ONE VERY IMPORTANT QUESTION

There are a lot of very important questions that one might ask, and especially in the realm of salvation. We will note several in this brief article, but there is one specific question that I wish to emphasize. That question is, "why do you think so?" Now, let us present the scene for this very important question.

Are you a saved person? That is certainly an important question. Other questions have to be answered before one can answer that one. Do you believe there is a God, that man has an eternal soul, and that heaven and hell are real are just a few of these other questions. One who does believe those things might be ready to hear the question, "do you believe that you are a saved person, or another way to put the question is, "do you believe that if you died right now, you would go to heaven? When this question is asked to those who are knowingly and purposefully living a life of sin and corruption, they will probably answer in the negative; No, they do not believe they are saved. However, many will readily answer the question in the affirmative; Yes, they do believe they are saved.

Now comes that very important question; "why do you think so"? This is a very important question because what one believes is based upon some grounds, but not all grounds are solid ground. Therefore, we are asking with this question, "what are the grounds upon which you believe that you are a saved person?" For some, the grounds is that they have continued to follow the religious beliefs and practices that their parents and possibly grandparents followed before them. Such is surely sinking sand, not a solid foundation to support a belief in something so important. If Saul of Tarsus had continued to follow the beliefs and practices of his father, he would never have been saved, much less become an apostle and the writer of a large portion of our New Testament. To determine that the religious beliefs and practices of our departed loved ones are wrong does not place any accusations of dishonesty or willing disobedience to God upon them. They may well have done the same that you are presently doing, just following the family tradition. Surely they would have rejected it also, if they had found it was not the true way!

Many, if honest about it, would have to admit that they believe they are saved because they have listened to a preacher or a number of preachers that have told them that the way they were going was the

right way and that they were saved people. Again, this is some pretty weak evidence that one is saved. It is one hundred percent dependent upon the accuracy of that preacher or preachers. It is a simple fact that not all preachers are preaching and teaching the truth. Jesus once said of some teachers, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). The apostle John wrote, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). This is not to impugn the honesty of those preachers, for they too can fall prey to the same lack of knowing the truth. They may well be following tradition or the teachings of men before them who were in error. Some certainly know they are not teaching the truth, but most are likely just ignorant of the truth.

Another form of grounds for belief that one is saved can be that of personal feelings or in other words their emotions. They "feel good" about their spiritual life. This is just a matter of one's conscience not being offended. This too is a wobbly foundation for such an important question. The reason it is wobbly is that one's conscience is just a measure of what one has been taught and come to believe in the past. After having Christians arrested, punished and some put to death for merely being Christian, the apostle Paul was able to say, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). He didn't violate his conscience when doing those wicked things, because he thought they were right.

The only true way to know that one is saved is to live in harmony with the word of the Lord. John wrote, "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (I John 2:3). It is the truth that will make one free from their sins. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). The Bible clearly teaches that we will stand before the Lord in the day of judgment. "For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10). When we stand there, we will be judged by the gospel of Christ. Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). Paul also showed this to be the case (Rom. 2:16). So now, why do you think you are saved?   *Tilis*