

# *It Is Written*

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## **“Ways Unsaved People Think They Are Saved”**

*By Jarrod M. Jacobs*

Salvation is the top priority of man. Jesus made this clear as He asked, “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26). Are you saved? One cannot be saved unless he believes on Christ, repents of sin, confesses Christ and is baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38, 8:35-38; etc.).

Yet, there are unsaved people who have convinced themselves that they are saved. How does this occur?

### **Saved By Morality/Good Deeds**

Some think that all a person needs to do to be saved is to be a good person. If they have done more “good” deeds than bad, they think they are saved. Is this what the Bible teaches? While it is necessary to live a moral life, morality itself does not save a person. The Bible teaches us that morality is not enough to save in a couple of ways:

First, remember that Cornelius, a very good person, was lost until he obeyed the Lord (Acts 10:48). He sent for Peter so he could learn what to do to be saved (Acts 10:6, 11:13-14). Thus, the fact that he was a good moral man before hearing the gospel did not save him.

The Bible also makes clear that the works that I do are insufficient to save. Titus 3:3-6 teach this truth. We cannot work or earn our way into Heaven. Jesus taught that when we do all that He has said, we are still “unprofitable” (Lk. 17:10).

### **Saved By Faith Only**

Some convince people they are saved by teaching that we can be saved by faith alone. Some might encourage us to pray a prayer or “accept Jesus,” whatever this means to them. Yet, at the end of the day, the doctrine is salvation by faith alone or faith only. Is this how one can be saved? The Bible answers “No.”

When we study the Bible, we will see there is not one thing “alone” that saves anyone. A cursory reading of the Bible will show that no less than twenty-five things are said to play a part in salvation, whether from God’s “side” or man’s “side” of the discussion (Lk. 1:77; Matt. 1:21; Acts 16:17; Rom. 1:16, 10:9-10; II Cor. 7:10; Titus 2:11; Heb. 5:9; Eph. 2:8; II Pet. 3:15; Acts 2:40; I Cor. 1:21; I Pet. 3:21; Matt. 24:13; II Tim. 3:15; Acts 2:21; Rom. 3:25, 5:10, 8:24; II Thess. 2:10; Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:8; Matt. 12:36-37; II Thess. 2:14; I Tim. 2:4). In fact, the only time in the Bible where the phrase “faith only” is found, James says that it does not justify (Jas. 2:24)!

### **Saved Based On Feelings**

In other words, some convince themselves they are saved based merely upon a feeling that they have. Some claim to have a “religious experience,” or a “feeling better felt than told.” Some say that emotional feelings are God’s way of letting them know that they are saved. Is this true? Do our emotions determine whether or not we are saved? The Bible answers “No.”

When we study the accounts of conversion, we see that people’s salvation was not based upon feelings, but as in Cornelius’ case, salvation is based upon being told “words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:14). God’s word, not man’s feelings, produces faith (Rom. 10:17). Based upon one’s faith, one then obeys God’s plan for salvation (Mk. 16:16)! Man’s feelings can deceive him. In contrast, God’s word is truth (Jn. 17:17).

### **Saved By Following Man-Made Traditions**

Unsaved people can be fooled into thinking that they are saved when they follow the traditions and

practices of men rather than God's will. However, can one be saved because he follows the traditions of his family or of his culture? The Bible says, "No."

For example, when Jesus was on the earth, He said there were some people who rejected the commands of God in order to keep their traditions (Mk. 7:9). The apostle Paul talked about some Jews who were lost because they were "ignorant of God's righteousness, and ... established their own righteousness" (Rom. 10:3).

Are you guilty of this? How can I know whether or not the traditions I follow are opposed to God's will? The easiest way to determine this is by comparing all that we do and say with the Scriptures (Col. 3:17; II Tim. 3:16-17; Jas. 1:22-25). If we are doing things for which we have no Biblical authority, then let us stop those practices now and begin doing exactly what God has said!

God's word, not man's tradition, produces faith (Rom. 10:17). Based on one's faith, he must obey God's plan for salvation (Mk. 16:16)! Let us not be guilty of placing our traditions above God's word!

### **Saved Because I Am Physically Blessed**

Sometimes unsaved people think they are saved when they observe the blessings they enjoy daily. Some will assume that since they are blessed physically then this means they are saved eternally. Some fall for the idea that physical blessings mean God's favor, but hard times mean God's curses. It is not unusual to think this way. Job's friends had this philosophy. However, this is not always true. Remember, God sends the sun and rain on the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45)! Physical blessings are not necessarily an indicator of spiritual salvation. If you don't believe this, then remember Jesus, the apostles, and other Old and New Testament heroes. They suffered horribly on earth for their faith. Yet, this did not indicate they were lost. It just meant the world hated them for their faith (Heb. 11:38; Jn. 15:18-20; I Pet. 4:16). Physical blessings or physical loss do not necessarily indicate whether or not we are in God's favor or have salvation.

Friends, let us not be fooled into thinking that one's feelings, following man-made or family traditions, or that physical prosperity has any bearing on whether or not we are saved. Salvation begins with having faith in Christ (Jn. 8:24). Based on one's faith, we must obey God's plan for salvation (Mk. 16:16)! Let us trust and obey the word of God. Only by following it will we have salvation (Heb. 5:8-9; Rev. 22:14)!

## **Question**

*By Andy Diestelkamp*

God created us with the capacity for knowledge and to that end the ability to be inquisitive. We need to encourage questions because they are a product of rational thought. Ideally, to question is to sincerely seek answers in the quest for better understanding and greater wisdom.

Of course, some people question with ulterior motives and the inferior goal of undermining truth by implying that truth is malleable or illusory. However, contra Pontius Pilate (cf. John 18:38), the ability to question in no way suggests that truth is uncertain or unknowable. To question is actually quite simple. To answer is often complicated. Anybody regardless of intelligence can question. It requires knowledge and wisdom to give good answers.

"A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel. ... The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Proverbs 1:5,7)