

TRUTH & RIGHT

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DOES IT MATTER WHAT I BELIEVE?

Many ask this question in reference to religious matters. Some will try to say that it does not matter what we believe as long as we are honest and sincere about religious issues. Let us look to the Bible and see the consequences of that reasoning. If, in spiritual matters, it does not matter what you and I believe, why did Jesus condemn the Pharisees and the Sadducees for their behavior? Let us read Matthew 15:9. Jesus said, *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* Does this sound like Jesus does not care what we believe? If it does not matter what we believe, then why did Jesus make that statement and contrast man's commandments with God's? Another passage we should read is Matthew 22:29. Jesus condemned the Sadducees and said, *"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God."* How could these people "err" concerning the scriptures if it does not matter what we believe on religious matters? Let us look at an early

teacher and preacher of the gospel; a man by the name of Stephen. This space will not allow us to print the entire text, but please read Acts 6-7, so you can understand the entire context. We are introduced to Stephen in Acts 6, and Acts 7 records a time when he was opposed by the Jews for preaching about Christ. Toward the end of Acts 7, Stephen condemns the Jews for refusing to believe that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament Messianic prophecy. Please notice what happened, *"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth...And cast him out of the city, and stoned him"* (Acts 7:54, 58). Does this sound like a reaction from folks who have been told, "It doesn't matter what you believe"? Look at this another way. Does this sound like the response people would have who have subscribed to the theory that it does not matter what we believe, religiously? In other words, Stephen did not teach that it does not matter what we believe in

religion, nor did the Jews! They thought it made a difference and showed it! Why do people insist that it does not matter what folks believe in religious matters? Personally, I believe it is a “cop-out” for those who do not know the Bible. They want to seem “enlightened” and “above petty disagreements.” However, even a casual reading of the Scriptures makes it clear that we need to take a stand! I find it interesting to note that this position saying, “It doesn’t matter what you believe,” is not true in any other area of life. We cannot say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe about gravity,” and be taken seriously by our friends or coworkers. We cannot say, “It doesn’t matter what you believe about the rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division,” and be considered a person who respects mathematics. Why then do men teach “It doesn’t matter what you believe” when it comes to religious matters? Put simply, it is because these folks do not want to do what God says but want to follow their own will! My friend, what we believe religiously, matters! What we believe concerning religious issues will determine whether we go to Heaven or Hell (Matt. 7:21-23)! This is how serious it is. When people declare that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere, they are teaching something utterly foreign to the Scriptures. – Jarrod Jacobs **Pointed Paragraphs.**

“Instead of recognizing that God was working out through them his plan for the redemption of the world, the Jews concluded God

cared for no other people. The promise to Abraham and their own prophets should have taught them the truth, but they were too much wrapped up in themselves to see the truth.” – R. L. Whiteside

The Faith Once Delivered The first words of the book of Jude are, *“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Jude 1-4). The word “faith” in the Bible is used subjectively and objectively.

Subjective faith means to believe in something. Objective faith is the thing that is believed. Here, Jude refers to objective faith. The faith is the word of God. Please reread Jude 1-4. I want us to focus on three lessons in this article about “the faith.” **“The Faith” Was Once For All Delivered.** The Greek word for “once” in Jude 3 literally means “once for all.” As a matter of fact, the New American Standard Version translates it that way. This means that no new revelations or scripture would be revealed after the word was complete. An old saying goes

something like this, "if it's true, it's not new, and if it's new, it's not true." Some claim to see visions or claim God has given them some new "divine revelation." Joseph Smith of the Mormons, Ellen G. White of the Seventh-Day Adventists, and Mary Baker Eddy of Christian Science are all false teachers of the past who claimed these things. In recent years, people such as Russel M. Nelson of the Mormons, Stephen M. Veasy of the Community of Christ (a splinter of the Mormons), and Derich Jester (who has led a splinter off A.D. 70 Doctrine adherents) claim God has given them new revelations. They are liars (Rom. 3:4). If they have new revelation, then God was wrong to inspire Jude to write what he did. **"The Faith" Must Be**

Defended. Many will fight against the faith. As Jude points out in Jude 4, *"For there are certain men crept in unawares."* Likewise, Paul wrote in Acts 20:20, *"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."* Peter wrote, *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction"* (2 Pet. 2:1). We must be ready to defend the faith, as Paul did. *"Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel"* (Phil. 1:7) **We Must Contend For "The Faith."** As the

apostles stated and as we have seen in the examples above, people will fight against the faith. Therefore, we must contend for the faith. After all, no other religion or practice has the power to save souls. As Paul stated in Romans 1:16, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* Paul also stated in Romans 8:18, *"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."* We need to contend for *"the faith once delivered"* the only question is: Will you? – Ethan Jennings

People, Places, and Things of the **BIBLE**



1st Jerusalem Evidence of Quake From

Archaeologists excavating in Jerusalem, near the Temple Mount and a First-Temple-era wall unearthed evidence of an 8th century BC earthquake. The earliest floor of the southernmost room of a building bore evidence of destruction, but not by fire, and was dated to a time period when no known conquest of Jerusalem occurred. Stones from an upper part of the northern walls had collapsed, shattering a row of vessels that had been along the wall beneath. The excavation directors from the Israel Antiquities Authority, Dr. Joe Uziel and Ortal Chalaf, believe this corresponds to the great earthquake which occurred in the days of [King Uzziah](#), and is mentioned in Amos 1:1 and Zech. 14:5. Archaeological evidence for “Uzziah’s earthquake” has been found at other sites in Israel, including at Hazor and Tell es-Safi/Gath, but this is the first time archaeologists have identified evidence of this earthquake in Jerusalem. A similar 8th-century destruction layer was noted in a collapsed building 100 meters south of the current dig, which was excavated by Yigal Shiloh in the 1970’s, but it was not associated with Uzziah’s earthquake at that time. The multi-year coronavirus pandemic is now firmly branded as a benchmark in modern memory. Likewise, in the first verse of the Book of Amos, the 8th century BCE biblical prophet referred to “two years before the earthquake” as an anchor to the events he was about to relate. Two centuries later, the prophet Zechariah again referred to this destructive earthquake period, so deeply was it ingrained in the collective psyche. Now, for the first time, a team of Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologists in Jerusalem’s City of David report that they have found unprecedented concrete evidence of this 8th century BCE earthquake in the ancient capital. In an upcoming research paper, the archaeologists chart, for example, that in one particular 8th century BCE structure the destruction layer did not show signs of fire, yet other factors suggested the building had been damaged in a traumatic event, apparently in an earthquake. “This was most notable on the earliest floor of the southernmost room,” they write. “In this room, a row of smashed vessels was uncovered along its northern wall, above which fallen stones had been found. It appears that these stones were the upper part of the walls of the room, which had collapsed, destroying the vessels which had been set along the wall.” Until now, the earliest destruction layer of Jerusalem comes from the Babylonian conquest of 586 BCE. For archaeologists, an earlier historical anchor — if proven through hard, securely dated evidence — serves as an important stratigraphical benchmark for scientific excavations in Jerusalem.

