

# Follow Jesus: Salvation Depends On It!

Joe Slater

**“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him”** (John 3:35, NASB).

Note carefully that “believe” and “obey” are treated here as equals. Peter uses the same two words in 1 Peter 2:6 – *“Therefore to you who **believe**, He (Jesus) is precious; but to those who are **disobedient**, ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.’”* The faith that pleases God is the faith that obeys.

Also note that John did not say God’s wrath will abide on the disobedient at some future point. He said it “abides” on him (present tense, now). Of course eternal destruction will be the final manifestation of God’s wrath; but unless we are following Jesus, God is highly displeased with us right now. We must remedy that situation without delay!

If there were but one good reason to follow Jesus, that would be enough. John the Immerser, however, gave his disciples at least seven reasons in John 3:27-36. Those reasons are still valid. Are you following Jesus?

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## ***NO ASTERISK***

Those of you who are sports fans have already heard the news. The 2017 Houston Astros cheated. Their only World Series title was gained by dishonest means. The commissioner of baseball has decided not to void the Astros’ win, but there will always be an asterisk by their name in the list of champions (at least in people’s minds). The Astros did not earn it fairly by their own skill. They are allowed to keep their World

Series rings, but deep down they all know that they do not deserve them.

What a shame.

My name is in the book of life. I do not deserve to have it there; but it is there. There is no asterisk by my name, just a cross.

--Thayer Salisbury (Toledo, OH)

## What's "In Store" For The Church?

**Philippians 2:20** *“For I have no one like-minded [as Timothy], who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel.”*

Are you a stakeholder, personally and genuinely investing yourself in the health, growth, and ministry of the local church? Do you have “skin in the game,” so to speak, with a significant sense of responsibility for the success of the congregation to which you belong?

We live in a consumer-oriented society, in which spectators and onlookers window shop (now many of those windows are online!). If they don’t like what they see, they move on to consider other options. Such an attitude can easily affect Christians. We may become consumer-shoppers rather than owner-operators who have a real stake in the church’s progress.

Let’s compare the church to a store. Who might we see when we shop, and what do they teach us? And where do we place ourselves?

**First is the browser.** He or she is “just looking,” maybe not even for anything in particular. The browser has no stake at all in the store but just stops in from time to time when it’s convenient. If the salesperson offers too much help, the browser may feel pushed and decide to leave. If the store should close, the browser loses nothing.

**Second is the customer.** He wants or needs something, perhaps several things. He’s looking for good selection, low price, and solid value. If he finds all that at the store, he may make a purchase. If he does not, he will move on. He may be unwilling to pay full price and wait for a coupon, sale, or

clearance. If going out is inconvenient, he will shop online from home. The easier and cheaper, the better. Like the browser, his livelihood does not depend on the local store’s success or failure.

**Third is the employee.** He punches a clock, does what he is paid to do, collects his pay, and leaves. He does not have to come early, stay late, or even enjoy what he does. He looks at what he gets in return for what he gives. He may stay at the store – unless and until another boss offers higher pay, better hours, or greater benefits. He has some degree of loyalty, but he may still be looking at options.

**Fourth is the manager.** He is in charge of tasks, people, and schedules. He has been with the store for a while. He has accepted more responsibility and received more rewards. He feels more loyal to the owner and the company. He may be on a clock, but he will come and work just about anytime he feels that work is required. He is trustworthy and reliable. However, if he becomes discouraged by difficult circumstances, daunting challenges, or demanding people ... the owner will need to find a replacement.

**Finally, there is the owner.** Unlike the others, his life is to a huge degree wrapped up in the success of the store. He cannot afford for it to fail. He is tireless in his efforts. He loses sleep, puts other things on hold, and invests all that he can in making the store the best it can be. His name, his character, and his reputation are all connected with the progress (or lack of it) that occurs.

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Of course, Jesus Christ is the only true owner of the church. I’m just using “owner” here to represent any faithful servant who seriously invests his or her talents in the effectiveness of the local church.

What’s “in store” for the church where you are? That depends to some extent, perhaps a large extent, on you. Who are you in the “store?” What is your role? Are you the browser, the customer, the employee, the manager, or the owner? Don’t just show up! Instead, step up, sign up, and speak up! Invest in, and be about, the Father’s “business!”

--Cory Collins (Keller, TX)