

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE The Exclusivity of Christ

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Matthew 7:14

SYNOPSIS Do all religions lead to eternal life? Are there many paths to heaven? Jesus claimed to be the only way.

HIGHLIGHTS



☞ The Exclusivity of Christ

Last week: Why Shine the Light? Life is short; Hell is real; Heaven surpasses all. Today, I want to continue on this theme of why we need to shine the light. Does it really matter if you share your faith or not? Can't people just follow their own hearts and get into heaven? Aren't there many roads that lead to eternity? Aren't all religions just variations of the same thing? Or, maybe they're all smaller parts of a greater, whole truth? So, we just have part of the truth, while others have another part? Let's see what the Bible has to say...

☞ John 14:6

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

☞ Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Some have said that world religions are like an elephant. If you were blind and could only describe an elephant by feel, then if you touched the trunk you might think an elephant is like a hose. If you touched just the ears, you might think an elephant is like a fan. If only the legs, it's like a pillar. And so on. From a seeing person's standpoint, it a bit like all of those things, but in combination. So, some think world religions each are part of a larger whole and only in combination can the ultimate truth be known. But we don't believe this.

☞ **We believe that Jesus is the only way to receive eternal life.** He said so himself. So, either he's right or he was delusional or lying. This exclusive viewpoint is not popular today.

A 2008 Pew Forum survey found that 65% of Americans believe many religions lead to eternal life. I'm sure that percentage is quite a bit higher now, 15 years later. In fact, according to Pew Research's 2014 Religious Landscape Study, 66 percent of *American Christians* say many religions can lead to eternal life. But that's not what Jesus said, and that's not what true Christianity believes. We believe in the exclusivity of Christ – he is the only way to eternal life.

Christianity claims that God is real, eternal in the heavens; that this God created all that is, and that God has communicated personally with us in the Bible. We believe that Christianity offers the best explanation for why the world is as it is, and what must be done to put things right.

☞ Christians believe that **God came to us in the person of Jesus Christ in order to restore us to himself.** Jesus lived and was executed in our place and rose again to become the Savior of all humankind. We believe that **only by faith in Jesus can people be reconciled to God.**

Religious beliefs are not all the same. Various traditions are similar, but only in their moral codes. Many of them value such things as compassion, truth, peace, kindness and purity. But when it



comes to understanding the nature of God himself, how we become moral persons, or how we may be rescued from the mess we're in, world religions offer widely divergent views.

Buddhists do not believe in a personal God as we know him. Hindus may be polytheistic, pantheistic, monotheistic, or even atheistic. Allah, the god of Islam, is a divine person but is not personable. He stands aloof and demands obedience, but does not enter into relationships with people. To believe these are all parts of a larger truth is to ignore the obvious conflicts between the beliefs. It is completely illogical.

☞ --Hank Hanegraaff... *Logically speaking, **they can all be wrong, but they cannot all be right.** We, therefore, need to ask which religion points to the right God and consider how certain its claims really are. Regarding these questions, Christianity towers above the other religions of the world. For instance, while every other religion would have humanity try to reach up to God, Christianity says God reaches down to humanity. In other words, God's favor was obtained for humankind by Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and not by our own human merit. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus, who is God Himself cloaked in human flesh, always backed His pronouncements with His own miracles, the culmination of which was His bodily resurrection from the dead. None of the other religious figures throughout history have ever justified their respective claims with such power and authority. All people, regardless of their religious circumstances, need to hear and heed Christ's message because Jesus pointed to Himself as the only way to God.*

Christianity is unique in the following fundamental respects, among many others:

1. Only in the Bible is God revealed as the one eternal, personal Creator, who brought the entire universe into existence by His own Word. Most other religions start with the material universe as the only eternal reality.
2. Christianity alone is centered in the historical events associated with a Person - the birth, death, resurrection, and imminent return of Jesus Christ. Other religions are invariably based only on the teachings, rather than the acts, of their founders.
3. ☞ **Jesus Christ alone, of all men in history, has conquered death.** The founders of other religions are all dead. The tomb of Christ is empty, and His bodily resurrection from the grave is among the best proved facts of all history.
4. The Bible sets its moral standard as the very perfection of God Himself, and demands nothing less than this for salvation. All other religions of the world are fundamentally just one religion — one of salvation by works.
5. The man Christ Jesus, alone, maintained a life of perfect holiness and full obedience to the Father. He then died for the sins of all men and offers full pardon to anyone who receives Him. All other religions were led by flawed people who can only offer ideas about what is right and ethical.

Religious beliefs are not all the same and cannot be smaller parts of a greater whole. There are too many differences between them. It all comes down to Jesus.



☞ 1 John 4:1-3

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2** This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, **3** but **every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God...**

--Keith Krell... What is the mother of all politically incorrect statements? Are you ready? Here it is: "Jesus Christ is the only way to God." Even the mere hint of this conclusion causes most Americans to cringe and shudder. Many Americans become irate over this declaration. They will spew forth accusations such as "intolerant," "narrow-minded," "arrogant," "hateful," and "bigot." It quickly becomes apparent that the greatest atrocity in today's culture is not theft, rape, or murder. It is intolerance. People are willing to tolerate any viewpoint, except one that claims to be uniquely true.

Some say it's arrogant of Christians to claim Jesus is the only way to eternal life... But, let's suppose that researchers at the University of Iowa this very week discovered the cure for cancer. After years of research, they developed a treatment that could instantly cure all forms of cancer. The treatment is painless, one-time, and 100% effective. Would it be arrogant for them to say, "This is the only treatment for cancer you will ever need?" Or would that be the most loving thing they could ever say? I don't think very many people would complain, "What about all the other potential cures?" When it comes to healing our bodies, most people are looking for a definite solution. Likewise, the Bible teaches that humanity has the spiritual cancer of sin. This disease needs to be cured. And, the only way to cure it is through Jesus Christ!

☞ 1 Timothy 2:5-6

5 For there is one God and **one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus**, **6** who gave himself as a ransom for all men

☞ Matthew 7:13-14

13 "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate & broad is the road that leads to destruction, & many enter through it. **14** But **small is the gate & narrow the road that leads to life, & only a few find it.**

There are not many ways to eternity. There is one way, and that is through Jesus Christ. People need to know the truth so they can find the way. This search for the way is inherent in humanity. It has been verbalized in pop music...

Show me the Way by Peter Frampton

Who can I believe in? I'm kneeling on the floor

There has to be a force; Who do I phone?

The stars are out and shining, But all I really wanna know

Oh, won't you show me the way, yeah; I want you to show me the way



Show me the Way by Styx

Every night I say a prayer in the hope that there's a heaven
But every day I'm more confused as the saints turn into sinners
All the heroes and legends I knew as a child have fallen to idols of clay
And I feel this empty place inside, so afraid that I've lost my faith
...And if I see your light, should I believe; Tell me how will I know...
Show me the way, show me the way
Take me tonight to the river; And wash my illusions away
Please, show me the way

John 14:6

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

Jesus is the Way by Phil Waldo

The trend today is to claim that every faith is just the same
People think that different faiths are different ways to the same place
"Heaven's gates are open wide, so live it up, enjoy the ride"
"No need to fear the afterlife, there really is no wrong or right"

Some people say that to be nice we should claim that all are right
"No one's wrong in their belief, let's get along and live in peace"
Now, I'm for peace, I'll do my share, but the truth I'll still declare
Which is worse: the truth that hurts, or the lie that lets people burn?

God's Word says and doesn't lie; you must be ready when you die
What you believe 'bout Jesus Christ will decide where you will rise
Heaven's real, but so is hell; what you believe determines where you will dwell
Jesus is the Way, the only way to choose; Other ways won't do 'cause Jesus is the truth
Jesus offers life, eternal life to you; So choose to follow him, the way, the life, the truth

☞ **Jesus is the only way** to eternity in heaven. There is no other way; it's exclusive to Christ. We must point people to the truth so they can find the way. So, let your light shine and illuminate the only true path to eternity in heaven. Jesus is the way!