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## Salvation - It Isn't Easy

Churches, for many years, have been making it “too easy” to get saved.  
I believe a look at what the Holy Bible says about that is in order.

**Note: All Scriptures are King James Version unless otherwise noted and all emphases are added.**

### A. Jesus Himself taught that it is extremely difficult to make it into the Kingdom of God.

1. In Matt. 19:16-26 (also in Mark 10:17-27 and Luke 18:18-27) Jesus said, “**With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**” In all three accounts Jesus addressed the question: “**What shall I do to inherit eternal life?**” Yes, that’s what we all want to know!  
\*\*Read all three accounts for context and comparison. (it takes about 1 minute for each account)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Jesus brings up the law – actually He mentions only the commandments of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 10 commandments – the ones dealing with man’s relationship with other people. To this the rich young man self-righteously said he had “kept” them all. No man, *except Jesus*) has kept them all, but Jesus continues on in Luke 18:22 saying, “**Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me.**” The next verse says, “But when he heard this he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich.” Jesus then said, “**How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!** <sup>25</sup>**For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God**”
2. Matt. 7:13-14 Jesus says, “**Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: <sup>14</sup>Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**”
  - Jesus describes **2 gates** – one gate is narrow and difficult – it leads to life and only a few will find it (i.e. life). Many find the narrow gate but **it is too difficult**, and so, they give up and take an easier way – which would be the wide gate and the broad (easier) road. Many people go in by it, but it leads only to death (hell) because Jesus said, “**I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.**” (John 14:6)

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3. Matt. 7:21-23 says, “**Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.** <sup>22</sup>**Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?** <sup>23</sup>**And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity’.”**

- These people had faith to do miracles but yet Jesus said, “**I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.**” They were **disobedient** and were workers of **iniquity** and they will die, **spiritually.**”
- They would have done well to remember what it says in **Luke 10:20**: “**Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.**”

4. Luke 13:24-27 Jesus says, “**Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.** <sup>25</sup>**When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: <sup>26</sup>Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. <sup>27</sup>But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.”**

- Verse 24 says, “**Many will seek to enter and will not be able!**”
- The reason is in verse 27 “**Depart from Me all you workers of iniquity.**” Disobedience again!

5. The parable of the sower (in **Matt. 13:3-23** also **Mark 4:2-20** and **Luke 8:4-14**) Please **read all 3** accounts (always **compare** accounts to gain a ***more complete*** understanding.)

- Seed on **stony ground** – in all 3 cases the word was received with joy but it ***never really*** took **root** – Luke 8:13 says, “**They on the rock *are they*, which, when they hear, receive the**

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word with joy; and these have no root, which *for a while* believe, and in time of temptation fall away.” Mark 4:17 says, “And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended.” Matthew’s account agrees as well.

- Seed on thorny ground – these also receive the word, but: Luke 8:14 says, “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” Mark 4:19 says, “And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”
  - So we see that the seed on the wayside, the seed on “stony” ground, and the seed on “thorny” ground all failed to produce fruit (or became unfruitful – implying that they were fruitful for a time) even though the word was received in the latter two cases. The end is still death!
6. John 15:1-8 says, “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. <sup>2</sup>Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. <sup>7</sup>If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. <sup>8</sup>Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.”
- If we do not bear fruit we will be thrown into the fire and burned.
  - The fruit He speaks of here is not necessarily “other souls” so much as it is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, righteousness, and truth etc. (See Gal. 5:22-23 and Eph. 5:9)

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- It is important to understand that even if you do bear fruit, the Father will prune you (which hurts) so that you will produce more fruit. Therefore, He is glorified even more!
7. **Matt. 11:12** says, “**And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the *violent* take it by force.**”
- John was imprisoned and killed for preaching the gospel.
  - Jesus was killed for preaching it too.
  - The 12 Apostles all were imprisoned and/or killed for preaching too.
8. **Luke 16:16** says, “**The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.**”
- While John the Baptist, Jesus and the Apostles were being persecuted and killed, many were entering the Kingdom – **but it was not easy!** They pressed their way in!
9. If you consider both **Matt. 11:12** and **Luke 16:16**, the “*sense*” of **Matt. 11:12** *could* be rendered this way: “The **Kingdom** presses ahead *relentlessly* and only the relentless press their way into it.” This catches the essence and helps us realize how it takes effort, sacrifice, obedience, and endurance to be able to enter into the Kingdom of God.
10. One last caveat to go along with **point # 9**. All this effort, sacrifice, obedience, and endurance *must be done* in love or it will avail nothing!
- **1Cor. 16:14** says, “Let all your things be done with charity..”
  - **1Cor. 13:1-3** says, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that

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I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.<sup>3</sup> And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

- **Matt. 24:9-13** says, “**Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake.** <sup>10</sup> And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. <sup>12</sup> And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. <sup>13</sup> But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”
- **Jude 1:21** says, “**Keep yourselves in the love of God**, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” (We must endure in love, until the end of our life.)
- **1John 3:10** says, “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: *whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*”
- **1 John 4:7-8** says, “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. <sup>8</sup>He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

## B. The cost of being a Disciple or a Follower of Jesus.

1. **Luke 14:25-28** says, “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them. <sup>26</sup>**If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.** <sup>27</sup> And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?”
  - “Hate” in verse 26 really means you must love God much more than anyone else. **If** you **don’t**, you cannot be His disciple (See **Matt. 10:37** to compare) Notice you must love Him more than your own life as well. **Not easy!**

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- Bearing **his** cross refers to the things **you will** suffer because of your stand for Christ. The world and even many churches will hate you.

2. Other Verses similar to Luke 14:25-27 include:

- **Luke 9:59-62** says, “And He said unto another, **Follow Me**. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. <sup>60</sup>Jesus said unto him, **Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God**. <sup>61</sup>And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; **but** let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. <sup>62</sup>And Jesus said unto him, **No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”
  - *You cannot follow Jesus and be busy, entangled in the affairs of the world too. He must come **first**. Also, as stated in verse 62 – once you start with Him, you must *stay* with Him and not be drawn back into the things He has brought you out of.***
- **Luke 14:28-33** says, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? <sup>29</sup>Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to **mock** him, <sup>30</sup>Saying, This man **began** to build, and was not able to **finish**. <sup>31</sup>Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. <sup>33</sup>So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.”
  - It is *critical* for a person wanting to follow Jesus to consider the **cost** and decide whether or not he is *willing* and *able* to even **pay** the cost. Jesus paid a high price for our salvation, and if you do choose to follow Him, you must realize and *accept* the fact that it will cost you and it will not be easy!
- **Acts 14:22** says, “Confirming the souls of the disciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

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- **Phil. 1:29** says, “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.”
- **2 Tim. 3:12** says, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer persecution.**”
- **Acts 9:15-16** says, “But the Lord said unto him, **Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: <sup>16</sup>For I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.**”
- **John 15:18** says, “**If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you.**”
  - When you get serious for God, the world will start seriously hating you. But if you are not serious with God He will *spew* (vomit) you out of His mouth.
    - **Rev. 3:15-16** says, “I know thy works, that **thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.** <sup>16</sup>So then **because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth.**”
- **John 16:2-3** says, “They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, **the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.** <sup>3</sup>And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the **Father, nor Me.**”
  - This doesn’t sound very easy.

### C. Another Difficulty for believers is False Prophets and Teachers.

1. **2 Peter 2:1-3** says, “But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall **bring in damnable heresies**, even denying the Lord that bought them, and **bring upon themselves swift destruction.** <sup>2</sup>And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. <sup>3</sup>And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

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- Satan has *always* endeavored to infiltrate groups of believers *with* the *deception* of *false teachers*. These will be *parading themselves as Christian pastors, teachers, and evangelists!*
2. **Jude 1:3-4 and 16-18** says, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was *needful* for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was **once delivered unto the saints**.<sup>4</sup> For there are *certain men crept in unawares*, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, **ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ**.<sup>16</sup> These are *murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts*; and their *mouth speaketh great swelling words*, having men’s persons in admiration because of advantage.<sup>17</sup> But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the *apostles* of our Lord Jesus Christ;<sup>18</sup> How that **they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.**”
  3. **Acts 20:29-31** says, “For I *know* this, that *after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in* among you, *not sparing* the flock.<sup>30</sup> Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.<sup>31</sup> Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of **three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.**”
    - We must still heed Paul’s warning **today!**
  4. **Gal. 2:4** says, “And that *because of false brethren unawares brought in*, who came in privily to *spy out our liberty* which we have *in Christ Jesus*, that *they might bring us into bondage:*”
    - Paul dealt with false brethren causing problems. (We must still do so today)
  5. **1Tim. 4:1-3** says, “Now the *Spirit* speaketh **expressly**, that **in the latter** times *some shall depart from the faith*, giving heed to *seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*;<sup>2</sup> Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;<sup>3</sup> Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”



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- False teachers are still a very real problem for us today! Be very careful!!
6. **1 John 2:18-21** says, “Little children, it is the *last* time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, *even now are there many antichrists*; whereby we know that it is the *last* time. <sup>19</sup> They went *out from us*, but they were *not of us*; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. <sup>20</sup> But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. <sup>21</sup> I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.”
7. **2 John 7** says, “For *many deceivers* are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. *This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*”
- Many “Christians” teach or believe this *false doctrine*. These false teachers came out from a church and entered into the world. They *deny* the *undiminished deity of Christ and the humanity of Jesus*. Understand this: **Jesus was fully God and fully man!** By *denying the deity of Christ*, you are *denying the Father as well!*
    - **1 John 2:22-23** “Who is a *liar* but he that *denieth that Jesus is the Christ?* He is *antichrist*, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever *denieth the Son*, the same *hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*”
    - **Matthew 10:33** “**But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.**”
8. **1 John 4:1** says, “Beloved, *do not* believe every spirit, but *try the spirits* whether they are of God; because *many false prophets* have gone out into the world.” (see **1 John 2:19** above)
9. **Matt. 24:24-25** says, “**For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.** <sup>25</sup>Behold, **I have told you before.**” (This is Jesus’ warning to us!)

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10. Matt. 7:15-16 says, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. <sup>16</sup>Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”

- This gives a good hint – their life style will not line up with godliness. Their fruit will not match those listed in **Galatians 5:22-23** or **Ephesians. 5:9** and *elsewhere* in the Bible.

11. Again, I list *only some* of the examples of the *many warnings* about false teachers, preachers, prophets and doctrines. If you won’t hear and believe these, then you wouldn’t hear others either.

12. How do you combat against **false teachings**? By knowing what the word says! *If* you don’t know, then look it up! **Acts 17:11** says (of the **Bereans**, when *Paul* taught them), “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

**D. The bottom line is this:** If you are not truly serious about God, you just as well live like the devil, because God will not accept *lukewarm* Christians. There are many more scriptures that could be listed but to what end? If you will not listen to these, then you won’t heed the others either. Jesus very clearly warned that following Him and making it to heaven was very difficult! Actually, He said with **man** it is **impossible!** But, He also said that **with God, all** things are possible.

Since Jesus taught in this manner, my question to most preachers and churches today is this: *Why* do you try to make it sound so **easy**? That is a direct contradiction to what Jesus and His apostles taught. They said it was very difficult. They said it may cost you your spouse. They said it may cost you your own children. They said it may cost you your relationship with your own brothers and sisters! They even taught that it may send you to prison! And finally, they taught that it might well cost you your physical life. But the *good* news was also taught – that whoever loses his life for His sake will actually find it. **Matt. 10:39** says, “**He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.**” If you are one who is too weak to take a visible, public stand for Jesus, it will not bode well for you, since that is being *lukewarm*! You don’t need to be obnoxious – just be *honest* and be a *good* example for others. **Matt. 10:32-33** says, “**Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven.** <sup>33</sup>**But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.**” Verse 33 is a very clear statement and a very fair one as well.

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1Pet. 3:15 says, “But *sanctify* the Lord God in your *hearts*, and *always be ready to give a defense* to *everyone* who asks you a reason for the *hope* that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

\*\* It would be *good* for every *believer* to *understand* what it is that they believe, and *why* they are a Christian.

Every individual claiming to be a Christian  
should challenge himself by asking;

“Can I *humbly* and *thoughtfully* explain to someone the ‘*hope*’ that is in me?”

That “*hope*” is God’s eternal *salvation* and it’s *anticipation* of eternal *glory*.

Even more importantly, can I do this *biblically*?

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