

The BIG QUESTIONS about Christianity

*How can Jesus be the only way?*

11-21-10

Scripture Reading - Luke 13:22-30

**How can Jesus be the only way?** This is one of the questions that haunted me *the most* prior to becoming a Christian.

- 1) It seemed SO arrogant and judgmental because it meant that Christians were the only ones who were right and everyone else was wrong.
- 2) It seemed just plain WRONG because it meant that Christians were the only ones going to heaven and everyone else was going to hell.

I figured IF *God was real*, it would make a lot more sense for ALL PATHS to lead to Him.

- 1) The God I imagined seemed like He'd be big enough to make that happen
- 2) There seemed to be a lot of overlap in all the different religions which suggested to me that they might all end in the same God
- 3) And most people being right and going to heaven rather than most people being wrong and going to hell seemed A LOT more palatable to me than the alternative.

So that's where I stood until 12 years ago when God got a hold of my life, *convinced me that the Bible was His Word*, and presented me with a VERY difficult choice (a choice that Bible believers face *all the time*).

The Bible CLEARLY taught that Jesus was the only way, just like it CLEARLY teaches lots of other really hard truths. So the question wasn't, "What does the Bible teach?" The question was, "*What was I going to do with its teaching?*"

- 1) Reject it - If that's what it says, then it can't be God's Word.
- 2) Ignore it - I know what it says, but I'm going to pretend that I don't.
- 3) Twist it - I don't like what it says, so I'm going to change it.
- 4) Accept it - I may not like what it says, but because it is God's Word I'm going to do my best to trust it, understand it, and deal with it, with a lot of help from Him.

By the grace of God I chose to accept that Jesus was the only way, just like I try to accept EVERYTHING that the Bible teaches no matter HOW HARD it may be, and so that's the angle from which I'm going to approach this difficult topic today.

**Five Biblical truths that have helped me to accept, trust, understand, and deal with *Jesus being the only way***

- 1) There is one and only one God, who wants us to know Him, love Him, and worship Him, and who has revealed Himself to us in a variety of ways.
  - a. *There is one and only one God...*
    - i. **Isaiah 46:9 (ESV)**  
9 ... I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me,
    - ii. The idea that all religious paths are legitimate and lead to the same God is *absolutely foreign* to the Bible. God adamantly denounces and warns against *all other paths* throughout.
      1. **Exodus 20:2-5 (ESV)**  
<sup>2</sup> *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>3</sup>"You shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup>"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup>You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,*
      2. Not only does God COMMAND us to take no other path than His, He lets us know that to take any other path is to HATE HIM.
    - iii. Finally, the Bible makes clear that any god apart from Jesus is no god at all.

1. **1 John 2:22-23 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> Who is the liar but *he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? (which all other religions do)* This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. <sup>23</sup> *No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.*

iv. So the Bible teaches there is one and only one God, and that God is Jesus Christ.

b. And that God wants us to *know Him, love Him, and worship Him.*

i. **Matthew 22:37-38 (NIV)**

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' <sup>38</sup> *This is the first and greatest commandment.*

ii. The more we know Him, the more we love Him, the more we love Him, the more we worship Him. That's both *God's desire, and His design, for us.*

c. So, the Bible teaches there is one and only one God, who wants us to know Him, love Him, and worship Him, *and who has revealed Himself to us in a variety of ways.*

i. **Romans 1:20 (NIV) - Creation**

<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

ii. **Exodus 20:2 (ESV) - Actions in history**

<sup>2</sup> "I am the Lord your God, *who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

iii. **Psalms 78:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> ...tell to the coming generation *the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.*

iv. The Bible teaches that the one true God is a God of action who has broken into history on several occasions and made Himself known. The exodus from Egypt, the giving of the ten commandments, the sustaining of Israel in the wilderness, the conquering of the promise land, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the miraculous advance of the church, are just few examples.

v. **Hebrews 1:1-3 (ESV)** – Prophetic Word and His Son Jesus Christ

<sup>1</sup> Long ago, *at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,* <sup>2</sup> *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.* <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...

d. **This multifaceted revelation is one of things that really separates Christianity from all other religions**

i. Many other religions are based *entirely* on the life and teachings of a *single human being* (e.g. Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, and Mormonism ).

2) But despite His multifaceted revelation of Himself to us, the Bible teaches that we all have a tendency to reject God and to replace Him with gods of our own making instead. God considers this *very serious* sin of idolatry to be "*spiritual adultery*" committed against Him, our Creator, Sustainer, and King.

a. **Romans 1:21-25 (NIV)**

<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they neither glorified

him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.<sup>22</sup> Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools<sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles...<sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

b. **2 Timothy 4:3-4 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears *they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,*<sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

c. **Jeremiah 2:13 (ESV)** - 600 years earlier

<sup>13</sup> for my people have committed two evils: *they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

d. **Jeremiah 2:26-28 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> "As a thief is shamed when caught, so the house of Israel shall be shamed: they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their prophets,<sup>27</sup> *who say to a tree, 'You are my father,' and to a stone, 'You gave me birth.' For they have turned their back to me, and not their face.* But in the time of their trouble they say, 'Arise and save us!'<sup>28</sup> *But where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them arise, if they can save you, in your time of trouble; for as many as your cities are your gods, O Judah.*

e. **Jeremiah 3:1-3 (ESV)** - Spiritual adultery

<sup>1</sup> "If a man divorces his wife and she goes from him and becomes another man's wife, will he return to her? Would not that land be greatly polluted? *You have played the whore with many lovers;* and would you return to me? declares the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Lift up your eyes to the bare heights, and see! Where have you not been ravished? By the waysides you have sat awaiting lovers

like an Arab in the wilderness. *You have polluted the land with your vile whoredom.* <sup>3</sup> Therefore the showers have been withheld, and the spring rain has not come; *yet you have the forehead of a whore; you refuse to be ashamed.*

3) This “spiritual adultery” is the ultimate act of rebellion against our loving Creator God. It both angers Him, and grieves Him deeply, and is deserving of punishment.

a. **Jeremiah 5:7-9 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> *“How can I pardon you? Your children have forsaken me and have sworn by those who are no gods. When I fed them to the full, they committed adultery and trooped to the houses of whores. <sup>8</sup> They were well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for his neighbor's wife. <sup>9</sup> Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the Lord; and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?”*

b. **Jeremiah 5:21-29 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> *“Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes, but see not, who have ears, but hear not. <sup>22</sup> Do you not fear me? declares the Lord; Do you not tremble before me? I placed the sand as the boundary for the sea, a perpetual barrier that it cannot pass; though the waves toss, they cannot prevail; though they roar, they cannot pass over it. <sup>23</sup> But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away. <sup>24</sup> They do not say in their hearts, ‘Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives the rain in its season,... <sup>29</sup> Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the Lord, and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?”*

4) Yet despite our heinous, faithless, continuous spiritual adultery, God has left the door open to all who will leave their gods and turn to Him.

a. **Jeremiah 3:12-23 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> *“...” ‘Return, faithless Israel, declares the Lord. I will not look on you in anger, for I am merciful, declares the Lord; I will not be angry forever. <sup>13</sup> Only acknowledge*

your guilt, that you rebelled against the Lord your God and scattered your favors among foreigners under every green tree, and that you have not obeyed my voice, declares the Lord. <sup>14</sup> Return, O faithless children, declares the Lord; for I am your master; I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. <sup>15</sup> "And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding...<sup>22</sup> "Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness." ...<sup>23</sup> Truly the hills are a delusion,... Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel.

b. **Luke 13:23-29 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, <sup>24</sup> "*Strive to enter through the narrow door.* For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able...<sup>29</sup> And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.

5) Jesus is the door.

a. **John 14:6 (NIV)**

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

b. **John 10:7-10 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> ..."Truly, truly, I say to you, *I am the door of the sheep.* <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> *I am the door.* If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

c. How do you enter? *You turn FROM your spiritual adultery, and you turn TO Jesus.*

i. **Mark 1:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> ..."The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; *repent and believe in the gospel.*"

- d. What is the Gospel? *DESPITE our spiritual adultery, God sent Jesus to DIE for our sins.*
- i. **Romans 5:8 (NIV)**  
<sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*
  - ii. Despite our faithlessness, God remains faithful to us, even unto death (2 Tim 2:13)

Which leads into two, final, VERY STRONG arguments for Jesus being the only way.

- 1) *If Jesus is just one of many ways to God, why would God have killed Him on the cross?*
- 2) *Christianity is the only religion that both acknowledges and deals with the seriousness of sin*
  - a. Hinduism and Buddhism teach that our problem is not sin but ignorance of the true nature of reality. Confucianism and New Age Spirituality see human nature as inherently good, rather than as corrupt and sinful. Thus none of them *even come close* to acknowledging the seriousness of our sin and rebellion against our Creator, Lord, and King.
  - b. Islam takes sin seriously, but doesn't deal with it adequately
    - i. No matter how many times a day you pray, how many days you fast, or how many trips to Mecca you make, you cannot atone for the sins you've committed by doing good works.
    - ii. **Ephesians 2:8-9 (NIV)**  
<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- <sup>9</sup> *not by works, so that no one can boast.*
  - c. Christianity is the only religion that both *acknowledges and deals* with the seriousness of sin

- d. Christianity recognizes that our spiritual adultery and rebellion against God are *serious crimes that are deserving of death*.
- i. **Genesis 2:17 (ESV)**  
<sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, *for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*"
  - ii. **Romans 6:23 (ESV)**  
<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, ...
  - iii. **Hebrews 9:22 (ESV)**  
<sup>22</sup> ...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.
- e. Christianity deals with the seriousness of our sin in the most serious way imaginable, through the death of God's One and Only Son on the cross 2,000 years ago.
- i. **Isaiah 53:5-6 (NIV)**  
<sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**How can Jesus be the only way?** The Bible says this...

- There is one and only one God and Jesus is it.
- All other paths are the product of sinful human imagination and the devil's deception, and to follow them is to commit spiritual adultery against the one and only true God.
- Though our adultery is WELL deserving of death, God provided a way for us to be saved, at great cost to Himself, through Jesus' death on the cross.
- If we'll turn FROM our adultery and turn TO Jesus in faith, He promises to forgive our adultery and take us as His bride eternally.

According to the Bible, there is NO QUESTION that Jesus is the only way. *The only question is, "Will you accept Him?"* Let's pray.

