

Is Jesus the Only Way?

SUMMARY: Jesus is the only way and mediator; apart from Whom there is no salvation. To say it simply, the Bible really leaves no room for claims which speak of other or various means to be reconciled to God. In the end, there is one Lord and one faith. The Scriptures quite clearly assert the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as the one and only mediator between God and man. It is His death which is the sacrifice that appeases God's hatred toward sin, and it is His resurrection which proves the efficacy of the offering.

At The Village Church we teach and preach the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father, and to receive justification, heaven, eternal life, the kingdom, salvation, et al. In accordance with the very words of the Lord and His inspired apostles, we confess that He alone is the way, the truth and the life. Within God's divine prerogative and providence, He appointed Christ from the before the foundation of the world to be the one and only mediator, redeemer and Savior through which He would, did, is currently, and will one day fully accomplish reconciliation.

The Bible gives clear and explicit evidence to the fact of Christ's exclusivity in passages such as:

- John 3:18 "He who believes in him is not condemned; *he who does not believe is condemned already*, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."
- John 14:6 "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; *no one comes to the Father, but by me.*"
- Acts 4:12 "*there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*"
- 1 Timothy 2:5-6 "For there is one God, and *there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...*"

From the testimony above, we can see that Jesus is the only way and mediator, apart from Whom there is no salvation. To say it simply, the Bible really leaves no room for claims which speak of other or various means to be reconciled to God. In the end, there is one Lord and one faith as Ephesians 4:5 reminds us. This faith rests in the efficacious and substitutionary death of Christ Jesus for our sins.

Romans 3:21-26 *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it - the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Walking through this text of Romans we will notice a few things:

- Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ
- This righteousness comes to all who believe
- All people, Jew and Gentile, have sinned and are in need of grace
- Justification is a gift of God's grace
- Redemption is in Christ Jesus
- Jesus is our propitiation¹
- God justifies those who have faith in Jesus

The Scriptures quite clearly assert the exclusivity of Jesus Christ as the one and only mediator between God and man. It is His death which is the sacrifice that appeases God's hatred toward sin, and it is His resurrection which proves the efficacy of the offering. It is faith in Him which enables His people to enter into the blessings which He has purchased. There is absolutely no way to the Father but through the Son.

Common Objections

In discounting this understanding of Christ's death, persons often inquire about devout and religious men and women who are not believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ. First, we must remember that there is none who rightly seeks after God (Romans 3:10-12). Even the most "devout" and "religious" are mired and enslaved by sin. Neither their good works nor their discipline will ever break such bonds. Second, we know that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). As we stated earlier, there is really only one faith (Ephesians 4:5) and it rests in a triune God. Those who claim to believe in a God other than He Who has from eternity existed as Father, Son and Spirit, are misled in their beliefs.²

Although many who would hold to a plurality of ways to God point to the example of Cornelius from Acts 10 as an example

¹ Propitiation is a fancy word for the sacrifice which satisfies God's just wrath against sin.

² The Bible specifically relates loving the Father to loving the Son. Therefore, if one does not love the Son, neither does he love the Father. You cannot claim to love God and yet not love Jesus. See particularly John 5:23 and 15:23.

of devout and godly men being saved, the narrative explicitly teaches not plurality, but singularity. This is made explicit in Peter's retelling of the story in Acts 11:14 "he (Peter) will declare to you (Cornelius) a message by which you will be saved". What was the instrument through which salvation came? The message of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:34-43). If Cornelius could have been saved simply because he was devout then the gospel would have been superfluous, but such was not the case. Though he was devout and "feared God," it was still through Christ alone that he was justified in God's sight.

In the end, everyone who has truly heard from the true God will come to Christ (John 6:45). Someone who claims to have faith in God, but not in Christ is evidenced to be misled and mistaken as there is only one God and He is Father, Son and Spirit.

A last objection to this understanding is that it is intolerant. In response, I would say that Christians are bound by Scripture in what they can rightly believe and teach. God has spoken through His prophets and apostles within the pages of the Bible and the judgments that He has rendered within are binding upon all His creatures. The Bible clearly teaches that Christ is the only way and that outside of faith in Him, all will perish. This should not inspire bigotry or hatred, but rather a humble love for the lost which beckons believers to share the message of God's salvation to a broken world.

It seems as though this interpretation of tolerance merely highlights the postmodern tendency to equate toleration with acceptance. We do not "accept" or believe that other faiths are viable means to God because they are not. God and God alone decides how men and women may come to Him and, in His great wisdom, He has chosen one way, the life, death and resurrection of His only Son.

Conclusion

Does our lack of acceptance of other beliefs manifest "intolerance"? No, the terms are not synonymous. How unloving, unkind, uncompassionate and hateful it would be of us to not share God's revealed means of reconciling the world with those who are perishing. To deny the exclusivity of Christ (an objective reality according to the inerrant Scriptures) in the name of tolerance is indicative of either disbelief in the Bible or hatred toward those in danger of the judgment of which it warns. This is not tolerance.

Acts 17:30-31 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

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