

# Entrance Requirements & Oath

The Kingdom and the Covenant, Session 9

## Introduction

- A covenant is a loving, enduring relationship in which each partner focuses on the other's well-being and success, including what they deserve, need or want.
- The main purposes of the new covenant: restore us to relationship with God, restore his image & likeness in us, prepare us to serve in his kingdom
- Jesus frequently referred to childlike qualities for those who enter the kingdom
  - Mt 18:3, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."
- Childlike qualities; believe what God tells you, accept what he offers you, trust him to take care of you, simply do what he says

## Entrance requirement: Repentance

- Mt 4:17 "From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"
  - "repent" (Gk, *v*, *metanoio*) – literally means to change the way you think; make it conform to what Bible says
  - Our primary responsibility in the new covenant: change the way we think
  - What you think determines what you do
- Ac 26:20-21 "First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds."
  - According to this passage, how can we tell whether we are effectively changing the way we think?
  - Changed behavior is result or evidence of repentance, not repentance itself
- Repentance must continue after salvation
  - Mt 6:33, "But seek first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
- As we conform our thinking to God's methods, laws, standards & nature, we function more effectively within the system he created, as defined by his kingdom
  - Otherwise, our thoughts are incompatible with his & are counterproductive because they conflict with his will

## Entrance requirement: Accept Salvation

- 1 Jn 2:1(c)-2, "Jesus Christ, the Righteous One... is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."
  - God did his part by making salvation available to everyone, now it's up to us to do our part by accepting his offer
- Must be born again to enter kingdom
  - John 3:2, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."
  - Jn 3:3, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."
    - "again" (Gk, *adv*, *anōthen*): top; again; from above

- Jn 3:5, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.”
- v 6, “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”
- Begin born again brings us into covenant relationship with God, which causes us to enter his kingdom
- Why is repentance necessary before we can be born again?
- Why is repentance necessary after we’re born again?

### **Entrance requirement: Faith**

- Mk 1:14-15, <sup>14</sup> “After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’”
  - “repent” (Gk, v, *metanoeo*)
  - “believe” (Gk, v, *pisteuo*): to believe, trust, have faith in someone or something
- Heb 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”
  - “faith” (Gk, n, *pistis*): a strong confidence, reliance upon someone or something
  - “believe” (Gk, v, *pisteuo*)
  - Our covenant requires us to have faith in God, since we can’t please him without it
- Jas 2:17, 26, <sup>17</sup> “In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.... <sup>26</sup> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”
  - “faith” (Gk, n, *pistis*)
- Our faith is dead, meaningless, completely ineffective unless it governs what we do

### **Entrance requirement: Obedience (including faithfulness)**

- Mt 28:19-20(a), <sup>19</sup> “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”
  - The “great commission” requires us to teach new disciples to obey everything Jesus commanded
  - “obey” (Gk, v, *tereo*): to conform one’s action or practice to someone or something
- Apostle John (“disciple of love”) quotes Jesus:
  - Jn 14:15, “If you love me, you will obey what I command.”
  - Jn 14:21, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.”
  - Jn 14:23, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.”
  - Jn 14:24, “He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.”
  - Jn 15:10, “If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love.”
- If we love Jesus, we will obey what he commands
- Conversely, if we don’t obey what he commands, we don’t really love him even if we think we do

## Covenant Oath or Vow

- A covenant is sealed and guaranteed with an oath, which binds the covenant partners
- The new covenant was made by God the Father with Jesus, who is now both the Son of God and the Son of Man as a representative of all humanity
- Heb 7:18-22
  - <sup>18</sup> The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless <sup>19</sup> (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.
  - <sup>20</sup> And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, <sup>21</sup> but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: “The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: ‘You are a priest forever.’ ”
  - <sup>22</sup> Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.
- Book of Hebrews calls the Law of Moses, the old covenant, weak & useless
  - We should never use it as a guideline for Christian living
  - It has value for other things, but it is not our standard for life
- God’s oath for new covenant was to Jesus, who represented all of humanity in the covenant
  - Heb 7:18-22, Jesus the man is a priest forever & the guarantee of a better covenant
  - Heb 6:20(b), Jesus “has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”
  - Jesus is the high priest; we also are priests to God
    - Rev 1:6, Jesus “has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father”
    - Rev 5:10; 20:6, we are priests of God
  - God sealed the covenant with an oath to Jesus, which made him the high priest of that covenant
- Our covenant oath
  - Ro 10:9, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”
    - “believe” (Gk, *v, pisteuo*)
    - “you will be saved” (Gk, *v, sozo*): to protect or deliver from danger, judgment, destruction, harm, loss
    - All expressions of *sozo* are blessings of the new covenant
    - “confess” (Gk, *v, homologeo*): to make open and free declaration; to profess, admit, declare
  - To confess Jesus is Lord is to take an oath of obedience!
  - Lk 6:46, “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”
  - Declaring Jesus is your Lord is a covenant oath, because he becomes your Lord through the new covenant

## Conclusion

- The main purposes of the new covenant: restore us to relationship with God, restore his image & likeness in us, prepare us to serve in his kingdom
- The main requirements for us to enter the covenant: repentance, acceptance of God’s plan of salvation, faith & obedience