

His Own Belief? - cont.

In the New Testament, there were others who did not have a right to their own beliefs. The disobedient Jews did not (Acts 13:45-46), Saul of Tarsus did not (Acts 26:9-10), the unrighteous did not (2 Thessalonians 2:11), and the false teachers did not (1 Timothy 1:3; 1 John 4:1).

Those who say everyone has a right to believe what he or she wants in religion are often inconsistent, usually have an agenda, have no fixed standard to go by, and do not want to be limited by a standard. These people, at some point, will have to face the consequences of complete anarchy if they are consistent in their approach.

The truth is, all “rights” (authority) have been given to Jesus (Matthew 28:18), and as such, everyone today must...

- Hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized (Romans 1:16)
- Be members of the Lord’s church (Matthew 16:18)
- Worship according to the New Testament (John 4:24)
- Live their lives according to the New Testament (Ephesians 4:1)

- Chris Reeves -

- Word of the Week -

“Minister” (Gr. *diakonos*) is a word that is often associated with the preacher. But it actually refers to all Christians. It means one who serves. Jesus was a “minister” and he wants all his follows to be the same (Matthew 20:26-28). We live in a world of selfish people who do not want to serve others. Let’s go out this week and find some way and someone to serve.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Does Everyone Have A Right to His Own Belief?

Members of the Lord's church are often charged with religious bigotry and intolerance. When a Christian insists that another person believe what the New Testament teaches, the other person often responds by saying, "Well, we all have a right to our own belief." By "right," the other person means that one is granted the privilege of determining what he will believe or not. And so, I ask, "Does everyone have a right to his own belief?"

The answer to this question depends upon who you ask. Legally, yes, one has a right to his own belief (in the eyes of man). For example, our U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights grants citizens many rights and freedoms, one of which is the right to religion, free speech, etc. **Amendment I**, reads as follows:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

So, you can see that legally, a person could believe and say what he

wants about his beliefs. However, biblically speaking, no, one does not have a right to believe what he wants (in the eyes of God). Our freedoms, rights, and beliefs with relation to God are to be controlled by a single standard, God's word (John 17:17; Romans 10:14,17).

Just like we have a single standard to be used in the area of mathematics, measurements, etc., we have a single standard (the New Testament) to be used in our relationship with God.



Think about it for just a minute. Do we allow one to have his own belief in mathematics. If a person believed that 2+2 equals 5, would that be ok? If a person believed that 4 quarts equals 2 gallons, would that be ok? If a person believed that 50 cents equals 1 dollar, would that be ok? If a per-

son believed that 16 ounces equals 2 pounds, would that be ok? We would not accept a person's beliefs in these matters, so why would we do that with our religion? The reason people accept all kinds of beliefs in religion is that they want to practice all kinds of things that are not found in the New Testament. That's the plain truth about it.

It must be remembered that a single standard determines our "right", not one's own belief (Numbers 15:39; Deuteronomy 12:8; Judges 17:6; 21:5). God is our Creator and we are the creatures. God is all-knowing and all-powerful (Revelation 4:11). Mankind is limited and does not always know the right way (Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:25; 16:25; 20:24). Therefore, we must follow what our Creator has told us in the Bible, not what we think, feeling, or believe.

When you read your Bible, you find that many individuals did not have a right to their own beliefs. For example, Adam and Eve did not have a right to their own beliefs (Genesis 3). Neither did Cain have a right to his own belief (Genesis 4:3-5), Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2), Moses (Numbers 20:10-13), or Naaman (2 Kings 5:10-12).
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