

What About Other Religions?

Our study is focused on the seven most common objections to the Christian faith. Our first topic was about suffering. If God is all loving and God is all powerful, why does he allow so much suffering on the earth?

If you remember, we looked at:

1. Self-inflicted suffering
2. Suffer because of other decisions or actions
3. Suffering because of the sinfulness of this fallen world (Satan)
4. Redemptive suffering
5. Christian suffering for following Christ

This session we will look at a second common objection which is in two parts.

1. Christianity asserts has ultimate truth, and the other religions have some form of error.
2. Also, what about people who have never heard of Jesus and the Gospel?

Religion is our attempt to understand and answer the questions of the ‘FIRST ORDER.’”

1. Where did I come from?
2. Why and I hear?
3. Why is anything here (creation, solar system, universe, etc.)?
4. How do I understand the world in live in?
5. Is there a supreme being who is in charge?
6. If so, how can I know God and please God?
7. What happens to me when I die?

Christianity offers answers to these questions and believe those answers are the ultimate truth for all humanity.

Christianity declares:

- Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6)
- Salvation is found in no other name but the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12)
- Jesus is the only mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim 2:5)
- Acts 3:14,15,20 – Holy and righteous one, author of life, the Christ

No other religious figure or leader makes these claims

- Buddha was a teacher
- Krishna was an Avatar
- Muhammad was a prophet
- Moses was a prophet
- Jesus IS the savior – he brings us salvation – Jesus is God

The record of Jesus' incarnation, public ministry and teachings, his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection were all attested to my many witnesses.

I Corinthians 15:1-5; 13-20 – The resurrection is the foundation of the Christian Faith – the tomb was empty. He was seen, touched, heard, and ate with them after the resurrection for 40 days.

So, what about other religions?

Every other religion will deny one or more of the following:

1. They will deny Jesus is God – His divinity
2. They will deny Jesus is fully human and fully God (the incarnation)
3. They will deny His resurrection – the empty tomb
4. They will deny His death on the cross was sufficient and complete – nothing needs to be added
5. They will deny salvation by grace alone through faith (Eph 2:8) – not works

Every other religion is a religion of man's works making him acceptable to God.

- Buddha – Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold path
 1. All life is suffering
 2. The cause of suffering is desire
 3. The way to stop suffering is to end desires
 4. The way to end desire is to follow the eightfold path
- Islam – Five Pillars
 1. Profession of faith – Allah is God and Muhammed is his messenger
 2. Prayer – five times a day facing Mecca
 3. Alms – 2% of your net worth
 4. Fasting – Ramadan
 5. Pilgrimage – visit Mecca once in your lifetime
- Judaism – Law of Moses
- Hinduism – Karma and Dharma (duty)

Religious Comparison Chart – see handout

Pluralism –

- All religions are equally valid and equally true
- All religions are climbing the same mountain (heaven) but coming from different sides
- All religions contain similar truths and moral tenants of behavior/ethics
- No one religions contain all the truth

Christianity rejects these statements. We believe God has revealed Himself in the person of Jesus who is the truth and Jesus is the standard by which all truth claims must be examined.

How are we to engage with people of other religions?

- Bear witness to our faith in word and deed
- Speak the truth in love – right motivation, vs judgment or condemnation
- Be respectful and humble
- Be prompted by the Holy Spirit – Engel’s Scale
- What did early church do? – Acts 2:38-42

What about those who have never heard?

- Jesus commands us to go to all the world (Matthew 28, Great Commission)
- All have knowledge of God through creation and conscience (Rom 1:16-20)
- God is just?
- Cornelius – Acts 10 – devout – seeking God – praying – giving alms
- Abraham – Genesis 18:25 – “shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly.”
- 1 Peter 3:18-19 – Jesus’ descent to hell to make proclamation