

“Is Jesus the Only Way to God?”

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by Rev. Jeremiah Montgomery

This week I would like us to consider together one of the most common objections to the Christian faith – the objection raised against Jesus Christ’s claim to be the only way to God.

No honest person can deny that Jesus made this claim. Jesus himself said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,” (John 14:6). The apostles of Jesus said the same thing about him: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,” (Acts 4:12). According to Jesus and the apostles, the claim that there are many valid religions and many ways to God is a devilish error.

Yet it is precisely this exclusiveness that many modern people – even regular churchgoers – find so objectionable. Let us consider it, then: can there really be only one true religion?

One way to begin to answer this question is with a counter-question: why not?

Why should there *not* be only one true religion?

After all, few people get upset about the exclusiveness they encounter in other aspects of reality. Take physics, for example. When was the last time you heard somebody protest that the laws of physics only work in certain ways? Or take human physiology. Does anybody condemn the intolerance of the human lungs for being the only true way to breathe? Of course not. Whether we like it or not, all people accept that certain physical laws are hardwired in the fabric of the universe. Certain biological patterns are woven into the fiber of our being. This is simply how reality is.

But if we accept the exclusiveness of physical and biological reality, why do we object to exclusiveness when it comes to spiritual reality?

The answer is that there is a hidden assumption lurking in our objection. When a person says, “There cannot be only one true religion,” they are assuming that *religious truth is not a matter of fixed principles, but rather of personal preference*. If they are right, then of course God – however one chooses to define ‘God’ – is ultimately indifferent to the spiritual behavior of human beings. But this is a big ‘if,’ and those who assert it have no proof. It is, ultimately, nothing more than an assumption.

It is vitally important to recognize that this assumption is itself an exclusive religious claim. Christianity claims there is only one way to God. Critics of Christianity claim there is *not* only one way to God. Each of these positions makes a claim that, if correct, logically rules out the other. As Timothy Keller puts it in his book, *The Reason for God*, “We are all exclusive in our beliefs about religion, but in different ways.”

But if everybody is exclusive, then the words of Jesus cannot be so easily dismissed. And given the importance of the subject matter – our personal wellbeing, both in this life and that which is to come – are not the claims of Jesus worth our serious investigation?

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