Isn't It Arrogant for Christianity to Teach that Jesus Is the Only Way?

Written by Al Baker

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12

In our pluralistic, post-modern, western world few things irk people more than the gospel message of exclusivity. After all, absolute truth statements have caused major problems in the last one hundred years. Josef Stalin believed his way was the right way and he murdered twenty million of his own people. Adolf Hitler believed he had the truth and he killed six million Jews and six million Gypsies. Some, therefore, wish to say that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Of course the moment they make such statements they are denying their own proclamation. There must be absolute truth. If two plus two does not equal four then bridge builders cannot do their thing, and rocket scientists cannot hurl satellites into space. And be clear on this — Christianity is not the only religion that makes claims of exclusivity. Islam clearly does, saying that only confession of Allah as the one true god and Mohammed as his prophet makes possible the entry into Paradise. And even Hinduism is exclusive, saying that supreme authority comes only through the Vedas (their scriptures), belief in Karma, and the reality of reincarnation. Let’s not forget the martyrdom of Graham Staines and his eleven year old son in January, 1999 at the hands of militant Hindus in Orissa in India.

The first question is this — does Christianity teach that Jesus is the only way to God? Clearly the apostles believed and preached this. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4 boldly said so. Jesus, whom many admire as a noble, moral, and kind man said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me' (John 14:6). Moses put forth the covenant numerous times in the Pentateuch, looking forward to the coming of the Mediator of that covenant (Gen. 3:15, 12:1-3, 15:18-19, 28:10ff, Exod. 3:2ff, Num. 24:17). David proclaimed it (Psa. 2, 16, 22, 110). So did Isaiah (Isa. 7, 9, 52, 53) and Zechariah (Zech. 12:10), to name only two of the Old Testament prophets. No doubt about it — Christianity teaches that Jesus is the only way to God.

But that begs a second question — why is this necessary? All the religions of the world assume too little about man's condition. They are not realistic. They assume man is not really that bad, that he is recoverable, that by following certain religious regimens laid down by various leaders, then one can find his way back to God. But the Bible says man has a deceitful heart (Jer. 17:9), that he has the poison of snakes under his lips, that his mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, that his feet are swift to shed innocent blood (Rom. 3:10ff). The evil and wickedness that lurks within each human heart is profound and ready to be unleashed at the slightest provocation. The slaughter of the Tutsis by the Hutus in Rwanda in 1994 is a horrific case in point. They hacked and brutally murdered their own countrymen, over six hundred thousand men, women, and children in less than two months. And because man is so wretched and murderous his life is plagued with guilt and shame that make it impossible for him to appear before the face of a holy God. The vision of Joshua the High Priest coming before God in a robe covered with excrement is a vivid illustration (Zech. 3:1ff) of how utterly unprepared we all are to appear before One whose eyes are a flame of fire, before One who is pure and undefiled holiness. The
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simple fact is that no religion, no philosopher, no moral man is pure enough to come before the true and living God who will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. Only Jesus, the pure and undefiled Son of God, fully God and fully man, the one who obeyed the law of God perfectly, who gave himself up on the cross, who suffered death, hell, and condemnation, who was then raised from the dead, is capable and willing to save people from their sins and to make them holy so that they can appear before God without sin or blemish. There is absolutely no other man or religion which can say or prove this.

But that leads to a third question — ‘But how can we know the Bible is true? After all, men wrote it, didn’t they? Isn’t the Bible full of errors?’ I have written extensively on this issue¹ so I will only briefly touch on it here. First, it is true that men wrote the Bible, but they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That is, God breathed into them the very words of God so that when they wrote in their own style, with their own limited or developed grammar and vocabulary, they wrote the very words of God, being carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16-17, 2 Pet. 1:21). Second, the Bible is also infallible (John 10:35). That is, the Bible is true in all it teaches. If it teaches that Jesus is the only way to God, then that is infallibly true. If it teaches that a husband is to love his wife sacrificially, if children are to submit to their parents, if parents are to discipline their children with the rod, then these things are all infallibly true. And third, the Bible is inerrant — that it is true in all it touches. If the Bible says that Moses parted the Red Sea and all Israel went through it while the Egyptian army was drowned, then this really happened. If the Bible says that the sun stood still and Joshua routed his enemy, then this really happened. If the Bible says that Jesus was born of a virgin, was crucified, and was raised from the dead, then these things really happened. Someone may well ask, ‘What about discrepancies in the Bible? How can we be sure that what we are reading in our English Bibles is really accurate? After all, we don’t have the original documents, right?’ True, but we do have the science of textual criticism² that allows us to piece together from the more than five thousand early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament what the original manuscripts did write. So, a good English translation, based on the science of textual criticism is 99.9% accurate. If no one challenges the accuracy of Homer’s Iliad, in which we have only a few hundred manuscripts, none of which were written any sooner than eight hundred years after the original; then why should anyone question the authenticity and accuracy of the more than five thousand New Testament documents, written within three hundred years of Christ, many of which were written within one hundred years of Jesus’ life and ministry!

And fourth — what must we do with this truth? As a believer, you must humble yourself with profound joy that God has done for you that which you could never do. He has given you Jesus. He has opened your eyes to see the truth. He has given you a new heart to love God and hate sin. And you must proclaim Jesus as the only way of salvation to any and all who will listen. And if you are not yet in Christ, put away your false notion of some measure of goodness. You are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. You have no hope in yourself or any other religion. You must flee to Christ to be saved. You must humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, acknowledge your sin, your complete and utter helplessness, and you must believe that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners, that he died for you, that he was raised again from the dead for you, that he can forgive all your sin, that he can and will give you the Holy Spirit who can enable you
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to walk in gospel holiness. You must turn from your sin and run to Jesus, the great lover of your soul. He alone has the words of eternal life.

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**Notes:**

1. See my devotional "Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?" (May 2011) for more extensive information on this issue.

2. Ibid.