Does Everyone Have the Right to His or Her Own Belief?

Text: Matthew 28:18-20

Introduction:

1. Satan has convinced many in the world, in the religious realm, and even in the Lord's church that each man is his own standard.
2. By God's design, each man and woman possesses free will; thus, all have a personal right to choose.
3. In this country, citizens enjoy freedom of religion; thus, all have a legal right to choose.
4. However, God's law is not determined by civil law, personal opinion, or one's conscience.
5. The Bible must be allowed to answer this question…

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."
Matthew 28:18-20

I. Reasons from Scripture
   - A. Jesus is the absolute and final authority (Matthew 28:18).
     1. Thus, man is commanded to hear Him (Matthew 17:3-5; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37; cf. Hebrews 1:1-2; 12:25).
     2. Furthermore, His will must be obeyed (Matthew 7:21-27; Hebrews 5:9).
   - B. The Gospel of Christ is the only source of authority (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
     1. Gospel obedience purifies the soul (1 Peter 1:22-25).
     2. This is the New Testament (Hebrews 10:9-10; Galatians 3:15).
     3. Thus, no alteration is allowed (Galatians 1:6-9).
   - C. God forbids man tampering with or changing His Word.
     1. No addition (1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 John 9)
     2. No subtraction (Revelation 22:18-19; Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32)
   - D. For these reasons, everyone does not have the right to his or her own belief.

II. Examples from Scripture
   - A. **CAIN** – an example of opinion vs. faith (Genesis 4:3-5)
     1. God instructed man how to worship (Hebrews 11:4; Rom. 10:17).
     2. Cain substituted his opinion for God's instruction.
     3. Thus, he was rejected.
   - B. **NADAB & ABIHU** – an example of authority from silence (Leviticus 10:1-2)
     1. Notice that God did not say they could not use the strange fire.
     2. By authorizing one fire, God made all other fires unauthorized.
     3. Compare with Hebrews 7:14.

C. **SAUL OF TARSUS** – an example of guidance by the conscience (Acts 26:9)
   1. Paul lived as a devoted Pharisee (Acts 26:5).
   2. Yet, he also lived with a good conscience (Acts 23:1).
   3. The conscience is not an adequate or reliable guide unless it is trained by the Scripture.

D. The examples demonstrate that everyone does not have the right to his or her own belief.

III. Applications from Scripture

A. This principle applies in many areas of life and religion.

B. One does not have the right to choose the name to be worn in religion.
   1. God promised to give the name (Isaiah 56:5; 62:2).
   2. The name given by God is "Christian" (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16).

C. One does not have the right to choose what church to belong to.
   1. There is only one church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23).
   2. There is only one family (1 Timothy 3:15; Acts 2:47).
   3. There is no right to join another (cf. Revelation 18:4).

D. One does not have the right to choose how to serve faithfully.
   1. The Christian belongs to Jesus, not self (1 Corinthians 6:20).
   2. He must live a holy life (James 1:27; 4:4).
   3. He must worship when and how God demands (Heb. 10:25-29).
   4. He must work as God commands (Galatians 6:10; Titus 3:8).
   5. He must teach the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16; Hebrews 5:12).

E. One does not have the right to choose how to be saved from sin.
   1. Man's way will lead to destruction (Proverbs 14:12; 28:26).
   2. God has only one plan of salvation (Acts 10:34-35).
   3. All men must obey the same Gospel (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30; Acts 8:37; 2:38).

Conclusion:

1. One must be willing to surrender his or her own beliefs to the will of Jesus – the Gospel of Christ.
2. Only then can one be found faithful on the Day of Judgment.