

ENTERING THE KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

A. Colossians 1:13

In one sense, all who are saved in Jesus are already in His kingdom because the church is a substantial portion of it ([Matthew 16:18](#)).

B. 2nd Timothy 4:1

Yet, in another sense, we await the kingdom to come at judgment. Either way, salvation is connected to being within the kingdom, whether we mean the church now or heaven hereafter. So, entrance therein is of paramount importance.

I. “UNLESS YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS EXCEEDS... THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES”

A. Matthew 5:20

Misconceptions abound regarding the Pharisees. The Lord’s criticisms about this sect were not directed toward their strictness, but their hypocrisy ([Matthew 23](#)). Therefore, we will need to be more righteous than them to enter the kingdom.

B. 1st Corinthians 6:9-11

Unrighteousness will definitely exclude souls from the kingdom ([Galatians 5:19-21](#); [Ephesians 5:5](#)).

II. “NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, ‘LORD, LORD’”

A. Matthew 7:21

Mere confession of faith in Jesus is insufficient for entering.

B. 1st John 2:17

The kingdom accepts doers, not just hearers.

III. “UNLESS YOU ARE CONVERTED AND BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN”

A. Matthew 18:1-5

This condition for entry teaches two things:

1. Children are innocent, not depraved as the Calvinists teach.
2. Adults must revert to childlike innocence or they will miss heaven!

B. Ecclesiastes 7:29

Don't blame God for your sin. That was your own choice.

C. Philippians 2:14-15

The goal is blamelessness and harmlessness.

IV. "IT IS HARD FOR A RICH MAN"

A. Matthew 19:23-24

Wealth is a hindrance to eternal salvation.

B. 1st Timothy 6:6-10

Money itself is not evil, but the love of it is. Loving money motivates a wide array of sins.

V. "TAX COLLECTORS AND HARLOTS ENTER... BEFORE YOU"

A. Matthew 21:28-32

Regardless of earlier behavior, whoever eventually believes and obeys the Lord will be granted entrance to the kingdom.

B. Luke 5:31-32

Jesus' purpose is the salvation of sinners.

VI. "INASMUCH AS YOU DID IT TO THE LEAST OF THESE"

A. Matthew 25:31-40

Our treatment of others determines eligibility for the kingdom.

B. Galatians 5:14

We cannot fulfill the law of God unless we treat our neighbors correctly.

VII. "BETTER FOR YOU TO ENTER... WITH ONE EYE"

A. Mark 9:47-48

This requirement for getting into the kingdom reminds us of two facts:

1. What one chooses to look at can condemn his soul.
2. Heaven is worth every sacrifice.

B. Luke 11:34

What we let our eyes linger on matters tremendously.

C. Mark 8:34-38

There is no sacrifice too great to receive eternal life.

VIII. "UNLESS ONE IS BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT"

A. John 3:1-7

In order to enter the kingdom, one must be born anew! Rebirth is through water and the spirit, a clear reference to baptism.

B. Matthew 28:19; 1st Peter 3:20-21

Baptism absolutely involves the Spirit and water, and it is definitely needed for salvation.