

## ***They Say He Is a Liar***

My friend had an "experience"--"better felt than told"--he "got" something. Some people tell my friend he has allowed his imagination to deceive him; that he had no feeling, no experience. Some even accuse him of faking the whole story. This makes my friend very unhappy. He doesn't like to be called a liar. He says, "I know what I feel."

Now I believe my friend. I know him to be an honest man. If he tells me he "felt something" I will not deny this.

But sometimes I try to check his unwarranted conclusions concerning the meaning of these feelings. My friend assumes that because he "had a feeling" his sins are forgiven. Why could not this just as well mean his sins were multiplied??

God alone can forgive sins; and His Word states the truth concerning such matters as these (John. 17:17). When my friend says he knows his sins are forgiven because he "felt something" I must remind him that the Bible allows no such evidence. It even warns us that feelings can be deceptive (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

Christ is the author of eternal salvation unto all them who obey Him (Heb. 5:9). And Christ teaches us to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS?

- by Robert Turner

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## ***Will Only 144,000 Be Saved In Heaven?***

Among the many false doctrines taught by these who call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses is the one that only 144,000 will be saved in heaven. They cite Rev. 14:3: "And they sung as it were a new song before the throne and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth."

A study of the text and context will show the fallacy of their strained interpretation. The passage does not say that only 144,000 will be saved in heaven. Verse 4 says they were the firstfruits, indicating there would be others. After John saw the 144,000 he said, "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb . . ." (See Rev. 7:1-17).

In Rev. 7:4 we learn the 144,000 were Jews; and they were men who were virgins (Rev. 14:4). According to the Witnesses' theory, therefore only Jewish men who were virgins will be in heaven. There can be no women, not even the mother of Jesus, nor any married man not even the married apostle Peter!

The Witnesses err in limiting the number for heaven to 144,000, for the Bible does not teach that limitation. After John saw these 144,000 Jewish virgin men, he plainly says that he saw a great multitude that no man could number (Rev. 7:9), who were of all nations. The Witnesses ignore this and try to number those who will be before the throne of God in heaven.

Be not deceived by this false doctrine of False Witnesses. All who obey God's commandments will have a right to enter the city (Rev. 22:14). Eternal salvation is promised to all who obey Christ (Heb. 5:9). You can be among that great multitude which no man can number, whether you be man or woman, Jew or Gentile, married or unmarried. Be not misled by the false prophets (preachers) who are determined to be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone to be tormented day and night forever and ever (Rev. 20:10). If you blindly follow leaders you too will fall into the ditch with them (Matt. 15:14). "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15).

- by Earl Fly

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## ***Following The Pattern In Benevolence***

As one studies the work of first century congregations, it becomes obvious that benevolence was an important part of the work God authorized them to do. We know that specific commands were given directing churches to provide for those in need.

An important and inescapable conclusion based on a review of this subject is this:

congregations always and exclusively used their collective funds for the relief of needy saints. A complete listing of all examples of church benevolence clearly demonstrates this truth:

- “all that believed” (Acts 2:44,45)
- “them that believed” (Acts 4:32-35)
- “the disciples” (Acts 6:1)
- “relief unto the brethren” (Acts 11:29)
- “unto the saints” (Rom. 15:25)
- “for the poor saints” (Rom. 15:26)
- “accepted of the saints” (Rom. 15:31)
- “collection for the saints” (1 Cor. 16:1)
- “ministering to the saints” (2 Cor. 8:4)
- “the ministering to the saints” (2 Cor. 9:1)
- “supplieth the need of the saints” (2 Cor. 9:12)
- “relieve them that are widows indeed” (1 Tim. 5:16)

It must be emphasized that individual Christians can and should use their personal funds to “do good unto all men” (Gal. 6:10), but when acting as a collective body, the church can only provide benevolence to Christians in need.

This church assistance can be administered as follows:

- A church may care for its own needy saints (Acts 2:44,45, 4:32-35, 6:1-8)
- One church may send to many churches in order to relieve needy saints (Acts 11:27-30)
- Many churches may send to one church to relieve needy saints (1 Cor. 16:1-3, 2 Cor. 8:1-5, 9:1-2, Rom. 15:25-32)

In the Scriptures we never read of man-made benevolent organizations that were established or supported by churches. And, of course, no so-called ‘sponsoring churches’ existed as they would have been a violation of local church autonomy and the limited oversight of local elders (1 Pet. 5:2).

Let us be careful to follow the Biblical pattern in all of our work for the Lord.

**- by Greg Gwin**