

# Are Not All Religions The Same?

Intro: Tolerance is the word of the day. And built into that word is an acceptance of not just the individual, but also of their beliefs, choices and behaviors. After all, can't we all just get along? Can't we all Coexist, I mean after all, there is no one right way to God, is there? Aren't the people involved in Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism or the various other religions out there all just trying to find their way to God, to peace and the after-life? Won't God honor their sincere attempts to find Him?

Envision everyone trying to scale a mountain to God, don't all the different paths lead to the top? Sure, the problem is, what is at the top is not the One True God. Just me saying that, that they don't reach the One True God makes me sound so...intolerant!

## Jesus predicted confusion would arise from differing religions.

Matthew 7:15-23:

15“Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. 16You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17A good tree produces good fruit, and a bad tree produces bad fruit. 18A good tree can't produce bad fruit, and a bad tree can't produce good fruit. 19So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. 20Yes, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit, so you can identify people by their actions.

True Disciples

21“Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. 22On judgment day many will say to me, ‘Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.’ 23But I will reply, ‘I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God’s laws.’

Walter Martin in his book Kingdom of the Cults says;

“A person may be ethically and morally ‘good’ by human standards, but if he sets his face against Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and rejects Him, his fruit is corrupt and he is to be rejected as counterfeit.”

We are not going to spend time dissecting every cult or non-christian religion out there, rather we are going to look a few of the major distortions that commonly happen. And our perspective is going to be like those who train to identify counterfeit currency. They start by examining and becoming familiar with real currency, then the fakes are more easy to recognize.

“Cults and non-Christian religions deny, distort or disregard the central truths of the historic Christian faith.” -Paul Carden

Most Common Distortions are found in four primary areas. Yes, you could identify other areas as well, but the majority distort at least one or more of these four foundational truths.

We do not have the time to do a full teaching on each of these areas, but there are resources you can refer to that we will mention later.

## Revelation - The Authority of Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16 - “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.”

2 Peter 3:15-16 - “This is what our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom God gave him— 16speaking of these things in all of his letters. Some of his comments are hard to understand, and those who are ignorant and unstable have twisted his letters to mean something quite different, just as they do with other parts of Scripture.

So many non-christian religions add to, subtract from or distort God’s Word. It is the only book that comes from God Himself, literally God-Breathed!

Since the words of Scripture are “self-attesting,” they cannot be “proved” to be God’s words by appeal to any higher authority. If we make our ultimate appeal, for example, to human logic or to scientific truth to prove that the Bible is God’s Word, then we assume the thing to which we appeal to be a higher authority than God’s words and one that is more true or more reliable. Therefore, the ultimate authority by which Scripture is shown to be God’s words must be Scripture itself. -Wayne Grudem

Every Truth about God and His plan comes from this book. If you start to question one part, how can you be sure of the others?

## The Godhead - The Trinity

John 1:1 - “In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Hebrews 1:8-9 -

8“But to the Son he says,  
‘Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever.  
You rule with a scepter of justice.  
9You love justice and hate evil.

Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you,  
pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.”

This is a difficult one to fully understand or wrap our heads around. But the teaching of Scripture is clear:

1. God is three persons
2. Each person is fully God
3. There is one God

Many religions teach that there is just one god, or there are 1,000s of gods.

## **Jesus Christ - The person and work of Jesus**

John 14:6 - “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

As Walter Martin puts it, “Jesus did not say, I am one of many equally good ways. or I am a better way than the others, I am an aspect of truth; I am a fragment of life. His claim was absolute.”

He was either a liar, a lunatic or He is Lord! Those are the only three options, based on all the He declared about Himself.

He can't be a good teacher if he was lying. He can't be a wise sage if he was a lunatic. And if He isn't God, then the basis for all we believe is gone.

As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19 - 17And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. 18In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! 19And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

False religions teach Jesus was a prophet, a wise teacher, many things other than God and Savior.

If you look at every other religion, their founder or prophet is dead. Christianity serves a living Savior!

## **Salvation - By grace through faith**

Ephesians 2:8-9 - “God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.”

So many religions are about earning your way to God. I hope I do enough good things. I have to give, I have to attend, I have to serve. To earn approval. We do those things

out of gratitude because we have already been accepted and approved. And there is no security in knowing whether I've done enough of the right things.

If you go back to the mountain illustration...All those different paths to try to get up to where God is, but you see, in Christianity, God left the top of the mountain to come down to us, to die for us, to save us.

So what does all this mean to you and me?

Robert Ingersoll an agnostic and antagonist of Christianity stated, "If this religion (Christianity) is true, then there is only one Savior, only one narrow path to life. Christianity cannot live in peace with any other religion."

We can't understand that fact and then just sit idly by. As Christians, we too often sit, soak and sour. Instead we need to...

- We need to study the truth, so we can recognize what is false. 2 Timothy 2:15, "Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth."

\*\*Huffakers SS Class, Adams Road Concert, Books

- We need to be ready to confront the false teachings in love. As we wrestle with these truths and are confronted by those who teach a different doctrine, we must remember as we engage them that our primary objective is not to win the argument, but to win the soul.

"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; And in all things, charity." Peter Meiderlin, 17th Century Theologian