

# CHRISTIANITY IN A RELIGIOUSLY DIVERSE WORLD

## Session 1

### The Bible and the Challenge of Religious Diversity

#### Outline

---

#### I. Religious Diversity

- a. 7 in 10 religious Americans say that many religions can lead to eternal life.

#### II. The Challenge

- a. Truth
- b. Confidence
- c. Evangelism
- d. Salvation
- e. What is the fate of the unevangelized?

#### III. A Bad Answer: Relativism

- a. Definition
- b. Is self-defeating

#### IV. Outlining the Answers

- a. **Pluralism**: all religions lead to salvation.
- b. **Universalism**: all the unevangelized are saved.
- c. **Inclusivism**: most of the unevangelized are saved.
- d. **Restrictivism**: none of the unevangelized are saved.

- e. **Accessibilism:** all of the unevangelized can be saved, but only some are.

## V. What Does the Bible Say?

- a. There is a God (Isaiah 44:6; 1 Timothy 2:5; Deuteronomy 32:39a; Psalm 18:31; Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3)
- b. Mankind's Condition (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23a; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 1:8)
- c. General Revelation
  - i. In Nature (Psalm 19:1; Acts 17:28-29; Acts 14:16-17; Romans 1:18-20)
    - 1. There is a God.
    - 2. He created the world.
    - 3. He has great majesty.
    - 4. He is kind and loving.
    - 5. God is a living being like us, not one made of metal or stone.
    - 6. He is eternal.
    - 7. He is powerful.
    - 8. He possesses those properties normally associated with deity.
    - 9. God has a just wrath against wickedness.
    - 10. And the recognition that certain sins deserve God's judgement.
  - ii. In Conscience (Romans 1:32; Romans 2:14-15)
    - 1. There is a moral law to which people are held accountable.
    - 2. People fail to live up to it. They break the moral law.

3. People know their sins are wrong.

d. Where is Salvation to be Found?

- i. What Jesus taught (Matthew 11:27; Luke 12:8-9; John 3:16-17; John 10:28; John 3:18; John 3:36; John 14:6)
- ii. What the early disciples taught (John 1:12; Acts 2:37-38; Acts 4:12; Acts 16:30-31)
- iii. Paul (2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 Thess. 5:9)
- iv. The other NT authors (Hebrews 7:25; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:9)
- v. Only Jesus saves (1 Timothy 2:5-6; 1 John 5:11-12)

a. Who Will Be Saved? (Matthew 7:13-14; Matthew 7:21; Galatians 5:19-21)

b. Romans

- a. Universal access to knowledge of God, the ungodly reject it (Romans 1:18-21)
- b. Rejection leads to idolatry (Romans 1:22-25)
- c. All people are affected by sin (Romans 3:9-12)
- d. Salvation was purchased by Christ's sacrifice and is appropriated by faith (Romans 3:21-24)
- e. Only Jesus can bring salvation (Romans 5:17; Romans 6:23)
- f. God will judge everyone fairly based upon their response to the revelation they've received (Romans 2:6-16)

- c. So what does the Bible teach?
  - a. God exists and is the creator of all things.
  - b. All people fail to meet God's moral law and are justly condemned.
  - c. Salvation from just punishment and reconciliation with God is only possible through Christ's atoning death on the cross.
  - d. Acceptance of Christ as Lord and Savior leads to life, but rejecting Him keeps men condemned.
  - e. None can excuse themselves because all have access to basic knowledge of God through his General Revelation in nature and conscience.
  - f. Rejection of God's revelation leads to futile idolatry.
  - g. God will judge everyone fairly.
  - h. Most will not fare well.
- d. What about Missions? (Matthew 9:36-38; Luke 9:1-6, c.f. Matthew 10:5-20; Luke 10:1-3; Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:14-15; 2 Peter 3; Matthew 24:14)