



# The Good News

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## ***Does accepting Jesus as my personal Savior save me?***

By Michael McCleary

In a word, the answer to this question is “yes”. “Whoa, preacher! What do you mean?” Allow me to explain. When people of the religious world talk about accepting Jesus as their personal Savior, what they usually mean is being saved by faith only. The idea is that one realizes they have sin and so they acknowledge Jesus as their Savior, “accepting” Him into their hearts. This initiates God’s grace being bestowed on them to save them from their sins thereby making them a Christian. Now if the question above is being asked with this concept in mind, then the answer would be “no”. So, in the end, the entire swing of “yes” to “no” lies in the definition of “accepting Jesus”.

What is the Bible’s definition of “accepting Jesus”? Jesus provides us a Biblical definition of “accepting” in Luke 4:24, where Jesus likens Himself to a prophet and He tells us that ***“no prophet is accepted in his own country.”*** The accepting of prophets wasn’t simply based on faith, but rather on heeding the words that prophet spoke as being from God and obeying them. In John 14:15, Jesus says that if we love Him (which would include accepting Him as our Savior) we will keep His commandments and John adds in John 5:3 that His commandments are not grievous. This brings us to the actual words of Jesus in Mark 16:16, ***“He who believes and is baptized shall be saved;”*** and John 3:5 ***“...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven.”*** These are Jesus’ commandments. Why then do so many who claim to love and accept Him fail to follow these simple commands?

The answer is that many (usually in an effort to justify themselves) single out one Scripture, usually out of context, and make it say what they want it to say. For example, Acts 10:35, ***“But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him”*** could easily be taken out and applied to say that all people who fear God and do good works will be

saved. Even a verse later in the context, vs. 43 ***“...whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins”*** would appear to support this concept. Yet, we see later in the text that Peter ***“commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” (vs.48)***. The problem so many have is that they fail to harmonize Scripture. If I fear God, will I not seek to carry out His commandments? Working righteousness means that I am following His commandments, thus being ***“accepted by Him”***. If I believe in Him, then I should love Him, which means that I will repent of my sins (Acts 2:38) and be baptized for the remission of my sins (Acts 2:38, Mark 16:16). Rom. 10:13 is often used as proof-text for “faith-only” doctrines of accepting Jesus into the heart. It reads, ***“For ‘whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”*** If I were a non-believer, I might say that I find 3 different methods of salvation in the New Testament, thus constituting a dire contradiction (belief+baptism – Mark 16:16; repentance + baptism – Acts 2:38; belief+confession – Rom. 10:13) But what if we harmonize these three: ***“Faith*** (or belief) ***comes by hearing” (Romans 10:17)***, after believing I repent of my sins (acknowledging I need a Savior – Acts 2:38), after repenting I confess that Jesus is Christ the Son of God (Romans 10:13, Acts 8:37), and after confessing I am baptized to wash away my sins and make me a Christian (Acts 2:38, 8:38, 22:16, Mark 16:16, John 3:5). Following this, I arise to walk a new life of faithfulness and obedience (Romans 6:4). There can be no claim of a contradiction.

This is not simply my interpretation of these Scriptures...these are the commandments of God. To truly accept Jesus into my heart and become a saved Christian, I must obey His commandments, which are: belief, repentance of sins, confession that He is the Christ, baptism to wash away sins, and faithful obedience unto death. There is no other way to be saved except for God’s way...will you “accept” Jesus as your personal Savior today?