

## HEART RELIGION OR HEAD RELIGION

With regard to religion, have you ever heard someone say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere"? Sincerity, in no field of academics, is the means by which truth is determined. A child may sincerely believe that two plus two is five; however, no parent who loves their child would be satisfied with this situation. Why? Because we want our children to know the truth, not just think they know the truth. History teaches us what happened in the past. While there are those who want to altar history for political advantage, most of us want to know what truly happened.

Christianity is a religion based on the specific teachings of the Bible. The majority of Christians believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of the God they worship. Why is it then that some take a different approach in determining truth with regard to their Christian faith? Sincerity of heart, not the objective teachings of scripture, is often the paradigm by which one determines the validity of what they believe. While there have always been those who say the Bible has been corrupted, the majority of Christians profess to believe that the Bible is completely trustworthy. Suppose you were informed by your doctor that you have terminal cancer, only to learn a week later that there was a mix up in medical records. Actually, you are in great health and are released until your next annual check-up. As real as the feelings of grief, sorrow, and emotional pain may have been, it is the medical tests, not the emotions, which determine if you have cancer.

Does God want us to know the truth about who He is and what He has done for us? I will answer that question with a question. Are you okay with what people believe about you as long as they really think it's true? For example, if someone thought you were a liar, would you be satisfied with this situation as long as they sincerely thought you were a liar? Why then do we think that God doesn't care what we believe about Him as long as we are genuinely sincere in our beliefs?

Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him **must** worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24). Notice how Jesus described worship that is acceptable to God. We must worship him in "spirit" (with genuineness and sincerity) and in "truth" (with a knowledge of that which is true). Some say, "The Bible is just too hard to understand". However, I ask you to consider this question, "Why did God give us His inspired word if He did not intend for us to understand it? I admit that there are portions which seem impossible to understand. However, keep in mind that this is the word of God which requires prayerful meditation, not a newspaper to glance over and then toss to the side.

All of us want to have good feelings when we worship. However, is it not true that feelings are a result of what we know or believe to be true? If you think you must "work your way to heaven", you will have feelings of bondage and fear because you know how often you fail. On the other hand if you understand, in your mind, that God loves you unconditionally and that his judgment for your sin was poured out on Jesus at the cross, you will have feelings of joy, peace, and rest. Believing that something is true doesn't make it true. Believing that Jesus died for your sins does not save you. Nonetheless, you will experience a great peace in knowing that he saved his people over two thousand years ago.

Buddy Abernathy  
P.O. Box 411  
Carrollton, Alabama 35447  
863-797-6685  
January 25, 2013

