

Only One

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, ² greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³ And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴ But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

⁵ On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem, ⁶ with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. ⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹ if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, ¹⁰ let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. ¹¹ This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹² 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." Acts 4:1-12

Religious Pluralism - a philosophical belief that there is more than one ultimate principal, therefore claiming there can be no absolute truth, no one system of thought.

Universalism - everyone will be saved by God

Secularization – the culture is moving away from the influence of the church

Privatization – creating categories for public and private

Pluralization – multiple choices of ideologies and faith

The Result

Secularization means there is no space for a **particular** form of faith or agreed upon world view of truth

Privatization promotes a celebration and practice of your faith, but do not bring it into the public arena

Pluralization means that not only are there multiple faiths and multiple ideologies contending for your consideration, but they are all seen as completely equal with one another, equally true, and equally valued

The argument is being made that if we sincerely worship the God of any religion we are worshipping the one true God

What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰ No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 1 Corinthians 10:19-20

Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, Deuteronomy 29:18

that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, ⁸ but you shall cling to the LORD your God just as you have done to this day. Joshua 23:7-8

The Bible is clear that the God's of other religions are not the God of the Bible

There are some key distinctions that we need to understand between pluralism and Christianity

As Christians we believe truth is given to us by God – from His word and by his spirit

Pluralist argue truth is not given it is discovered

Discovery is happening by everyone through experience so each religion, its writing and teachings, serve to accomplish different discoveries of the same God each containing only portions of the truth.

This ideology does not accept the notion of absolute truth

Enter, Jesus Christ, the reason Christianity is an outlier to this new secularism.

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you had known me, you would have known my Father also,¹ From now on you do know him and have seen him.” John 14:6-7

Pluralism argues that humanity is basically good and asks the question “How could a good God condemn so much of “good” humanity to eternal punishment?”

Christianity argues that because of the fall, humanity is not basically good instead we are separated from God by our sin. The better question is “Given the fall and the fact that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, how is it possible that so much of humanity can be saved?”

It is Jesus

Jesus speaks with authority (Matthew 7:28-29, 24:35, 28:18)

Jesus has the authority to forgive sin (Mark 2:10)

Jesus testifies to His divinity (John 5:22-23, 8:12, 10:11)

Jesus is the son of God (Matthew 16:16, 27:54, Luke 3:22, John 17)

Once we understand the claims of Jesus Christ we must either receive him as Lord and Savior or identify him as someone to be ignored completely.

How does the church respond?

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 1 Peter 3:15

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” Romans 10:13-15

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men^[c] by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

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