

Watch out!

Do you consider yourself to be a lukewarm or spiritually cold “Christian?” Based upon verses like the ones shown below, you should be frightened and very concerned where you will spend eternity:

“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 the word which I preached to you— unless you believed in vain” (I 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 gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned” (John 15:1-6 NIV).

As you can see from these verses, your salvation from the coming wrath of God requires that you remain in Jesus while bearing spiritual fruit. The verses above are only a small sampling of verses that teach this. Over 8% of the New Testament teaches and warns about this! Christians who read their Bible know about passages like this, but they tend to ignore them because most churches no longer talk about these things. Perhaps you are already aware of this New Testament teaching. If so, let verses like those above encourage you to wake up and begin following Jesus more diligently. But if you were never informed of this New Testament teaching, continue reading to learn why you may not have heard it before.

Like millions of other people, you may have heard someone tell you one or more of the following statements:

- “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.”

Most people who make such statements give the one hearing it the impression that inheriting eternal life involves one or more of these one-time acts. This may be the most widespread error in the thinking of Christians living in the 21st century. Millions of people falsely think that because they performed one or more of these one-time acts, their place in heaven is secure. 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. Verses like those at the beginning of this article demonstrate that believing into Jesus is not a one-time act.

In harmony with such verses are the New Testament commands to believe. Unfortunately, most seminaries no longer require pastors to learn New Testament Greek and the grammar principles that govern interpretation. The fact of the matter is that most of the New Testament commands to believe the gospel are in the Greek present tense which includes 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 this 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.) This is consistent with other commands that require continuance. Here are two such commands of Jesus:

“Remain in my love.” (John 15:9b)

“Remain in Him” (I John 1:28).

In addition to commands in the present tense, 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).”

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 is not 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).*

"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 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.)

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

Barnabas (the apostle) (c. 70-130, E), 1.139: *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."*

Justin Martyr (c. 160, E), 1.218: *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.*

Clement of Alexandria (c. 195, E), 2.600: *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."*

Tertullian (c. 198, W), 4.19: *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.*

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

Cyprian (c. 250, W), 5.451: *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), 5.487: *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.*

If you want to be saved from the wrath of God that is coming, 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 Acts 16:31.) 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 are lukewarm or spiritually cold, you may end up turned away (or might already be turned away) from Jesus. Anyone who remains in that condition will perish forever. This is a part of the gospel that Jesus and the apostles preached. So, take heed before it is too late.

For more information about this, contact us at DearbornBible@hotmail.com or call Tom at 313-213-1570.