

So Why is Jesus Christ the Only Way of Salvation?

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By Kevin Lewis

Jesus Christ proclaimed, “I am the Way, and the truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (John 14:6). The Apostles echoed this claim, stating, “And there is salvation in no one else; there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). This doctrine is known as “Christian Particularism.”

Common objections to this doctrine include claims that it is “arrogant,” “prideful,” or “just plain unfair!” These objections, though, are meritless and often fail to address the foundational theological precepts inherent in the doctrine.

To have another way of salvation, a person must change the goal of salvation itself. For example, if the purpose of “salvation” is to become a god, realize your godhood, or merely escape incarceration in a cosmic jailhouse, the *means* of accomplishing salvation will reflect those mistaken salvific *ends*.

While Biblical salvation includes many concepts such as justification, adoption, and regeneration, the objective of Biblical salvation is easy to understand. The goal is to enjoy a loving, mentoring relationship with our Creator, the one true God. As Adam walked with God, so should we. But how can one restore a broken relationship with God?

The requirements for restoring a broken friendship are easy to understand, but difficult for most to do. To restore a lost friendship, the offended person must be willing to forgive by bearing the harm caused by the transgressor, electing not to hold it against him if certain conditions are met.

The conditions for forgiveness are that the offending party must repent, confess his sin, and want to restore the relationship with the offended party. Since the goal of forgiveness is the

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restoration of a genuine friendship, the offending party must begin with repentance. When the sinner genuinely repents, confesses, and receives the offer of forgiveness, the estranged parties reconcile, walking together again in righteous harmony. If anyone has ever lost and genuinely restored a meaningful friendship, they know this is the *only* meaningful way to do it.

One purely hypothetical illustration may help. If I screamed at my wife, calling her unmentionable names, my wife would rightly be offended and our intimate fellowship would surely be broken. So how would I return to a genuine state of e-harmony with my wife? First, my wife must be willing to bear the harm I caused her and not hold it against me. But to restore the relationship in any meaningful sense, I need to realize that what I did was wrong, repent, and confess my sin to my wife — preferably with symbols of my repentance in hand, such as flowers and candy! When these conditions are fulfilled, my wife will forgive me.

So how does this relate to Jesus Christ as the only Way? Simple. To restore the broken relationship with the one true God, the offended party, God, must be willing to bear the consequences of our sin. God accomplishes this by means of the Second Person of the Trinity assuming a full human nature, living a sinless life, and satisfying our penalty for sin on the cross. Sinners, the offenders, need to repent, confess, and trust God's offer of forgiveness. When we do, we are reconciled to God for the purpose of fellowship with Him as His beloved children. This is biblical salvation.

Now consider some of the common errors offered as “ways” of salvation. They are incoherent given the biblical objectives of salvation. For example, in a works righteousness model, one would perform good works, such as helping little old ladies across the street, and then return to his wife and demand forgiveness since he “earned it” by good works. This model is as absurd as having a third party, such as the next door neighbor, “bear the burden” of the offense, after which the unrepentant man demands forgiveness from his wife. No sane person would ever attempt this method with their spouse, yet these errors are commonly offered as a “way” of salvation with God.

So contrary to the many objections, since the goal of salvation is forgiveness and reconciliation with a personal God in order to have loving fellowship with Him, the *only* scenario that makes any sense is to have God incarnate, Jesus Christ, bear our sin as a Substitute, and require repentance and faith in Him on the part of the sinner. He is the only Way and the Truth and the Life! Scripture and good old common sense confirm this truth.