

IS CHRISTIANITY ARROGANT?

Question 1: Isn't it arrogant for us to believe that Christianity is the only true path to heaven? ... History is chock full of examples of people who have strayed very far from the path while believing they were right (Jones, Koresh, FLDS, Radical Jihadists, Crusades, etc. etc.). Are we like them? If you believe God can do all things, it isn't that much of a stretch to believe He could offer up several different pathways to heaven. He created all of us, He loves all of us, it seems to me a much bigger stretch that He'd omit some simply because they were born and raised in cultures who were following one of the other paths.

COULDN'T GOD OFFER DIFFERENT PATHS?

Question: Could God offer several different paths to heaven?

Answer: It doesn't matter what God **could** do. It only matters what God _____ do.

Edwin Arlington Robinson: The world is a kind of spiritual kindergarten where millions of bewildered infants are trying to spell "God" with the wrong blocks.

Isaiah 55.8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

THE CHARGE OF ARROGANCE

Question: Is it arrogant to think that Christianity is the only way to God?

Answer: Not if, in fact, Christianity is the _____ to God.

If there is one true answer and you believe you have it, saying, "I'm sure there are other answers that are just as good as mine," wouldn't be humble.

It would be foolish; in fact, it would be _____.

In my humble opinion **the real question we should be asking** is not: Is it arrogant to claim that Christianity is the truth?

But: Is what Christianity teaches about God and how to please him and how to get to heaven _____?

And: Is it more true than other religions which claim to be paths to God?

RELIGIONS ARE ABOUT TRUTH

The purpose of religion is not to help us understand ourselves or fill our lives with _____.

The purpose of religion is not to _____ us from the harsh realities of life.

The purpose of religion is not to make our lives "_____".

The purpose of every religion is to tell us _____ about spiritual reality.

Judging religious ideas and critiquing beliefs – that doesn't make us arrogant;
it makes us _____ and rational.

We can put forth our beliefs and critique the views of others with clarity and with conviction and still not be arrogant.

1 Peter 3:15: ... Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with **gentleness and respect**.

If we fail to share what we believe with gentleness and respect, then no matter how right our answers, we're still getting it wrong, and we _____ Christ.

But if there is truth, and if discovering it and living by it are important, we should be able to seek it and discuss it, and even disagree about it – and not have to fear being called arrogant or _____.

Religions are about truth – not feelings or sincerity or who's a good person.

TRUTH CLAIMS ARE EXCLUSIVE

Ravi Zacharias: If truth does not exclude, it's just an opinion that is being stated. Any time you make a truth claim, you mean something contrary to it is false. Truth excludes its opposite.

Religions, all religions, make truth claims – every religion claims to explain reality.

They all claim to give _____ about reality's most important questions.

We honor the answers that other religions give by taking them seriously enough to study them, think them through, and where they are true, accept them; and where they are false, _____ them.

Religions are about truth; the most important truths there are.

And so they should be judged on whether or not they are _____ in portraying what's true.

THE TRUTH CLAIMS OF ALL RELIGIONS CANNOT BE RECONCILED

The answers that religions give to critically important questions are _____.
And that means they can't all be true.

Religions do not teach _____.

Religions can contain mysteries – beliefs and ideas that are beyond our understanding.

But “Jesus was divine” (Christianity) and “Jesus was not divine” (Islam) – that's not a mystery; that's a _____.

Both beliefs cannot both be true.

The death of Jesus on the cross saves us from our sins and we receive salvation by faith in Christ (that's Christianity).

The death of Jesus does not make salvation possible and faith in him does not save us from our sins (that's Islam and other world religions).

These beliefs cannot be reconciled so that they turn out to be two different paths to the same goal.

If one is true, the other is _____.

What is God Like?

Christianity: God is _____ from his creation.

Hinduism: Reality is one. God is not distinct from his creation. Everything that is – is God – including you and me.

Christianity: God is a _____ being (will, intellect, purpose).

Hinduism: God is impersonal, possessing none of those qualities.

Buddhism: Some Buddhists are agnostic, others believe in many gods, and others are atheistic.

What is Heaven Like?

Christianity: In heaven personal beings (us) will commune with a personal God (Yahweh, aka “not us”).

Hinduism: Describes heaven as a drop of water returning to the ocean – your consciousness melds into the one divine consciousness and you no longer exist as an _____.

Buddhism: Describes enlightenment as a candle being snuffed out – again, you no longer exist as an individual being.

So, are there many true paths to heaven?

In some ways, it's a nonsensical question.

Because the eastern religions don't believe that what we conceive of as heaven – personal beings in relationship with a personal God – is _____.

What's the Problem?

Christianity: _____ against God.

Hinduism: _____ concerning our divinity.

Buddhism: _____ that leads to suffering.

How are We Made Right with God?

Christianity: God's Son died for our sins and his death was both _____ and sufficient to pay for our sins. We receive this gift by faith in Jesus.

All Other Religions: Deny that Jesus was uniquely divine and that his death saves us. The vast majority of the world's religions teach that “salvation” is not a gift of grace, but something that we achieve or _____.

Ephesians 2.8-9: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

DOES IT MATTER WHAT YOU BELIEVE AS LONG AS YOU ARE SINCERE?

W. F. Buckley: I won't insult your intelligence by suggesting that you really believe what you just said.

PARTING THOUGHTS

1. You don't have to worry about what God might do or what paths he could have created.

We know what he did do – he sent Jesus Christ, his Son, to die for your sins and pay a debt you could never pay.

2. Christianity invites _____.

Christianity is the most _____ of all the religions because it teaches that you have every right to check it out and reject it if it's wrong.

1 Corinthians 15.14-15: And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead.

If the Gospel can't stand the light of scrutiny and investigation, then you have every right to reject it.

But if true, it's not one of many truths – it is the truth and we should embrace it as such.

YOU ASKED FOR IT!

Week 1: Is Christianity Arrogant?

Week 2: What about those who Never Hear the Gospel?

Week 3: What Should Christians Think about Homosexuality?

Week 4: Why Are Women so Weird?

Week 5: Why is it so Hard to Live a Christian Life?

Week 6: What's Hell Like and Who Goes There?

Week 7: How Do I Balance Family, Work and Faith?

Week 8: Does God Predestine Some People to Heaven and Others to Hell?

WAYS TO COMMUNICATE – PLEASE DON'T SEND ME EMAILS.

1. Write your thoughts, questions, tirades and invectives at: QuestYouAskedForIt.com
2. Come to breakfast on Wednesdays (beginning January 25) at the Waterway Marriott 6:30 – 8:00 am.