

DOES IT MATTER WHAT WE BELIEVE?

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Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (Jn. 8:24). The Hebrew writer would later pen, "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

While Jesus was living on the earth, many people of His time had different beliefs as to who He was. When coming into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, Christ asked his disciples about the varying beliefs. "And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Mt. 16:14). However, the apostles themselves believed that Christ was who He said He was: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16).

What if someone believed otherwise? In our culture of "go to the church of your choice," some may believe that Christ was merely a prophet, but not the Son of God. Some may believe He was nothing at all. Would these people find a home in eternal comfort when this life is over? Some may claim to be "Christian," but adhere to the words of some man instead of Christ. Surely this is not acceptable to God!

God requires man to believe, but He requires him to believe the truth (2 Thess. 2:10-12). Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (Jn. 14:6). If Christ is the only way to the Father, one must believe Him to be the very Son of God!

Having this belief, we will want to do exactly as He says. The church we choose will be the one for which He died (Acts 20:28). When instituting the Lord's Supper, Christ said, "Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mt. 26:27-28). Without doubt the blood of Christ is what forgives our sins. He shed His blood so we would not have to shed our own (Rom. 6:23).

We come into contact with that blood at the point of baptism (Acts 22:16) and the act of baptism places us in Christ (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4), which is the church (Col. 1:18). Luke recorded in Acts these words, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Outside of the institution for which Christ died, the church of Christ- the church that bears His name (Rom. 16:16), there is no hope (Eph. 2:12).