

What Makes Christianity Different Than All Other Religions?

Critique #1: All Religions are Basically the Same...

The World's religions are fundamentally _____.

- ▶ These differences include:
 - The nature of _____ (personal, impersonal, transcendent, immanent, monotheism, polytheism, pantheism)
 - How God has _____ Himself (holy books, nature, people)
 - The nature of mankind's _____ (sin, ignorance, lack of enlightenment)
 - The necessary human _____ (faith, obedience, mediation)
 - Mankind's ultimate _____ (salvation, liberation, enlightenment)

“Careful examination of the basic tenets of the various religious traditions demonstrate that, far from teaching the same thing, the major religions have radically different perspectives on the religious ultimate.”

Harold A. Netland

Religious Scholar, Author

Attempts to reduce all religions to a common meaning _____.

- ▶ The religions of the world are so _____ in belief and in worldview that they defy attempts to reduce them to a _____ common theme or essence.
- ▶ Though we can agree that there are similar ethical values in the various religions, they are grounded in _____ different views of the nature of reality.

“For as soon as the notion of sameness moves beyond vague generalities – ‘every religion has some version of the Golden Rule’ – it founders to the fact that the religions differ in what they consider essential and nonnegotiable.”

Huston Smith

Professor, University of California-Berkeley

Critique #2: All Religions Lead to God...

The different religious beliefs remain logically _____.

- ▶ Two _____ statements cannot both be true at the same time.
- ▶ For example, Jesus Christ _____ be God incarnate (Christianity) and not God incarnate (Judaism, Islam) at the same time.
- ▶ Since Jews, Christians, and Muslims all _____ the identity of Jesus differently, their _____ cannot all be true.

What about the analogy of the elephant? (John Hick)

- ▶ Several blind men encounter an elephant and each feel a different part, describing the _____ elephant _____.
- ▶ Likewise, each religion has a different perspective of who God is and no single religion has an _____ understanding of God.

Two Critiques

- ▶ One: He assumes no one religion can really know God and all are _____. He also assumes to know more about God than all of the major world religions _____.
- ▶ Two: If the analogy were to reflect Christianity, the elephant would heal the men's _____ and introduce himself.

In Christianity, _____ is the elephant!

“If you knew me, you would know my Father as well.”

John 14:7

“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”

John 14:9

Critique #3: What Makes Christianity Unique...

What makes Christianity different is the _____ by which God interacts with people.

- ▶ In Christianity, God does all of the work on His end to _____ relationship with mankind.

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin.

Romans 8:3

- ▶ Every other religion requires _____ to reconcile their relationship with God.
 - Prayer, meditation, confession, good works, giving, pilgrimage, etc. are all required for salvation.

To Sum It Up in a Word:

The difference is _____.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.

Ephesians 1:7-8

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Romans 9:16