



The Good News

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Listening to God about Salvation

By Matt Smith (San Antonio, TX), edited and adapted by Michael McCleary

Salvation is, to put as fine a point on the subject as possible, the goal of those who worship the Lord our Father and His Son, Jesus the Christ. It's also the stated goal of any number of religiously-oriented groups of people, whether they believe in Christ or not. It doesn't take a lot of looking or listening to find differing opinions on salvation and the necessary efforts that need to be made to achieve that spiritual (or semi-spiritual, depending upon the deity being discussed) state. There are numberless good, honest, hard-working, generous, benevolent people that, for whatever reason, believe that their way of worshipping and serving God is sufficient and that God's guidance through His Word—His *complete* Word—is unnecessary. We've heard claims that "you don't have the right to judge an individual, because you don't know my life _____ and you're not God," and you can fill in the blank with whatever you may have been presented as a reason they believe they are exempt from God's authority and Will. They are right in that we do not have the authority to judge the souls of others because only God has the authority to judge souls. However, if what we as Christians teach is difficult to hear by others because it is God's authority speaking through us and it **stings to hear it**, then it is not our judgment with which they are finding fault. It is God's judgment. That's only possible if what we speak and what we teach comes from God Himself. His Word is sufficient, not our own opinions, or our own will, or our own judgments. As His workers, as His emissaries, it is absolutely vital that we make certain our authority is derived from God's Word and only His Word.

A man can paint a house any color he chooses. He can paint it in any manner he chooses to use. He can buy any kind of paint he wishes to buy. But

if he is painting a house for someone else and the other person has his mind made up on how these things are to be done, the painter either follows those guidelines or he will likely lose the job. If the owner wants a black and purple house, then the painter better buy black and purple paint. If the owner wants it painted entirely by brush and not by paint gun, the painter will have to use brushes. If the owner wants the paint to be a certain brand and wants it to be a flat finish, then the painter has a directive to follow when purchases the paint. In some cases, God is less specific and gives us guidelines in describing how He wants things to be done. Other times, God is unforgiving of deviation of any kind: salvation without baptism is not possible under God's authority, for example. God's Word is clear on the Supper of the Lord: what is to be used, why it is eaten, when it is observed, and what we are to consider during the ceremony are all clearly defined. If we do all that God has commanded us, except we use sourdough bread as opposed to unleavened bread, how will God view the ceremony? Have we *listened* to God? Are we acting *entirely* under His authority? Adherence to His Word and His will is necessary for obedience. To do otherwise is to demonstrate a belief that God's Word, which is His Will and His commandments of what is necessary for salvation, is not good enough for us. Salvation comes only through God, and only through the adherence to His Word.