

Chapter 14, Christianity and other Religions

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

When the good Jew or atheist or whatever religion is saved they are not saved by their Judaism or atheism or whatever but by the power of Christ. That is all that we mean by saying that Jesus is the only saviour.

Reason Says

They want to say this to avoid the accusation that religion is divisive and causes wars.

If Christians can claim that Christ is the only way to salvation, then so can other faiths. They can even state that you need explicit faith in their creed to be saved.

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Christians make exclusive claims for Christ not Christianity. It is Christ that saves not Christianity. If people find this arrogant, then the answer is that it is Christ that made this claim not us and it would be arrogant for us to try and change the message given to us by Christ.

Reason replies:

So an arrogant claim is not arrogant when Christ makes it?

It is arrogant for it is saying, "No matter what saviours you have ours is the real one. This is a fact." It is pride. Christians may as well then make exclusive claims for Christianity too! The authors seem to be glad and smug about not making exclusive claims about Christianity.

But Jesus said that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand and said that the Church was his kingdom. He condemned denominationism and affirmed clearly in this that nobody can be saved or a Christian unless they know of him and the salvation he brought. They must profess the Christian dogmas. If pagans are saved and don't know they are in union with Christ then if they disapprove of the Church he founded we have the kingdom divided against itself that Christ said didn't exist in his religious system.

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You can't call any religion wholly untrue.

Reason replies:

The Mormon believing that stealing is wrong on the authority of the revelations of Joseph Smith is right that stealing is wrong. But is this an overlap with being against stealing because it hurts people? No. What the Mormon is condemning is the disobedience to divine revelation not the stealing as such. Stealing is a form of harming and religion teaches that God may require us to harm for a good purpose. If God tells us to kill in war to defend ourselves so he can let us steal. He can tell us to do it but it wouldn't be a sin then. So the overlap is only superficial. "Don't steal", says the Mormon. "Don't steal", says the humanitarian but they only look like they are saying the same thing. The meaning is different. The Catholic saying, "Don't steal", because the Church says so is not saying the same thing as the Muslim saying, "Don't steal", because of the Koran. Any religion that is based on the wrong foundation is therefore wholly untrue.

A religion that is right on something by chance is not right in the proper sense of the word. It got it right by luck not by conviction or knowledge. There has to be a link with knowledge for something to be right. Right or true means to say or believe something that conforms with reality or matches what is real. So even if a religion is "right" on something that does not make it really right.

If a planet Vulcan were discovered through a telescope and blazoned across the newspapers of the world and a tribe is found with an ancient tradition about a similar planet just where the new planet was found does that mean that the tribe was right? No because they believed in the planet because of mythology and not because they looked at what was out there. It only looks like they were right. From the viewpoint of justice, a student who does a multiple choice exam and passes because of a question that he or she just guessed the answer to does not deserve to pass. The answer wasn't right in his or her mind. It just happened to be right according to a standard.

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The view that all religions despite the differences are one at their core in the essentials is heterodox or heresy.

Reason replies:

This view teaches that they reach out to a loving power to love others and serve the world. What is to stop somebody saying that the inner core of religion is hypocrisy for no religious person claims to follow their religion well and do good well. The inner core can be anything. And besides, it is not enough to be right at the core. It's the baggage that comes with the core that is the problem and which will undo any good done by the core. The differences simply cannot be ignored.

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Different religions respecting and tolerating each other is indifference. You only tolerate differences that you don't consider very important.

Reason replies:

True. Glad to see that you admit your religion is bigoted and willing to contribute to war in the world. If Islam grew so powerful that it was going to Nuke Europe unless the Catholic Church admitted to its lies and renounced its teachings the Church would refuse. The Catholic faith values religion above life. It says the worst crime ever was the death of Jesus Christ who was God meaning that if there is a choice between him dying and a million babies being tortured to death then let the children die. And it says that God is to be loved above all even your own life. God runs the universe and holds all life in the palm of his hand so if millions die for his truth it is his will. The anger that such a horrific idea is God's truth would put into Catholics could lead them to violent acts against other religions. These days religion is so sweet that one can hardly tell what it is really like.

Christianity expects other religions to tolerate it. Most religions find religions like this that put God before humanity or a hypothesis before people to be evil and dangerous to believe in. When a Christian believes in Hell or everlasting punishment even for their wife, husband or parent or child or a person with lifelong sickness and misery if they don't obey the faith that Christian is plainly declaring God to be more important than people. Religion should be kept within the confines of what is best for people. Religion if necessary at all, should be made for people not vice versa. If you have the right to declare that sinners go to Hell forever then what is to stop somebody from insisting that they have the right to believe that women are inferior to men? It would be better to believe that women are inferior than to believe that there should be a Hell. Christians reply that they do not believe there should be a Hell but stubborn sinners have to go somewhere. They always try to make their opponents look bad. So what we will say is that they believe there should be a Hell for these sinners from which they cannot escape.

To say that your loved ones should be sent to Hell forever if God rejects them is to say that faith is of supreme importance and more important than any person.

You may say that a murderer should be put to death. In saying that, you are saying that the victim's life is so important that it can only be atoned by taking the killer's life. So by saying somebody should go to Hell forever or unbelief or because they lived in sin or fell out with the priest is to deny their importance.

Faith then though it seems to nurture human relationships does not. All it does is sometimes keep up the appearance.

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The book promises that any sceptic who prays for God to show him or her the truth will have the prayer answered. So if Christianity is true God will reveal it to the person provided the prayer was humble and was not unfairly asking God to do a miracle instead of letting him work on you his own way (page 387).

Reason replies:

I think the logic is perfect. If there is a God and if Christianity is true then this will happen. But millions have prayed this way and still found both to be untrue. Or they have gone into a heretical Church like the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses or the Roman Catholics. It is like an experiment that proves that the religion is a pack of lies and errors for not everybody gets the same answer. If the sceptic will get an answer by praying then so will the sceptic who does not pray for there will be somebody praying for him and Christians pray for the enlightenment of the whole world. Then the sceptic is being accused of knowing what the truth is and turning away from it. This is slander and bigots have no regrets about uttering it. But at least it tells you that you know if you do not believe in God or religion and know you are sincere then you know there is no God.



