

MUST WE “ACCEPT JESUS” TO BE SAVED?

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A common phrase that is heard today is that you must “accept Jesus” in order to be saved. What does this mean, and is it what the Bible teaches?

Here is a statement that incorporates this language:

“Accepting Jesus as your personal Savior means placing your own personal faith and trust in Him. No one is saved by the faith of others. No one is forgiven by doing certain deeds. The only way to be saved is to personally accept Jesus as your Savior...”

(www.gotquestions.org/personal-Savior)

This matter deserves some closer study.

The basic definition of “accept” is to “take or receive something offered with approval or favor.” This is the meaning of the word “receive” in John 1:11-12 – “He came to His own, and His own did not *receive* Him. But as many as *received* Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”

We must receive, or accept, Jesus as offered and sent by God the Father. He is the beloved Son of God who is the Savior of all who believe, and the supreme Prophet, High Priest, and King. If we refuse to believe in Him, we are condemned in sin without any hope of salvation (John 3:18; Acts 4:12).

But what is often neglected when we are told to “accept Jesus” is that **we must also be acceptable to God**. This involves obedience, or works of faith, which is ignored or explained away as unnecessary. The statement quoted above is an example of teaching “faith only” salvation, that *no one is forgiven by doing certain deeds, just trust in Jesus*. But this does not make us acceptable to God! Faith without works is dead (James 2:26).

What will make us acceptable to God? “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is **accepted** by Him” (Acts 10:35). So we are not only to believe, but obey God’s righteous commands to be saved. The sinner must repent, confess, and be baptized to be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).

As Christians, we are to continually worship and live so as to be acceptable to God – “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices **acceptable** to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

Will you receive the truth and obey it? Jesus is the only way. “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).