



The mind of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. Proverbs 18:15

Is Jesus the only way?

General question: How could it be fair for Jesus to be the only way to God?

Also asked as:

Don't all religions worship the same God ... just by different names?

Aren't all religions just different roads leading to the top of the same mountain?

Similar questions answered separately:

What happens to good people who do not believe in Jesus?

What about the heathen ...i.e., people who have never had a chance to hear about Jesus?

What happens to Jewish people who do not believe that Jesus is their Messiah?

What happens to mentally handicapped children ... or to those who die young?

A caution: Many people believe that *Jesus being the only way to God* comes from self-serving bigotry and narrow-mindedness on the part of Christians. In today's world of misdirected tolerance and political correctness, such a claim may be categorically rejected because of its apparent lack of inclusive tolerance.

The short answer:

Narrowness is not wrong because it is narrow. Actually, narrowness is necessary, expected, and hoped for in life-or-death situations. We would not want an anything-is-okay surgeon, pharmacist, airline mechanic, or pilot. Narrow-mindedness is wrong ... but narrowness is not wrong. However, narrowness is not the key issue. Truth is the key issue. Popular opinion, comfort, and desire do not create truth. The Bible states that Jesus is the only way to God. Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me,*" John 14:6 ... thereby excluding all other religions. Was He telling the truth ... or was He lying? If there is a list of multiple ways to God, Jesus would be a liar and therefore not on that list. Moreover, if all religious roads lead to God, then God would be unfair in applying different standards to different people. The only fair way is one equal way for everyone. Moreover, other religions are unfair because they do not resolve the problem of sin. They offer their own good works standard in hopes that God will overlook sin ... but He will not. Other religions offer no solution ... no payment for sin ... no forgiveness. They are unfair because they do not work. The exclusivity of the way of Jesus is fair because it is the same for all people ... and fair because it is offered to all. "*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for 'Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved,'*" Romans 10:12-13.

The longer answer:

Can it be fair for Jesus to be the only way to God? Many people struggle with the idea of Jesus being the only way to God. Some say that all religions are just different roads that lead to the top of the same mountain ... to a God of many names. However, the Bible and Jesus state something very different ... that is, that Jesus is the only way to God. This exclusiveness seems unfair, narrow-minded, and even bigoted to some people ... especially in today's climate of misdirected tolerance and political correctness. However, the only way of Jesus is actually the only fair way.

Narrowness is not wrong. Narrowness is neither right nor wrong in itself. As narrow-minded prejudice, it is totally wrong and irrational. However, in life-or-death situations we depend on narrowness. Think about the airplane mechanic repairing a plane's hydraulic system before take-off ... or the heart surgeon literally holding a life in his hands ... or the pharmacist mixing your life-sustaining medicine. In these, as in most important situations, narrowness is expected, necessary, and right. Man's eternal destiny is a life-or-death situation. Therefore, we should expect the way to God to be narrow. The narrowness of the way of Jesus does not make it wrong ... it actually makes it more credible. On the other hand, tolerance can be deadly. Would you be tolerant if you saw your playful two-year-old trying to put a nail file into an electrical outlet ... or if you noticed a bomb under a fellow-passenger's coat while boarding a plane ... or saw rat poison spilling into the sugar bin? Tolerance can be very dangerous. Narrowness can be very right.

Is it bigotry or is it Biblical? History is filled with people wrongly expressing their bigotry and prejudices in the name of religion ... even hypocritically in the name of Christianity. If *Jesus being the only way to God* is the arrogant claim of self-righteous bigots, then it should be categorically rejected and ignored. However, it does not come from self-righteous bigots. Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me,*" John 14:6. The Apostle Peter said, "*There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved,*" Acts 4:12. Similar unambiguous statements are made many times in the Bible, John 3:18, John 5:23, John 15:23, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, 1 John 2:23, 1 John 5:10-12 and Matthew 7:13-14. The Bible states that Jesus is the only way to God. He is not one of many ways. He is the only way. No one may redefine Jesus as being one of many ways to God. A Jesus that is one of many ways to God is not the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible is the only way to God. His way *does* exclude all other ways. However, He excludes no person from the opportunity to choose His way. He never excludes anyone based on prejudice and bigotry. All may come to Jesus ... but they must come His way. "*Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved,*" Romans 10:13.

Truth is the main issue. The *only way* message of Jesus is either both true *and* narrow ... or it is not true at all. The Bible gives us no other choice. Think about the concept of truth. What is truth based on? Truth is based on facts rather than on feelings, opinions, or reactions. Truth is not based on comfort ... morphine temporarily provides comfort as it reduces the pain of a burst appendix, but it is no cure. Sincerity does not create truth ... a pharmacist's sincerity will not make a right prescription from the wrong ingredients. For centuries, most people believed that the world was flat ... but majority opinion did not change reality. Intensity of feelings and great desire will not win the lottery ... wrong numbers just do not win the prize. In addition, multiple choice is not necessary ... no one would reject an *only* cure for cancer because it was the *only* cure. The truth of Jesus being the only way to God is independent of circum-

stances, feelings, comfort, and response. If His way is true, then His way is true whether we reject it or accept it. Our reaction does not change the truth of the Bible. The words of Jesus are true. He is the only way to God.

Aren't most religions the same? The answer is that they are different ... but most are also very much the same. The differences can be significant in doctrines, rituals, and traditions. They vary in their basis of authority, that is, in the credibility and reliability of their core writings. However, most religions are also very much the same. Underneath their external differences is one basic shared path to man's eternal destiny ... i.e., the quality of your life after death is dependent on the quality of your behavior before death. In other words, your present effort in following one of their varied prescribed codes of social and religious behavior determines your eternal destiny. Most religions are man reaching out to find and appease God. In this way, most religions are very much the same. However, the way of Jesus is very different.

The way of Jesus is unique in that it does not share the common path to one's eternal destiny that the other religions teach. Other religions are essentially man seeking God. Christianity is God seeking man. *"God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him,"* 1 John 4:9. *"For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost,"* Luke 19:10. The proposed way to God through other religions is by *good works* ... doing good to try to appease Him. However, the way of Jesus is not by good works. *"No man can justify himself before God by a perfect performance of the Law's demands — indeed it is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are,"* Romans 3:20 (Phillips translation). *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast,"* Ephesians 2:8,9. The way of Jesus is not based on our efforts ... it is based on His effort. Faith in Jesus is what is required rather than good works. *"A man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus,"* Galatians 2:16. Other religions claim that if you do enough good works then their gods might overlook your sins ... not forgive or remove them ... just overlook them. They offer no real solution to our sin problem. However, the way of Jesus is different. If we believe in Jesus ... then our sins are paid for, forgiven, and taken away. *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,"* 1 Peter 2:24. *"Through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins,"* Acts 10:43. *"As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us,"* Psalm 103:12. The way of Jesus is the only way based on our faith rather than our works ... based on God's work rather than our own works. The only way of Jesus is the only way that solves our sin problem.

How can this only way of Jesus be fair? The answer is quite simple. The way of Jesus is fair because it is equitable ... impartial, just, evenhanded, and unbiased. It is fair because it is equally applied and offered to all. The only equitable way for God to treat all people is to do so in just one way. Other religions suggest many different standards of behavior to appease God ... i.e., different standards for different people. These standards are not equal. If all religions lead to God, then God is unfair because that would mean that He judges different people by different standards. However, God is fair. He is fair because He judges all people in just one way ... and because He offers everyone the same one way. The way of Jesus is the only equitable and fair way.

Jesus offers a solution. Sin separates us from a righteous God. If God were to overlook sin, He would be compromising Himself by essentially approving of evil. However, He does not approve of sin ... not now and not in eternity. Sin separates us from God. *"But your iniquities have made a separation between you*

and your God," Isaiah 59:2. Our sin problem needs to be solved. Other religions offer no solution. In them, their followers must hope that their good works will outweigh their bad deeds ... and that God will somehow overlook their record of sin or grade on a curve (arbitrarily bump failing grades up to passing grades). However, a righteous God cannot and will not do that. Sin must be punished. The good news is that Jesus took our punishment. He paid for our sins on the cross. Moreover, God offers forgiveness to all through faith in Jesus. Our sins are forgiven and removed when we put our personal faith in Jesus. Either we pay for our sins by being eternally separated from God, or we accept Christ's payment for our sins by believing in Him. Jesus offers the only solution to our sin problem.

The final test of the fairness of a way to God is its effectiveness. Can it work? Does it work? Other religions are like roads leading toward the top of a mountain. In other religions ... by monumental, life-long effort, you must attempt to reach the summit via their good-works roads. However, no one, by his or her own efforts, can satisfy a perfect and righteous God. Therefore, the roads of other religions are unfair because they cannot be climbed to the top. No one can reach the summit by good works. The way of Jesus is different. He asks that we simply recognize that the mountain cannot be climbed by anyone but God. For us, the climb is impossible. We cannot be good enough. However, Jesus is God. He climbed the mountain ... He led a perfect life. Then He paid for our sin on the cross. And now, He offers to take us to the summit ... if we simply believe in Him.

No other Gods. The Bible states it clearly ... *"To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him,"* Deuteronomy 4:35. Worshipping other gods is forbidden ... *"You shall have no other gods before Me,"* Deuteronomy 5:7. *"I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images,"* Isaiah 42:8. Idolatry is wrong ... *"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,"* Exodus 20:4-5. The Bible also states that Jesus is man's only possible connection to God ... *"For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time,"* I Timothy 2:5-6. Those who do not honor Jesus do not honor God the Father ... *"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him,"* John 5:22-23. Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me,"* John 14:6. What do you say?

The choice is ours ... the choice is yours. He gives each of us the choice. We can choose other ways and spend our lives attempting to climb unfair, impossible roads by good works. Or we can choose the fair and possible way of Jesus. Putting your faith in Jesus is a simple step. It is a decision to *believe in* Jesus ... to invite Him to be your Savior. No one can make that decision for you. You must take that step on your own. If you want to take the way of Jesus ... if you want to be sure that Jesus is yours, then I invite you visit www.91IGOD.org to learn how to do that.

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