



How Do We Know Christianity Is Right Out Of All The Religions?

JP Moreland

Introduction

Film illustration from 'The Stolen Summer' -Two boys

"Sir, I have to ask you to forgive me for what I have done to your family and your son. I've tried to get your son to change and be a Christian and I now know that that was terrible of me. It really doesn't matter what you believe. What matters is that you love people."

This message / idea, that it is intolerant if you actually think that a particular view might be true and that all views should be equally acceptable, is widely held by people today. While I can empathise, I don't think this point of view is true. Christianity is the one truth path to God.

Two questions

1. How should we approach this question? What view should I adopt for myself?
2. How I chose Christianity? Why Christianity?

1. How should we approach this question? What view should I adopt for myself?

"I'm going to pick a perspective based on what works for me."

Wonmug illustration

Wonmug's beliefs work for him. 'Everybody adores my work', 'My work is meaningful and important and I am adored and respected across the country.' Would you choose Wonmug's life? There is one thing more important than whether

or not a belief works for you. **Is it true?**

Problem: The various religions of the world contradict each other, they can't all be true. 'But isn't truth relative to each individual?'

Mother illustration.

What does my mother look like? There is one thing we all know – You can't all be right. What really matters? How tall my mother is, not how hard you believe a certain thing or how many people join you in it. The various world religions can't be true for the same reason. Buddhists – agnostic about God. Hindus – millions of Gods. Islam – Jesus is NOT God. Christianity centres on Jesus and his divinity.

Don't seek what works, seek what is true.

'Okay I have an alternative approach.' Pick and mix. The smorgasbord approach

- What is on the plate? Everything they like
- They always end up with a picture of God that looks just like the person who went looking for God
- You will be led by what you want to believe, rather than finding the true God.

We need to sift the evidence, to see if a case can be made. Of all the perspectives, Christianity is based upon truth and argument and evidence. How different this is from the other systems.

Islam. What if Mohammed was lying? You either accept it or reject it. There is no evidence.

2. How I chose Christianity? Why Christianity?

Of all the leaders in the world, Jesus alone claimed that he was God himself and backed that up with miracles and rising from the dead. If those things happened, then our quest for God stops with him.

So the question is: Are the NT documents historically reliable? I believe that they are, I'm going to give you three reasons. Please turn to Luke 1:1-4. Luke's intention was to record accurate history. Why should we believe that he did?

1. Whenever we put the NT to the test archaeologically, it has been confirmed over and over again. We have been able to verify many details that are merely incidental. Legend isn't like

this. Eg. the pools at Bethesda [John 5:2].

2. Jewish oral tradition. The disciples were to be very careful not to let legend and inaccuracy creep in.

3. The dating of the NT materials. A.N. Sherwin-White, 'Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament.' When an event happens and it is being retold up to 2 generations we get a solid core of information. We are within 6-7 years. Acts written 60-62 AD. Gospel of Luke had to be written earlier. Luke written 58-60 AD. Matthew and Mark before that. From Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection in 33 AD, this is within one generation. In Paul's letters, which can be dated to the latter part of the 30s, it is obvious that he is quoting creeds and established Christian beliefs. Jesus was regarded as God within 7-8 years. 'Jesus under Fire', J.P. Moreland. It is important for you to know that Christianity has evidence behind it. But at some point you have to step in and follow Christ as your personal saviour.

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