

BASIC INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY

I. WHY Christianity?

- A. There is only one true God (Isaiah 45:22; Deuteronomy 6:4).
- B. There is only one true religion (Jude 3; Acts 17:24-31).
- C. There is only one true answer to man's basic problem (John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5).
- D. The many religions of the world are contradictory, and therefore, cannot all be true.
- E. The Bible teaches that the origin of the many religions is:
 - 1. All men have a sense that God exists (Romans 1:18-20).
 - 2. Sin causes men to make religions of their own liking (Romans 1:21-32).
- F. Christianity is the only true religion – with rational and inescapable proof of its truthfulness (1 Corinthians 1:20; 1 Peter 3:15).

II. WHERE do we learn about Christianity?

- A. The Bible is where God speaks to the world (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- B. The Bible is perfect – without error, unchanging, and supplies all we need to know about God and true religion (1 Peter 1:19-21).
- C. The Bible is the only place where God tells us of his purpose and plan for man having a relationship with God (Romans 10:14-17).

III. WHAT does Christianity teach?

- A. *About Sin* (man's basic problem). Sin is our failure to be or do what God requires.
 - 1. What God requires is found in the Bible and summarized in God's Law – the Ten Commandments. Everyone has fallen desperately short of this standard of perfection (Romans 3:23).
 - 2. Because God created us, he makes us accountable to him as his creatures (Acts 17:28-31).
 - 3. *What we have done* leaves us declared *guilty* before God our Judge, and by the standard of His Law (Romans 3:19).
 - 4. *What we are* is persons polluted and defiled by our sinful hearts (Genesis 6:5).
 - 5. Sin leaves us separated from God and in spiritual bondage (Ephesians 2:1-3).
 - 6. Sin comes with a payment – physical death culminates in the eternal punishment of Hell (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21 :8).
- B. *About God*. The true God of the Bible is:
 - 1. The Creator (he made everything); Holy (without any sin or impurity); Righteous (he cannot overlook the sin we have done); Just (he will punish sin).
 - 2. God's mercy, goodness, kindness and love are displayed in the good gifts that he gives to all his creatures, but they are preeminently seen in the salvation that he provides to those who trust in him.
- C. *About Salvation*. How are we saved from sin? (Acts 16:30)
 - 1. The wrong way (man's answers):
 - a. Working hard at being good will not save us, because it cannot erase our guilty past or change our impure and polluted hearts (Isaiah 64:6).

- b. Ignoring the problem we have because of sin, and filling our lives with pleasure and success in the world, will only delay and worsen the consequences of our sin (Luke 9:25).
2. The right way (the Gospel- which means *good news*):
- a. *Free gift*. In love, God sent Jesus as a Savior of sinners (John 3:16). Jesus became a *substitute* to take the place of his people in two ways.
- First, he lived a perfect life of righteousness in obedience to God's Law – something we are unable to do. Secondly, he paid the full penalty for sin, by suffering in his crucifixion – being declared guilty, and standing in our place to bear the wrath of God against our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).
 - Our debt to be paid because of our sin is laid upon Christ, and his record of perfect obedience is credited to our account before God.
- b. *Free grace*. Grace is God giving us something we have not earned and that we have not deserved. It includes pardon and forgiveness for our sin now, and everlasting life in heaven after death – for those who trust in Christ for this salvation (Romans 8:1; 6:23).

IV. HOW should we respond to Christianity's message?

- A. *Urgency*. The shortness of time, the finality of death and a looming eternity should wake us up to our need, and motivate us to act with speed (Revelation 20:11-15; Hebrews 10:26-31).
- B. *The Gospel Offer*. There is hope. Christ is willing, able and desirous to save all those who hear the good news of salvation (Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 55:1-3). He will not reject any who come to him (John 6:37).
- C. *Faith*. We are to believe this message – especially what the Bible says about the Lord Jesus Christ and what he provides for sinners (Acts 16:31; John 1:29). We are to look to Christ, flee to Christ, and rest and trust in Christ, as the Son of God who stood in the place of sinners to accomplish a salvation they could not provide for themselves. Faith also means believing the entire message of the Bible.
- D. *Repentance*. Our realization that we have sinned against God, and our recognition that God is merciful should motivate us to hate our sin, to turn away from it, and to flee to the God of the Bible as our only hope and help (2 Peter 3:9; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38).
- E. *Loving Gratitude*. A true thankfulness for God's mercy will motivate us to love, honor and serve him, and to obey his commandments. Christ becomes our Lord and Master, and the Bible becomes the rule and standard for how we live (Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-15).

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