

# When Did God Begin Repentance in Us?

**Focus:** How God began His saving work in us through Baptism and His Word.

**Key Verse:** “He saved us... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit.” – Titus 3:5

**Text: NAS 2020**

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: A brief review:

- Repentance includes **✦**contrition **and** **✦**faith!
- Repentance is necessary for salvation!
- Since the **unrepentant** are spiritually dead, God must **✦**open blind eyes **and** **✦**give spiritual life!
- God works **✦**through His Law *to break unrepentant hearts*, then **✦**through His Gospel *to gift forgiveness*!

**Reminder:** What is God-worked repentance? Dr. Koehler:

“...repentance consists... of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; **the other is faith**, which is born of the Gospel... and believes that, for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven...”

**Today’s Question:** When Did God Begin Repentance in Us?

The primary answer will focus on **✦older children and adults** but let me begin with **✦infants and young children**.

## 1. **Infants and Young Children:**

- a. Infants inherit sin: **Romans 5:12** “...just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death

through sin, and so death spread to all mankind...” // **5:14** “...death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the violation committed by Adam...” // Adam broke a certain Law *and died*. Those between Adam and Moses did **not** break certain Laws of God, *yet they died*. Why? Because **everyone** inherited sin and death – *including infants!*

b. Important baptism passages:

- i. **1 Peter 3:21** “...baptism now saves you...” // What does that mean? “The world was cleansed when Noah and his family were lifted up by the flood. Baptism cleanses and raises us to new life. By grace, Baptism is a means of salvation through which the [HS] produces faith” (TLSB).
- ii. **Titus 3:5-6** “He [God the Father] saved us... [**How?**] by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He richly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior...”

c. Infants and repentance:

- i. Repentance is contrition and faith. Infants are **not** aware of their sin, *so they are not called to godly sorrow*. **But** they do need the gift of faith by which they receive God’s gift of forgiveness.
- ii. As we learned in Part 3 of this series, no one of any age can make himself spiritually alive. For infants and young children, God imparts the gift of faith through baptism. As children grow and are taught the Bible, *it is vital for them to live in repentance!*

2. **Older Children and Adults:** For children who were never baptized **OR** have fallen away, God began **OR** restarted repentance in them **through His word**. Whenever God works repentance, He also makes the person spiritually alive, that is, born from above!
- a. **John 3:6-7** “That which has been born of the flesh is flesh, and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘You must be born again [from above].’” // Since God must do it **and** He does it through His word – *Let us immerse ourselves in God’s powerful, transforming word!*
  - b. **Romans 8:29-30** [Notice **God’s** five steps:]
    - i. “**He foreknew**” us – *chose us beforehand!*
    - ii. “**He also predestined**” us – *to be saved!*
    - iii. “**He also called**” us – *through His word!*
    - iv. “**He also justified**” us – *through His Son!*
    - v. “**He also glorified**” us – *made us great!*
  - c. **2 Thessalonians 2:13** “...God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.” // God chose us *before time*, then, *in time*, God sent the Holy Spirit to work godly sorrow in our hearts and give us faith in God’s word of truth, *which is all about JESUS!*
  - d. **James 1:18** “...He [God the Father] gave us [spiritual] birth by the word of truth...”
  - e. **1 Peter 1:23** “...you have been born again not of seed which is perishable [like our present physical bodies], but imperishable [eternal], that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”

f. **Ephesians 2:1–7**

i. The huge problems of the unrepentant:

1. **1:** “...dead in your... sins...”
2. **3:** “...by nature children of wrath...”

ii. The great blessings of the repentant:

1. **4-5:** “...**God**... made us alive together with Christ...”
2. **6:** “...**[God]** raised us up with [Christ], and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places*...”  
// We no longer focus on temporal things  
*but on eternal things!*
3. **7:** “...**[God will]** show [us] the boundless riches of His grace [in the life to come]...”

**Conclusion:** Which category are you in?

- Blessed and Continuing: Your repentance began when you were baptized **and** *you are still living in repentance!*
- Blessed; Fallen; Blessed and Continuing: Your repentance began when you were baptized, **but** *you stopped living in repentance; however,* God has worked repentance in you again **and** you are living in it!
- Need Help: You have never been repentant, **so** you need God ♦to work through His word ♦to transform your life!

**Let Us Pray:** Father in heaven, TY for loving us rotten sinners!  
Please ♦keep us repentant and ♦transform the **unrepentant!**

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