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Imperative present tense verbs (commands) in the New Testament

The New Testament contains many commands that have soteriological significance. (In other words, they relate directly to the salvation that will take place when Jesus comes back to judge the world.) Probably due to ignorance of basic Greek grammar rules, many Christians and pastors falsely assume that most of these commands relate mainly to or strictly to conversion rather than the salvation that will take place in the future when Jesus comes back to judge the world. But when Greek grammar rules are considered, it is clear that these commands relate solely to the salvation that will take place in the future when Jesus comes back to judge the world.

Most of these commands relating to salvation are present tense imperative verbs. Here are a few examples that are familiar to most Christians:

- "Repent and believe in the gospel" (See Mark 1:15, spoken by Jesus.)
- "Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden" (See Matthew 11:28, spoken by Jesus.)
- "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." (See John 7:37, spoken by Jesus.)
- "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able." (See Luke 13:24, spoken by Jesus.)
- "Come, take up the cross, and follow Me." (See Mark 10:21, spoken by Jesus.)

All of these examples are present tense commands. The New Testament writers had other options open to them but they chose present tense commands. Koine Greek present tense commands are NOT commands to do something once! They are always commanding something that is to be done continually or repeatedly without stopping. You can affirm this by consulting any decent Greek grammar book under imperative verbs and volitional clauses. One example is **Wallace, Greek Grammar, Beyond the Basics, An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament, 1996 p. 721-722, Zondervan**. Also, on page 485, "With the present, the force is generally to command the action as an ongoing process. This is in keeping with the present's aspect.")

Therefore, in the case of the present tense commands mentioned above, they must be interpreted as follows.

Repent and keep repenting, and believe and continue to believe in the gospel.

Come and continue to come to me.

If anyone thirsts, he must come and continue to come to Me and drink.

-Strive and never stop striving to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able."

-Come follow Me and continue to follow Me."

What would you say to an unbeliever who asks you, "What must I do to be saved?" Because the answer you give involves the ultimate salvation of his soul, the answer you give him is very important.

If you read this article, you now have a responsibility to do something about it. I understand the apprehension a person might have to accept it all as true if he does not understand Greek grammar. Yet, it would be irreverent (to the Lord) to simply reject it outright. All of this information is available to anyone who will take the time to look it up.

If you want to see my detailed response to the question, "What must I do to be saved?," [click this link](#). It will take you to an **excerpt** from my recently released book, ***The Narrow Way Gospel Study Guide***.