

# Jesus is the only way to Heaven

Buddhism has a story similar to prodigal son, but when he returns, he just eats leftovers from other people's food and begging for alms with a broken bowl.

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus is the way to eternal life. To heaven. To salvation.

- Was Jesus saying that Christianity is the only way to heaven, therefore abandon all other religions which have no hope?
- Yes. Absolutely. There is no place for universalism.
  - **Acts 4:12** Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
  - Jesus is the only means to salvation

**Christianity is true and all other religions are false.**

- Are we arrogant to say this?
- If it is true, then our opinion does not matter. It makes no sense to say that I won't acknowledge a God who is like such and such, or to make a God to worship that fits what you want to believe.
- If God is God then He is to be feared and worshiped.

**Luke 12:4-5** "And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. <sup>5</sup> But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!

**Why Religions Exist**

Religions are created to explain the unexplainable (Sun god, rain god, fertility god). As knowledge and technology advanced, many religions have passed on. We created sprinklers, so no need for rain god.

But there is a deep problem steeped in humanity. There are 5 questions that cannot be explained without going outside of ourselves that must be answered:

- Where did we come from?
- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- How should I live?
- What happens when we die?

Origin • Identity • Meaning • Morality • Destiny

All people grapple with these questions and when left unanswered makes us feel uneasy and without rest or peace.

So religion's purpose is to answer those questions. (Note that I said religion – obviously following Jesus has a deeper purpose, but in doing so, those questions are answered).

### **3 myths about religion**

#### **1. All religions are basically the same**

- a. Universal brotherhood of mankind
- b. Universal fatherhood of God
- c. Moralities and values

**But Christianity is unique and the uniqueness is bound in Jesus.**

- All religions have systems built in to reach God, and to live with Him.
  - Follow these 5 pillars, obey these rules, follow these 4 aims for life, etc...
- But Christianity is unique in it's foundation.
  - If someone asks, are you religious? They really mean do you cuss, drink, go to church, read your Bible, pray, etc...
  - None of those make you a Christian.

- We are saved not through any system, rather as a gift from God.
- **Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not of works, lest anyone should boast.

There are only 3 religions – Self-based, Works-based, Grace-based.

- Atheism is self-based.
  - Self is to be obeyed.
  - Origin is unknown, Identity is based on what self is doing, pleasing self is the meaning of life, Morality comes from within (thus differs from person to person), and your final destiny is to cease to exist.
  - There is no god, therefore I am god.
- All world religions (including Judaism) besides Christianity are works-based
  - Obey these laws, perform these rituals, achieve enlightenment through self-actualization...
  - Work for your god according to his rules and maybe you will be accepted.
  - Obeying laws, performing rituals, whatever – it is all based on our behavior and so the criteria is understandable, and obtainable through human effort. All these religions are setup this way. Do good get awarded. Follow the rules, get rewarded. This structure suggests that they came from human minds, not divine origin.
  - Change comes from your will to change.
- Christianity is not immune to this way of thinking, but that is missing the mark.
- **True Christianity is grace-based**
- Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Because it is the only one that is not merit based.
  - **Ephesians 2:4-5** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> **even when we were dead in trespasses**, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

- If humans had written it, then it would be attainable as humans. But the central message of Christianity is you cannot save yourself, only Jesus saves.
- It is a gift of God, at the cost of Jesus' life.
- **Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- **Titus 3:4-7** But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup> whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.
- Change comes from surrendering to His will.

**The concept that God came to us and made the way for us is not found in any other religion.**

- As a Christian we cannot say we are Christian by what we do, but rather by what God did.

All other religions are merit-based and acceptance comes at the end.

- Do works to gain acceptance.

Only in Christianity does acceptance come at the beginning.

- The works flow from that point of acceptance.

Obeying laws and rituals is people attempting to reach God.

**Jesus is God reaching us.**

- Other religions – follow me I will show you truth. Jesus – I am truth

- Others – Follow me and I will show you the way to salvation. Jesus -I am the way.
- Others – I will show you how to be enlightened. Jesus – I am the light.
- Others – I will show you the door to reach God. Jesus – I am the door.
- Jesus said all these, then follow me. Others are follow me and I will show.
  - **John 8:12** Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."
- The Bible teaches us that we are all sinners, and that sin separates us from God, and God is righteous so He sent Jesus to pay the penalty so that we can be righteous.
- The cross paid the price.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> myth

**Even though Christianity is different, it is just one path among many.**

- All roads lead to God.
- Anyone is free in America to worship however they want.
- But just because you can does not make it right. (Because we're Grown ups!)
- But only Jesus rose from the dead.
- Jesus claimed to be God and backed it up by the resurrection.
  - Execution
    - (affirmed by non-believers and atheists)
  - Early Accounts
    - Clement of Rome in AD 95 wrote of it in 1 Clement
    - Ignatius in Letter to the Smyrneans writes of it.
    - Polycarp writes about it in Letter to the Philipppians in AD 110.
    - Justin Martyr wrote about it, though through second hand experience.

- There were literally thousands of people that testified of being with Jesus after His death, many recorded in the Bible, most recorded outside the Bible.
- Empty Tomb
  - No dispute it was empty – even the government tried to explain why.
  - **Matthew 28:12-14** When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, <sup>13</sup> saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’” <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.”
- Eyewitness accounts (killed for believing this)
  - “I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world-and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.”— Charles Colson
- Christianity is not another philosophy; it is a reality.

**All religions are irreconcilable with each other** because of different paths of salvation, different ideas of who God is, different ideas of who Jesus is.

### **The Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God,  
     the Father almighty,  
     maker of heaven and earth,  
     of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
begotten from the Father before all ages,  
God from God,  
Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made;  
of one being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven;  
he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,  
and was made human.  
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered and was buried.  
The third day he rose again, in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended to heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again with glory  
to judge the living and the dead.  
His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life.  
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic (*universal*) and apostolic church.  
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,  
and to life in the world to come. Amen.

Any belief system that differs on any of those accounts is not the same as Christianity. We do not worship the same God if the one we call God has different characteristics.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> myth

#### **Christians are narrow minded when we say Jesus is the only way.**

- If there were other ways, then this is not narrow minded.
- Truth – Someone has to pay the penalty of our sins. And Jesus in His sinlessness and divinity is the only one qualified to pay that price.
- That is just reality. Truth is always very narrow minded.
- Ex of treating Jaundice – It is not being narrow-minded to act in accordance with the evidence.
- We have a terminal disease – sin nature. There is only 1 cure.

#### **Everyone is welcome to join. But you are not being forced to come.**

- **1 Timothy 2:3-6** For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

### **2 Common Questions:**

#### **Is God mean by sending those that reject Him to hell?**

Ex of Anthony inviting me to dinner, rejecting him, going to bed hungry and then blaming him.

God actually invited us while we were in the process of rejecting Him.

**Romans 5:9-10** Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. <sup>10</sup> For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

God does not send people to hell, He intervenes and rescues people from going to hell, if they let Him.

**What about people that live isolated and never hear about Jesus?** If Jesus is the only way, what about them?

From the Bible all people have a moral standard written on their hearts by God and all people violate that standard which is why people feel guilt.

- **Romans 2:14-16** <sup>14</sup> for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, <sup>15</sup> who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*) <sup>16</sup> in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

All people have enough information by observing the world to know that God exists.

- **Romans 1:19-21** because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, <sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Those that sincerely seek God will find Him.

- **Jeremiah 29:13** And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.
- **Acts 17:26-27** And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, <sup>27</sup> so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;
- **Matthew 7:7-8** "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

The Holy Spirit is seeking us first.

This suggests that people that respond to the knowledge they have, that God will respond to them and in some way present the way of salvation.

- **John 6:44** No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

### Mark Baxter Story.

God is fair. God is just. God is righteous. All people will be judged individually. No one will be able to say that is unfair.

How many details must one know to get to heaven? We don't know. We don't know where the line is. But God is fair.

When people choose to live this life apart from God, He will send us live eternity without Him.

### Choose Jesus

**John 1:12-13** But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

- Not the will of the flesh (atheism – self is god)
- Not the will of man (man-made religions – working to earn acceptance through man's laws).
- But of God!!!
- Knowledge – know who Jesus is (Judas)
- Accept – Accept that Jesus is God (Demons)
- Receive – Bow your knee to Him as Lord (Peter – You are the Christ)
- Now you are a child of God!!!