

Challenging Assumptions

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1. How can Jesus be the only way to God?
 - a. First, let's consider from where the question arises.
 - i. It was Jesus (Himself) who said,
"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:1-6)
 - ii. So did Peter, Acts 4:12 (2nd sermon)
"There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among mankind by which we must be saved."
 - iii. So did Paul, Romans 10:9
"...if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."
 - iv. So did John, I John 5:11, 12
"And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has the life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have the life."
 - b. So, the notion that Jesus is the only way to God is a non-negotiable tenant of our faith, a foundational doctrine clearly established in the NT
 - c. Whether one chooses to believe it or not is another question.
2. Next, let's consider the alternatives...
 - a. Some believe or imagine there is no God or heaven (as John Lennon once famously sung) and choose therefore to live as they wish: For better or worse by their own moral code.
 - b. But think about it:
 - i. If they're right and we're wrong, what have we lost?
 - ii. But if we're right and their wrong, they will lose everything.
 - iii. As Jesus said, *"What good will it do a person if he gains the whole world, but forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)*
 - c. However, most throughout history have recognized Someone is out there, a Creator worthy of our respect and in need of appeasement given our sinful nature.
 - d. So... How have imperfect humans tried to appease a perfect God?
 - i. Through human sacrifice
 - ii. Self-flagellation, whether in physical or emotional forms
 - iii. Religious devotion in search of purification
 - iv. Perfectionism
 - 1) All such things amount to what the Bible describes as works
 - 2) The Bible demonstrates from the beginning of our existence that works cannot save us or make us right before God
 - a) Adam and Eve, Genesis 3: 7, 20
 - i) They saw that they were naked, and sewed fig leaves together to cover their waists. (v. 6)
 - ii) Later, God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. (v. 20)

- iii) It is here that God establishes the standard: i.e., that apart from the shedding of innocent blood (as provided by Him) there can be no forgiveness of sin (see also Hebrews 9:22)
 - b) We see this again in Cain and Abel, Genesis 4:2-5
 - i) "Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a cultivator of the ground.
 - ii) "So, it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the ground. (he worked it)
 - iii) "Abel, on his part also brought *an offering*, from the firstborn of his flock and from their fat portions. (God provided it, an innocent animal)
 - iv) "And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering; but for Cain and his offering He had no regard."
 - c) Then again at the first Passover (Exodus 12)
Why Jesus is called the Lamb of God
 - 3) So, the Bible is clear:
 - a) Salvation comes from God and God alone. It can't be earned or gained through human effort.
 - b) For by grace, you have been saved through faith; and this (salvation) *is* not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8, 9)
 - 4) In other words, in terms of finding God, salvation, someday heaven, etc., faith and works are mutually exclusive. It's one or the other.
 - a) James 2
 - i) Works perfect, mature, and evidence faith and are offered in thanksgiving to God who saves
 - ii) But faith is the starting point
 - b) Christianity is the only faith claiming salvation is by faith alone, i.e., works not at all involved
3. If salvation could be earned, then why did Jesus die?
- a. Good question: The (CS) Lewis Trilemma
 - i. Liar: Jesus deceived mankind by conscious fraud.
But who would die for a lie?
 - ii. Lunatic
So, the most influential human being in all of human history was...
 - 1) Deranged (He was crazy)
 - 2) Deceived (He sincerely believed He was God)
 - iii. Lord
 - 1) He is who He said He was
 - 2) He died as God's sacrificial lamb, i.e., to take away the guilt and shame of sin so that those who believe should not eternally perish but have everlasting life

4. How were people saved in the OT before Jesus was even born?
By faith that looked ahead to a Savior as our looks back to a Savior (Genesis 3:15)
5. But what if you hold to sincere beliefs, sincerely? (i.e., all roads lead to one)
We can be sincere and sincerely wrong at the same time.
6. What about those that have never heard?
Think about who's asking the question and why...
 - a. Some who believe in God are genuinely curious
 - b. Others are looking for an escape clause or to delay their own decision about Jesus
 - i. We might ask them, "If there's not a God, then what does it matter?"
 - ii. If there is a God, we can be certain He's got this
 - 1) General Revelation (Ps 19:1)
 - 2) Other avenues available to Him (i.e., visions and dreams, etc.)
 - iii. The fact is, we are responsible for what God has revealed to us
 - iv. So, what about it?
 - v. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah (45:6-9), God says...

"So that people may know from the rising to the setting of the sun
That there is no one besides Me.
I am the Lord, and there is no one else,
The One forming light and creating darkness,
Causing well-being and creating disaster;
I am the Lord who does all these things.
Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker...Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?'"

Conclusion

How can Jesus be the only way to God?

1. Because He said so
2. Because the Bible validates the claim
3. Because it makes sense: *Think about it...*
 - a. Unrighteous humans cannot make themselves righteous
 - b. We who are imperfect cannot earn or work our way into the presence of a perfect God
4. Because we believe it (in Him) by faith
 - i. Beyond what can otherwise be known for sure or reasoned
 - ii. That's what faith is all about
 - iii. Hebrews 11:6

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, and that He proves to be One who rewards those who seek Him."