

Do We Accept Or Receive Jesus Christ?

Preachers of free-willism constantly exhort their hearers to “accept Jesus Christ.” This phrase is never found in Scriptures. Rather, Scriptures emphasize *receiving*, not *accepting* Christ. For example, “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” (John 1:11f).

There is an important difference between *receiving* and *accepting*. To *receive* means “to take in: act as a receptacle or container for” (Webster). To *accept* means “to receive with consent” (ibid.). When we say we have *received* Christ, we emphasize the sovereign bestowal of Him by God. “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven” (John 3:27). But when we say we have *accepted* Christ, we emphasize the power of our own will to either receive or refuse Him. We cannot accept Christ of our own will (John 6:44,65), unless we have been made willing by God to do so (vv.37,45).

Therefore, in order to be consistent with the Scriptures, we preach that God in His sovereign predestination accepts whom He will (Ephesians 1:3-6) and then graciously makes them willing to receive Christ.

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