



The **Second Great Awakening**, when altar calls became popular

Some churches, at the close of their Sunday service, have what is known as an “altar call”, where attendees are invited to the front of the church, and speak with the preacher, with some becoming very emotional. After this the preacher sometimes announces to the congregation that ‘so and so’ has been “saved”. Indeed, according to some Christians, all one has to do is “believe in Jesus, and they will be saved”. At that point in time, that person is “saved” for all time, and can never lose their “salvation”. Is this true? Is salvation really that easy, and guaranteed from that point forward, no matter what?

“The Book of Romans explains clearly what is required for salvation — “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. It is really that simple.”—Christian Website

“Someone asked him, ‘Lord, will only a few be saved?’” (Luke 13:23) NLT). Rather than answer directly, Jesus replied with an imperative, including an implied, “Yes”, to the question.

“He replied, ‘Work hard to enter the narrow door to God’s Kingdom, for many will try to enter but will fail’” (Luke 13:23-24 NLT). Contrary to some modern teaching which claims Christians can’t do any work toward their own salvation, Jesus diametrically turns that idea on its head by saying, “work hard”! The point Jesus was making was that salvation will not be an easy achievement for anyone, but strenuous effort must be put forth by all who attain salvation. As the apostle Paul said:

“I do not spare my own body, but bring it under strict control, for fear that after preaching to others I should somehow find myself disqualified” (1 Corinthians 9:27 REB). Unlike the popular, “Believe in Jesus, and you’ll be saved”, and the “Once saved, always saved”, mantras, salvation involves hard work on the part of each individual.

This is not to deny that, **“God is the judge” (Psalm 75:7),** but Jesus indicated that salvation is not for the **“lazy” (Matthew 25:26 NIV).**

No, salvation is not easy to achieve. Salvation is not easy!