

**What About Other Religions?
For the week of 4/21/24**

Reflection

1. What were some of the takeaways, for you, from Sunday's sermon?

2. Were there questions, comments, concerns...?

The exclusivist claim of Jesus to be the only way humans can access God and be saved (John 14:6) is extremely unpopular and far from politically correct. But the criticism leveled against Christianity on this count is quite unjustified. Every religion makes exclusive claims. That is what makes them distinct religions. The answers to who Jesus is and what must be done to attain salvation differ from religion to religion.

Another way of thinking about this is by considering the saying, "All roads lead to Rome." Some believe that each religion is like a different road leading to the same place (religious pluralism). This quickly falls apart when we look at each road's direction. One says Rome is everywhere. One says Rome is in oneself. One says Rome is unknowable. One says Rome doesn't even exist. But one says Rome is in a specific place and can only be gotten to in a very specific way. Really, instead of all roads leading to Rome, all roads lead to their own exclusive destination and do not even intersect. They may even each call their destinations "Rome," but they do not mean the same things by it. Either all the roads are wrong or only one is right. There are no other options.¹

All truth is exclusive by definition. Contradictory statements cannot each be true at the same time and in the same way. This is why people do not adhere to more than one religion simultaneously. There are no Islamic Christians. Rather, they convert their thinking about God, themselves, and the world from one way to another.

One last thing to consider is this: If Jesus is not the exclusive avenue to salvation, but just one way, then why did He die? Why did He live at all? For what possible reason would God become incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, live a life of perfect obedience, service, and self-denial, suffer torture, and then execution in one of the most horrible ways imaginable if there were plenty of other avenues to God? Only a cruel and sadistic God, a God far from being worthy of worship by any religion, would perpetrate such a gratuitous and evil act. For those who say there is no fundamental difference between religions, this is the God they are left with.²

¹ Doug Powell, [Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006), 326–327.

² Doug Powell, [Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2006), 327.

3. In the seven “I AM” statements of Christ, recorded in John’s Gospel, Jesus states that he is the only way to the Father (John 14:6). How can this statement be so exclusive, yet be a statement of truth and love?

Tim Keller stated, “Everyone has exclusive beliefs. Therefore, which set of exclusive beliefs creates love, peace, and unity? Instead of looking at what all religions have in common, look at the things in the Christian Gospels that are unique and different than other religions. These are what make you agents of reconciliation and peace in the world.” Keller continues to highlight three steps of salvation through Christ, using I John 4:1-10.

First: The origin of Jesus’ salvation – God comes into the world (Is 7:14; Matt 1:23; I John 4:2)

“Other religions are seeking how to be good, obtain enlightenment, where in Christ, God came to us.”

Second: The purpose of Jesus’ salvation – Jesus came in the flesh (I John 4:2) “Other religions are trying to escape the flesh; Jesus came to redeem it.

Third: The method of Jesus’ salvation – grace – “Other religions are based on one’s performance where Christ saves through grace and grace alone. In I John 4:10 ¹⁰“In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.³”

The words of Jesus, on the face of them, seem exclusive (John 14:6). When, in actuality, it is a statement of true direction that leads to God in order to avoid false roads. Salvation through Christ is extremely inclusive (John 3:16).

In the swirling chaos of arguments from atheism (disbelief in God) to pantheism (tolerates all gods), and from inclusion to exclusion, how are we as believers to respond?

Please read II Corinthians 10:3-6, Ephesians 6:10-20, I John 4:1-10 and answer the following questions:

4. What are we truly wrestling/battling against?

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 1 Jn 4:10.

5. Where does our strength, wisdom, and power come from?

6. What are we called to do?

“We don’t use sociology, psychology, or political science as the lens to view the Bible. We need to use the Bible as the lens to critique the world.”

–Voddie Baucham