

What does confession involve?

1. An example from the Old Testament. King Solomon just finish building the first Temple for God, and the nation of Israel gathered to celebrate the installation of the Ark of the Covenant within the Holy of Holies. Standing before the Altar of God, king Solomon prays for the nation and part of his prayer involves confession. What does the king tell the nation to acknowledge?

“When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy, because they have sinned against You, if they turn to You again and **confess** Your name and pray and make supplication to You in this house, then listen in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their fathers. When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain, because they have sinned against You, and they pray toward this place and **confess** Your name and turn from their sin when You afflict them, then listen in heaven and forgive the sin of Your slaves and of Your people Israel; indeed, teach them the good way in which they should walk. And give rain on Your land, which You have given to Your people for an inheritance. (1 Ki 8:33-36, LSB)

2. An example from the New Testament. As the apostle Paul writes to the Church of Rome, what does he tell them to acknowledge?

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you **confess** with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, leading to righteousness, and with the mouth he **confesses**, leading to salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes upon Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him, for “Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Rom 10:8-13, LSB)

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Teacher Notes

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Ask the student: look up the word “confess” in a Bible dictionary. For example, 1) search “studylight holman,” 2) select “Holman Bible Dictionary,” and 3) locate “confession.”

Confession, an admission, declaration, or acknowledgment, is a significant element in the worship of God in both Old and New Testaments. The majority of the occurrences of the term can be divided into two primary responses to God: the confession of sin and the confession of faith.

Ask the student: why does confession include both an acknowledgment of sin and the name / person of God? What does king Solomon indicate? Encourage discussion of this connection. What if there is no connection?

When the confession of sin includes the acknowledgment of the holiness of God’s name / person, it reflects the repentant heart of a person and a genuine acknowledgment of one’s sins. If so, then God will forgive and restore His promise of blessings and inheritance to the nation of Israel.

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Ask the student: is the confession in the New Testament the same as in the Old? What is the significance of the name? Do you remember the Hebrew meaning behind the name “Jesus?” Comparing these two passages, take the time to contrast the Old and New Testaments.

In Hebrew, the name “Jesus” means “God is Salvation.” Acknowledging the name “God is Salvation” in the New Testament is the same as acknowledging the God in the Old Testament.

Just as in the Old Testament, a repentant heart confesses one’s sin with the confession that Jesus, God of Salvation, was raised by God after dying for our sins.