

## 21T16c Now What? (Part 3) Saved

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table.

Now What? Last time we asked this question. Once you are a Christian, Now What? What should I do? How should I do it? How do I act? and on and on and on. I know the questions because I have asked these questions myself over and over during my life. But honestly, did you ever get an answer to those questions?

Well, the short answer to these questions is the Bible. But I know that is not very specific. In this series we looking at what the Bible says the answer is to those Now What? Questions.

Now obviously we need to accept the authenticity and errancy of the Bible first. If you struggle with this, email me. People have sot to disprove the Bible for centuries. Science, Archeology, and History all support the Bible. I know that's not what you hear. Despite all the attempts to discredit the Bible, none have done so. The Bible is the most critically reviewed book of all time. It is the most read book of all time. And in all that time it still holds up to the scrutiny like no other book ever. If you are looking for some sources to help you satisfy your skepticism, Lee Strobel's Case for Christ or my video titled "Can you Trust your Bible" are just a couple of the many resources. I'd love to point you to resources that address your specific concerns. But getting back to our topic, we will assume authenticity and errancy of our Bible during this series.

Okay. I think we should start by looking at how we are saved according to Jesus. What is our Salvation? There are a lot of church doctrines about this topic, and each have Bible verses in support and Bible verses in opposition.

I think we need to remember that the Bible is a story cover to cover, Genesis to Revelation. But not every statement is complete on its own if you separate it from the other scriptures or take it out of context. The Bible authors do not always tell us the whole story in every verse or in every chapter or even in every book of the Bible, which would be impossible. There is a reason our Bible has 66 books in it. God is revealing His Character to us so we can know Him. We would not need the whole Bible if every part was able to tell us the whole story.

We have to remember the entire Bible is important from Genesis to Revelation. Now please hear this, when Jesus says we are saved by this in one part of the Bible and saved by that in another part of the Bible, we need to put it together to truly understand what Jesus is telling us. We cannot choose which one we like. They both have to be true. We have to accept all scripture, especially the words of Jesus in the Gospels.

I want to look at how we are saved according to Jesus. We will look at several scriptures,

- Matthew 10:22; Matthew 10:32-33; Matthew 24:13.
- Mark 13:13; Mark 16:16.

- Luke 9:62; Luke 12:8-12.
- John 3:16; John 5:24; **John 14:6**; John 15: 9-11

These are just some of the 20 or so times Jesus spoke about how we are “saved”, and I think these few scriptures give us a picture of what is required to be “saved”. But I know some of you will ask, What is “Saved?” Simply put Jesus has saved us from the punishment we deserve for the sins we have done and will do. If we are saved, then we are a Christian. I know this because Jesus said so. *“I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me.”* (John 14:6 ICB). So, if I am saved, then by definition I have to be a follower of Jesus or a Christian because the only way to the Father or salvation is through a relationship with Jesus.

As we work through the scriptures about how we are saved, we need to concentrate on the “IFs” Jesus is telling us about. Being a Christ follower is an either or decision. You can’t be a part-time Christian or partial Christian. You are either a follower of Jesus or you are not. No gray areas here. Jesus will tell us, Believe or Disbelief, Faithfulness or Faithlessness, Obedience or Disobedience and even Proclaim or Deny. These are all choices Jesus tells us we must make to be saved. Now I’m sure some of you are starting to get uncomfortable, but this is what free will is. It is the ability to make a choice. We either choose Jesus or we don’t. Every day we have to choose to follow our Lord, Jesus. Or as Jesus said, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:24-26 NKJV)

I’m guessing if you have attended church for any length of time you have heard these verses paraphrased, “take up your cross and follow Jesus daily”. Jesus is stressing we must do the things He wants us to do. We have to prioritize following Jesus. Or as Jesus says, what is the profit of gaining everything you want but in doing so you lose your soul. Think about it. Jesus is saving us from ourselves, we need to follow the one who knows how to get where we want to go.

Let’s take a look at our scriptures about how we are saved, starting with the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew Chapter 10 begins with Jesus sending out the twelve disciples (v. 1-15), then He teaches about coming persecutions (v. 16-26) followed by series of teachings (V.27-42) Jesus says, *“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.”* (Matthew 10:22 NKJV)

Here is one of those either or “IFs”. Jesus says IF we endure to the end we will be saved. Jesus had been talking about persecutions. So, if we stay true to Jesus as we go through our trials, troubles and persecutions we will be saved or if we don’t endure then we are in for more trouble in the life which is to come.

and later in Matthew Chapter 10, Jesus says, *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies*

***Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.***” (Matthew 10:32-33 NKJV)

Again, Jesus is stressing we need to make a clear choice, no gray areas. You either confess Me or you deny Me. This is another of those either or “IFs”. Proclaim Jesus to men and be saved or deny Jesus to men and be denied before God.

Last let’s look at the Gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 9 is packed full of amazing scripture. Starting with Jesus sending out the twelve (v. 1-8), feeding the five thousand (v. 10-17), Jesus predicts his death (v. 21-27, 43-45), Mount of transfiguration (v. 28-36), stories of healing and others. Then starting in verse 57 Jesus tells of the cost of discipleship concluding with this warning But Jesus said to him, ***“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*** (Luke 9:62 NKJV)

There are a lot of interpretations of this verse. But it is clear Jesus is talking about those who claim to be a follower or ***“put his hand on the plow”***, and who are not committed to him or ***“looking back”***. This seems to say only fully committed disciples are fit for the kingdom of God. The NIV bible uses ***“not fit for service”***. I grew up in an agricultural area. In fact, we often used a plow in our fields and gardens. In Jesus day, a plow would be pulled by animals. If you aren’t paying attention to where you want to go and look back, then you will make a mess of you field. Your work will be worthless or useless. Without belaboring this scripture, Jesus requires our full attention and commitment if we are to be ***“fit for the kingdom of God.”***

Here is a summary of just a few of the times Jesus talked about salvation.

- **Faithfulness**
  - **Mark 16:16; believes and be baptized to be saved**
  - **John 3:16; believe to be saved**
  - **John 5:24; hears My word and believes to be saved**
- **Stand Firm**
  - **Matthew 10:22; endure to be saved**
  - **Matthew 24:13, endure and be saved.**
  - **Mark 13:13; endure to be saved**
- **Proclaim**
  - **Matthew 10:32-33; confess vs. deny**
  - **Luke 12:8-12; confess vs. deny**
  - **1 John 2:23; confess vs. deny**
- **Committed**
  - **John 14:6; keep my commands**
  - **John 15: 9-11; keep my commands**
  - **Luke 9:62; not fit for the kingdom of God.**

In each of the scriptures, Jesus is telling us either or IFs. We must choose which side we are on. If we continue to believe or continue to be faithful, then we have eternal life. “pistis” vs. “apistis” or Believe vs. disbelief, faithfulness vs. faithlessness, obedience vs.

disobedience and also confess vs. deny. Jesus is warning us there is no gray area here. You are either on His side or you are not. You can't be a "sort-of" follower. You either follow or you don't. And no matter what happens we must stay committed and focused on Jesus or "endure" to be saved.

But what does all of this mean. There are a lot of very well-meaning people who will tell you if you believe you are saved. A one-time declaration and your ticket to heaven is secure. They very well may be right. But I only see a few scriptures from Jesus to support this. What do we do with endure, confess and keep my commands to be saved?

What I know is Jesus calls us into a relationship with Him. He uses relationship language over and over in His teachings, like we are children of God, His Friends, His bride, and so on. Jesus tells us we must endure hardships for His names sake to be saved. Jesus tells us we must continually proclaim His name to the world by confessing Him. If we don't the consequence is to be denied, that sounds like lost salvation. And then Jesus says believe to be saved. He does not say believed to be saved. Believe is present tense and infers relationship rather than onetime sincere choice. Now this is just my opinion, but I believe salvation is more than a mere one-time belief. Again, this is my opinion based on the scriptures we just read, that we are saved through our relationship with our King Jesus. We choose to follow, we choose to believe, we have to endure, we must continually confess, we must proclaim to the world our Lord, King Jesus. Every day we have to trust Jesus to be our leader. There is no such thing as a part-time follower. You cannot be a true Christian only when it suits you and think somehow God is stuck with you in heaven no matter what. Partial Christians are those looking back at what the world is offering and losing their focus on Jesus. Jesus says, these partial Christians are not fit for heaven.

God loves us enough to give us free will. This means we have to choose to accept His free gift. Blaise Pascal put it this way nearly 400 years ago and I quote, "In faith there is enough light for those who want to believe and enough shadows to blind those who don't." God loves us so much He gives us what we want. Light for those who seek Him to believe and just enough shadow to blind those who don't wish to believe.

**Father God. I love you above all else. Thank you for your word the Bible. I thank you that we can openly read, learn and talk about your word. Even though not everyone will like our conversation, I'm thankful for the study, may it lead us to a stronger, more confident faith in you Lord. I pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.**

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us for the rest of the series "Now What?"

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See you next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.

LINKS

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