

Why should I believe in Christianity when there are so many different religions?

For as long as human history, people have grappled with the big questions of life. Is there a God? What happens when I die? How should I live? And the result has been a countless number of religions that have sought to answer these questions. These, of course, include the likes of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, as well as many others. In fact, one must wonder if it's possible to examine all the religions and confidently pick one over the others. For many, the best way to approach different faith perspectives is to say they are all equally valid.

It's true that many religions encourage people not to lie, cheat, or steal, but those directives are not the whole of any religion. Consider that many Hindus believe there is one impersonal God with many avatars. Buddhists don't generally believe there is a God at all. Mormons believe you can become a god. Muslims believe there is one God and that Mohammad is the definitive prophet. Jews also believe there is only one true God, but await a Messiah not Mohammad. And Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah and the sole means by which we can enjoy eternity with God. Like it or not, these are contradictory claims. They can all be wrong, but they cannot all be right. Those of different religions understand this. That's why you will be hard pressed to find Muslims say that what they believe is the same as Judaism or Christianity and vice versa.

At this point some might object by saying, "But logic does not apply to religious matters so it does not matter whether they are contradictory. They can still all be true." I find two problems with this position. First, it seems rather arbitrary not to apply logic to religious matters. Wouldn't we find it problematic if someone said, "But logic doesn't apply to science" or "logic doesn't apply in relationships?" Secondly, the claim that logic doesn't apply to religious matters is rather self-defeating. In other words, such a claim can never be used to discount my saying that logic does apply. Sure your claim and mine are contradictory, but if you say logic does not apply to matters of religion then you must let my position stand even if you think it's illogical to do so.

Let's take the position then that there are many different religions and they can't all be right. Why then should you take a special look at Christianity relative to all the rest? I will not attempt to prove that Christianity is the religion you should follow. I am not quite sure how I would do that if we are talking proof in a mathematical sense. But I don't think a mathematical-like proof is what is necessary to have confidence in Christianity. We have confidence in Abraham Lincoln's assassination without a mathematical proof, and I think the same can be true of Christianity. Let me then give you some reasons why Christianity is worthy of your pursuit in a world full of religions.

1. **Christianity believes pain and suffering are real.** Like it or not, pain and suffering are a big part of our existence. Some Eastern religions, however, want to call it an illusion. Christian Scientists often do the same. I don't find it makes much sense to say that the pain and suffering of those in Nazi prison camps was just an illusion or could be overcome with more faith. Christianity agrees with me and faces pain and suffering head on. It even presents a Savior who endured it himself.
2. **Christianity makes itself testable through historical corroboration.** How are we to know whether a religion is true or not? Wouldn't it be nice if they all put themselves out there to be tested in space and time? Christianity does this. It says that if the bodily resurrection of Jesus did not take place in history (the central claim of Christianity), then we should not believe in it (See 1 Corinthians 15:12-19). Most religions don't tie themselves to historical events, and if they do their historical claims are

dubious. Take Buddhism, for example, whether the Buddha actually lived or not is really unimportant because in Buddhism it's the principles that matter not any historical acts of God in history. Or consider, Islam's claim that Jesus was not crucified even though multiple eyewitness accounts confirm that he did. Christianity does better than that. It speaks of events in history which are consistently corroborated from other sources.

3. **Christianity is consistent with basic human intuitions.** Sometimes we reject something because it doesn't "feel" right; that is, it just doesn't jive with our intuitions. And the converse is true as well. Here's four big intuitions that Christianity is right in line with:
 - a. *Life isn't meaningless.* The age-old question is what is the meaning of life. But have you ever wondered why we even ask that question? If we are here as the result of an unguided process, we have no more meaning than the pattern of leaves on your lawn after an autumn breeze. But our intuition says that isn't right. There is meaning to our existence. We do have a purpose. Christianity agrees and believes it is bound up in a Creator who didn't bring us into being by accident.
 - b. *Something is wrong the world.* It doesn't matter who you talk to--Republican or Democrat, rich or poor, Chinese or European, environmentalist or not--everyone seems to think that something isn't right with the world. They certainly don't agree on the diagnosis, but everyone is sure something has gone wrong. Christianity says the same. It does not give some Pollyannic view of the world. It, too, says something is terribly wrong.
 - c. *We can't seem to fix it.* This third intuition is often not recognized until a little bit of life experience has been gained. People know the world isn't right, so they try to fix it. But it seems that no matter what anyone does, problems persist regardless of governmental structure or social programs. Oh sure, some things might get better here or there, but it seems that when we patch one hole, something starts leaking elsewhere. Are we really any closer to addressing the world's problems than we were 100 years ago, 1,000 years ago? Christianity agrees with this intuition. It says loud and clear that we will always fall short of fixing it. It doesn't say we can't accomplish great things, but it says that as much as we try we will still find ourselves falling short, way short.
 - d. *Saviors of the imperiled are to be celebrated.* Have you ever been to a movie in which the little guy (or gal) who is in trouble gets saved in the end? I'm sure you have. And what happens in the theater when this happens? More often than not, the crowd cheers. Even though they have just watched a fictional account, they can't seem to help themselves from celebrating when the imperiled is rescued by a savior. This is the story of Christianity. Christianity says something is wrong with the world. As best as we try, we can't fix it. Then it offers a Savior, a Savior it says should be celebrated.
4. **Christianity points to a salvation that is without cost.** If we take a look at the religions of the world, we see there is a consistent call to certain behaviors (whether moral or religious in nature) to get right with God or attain a certain place of enlightenment. In other words, to even get off the starting block you've got some work to do. Christianity, however, says that try as we might we can never make ourselves good enough to be on the in with God. Thus, God paid the price for our shortcomings and offers us a relationship with him without cost. I don't know about you, but I like free!
5. **Christianity puts Jesus front and center.** I've always found it intriguing that so many of the world's religions esteem Jesus. Muslims call him a great prophet and ascribe many impressive things to

Jesus they don't say of Mohammad. Hindus are apt to call him a great avatar. Buddhist often see him as very enlightened. And even many Jews call him a great teacher. It's as if everyone wants a piece of Jesus. That said, how about going with the religion that puts Jesus front and center?

6. **Jesus declared there is no other path to God than through him.** Many people's perspective of Jesus is that he was a good guy. I think so too. But we must recognize that Jesus made some rather exclusive claims. So exclusive were his claims, he didn't leave open the option of following any religion we want in order to be on God's good side. Here are just a couple statements Jesus made. I'll let them stand without commentary.
- a. John 3:17-18. "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son."
 - b. John 14:6. "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
 - c. John 6:40. "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

As I said earlier, it has not been my aim to prove that Christianity is the right religion in some mathematical sense. Much of what we have confidence in day to day cannot be supported by that kind of proof. But that does not mean our confidence in such things is without substance. I understand there are many religions. I also understand there is some truth to be found in many of them. But it seems to me that Christianity is the key that opens the most doors, it is the "theory" that best fits experience, human intuition, and history. That's why I think it is worthy to pursue Christianity in a world full of religions.

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Suggested Reading: I am indebted to Craig Hazen for many of the thoughts found here. He presents them in a rather creative way in his novel [Five Sacred Crossings](#).