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**The Importance of Right Doctrine**

By Freddy Davis

Many people seem to think that as long as a person believes in God, not much else really matters. Well, nothing could be further from the truth.

A Theist asserts that God exists, but without more detail, that says nothing about who that God might be. In order to get at that kind of information, you have to move to the level of individual belief systems. For instance, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Judaism are all members of the theistic worldview community. That said, each of them have their own unique beliefs about who God is and what he is like. These unique beliefs literally contradict one another. In other words, it is impossible for Christianity and Islam (for example) to both be correct. Technically, it is possible for both of them to be wrong, but because of the radically different understanding they have about God, they are mutually contradictory.

Recently Larycia Hawkins was in the news. She is a professor at Wheaton College, and recently created controversy by her desire to show solidarity with Muslims. To do that, she decided to wear a traditional Muslim hijab during the season of Advent. But it was not the wearing of the headscarf that caused all the ruckus. Rather, it is what she said in the process of announcing her actions.

In explaining her motivation, Dr. Hawkins made a profoundly non-Christian statement. While claiming to be a Christian, she promoted a view of God that is not Christian. She said, "I stand in religious solidarity with Muslims because they, like me, a

Christian, are people of the book. And as Pope Francis stated last week, we worship the same God."

The problem is, Muslims and Christians don't worship the same God. The God described in Koran is, in fact, very different from the God described in the Bible – both his character and his expressed will. Beyond that, the means of salvation taught by the two religions literally contradict one another. It is simply impossible for salvation to be only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as the Bible teaches, and for it to be achieved by pledging allegiance to Allah.

**Why Is this Important?**

Some people really don't recognize this issue as important. To see that, all you have to do is look at the words of Professor Hawkins. But she is not alone in this view. There are numerous stories of "Christian" academics, some even in Christian schools, who base their beliefs on authority sources outside the Bible. They have deemed that the feelings of those who have been offended by the "exclusivity" of the Christian faith hold higher value than the revelation of God found in the Bible itself. So the question becomes, "Is this issue really that important?"

Well, it is important if the message of the Bible is actually true. You see, the Bible teaches that eternal salvation is only possible by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Muslim beliefs do not recognize Jesus as Savior, and they portray an entirely different picture of the very nature of God. Additionally, they have a completely different view of what it takes to please God; and based on that, totally discount the teachings of the Bible.

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So, which is it? Are the teachings about salvation found in the Koran true, or those found in the Bible? This is critical because if we believe information about God and salvation which is not true, our salvation is in doubt. By the same token, if we share information with others which does not express the truth of the gospel, anyone who believes what we say is believing something that is not true about salvation.

I have used Islam to illustrate the issue at hand, but the problem associated with this is, certainly, not limited to Islam. Every theistic belief system which teaches beliefs which contradict what the Bible has to say about God falls into the same category.

We don't believe a particular doctrine because it is convenient, makes us feel good, or is familiar. We believe it because it is true. And if it is not true, it leads away from God, not to him. Believing the right doctrine about salvation is important because it determines our eternal destiny. Nothing more, and nothing less.

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