

**DOES ONE'S RELIGIOUS BELIEFS  
MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE?**

Is sincerity all that matters?

## SINCERE BELIEFS DO NOT CHANGE THE TRUTH

- We understand that accurate information is essential in life.
- The doctrine that all one must do is **sincerely believe** is contrary to reason and the Bible.
  - Sincerity is important – Josh. 24:14; 1 Cor. 5:8
  - Sincerity alone can lead to sin – Acts 26:9-10; 1 Tim. 4:15
- Sincerity alone doesn't determine one's character or standing before God – 1 Jn. 1:5-10
  - One can sincerely believe he/she has fellowship with God and not – 1:5-6
  - One must **walk in the light** of God's word to have fellowship – 1:7
  - One can sincerely believe he/she **has no sin** and be wrong – 1:8, 10
  - One can believe she/she is forgiven and be wrong – 1:9

# SINCERE BELIEF IN THE TRUTH MATTERS

- Those who know God sincerely believe and obey the truth taught by the apostles – 1 Jn. 4:6
- If one can believe whatever one wants, then...
  - John was wrong—you don't have to listen to the apostles; and, truth is of no more value than error
  - Jesus was wrong—you don't need truth to be a disciple and be set free from sin – Jn. 8:31-32; Jn. 18:37
  - Paul was wrong—correct doctrine isn't needed to assure one's salvation – 1 Tim. 4:16
- Examples that teach truth is necessary (Eve – Gen. 3:2-5; 2 Cor. 11:3; the young prophet – 1 Kings 13)
- **Lesson:** *Salvation* is more than a matter of belief vs. unbelief or sincerity vs. insincerity. It most certainly is a matter of truth vs. error/lie

WHAT ONE BELIEVES SHAPES  
ONE'S CONDUCT

## BELIEFS SHAPE ONE'S CONDUCTION

- Atheists have not legitimate, reasonable standard to restrain their conduct
  - Without fear of God, anything goes – Rom. 3:18
  - This is responsible for our moral decline and extreme, senseless violence – Rom. 1:18-32
- Belief in religious error results in more sin – 2 Tim. 2:15-18
  - Contrast correct handling of God's word with profane/idle babblings
  - Error: Denial of the resurrection
  - To deny the resurrection is to nullify the faith and leads to hedonistic living – 1 Cor. 15:17, 32

IS IT IMPORTANT WHAT ONE BELIEVES  
ABOUT RELIGIOUS MATTERS?

# DOES IT MATTER WHAT ONE BELIEVES...

- About biblical authority in matters of faith and practice?
  - Scripture – Matt. 15:9; 28:18, 20; Col. 3:17; 1 Cor. 4:6; Rev. 22:18-19
  - Is someone **sincerely believes** the scriptures' instructions can be **changed** to suit our likes/dislikes, will that negate the consequences?
- Whether one church is as good as another?
  - The N.T. reveals instructions concerning the church's organization (Titus 1:5), doctrine (1 Tim. 3:15), and worship (1 Cor. 11:17-34)
  - If we follow churches' approved actions and listen to what is instructed them, we are assured that we are following the truth
  - If we cannot read of action or instruction to a local church, but do it anyway, we are acting in error

## DOES IT MATTER WHAT ONE BELIEVES...

- About biblical baptism?
  - Baptism is commanded – Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 10:48
  - It is to be obeyed for the remission of sins – Acts 2:38; 22:16
  - Is someone **sincerely believes** baptism isn't necessary for salvation, that its purpose is symbolic, that it has nothing to do with washing away sins, does sincerity negate the truth?
- Holiness in the life of a Christians?
  - God has said that without holiness, no one will see God – Heb. 12:14-16
  - If a church or person **sincerely believes** sin doesn't affect their salvation and accepts all sorts of immorality, does that negate the truth/consequences of sin?