

[Click this to go back to the free articles and media page.](#)

Know what you must do to be saved from the coming wrath of God.

(Excerpt from Tom Bear's latest book, *The Narrow Way Gospel Study Guide*.)

It is critical that you understand up front what you must do to inherit eternal life. It is likely that you have heard some blatantly false information. So, let us consider some popular false statements and see what the Bible says about them. Below are some unbiblical (false) statements you may have been told.

- “If you ask Jesus into your heart, you will be saved.”
- “If you pray this prayer, you will be saved.”
- “If you are baptized in the name of Jesus, you will be saved.”
- “If you make a decision to follow Jesus, you will be saved.”
- “If you give assent to the Apostle's Creed, you will be saved.”

Some of these statements may seem blatantly erroneous to you. Perhaps one or two might seem less erroneous to you. But one error that is common to all of them is the idea that inheriting eternal life involves a one-time act of faith. This may be the most widespread error in the thinking of Christians living in the 21st century.

There are millions of people who falsely think they are Christians simply because they repeated a “sinner's prayer” or walked down to the front of an auditorium at the invitation of an evangelist. They remain dead in their trespasses and sins. Yet, they falsely believe they are Christians. They followed the promise of a man rather than believing the promise of God. The man told them they would be “saved” if they repeated a “sinner's prayer” or walked down an aisle. God makes no such promise. His promise is *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”*

In Part One, I provided biblical analysis to show that believing into Jesus is not a one-time act. Rather, it is something that continues. Here, I will provide more biblical analysis to help you realize the long-range implications involved in following Jesus. I encourage you to think of your decision to follow Jesus as something similar to entering into marriage. The vows of a biblical marriage include the phrase, “till death do us part.” They do not say, “till very difficult circumstances do we part.” It is important to know the nature of the relationship that God wants with you. So, let us consider what the New Testament actually says.

The commands to believe the gospel:

Unfortunately, very few modern-day pastors and evangelists are familiar with New Testament Greek. If they were, they would know that most of the New Testament commands to believe the gospel are in the Greek present tense. Because the authors purposely chose to spell these commands as present tense, they wanted to convey the idea of continuance in the command. Here is an example of a command that Jesus gave on this subject:

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15).

Because the command to believe is in the present tense, Jesus' command is that we believe and continue to believe the gospel. This command tells us what we must do to be saved from the wrath of God that is coming upon the world and to be delivered from the bondage of sin. We must believe and continue to believe the gospel. (It is not a one-time act of faith.)

Do you want to know with confidence what you must do to be saved from the wrath that is coming upon the world? This is the promise you can trust: ***“Believe and continue to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved from the wrath of God that is coming upon the world!”***

Now compare this gospel promise to the false statements below:

- “If you ask Jesus into your heart, you will be saved.”
- “If you pray this prayer, you will be saved.”
- “If you are baptized in the name of Jesus, you will be saved.”
- “If you make a decision to follow Jesus, you will be saved.”
- “If you give assent to the Apostle's Creed, you will be saved.”

Typically, when people are told false statements like those immediately above, they get the impression that if they perform one of these one-time acts, they will be instantly “saved” and their place in heaven is written in stone. But the gospel invitation and commands include a requirement of continuance. The rest of the New Testament speaks about this reality. Consider some other verses that bear this out.

[Click this to go back to the free articles and media page.](#)

Two of Jesus' commands:

"Remain in my love." (John 15:9b)

"Remain in Him" (1 John 1:28).

Our salvation from God's wrath requires that we remain in Jesus:

"IF anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:32-39 NKJV).

"We have become partakers of Christ IF we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end" (Hebrews 3:14 NKJV).

"And I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, IF you hold fast and continue to hold fast the word which I preached to you— unless you believed in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:1-2 NKJV).

"And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight —IF indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister" (Colossians 1:21-23 NKJV).

"I AM the true vine and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away. And every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit. You are now clean because of the Word that I have spoken to you. Remain in Me and I in you. As the branch is not able to bear fruit of itself if it does not remain in the vine, likewise, you are not able to bear fruit if you do not remain in Me. I AM the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me, you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered, and they gather them and throw them into the fire and he is burned" (John 15:1-6).

This is a very small sampling of verses that talk about this. At least 8% of the New Testament warns about the dangers of turning away from Jesus. Christians generally agree that if a person turns away from Jesus and remains in that condition until he dies (apostasy), he will perish. Yet, many Christians falsely assume that their glorification is set in stone and there is absolutely no possibility that they could end up perishing. This is not how Jesus, the apostles and the early church leaders believed. If your gospel does not fully harmonize with what they taught about **salvation**, your gospel will not be in full harmony with the New Testament.

Some of the popular teaching about **salvation** does not completely line up with the teachings of Jesus, the Apostles and the leaders of the early church. These days, most Christians tend to think of **salvation** as something that took place in their past. They associate **salvation** as something that takes place at conversion. This is so engrained in their thinking that they don't notice the abundance of scriptures that portray **salvation** mainly as something relating to that which will take place when Jesus returns and judges the world.

The apostles and the early church fathers thought of salvation as something that will take place in the future when Jesus comes back to judge the world. Below are a few New Testament verses and then some quotations from the early church fathers. All of these are provided to demonstrate that much of the current teaching about salvation does not line up with the scriptures.

"So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11).

"who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:5).

[Click this to go back to the free articles and media page.](#)

"In this (above) you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith -- the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:6-9). (The salvation of their souls takes place after the various trials have proven their faith. It is the "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" that was mentioned in the preceding verse – v.5.)

"from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15 SCOT). (Spoken to a Christian who had been converted years earlier)

"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:10). (Spoken to Christians. Their recent repentance is leading unto salvation.)

"For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9) (Spoken to Christians.)

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

"But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thessalonians 5:8). (They don't have the salvation yet. They are hoping for it based upon God's promises.)

"Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down" (Revelation 12:10). (This salvation takes place at Jesus' 2nd coming.)

The **early church fathers** also thought of salvation this way:

*The whole past time of your faith will profit you nothing, unless now, in this wicked time we also withstand coming sources of danger. . . Take heed, lest resting at our ease as those who are the called, we fall asleep in our sins. For then, the wicked prince, acquiring power over us, will thrust us away from the kingdom of the Lord. . . . And you should pay attention to this all the more my brothers, when you reflect on and see that even after such great signs and wonders had been performed in Israel, they were still abandoned. Let us, beware lest we be found to be, as it is written, the "many who are called," but not the "few who are chosen." **Barnabas** (the apostle) (c.70-130, E), 1.139.*

*I hold further, that those of you who have confessed and known this man to be Christ, yet who have gone back for some reason to the legal dispensation [i.e.. the Mosaic Law], and have denied that this man is Christ, and have not repented before death— you will by no means be saved. **Justin Martyr** (c. 160, E), 1.218.*

*It is neither the faith, nor the love, nor the hope, nor the endurance of one day; rather, "he that endures to the end will be saved." **Clement of Alexandria** (c. 195, E), 2.600.*

*He who hopes for everlasting rest knows also that the entrance to it is toilsome and narrow. So let him who has once received the Gospel not turn back, like Lot's wife, as is said----even in the very hour in which he has come to the knowledge of salvation. And let him not go back either to his former life (which adheres to the things of sense) or to heresies. **Clement of Alexandria** (c. 195, E), 2.550.*

*We ought indeed to walk so holily, and with so entire substantiality of faith, as to be confident and secure in regard of our own conscience, desiring that it may abide in us to the end. Yet, we should not presume [that it will]. For he who presumes, feels less apprehension. He who feels less apprehension, takes less precaution. He who takes less precaution, runs more risk. Fear is the foundation of salvation. Presumption is an impediment to fear. . . More useful, then, is it to apprehend that we may possibly fail, than to presume that we cannot. For apprehending will lead us to fear, fear to caution, and caution to salvation. On the other hand, if we presume, there will be neither fear nor caution to save us. **Tertullian** (c. 198. W), 4.19.*

*A man may possess an acquired righteousness from which it is possible for him to fall away. **Origen** (c. 225, E), 4.266.*

[Click this to go back to the free articles and media page.](#)

*There is need of continual prayer and supplication so that we do not fall away from the heavenly kingdom, as the Jews fell away, to whom this promise had first been given. **Cyprian** (c. 250, W), 5.451*

*He says. "He that endures to the end, the same will be saved." And again He says. "If you continue in my word, you will truly be my disciples" [John 8:31. 32].... So there needs to be patience in order that hope and faith may attain their result. **Cyprian** (c. 250, W), 5.487.*

*Let us press onward and labor, watching with our whole heart. Let us be steadfast with all endurance; let us keep the Lord's commandments. Thereby, when that day of anger and vengeance comes, we may not be punished with the ungodly and the sinners. Rather, we may be honored with the righteous and with those who fear God. **Cyprian** (c. 250, W), 5.491.*

Let me quote from John to help you understand the nature of "believing" according to the Bible.

"All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me and the one who comes to Me I will NEVER cast out" (John 6:37).

Let me discuss a few words from John 6:37 to bring clarity. Jesus said, *"The one who comes to me I will never cast out."* What do you think Jesus meant by the phrase, "the one who comes to me?" If you are like most people, you assume this coming to Jesus is a one-time act of some sort, but it isn't!

In the New Testament, acts of faith such as "believing into Jesus," "coming to Jesus," "calling upon the name of the Lord," "believing the gospel," are normally found in the Greek present tense. Present tense actions in New Testament Greek are not one-time happenings. They happen and never stop happening. Therefore, the implications of "comes" in John 6:37 can legitimately be expressed as, "The one who comes to me and keeps coming to me, I will NEVER cast out." John 3:16 is legitimately expressed as, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes into Him and keeps believing into Him might not perish but have eternal life." Romans 10:9 is legitimately expressed as, "If you confess and keep on confessing with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe and keep on believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (*from the wrath of God that will soon be poured out*)." (Words in italic font are mine but they are in harmony with Paul's use of the word "salvation" in the book of Romans. See Romans 13:11 further above, for example.)

If you want to be a disciple of Jesus, it is critical that you understand that inheriting eternal life is not the result of a one-time act of faith. To inherit eternal life, you must believe and continue to believe into Jesus. (See Mark 1:15.) You must come and continue to come to Jesus. (See Matthew 11:28.) You must call upon the Lord and continue to call upon the Lord. (See Romans 10:12; I Corinthians 1:2; Acts 9:14.) You must repent and continue to repent (surrendering your life to the Lord daily). (See Mark 1:15.) You must confess Jesus and continue to confess Jesus, even if threatened with harm or death. You need to know that if you turn away and remain in that condition, you will perish forever. This is a part of the gospel that Jesus and the apostles preached. This is why I suggest that you think of this as something similar to biblical marriage. It is life-long. For a much more thorough examination of this subject, I recommend you read my book *Finish*, or my *Commentary on Romans*.