

CHRISTIANITY IN A RELIGIOUSLY DIVERSE WORLD

Session 6

Summary, Final Thoughts, and Practical Applications

Outline

- I. Summary
 - 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. Narrow Accessibilism: the unevangelized have access to salvation, but few or perhaps none receive it.
- II. Other Minor Views
 - A. Agnosticism
 - B. God Saves Based on What People Would Have Done
 - i. No faith needed
 - ii. Cuts both ways
 - iii. Why would God bother waiting (2 Peter 3:9)
 - iv. Salvation but also damnation of infants
 - C. Post-Mortem Evangelism
 - i. No room in Hebrews 9:27
 - ii. They'd still reject God
 - iii. Makes earthly life meaningless
- III. Narrow Accessibilism
 - A. Insights from other views
 - i. Pluralism: there is some truth available to all people.
 - ii. Universalism: God loves all people and desires everyone to be saved.
 - iii. Inclusivism: in the past some people have been saved without any knowledge of Christ and perhaps may still be able to do so.
 - iv. Restrictivism: the pessimistic prospects of salvation without knowledge of Christ.
 - B. God is sovereign
 - C. God loves all people
 - D. God wants to save all those who would accept salvation
 - E. Therefore, it is possible for the unevangelized to receive salvation. But few, or perhaps none, actually do receive it.
 - F. However, it is the job of each of us to study and think through the issues and come to our own conclusions.
- IV. Final Thoughts and Questions

- A. Whatever view we hold has to make sense of the basic teachings of Scripture.
 - B. If any unevangelized have received salvation without hearing the gospel, they will also respond positively to hearing the gospel.
 - C. The Bible does not say why God allow other religions.
 - D. Studying other religions can be profitable
 - i. Theological refinement by encounters with challenges
 - ii. Inspiring us with individuals of other faiths that exemplify a particular moral virtue
 - E. Perhaps children are not sinful, since they do not comprehend the moral dimension of their actions. Therefore, they are simply ushered into heaven.
- V. Practical Applications
- A. General Revelation aids in evangelism
 - B. Learning from other religions can be profitable
 - i. Profitable for teaching
 - ii. Profitable in apologetics
 - iii. Opposition can help perfect Christian doctrines
 - iv. Can be dangerous
 - C. We can be optimistic about the reach and effect of the Gospel
- VI. Conclusion

Further Reading:

- **Conversion stories illustrating the religious culture and thought patterns of many Hindus and of many Muslims:** *“Death of a Guru”* by Rabindranath Maharaj; *“Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus: A Devout Muslim Encounters Christianity”* by Nabeel Qureshi.
- **Gaining confidence in and a game plan for sharing your faith:** *“Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions”* by Greg Koukl
- **A series of guides for discussions with members of some specific religions:** *“Reasoning from the Scriptures with...”* series by Ron Rhodes.
- **Analysis of Old and New Testament, and early church fathers, on why God allows other religions:** *“God’s Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions? Insights from the Bible and the Early Church”* by Gerald R. McDermott
- **Answering common questions related to which religion is true:** *“True for You but Not for Me”* by Paul Copan.
- **Arguments for God and Christianity:** *“On Guard”* or the more advanced version *“Reasonable Faith”* both by William Lane Craig; *“I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist”* by Frank Turek and Norman Geisler.
- **Basics of Christianity:** *“Mere Christianity”* by C.S. Lewis.