

Is It Biblical to 'Accept Jesus as Your Savior'?

by David Servant

David Servant challenges the notion of accepting Jesus solely as Savior, emphasizing the biblical requirement of acknowledging Him as Lord for true salvation.

Scripture: Colossians 2:6

Topics: "Saving Faith", "Lordship Salvation"

Description

David Servant shares Bernie Koerselman's insights on the nature of saving faith, debunking the myth of two classes of heaven-bound Christians based on accepting Jesus as Savior or Lord. Bernie emphasizes the overwhelming mention of Jesus as Lord in the New Testament compared to Savior, highlighting the importance of receiving Jesus as Lord for salvation. Through various scriptures, Bernie shows that true salvation requires accepting Jesus as Lord, not just as Savior, and questions the popular evangelical phrase 'accept Jesus as your personal Savior.'

Transcript

My friend Bernie Koerselman is a retired attorney who now teaches the Bible like he used to practice law--relentlessly searching for the truth. His favorite topic is the nature of saving faith. He wrote a book on that subject that we often give to pastors in our leadership conferences around the world.

Bernie sent me an article he recently wrote that I wanted to share with you, but it was too long for our monthly e-teaching format. So I made a deal with Bernie, and he has allowed me to summarize what he had to say. What follows is that summary.

In his article, Bernie demolishes the commonly-believed myth in Western Evangelical Christendom that there are two classes of heaven-bound Christians: those who have "accepted Jesus as Savior" and those who, desiring a deeper spiritual walk, have received Jesus as Lord. Bernie proves that such an idea is completely foreign to Scripture.

He begins by pointing out an amazing fact: In the entire New Testament, Jesus is mentioned as being Savior only fifteen times, whereas He is mentioned as being Lord over six hundred times. One might wonder, If salvation was to be gained by accepting Jesus as Savior without receiving Him as Lord, why would Jesus be mentioned as being Lord forty times more than He is mentioned as being Savior?

But Bernie doesn't stop there. He writes:

Eighteen books (two-thirds) of the New Testament don't refer to Jesus as Savior even once. Two of the four Gospels don't; neither does Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude or Revelation.

Bernie then goes on to ask,

Is it conceivable that if salvation could be found by accepting (or believing or receiving or having faith in) Jesus as Savior only, would God have omitted that particular title of Jesus from most of the New Testament?

Great question. Bernie continues,

Scripture requires those who would be saved to receive Jesus as their Lord (see Romans 10:9-10, 13; 14:9; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Peter 3:15; Colossians 2:6-7; Acts 10:36, 5:14, 9:42, 11:21, 16:15, 16:31, 18:8, 20:21).....There are no scriptures--not even one--that state that salvation can be had by receiving or accepting or believing in Jesus as one's Savior.

This being so, I can't help but wonder how the phrase, "accept Jesus as your personal Savior" has become such an evangelical mantra for salvation.

Bernie spends the rest of his article searching the New Testament epistles to discover "whether Jesus was Lord of the believers of the first century, or if some only accepted Jesus as Savior." The overwhelming evidence proves that only those who had made Jesus Lord were considered Christians and members of Christ's body. Bernie shows how the New Testament authors used the phrase "our Lord" over seventy times in their letters in reference to the relationship all the early Christians had with Jesus.

For example, Paul spoke of the church universal when he addressed the entire church at Corinth saying:

To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ--their Lord and ours (1 Corinthians 1:2, emphasis added).

To Paul, the church consisted of those whose Lord is Jesus. Eleven times Paul referred to Jesus as "our Lord" in his letters to the church at Corinth.

To the Colossians, Paul wrote:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness (Colossians 2:6-7, emphasis added).

To the Thessalonian Christians Paul wrote:

For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 5:9, emphasis added).

He [God] will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9, emphasis added).

To the Roman believers Paul wrote:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1, emphasis added).

Bernie writes:

Paul's letter to the Romans contains a verse that seems little known. Paul told Jesus' reason for His atoning sacrifice: "For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9).

According to Paul, Jesus died and rose again so that he might be our Lord. Who then would dare to say there can be salvation without having Jesus as one's Lord?

Unfortunately, the answer to Bernie's question is "Millions of professing Christians and their teachers."

Why don't we once-and-for-all remove from our vocabulary the phrase, "Accept Jesus as your Savior"? It doesn't matter whether anyone accepts Jesus. What matters is if Jesus accepts us.

(I would encourage you to read Bernie's entire article at www.bereanpublishers.com. On the home page left column, click on "Jesus is Lord." Next click on the 3rd entry "Our" Lord. Finally click on "Our" Lord.)

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