

MAN...A RIGHT TO HIS OWN BELIEF?

By Keith Greer

Why do modern religions tell us we have the right to worship and serve God as we choose? It's a popular and lofty notion; but alas, it did not originate with God. Let's consider the proverbial question—if man has the right to believe as he wishes, why...

Did God reject Cain's offering? *“And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.” {Genesis 4:3-5}* How could this be if Cain had the right to choose the way he worshiped? The book of Hebrews tell us that Abel's offering was “*by faith*” {*Hebrews 11:4*}. This means he followed God's instructions, and Cain did not. To what did Cain's actions lead? *“Not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.” {1 John 3:12}* Abel's acts were righteous because he obeyed God's instructions.

Wasn't Naaman right? *“But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out to me, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.” {2 Kings 5:11,12}* According to modern-day thinking, those other rivers would have been just as suitable. Yet, according to the Biblical account, Naaman's leprosy was not cleansed until he obeyed God's instructions, given by Elisha the prophet, and dipped seven times in the Jordan River {*2 Kings 5:13-15*}.

Did God send fire to consume Nadab and Abihu? *“Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron, ‘This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.' So Aaron held his peace.” {Leviticus 10:1-3}* Please understand what happened here. Two priests, in their priestly garments, consecrated for the work of the priesthood, offered a sacrifice to God. If men have the right to exchange God's instructions for those of their own choosing, why did God send fire to consume Nadab and Abihu? Isn't that what they did? In a very powerful way, when He was establishing the priestly duties, God made it known that they were not to change His instructions. How can men today make changes and believe that God will accept their service?

Can we be lost because we believe a lie? *“And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” {2 Thessalonians 2:10-12}* Those who lie do not love and respect truth. Therefore, even though we believe we're doing right, if it isn't what God commanded, it is wrong.

We should rejoice and understand that our duty is to obey every aspect of truth if we desire to please God and be acceptable to Him. Unfortunately we live in a world that seeks to convince us that mankind has "many different" kinds of choices when it comes to serving God. One can be called by different names, attend different churches, teaching different doctrines, and even choose what and how we desire to worship the God of heaven—to please us! Yes, we do have the right to our own beliefs—but we have to be willing to accept the consequences of our choices. Let me offer a friendly, biblical piece of advice—seek to please God and follow His religion. The results will be eternally better! ***