

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION:

Why the Blood and Why the Cross? (Couldn't God have devised another way?)

Why does the Plan of Salvation found ONLY in Jesus Christ "work?"

Note the numbers of adherents to these world religions before we read the following article:

Judaism... 14.5 million

Buddhism... 330-500 million

Hinduism... 900 million-1 billion

Islam... 1.6 billion

Christianity... 2.1 billion

The following excerpts were taken from an article published in the *Christian Post* in December of 2008:

"Sixty-five percent of all Christians say there are MULTIPLE paths to eternal life, ultimately rejecting the exclusivity of Christ's teaching, according to the latest survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, called the survey results "a theological crisis for American evangelicals," according to USA Today. "They represent at best a misunderstanding of the Gospel and at worst a repudiation of the Gospel," the prominent evangelical theologian said. Mohler called the findings "an indictment of evangelicalism and evangelical preaching."

"The clear Biblical teaching is that Jesus Christ proclaimed himself to be the ONLY way to salvation," he told USA Today.

Explaining the challenge many believers face in today's culture, Mohler noted, "We are in an age when we want to tell everyone they are doing just fine. It's extremely uncomfortable to turn to someone and say, 'You will go to hell unless you come to a saving knowledge of Jesus.'"

QUESTION: Soooooo...if the 65% number who believe in multiple paths to eternal life can be extrapolated to the Christians worldwide, that leaves 35% of the 2.1 billion who actually believe in TRUE BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY (i.e., Jesus Christ is the ONLY way to have eternal life). What would be the number of those Christians worldwide? 35% of 2.1 billion equals ????????

ANSWER: _____ THIS IS A WAKE-UP CALL!!!

WITH THESE STATISTICS, IT BEHOOVES US TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WE BELIEVE:

1. “Why the Blood and Why the Cross?”(That is, couldn’t God have devised another way?)
2. “Why does the Plan of Redemption found **ONLY** in Jesus **WORK?**” (That is, why is the Cross **EFFICACIOUS?** Is it simply because God said ‘I’m just going to make it this way,’ or are there **DIVINE PRINCIPLE** and **DIVINE LAW** upholding the Plan of Salvation, undergirding the Plan of Salvation, and empowering the Plan of Salvation, thereby making it **THE CURE FOR SIN?**)

As we seek to find the answers to the above questions, keep in mind the following scriptures:

- Malachi 3:6: “For I am the Lord, I **CHANGE NOT...**”
- Hebrews 6:17: “...the **IMMUTABILITY** of His counsel...”

QUESTION: What does **IMMUTABILITY** mean?

ANSWER: _____

- James 1: 17: “...from the Father of lights, with whom is **NO VARIABLENESS**, neither **SHADOW OF TURNING.**”

QUESTION: What does this scripture tell us about the “nature” or “essence” of the being of God?

ANSWER: _____

- I John 4:8: “...for God **IS Love.**” *****VERY IMPORTANT!!!**

QUESTION: What does this scripture tell us about the “nature” or “essence” of the being of God? (Note: God **HAS** LOVE, but this scripture makes a distinction between **HAVING** LOVE and **BEING** LOVE—which is an exclusive characteristic of GOD only!)

ANSWER: _____

1. **QUESTION:** Religions/belief systems that are not true Biblical Christianity set forth many different “paths,” “ways,” or “methods” to have eternal life. What is a common characteristic in these other religions/belief systems relative to attaining eternal life?

ANSWER: _____

2. **QUESTION:** How does this common characteristic among other religions compare to true, Biblical Christianity?

ANSWER: _____

To understand why God chose the Plan of Redemption through Jesus Christ as the **CURE** for our **SIN problem**, (thereby enabling us to have eternal life) we must look back *before* the creation of mankind in Genesis 1. From scriptures in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, we find that prior to man's creation, Heaven's idyllic setting was disrupted by **THE ORIGINAL SINNER! INIQUITY** found a place in the heart of God's "anointed **CHERUB** that covereth," God's **MUSIC LEADER** in **HEAVEN!** (*Sometimes choir directors can be such a pain!*) 😊 **Lucifer**, the majestic cherub with musical instrumentation created within his angelic being (tabrets and pipes within him), **REBELLED!** With 1/3 of the angelic host seduced by him to attempt a coup d'état, **LAWLESSNESS** broke out! Lucifer had a change of "nature," as reflected by his name, **SATAN**—now the **ADVERSARY**, the **EVIL ONE**.

This gift of **FREE WILL** that God even bestowed upon the angels has now opened the door for **A BIG CHANGE!** (But keep in mind that the **OMNISCIENT GOD** knew about this **BEFORE** He even created the angels, so He has a **SUPERIOR PLAN** in Mind!!! God is definitely "up to something" and He is **PROVING** something about what **TRUE POWER IS!**)

QUESTION: Did God handle this outbreak of **SIN (LAWLESSNESS, REBELLION)** by annihilating all the revolting angels? *POOF and they were gone???*

ANSWER: _____

QUESTION: Interesting that now that **SIN** (i.e., **REBELLION, LAWLESSNESS**) has entered Heaven and Satan has fallen **FROM** Heaven **TO EARTH** as lightning (Jesus' words), God decides to **CREATE HUMANITY!** Hmmmmmmmm! Wonder why God decided to bring humanity into existence at this seemingly inopportune moment and even **GIVE** humanity **FREE WILL**, also???

*Did God **NOT** think this through???* 😊

ANSWER: _____

To find out what **God's SECRET WEAPON** for the "WAR ON SIN" is, read I Corinthians 13 and **REMEMBER, GOD** doesn't just *possess* **LOVE**, HIS **BEING AND ESSENCE** **IS** **LOVE**. Unlike us, **GOD'S "COMPOSITION"** is **AGAPE LOVE**—and that is a **FORMIDABLE "WEAPON."**

- "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not **charity, (LOVE)** I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could

remove mountains, and have not **charity, (LOVE)** I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, **(LOVE)** it profiteth me nothing. **Charity (LOVE)** suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the **GREATEST** of these is charity. **(LOVE)**'

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT WEEK...