

# SAME GOD?

How to Engage with Christian Cults &  
World Religions

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# Answering the “WHY?”:

*“Why are there so many religions? Why so much confusion about who GOD is?”*

- Can God not clearly reveal who HE is to ALL mankind so there is no confusion? After all, scripture declares: *“For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.”* – **1 Corinthians 4:33**. So what is the problem?

God’s Word makes it clear that man’s rebellion against the truth about who HE is, is morally, **NOT** intellectually, rooted.

**-Genesis 2 & 3** – (We find there are Spiritual beings in active rebellion against God’s clear revelation who then, lead Humans to join that rebellion.)

- <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” – **Genesis 2:16 - 17**
- <sup>4</sup> “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- <sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> – **Genesis 3:6-7**

## **...."Come MAKE us Gods..."**

<sup>1</sup>When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

<sup>2</sup> Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." – **Exodus 32: 1-4**

<sup>11</sup> The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them?" – **Numbers 14:11**

## ***Perhaps if God revealed himself to His creation by entering into it personally, He could clear up the confusion?***

<sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup> He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **John 1:9-11**

## ***Suppressing the Truth in unrighteousness***

<sup>18</sup> The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, <sup>19</sup> since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

<sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.— **Romans 1:18-23**

# Answering the “WHAT?”:

*“What are the different religions and how can I easily make sense of them all?”*

All World Religions can be divided into 3 main groups:

## 1. Religions of Transcendent Mysticism

*(Transcendent means that which goes beyond man’s experience. It is also the realm that goes beyond our ability to understand. It is not part of our ordinary day to day experience. It can only be contacted in a super rational or mystical way.)*

- **EXAMPLE: Hinduism** - Our experience in this world is all an illusion. We live in a realm called “maya.” The main reason why there are illusions is because we are thinking in the terms of differences and distinctions. We are thinking in terms of things being isolated and separated. The reality is that all is one. You are the drop that falls into the shoreless ocean of being. We do not have separate existence. As long as we are caught up on the wheel of life and do not understand the true nature of reality, we will continue to be reincarnated. After we live our life, we will come back in another form in another life. Until we have become enlightened and practiced yoga so perfectly, we will then be merged into the shoreless of ocean. How we are reincarnated depends upon our karma. If I have bad karma, I might come back as a lower life form. If I have good karma, I will come back as a better person. Eventually, I will be liberated from the wheel of life and be absorbed into Brahman.

## 2. Religions of Immanent Moralism (*Examples: Confucianism, Buddhism*)

**Similar Message:** - The problem that men have is they don't live up to a particular code. All men fail to live up to that code so the Answer is to "Strive on, untiringly!" Deny self and try harder.

**Buddhism:** (Siddhartha Gautama (Founder) – 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (The word Buddha means "*Enlightened*")

- No Transcendent authority to appeal to
- Denies the supernatural.
- Stresses personal experience.
- Focus on achieving enlightenment—a state of inner peace and wisdom. When followers reach this spiritual echelon, they're said to have experienced nirvana.
- The path to enlightenment is attained by utilizing morality, meditation and wisdom.
- The KEY to reducing suffering is ridding ourselves of desire aka "*Suffering will cease when desire ceases*"
- 8 fold path

### 3. Religions that are Counterfeits of Christianity:

#### 3 subdivisions:

1. **Polytheistic perversions** (*Belief in many Gods*) – Mormonism.
2. **Unitarian perversions** (*Denial of the Trinity and belief in One God*) – Islam, Jehovah's Witness, Judaism
3. **Pseudo Messianic perversions** – (*Self proclaimed Messiah's picking up where Jesus left off*) – Sun Myung Moon & "The Moonies"

# Answering the “HOW?”

*How do we engage when it is “Your Revelation and Holy book vs. My Revelation and Holy Book?”*

## Internal critique by way of underlying worldviews:

1. Which worldview provides the preconditions necessary to make intelligible our human experience, and does not lead to inconsistency, arbitrariness or have consequences that anyone would want to get rid of?

In other words, which worldview can provide a Rational basis for: Objectivity, Human Freedom, Laws of Logic, Scientific Inference, Moral Absolutes, the Inductive Principle (The Uniformity of Nature)

2. Which worldview provides a cogent & consistent answer to the Major questions of Life?:

- Where did we come from (creation)?
- What’s gone wrong with the world (fall)?
- What’s the solution (redemption)?
- How does it all end (restoration)?

## Judaism

- **Creation** – God, who is ONE, created. Some hold to Naturalism.
- **Fall** – Man is morally neutral.
- **Redemption** – Man is able to overcome evil through observing the Law.
- **Restoration** – Physical resurrection to life or punishment. Some reject any life after death.

## Islam

- **Creation** – Allah, who is ONE, created the world.
- **Fall** – Man is inherently good, though he can choose to reject God's way.
- **Redemption** – Based on human effort. Good deeds must outweigh bad deeds. 5 pillars.
- **Restoration** – Physical resurrection to sensual paradise or punishment based solely on whom Allah deems worthy.



## Mormonism

- **Creation** – Jesus shaped the world.
- **Fall** – Man is a demi-god but can choose to live a wicked life.
- **Redemption** – Man can increasingly become a god, just like Jesus and the Father. (*2 Nephi 25:23 – “It is by grace we are saved, AFTER all we can do.”*)
- **Restoration** – Man becomes fully divine and forms his own planet. The wicked are able to redeem themselves and become gods.

## Jehovah’s Witnesses

- **Creation** – Jesus, a lesser deity, created the world. Jesus is Michael the Archangel.
- **Fall** – Man is a mortal soul who sinned against God.
- **Redemption** – Jesus made salvation available, but man must work to achieve it.
- **Restoration** – 144,000 will experience a heavenly kingdom. Those who did not achieve salvation will cease to exist.

# Christianity

- **Creation** – The Father created the world through the Son by the Spirit.....and there is ONE God.
- **Fall** – Man freely rebelled against God and became inherently sinful.
- **Redemption** - The Son (Jesus) paid the penalty of sin through His death on a cross and offers reconciliation, forgiveness and right standing with the Father as a free gift through faith in Christ alone.
- **Restoration** – Physical resurrection to life for those in Christ, and punishment for those separated from Christ. New heaven and earth.

# Some Philosophical problems to consider:

**Hinduism** – If all reality is illusion and there are no ultimate differences and distinctions, Logic becomes impossible. It cannot exist because if it does, it doesn't. How do you account for moral absolutes without acknowledging a distinction between good and evil?

## Buddhism, Confucianism or other Immanent Moralistic systems

- If man is ultimately guilty of not following a certain code, the question is “How are you going to change man so that he will start following the code”? (*Seems like you need something like Redemption or Deliverance*) however the only answer given is to “Strive harder.”
- Moralistic systems not only fail to deal with the “human problem” but they provide no solution to the guilt of past law breaking.

**Islam** – The Quran teaches that Allah is a Being, so different than anything in this world, so Transcendent, so beyond human experience, that nothing in human language or experience can describe him. If all our human language is inseparable from human experience, then how can the Quran be possible to reveal Allah? The Quran essentially makes impossible what it claims to be.

Q & A?

- Issues of inconsistency in revelation?
- Deuteronomy 13
- Arguments from issue of translation? Corrupted text?