

## Does It Matter? What We Believe

The question "Does it really matter what we believe?" can be applied to many things. In the past two years, as a pandemic occupied the people of the world, there were two dominant beliefs expressed. One is set on the side of disbelief that the COVID-19 virus is a problem, the other side believing it to be a severe problem. One side said do nothing but go on as usual, and the other said take drastic action to stop the spread of the infection. And since a vaccine is available, three opinions emerged. One group said it is not needed, one group said everyone needs it, and a third group said it is harmful to humans and will cause more problems than the virus. The debate continues, and people still have their differences.

On the subject of God, there is a multitude of differing opinions. However, reason indicates not all opinions are correct. If God is, then all views to the contrary are incorrect. If He created the heavens and the earth, all who say He did not are wrong. The opposite is also true in each case.

Interestingly, the Bible does not begin with any proof of God's existence. The entire Bible is written on the basis that He does exist. The first words in the Bible, *"In the beginning God created"* are an emphatic statement that God does exist. The writers of both the Old and New Testaments look to the earth and sky as proof that God created and remains in control of His creation. People say, "Where is the proof that there is a God?" King David said, *"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork"* (Psalms 19:1 ESV). And Paul wrote, *"For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse"* (Romans 1:19-20 ESV).

So why do people not see the handwork of God all around them? Why do they accept the theories of other people but not the Bible? Can it be that the serpent who talked to Eve in the garden is still active today? Can it be that Satan is still telling half-truths and lies to people today? The Bible does teach that Satan is an influence today. *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8 ESV). While this is undoubtedly true, there is also the problem of authority to consider.

Acknowledging that there is an all-powerful God, the creator of the universe and people, places one under the authority of that God. People do not like to humble themselves and accept that the creator has the right to command His creation. Most people prefer to do as they please and not be restricted as servants. By submitting to God one must give up time and energy devoted to selfish interests: It places one under the rules of God.

Believing in God means we must let go of our need for prestige. We strive to be the best in work and play with the motives and actions necessary to reach the top. We separate people into categories based on looks or talents and how we can use them to our advantage. However, recognizing that all people are equal in God's eyes, that He loves them all enough to send His son to die for them, condemns our selfish attitudes. Acknowledging God will cause us to follow him, speak to Him in prayer, and love those that He loves.

Believing in the God of the Bible would cause us to recognize the sins and the lives we have lived that are displeasing to God. For many of us, that means giving up and changing almost everything we have worked to accomplish. For others, it means forgetting about their plans for the future. For all, it means looking for something that cannot be seen or touched because it exists in the spiritual realm where God is.

Why does it matter if we believe in the God of the Bible? Moses told Israel as they prepared to enter the promised land, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might*" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5 ESV). Of all the gods and theories of man, there is only one supreme being: the God of creation who gave us the Bible as our guide. The Bible is our guide to know God and all He wants us to know about that spiritual realm which we can only see by faith in Him and His Word. God's Word is truth (John 17:17) and the only rational teaching we can believe.

What do you believe?