

ARE  THERE



MANY



WAYS



TO  GOD?

Dr. Steve Newton



### **Acts 4:10-12**

"Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead...there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved"

I am often times asked, "Pastor, What will happen to those individuals who have never heard the Gospel?"

For some strange reason people have a difficult time believing that a kind and loving God could ever send a person to an everlasting Hell, never mind someone who has never even heard the Gospel. Why it just would not be fair.

The disturbing fact is that many Christians who once held that there is only one-way to God now believe that there are many paths to God. Why is that?

Simply, they are buying into the worldview (that rejects belief in God) that there are many ways to God. Sincere Jews and Muslims and Buddhists and all others will make it to Heaven. This world -view has no tolerance for exclusivity. They say no one should ever be told that they are excluded or second-class yet they are intolerant of Christians and their Biblical view that teaches there is no other way to God except through Jesus.

### **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?**

Are those who live and die without hearing the Gospel condemned to an eternity in Hell?

Are those who have put their faith in the god of some religion other than Christianity and who strive to live righteous lives condemned to Hell?

Could it possibly be that God has revealed Himself in different ways to different peoples, and therefore there really are many different roads to God?

Could the sign be true that was displayed in a Sunday school class that read: "Our God is too big to be confined to one religion"?

Could it be that Christians really are too narrow minded to insist that "their way" is the only way?

## ARE THERE MANY WAYS TO GOD.....WHAT DID JESUS HAVE TO SAY?

### **John 14:26 - Jesus speaking to Thomas**

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."

### **Matthew 10:32-33 -Jesus Speaking to his newly chosen disciples**

"Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."

### **Luke 10:16 -Jesus speaking to 70 disciples sent forth to preach the kingdom of God**

"The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; and he who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

### **John 5:24 - Jesus speaking of His relationship with His father said:**

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

### **John 17:3 - At His last supper with the Apostles, Jesus prayed:**

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

### **John 3:16 – To a religious leader**

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

### **Jesus made it clear**

1. He said that He is the **one and only way to God**.
2. Those individuals that trust in Christ by faith as Lord and Savior will be saved.
3. All who reject Jesus will be condemned, because Jesus said He and His father were one. To reject Jesus is to reject God.
4. To obtain salvation one must have a personal relationship with Jesus!

## ARE THEIR MANY WAYS TO GOD?- WHAT DID THE APOSTLE PETER HAVE TO SAY ABOUT IT?

### **Acts 2:36-38**

"Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him [Jesus] both Lord and Christ [Messiah] — this Jesus whom you crucified."

"Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins"

### **Acts 4:10-12**

"Let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead...there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved"

## ARE THERE MANY WAYS TO GOD? WHAT DID THE APOSTLE PAUL SAY ABOUT IT?

### **I Timothy 2:3-6**

"God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave Himself as a ransom for all..."

## WHAT ABOUT THE APOSTLE JOHN...WHAT DID HE SAY ABOUT IT?

### **1 John 2:22-23**

"Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah]? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also"

### **John 5:11-12**

"...God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life"

### **The Apostle Peter, Paul and John made it clear**

1. Jesus was the Messiah – The Savior promised by God.
2. There is salvation in no other person except Jesus.
3. Those who reject Jesus are guilty of rejecting the Father.

## **LISTEN TO JOHN THE BAPTIST**

### **John 3:36**

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him"

- A loving God must deal with sin for He is a just God.
- Psalm 37:28
- Isaiah 61:8

A Holy and just God **MUST DEAL WITH SIN**. Why is that so hard for humanity to comprehend? If one accepts Christ and His atoning work on the cross-trusts in that work- acts upon that trust by repenting of their sin and trusting Christ as their Lord and Savior then the wrath of God is put aside and God deals with that individual now in Grace

God deals with sin in one of two ways, either grace or wrath. Reject Him and He deals with your sin and rebellion in wrath. Repent and trust Him as Lord and Savior and He deals with you in Grace.

The problem is man's wicked heart in pride wants to change his creator into His (man's) image rather than man changing into God's image.

Some years ago, a preacher said: "If when holding your cat you rub your hand against the natural flow of fur you must turn the cat around-not yourself...so then when God's hand goes against your grain...you should turn around to line up with God's stroke. God does not turn Himself around to line up with you!"

**GOD DESIRES THAT ALL MEN WILL BE SAVED...BUT GOD CREATED MAN AS A FREE MORAL AGENT ...ABLE TO MAKE A CHOICE!**

**1 Timothy 2:3**

**2 Peter 3:9**

Whosoever will let him come. Man must choose to accept Jesus or reject him.

Jesus Himself emphasized this truth..He said in Matthew 7:13-14 & 21

"The gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those **who find it...Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven"**

**SO WHY WOULD MAN NOT CHOSE TO SERVE & OBEY COMPLETELY A LOVING GOD IN WHOSE IMAGE WE ARE MADE?**

Man is born with a sin nature that puts us in rebellion against the holiness of God.

**Jeremiah 17:9**

"There is nothing more deceitful than the human heart"

**Psalms 14:1-3**

"There is no one who does good...they have all turned aside...there is no one who does good, not even one"

**Romans 3:10-18**

The biblical message is not up for debate...It is very clear and there can be no misunderstanding. Because of man's depravity, we have no hope apart from faith in a Savior, and Jesus is that Savior.

Isaiah prophesied about the promised Messiah. He speaks of Christ more than any other prophet does. He said "All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him [the Messiah]" (Isaiah 53:6).

The Bible is clear. There is **only one way to God** and that **is through Jesus of Nazareth.**

**The worldview is WRONG.** There is absolutely no hope in the modern day false religions. Jews must accept Jesus as Messiah, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, or any of the religion must come to God through the cross of Calvary...through JESUS.

## WHAT ABOUT BABIES AND CHILDREN WHO DIE YOUNG – ARE THEY SAVED APART FROM FAITH IN CHRIST

While Bible does not specifically mention an age of accountability, there are places in the Bible that cause us to believe that there is indeed an age of accountability...an age when children are accountable for knowing and acting upon the knowledge of right and wrong. It seems that until a child reaches that age of accountability they remain innocent.

For example, in the book of Deuteronomy when the Israelites refused to enter the Promised Land because of unbelief, God punished them for not trusting Him by making them wander in the wilderness until the rebellious generation had died off (see Numbers 13 & 14).

The Lord allowed only two people of the current generation to enter the land. They were the two spies, Joshua and Caleb, who gave a positive report of the land and suggested the Israelites go up into the land immediately and claim their inheritance from the Lord. (Deuteronomy 1:34-38). But then, another exception was made: "Moreover, your little ones...who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there [the Promised Land], and I will give it to them, and they shall possess it" (Deuteronomy 1:39).

**Then, there is the example of King David's child that was born of Bathsheba.** When the child died seven days after it was born, David proclaimed by inspiration of the Holy Spirit that although the child could not come back to him, one day he would go to be with the child (2 Samuel 12:23).

The idea that those who die before the age of accountability will be saved seems to be reinforced in the New Testament also in the words of Jesus found in (Matthew 19:13-14)

Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'

**Another argument in behalf of the salvation of children who die before the age of accountability is the justice of God.**

The Bible asserts repeatedly that our Creator is a God of justice (Zephaniah 3:5).

He has an overwhelming passion for justice (Micah 6:8). In addition, He promises repeatedly that justice will be one of the characteristics of His Son's millennial reign (Isaiah 42:1-4). How then, could a God of perfect justice condemn to Hell children who never knew the difference in right and wrong?

If true, children and babies who die before the age of accountability will not be eligible to receive special rewards for faithfully serving the Lord. It does appear that they will be granted eternal life, however, this can happen only by having the blood of Jesus applied to them (Hebrews 9:22).

This same exception would apply to the mentally handicapped who reach adulthood. Since they are incapable of determining right from wrong and are also incapable of repenting and putting their faith in Jesus, it is only reasonable to conclude that a just God would not hold them accountable and would apply the blood of Jesus to their sins.

### **WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO LIVED AND DIED BEFORE THE BIRTH OF JESUS. ...AND BEFORE THE REVELATION OF JESUS AS GOD'S SON BUT WHO PLACED THEIR FAITH IN THEIR CREATOR.**

Hebrews 11 tells us that people like Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham were justified by their faith in God. They had no Scriptures, nor any knowledge of Jesus, yet because they related to their Creator in faith, they were saved. Genesis 15:6 says that because Abraham believed the Lord, "it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Jesus even said to the Jews, that "Abraham rejoiced to see my day and he saw it." John 8:56. Still Abraham had to have the blood applied to be saved.

Abraham and others like him, were dependent upon the sacrifice of Jesus for their salvation to be sealed. Their faith covered their sins, but the forgiveness of their sins depended upon the sacrifice of a perfect person who did not deserve to die. Only the blood of such a person could produce forgiveness of their sins.

That is why Old Testament saints did not go directly to Heaven when they died. They went, to a place called Sheol (Hades in the New Testament). In Hades, their souls resided in a compartment called "Abraham's bosom" or "Paradise." They could not be ushered into the presence of a Holy God until their sins were forgiven.



After Jesus' death on the Cross, He descended into Hades and made a proclamation (1 Peter 3:19). We are not told exactly what He said, but most likely it was, "The blood has been shed! What a shout for joy those words must have produced. We are also told that when Jesus ascended into Heaven, He took a "host of captives" with Him (Ephesians 4:8). In other words, He emptied Hades of those Old Testament and some New Testament saints (the thief on the cross) who were saved. Paradise was at that time moved from Hades to Heaven.

Later, when the Apostle Paul was taken up to "the third heaven," he called it Paradise (2 Corinthians 12:1-4). This would confirm Paradise was moved from inside of the earth to heaven. Now we can assuredly proclaim that for a Christian to be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord!

### **WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO HAVE LIVED AND DIED WITHOUT HEARING THE GOSPEL...WILL THEY GO TO HELL**

I personally believe the same principle applies to them that applied to people living in Old Testament times before the First Advent of Jesus. Their fate will depend upon whether or not they ever responded to God in faith.

The Bible PLAINLY TELLS US THAT all people have an instinctive knowledge that God exists (Romans 2:14-15). The Bible also tells us that we can realize the existence of God by observing the complexity and beauty of the creation (Psalm 19:1-6).

Because God is a just God (Psalm 89:14), I seems to me that He will hold us responsible for what we knew. Those exposed to the Gospel and who then reject it will be lost. Those who have only the testimony of instinct and the creation who reject that testimony will also be lost. Those who hear the Gospel and put their faith in Jesus will be saved. Those who respond to the testimony of instinct and the creation by putting their faith in their Creator will also be saved. However, this latter group will be saved only by having the blood of Jesus applied to them, as was the case with Old Testament saints.

Some might respond by saying, "If those who live and die without ever hearing of Jesus might still be saved by their faith in God, whereas those who hear the Gospel and reject it will be lost, then perhaps we should stop proclaiming the Gospel!"

However, this statement is based on the faulty assumption that the Gospel is just a fire insurance policy. The truth is that it is much more than that, for the person who receives Jesus as Lord and Savior is blessed with the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, receiving supernatural power to live triumphantly in a world of heartache and suffering. The person is also enabled to know God personally in this life — an absolutely invaluable blessing.

Further, I believe that any person who would respond to God in faith based on instinct and the witness of the creation is one who would accept the Gospel if exposed to it.

### **WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO CLAIM TO BE A CHRISTIAN YET HAVE NO PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS?**

Simply, these folks have never been born again. Many of these are people who attend church regularly. Some are elders, deacons, teachers, and even pastors. Can they get to Heaven through church membership or by participating in Christian rites like baptism or communion?

The answer of the Bible is a clear "No!" Jesus Himself said that no man can see the kingdom of God unless he is "born again" (John 3:3). That means a person must put his faith in Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior. It is not sufficient to simply believe that Jesus lived. The Bible says that even "the demons believe and shudder" (James 2:19). But they have rejected Jesus as their Lord.

Going to church or participating in Christian rituals is not another road to Heaven. Our churches are filled with unsaved people who are trusting in their works to get them to Heaven. However, the Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith...not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

### **Listen to the words of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel**

<sup>21</sup>Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

<sup>23</sup>And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Notice verse 23

**Matthew 7:23**

And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you**: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

**CONCLUSION TO MANY WAYS TO GOD**

From a biblical, Christian perspective, there is no way to escape the conclusion that Jesus is the only way to God, either through direct faith in Him, or by having the blood of Jesus applied to a person who has responded to God in faith through the testimony of instinct and nature.

To argue that there are other roads to God, as some apostate Christian leaders are doing today, is to deny that the sacrifice of Jesus was necessary for the forgiveness of sins. If there really are other roads to God, then Jesus came to earth to die a horrible death for no purpose. His sacrifice was all in vain. Either we are saved by the blood of Jesus, or we are not.

**THIS ONE THING IS ABSOLUTELY FOR SURE**

Every person on earth who is alive at the end of the Tribulation will hear the Gospel before the Second Coming of Jesus. We know this because Jesus said it would happen (Matthew 24:14)). Many preaches use this scripture to proclaim the Gospel must be preached to the entire world before Jesus can return but in fact the Gospel will not be preached to the whole world until when in the tribulation period, Angels preach to the entire world (Revelation 14:6,7). and THEN SHALL THE END BE. That prophecy is being partially fulfilled today with modern technology. Computers are used to produce translations of the Bible. Satellites are used to transmit the Gospel message worldwide.

**BE SURE YOU ARE SAVED. ASK JESUS TO FORGIVE YOU OF YOUR SINS RIGHT NOW. INVITE HIM TO BE THE LORD OF YOUR LIFE AND LIVE FOR HIM EVERY DAY Matthew 10:32-33 -Jesus Speaking to his newly chosen disciples SAID** "Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven."



*Loving Jesus*  
*With a Passion for*  
*His People*  
*His Purpose*  
*His Presence*

**Dr. Steve Newton, Pastor**

**4634 Grosenbacher Road**

**San Antonio, Texas 78245**

**[www.crownridgeministries.org](http://www.crownridgeministries.org)**

**[newt7777@yahoo.com](mailto:newt7777@yahoo.com)**

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