

2 Chron. 7:11-16 (LD 33, Q/A 88-90) “Turning From and To”

For the Children: If your parents hold out a treat for you, when you are busy doing something else, you first have to turn away from what you have been doing. Then you have to face your parents and perhaps move towards them. If you tell them, “No, I want to keep doing what I’m doing,” you might find that they walk away without giving you what they held out. God holds out to us a free gift: forgiveness of our sins. But if we say to Him, “No, I want to keep on sinning!” we may find that He does not give us His blessing. **Questions:** How are repentance and faith related? Why are they both so necessary for salvation, if we don’t actually earn forgiveness of sins by our repentance? How is the Lord Jesus held out to the people of Israel in this text?

Introduction:

First Point: The Promise of Healing

- 1) Spiritual Healing: Israel is promised spiritual healing in v. 14 – the forgiveness of sins.
- 2) Healing of the Land: The blessedness of the Kingdom of heaven is foreshadowed in the OT by the physical-temporal blessings of “milk and honey” in Canaan. But when the people give themselves over to sin, their enjoyment of the blessings is adversely affected. The Land is affected by their sin – through the judgements of drought, famine, disease, invasion etc. (v. 13). The land then needs to be restored as well as the people. God will eventually remove all aspects of the curse from creation, when He finishes restoring His people.
- 3) Healing of the Relationship with God: Sin estranges us from God. It makes us feel distant from Him and feel that He is ignoring us. Vss. 14-15 promise that sinful Israel can again know closeness to the Lord, that He is paying close attention to them and their prayers.

Second Point: How the Promise Is Applied

- 1) If Then: Election and regeneration are unconditional. But the application of redemption has conditions – though not so as to *earn* salvation. We see that conditional aspect in vss. 13-14 – “If...then...” If the people repent, then the Lord will hear, forgive their sins and heal them. Repentance is necessary for entering God’s Kingdom (Acts 17:30) as well as remaining in it. See Q87 on this necessity.
- 2) Because of the Connection to Faith: This necessity is not because we earn salvation by our repenting, but because repentance is the other side of faith. Turning from sin and turning to Christ are inseparably joined. The dying away of the old self and the coming to life of the new self are inseparably joined (LD 33). Neither are possible apart from Christ. We are joined to Christ, so as to receive His benefits, by faith alone. Therefore, faith is necessary for salvation – and one cannot turn *to* Him without turning *from* sin. Faith supplies us with the proper motives for repentance and establishes the relationship with the God who enables repentance. Note that the text joins the 2 aspects together as well: humbly seeking God’s face (faith) AND turning away from their wicked ways (repentance).

Third Point: How the Promise Is Fulfilled

- 1) Christ’s Sacrifice Foreshadowed: The object of faith is Christ. In the OT, faith in Messiah’s deliverance from sin was expressed in the sacrificial system tied to the Temple. The Temple was also the place to draw close to God and to come to pray to Him. Of course, the Temple was eventually destroyed. But it pointed to the “Temple Made without hands” (Jn. 2:18-11, Mk. 14:58). Through Him, our sins are forgiven, our prayers are heard and we draw close to God.
- 2) Christ’s Kingly Rule Foreshadowed: These promises are given to Solomon as a son of David, who points ahead to the rule of the Lord Jesus. See 2 Sam. 7 and 2 Chron. 7:17f. The promises can only be gained through Him, because of the work He has done as the Great Prophet, Priest and King.

Conclusion: