

In search of...



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"I Believe Everything"

Not too long ago, I was having a conversation with a friend about religion, and she said, "I believe in everything." I was a little taken back with this response, and did not reply to her immediately, but decided to ponder upon it for a while. Knowing a little something about this person, I am pretty sure that she did not mean something like "I believe red lights mean 'go'," or "I believe that $2+2=2365$." Given the context of our discussion, she seemed to be referring to religious beliefs, and

so, to be charitable with her statement, I will comment upon that.

Even given religious beliefs, however, one will soon find that not all of them can be accepted so that one could truly say, "I believe everything." For example, popular Hindu beliefs accept reincarnation. This is the idea that one's soul leaves one's body and comes back in another life to inhabit a different body. In Hindu belief, this happens impersonally. One's soul is simply

the "energy" from one body that inhabits a new body, but no personality is transferred. Hindus also believe that reincarnation can take place into other beings like dogs, cats, horses, cows, birds, rats, and other animals.

However, Christianity does not hold to reincarnation. Christians believe that one's life on earth is the only life that one has to live before final judgment, and that there is no cycle of reincarnation that occurs (Hebrews 9:27). Each individual is a separate person unique in identity for all time and space. Each person has one body, which will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment (John 5:28-29). On that day, everyone will be judged by Jesus the Christ according to what he or she has done in that body whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Perhaps one might say, "I can believe both of these things, and do well." Such seems like a high-minded way of looking at it, but that both sets of beliefs cannot be maintained is easily seen by simply considering the differences.

It seems clear that one cannot believe both sets of teaching (reincarnation and resurrection) at least as these doctrines are set forth in Christianity and Popular Hindu Religion. One may try to

synthesize these beliefs somehow, but one will wind up with something different and end up compromising one set of beliefs or the other. The new set of beliefs will still be different from the old set and one will still end up not believing everything.

Most importantly, though, an individual who professes to believe everything must ask himself how he is going to live his life right now? If one accepts the teachings of reincarnation, there really is no motivation beyond one's own personal feelings as to how he should live. So, if one lives in such a way so as to destroy his or someone else's life, then no big deal. One is reincarnated into the next life as something lesser than human and one's energy moves to that state. If one fulfills the purpose of that state (whatever that is), one may then move back up and take on being human again. If one becomes "enlightened," then he may move on to an impersonal state of existence with the whole of the cosmos. One would never know all of this is happening because in this religious system, each change destroys one's personality.

However, if one truly believes in resurrection, one will order his or her life so as to anticipate the Day of Judgment when all will be judged

according to his deeds. One will seek to ensure that his deeds have been of the sort that accord with the Judge's standards of right and wrong (John 12:48). If one only has one shot at life and doing the right thing therein, then one had better get it right lest his soul is lost eternally. Such circumstances do not entail impersonal cosmic union, but the eternal persistence of an individual consciousness under just punishment for wrongdoing. However, should someone act according to the Judge's standards, he or she will receive judicial mercy and eternally persist in a state of harmony and union with the Judge (God) in a personal loving relationship.

Surely these two sets of beliefs entail different sets of life choices. One will either believe he has another opportunity to do right in the next life, or he will believe this life is his only opportunity to do right. One will act according to the one belief or the other, and consequences will follow. When it comes down to making personal decisions, one simply cannot believe everything.

Practically speaking, one must act one way or another at any given point in life. One will act based upon what one believes about one's actions. It is important that we believe the right things so that

we will act the right way. However, in order to believe the right things, we must have the right standard of behavior. The Bible is that standard. It is the word of God that God has given for us to study, learn, and believe so that our actions may be ordered correctly. The apostle Paul wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Why not ask someone today to sit down and study the Bible with you.

Kevin Cauley

There will be a teacher's/VBS meeting after services on Sunday morning, today, Feb. 17th. If you are currently teaching or would like to sign up to teach or help, please come. Thank you!

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Bible Regions

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- Appealing to Caesar, Paul sailed to Italy under guard (Acts 27:1)
- Paul was called to Macedonia to preach to them (Acts 16:9)
- Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea (Luke 3:1)
- Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain (Gen. 42:3)
- There were several churches in Asia Minor (Rev. 1:4)
- Israelites were carried captive to Babylonia (Ezra 2:1)
- Paul had hoped to go to Spain by way of Rome (Rom. 15:24)
- After parting from Barnabus, Paul went to Syria...
- ...and Cilicia with Silas, strengthening the churches (Acts 15:41)
- Gallio was proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18:12)
- The goat in Daniel's vision was the king of Greece (Dan. 8:21)