

# Does Everyone Have A Right?

**Introduction.** Whenever you talk to people about the gospel, inevitably you encounter people who feel that they have the “right” to believe what they want. Legally speaking, we have a right to believe any doctrine. We should be grateful to live in a society that provides religious freedom to its citizens, allowing us to worship God in any manner we please.

The fact that our civil government allows religious differences should not be understood, however, to mean that God will accept religious differences. God has never revealed that He will accept every man, just so long as that man is good, honest, and sincere (Isaiah 8:20; 2 Corinthians 10:18). Scripturally speaking, we do not have a right to believe anything religiously except the truth revealed in the Bible (John 8:32).

## I. *Those Who Did Not Have The Right To Their Own Belief*

### A. Cain (Genesis 4:3-5).

1. Abel offered his sacrifice by faith (Hebrews 11:4). Therefore, God taught Abel what kind of sacrifice to offer (cp. Romans 10:17). God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35). Therefore, Cain had received the same instructions as Abel.
2. Although God had taught them how to worship and what kind of sacrifice to offer, Cain did not obey. He worshipped by opinion, according to his own idea. Abel worshipped by faith as God had commanded. Therefore, God accepted Abel’s sacrifice.

### B. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2).

1. Nadab and Abihu made the mistake of offering God strange fire. The text explains that it was fire God had not commanded.
2. These men lost their lives because they were presumptuous with God. He rejected their worship, thereby demonstrating that not every kind of worship pleases God.

### C. Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:25-33).

1. This king instituted a system of worship in Bethel that caused him to sin against God because his worship did not agree with God’s revelation.
2. He departed from God’s pattern of worship by changing the place where sacrifice could be offered, using idols, using priests who were not descendants of Aaron, and changing the feast days. God rejected the worship which he instituted, demonstrating that Jeroboam did not have a right to his own belief.

### D. Naaman (2 Kings 5:10-14).

1. Naaman wanted to follow his own idea instead of Elisha’s simple instructions, but he could not and be healed of his leprosy.

2. He wanted to select his own river in which to dip, but he did not have that right. He had to either obey God's command or else remain a leper.
- E. Paul (Acts 23:1; 26:9-10).
1. Several years after the church was established, Paul thought that he had the right to be a Pharisee, oppose Christ, and fight the gospel.
  2. Paul did not have a right to his own belief. Even though his conscience approved what he did, it did not make it right. Paul had to learn the truth and obey (Acts 22:16).

## II. ***Some Areas In Which We Have No Right To Our Own Belief***

- A. What we think of Jesus.
1. He is the one who has all authority (Matthew 28:18; John 14:6), so we must believe and obey Him (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9).
  2. The man who rejects that Jesus was born of a virgin, performed miracles, shed His blood on the cross as the atonement for sins and was raised from the dead cannot be saved -- regardless of how good, honest, and sincere he might be (John 8:24; Mark 16:16; cp. Mark 9:7; Acts 3:22-23).
- B. Choosing to which church we should belong.
1. Jesus did not establish many different churches. He promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). All the saved were added to it by the Lord (Acts 2:46-47). It constituted one body (Ephesians 2:14-16; 4:4; 1 Corinthians 12:13).
  2. Denominations of men are "plants" that the Lord will root up (Matthew 15:13-14). Adam had no choice of a wife (Genesis 2:21-23). He had to either accept Eve or do without. Scripturally speaking, man has no right to a church of his choice.
- C. Choosing what name we should wear in religion.
1. Some imply that one can choose whether to wear the name Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, Baptist or some other name. But the Lord promised to give His children a new name (Isaiah 62:2). That name was "Christian" (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).
  2. This is the name God's children should wear. Paul rejected the idea that men could wear another name and still be saved (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). If I choose to wear someone's name other than Christ's, the Lord will choose not to save me.
- D. Determining what standard of holiness to follow.
1. Some imply that one's moral standards are a matter of personal preference. Some choose to be homosexual and others choose to be heterosexual. Some choose to drink and some choose to be al-

- coholics. Every man is entitled to his own belief, we are told. Not so!
2. Because God is holy (1 Peter 1:16), He revealed the standard of holiness that men should follow, condemning wickedness in the heart (Matthew 15:17-20) and the works of the flesh (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21). No one can choose to go to heaven practicing ungodliness.
- E. Determining how to worship God.
1. God has given men a pattern for worship (cp. John 4:24). He has revealed that men should worship Him through singing (Ephesians 5:18-19), prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), observing the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-26), giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), and preaching apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42).
  2. Some have the idea that we can change worship to make it more appealing to the public, but worship that rests on the traditions of men is vain (Matthew 15:8-9). Worship designed by the will of men displeases God (Colossians 2:21-23). Man does not have the right to choose the kind of worship which pleases him.
- F. Determining how we will be saved.
1. All must obey the true gospel (Galatians 1:8; 1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 1:13). God has revealed the conditions that men must meet to be saved by the blood of Christ:
    - a) All must hear the gospel (John 6:44-45; Ephesians 1:13).
    - b) All must believe the gospel (Mark 16:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
    - c) All must repent of their sins (Luke 13:5; Acts 17:30).
    - d) All must confess Christ as God's Son (Matthew 10:32-33; 16:16; Romans 10:10).
    - e) All must be baptized (Acts 2:38, 41; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12).
  2. Man does not have the right to lay down the conditions on which God will wash away his sins. Those who are "saved" in some other way are not saved at all!

**Conclusion.** Should someone tell you, "Every man has a right to his own belief," ask yourself, "Does this man have the power to enforce what he has told me?" Will he have the power to save my soul from condemnation (cp. Matthew 10:28)?

No one has ever been forced to serve God. Adam and Eve had the power to obey or disobey, and man still has the same power of choice. However, in religion man must surrender his will to God's will (2 Corinthians 5:9). Our invitation for you today is to surrender your will and obey the only gospel that can be found in the pages of the New Testament.