

Jesus Denies Salvation to those Who Don't Know Him or the Christian Faith

SINCERITY WILL NOT SAVE, SAYS JESUS

Jesus Christ claimed to be the only way to God and that sincerity will not save. This is no surprise for the Book of Ecclesiastes condemns marrying and giving in marriage and all activities under the sun as vanity. Vanity is stupid pride and a sin. The book says the only exception is getting wisdom from God meaning not just wisdom by itself but wisdom put into practice. So marriage is not sinful unless you are some kind of saint. The teaching that all human actions are vanity and pride implies that divine guidance is necessary for goodness and salvation if salvation is possible. So you do your best and it is vanity. But if you obtain knowledge from God and are wise in God's estimation you have a chance of avoiding this sin of vanity.

Jesus accepted Genesis as divinely inspired history and so he approved of Genesis when it said that Eve was punished by God for believing the snake. Though she meant well she was still condemned. She thought the evil she was doing was good for she didn't know what evil and good was. That was what she ate the forbidden fruit for to get that knowledge. Read the account.

Jesus said that the man who had his master's money and buried it instead of investing it to make more money from it would be severely condemned. The man was sincere when he thought his master would praise him for what he did but the master rejected him and Jesus said God would do the same. The man cannot be accused of having done no good for he accepted the money and he buried it and gave it back but his goodness could not save him.

The Jews accused Jesus of casting out demons by the Devil's power because they suspected the Devil was helping to advertise him. Jesus said that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand so Satan couldn't be casting out Satan and said that the Church was his kingdom. He therefore 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.

Jesus told the Jews they were guilty of the eternal sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in saying Satan was doing his miracles. They really thought Satan and Jesus were plotting to make Jesus look good. They thought Satan didn't need to possess people and so didn't mind putting demons out or he was planning something so bad that it made it worthwhile for him to help Jesus fake exorcisms. Jesus was saying that unbelief, excusable or not, blocks ones salvation.

A scribe asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was and Jesus said it was the one to love God totally and to love one neighbour as oneself. The scribe said he agreed and that its more important to love God and neighbour than to offer any ritual sacrifice. Jesus told him he was not far from the kingdom of God. This was said merely because the scribe expressed correct belief. There is no mention of his goodness or otherwise. He is told though that he still has some way to go before becoming part of the kingdom of God.

Jesus said that he was the bread of life and that anybody who did not eat that bread would have no life in them and he said that the Holy Spirit he gives would satisfy every spiritual thirst (John 4:14). The implicit incitement to hatred and intolerance and pride in this is very alarming for he made these promises as if unbelievers could not avail of them for he said that one has to go to him to receive it and the listeners would have understood him to mean coming to him in explicit faith and obedience. If sincerity were enough, they would have been unknowingly fed by and with Jesus.

First, Jesus was running down the experience of others who find satisfaction in their god and calling them liars and boasting about himself. Anybody who has ever enjoyed another God, say Krishna or whoever, knows that Jesus was a liar.

Second, he is telling Christians to believe that only he satisfies which making them do the same thing. It is pride to say that you have the only source of spiritual satisfaction the way they do it. How could you find as much satisfaction in a God who sends people around you to Hell forever and who created the law that whoever dies in sin must rot there forever as you could in one who does not? There are Christians who do not believe in eternal punishing and we must believe then that if Jesus is right and sends people to Hell that their faith is in error and so they cannot have as much satisfaction as they would have if they knew God better and that he does that. There is a problem then in the fulfilment of Jesus' promise unless it is made easy for Christians to agree on doctrine if they want to for if it is true then the more doctrinal accuracy the more Holy Spirit because when doctrine is needed before you can get the Spirit then the more doctrine the more Spirit.

Jesus said that the road to damnation was smooth while the road to Heaven is rocky and few find it (Matthew 7:13,14). If sincerity and repentance alone could save them this would be untrue. Everybody would have found the road although they would not all travel it. This saying implies that unless you believe in Jesus explicitly and sincerely you have no hope of salvation. Remember how Jesus said that his burden of law was light and First John says that the commandments are not difficult. This suggests that the smooth wide road is not that way because the commandments are not hard. It is because it is hard to have a faith that is correct in Jesus' estimation. It is hard to get the truth. That is the narrow way.

Once when he was asked if only a few would be saved, Jesus replied that people have to strive to get into Heaven and to squeeze through the narrow door (Luke 13:23, 24). He did not say straight out that only a few can expect to be saved. But when he started talking about the need for a struggle and to get in through a narrow door yes was written all over it. Jesus said you have to strive to get into Heaven and that many do so and don't make it. Jesus was saying that those who battle to get into Heaven and fail are really trying. Thus sincerity is not enough to get you into Heaven.

Thomas asked Jesus what the way of salvation was. Instead of telling him that he knew and had the way which he would have done had sincerity been enough, Jesus said that he was the way, the truth and the life and that no man could come to the Father except by him (John 14:6). This implies that sincerity alone cannot let you into Heaven – you have to be right too. The context is about the way to salvation therefore Jesus meant he was the essential way to God and the essential truth that leads to God. Therefore having the truth is necessary for salvation and there is no salvation for one who has the wrong faith. Jesus called himself the truth that is the only way to God to emphasise that you have to know some of the main truths about him to be saved. He stressed his being the truth to emphasise that no other man could be the only way to God. The wrong man or even the wrong perception of Jesus would mean you miss the only way to God. The Catholics see a wafer that they think is Jesus to be the only way to God so they have the wrong Jesus. Jesus' words would be of little value if a wafer could be claimed to be Jesus and make no difference even if it is not Jesus. Why stop at wafers? Why not proclaim other Messiahs like Henry James Prince or Father Divine or Vissarion to be Jesus? Jesus said having the right Jesus was important. He condemned false Messiahs. St Paul said that some of his flock were following another Christ not the right one. If sincerity alone is enough, then it doesn't matter who you worship as Jesus or what. The worship is meant for Jesus and you have just made a mistake about who is Jesus. The bad thing about it somebody gets the benefit of being treated and adored as Jesus.

Desmond Tutu linked Jesus' claim that he was the only way to God and the only truth and the only life (meaning only following him makes your life a life or worth living both for your sake and God's) to John's doctrine that Jesus was the Word and the Word was in the beginning with God and the Word was God and became flesh. He argues that Jesus being the only way does not mean that you must know about the man Jesus to be saved. You can know about Jesus as the Word. He argues that Jesus was active and saving as the Word before he became man. So Jesus being the only saviour refers to the Word whether incarnate or not. But if Tutu were right it would follow that Thomas already had found the way. But Jesus talks to him as if he hasn't. I am the way the truth and the life refers to the man Jesus. This is the more natural interpretation. Keep the Word stuff out of it.

Jesus informed a Samaritan lady, Samaritans were Jewish heretics, that salvation comes from the Jews (John 4:22). This is a denial that sincerity is enough and that God will save you if you are not in the true religion. The Samaritans followed virtually the same Law as the Jews and were sincere. They believed in the same God as the Jews though there were some minor differences and yet Jesus said that the Jews know what they are worshipping and the Samaritans do not (John 4:22). He meant they were not in touch with God or getting intimate with him for they had the wrong faith. Not only does this suggest that those who have not heard of God and those who do not believe in him will not be saved but it suggests you can have the true God and know a bit about Jesus and still be damned so you need to know a fair bit about them. The Jews and Samaritans were theologically closer than Catholics and Protestants are. This clearly shows that if the Protestants are right the Catholics will be lost forever for they do not have a relationship with God. The relationship they have is like the relationship a man has with a woman he has deluded himself is in love with him and that he loves her.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that she and her co-religionists did not know what they were worshipping for those who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth for "God is a Spirit (a spiritual Being) and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth (reality)" (John 4:24). Because God is bodiless or a spirit we have to be spirits too to worship him. Whatever could Jesus have meant by such a statement? He certainly was supporting the Gnostic doctrine that you treat your body as not you or part of you and that you live like a spirit or as if you didn't have a body. By implication, Jesus was denying that his resurrection body was a real body despite its power to materialise. He said then that because God is a spirit we must worship him in truth. What does that mean? It can't mean, "God is a spirit so we must worship him in reality or really worship him." That makes no sense. If God is supreme then spirit or not he is entitled to our worship. If God is a spirit then he can be everywhere and see all things. So Jesus must have meant, "Worship God by the truth for God knows and sees all". He will see if you have the truth or not and will treat you accordingly. When you have the truth of God, God is pleased for you agree with him and this is worship. Those who do not have the truth will not be accepted by God.

Jesus told the Jews that unless they believed in him they would die in their sins (John 8:23). Some think he meant believe as in agree and believe as in do what you believe so he meant that unless they repent and believe they will die in their sins. But they could believe and repent because of his moral teaching and not because of him. He specified that they have to believe in him so he meant that unless they believe in him intellectually they have no hope. The view that Jesus only meant, "I require you to believe in me and I will tell you what to do to be saved from your sins", also implies that there is no salvation without him.

In the very same chapter, Jesus told his apostles that if they continue in his teaching then they are really his followers or Christians and they shall know the truth and the truth will make them free (verses 31,32). This says that if you try to be good you will see the truth for God's grace will speak to you. Anybody who does not believe properly is a bad person.

Jesus said that anybody who wants to do right will know that he is from God (John 3:21; 7:17). So, anybody who hears of Jesus and the true gospel and does not believe is just too devoted to sin to believe. So, such people will go to Hell forever.

He also said that anyone who believes and trusts in him is saved and he who does not is damned already (John 3:18). He said this to Nicodemus who also believed in a God who would not accept the sincerely wrong idolater – there is no other kind of idolater anyway. So Nicodemus would have taken him to mean that unless you know of Jesus you cannot be saved and Jesus did not clarify so he was clear enough and Nicodemus had the right understanding. Jesus was telling a sincere Jew that he needed to be born again into a relationship with God. If Nicodemus thought he was connected to God through his faith and religion and good living he was wrong!

Also, when idolatry makes God exclude you it follows that if you do know of Jesus but the picture is too distorted you are no better off. You have another Jesus who cannot save (2 Corinthians 11). So you have to know of the real Jesus to have any hope. The present tense Jesus used accentuates the impossibility of being saved without knowing of him for it was only at the start of his ministry and there wasn't much reason to believe in him then for he hadn't even made his come-back from the grave yet and yet here he was saying that nobody who "believes" in him will be condemned and whoever does not believe will be rejected and "is condemned already" for not believing in God's only Son. This clearly implies that sincerity is insufficient for you could not blame anyone for refusing to believe at that stage.

If you have not paid to get on the bus and are found out you will be thrown off for the sake of justice. And even if you feel that the bus service owes you money, you should be put out. If you think you can pay for your sins and have not how can sincerity get you into Heaven? God will permit you being expelled from the bus so he can penalise you for sincerity and ban you from Heaven for being wrong.

Jesus said that he knows his own and his own know him (John 10:14). The context says he means all who come to God. The sheep do not obey the false prophets (John 10:5,8). So, his own consciously believe in Jesus. They know him so they must be experts in the true faith. He also said that anybody who enters the fold without him is rejected as a robber for stealing a place they are not entitled to (John 10:1-9). This robber is hypothetical for he says later that the fold follows him. He is not saying anybody can really enter the kingdom without using Jesus as the door. He does not say that the robber is rejected for being a sinner. The idea that a sinner could get into Heaven would be too ridiculous to refute. Jesus says what is wrong is that they did not use him to enter which implies that they sneaked into Heaven without belief in Jesus. Proof that it is belief in verse 8 which says that all who came before Jesus were thieves and robbers though none of them encouraged sin but did encourage false doctrine. They steal sheep and they destroy them by leading them to Hell. It is not said that they were sociopaths or uncivil people. Many say Jesus sees the thieves and robbers as those who believe they should be in Heaven because of their good works and religious sincerity. After all, openly evil people wouldn't even want to be in Heaven. You can't steal or rape or murder in Heaven. Only those who use Jesus as the only way to God and not their works belong in Heaven.

Most Christians say that Jesus will save you from sin and Hell if you are a sincere unbeliever though you won't know that it is him. They say that the exclusive salvation doctrine means that only Christ and not his religion is absolutely necessary for salvation.

But if sincerity will do then why didn't Jesus save us secretly and secretly send his spirit to guide us into charity? There would be no need for a supernatural and infallible giver of revelation like a Bible or a Church. To give them would be the sin of doing needless miracles. So the fact that Jesus spoke of revelation infers that you have to consciously believe in him and hear of him to be saved.

The apostles would not have suffered to deliver a gospel message to all people if they had thought that sincerity was all that was required.

Some Christians say that Jesus said that other religions could not work for he was compassionate and it needed saying (page 26, God, That's Not Fair!). But if sincerity cannot save it is because God refuses to accept it though he should so it is

anything but compassion.

The accusation against Christians that they are inciting their followers to intolerance by saying that Jesus is the only way to God even if they believe that Jesus will save those who don't know of him by working in their souls like an anonymous saviour is true. It is saying, "I don't care if there is a more plausible way to salvation, I proclaim Jesus as the only way to God." It is an intrinsically arrogant attitude and when going that far is allowed then other forms of intolerance towards other religions must be allowed. Christians accuse those who say such things about their belief in Jesus of indifference. Humanists recognise that everybody has different likes and dislikes. Right and wrong in the subjective sense is not the same for every person because each person has different needs. Therefore we encourage people to do whatever they like to help their Humanist life. Religion when it claims the right to proclaim Jesus the only way should also encourage people to try out other saviours if they wish. I have noticed in my own past religious life that I got sense of peace of turning to Krishna by chanting Hare Krishna that I never got from Jesus. We can't afford to be indifferent in everything but if we regard religion as acceptable we can afford to be indifferent to people choosing whatever gods and fairy stories about them that click with them. Christianity wants you to think Jesus is best for you but he might not be – it makes a fuss about nothing. If you get happiness from Krishna more than Jesus nobody has the right to object – in your emotional life in this line anything goes and indeed should. There is no doubt that Christianity making Jesus the only saviour is against many important human rights and therefore against the laws of the world that forbid such trouble-making ideas.