

The Old Paths

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“Does It Matter What I Believe?”

Jarrod Jacobs

Many ask this question in reference to religious matters. Some say that it does not matter what we believe as long as we are honest and sincere about religious issues. Let us look to the Bible and see the consequences of that reasoning.

If, in religion, it does not matter what you and I believe, why did God say, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:3)? Isn’t it possible that there were some Canaanites and heathens that were sincere and honest in their infant sacrifices, mutilation of their bodies, and other forms of “worship” to their gods? Yet, God did not allow such a thing (Josh. 24:20). How could this be unless God expected worship to be to Him and Him alone, no excuses and no exceptions?

If, in religion, it does not matter what you and I believe, why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees and the Sadducees for their behavior? Read Matthew 15:9. There Jesus said, “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Does this sound like Jesus does not care how we worship him? Is there a possibility that some may believe that they are truly worshipping God, but in reality it is “in vain”? Yes!

Another passage we ought to read is Matthew 22:29. Jesus condemned the Sadducees

saying, “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” How could these people “err” if it does not matter what you and I believe on religious matters?

Let us look at an early teacher and preacher of the gospel, Stephen. This space will not allow us to print the entire chapter, but please read Acts 7 so you can understand the context. Toward the end of Acts 7, Stephen condemns the Jews for refusing to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Yet, “when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth...And cast him out of the city, and stoned him” (Acts 7:54, 58). Does this reaction sound consistent with people who have heard words to the effect, “I’m O.K. and you’re O.K. — There are many roads to the same goal”?

Many times, Paul would cause a riot in the cities he visited. Why was this? This was because he taught “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16)!! He taught that there was not another gospel of Christ. Therefore, folks will either follow the one true gospel, or a perverted gospel (Gal. 1:6-9). Paul caused a stir among the Philippians because he was accused of teaching “customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans” (Acts 16:21). Does this sound like Paul taught that there are “many ways to serve God”? In Ephesus, Paul “hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands” (Acts

19:26). Why would he say this to such an honest and sincere group of people who are just trying to worship their goddess the best way they know how? How do we know that these people were honest and sincere in their beliefs about the goddess Diana? For one thing, they shouted “Great is Diana of the Ephesians” for two solid hours to show their devotion to that idol (Acts 19:34). Paul did not teach these things in Ephesus alone, but everywhere that Paul went he taught the same gospel (Acts 19:26; I Cor. 4:17).

If it is true that God will accept you as long as you are honest and sincere in what you believe, then why was Paul converted in the first place? He was the epitome of an “honest and sincere,” “religious” person, fully persuaded in his own mind (Acts 22:3, 23:1, 26:9-10; Gal. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:4-6). But it was not enough to be saved, was it??

My friend, what we believe religiously, matters! What we believe will determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell! This is how serious it is. We are not on “different roads to the same goal”! We may be on different roads, but rest assured, only one road leads to Heaven. The other road leads to Hell (Matt. 7:13-14). These are our choices!! When people declare that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere, they are teaching something completely foreign to the Scriptures. We must follow what the Bible and the Bible alone says on matters of religion, as well as in every other area of our life (Col. 3:17)!! If people will not give us book, chapter, and verse for their actions, we need not listen (I Pet. 4:11). The next time someone asks the question “Does it matter what I believe religiously...?” How will YOU answer them??

Difficult People

Selected And Adapted

Do you recognize these people? What does the Bible say to help difficult people?

The Know-It-Alls: They're arrogant and usually have an opinion on every issue. When they're wrong, they get defensive.

The Bible: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Cor. 10:12).

The Passives: These people never offer ideas or let you know where they stand.

The Bible: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15).

The Dictators: They bully and intimidate. They're constantly demanding and brutally critical.

The Bible: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3).

The "Yes" People: They agree to any commitment, yet rarely deliver. You can't trust them to follow through.

The Bible: "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I Jn. 3:18).

The "No" People: They are quick to point out why something won't work. What's worse,

they're inflexible.

The Bible: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13).

The Grippers: Is anything ever right with them? They prefer complaining to finding solutions.

The Bible: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings ... Holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:14, 16).

(From: Lakeland Hills Leader, 3/13/05)

Editor's Note:

It is much easier to be a "know-it-all," a "griper," or even a "passive" person than it is to simply follow what God said. Did anyone notice that the author of the article included both "yes" and "no" men in his list? Both men are diametrically opposed in their motivations, yet they hurt the cause of Christ and hurt the local church in their attitudes and actions! All these men do that! Let us not be "difficult," but allow God's word to rule all aspects of our lives (Col. 3:17). The end result is so much greater when we just follow God's will!

Mark Your Calendars!

The Jacobs-Holland debate on apostasy will take place on May 27-28 in Millwood, KY.



I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

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"God Is Just"

Jarrod Jacobs

Thomas Jefferson once said, "Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." The Hebrew writer said, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). Considering the fact that God is just, and that He will judge righteously, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

The justice of God ought to be a great comfort to all those who are His children. While men may be bribed, threatened, and otherwise coerced to make judgments in favor of certain ones, God is not like this. Regardless of social status, God is just. "Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of his hands" (Job 34:18-19). Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34-35). David rightly said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance" (Ps. 33:12).

Seeing that God is just, life is short (Jas. 4:14), and the judgment is certain (II Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27), what have you done to make your life right with God (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38)? Think about it!! Our "second chance" is right now (II Cor. 6:2)!

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