



March 13, 2005

You Don't Believe In Anything !

Sometimes in trying to talk to those in the denominational world we are told that members of the Lord's church don't believe in anything. This is usually in the context of what we recognize as attitudes and practices that are not supported by the scriptures. This is a tough thing to deal with many times since the attitude on the part of many in the religious world is that the "church" is as much a social and political organization as it is a religious or spiritual body. The fact that we do not support or engage in certain activities does not mean that we do not believe in anything. On the contrary, we might argue that it is impossible to believe in nothing. Even to state, as the agnostics do, that we cannot be certain of anything, would imply that we believe in confusion, which is something, not nothing.

The scriptures are clear as to what the church is, or should be. Paul told Timothy that the church is "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*" (1 Tim 3.15). The truth here is the body of doctrine that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) and is to be defended, as Jude also states in the same passage. Those who are New Testament Christians accept the word of God as being complete and not in need of addition or further revelation. Peter states that God has "*given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*" (2 Pet 1.3). In that knowledge we are given all things that we need to know, or that God saw fit to tell us.

The problem comes in when there are practices and doctrines that are taught that are not in harmony with what we find in the scriptures. Peter tells us that in our teaching we are to "*speak as the oracles of God*" (1 Pet 4.11). This implies limitations to what we can, or ought to teach. In the first century Christ condemned the religious leaders of the day for teaching as doctrine the commandments of men (Matt 15.9). Throughout the scriptures there are numerous warnings to teach only that which we find in the scriptures. The final warning coming from John as he closes the book of Revelation. "*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*" (Rev 22.18-19). Warnings are severe and tell us that we need to pay attention to what we teach and practice. John also stated, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*" (Rev 22.14). Christ also stated that if we love him we should keep his commandments (John 14.15). Once again this implies a limit to what we can do or say.

It would be comforting to be able to join in with the rest of the religious world and accept what they teach and practice. This, of course, would violate the above principles as stated in the scriptures. John also tells us "*If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.*" (2 John 10-11). Why would the doctrines that others teach be called evil in this passage? The reason is simple. Accepting anything other than what the Bible teaches is to lead others to be lost. James issues a warning to those who would take upon themselves the role of a teacher. "*My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*" To fail in this is also addressed by Christ when he stated, "*Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!*" (Matt 18.7). While others in the religious world have good intentions, the focus is on leading others to simply believe and accept Christ. This is a step in the right direction, but it falls short of delivering the entire message of the Gospel when substitutions or omissions occur.

We must all come to a knowledge of what God wants us to believe and do. This is done through studying and meditating on the word of God, accepting only what we find in the scriptures and comparing those practices and beliefs to what we find in the scriptures. When we find things that conflict with the scriptures then we must abandon those things in favor of what God has to say about the matter. To do otherwise will cause us to be lost, and those we influence will be lost as well. This is not an impossible task as some think. God has given us a mind and the ability to come to an understanding of what he wants us to do. When we hear that we do not "believe in anything" this usually implies that we do not accept a belief or practice that conflicts with what the other person has come to adopt as doctrine. A true measure of faith in our lives is to accept only what God has given us. Nothing less. Nothing more. Yes, we believe in something and hopefully we can show a book chapter and verse for those things as God would have us do. Our aim is to lead others to do this as well so that together we might serve God and find our way to that eternal home that we all strive for.

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