

# **“I Know In My Heart That I’m Saved”**

By Jason P. Hilburn

I once asked a woman working in a convenience store if she believed the Bible and if she believed in Heaven and Hell. She nodded her head and said she did. I then asked if she could tell me what I would need to do to go to Heaven if I had never become a Christian. Before she could answer, her female co-worker spoke up rather loudly and said, “Get down on your knees and pray.” I asked the co-worker if she had ever read of anyone under the New Testament becoming a Christian by praying a prayer. She said, “I have been a Christian all my life, and I have never read the Bible.” I said, “What if the Bible says we are supposed to do something different than to pray?” She replied, “Well, I know in my heart that I’m saved,” and walked away. The other woman said she was a believer, but she could not tell me what the Bible says about being saved. I invited her to a Gospel meeting taking place that night to hear what the Bible says, but she did not attend.

## **Deceived by Satan**

What does the Bible say regarding statements like, “Well, I know in my heart that I’m saved”? The Bible says that we can be deceived by others who are, whether intentionally or not, serving Satan (Mt. 7:15-20; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Jn. 4:1). The aforementioned woman said she had never read the Bible. That most likely indicates that family members, friends, or some religious leader told her to pray the sinner’s prayer, even though it is not in the Bible (Mt. 10:34-39; 1 Cor. 15:33). Rather than being like the noble Bereans in comparing men’s teachings with the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), she accepted the words of uninspired people as “the Gospel” (Psa. 118:8; Gal. 1:6-9). She then trusted her feelings, which were based on incorrect information, and such is a fatal mistake. Not only did she rely on her subjective feelings regarding her own spiritual state, but she was also willing to carelessly risk my eternal destiny by telling me how to be saved based solely on her feelings!

One wonders how many there are in the world who believe in Jesus and believe they are saved, but have never checked to see what the New Testament says about it. One may also wonder how many people risk not only their own salvation, but the salvation of others, because they refuse to study for themselves to make sure what they believe and teach is right. How many parents risk their children’s eternal destinies by continuing to follow blindly some religious tradition without seeing if it is supported by the Holy Scriptures? How many religious leaders and Bible class teachers will contribute to precious souls being lost because they have not studied thoroughly enough or in a truly objective manner to find the Truth? (James 3:1). Even though the eternal destinies of many are on the line, they never consider that they might be wrong, simply because they “feel” it is right.

An atheist may “feel in his heart” that he is fine, but that does not make it so (Psa.

14:1; Rom. 1:20-22; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). The Muslims who attacked the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 almost assuredly “felt in their hearts” that what they were doing was right in a religious sense, but that did not make it so (Prov. 14:12). Feelings and emotions are not trustworthy. Oh how people need to understand that lies can stir emotions just as much as the truth! Joseph’s brethren deceived Jacob when they brought him Joseph’s blood stained coat. The pain Jacob felt that day was real and powerful. It was true pain, but it was based on a lie! (Gen. 37:31-35).

Consider how easily fictional stories, books, and movies can stir the emotions. How many tears have been shed in movie theaters, even though the people were crying about a fictional story? How much laughter and anger has been stirred by such things, even though the story is not based on true events? Emotions can be easily stirred by lies, so what we “feel in our hearts” is not a dependable guide in matters of eternal importance.

### **Deceived by Self**

The Bible not only says we can be deceived by others—it also says we can deceive ourselves! *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves”* (James 1:22). People can deceive themselves into thinking they are right with God, even if they are completely in error (Jer. 10:23). Saul of Tarsus believed firmly that he was doing God’s will by persecuting Christ’s church, but later called himself the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). His conscience did not bother him at all while doing those things (Acts 23:1), but one’s conscience must be trained by the Truth, or it will be deceptive. Many Jews living after Christ’s church was established were very zealous, but their zeal was not based on Truth, and thus they were lost (Rom. 10:1-2). *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death”* (Prov. 14:12). Apparently God considered that statement so important that He included it twice in the Book of Proverbs (14:12; 16:25), with the same basic idea conveyed in many other verses (cf. Prov. 3:5-7; 12:15; 16:2; 26:12; 30:12, etc.).

### **Determining Our Status**

So how can one know if he is right with God? John has the answer:

*And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked (1 Jn. 2:3-6; cf. Rom. 6; Heb. 5:9; James 1:22).*

John said that if someone claims to know God, but does not keep His commandments, that person is lying. They do not really have a relationship with God. Subjective emotions are not dependable when it comes to determining what is right and wrong. There is an absolute moral Standard which must be followed, and it is God’s Word (Isa. 8:20; Mt. 4:4; Jn. 12:48; Acts 17:30-31). Keeping God’s commandments is what people of faith do (Heb. 11; James 2:14-26), and that is also what loving people do (John

14:15; Gal. 5:6; 1 John 5:3). However, one cannot keep God's commandments if he never studies God's Word to see what God's commandments are! How dangerous it is to disobey God's commands to study! (2 Tim. 2:15). This effectively makes one defenseless against all the tricks of the devil to deceive (Psa. 119:11; Mt. 4:3-11; 2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:10-18; Heb. 5:12-14).

Apparently there will be many religious "believers" condemned to Hell on the Day of Judgment, much to their surprise:

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Mt. 7:21-23; Jn. 8:30-44; 12:42-43; James 2:14-26).*

May we all study God's Word, live it, and teach it to others, constantly examining ourselves by God's Standard to truly know if we are saved! (2 Cor. 13:5; Heb. 6:11-12; 12:14-17, 25, 28-29; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; 1 Jn. 1:7; 2:3-6; Rev. 2:10).

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