



ONE WAY

IS THERE REALLY ONLY ONE WAY?

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LOVE JESUS CHRIST. SERVE HIS CHURCH. CARE FOR PEOPLE FAR FROM GOD.

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IS THERE ONLY ONE WAY?

The source from which I have borrowed most heavily is a book called, “THE REASON FOR GOD” by Tim Keller (Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian in NYC).

Today, if you’re looking for an authoritative book on spirituality, you have a plethora of options to select from. You can get your spiritual lessons from the Bible, the Koran, the Gita, the book of Mormon, or a book called “Dianetics” (for Scientologists). Spiritual leaders include the Pope, the Dalai Lama, Gandhi, Hare Krishna, Joseph Smith, Mohammed, Buddha, and Oprah. (Yes. I said Oprah, the high priestess of media interviews.) It is no joke when one author says, “the religious landscape of American society today has become a celestial fast-food restaurant where you can

walk in anytime and order anything you want.”

It’s in the middle of these pluralistic views of our culture that Christians boldly assert that there is ONLY ONE WAY that one can truly know God, and His name is Jesus Christ. Which of course, culture responds to by saying, “ARE YOU KIDDING ME? With all the religions out there, don’t you Christians think that sounds a little arrogant, narrow-minded, bigoted, and even detrimental to other faiths? There simply can’t be just one true religion or only one true path to God.”

Which of course, I’ve learned to respond to by asking, “Really? R.E.A.L.L.Y? Are YOU certain, beyond a shadow of a doubt that there isn’t just ONE WAY to God?” because it takes just as great a faith

to believe and be certain that there isn't just one way to God.

Allow me to make my case by addressing certain statements that are often assumed to be true, but in reality are not. These are sometimes called axioms. An axiom is a statement that has been repeated so often in culture that many people now regard it as truth, or at least on the level of common sense. For example you might have heard someone say, "The Bible says, God helps those who help themselves." Well the Bible never said that, it was actually spoken by Benjamin Franklin, who was quoting an earlier author. But here's one you might have heard:

AXIOM #1: THERE CAN'T BE JUST ONE WAY TO GOD BECAUSE WE ALL WORSHIP THE SAME GOD.

I've heard this enough times now that I'm becoming convinced that people who make this statement have never really taken then time to actually study these different religions they claim point to the same God. On the surface, you might find some similarities between religions, but a closer look at most of them will reveal a

contradiction in crucial areas of each faith.

For example, Muslims view Christ, (whom they call, "Isa") as a great Prophet who lived an exemplary life, but was only a man and nothing more. Jehovah witnesses happen to believe that Jesus did come from God in heaven, but they do not worship Jesus, and do not believe that He is Almighty God. According to the book of Mormons, after Jesus' resurrection, he visited ancient America. In fact, America plays a special role in Mormonism and they believe that when Jesus returns to Earth, He will first go to Jerusalem and then to Missouri.

Now compare all of that to what Biblical Christianity has to say about the divinity of Jesus Christ. In fact, Christ Himself in places like John 10:30, said, "I and the Father are one." And then in John 8:58, He says, "Very truly I tell you....before Abraham was born, I Am!".

Those statements were clearly understood by the religious leaders and crowds in His day as a blasphemous claim to be God. So much so that they attempted on several occasion to stone Him to death. In John 10:33, when Jesus challenged His opposition to produce evidence for any wrong He had done, here's how they

responded, ““We are not stoning you for any good work,” they replied, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.”

It is impossible to look at the central doctrines of the different world religions and conclude that they are all worshipping the same God. Christians are either right and everyone is wrong, or everyone is right and Christians are wrong; or we’re all wrong – but it is intellectually dishonest to say we are all right.

Besides that reality check, Jesus Himself doesn’t even allow room to entertain that worldview of many paths to God because in John 14:6, He says, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Some people hear that and still conclude by saying, “Well that might be true for you, but it’s not true for me. I think Jesus was a good man and a great teacher, but I don’t want to be limited by Him, so I’m up for exploring other faiths.” Here’s how C.S Lewis, great British writer addresses this thinking in his book, “Mere Christianity”. He says, “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him (Jesus): ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept

His claim to be God’. That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher; he’d either be a lunatic -- on a level with a man who says he's a poached egg -- or else he'd be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse." "You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Once again, when you look at the teachings of these different world religions, and the words of Christ Himself, you can only conclude that one of us is wrong, the other is right, or both are wrong – but BOTH CAN’T BE RIGHT!

AXIOM #2: THERE CAN’T JUST BE ONE WAY TO GOD BECAUSE NO ONE SEES THE WHOLE TRUTH OF GOD.

There’s a classic story that illustrates this point. The story goes

that several blind men came upon an elephant that allowed them to touch and feel it. The first blind man, touched the elephant's trunk and said, "This creature is long and flexible like a snake." The 2nd blind man felt the elephant's leg and said, "No this doesn't feel like a snake. It is thick and round like the trunk of a tree." The 3rd man, having touched the elephant's side, corrected the 2 previous blind men and said, "No, you both have it wrong, this creature is more of large and flat kind of animal."

So the story goes that because each blind man could feel only part of the elephant, none could envision the entire elephant. This story is then carried over into culture's understanding of God, and is argued today by many that each religion grasps only parts of the truth and no one has the whole picture. No one sees "whole elephant" and cannot claim a comprehensive vision of the whole truth concerning God. Fair enough. There's just one problem where this story backfires. This story assumes the existence of someone who sees and corrects the flawed analysis of the blind men. In other words, there has to be someone who sees the whole elephant who can tell the 3 blind men that they are only touching different sides of the same thing.

In the same manner, for you to make the claim that no one sees the whole truth, but that all religions have small pieces of it assumes that YOU KNOW what the full truth is.

Otherwise, how can you possibly know that no one religion sees the whole truth unless you yourself do? You see the problem with this view? To make such a claim would mean you have superior insights that the other religions don't, (and you'd be doing the very thing you're trying to argue against).

Here's the Biblical fact of the matter, there is ONE who stands above all culture and all religion, looks at THE WHOLE ELEPHANT and says, "I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life, NO MAN can come to the Father except through Me!"

Consider this for a moment. If Jesus isn't divine and isn't the ONLY way to God as He claimed, but was simply one of the many acceptable options to eternal life, then we can all rest easy because at the end of the day (according to popular belief) we'll all end up in heaven because all roads ultimately lead to God.

However, if Jesus Christ is in fact God in flesh, If indeed His death on the cross is the ONLY means through which our sins can be

forgiven. And if indeed, it's only through Him that we can be reconciled into a life saving relationship with God, then those who hold to these axioms have A LOT MORE TO LOSE if they're wrong. If they're wrong, then they lose life in the afterlife because they can't come to God without Jesus!

There is a third axiom that fuels skepticism and it goes like this;

AXIOM #3: IT IS ARROGANT TO TRY TO CONVERT OTHERS TO YOUR FAITH.

I find that statement a little ironic because in itself, it is a subtle attempt to "evangelize" others to adopt a certain worldview. In other words, if I assert in a conversation that Jesus is the only way one can know God, and you disagree but insist that there are other, or even several paths to God, ARE YOU NOT ALSO TRYING TO CONVINC ME THAT YOU HAVE SOME ANGLE ON THE TRUE TRUTH THAT I DON'T? How is your assertion that there are multiple ways to God any less arrogant than mine? You're trying to convince me of your position just

I am trying to convince you about mine.

In fact, if you look at any of the major bestseller books that have recently been written by popular atheists or agnostics, you'll find that the authors are doing the very thing they are trying to persuade their readers not to do. So in books like, "THE GOD DELUSION" by Richard Dawkins, or "LETTER TO A CHRISTIAN NATION" by Sam Harris, or "GOD IS NOT GREAT" by Christopher Hitchens, you'll find that each author is trying to convince and persuade the reader about his particular worldview. Yet, when I propose the case for my faith in God during a conversation, I am perceived as arrogant!

One author reasoned it out this way, "It is no more narrow to claim that one religion is right than to claim that one way to think about all religions (namely that all are equal) is right." - (Tim Keller).

Let's wrap this up by addressing the question itself of why Christians believe that Jesus is the only path to truly know God and experience eternal life.

At the center of our assertion is the Biblical and historical record of Jesus' birth, His life, His death on the cross, and His resurrection.

So here's the Biblical account. Over two thousand years ago, Jesus was born in an obscure ghetto village to a young teenage girl who was ridiculed by her peers because she claimed her pregnancy was from God. Ultimately, that little baby named Jesus grew up to become a man.

Jesus grew up and lived and incredibly simple life. He never travelled more than two hundred miles from his hometown. He never dated anyone. He didn't go to high school or community college, he never wrote a book and never went on Oprah. At age 30, he began his public preaching ministry, which included miracles and healings, raising the dead, shutting down demonic operations, one on one time with thieves and hookers, and daily teachings with mostly uneducated townsfolk.

Three years into His public ministry, popular opinion quickly turned against him because he claimed He was God and had the power to forgive sin. He was arrested, tortured severely, and hung naked on a cross to die. After his death, he didn't even have a grave to be buried in, his friends had to borrow one from an acquaintance who felt sorry for him.

Yet, despite such a simple lifestyle and after two thousand years, the cross is one of the most iconic figures to date, and JESUS CHRIST Himself arguably remains the most important figure of the entire human race.

More songs and books have been written about Him, artwork created of him, than any other figure in human history. In fact, His life looms so large over history that we actually measure time by him today, (history's calendar is divided into years before and after His birth, often noted by the words "B.C" and "A.D" // before Christ and after death).

Listen. Christians are not being arrogant or judgmental when we say Jesus is the only way to God. If I were to come in possession of the cure for cancer and kept it to myself because I didn't want to seem, "pushy" – that wouldn't be humility or tolerance, that would be irresponsible and selfish. In fact, Christianity, more than any other religion believes that God's house is big enough for everyone regardless of life choices, background, or baggage.

There is no sin so great that the shed blood of Jesus on the cross cannot cancel. We do however believe the Bible that that the glorious house of God has only one

door, and His name is Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself says that, “I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved” (John 10:9).

How you respond to the invitation of Jesus to trust in Him, determines not only your purpose in this life, but your eternal destiny in the one that’s to come when you take your last breathe in this world. I implore to embrace and receive the invitation of Jesus when He says, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

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