

23T18b Why be a Christian (Part 2)

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me today for an @ the PUNLA coffee table. I'm Kip your host here at the PUNLA Coffee Table.

Last time I asked you the question. Why should you be a Christian? We talked about the fact we all follow someone, choosing that someone changes how we face the troubles in our life. And all of us will face troubles. But okay. You say you are a Christian. Then I have a very important question to ask you today. Are you 100% confident you know what will happen when you die? What I mean are you sure you are going to heaven.

Let's pray.

Okay, are you 100% confident when you die you are going to heaven or to be with Jesus. Whether you are Christian or not, many have questions about this. My wife sees this a lot at her work in the hospital. Faced with death, most people desperately cling to this life as if they are scared or at least uncertain about what happens next. If that is you, it does not have to be. You can be sure? So, what happens when we die? We all know that we are eventually going to die. Could be this hour or years from now. We don't get to choose when or how we die. So, okay. We are going to die, but then what? What happens after we die?

Okay I get it; most people don't like to talk about dying. But whether you talk about it or not, you are still going to die. We don't get to choose. So, then what? Well, there are lots of theories and opinions. But first of all, if you are listening, I'm going to assume you believe there is a God. So, let's start there. What will God do with you when you die? Now there are several opinions out there. I want to speak about a few of them,

- Annihilation group
- Love group
- Fill-Me-Up group
- Scales of Justice group

The Annihilation group. This group thinks we either cease to exist or if I'm bad God will annihilate me when I die. Good ones to heaven, Bad ones cease to exist. In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus tells a story about a Rich Man and Lazarus. If you are not familiar with this story please read it. Basically, Jesus tells of two men that die. Lazarus goes to paradise or what is called Abraham's bosom or the heavenly banquet in some translations. But, the rich man goes to a place of torment. It does not appear that this man in the place of torment is annihilated. You can also read, Matthew 25:46, Revelation 14:11, 20:10, Daniel 12:2 and many others. Annihilation is not consistent with the scriptures. You can probably find a verse or two to try and support this, but it is not supported by all scriptures. Oh, and it is not true according to Jesus.

The Love group. This vantagepoint says a Loving God would not send anyone to Hell. Well, all I can say is we don't get to choose how God behaves. God has to be true to

His character. Justice, Wrath, Truth are just as much God as Love is. The scriptures I listed above clearly show consequences after death. Here is one, Matthew 25:46(NKJV) *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.* Everlasting punishment does not sound like heaven. So yes, some people will not be allowed into heaven.

The Fill-me-up group. This group believes that, if I do my best, then when I die our loving father God fills us up with whatever we lack. I don't know where this concept comes from. We don't gain points by doing good in this life, because we can't do good enough. The Bible says in Isaiah 64:6 (NIV) *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.* Another scripture is in Ephesians 2:8-10 (NIV) *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Everything we do is like filthy rags compared to God's righteousness. And Paul states it clearly, we are saved by grace, we don't do good works to get to heaven. But we have been created to do good works in God's name. You can also check out Romans Chapter 3 & 10 for more on this theme.

So, Annihilation is not biblical, Love group perspective is not biblical, the Fill-Me-Up group perspective is not biblical. So, what about our last group. The Scales of Justice group. This group believes based on your choices in this life you go to Heaven or Hell. Sometimes people in this group will say if my good outweighs my bad then God will let me into heaven. This scales of justice concept is definitely not in the bible. Remember the two scriptures we just read. Not by works least we boast. Our good can never outweigh our bad.

Let's take a moment to talk about why that is. God is holy, He is pure. Sin is impurity, things that are against God. God hates sin. God is so powerful that if we are impure in His presence we would be destroyed. The only way we can be with God is if we are faultless or pure. Now there is no way any of us can be this way on our own. It's like rotten or spoiled food, a little rotten is still rotten. Yes, others might be more rotten than us, but rotten is rotten. A little rotten is still rotten or spoiled.

So okay, none of these seem to adequately explain what happens to us after we die. So what does happen after we die? What does the Bible actually say? I'm going to read a couple of these for you. First, Hebrews 9:27-28 (NKJV) *“Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”*

Die once then face judgement. Everyone will face judgement, there are no exceptions. What we say, do and think matters to God. But Jesus sacrificed His life for ours. He

paid the price our sin demands, but we only get that forgiveness if we repent. Repent meaning we stop doing what God does not like, we turn back to God's way of living. And when we fail, we repent and again turn back to God. Always focusing on Jesus, waiting on Jesus who brings our salvation, but only to those who are waiting for him. I would add eagerly waiting for God.

I'd also like to read from Romans 2:1-16 (NKJV) *Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*

Again, according to our deeds, repentance from sin then doing the things God wants us to do. We don't work our way to heaven. We trust our way to heaven by following the King of king and Lord of lords, King Jesus.

What happens when you die? Well one of two things, you go to be with Jesus, or you are eternally separated from God. Separation from God means, separation from all of God's beauty and goodness, isolated without anything nice. And it is not about what we do, it is about who we serve. There is a choice to be made. Jesus or not Jesus.

Heaven or Hell, right? Well, what about this scenario. Say you think that you want to go to heaven when you die. Okay, I can understand that. But you don't want anything to do with God here on earth. Or maybe, you are angry with God. You live doing things you know God hates. You avoid being with Godly people or serving others in God's name. You just do your thing, without any real thought about God. Well, why would God let you move in with Him after you die? You can think of it this way. Pick the richest person you know of, an athlete, actor, famous person. Okay they are worth

Billions. Got the image in your head? Now image knocking on their door and telling them you are a great person, so you deserve to move in with them. How do you think that would go? You can bet that person would say something like this, *“Who are you, I don’t know you, get out of here or I’ll call the police.”* Right, that’s what you would do in their place. So, why do we think God will be different and let you into heaven. In fact, this is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV) *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’*

And I know, some of you are going to say. I’m being too harsh. There are many ways to heaven. Why do I think it is either Jesus or not Jesus? Well okay think about it for a moment. Say, you know someone that has a really amazing vacation home in the mountains. They tell you to come for a visit. Great! But when the owner tries to give you directions, you say I’ll find my own way there. No Mobile phone towers, no satellite positioning, no address. How do you expect to find the place without following the owners’ directions? Sounds really arrogant doesn’t it. What are the chances you can find the place without the directions? Probably zero. So why do we think we will find heaven doing things our own way?

So, I hope you get it. There is a choice. It is yours to choose. But this is like an open book test, with only one question and everything in the book gives you the correct answer. The choice is simple Jesus or not Jesus. No middle ground. You can’t say, well on Sunday mornings sometimes, or when it’s convenient I choose Jesus. No there are no partial or parttime Christians. You are simply either in the group that say, “yes Jesus” or you are not.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (NIV) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

When we choose Jesus, we become a new creation in Christ. We are reconciled to God because of Jesus. Jesus gives us His righteousness. Righteousness means, we are made right with God by what Jesus did for us. All we need to do is make the choice to trust and follow Jesus. We repent from the things we have been doing that are against God and return to God. We return to the way God wants us to live.

Surrender all you have and are to Jesus, Let Jesus be in charge of your life. Say yes to Jesus, then leave the rest up to Him. Do the things you are urged to do by Jesus.

Serve Jesus by serving others in His name. Love Jesus by loving others the way He loves them.

Let's Pray...

One last thing before I let you go today. Life is full of choices. But unlike all the other choices we make in life, This choice is THE CHOICE. The choice that determines what our eternity looks like. Don't fool yourself, you either choose Jesus or you don't. Not making a choice is a choice, like it or not. We only live once then face judgement. Do you want Jesus on your side or against you? I choose Jesus because I know I need help and who else should we call on for help. I choose Jesus, I choose to work at living the way He wants me to live. I choose to work at treating others the way Jesus wants them treated. I trust God. I choose Jesus.

Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. If you liked the message, please share a link with a friend. You can contact me at kip@punla.org if you have comments or questions. So, until next time @ the PUNLA CoffeeTable. God bless.