

## Why We Believe Jesus Is the Only Way to God

Message 2 of 6 in the series: "Apologetics: The Defense of Christianity Through Rational Argument"

### A. It's important for us, as Christians, to be able to explain what we believe and why we believe it.

"...you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. But do this in a gentle and respectful way." 1 Peter 3:15-16a (NLT)

"Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone."

Colossians 4:5-6 (NLT)

### B. Why we believe Jesus is the only way to God:

1. Jesus said that the only way for us to have a relationship with God was through Him. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. **No one can come to the Father except through me.**" John 14:6 (NLT)
2. Jesus' disciples worshiped Him as God and taught that the only way for us to have a relationship with God was through Jesus. "**There is salvation in no one else!** God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12 (NLT)  
  
"We proclaim to you the one who existed from the beginning, whom we have heard and seen. We saw him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. He is the Word of life. **This one who is life itself was revealed to us, and we have seen him. And now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life.** He was with the Father, and then he was revealed to us. We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard so that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy." 1 John 1:1-4 (NLT)
3. Even people who didn't believe in Jesus recognized that He claimed to be God. "The people surrounded him and asked, 'How long are you going to keep us in suspense? **If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.**' Jesus replied, 'I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. **The Father and I are one.**' Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. Jesus said, 'At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?' They replied, 'We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! **You, a mere man, claim to be God.**'" John 10:24-33 (NLT)
4. Jesus claimed that He could forgive sins. "Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, '**My child, your sins are forgiven.**' But some of the teachers of religious law who were sitting there thought to themselves, '**What is he saying? This is blasphemy! Only God can forgive sins!**' Jesus knew immediately what they were thinking, so he asked them, 'Why do you question this in your hearts? Is it easier to say to the paralyzed man "Your sins are forgiven," or "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk"? So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.' Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, 'Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!' And the man jumped up, grabbed his mat, and walked out through the stunned onlookers. They were all amazed and praised God, exclaiming, '**We've never seen anything like this before!**'" Mark 2:5-12 (NLT)

#### Why it Matters!

- "For **everyone has sinned**; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." Romans 3:23 (NLT)
  - "For **the wages of sin is death**, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23 (NLT)
  - "For **God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin**, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)
  - "God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. **Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done**, so none of us can boast about it." Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)
5. Jesus backed up His claims to be God and to be able to forgive sins by rising from the dead. "...and he was shown to be the Son of God when he was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit. He is Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 1:4 (NLT)

**Why it matters!** We're all a bunch of filthy, rotten sinners who need a savior, and Jesus is our only option. "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that **everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life**. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. And the judgment is based on this fact: **God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil**. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants." John 3:16-21 (NLT)

### C. Three important notes about explaining our belief that Jesus is the only way to God:

1. It's possible to be sincere AND sincerely wrong. "Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, 'You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls, and prepare it and call on the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood.' So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then **they called on the name of Baal from morning until noontime, shouting, 'O Baal, answer us!' But there was no reply of any kind**. Then they danced, hobbling around the altar they had made. About noontime Elijah began mocking them. 'You'll have to shout louder,' he scoffed, 'for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is daydreaming or is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip or is asleep and needs to be wakened!' So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no sound, no reply, no response. Then Elijah called to the people, 'Come over here!' ...Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, '**O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. O Lord, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself.**' Immediately the fire of the Lord flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench! And when all the people saw it, they fell face down on the ground and cried out, '**The Lord—he is God! Yes, the Lord is God!**'"  
1 Kings 18:25-30a & 36b-39 (NLT)
2. We are not being prideful, imperialistic, or judgmental when we tell people of other nations, religions, or belief systems that Jesus is the only way to God. We are seeking to help them find the same forgiveness and love we've found. "For, **there is one God and one Mediator** who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. **He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone.**"  
1 Timothy 2:5-6a (NLT)
3. We cannot convince people to repent of their sins and surrender control of their lives to Jesus through apologetics alone. The Holy Spirit must convict people of the truth. "**When we tell you these things, we do not use words that come from human wisdom. Instead, we speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths**. But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means." 1 Corinthians 2:13-14 (NLT)

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### Connect Group Questions:

1. Read 1 Peter 3:15-16 & Colossians 4:5-6. Why do you think Peter and Paul both stressed the need for Christians to always be ready for spiritual conversations with unbelievers? How ready are you?
2. Read John 14:6 & Acts 4:12. Is Jesus just one of many ways to God?
3. What is the significance of Jesus' claim to have the authority to forgive sins? (Mark 2:1-12, Romans 3:23 & 6:23, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 2:8-9)
4. Read 1 Kings 18:20-40. Is it possible to be sincere AND sincerely wrong?
5. Why is it right and good (not prideful or judgmental) for Christians to tell people that Jesus is the only way to God? (John 3:16-21, 1 Timothy 2:5-6)
6. Why are apologetics by themselves not enough to convince people to surrender their lives to Jesus? (1 Corinthians 2:14-15)

7. Discuss the following quotation: "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." *CS Lewis*