

Feeling Saved

It is not uncommon to hear a person say, “I know I’m saved because I **feel** saved.” Such people are seldom able to state **why** they feel saved nor to describe how they feel when they “feel saved.” But since they “feel saved,” they possess an inner joy, experience a similar daily contentment possessed by those who really are saved, and can be heard saying, “I’m not afraid to die.” But it is one thing to “**feel** saved” and quite another to be saved!

Jacob fathered twelve sons, but he “*loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age*” (Gen. 37:3). As might be expected, Joseph’s older brothers were resentful of him because of their father’s partiality, and their resentment caused them to take drastic action. They sold their brother, Joseph, to some Midianite merchant men, dipped his coat of many colors in animal blood, and brought it to their father, saying, “*This we have found: Know now whether it be thy son’s coat or no.*” Jacob recognized the coat and said, “*It is my son’s coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent to pieces*” (Gen. 37:32-33).

Jacob believed a lie. How did he react to this false information? In the same way he would have reacted had his information been true! “*Jacob rent his clothes, and mourned for his son many days.*” In fact, he “*refused to be comforted,*” saying, “*I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning*” (Gen. 37:34,35). His **feelings** were determined by his faith in his sons’ statements — not in the **reliability** of their statements.

Many preachers today are like the sons of Jacob; they give out false reports. Some preach Universalism, saying everybody is saved. Others preach salvation by faith only. Others preach other doctrines equally as false. People believe these errors and they experience the same feelings they would if their information were true. They will actually be surprised in the day of judgment (Matt. 7:21-23)! It is a fact; a person can be in sin and **feel** the same as if he were “*in Christ.*” But his eternal fate in “*that day*” will be determined by what he is; not by how he feels!

The only accountable people the Lord has promised to save are those who obey his gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rom. 1:16; Heb. 5:8,9). All others are in the “*broad*” way “*that leadeth to destruction*” (Matt. 7:13). Genuine obedience includes faith in Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:16), repentance of sins (Acts 17:30), sincere confession of one’s faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37), immersion in water for the remission of sins (Acts 8:36; Rom. 6:4; Acts 2:38), followed by a life of faithfulness to God (Rev. 2:10; I Peter 1:9). Many preachers preach that one does not have to do all these things in order to be saved (in some instances none of these things!), and multitudes believe them. The result? These blind followers of these blind guides have done less (or other than) what the Lord commanded, and **feel** the same as if they had done all He commanded. Hell will be filled with people who felt like they were going to heaven!

A person, knowing he is “*without hope,*” feels miserable. Hope is defined as

desire coupled with the expectation of obtaining the things desired. Many desire to go to heaven and expect to go, but they have no biblical basis for their expectation. This is why the apostle Peter commanded Christ's followers to be ready to give "*a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear*" (I Peter 3:15). It is one thing for a person to believe that he has hope in Christ, and to **feel** accordingly, but another to have a "*reason*" for that hope and for that feeling.

Friend, if you cannot substantiate by the Scriptures the reason for your hope, then in all probability the feelings generated by that "hope" are as false as the hope. Do not be among that vast number who will suffer the tragic fate of having their good feelings in the **here** reversed in the hereafter!

—B. Witherington

Would We Approve of This Preacher?

It is not, but let us suppose that Moses' law were still binding and that we are Jewish subjects of the law. Also, suppose that we are Jews and have traveled to Jerusalem and that the Jews' Passover is at hand and that we have entered the temple in order to offer to God in obedience to that law. Now suppose further that as we enter the temple that we hear the lowing of the oxen, the bleating of the sheep, the chirping of the doves and behold the money-changers and animal traders. We are a bit surprised; we even admit to ourselves that "things have gotten a little out of hand." However, we refuse to become too upset about it all because "after all, the sheep, the oxen, and the doves are required offerings and the people must obtain their sacrifices somewhere, and someone has to be present so that we may exchange our Roman coins for the Jewish half shekel in order to pay tribute to the sanctuary." cf Ex. 30:11-16.

Now let us further suppose that a young preacher (a little over 30) suddenly appears and makes quite a scene. In fact, he becomes so upset that he makes "*a scourge (or whip) of small cords,*" drives "*them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen,*" and pours "*out the changers' money,*" and overthrows the tables and then cries out saying "*take these things hence; make not thy Father's house an house of merchandise,*"

Wonder what kind of reaction this action would produce? Can't you just hear the comments now as the people file out "to the further exercises of the day?" Do you suppose some would say: "I was never so embarrassed in all my life." "The gall of that young whipper snapper ...wonder who he thinks he is?" "I admit that perhaps these men may have been somewhat mistaken in bringing in the sheep, the oxen, and the doves, but after all, it's such a little thing...at least, he should have demonstrated more patience." "I hope that preacher never comes over to Chorazin where I live; he'd only cause trouble." "I'm glad our preacher, bro. Lovie Dovey, over at Chorazin is not like that; he's so meek and humble...you'd really like him." "I think I'm going to notify my uncle who is a member of the Sanhedrin and see if there is something they can do to penalize that preacher; just think of the disrespect he demonstrated toward our cherished traditions." Etc., etc., etc., ad. inf.

Well, Moses' law is not still binding, and most of us are Gentiles and were never under that law. But near the close of the Mosaic dispensation, such a preacher did appear on the scene and did exactly what we described in paragraph two of this article. His actions are also described in John 2:13-16. His name was **Jesus**! If Christ were to appear today in the flesh and manifested as much concern for the purity of His church now as He did for the purity of the temple worship then, I wonder how many churches would welcome Him into the pulpit?? Is it not possible that among so many churches today whose members profess faith in Jesus, that Jesus is still "*despised and rejected*?" Suffice it to say, we must "*worship the Father in spirit and in truth*," John 4:24, making sure that whatever we do "*in word or in deed*" is done in "*the name of*" (or by the authority of Jesus Christ, Col. 3:17.

Consider ye well!