

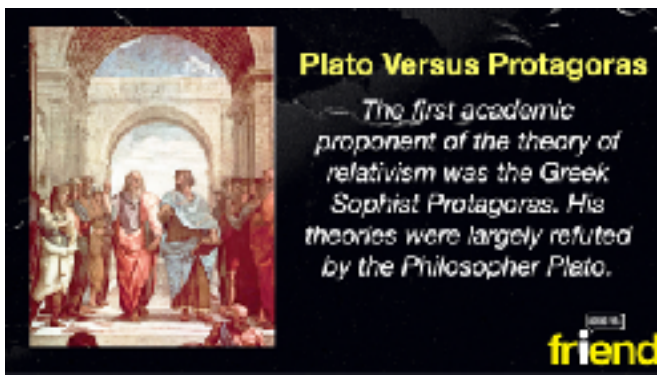
# Is Jesus the Only Way?

## Matthew 7:13-14

**INTRODUCTION:** We have been studying the urgent questions being asked by Generation Z, Namely, “Is God There?”, “Has God Spoken”.

Today we are looking at the third question and perhaps the most urgent - “Is Jesus the Only Way?”. The key word in that question is the word, “**Only**”.

Solomom the Wise tells us that, “there is really nothing new under the Sun” and that is certainly true when it comes to Relativism.



The concept was introduced in the academic sense nearly 500 years before Christ by the **Greek Sophist Protagoras**.

Protagoras was considered the ultimate “Spin Doctor”. He could argue and side of a case that he was assigned, even when limited to the weakest supposed argument. Ironically, he authored

a book entitled, “Aletheia” the Greek word for “Truth”. In the opening line declared: *‘Man is the measure of all things: of the things which are, that they are, and of the things which are not, that they are not.’*

His point was that truth and falsehood are determined not by objective truth, but from a person’s own **perspective**.

He gained quite a following until the Philosopher **Plato** came onto the scene. Plato argued that If every truth claim is relative then this must also apply to Protagoras’ own claim that truth is relative.

Plato saw something that later philosopher and academics soon forgot - Relativism dies as soon as it is asserted.

In the early 1900’s Relativism made a strong resurgence in the realm of **Anthropology**. German-born **Franz Boas** and the Americans **Ruth Benedict** and **Margaret Mead** suggested that no one culture had the right to critique another.

In 1947, the **American Anthropological Association** issued a statement that moral values are relative to individual cultures and should not be thought to apply

universally. Ironically, this was issued on the heels of the Jewish Holocaust and WW2.

WHAT THESE ANTHROPOLOGISTS HAVE SAID OF CULTURE, SOME MODERN DAY INFLUENCERS HAVE APPLIED TO THE INDIVIDUAL.

The charge was led by the first Super-Influencer herself **Oprah Winfrey** when she launched this revival or relativism with her speech at the 2018 Golden Globe awards making the statement, *"What I know for sure is that speaking **your truth** is the most powerful tool we all have."*

*The idea of truth being relative is remarkably dangerous. But as that concept is applied to RELIGION it is not only dangerous, it is damning.*

Yet this concept is almost universally held.

**Joe Klein**, a writer from Time Magazine has gone so far as to say, *"anyone who believes that "there are superior and inferior religions" is a right-wing extremist".*

**50 years ago two religious people would come together and say** "You may be wrong and I may be right, or I may be right on you may be wrong, but it is not possible for both of us to be right". That is called the, "**Law on Non-Contradiction**" which states that *two opposing views cannot be equally true at the same time and in the same way.*

Even **Pope Francis** has stated in a 2015 open letter to the founder of, "La Repubblica" an Italian Newspaper that, *"Non-Believers would be forgiven by God if they simply followed their consciences" and "Sin, even for those who have no faith, exists when people disobey their conscience."*

In other words, what matters is not your personal faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, but rather your obedience to YOUR TRUTH as you see it.

**CONTEXT: In today's text - Jesus speaks authoritatively and directly into the prevailing cultural climate and his words can equip you as you walk through a minefield of philosophical and theological world views.**

Jesus is drawing to the end of the greatest sermon ever preached. He's bringing the hearers to a point of decisions. His call is growing stronger and stronger in intensity. As a matter of fact if you have someone that you believe is close to a decision for Christ. Next week would be a great time to invite them.

**TEXT: Matthew 7:13–14 (ESV)**

13. "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many." 14. "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

So how do we live in a religiously relative culture while simultaneously holding to the exclusive claims of Christianity, as well as positively effecting and evangelizing those around us?

#### **NOTICE WHAT THE TEXT SAYS:**

**a. Everyone is on one of the two roads -**

There aren't hundreds of possible ways to God among which Christianity is an option. There are two - Jesus and everything else.

In essence everyone is born on the broad road going away from God and we must turn, and make a hard break in order to go on the other road.

**b. Everyone is progressing down one of the two roads -**

The roads LEAD to LIFE or LEAD to DESTRUCTION. So you are either progressing toward Christ or toward Hell.

**c. The vast Majority of people are on the Broad Road**

Think about it, no place on earth was closer to the essence of true religion than the rural areas of Israel in the time of Jesus. Yet Jesus said, most of you don't get it. So don't assume that because you are in the Bible Belt South you are surrounded by believers.

**d. It is not easy to change Roads**

**In LUKE's account of this same passage in Luke 13:24 Jesus says, "Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."**

Perhaps some of you today are sincerely religious relativists and you struggle with saying that Christianity is the only way. Perhaps you interact with some who feel that way. For some of you, your children feel that way and you are not aware.

**There are THREE THINGS I'd like you to consider IN LIGHT OF THIS TEXT:**

## **1. Religious Relativism Breaks It's Own Rules**

Never forget the person who says, ***“You shouldn’t hold your faith so exclusively is also holding a position”***.

They say - you shouldn’t evangelize or act as if your system of beliefs are superior than others. Don’t you see - **they are saying, you their religious relativism is SUPERIOR to your religious EXCLUSIVITY.**

So realize the argument is not as logical and coherent as it often seems. Why would a person embrace a position that negates itself?

**ILLUSTRATION:** The Buddhist Elephant Parable is something most of us have heard of. It compare religion to a group of blind me who encounter an Elephant. Each takes hold of a different part of the Elephant. One take the trunk and say, “This animal is long and flexible”. Another takes the leg and says, “No this animal is stiff and solid”. Sill another the side and says, “This animal is broad and wide”. The point is, religion is the same way, every religion has some truth but all only have part.



CONSIDER however the Relativist, the story teller - it is he that is claim to be the one who can see all of these blind people. He is claiming to have an objective truth. If all truth is relative, he too is blind and has nothing to teach the others, you see.

It is the same problem that Plato pointed out to the followers of Protagoras. To claim that all truth is relative is a logical fallacy. It is to claim that you see something no one else can see, thus making you the person of power.

**John 18:37–38 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, **“You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”** <sup>38</sup> Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”..

## 2. Realize that everything in creation teaches us that Narrowness Leads to Fullness

You may wonder, if this narrow way is so restrictive, why would I want to go down it?

**ILLUSTRATION:** My brother in law is one of the top oral surgeons in my home state of Alabama. But I remember very well when his life was SO NARROW. Everywhere he went, he studied. For 7 years! But today that narrowness has opened up into amazing broadness... he has options most of us do not have. He has multiple homes, able to enjoy multiple vacations each year. Why? Because we all know *that narrowness leads to broadness*.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Truly great musicians spend countless hours honing their craft, developing their skill. When they perform, it look effortless - as if they can play in their sleep. Yet the key to that amazing broadness of repertoire was a great narrowness of focus.

**ILLUSTRATION:** How about someone who is in amazing shape, all their clothes look amazing. Even later in life they are able to do things most of us couldn't do in our 20's... why? Because they ate anything they wanted? Because they slept in every day? NO! Because they stuck to a very narrow diet and training schedule - great narrowness has allowed them a broadness of ability.

The opposite is also true.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Take the broad road academically, maybe go to class, maybe not. You will never graduate. You will become a boomerang child and land in your parents basement. And guess what - life becomes very narrow.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Take the broad road with health, eat anything you see. And you will find that life becomes very narrow. You can't do what you want. You will slowly be killing yourself with a spoon.

**So what's the point? If all of creation teaches us that narrowness leads to a broadness of experience, why would it be any different in spirituality?**

God hasn't provided dozens of ways to know Him where you can borrow and create a whole new way if you like. There is one way - Jesus. Focus your

faith, narrow your sources and seek Christ and His Kingdom first and you will find that you truly find God and his life opens up to amazing abundance.

### **3. Never forget that the Narrowness of Christianity is based on the Words of the Founder. To reject the exclusive nature of Christianity is to reject Christ.**

#### **John 14:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

#### **Acts 4:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Not only did Jesus claim to be the only way to God, He claimed to BE GOD. No other's Religious Leader made the claim of Deity. Jesus was certainly unique.

**Make no mistake about it – he didn't present himself as only a great teacher, or a moral leader. But he had the audacity to say-**

- **John 10:30**, "I and the Father are one."
- **John 8:58** "I tell you the truth, Jesus answered, before Abraham was born, I am!"

#### **The Apostle Described Him -**

- **The Apostle Paul describes Him as**, "...our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ"
- **Hebrew 1:6** But unto the son he saith, thy throne oh God, is forever and ever.
- **Titus 2:13** The Bible says we are to be looking for Jesus to come again, and it says, looking for the glorious appearing of the **great God, and our Savior, Jesus Christ.**

Our Savior is the great God who is coming again.

- **When Thomas saw him** after the resurrection and realized after he had been raised from the dead, **John 20:28**. Thomas fell before him and said, my Lord and my God.

**This is a claim never made by Muhammad, Buddha.**

**Bono, the Lead singer of U2 wrestled with this truth in an interview with Michka Assayas. By the way, you can order a paper back copy this book for 1 penny on Amazon.**

**Michka Assayas:** Christ has his rank among the world's great thinkers. But Son of God, isn't that far-fetched?

**Bono:** No, it's not far-fetched to me. Look, the secular response to the Christ story always goes like this: He was a great prophet, obviously a very interesting guy, had a lot to say along the lines of other great prophets, be they Elijah, Muhammad, Buddha, or Confucius. But actually Christ doesn't allow you that. He doesn't let you off that hook. Christ says, No. I'm not saying I'm a teacher, don't call me teacher. I'm not saying I'm a prophet. I'm saying: "I'm the Messiah." I'm saying: "I am God incarnate." And people say: No, no, please, just be a prophet. A prophet we can take. You're a bit eccentric. We've had John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey, we can handle that. But don't mention the "M" word! Because, you know, we're gonna have to crucify you. And he goes: No, no, I know you're expecting me to come back with an army and set you free from these creeps, but actually I am the Messiah. At this point, everyone starts staring at their shoes, and says: Oh, my God, he's gonna keep saying this. So what you're left with is either Christ was who He said He was— the Messiah— or a complete nutcase. I mean, we're talking nutcase on the level of Charles Manson.... I'm not joking here. ***The idea that the entire course of civilization for over half of the globe could have its fate changed and turned upside-down by a nutcase, for me that's far-fetched...***

**CONCLUSION/INVITATION:** A man once said to a pastor that he would be happy to believe in Christianity if the cleric could only give him a watertight argument for its truth. The pastor replied, "**What if God hasn't given us a watertight argument, but rather a watertight person?**" Jesus is saying "I am that person. Come to me. Look at who I am. Look at my Cross. Look at my resurrection. No one could have made this up! Come to me, and you will find rest for your souls"