

## CAN YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

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Seeing the difference between truth and error can be challenging sometimes, so perhaps a selection of contrasts will help bring the truth to light. Peter commanded the content of the communication God expects concerning his truth: “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (I Pet. 4:11).

Since some say it makes no difference **what** name we wear in religion, then why should it make a difference **whether** we wear any name in religion? Yet, there is no salvation outside the name of Christ. Acts 4:12 reads, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” And, Philippians 2:9-11 urges everyone to respectfully submit to the name of Christ: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” From antiquity the prophets made clear the importance of being united in this one name: “And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one” (Zech. 14:9).

Since some say it makes no difference **what** we believe, then why should it make any difference **whether** we believe? Yet, unbelief will condemn the soul. The Lord said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16). The writer of Hebrews also said, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb. 3:12).

Since some say it makes no difference **what** church we are members of, then why should it make a difference **whether** we are members of any church? Yet, the church of Christ is the fullness of Christ: “And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). The prophets said God would place salvation in Zion: “I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory” (Isa. 46:13). Ezekiel wrote, “And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no

more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (Ezek. 37:22).

Significant proof that they were talking about the church of Christ emerges in Hebrews: “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. . .Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12:22-23, 28).

Since some say it makes no difference **how** we are baptized, then why should it make any difference **whether** we are baptized? Yet, the voice of inspiration insisted, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). In addition to that passage Colossians 2:12-13 says, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

Since some say it makes no difference **what** we give, then why should it make any difference **whether** we give? Yet, faithful giving is the proof of the sincerity of our love for Christ. Paul made this plain when he wrote, “Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. . .I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love” (II Cor. 8:4-5, 8).

Since some say it makes no difference if we forsake **some** of the assemblies of the saints, then why should it make any difference if we forsake **all** the assemblies of the saints? Yet, forsaking the assembly of the saints is a willful sin against God: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (Heb. 10:25-26).

Since some say it makes no difference **how** we worship God, then why should it make any difference **whether** we worship God? Yet, Jesus said, “But the hour

cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23-24). Further, Jesus spoke out against man satisfying himself in worship and not God: “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:9). The apostle Paul warned men that give little regard to what the word of God teaches concerning the worship that they had better be careful or else they could actually be worshipping the devils instead of God! He said, “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils” (I Cor. 10:20).

Since some say it makes no difference **how** we are organized, then why should it make any difference **whether** we are organized? Yet, the New Testament church was organized by duly appointed representatives of Christ called apostles: “Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:22-23). The writer of Hebrews pointed out the reason for elders to have a position of supervision or oversight within a local congregation: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17).

Seeing the difference in the name we wear in religion, what we believe, the church of which we are a member, how we are baptized, our giving, our attendance, how we worship, and how we are organized are vital to our acceptance before God and our spiritual maturity. Whether we are saved or lost eternally and whether those we love are saved or lost hinges on whether or not we truly can see the difference. What about you? “Can you see the difference?”