

## The Gospel and Subjectivism

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Our times are characterized by religious convictions based solely upon feelings and experiences. This phenomenon has always been a trademark of Pentecostalism, but it now affects all of the sects (and not a few brethren, as well). Most religionists trust their eternal destiny to no more than a vague hunch or feeling. Mormons profess to believe in Joseph Smith and his Book of Mormon because they prayed about it and God confirmed it by a “burning in their breasts.” Some describe a “better-felt-than-told” sensation that told them to go to a certain street corner and do this or that. All such things are only as “certain” as the feelings, emotions, and moods of those who “testify” about them. Is any thing more fickle than human feelings and emotions?

Such experiences and feelings leave men with no standard, no measuring stick. They rest entirely upon internal and fickle sensations, thus they are all subjective. The insincere imposter can claim experiences equal to or even better than those of the most sincere devotee. Pentecostals are inconsistent in their rejection of Joseph Smith and his Book of Mormon as sent from God. Smith’s “experiences” deserve at least as much credibility as those the Pentecostals claim. In fact, the subjectivist who claims to believe in Christ because he “feels” a certain way cannot consistently disallow the Hindu who sincerely relies upon his own feelings as evidence that his worship of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva is right.

While not intending to impugn the sincerity of anyone, it must be a very convenient form of religion that rests on “it is so because I say so/feel so.” Webster correctly identifies subjectivism as “a doctrine that individual feeling ... is the ultimate criterion of the good and the right.” *Subjectivism* describes the practice of relying upon things that arise from within oneself (i.e., the “subject”), and allowing these thoughts and emotions to determine one’s behavior. Those who smite their breasts and declare, “I wouldn’t trade the feeling I have right here for a stack of Bibles!” are announcing that subjectivism is their master.

Neither the Lord nor His apostles ever rested the salvation they offer upon subjective elements. Nor did they ever count mere feelings or emotions as evidence of salvation. The authority from which their Gospel (**the** Gospel, **Galatians 1:6-9**) sprang was not from the imaginings, “hope-so’s,” “think so’s,” or personal feelings of anyone---themselves or others. Their message was not, “Look what we are doing for Jesus,” but “This is what Jesus has done and can do for you.” The message they preached was objective (as opposed to subjective), for it was the Truth revealed from Heaven. It was/is an inflexible standard, independent of their own thoughts, opinions, and feelings.

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The Gospel of Christ, faithfully communicated to us in our New Testament, is God's, not man's thinking, (**John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10, 13; Galatians 1:11-12**; et al.). When men wanted to be saved they were not told to pray till they felt a certain way, or pray the mythical "sinner's prayer," but to obey the Gospel commands that would put them in touch with the cleansing blood of Christ (**Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-34; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4**; et al.). Only by obeying this objective Gospel can one know that God has forgiven, redeemed, and saved him.