heart and start out to live for God. ... **A penitent heart that turns from your sin and turns to Jesus**” (John R. Rice, “Repent or Perish,” *Sword of the Lord*, March 3, 1971).

A Baptist church that renounces the *RAC* for the *RNC* heresy should cease to call itself *Baptist*. A Baptist pastor who adopts the *RNC* heresy should voluntarily resign from his position, and be barred from the pulpit, removed by his congregation from his office, and placed under church discipline if he refuses to leave voluntarily. Baptist church members who adopt the *RNC*, and who refuse to repent of it after being instructed and admonished, should be removed from church membership and placed under church discipline. Corruption of the gospel has awful eternal consequences (Galatians 1:8-9), and since “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9), all such leaven of false teaching must be kept from entering into the church and immediately purged out if it enters (1 Corinthians 5:6-7).

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