

# WHY JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY.

## Part 1.

Introduction.

Perhaps you've heard people, even Christians, say, "There is no one way to God. It doesn't matter whether you believe in Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed, or someone else--they can all lead you to God and life after death.

Perhaps you believe that yourself. While this idea sounds very enlightened, there's a big problem with it. It's dead wrong!

Of all the religions and beliefs in the world, only one leads to God and eternal life--acceptance of Jesus Christ as your lord and savior. Well, Jesus was a good man, a great teacher, but so were some of those other leaders, you may be thinking. Saying Jesus is the only way is so narrow, so intolerant. Perhaps it sounds that way. But would you call a road map that gives the only accurate instructions to a given destination narrow-minded? It's only narrow in the sense of being exact. All the other maps in the world will do us no good if they don't get us to our desired destination.

Well, why is Jesus so special that He can claim He is the only way that leads to God?

There are many reasons Jesus is so "special." Perhaps the most important one is that He deals with the consequences of sin. Maybe you think the idea of sin is outmoded. Perhaps you don't think of yourself as a sinner. But God does. Let's look at what the Bible has to say on this subject.

Our Study.

THE SCRIPTURE: Romans 3:23.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

1. Who has sinned?

All is a very inclusive word. All includes you and me and everyone who has ever lived. We all sin, not just once or twice but over and over again.

Our sins create a huge gulf between God and us and they come with a very high price tag.

THE SCRIPTURE: Romans 6:23.

"The wages of sin is death."

2. What are the wages (the consequences) of sin?

Yes, death. Eternal death! There is no way in ourselves that we can bridge the gulf that separates us from God. What can we do then? Only Jesus Christ has a solution to that problem.

He is the solution.

At a certain time in history, 2000 years ago, God sent Jesus to earth to pay that debt. Here, Jesus lived a sinless life and taught people how to live God's way. For this He was crucified. But His death had a purpose.

What was that purpose?

THE SCRIPTURE: Romans 5:6,8

"At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ (Jesus) died for the ungodly....God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

3. What did Christ do for us?

In dying for us, Jesus took all our sins upon Himself to the cross. He paid the debt we owed God for those sins, thus obtaining our forgiveness.

The Bible reminds us that it would be extremely rare for anyone to die for even a godly person, but Jesus died for us while we were still sinners.

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 John 2:2.

"He [Jesus] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

4. What does this verse call Jesus?

5. What is He the atoning sacrifice for?

Perhaps you're wondering why there had to be a sacrifice, why someone had to die. Why couldn't God just forgive us and let it go at that? We find the answer to that question in the book of Hebrews.

THE SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 9:22.

"The law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

6. What is required for forgiveness?

In other words a death.

You see, since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, God and His arch-enemy Satan have waged war for people's souls. When Adam sinned, it was as though he passed on a defective gene to all of mankind. Man was forever tainted with sin. Even if we never personally sinned, our nature would still be sinful. But Scripture has wonderful news for us.

What Jesus' death accomplished?

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 John 1:7.

"The blood of Jesus, his (God's) Son purifies us from all sin."

7. What does Jesus' blood do for us?

When we accept Jesus, not only are we freed from our personal sins, but we are freed from our sinful nature as well. I love the way the Bible describes this process in the book of Colossians.

THE SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1: 13-14.

"He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

8. What has God rescued us from?

9. Where has He brought us?

10. What do we receive from Jesus?

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 15: 3,4.

"For what I (Paul) received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

11. How does Paul summarize Jesus' life?

Without proof, everything Jesus claimed could be just a wonderful story, but God proved that what Jesus claimed was true by raising him up to life again after his death.

Jesus' death and resurrection not only granted us forgiveness, they also gave us eternal life.

Eternal Life.

THE SCRIPTURE: John 17:3.

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

12. What is the essence of eternal life?

The Bible has much to say about eternal life. Let's look at some of the scriptures.

THE SCRIPTURE: John 10:27-30

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

13. What does Jesus give His sheep (His followers)?

THE SCRIPTURE: John 14:3,4.

"In my Father's house are many rooms;...I am going there to prepare a place for you....I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."

Jesus made these statements shortly before His death.

14. What was His promise?

THE SCRIPTURE: John 8:51.

"I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."

15. What was His promise in this verse?

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 John 5:12.

"He who has the Son (Jesus) has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

16. What do those who follow Jesus have?

But these are not the only benefits we receive through Jesus' death. In Part 2 we will look at more benefits and what Jesus is accomplishing for us today.

#### THE ANSWERS.

1. All
2. Death
3. He died for us.
4. The atoning sacrifice
5. The sins of the whole world
6. The shedding of blood
7. It purifies us from all sin.
8. The dominion of darkness
9. Into the kingdom of the Son he loves
10. Redemption, the forgiveness of sins
11. Christ died for our sins, was buried, then raised on the third day.
12. To know God and Jesus Christ, who was sent by God
13. Eternal life
14. Although he would leave for awhile, he would come back for them.
15. That his followers would never see death
16. Life

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#### WHY JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY.

##### **Part 2.**

##### Introduction.

In the first part of this study we looked at some of the reasons why Jesus is the only way to eternal life. We continue by looking at more of the benefits we received by Jesus' death.

##### Our Study.

THE SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 5:19.

"God [reconciled] the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

1. What did God do?  
- Reconciled the world to himself in Christ.

To understand the full import of this statement, we need to understand how God sees us.

THE SCRIPTURE: Romans 5:10.

"If when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life."

2. What does God consider us to be before we come to Christ?

Have you ever considered yourself to be God's enemy? Probably not. But the Bible says we are His enemy if we have not accepted Jesus. Christ's death, however, and our acceptance of Him didn't just stop us from being God's enemies. God had a much higher relationship for us.

THE SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:5.

"He (God) predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ."

3. What did God predestine us to be?

Think about that statement for a moment. When Jesus died for us on the cross, He purchased Sonship for us. God took us into His heart as His children.

THE SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 3:12.

"In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence."

4. How may we approach God?

Because we are sons (children) of God, we can approach God as a child approaches his father. But aren't we all God's children, some of you may ask. The answer is no. We are all God's creation, but only those who come to Him through Jesus Christ are His children.

THE SCRIPTURE: Romans 3:22.

"The righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe."

5. What does this verse tell us?

Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit.

THE SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:38.

"Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

6. What will we receive?

Before He died, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven, Jesus promised His followers that He would send Someone to take His place--the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit would be a comforter, a counselor, an advocate, someone who would stand beside us. He would lead us into all truth and remind us of everything Jesus had said. The initial giving of the Holy Spirit happened on Pentecost, but the Holy Spirit is Jesus' and the Father's gift to all Christians who will receive Him.

In order to understand how Jesus is able to do all this for us, we need to first understand who He is.

Who Jesus Is.

THE SCRIPTURE: John 1:1-4.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men."

7. What is Jesus called in these verses?
8. What do these verses tell us about the Word?
9. What has Jesus (the Word) done?

THE SCRIPTURE: Colossians 1:15-7.

"He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

10. What additional information do we learn from these verses?

Well, admittedly Jesus is pretty impressive, but why do we say that He is the only way to eternal life? We say it because Jesus and the Bible both proclaim it.

Jesus Is the Only Way.

THE SCRIPTURE: John 14:6.

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

11. What does Jesus clearly say?

THE SCRIPTURE: Matthew 10:32.

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

12. Who will Jesus acknowledge?

13. Who will He disown?

But Jesus is not alone in claiming He is the only source of salvation. Others have, too.

THE SCRIPTURE: Acts 4:12.

There is salvation in no one else. For there is no other name given to men by which they must be saved."

14. What does the Apostle Peter say?

On another occasion when Jesus asked Peter who he thought Jesus was, Peter proclaimed:

THE SCRIPTURE: Luke 9:20.

"But what about you?" he (Jesus) asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

15. Who did Peter say Jesus was?

If all this is true, why doesn't everyone recognize who He is? The Bible makes this clear, too.

Why Men Don't Recognize Him?

THE SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 4:4

"The god of this age (Satan) has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

16. Why doesn't everyone recognize who Jesus is?

THE SCRIPTURE: Mark 13:22.

"False Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect--if that were possible."

17. Why are they deceived?

This brings us to today and the future. Where is Jesus today? What is going to happen in the future? Christ's Position Today.

THE SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:20-22.

"He (God) raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything in the church, which is his body, the fullness of him."

18. Where is Jesus today?

19. What is His position?

20. What has God appointed Him?

THE SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:10,11.

"At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

21. What will eventually happen?

THE SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 15:24.

"Then the end will come, when he (Jesus) turns over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power."

22. What will happen when the end comes?

THE SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 1:8.

"But about the son he (God) says, 'Your throne...will last for ever and ever.'"

23. How long will Jesus reign?

Don't you want to acknowledge that Jesus is the only way to God? It's simple to do so. Pray this prayer with me.

Your Prayer.

"Dear Lord. I'm sorry for all my sins. I believe you are the Son of God, and, that when you died on the cross, you died for those sins. I believe, too, that God raised you from the dead, and you are in heaven with Him today. Thank you for saving me. Amen.

#### THE ANSWERS.

1. Reconciled the world to himself in Christ
2. His enemies
3. His sons through Jesus
4. In freedom and confidence
5. We receive God's righteousness.
6. The Holy Spirit
7. The Word
8. That He is God
9. Made all things
10. Jesus is the image of God; all things were created by him and for him; in him all things hold together
11. He is the only way to the Father.
12. Those who acknowledge Him
13. Those who disown him.
14. "Salvation is found in no one else. No other name has been given to men by which they must be saved."
15. "The Christ of God."
16. They are blinded by Satan.
17. False Christs and prophets who perform signs and wonders will appear to deceive people.
18. Seated at God's right hand in the heavenly realms
19. He is above every rule, authority, power, dominion, and title.
20. Head over everything in the church
21. Every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.
22. Jesus will destroy all dominion, authority, and power and turn over the kingdom to God.
23. Forever All scripture quotations in this publication are from the Holy Bible, New International Version.

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How can Christians say Jesus is the only way to God?  
Isaiah 45:21.

"There is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me."

John 14:6.

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

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How can Christians be so sure they're right and everyone else is wrong? Isn't that arrogant?  
Logically, it's not possible for all the major world religions to be valid ways to God. As seen in the verses above, Christianity states that the God of the Bible is the only true God and salvation is only possible by accepting Christ as Savior and Lord. Judaism states that the God of the Torah/Old Testament



is the only true God, but that Jesus is not the Messiah, putting it directly at odds with Christianity. Jesus either is the Messiah, or he is not. If he is, Judaism is not a valid way to God; if he is not, Christianity is not a valid way to God. The mutual exclusion only grows when other religions are added: Islam says that Allah is the only true God, and that anyone who says Christ is the Son of God will be condemned (Qur'an, 5:72, 9:30). Furthermore, if religions other than Christianity are valid ways to God, then one of Christianity's basic principles is false; in that case, can it still be said to be a valid, trustworthy religion? (See also 1 Cor 15:14-19.)

No matter what belief system you adopt, you will be saying that your system is right and that the billions of people who don't accept it are wrong. If Islam is correct, the billions of non-Muslims are wrong; if Orthodox Judaism is correct, the billions of Gentiles are wrong. If it is correct to approve of multiple belief systems because they're all valid ways of achieving spiritual enlightenment, the billions of Christians, Jews, Muslims and others who believe in exclusive religions are intolerant and therefore wrong.

How can Christians be sure their religion is the right one? Being born into a Christian family or growing up in a Christian community doesn't make one a Christian; culture and ethnicity don't determine one's relationship with God. Instead, people become Christians because they are convinced of the truth of Christianity and/or have had experiences with God - in short, they have good reasons for believing Christianity to be true. (See the testimonies of people who have become Christians.) Also, Christians are not saying that their personal ideas are true, but that the Christian God exists, and his words are true.

Furthermore, Christianity is unique among religions because it addresses the fact that we can never be good enough to be in the presence of a perfect, holy God. In order to be perfectly good, we would have to be doing good all the time. If we do something wrong, we can't undo it, and we can no longer be considered perfect. Nor can we do more good to make up for our wrongs, for perfection requires doing the most good possible at all times - we can't be more than perfect to make up for when we're less than perfect. Other religions teach that we can somehow do enough good to earn heaven or nirvana, but they don't address the fact that we continually make mistakes. Christianity teaches that our sins were paid for by Jesus' death on the cross, and that by accepting his payment and believing in him we can be forgiven; we don't have to earn our way into heaven, which is a good thing, because we can't do it. Christ is the only way to God, because without the forgiveness that comes through his death and resurrection, there's no way for us to be able to stand before a holy God.

Saying that Christianity is right does not mean that Christians themselves are right about everything, or that they are innately superior to non-Christians. What Christianity teaches is that both Christians and non-Christians "have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and need salvation, which comes only by the grace of God, not the individual's actions or merits (Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31).

Christianity is intolerant of other beliefs.

Is refusing to call a belief false always the right thing to do? For instance, is it right to say that racism and Nazism are simply alternate belief systems that we shouldn't pass judgment on, or should we condemn these beliefs as being morally wrong? If someone believes they have the right to rape or kill whomever they please, should we accept their beliefs as an alternate lifestyle, or denounce them? Tolerance is an admirable virtue in many circumstances, but tolerating wrong by refusing to say it's wrong is in itself wrong. If Christianity is true, then there is only one God and salvation comes only through Him, and religions that deny this are not merely alternate forms of spiritual expression, but systems of belief that prevent their adherents from obtaining salvation. If Christ is in fact the only way

to God, then to claim that he's not is both false and dangerous. If someone has a fatal disease, telling them that they don't need to seek medical treatment is wrong. If someone can only have salvation by accepting Christ as their Savior, telling them they don't need to accept Christ is even more wrong, no matter how tolerant or well-meaning it may seem to be.

Christianity is exclusive - those outside the church aren't saved.

First of all, would a religion that taught that everyone goes to heaven be a good religion? We would all like to think that we and our loved ones will go to heaven. Yet if everyone automatically goes to heaven, this includes evil people as well as good people. Should an unrepentant killer go to heaven? Should someone who enjoys torturing people, or who molests children and feels no guilt, go to heaven? If not, then there are cases when it's morally right for people to be excluded from heaven.

Christianity does not teach that only Christians deserve to go to heaven. Rather, it teaches that no one deserves to go to heaven, because we have all done wrong during our lives (Romans 3:23). We can gain admittance to heaven by repenting of our wrongs, accepting Jesus Christ's death as payment for our wrongs and deciding to follow and worship him as Lord. The principle is that Jesus is the only way to God, not any particular church or denomination (John 6:40). Thus, salvation is accessible to everyone and is intended by God for everyone:

Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth. (Is 45:22).

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone...This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men. (1 Timothy 2:1, 3-6).

(See also Isaiah 49:6, 52:10, Revelation 5:9.) Indeed, there are people "from every nation, tribe, people and language" who will be saved (Revelation 7:9). Thus, far from being exclusive, Christianity is inclusive. Anyone who chooses to accept Christ as Lord and Savior is a Christian and has equal standing with all other Christians before God.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26-28)

Other responses (offsite).

- Jesus the only way? Why Christians seem arrogant by John Bowen - Addresses several objections.
- Cliffe Knechtle explains why Christianity is different from other religions.
- Matt Perlman answers several common questions.
- Gregory Koukl on why the "many ways to God" approach is false

Related articles.

- Can we find God inside ourselves?
- What distinguishes Christianity from other monotheistic religions?
- Why won't good works get us into heaven?
- God is conceited for requiring everyone to worship only him.
- What about people who never hear about Jesus?

What happens to those who never hear about Jesus?

The Bible doesn't teach that everyone who never has the opportunity to hear about Jesus Christ will be automatically saved from condemnation. Yet neither does it teach that those who don't hear have no chance of finding God.

The Bible tells us the following about God's character and judgment:

- God loves everyone. and would like for everyone to be saved.
- God values mercy.
- God takes a person's knowledge into account when judging them.
- God judges people as individuals.

In order to be saved, a person must have faith in God.[6]How can someone who's never heard of God believe in him? The answer is that God has planned things so that everyone has access to some knowledge of him, through nature and conscience as well as other means. (For more on how these clues can lead to knowledge of God, seeHow can faith be rational?).

From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. (Acts 17:26-27).

There are at least a couple instances in the Bible of the unevangelized coming to faith in God. Rahab believed in God after hearing reports of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, which was probably the most she had heard about God.[8]Cornelius, a first-century Gentile who had been exposed to Judaism, believed in God and had a relationship with him despite not having heard of Jesus. In fact, God told Cornelius to seek out Peter so that he would hear the gospel.

This doesn't mean that everyone will be saved. Those who are aware of Christianity's message must choose to accept Jesus Christ as their God and Savior in order to be saved, for not doing so is an explicit rejection of God's forgiveness. What it does mean is that God is both just and merciful. He condemns wrongdoing, but gives everyone a chance to repent and doesn't condemn people for things which are truly outside their control.