

"The way, the truth and the life"

A QUESTION TO BEGIN WITH: for both Christians and non-Christians: *Are you uncomfortable about the "exclusivity" of Christianity?*

THE "EXCLUSIVE-NESS" OF JESUS HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MAIN IDEAS OF THIS SERIES:

I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

John 6:35

NOT: *"I can satisfy your inner hunger and thirst like a piece of bread and a cup of water."*

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

John 8:12

NOT: *"I can be a source of enlightenment to you. Like a light in the darkness."*

ONE OF THE MAIN THINGS ABOUT JESUS. **"Exclusive"**

If we belong to him, he excludes us from the consequences of our mistakes and wrong-doings.

If we refuse to believe in him, he excludes us from everlasting life.

TWO IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST

FACT #1. Christians didn't just make all this up.

Christianity & Jesus Christ did not "come about" the way the LADY of the GREEN KIRTLE said Narnia & Aslan did.

THE LADY OF THE GREEN KIRTLE, speaking to Jill and Eustace and Puddleglum (**THE SILVER CHAIR**)

"I see," she said, "that we should do no better with your lion, as you call it, than we did with your sun. You have seen lamps, and so you imagined a bigger and better lamp and called it the sun. You've seen cats, and now you want a bigger and better cat, and it's to be called a lion. Well, 'tis a pretty make-believe, though, to say truth, it would suit you all better if you were younger. And look how you can put nothing into your make-believe without copying it from the real world, this world of mine, which is the only world."



Christianity and Jesus **AREN'T** things we Christians just made up.

We learned about it all from people who received it from the apostles.

ABOUT THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST, there was no doubt in the apostles' minds [e.g. Peter]:

Acts 4:1-12 "...This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

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.**"

Peter and John and the other apostles weren't born believing these things. They experienced some things and they became convinced.

And the very best example of that sort of story is the apostle Paul. And there was no doubt in his mind of Paul about the "exclusivity" of Jesus. **Colossians 1:16,17** For **by him** all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created **through him and for him**. And **he** is before all things, and **in him** all things hold together.

These concepts and beliefs the apostle received from Jesus himself --- and then, in looking back at their heritage, from the prophets and the other writers of the Old Testament, long ago and far away.

FACT #2 Christians aren't (or shouldn't be) claiming to be the only people at all correct about God.

We are not saying (or at least we shouldn't be saying) that everyone else is absolutely wrong.

Check out for yourself how Paul the Apostle spoke to a crowd in Athens, Greece.

Acts 17:16-28

THE WORLD FACTBOOK (The 2013-2014 edition)	
WORLD POPULATION	7,095,217,980 (As of July, 2013)
Christians	31.5%
Muslims	23.2%
Hindus	13.8%
Buddhists	6.77%
Atheists	2.01%
Others	21% → including Sikhs (0.35%) and Jews (0.22%)
[2010 estimates]	

We think Muslims and Jews are quite right about there being only one God. And about there being an afterlife --- an everlasting life -- in which we experience consequences related to how we live. So that's about 55% of the world population agreed on two of the biggest issues. That doesn't make it true. The existence of God is not determined democratically!

Belonging to anyone of these groups DOES mean believing that THAT group's point-of-view is **more right**, or **right about more things**, than anyone else's.

BUT it's ONLY the atheists who MUST insist that only they are completely correct and that everyone else is wrong.

THIS SAME CLAIM OF THE EXCLUSIVITY OF CHRIST IS MADE IN **THIS MORNING'S TEXT**:

John 14:1-6 [Talking to his apostles just before his arrest on the evening before he was crucified] "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Here: Jesus **very plainly claiming exclusivity** and **very plainly identifying** the point or the focus of his exclusivity.

ONE THING TO KNOW ABOUT JESUS AS "THE WAY"

1. Only Jesus Christ can relate you properly to God. It's what he was talking about at the time.
John 14: (5)6 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."



Thomas a Kempis, (1380-1471) One of many from whom we Christians have received what we believe. A German monk who (almost certainly) wrote *The Imitation of Christ*

"Without the way, there is no going; without the truth, there is no knowing; without the life, there is no living. I am the way which you must follow; the truth which you must believe; the life for which you must hope."

THREE THINGS TO DO BECAUSE JESUS IS "THE WAY"

- a) Believe in God and believe in him
John 14:1 "...Believe in God; believe also in me..." Trust God. Trust Jesus.
 Entrust yourself and commit yourself. As if there is no one else like him.
- b) Come to the Father through him
John 14:6 "...No one comes to the Father except through me..."
- c) Know the Father by knowing him.
John 14:7 "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

COMMUNION

NEXT SUNDAY: March 15 John 15:5 "THE VINE" [Jude St.John]

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 Scripture references: HOLY BIBLE, **English Standard Version**, © 2001, CROSSWAY PUBLICATIONS

DIGGING DEEPER

- I. Poor Thomas the Apostle! His nickname changed from “*Thomas the Twin*” to “*Doubting Thomas*.”
BUT check out everything that Thomas said, *according to John*. **John 11:16**
John 14:5
John 20:24-28

If it were up to you, what nickname would you give him?

- II. On the topic of Christians not claiming to be “the only people correct about God,” read over the words of a speech made by Paul the Apostle in Athens, Greece. **Acts 17:16-28**. What can you conclude about Paul’s view of the “Men of Athens” and their beliefs about God? What does this suggest to us about how we should speak to non-Christians?

NOTES:

“*In him we live and move and have our being*” is a quotation of **Epimenides** of Crete, a 7th or 6th century B.C. Greek philosopher. (Paul quotes the same poem in **Titus 1:12**.)

*They fashioned a tomb for you, holy and high one,
Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies.
But you are not dead: you live and abide forever,
For in you we live and move and have our being*

“*For we are indeed his offspring*” is from a poem by **Aratus**, a Greek poet who lived from about 310 to 240 B.C.