
Dealing With Objections: Is Jesus the Only Way?

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’” -Matthew 28:18-20

Go Make Disciples Group Check-in: If you have not already, share with your group who the person (or one of those people) is whom God is calling you to go to and how you intend to reach them based on where they are at spiritually.

Last week we learned several different ways we can respond to someone who objects to Christianity because they do not believe God exists. This week we are going to learn how to respond to the objection: Is Jesus the Only Way? As we share the gospel with others we will most likely encounter people who do not necessarily object to the claims of Christianity, but only because they believe it is one of many paths to God.

However, we know from John 14:6 that Jesus said “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. *No one* comes to the Father *except through me.*” So, how should we respond to those who believe that Jesus is not *the only way*, but simply *one way* to God?

Our response must come in two parts. The first part involves in disproving that there are multiple ways to God, one of which can be Christianity. In order to do so, establishing the following points is key (Note: Points 1 & 3 are taken from “Who Made God” by Ravi Zacharias):

1. All religions cannot be true (and thus lead to God), because they all contradict each other.

It is illogical to say that two contradictory statements can both be true. Yet, that is what many pluralists or universalists assert when they say that all religions or many religions lead to the same one God.

For example, the Bible teaches that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave three days later (1 Cor. 15:1-6), and the Qur’an (Muslim Holy Book) teaches that he did not, that the bodies were switched and someone else died on the cross (Sura 4:157). It cannot be true that Jesus died on the cross and he did not die on the cross.

Similarly, Mormon theology teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three gods and those gods are three of many gods that exist. However, the Bible teaches that there is only one God who exists in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) (Deuteronomy 6:4, 1 Cor. 8:4). Again, it cannot be true that there are multiple gods and that there is just one God.

Therefore, when two statements contradict each other, we have to determine which one is true rather than assert that both are true. Which means that when different beliefs of different religions contradict each other, we must determine which religion is true rather than assert that both or all are true. In this case, we must determine whether Jesus is truly the only way to the Father, as Christianity asserts, or whether another religion is the way to God as they assert.

Consequently, a good question to ask pluralists or universalists is to use one of the examples above such as, “Christianity claims Jesus died on the cross and Islam claims that he did not. How can both be true?” Or, “In Christianity, Jesus claims He is the only way to the Father, but your belief system says there are multiple ways to God. How can both be true?”

2. It is just as arrogant to say that “all religions lead to God” than it is to say that “Jesus is the only way to God.”

One of the common critiques of Christians is their exclusivity in claiming that Jesus is the only way to God. After all, how can we be so sure that this is true? Therefore, we are called arrogant for not being “open-minded” to other paths to God.

However, that same critique can be returned on pluralists or universalists. We can simply ask them, “How can you be so sure that there are multiple ways to God and not just one way? Is it not likewise arrogant to believe you are right and I am wrong?” In either case, one person is asserting that they know the truth and the other is clearly wrong in their belief.

And, at the end of the day, being inclusive or exclusive is not near as important as knowing which truth saves us. For example, if given a choice as to a vest to wear into a raid between a bullet-proof vest, a fleece vest, a plaid vest, or a tuxedo vest, we would all grab the bullet proof vest because it is the only one that may save us if we get shot in the chest. In addition, we would call an inclusivist crazy for saying that, “All vests can save you from getting shot.” Again, being inclusive or exclusive is not what is important. Rather it is knowing what truth saves us. Going back to our previous section, when differently religions contradict each other, we must determine which is most likely true, so we can know how we can be saved.

3. Christianity does not claim there is no truth in other religions, but rather that other religions are false when their claims contradict the Bible.

Some pluralists and universalists ignore Christianity, because they falsely believe that Christians assert that only what is in the Bible is true. However, this is not the case. Confucius says: “Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you,” which is very similar to the Golden Rule of Jesus in Matthew 7:12: “Do to others what you would have them do to you.” And multiple other religions teach that honoring your parents is good and that lying, stealing, and murder are not.

So again, Christianity does not teach that only the Bible contains truth, but rather that when the truth claims of other religions contradict the Bible, that the Bible is true and other religions are false.

So that's the first part, working to disprove that there are multiple ways to God instead of one way to God. And of note (a.k.a. Bonus reason) is the fact that most true adherents to the major religions would also assert that only their religion is the true way to God. It is why the Jews looked down on Gentiles in the Bible. It's why the Mormons vicariously baptize the dead. And it's why some Muslims are hostile towards Christians. They believe there is one way to God and it's only through their religious practices. Therefore, going back to Point #2 above, it may be helpful to ask the pluralist or universalist, "Why do Christianity and other religions all believe their way is the only way to God?"

The second part is to then proceed to show that Jesus is the true way to God by making that case that the claims of Christianity are more likely to be true than the claims of other religions. Thus, we must ask the individual which of the major religions they adhere to, and then seek to show that the claims of Christianity are more likely to be true than the claims of his/her religion.

There is not enough time in this course to address each one of the major religions and to show that Christianity is more likely to be true than each of them, so I will simply point you to a few resources which you may find to be helpful:

- Dare2Share (4th Edition): A Field Guide to Sharing Your Faith by Greg Stier– The best book I have read on this topic. Greg Stier provides facts, connecting points, conversations starters, and good questions to ask as you share your faith with people of other religions. I would start here.
- Jesus: The Only Way to God: Must You Hear the Gospel to be Saved by John Piper– This book is more of a positive argument for Christianity than an apologetic book against other religions, but still will be helpful in making your case for Christianity once you have established that all religions cannot lead to God.
- Jesus Among Other Gods by Ravi Zacharias – Confession, I have not read this book, but have had several people recommend it. Ravi Zacharias is as good as it gets in terms of making the case for Christianity and against other religions.

1. Have you ever wondered whether there are multiple paths to God? If so how does today's topic, and passages such as John 14:6, help assure you that this cannot be the case?

2. How have you typically responded to the claim that "All religions lead to God?" How might today's topic help you respond better moving forward?

Go Make Disciples

Pray that God would give you an opportunity soon to share the gospel with someone who believes that “All paths lead to God.” In addition, prayerfully consider whether God would have you set aside time to read through one of the recommended books above to better prepare yourself for these opportunities.

Praying This Week

- Thank God for showing us that Jesus is the only way to the Father.
- Ask God to give us opportunities to share the gospel with pluralists and universalists.
- Ask the Spirit to change their hearts to believe exclusively in Jesus.