

Is Jesus really God? Is He the only way?

Ever heard the expression, “We are all climbing the same mountain. I’m just taking a different route than you.” This idea comes up regularly today when talking about religion.

What do you think it means?

This belief makes the claim that everyone is ascending the mountain to heaven and any route one takes will get them there. So, a Hindu will get to heaven on their route, and a Muslim will get there with their route, an atheist, Christian, Shinto, you name it, will all see the kingdom of God based on their belief system. The reason this thought process is so attractive today is because it sounds so inclusive. No one gets left behind, there is no punishment for our actions on this side of life, everybody gets a happy ending and no one has to get offended. But there is a problem... Almost every major world religion preaches exclusivity. Buddhism claims you must follow the teaching of buddha or repeat the cycle of suffering. Islam claims one must follow the five pillars of Islam or be labeled a “pagan” and will have no place with Allah. Christianity claims one must accept the free gift of grace through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross in order to be saved. At best, we are all climbing different mountains, but if that’s true, there must be one correct preverbal mountain that leads to salvation.

How can we be sure its Christianity? Why do we know its Jesus? Is Christianity exclusive? Why or why not? All of these are super important question to ask as we take our relationship with Jesus deeper. So, as we dive into this topic, please feel free to ask questions, join conversation, and be involved in discussion because these are topics your friends are trying to answer right now.

(Reiterate that you may not be able to answer every question they may have right now or that they may have questions at the end they want to address. That’s awesome! Let them know you are happy to meet with them and talk more about these questions.)

Introducing the Topic

Use these questions to help gauge what students already know about the subject and help them begin to verbally process what may be misconceptions or partial understandings pf this topic.

Let’s address the previous questions. If a friend were to ask questions like

- How can we be sure its Christianity?
- Why do we know its Jesus?
- Is Christianity exclusive? Why or why not?

How would you respond?

Those are huge questions and maybe you feel totally prepared to answer those questions, maybe you've never thought about it. But today we want to start the dialogue as to why Christians believe Jesus is the way into God's kingdom.

Scripture Study

As you transition to the Scripture Study portion of this session, remind students that Scripture is where we turn for truth. We want to continually reiterate that we study Scripture not just for the "Christian take" on a matter, but God's revealed word, given to us out of love for our good.

First, let's start with something we can all agree with. Everyone has done something wrong in their life correct? Stolen something (even a pencil) lied about something (what grade you got) whatever it may be.

Turn to Romans 3:23. All of us have fallen short of God's perfect standard. And if we have fallen short of God's perfect standard then we do not have the ability to enter God's presence.

- Thoughts on that?
- Does that seem fair or unfair? Explain your answer.

Now turn to Romans 6:23. We are told in the first half that not only have we all fallen short of God's perfect standard, but we all deserve death because we fell short. Brutal... But what comes in the second half? The **FREE** gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- So why is the gift free?
- Why did it come from Christ Jesus?

Great questions! Check out Romans 5:17 (*feel free to use any other verse to make this point. You can see several in Romans 5 but seriously there are so many places you can land this plane.*) Because of one man (Adam) death reigned (sin entered the world) but in another man (Jesus) people can receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness.

- But again, why did it have to be Jesus?

Because there was an infinite debt that needed to be paid of all men and women from all time's crimes against God. Therefore, an infinite price needed to be given and who or what is the only infinite being? God. Enter, Jesus.

Look at Jesus' claim John 10:30. He claims that he and God the father are one, that no one gets to the father except through him. That is a mighty bold statement. How can we know That Jesus was truly who he said he was? Well there are SOOOO many ways to answer that question and arguments have been made in just about any realm of study you can think of, but for today let's look at C.S. Lewis' (the author of the chronicles of Narnia) argument "Lier, Lunatic, Lord"

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: “I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.” That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange, or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God.”

- What has stood out to you in any of what we read?
- Do you agree with Lewis that these are the only three options when it comes to believing who Jesus was?
- So, if Jesus is God, does it make sense that he is the only one who could pay the infinite price of our sins?

Practical Application

We want students to be able to contextualize what Scripture teaches to their daily life. This portion of the conversation is centered around the practical application of the text, and aimed at helping students actually integrate this truth into their walk with the Lord.

- Now having had discussion on this topic “is Jesus God, is he the only way” what are your thoughts?
- Do you have any follow up questions?
- Would one or two people be willing to summarize what we discussed today

As always feel free to ask your leaders any follow up questions and remember no question is off limits or make you a bad Christian or anything like that. God is honored when you try to learn more about him. He wants you to ask questions about him, and learn more about his character. It will only help you in the long run to ask questions.