

HOW MAY ONE KNOW ONE IS SAVED?

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The N.T. teaches:
 - a. That Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, Mt.1:21; Lk.19:10.
 - b. That one can be saved from past sins and have the hope of everlasting life, Jno.3:16-18.
2. The N.T. speaks of a present salvation; that is, a salvation we now have, the forgiveness of past sins, having been washed in the blood of Christ, Eph.1:7; 2Tim.1:9; Tit.3:5; 1Cor.1:18; Eph.2:8,9.
3. The N.T. speaks of a future salvation, one, the saved, if faithful to the end, shall receive in heaven, Mt.10:22; Rom.5:8-10; 8:16-18; 13:11; 1Th.1:9,10; 5:5-9; 2Tim.2:10; 1Pet.1:3-5,9.
4. The N.T. teaches:
 - a. That we have this future salvation in promise; that we hope for it, 1Jno.2:24,25 Tit.1:2; Mk.10:29,30; Rom.8:24,25.
 - b. That we can have confidence, not only that we are saved now, but that we can know we are presently prepared for that future salvation, 2Tim.4:6-8; 1Jno.5:13.
 - c. That we can know that we have been born of God and that we **STAND** born of God, 1jno.2:29; 3:14; 2:3-6; 3:19,24; 4:12,13; 5:1-3,13,18-20.
5. Since the scriptures instruct us and thoroughly furnish us unto all good works, including the matter of our present and future salvation, we must always appeal to the N.T. scriptures in order to answer our question: How may one know one is saved?
6. Since there are many misconceptions and false ideas about how we may know we are saved, we begin our discussion of the question from a negative viewpoint.

II. DISCUSSION

A. WE CANNOT KNOW WE ARE SAVED BY THE TRADITIONS, DOCTRINES AND COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.

1. In Mt.15:7-9 Jesus declared that the worship of the Scribes and Pharisees was in vain because they taught "...for doctrines the commandments of men."

2. The apostle Paul, by means of the inspiration of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, taught the same thing in Col.2:20-23.
3. Tit.1:13,14 teaches that we are not to give "...heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."
4. Cf. 1Cor.4:6; 1Pet.4:11; 2Tim.4:1-5.
5. This should convince any truth loving, Bible believing, person that we cannot trust human traditions, doctrines or commandments of men to teach and assure us of salvation either present or future!

B. WE CANNOT KNOW THAT WE ARE SAVED BY OUR LIVING A GOOD MORAL LIFE.

1. That is, by living a good moral life, no matter how good that life is, apart from faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.
2. Certainly, a good moral life, a holy life, is necessary; for God requires it, Rom.12:1,2; 1Jno.2:15-17; Tit.2:11,12; Jas.1:27; 1Pet.2:14-16; 1Jno.1:6; 3:5,7.
3. Although we are required to live morally pure, a study of the conversion of Cornelius, who was a very good moral man, and a devout man who revered God with all his house, is proof positive that such a life, without obedience to the gospel of Christ will not save.
 - a. In Ac.10:1-6 Cornelius was instructed what to do and why.
 - b. In Ac.10:9-23 Peter was informed what he was to do, who was sending for him, for what purpose ("to hear words of thee"), where he was to go, nothing doubting.
 - c. In Ac.10:24-33 Peter arrives at Cornelius' house, finds him waiting with family and friends "to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."
 - d. In Ac.10:34-48 Peter delivers the God-ordained message to Cornelius and his house – the words Cornelius was to hear of him – the gospel of Christ – and commands that they be "baptized in the name of the Lord."
 - e. Ac.11:14, in the chapter where Peter rehearses the order in which these events took place, reveals that all of this was in order to tell Cornelius and his house "words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."
 - f. Cf. Ac.15:6-11.
4. Note other passages offering further proof that one (even the good moral man), in order to be saved must obey the gospel of Christ, which

is God's power unto salvation of sinners, Rom.1:16,17; 6:16-18; 1Pet.4:17; 2Th.1:6-10.

C. WE CANNOT KNOW THAT WE ARE SAVED BY OUR HONESTY.

1. Certainly, God requires that we be honest, Rom.12:17; Col.3:9; Rev.21:8.
2. However, honesty alone, or honesty without obeying the gospel will not save. It did not save Saul of Tarsus, 2Cor.8:21; Cf. Ac.7:57-8:3; 26:9-11; 9:1-6-18; 22:6-16; 1Tim.1:11-16.

D. WE CANNOT KNOW BY OUR FEELINGS, NO MATTER HOW STRONG.

1. Our feelings are the result of our beliefs, whether those beliefs are true or false, right or wrong. Examples:
 - a. Isaac blessed Jacob instead of Esau because Jacob felt like Esau to Jacob when he blessed him, Gen..27.
 - b. Jacob felt like his son Joseph was dead and mourned for him many days, even though Joseph was very much alive down in Egypt, Gen.37:33-35.
 - c. Although Saul of Tarsus felt like he was doing right, he was not, Ac.26:9-11; 1Tim.1:13.
 - d. Cf. Jno.16:1,2.

E. WE CAN NOT KNOW BY OUR CONSCIENCE; THAT IS, JUST BECAUSE WE HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

1. Though some may say, and many more may think: "Let your conscience be your guide; it will tell you whether or not you are saved." It is not so!
 - a. The conscience will reveal its feelings, but it is not the standard by which salvation can be determined!
 - b. One's conscience will either approve or condemn one's thoughts and actions depending on what one has been taught to be right or wrong, whether or not it is really right or wrong.
2. In spite of Saul of Tarsus ever exercising himself "to have always a conscience void of offense toward God, and man" (Ac.24:16); and, in spite of affirming that he had "lived in all good conscience before God" even while persecuting Christians, even consenting to their death

(Ac.26:9-11; 22:20); and, in spite of having a clear conscience in all of this, he was lost; he later said he “did it ignorantly in unbelief”, and was the “chief of sinners” while doing so!

F. NOW, FROM A POSITIVE VIEWPOINT: HOW MAY ONE KNOW ONE IS SAVED? HOW CAN ONE BE SURE?

1. One may know it only by what is written in the scriptures which thoroughly furnish us unto all good works, and tell us what one must do in order to be saved.
2. 1Jno.5:13; 1Pet.4:11; 1Cor.4:6; 2Tim.3:13-17. That settles it!
3. Cf. Jno.20:30,31; Jno.3:16-18.
4. Mk.16:15,16; Rom.1:16,18; 1Cor.15:1,2; 1Pet.1:22-25.
5. Ac.2:36-38; 22:16; 1Pet.3:21; Ac.11:14; 10:48.
6. Mt.7:21-27; Lk.6:46.
7. Ac.4:10-12; 2Tim.2:10; Rom.6:3-6; Gal.3:26,27.
8. 2Tim.4:6-8.

III. CONCLUSION

1. There is only one way to know and this is it!
2. But, as you can see, we can **KNOW** we are saved!

(Credit to: Carrol R. Sutton, The Instructor, Vol.34, May, 1997, No.5)