



MT. ROSE REFORMED
ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Is Christianity the Only True Religion?

Reverend Scott Johnson | August 16, 2026 | John 14:1-7

Old Testament Reading

The Old Testament reading is Isaiah chapter 45, verses 18 through 23. Isaiah 45, 18 through 23, the Lord tells the people of Israel that He alone is God, that there is salvation in no one else but Him. So let's hear the word of God. For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens, he is God, who formed the earth and made it. He established it. He did not create it empty. He formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is no other. I did not speak in secret in a land of darkness. I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, seek me in vain. I, the Lord, speak the truth. I declare what is right.

Assemble yourselves and come. Draw near together, you survivors of the nations. They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a God that cannot save. Declare and present your case. Let them take counsel together. Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides me, a righteous God and a Savior. There is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone out in righteousness, a word that shall not return. To me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear allegiance.

New Testament Reading

And now turn with me to John chapter four, John chapter four, or 14 rather, John chapter 14. For our New Testament reading, this is our sermon text as well. John chapter 14, verses 1 through 7. John 14, 1 through 7. 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. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you do know Him and have seen Him. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The Offense of the Exclusive Claim

There have always been all kinds of reasons why people have objected and continue to object to the Christian faith. But in our world today, perhaps the one thing that people find most problematic about Christianity is the fact that Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. Now, we as Christians have always believed and taught this, not because we just like the idea, but we have believed and taught this because this is what the Bible teaches. According to the scriptures, there is only one way to know God. There is only one way of salvation. There is only one path to heaven, and that is through faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

We've heard the words of Jesus in our sermon text from the Gospel of John. He declared this truth to us. He says, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. And we could add many other text to this one to show that there is salvation and no one else but Jesus. For example, in Acts chapter 4 verse 12, the apostle Peter declares, and there is salvation and no one else for there is no other name given among heaven or given among men under heaven by which we must be saved. No other name but the name of Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5, for there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

And so, when the church of Jesus Christ, when we as Christians declare that Christ is the only way of salvation, or when we say that Christianity is the only true religion, we are only saying what God has declared in his word. However, in the minds of many people today, to make that claim, to say that Jesus alone is the way to salvation, or to say that the Christian faith alone can bring us to God and take us to heaven, this is nothing less than committing the unforgivable sin.

One author who has tried to synthesize the different religions of the world to create a kind of global universal faith, he lamented the stubborn resistance of Christianity to that program. He wrote this, he said, Christianity is a contentious faith, which requires an all or nothing commitment to Jesus as the one and only incarnation of the Son of God. Christianity is uncompromising, ornery, militant, rigorous, imperious, and invincibly self-righteous. He really shouldn't beat around the bush. He should tell us what he really thinks about Christianity.

And maybe some of you as Christians, maybe you have been accused of these very things. Someone may have said to you, If you think that your religion and only your religion is the true one and that Christianity is the only way to God, well, that just makes you narrow minded. You are intolerant. You are bigoted. Or maybe you are listening to this sermon, and you are not a believer in Christ, and this is a question you have asked yourself. How can Christians claim that

Jesus is the only way of salvation? How can Christians say that their faith is the only true religion in the world, and that all the other religions, by definition, therefore, must be false?

Well, this is the question I want to consider with you today. And as we do, we'll first consider the challenge of relativism, and I will define that, but we'll first consider the challenge of relativism to the Christian faith, and then secondly, we'll look to the scriptures to see why we as Christians make the claim that the Christian faith is the only true religion.

The Challenge of Relativism

So first of all, the challenge of relativism to the Christian faith. The reason why the Christian claim that Jesus is the only way of salvation, the reason why this is so objectionable in our world today, the reason why the idea that all religions are equally valid in some way, the reason why that idea, that notion is so dominant today is because we are enculturated, we have been trained, we have grown up in an environment in which it is natural to assume that truth is relative. And that idea, the idea that what's true for me may not be true for you, what's true for this people may not be true for that people, this is what we call relativism. And to us today, relativism seems as unquestionably true as the fact that the sky is blue, that the grass is green, that water is wet. We just assume that that is the case.

One author has written about this. I forgot to bring the book. I was going to read a quote from his book about it, but he talked about the fact that universities today that professors can just count on this, that the incoming students will have this unquestioned commitment to moral relativism. It's not something that they were consciously taught so much, but something that they just assumed to be true because of the relativistic environment that we live in.

And because relativism is in the very air that we breathe, because of this, the most natural thing for us to think is that, well, every religion must have some truth to it, but no religion has the whole truth. Every religion is getting at the same thing, but there is no one worldview or philosophy or religion that can claim to have an exclusive possession of the truth. And so it sounds to us very reasonable, very plausible to say things like, the religions of the world are like a great mosaic. Each religion represents one little part of that mosaic that's one color. But when you put them all together, they create this one grand design.

Or it sounds natural, it sounds reasonable and plausible to say something like, all the religions of the world are like different pathways that lead followers up to the same mountain summit. This kind of thinking, I think, is captured well by the bumper sticker I'm sure all of you have seen before that says, Coexist. And each of the letters in that word is made up of a religious symbol from Islam or from Christianity or from Judaism or from paganism. And the idea is that not only should different people of different faiths live together, which of course is true, but the idea is that we all share something bigger than our religion, that truth is relative, religion is relative.

And in this kind of environment, in this way of thinking, it's just natural. In fact, we might even consider it just basic human decency to affirm the relative validity of every religion, to affirm that there is some truth in every philosophy or worldview or religion. And in this environment, the

greatest possible offense is to make the claim to absolute truth. And so when Christians say things like, Jesus is the only way to God, or that the Christian faith is the only path to salvation, those claims not only strike people as self-evidently wrong, absurd, unreasonable, but they sound simplistic, arrogant, imperialistic, and closed-minded.

The Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant

So what are we to think about all of this? How do we respond to this as Christians? Well, the first thing that we as Christians should say in response to this relativistic mindset is to say that, in principle, a claim to absolute truth, whether that is made by a religion or a philosophy, that this in itself is no logical or moral problem. Because when we dig just a little bit below the surface of relativism, what becomes clear is that Christianity is certainly not alone in making universal truth claims. There are many other religions that make universal truth claims as well. It is not the Christian faith alone that does so.

In fact, in principle at least, every religion, every worldview, every philosophy makes some kind of assertion of truth that necessarily must apply to all people universally. It's just the nature of the case. Any attempt to make sense of the world must include something that is taken to be true in a universal or absolute sense. Otherwise, it would be futile, it would be meaningless to try to make sense of the world at all. And this applies just as much to the idea of relativism or religious pluralism.

Ironically, relativism itself cannot escape the charge of claiming a universal truth. There is an old Buddhist parable that is often told to illustrate and to defend the idea that all religions are relatively true, that all religions contain some truth, but no religion contains the whole truth. And it goes like this. Perhaps you've heard this. Once upon a time, there was a king who placed an elephant in a room. And then he brought in six blind men, and he told them to feel the animal and then describe for him what they thought the elephant is, or what they think an elephant is.

So they're blind. He puts an elephant in the room. He tells them, this is an elephant. Of course, they can't see it. He tells them to touch the elephant and tell him what they think it is. And so the first blind man touches the elephant's head. And he says, the elephant is like a giant water pot. The second blind man, he touches the elephant's ear, and he says, the elephant is like a fan. The third man felt the elephant's trunk, and he said, no, an elephant is like a fat snake. The fourth blind man held on to the elephant's tusks, and he said, no, all of you are wrong. An elephant is like two prongs on a plow. The fifth man grabbed the elephant's leg. And he said, actually, in truth, the elephant is like a pillar. And finally, the sixth man held up the tail. And he said, all of you are wrong. You're all mistaken. An elephant is like a rope.

And then the blind men began to argue with one another, to shout at one another. They were all convinced that each one was right and that all the others were wrong. And according to Buddha, the moral of the story is this: How can we be, or how can you be so sure of what you cannot see? We are all like blind people in this world. We cannot see God. Each of your religions may be partly right, yet none completely so.

Exposing the Flaw of Relativism

Now, if we hear this parable, we don't give it much thought, it seems to put forth a very humble, a very reasonable explanation about the nature of religion or an explanation of why there are so many various religions in the world. All of them are partially correct, but not one of them sees the whole truth. Not one of them can grasp the whole picture. But the problem with the parable is that, in fact, there is one person in the parable who does see the whole picture. There is one person who can see exactly what the elephant looks like in its totality, and that is the king who brought the blind men into the room. And so the parable only works if, in fact, there is one person who does see the whole truth.

And so the claim of relativism, the claim that there is no absolute truth, or that no one can know absolute truth, it is actually a statement in itself that is taken to be absolutely true. And so it is a self-defeating kind of way of looking at various religions in the world, or philosophies, or worldviews. The idea that no religion sees the whole truth, in fact, though it sounds humble on the surface, in fact, it is a very bold and audacious claim. We might even say it's a very arrogant claim that the person who says that, that they know the whole truth about religion that every other religion in the world is blind to.

The whole point of this is to say that the challenge of relativism to the Christian faith is an empty challenge. It is an invalid objection. Merely because Christianity claims to possess the truth that applies to all people everywhere, merely because the Christian faith claims knowledge of the truth, and that therefore other religions and philosophies that aren't in conformity with that truth are wrong, merely for that reason, does not make Christianity wrong. It does not make it untrue or unreasonable.

The real question is not, does Christianity claim to be the only way to God? Of course it does. It's not a problem. The real question is, is this claim true? Is this a true statement? Is this a true claim? Is the content of the Christian message true or is it false? Is Jesus the only way to salvation or are there other pathways to God? That's the question that we are concerned with.

The Human Condition and the Need for Salvation

And that brings us to our second consideration, which is that very question: Why the Christian faith is the only true religion. There is one thing that every religion has in common. And that is every religion, in one way or another, offers the hope and contains the idea of salvation. Some kind of salvation. Salvation for those who follow the teachings of that religion. Salvation for those who worship the god or the gods of that religion. Now what that salvation entails and how people are to obtain it will be different from religion to religion, but every religion offers some sort of promise, some sort of hope to give us life, meaning, and significance, a life, meaning, and significance that transcends the brutal realities of life in this day-to-day world.

And the first question we should ask is this. When we consider religion in general, or the religions of the world, the first question we should ask is this: Since all religions have some idea

of salvation, what is that salvation that we are in need of? What do we need to be saved from? What is it that is our most basic fundamental problem that plagues us as human beings living in this world? Every religion recognizes that something is wrong with this world, something is wrong, and offers some kind of salvation from it. Well, what is wrong?

Well, the Bible's answer to that question is, our most fundamental problem is not the miseries that we endure in this life, as horrible as they are, our most fundamental problem is not even the death that faces us in this life, as terrible as that is, but our deepest problem is our alienation from God. That is our deepest problem. We are alienated from God, and that is because of our sin. We are cut off from the blessing, the favor of God, the communion with God that He created us to enjoy because of our sin.

God created us to have fellowship with Him forever and ever. He created us to live eternally in the blessedness and joy of knowing Him, worshiping Him, loving Him, and being loved by Him, the God who created us, who made us in His image. But we lost that communion with God when we sinned against Him. And now, apart from the grace of God, we are, each one of us, we are subject to the judgment, to the wrath of God. And that judgment of God is rightfully ours because we have sinned and rebelled against Him.

And that judgment that is rightfully ours because of our sin against God is not merely that we must die in this world and suffer the miseries of this world, but it is eternal destruction, an eternal death, living forever under the wrath of God. This is the judgment that God says we deserve as sinners. This is the judgment that the Bible calls hell. And this is all because of our sin. And this is the most fundamental, this is the deepest problem that plagues the human race. This is the deepest problem that each and every one of us has. We are alienated from God, we are under his wrath because of our sin. Romans 3:23 says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 6:23 says, the wages of sin is death.

The Inability to Save Ourselves

Now, at this point, someone might say, well, you're just using the teaching of Christianity to prove the truth of Christianity. And that's just circular reasoning. And to that, I would say two things. First of all, I would say to that person, let me ask you a question and be honest. Do you have a guilty conscience? Does your conscience convict you that you have ever done something that you know is wrong, something that you know is evil? And if they're honest, they'll say yes. Well, that is God's testimony to that person personally. That is his personal testimony to that person that he has sinned against God, that he is under God's judgment, that the guilt that we all experience, that is a sign, testimony from God, that we deserve his judgment.

And I would also say this, the fact that all people are sinners has been abundantly proven day after day, year after year, throughout all of human history. In one way or another, all of the problems of this world, all of the miseries of this world can be traced back to the corruption that is in the human heart. Greed, lust, covetousness, hatred. In the human heart, it's from this that springs all the problems, all the suffering, all the evil, all the miseries that exist in this life. The British author G.K. Chesterton, he made a very insightful observation. He said that the doctrine

of original sin, we might say, the universality of human sin, this is the one Christian doctrine that can be proven from the facts of human history. This is the one doctrine that can be shown to be true just by looking at history with open eyes.

And as bad as all of that is, the problem of our sin is even worse. Because of our sin, we are spiritually dead. The Bible says that we are dead in our sins and trespasses. We are no more capable of pleasing God than a dead person is capable of running a marathon. And it's for that reason, because of our sin, because we are dead in our sin, that the salvation whatever that may be that is offered by all the religions in the world is a false hope because we cannot save ourselves from our sin. We cannot save ourselves from the righteous wrath of God, no matter how many religious things that we do, no matter how many good works that we perform, no matter how pious and faithful we may be according to the tenets of whatever religion that we may belong to. We cannot be reconciled to God on the basis of morality or good works or religion. Our sin has left us utterly helpless to save ourselves from our sin.

This is our condition. We cannot save ourselves from the sin and death under which we are in bondage. We need God to save us. We need God to intervene and to act for us. And that is what the Christian message is all about. That is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that God has accomplished the salvation for us that we so desperately need that we could not accomplish for ourselves. And he has done this for us in the person of his son, Jesus Christ.

The Person and Work of Jesus Christ

The man Jesus Christ, he is the Son of God. And he is the Son of God in the sense that he was and that he is the incarnation of almighty God. He is the eternal creator and sovereign Lord who has come to us as man. He took on human flesh. And so he was, he is both God and man from the time of his incarnation and for all eternity. And he came into our world to bring us salvation.

And in our passage from the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of that salvation that he, as the incarnate Lord, came to bring us. These words that we read from John chapter 14, Jesus spoke these words to his disciples as they were reeling from what Jesus had told them moments before. Jesus had told his disciples that he was going away from them and that where he was going, they could not come. They could not join him there.

Remember, this was the night of the Last Supper. This was the eve of the arrest, the crucifixion, the death of Jesus. And for that reason, Jesus said to his disciples, where I am going, you cannot come. But to comfort the hearts of his disciples, Jesus said to them in verse one in chapter 14, he says, let not your hearts be troubled. And then He promised them that where He was going, He would prepare a place for them, that He was going to prepare a place for them in His Father's house. And this, of course, is the promise of heaven, the promise that one day that Jesus would be reunited with His disciples, that one day the disciples would be brought back again with Jesus in glory in heaven, in the house of His Father forever.

The Way to the Father

And in verse 4, Jesus said to his disciples, and you know the way to where I am going. Now, Jesus said this to his disciples because he had earlier told his disciples on multiple occasions that he must be crucified and buried and that he must die. Of course, he said he would be raised again as well. And so they already knew the way that Jesus was talking about when he said that he would go from them, that they could not come with him. That is, he would go to be with his Father. But the way that he would go to be with his Father was through the cross, through his death upon the cross.

But the disciples did not understand that. They seemed to think that Jesus was talking about him going away for a while someplace here on earth, someplace in Jerusalem. And so Thomas said to Jesus in verse five, Lord, we do not know the way you are going. How can we know the way? Or we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?

And then Jesus answered his disciples. He answered Thomas in a way which, so often as he does, it was a little bit cryptic at the time, but it certainly would become clear to them later. He says in verse six, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. In other words, by saying this, Jesus was saying to his disciples, the way that I am going to the Father is through the cross, and the way that you will go to the Father is through me. It is through my crucifixion, through my resurrection.

And so what Jesus was telling the disciples and what Jesus is telling you and me with these words is that the salvation that we so desperately need is found only in Him. It is found only in the person of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is found in Him as He was crucified to pay the penalty for our sin, as He was raised from death to life to give us that eternal life that we so desperately need.

And this is what makes the Christian message unique. This is what makes the Christian message so glorious, so wonderful. It is that God has done for us what we could not do. God has saved us in his Son Jesus Christ.

The Call to Faith

Notice what Jesus says in verse 1. He says, Believe in God, believe also in me. Now when you think about it, this would have been a very shocking thing for the disciples to hear. Because these were all Jews. These disciples had grown up as Jews, hearing all the time, being taught all the time that they were to put their faith, their hope, their trust in the Lord alone, not in any other God, not in any other man. But now here is Jesus, this man, who is telling them, believe in God, believe in me. Believe also in me. That same trust and hope and faith that you have in God, you must put that faith in me as well.

And why is that? It's because he is the very God that Israel worshiped. He is the very God that Israel called upon. He is the very God who created the heavens and the earth. That was the

God of Israel. And there he was standing in the flesh as man before the disciples saying, believe in me.

And with these words, Jesus is telling us that salvation from sin and death becomes ours only as we put our faith and our hope and our trust in Jesus Christ to believe that he died for our sins, to believe that he was raised up from the dead for our salvation. And so what all of this means is that Jesus is not just one way of salvation. He is not just one way for us to come to God, to be reconciled to God. He is the only way of salvation. Jesus says in verse six, he says this very thing, no one comes to the Father except through me.

And so if our most fundamental problem is our alienation from God because of our sin, and if the only way that our sin could be atoned for and forgiven is for Jesus Christ, the God-man, to die for our sin in our place, to bear the curse of death that we deserved, and if that atonement and forgiveness becomes ours only if we are united to Jesus Christ by faith, then salvation can only be through trust in Jesus Christ. That is the only way. No one comes to the Father except through Him.

And this forces the question upon each of us: Have you put your trust and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ? That is the only way to be saved. If you are trying to make yourself good before God, to make yourself right before Him by the things that you do, or by being a moral and decent human being, that is not sufficient. There is no amount of good things you can do to atone for your sin and to be forgiven. It is only by coming to the one who has done that for you, that is the Lord Jesus Christ, and bowing to Him as your Lord and Savior.

Exclusive Yet Inclusive

Now, it is true. It shouldn't embarrass us, but it is true that according to the Christian faith, according to the Scriptures, there is a sense in which God's plan of salvation is radically exclusive. We might even say intolerant. It is intolerant of every other attempt to be made right with God apart from Christ. It is exclusive of every other religion that preaches a way of salvation apart from Jesus Christ. No one is saved apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

But at the same time, God's plan of salvation is radically inclusive. John 3:16, we heard this earlier: For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. God does not exclude anybody who comes to faith in Jesus Christ. It does not matter what your nationality is, what your race is, what your social status is, your education. All who come to faith in Jesus Christ receive the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

What's most amazing of all about this is that it doesn't even matter what sins you have committed. No matter how great your sins have been, no matter how much evil you may have done, no matter how far you have strayed from the righteousness of God, if you come to Jesus Christ in faith, repentance, seeking his mercy, he is merciful, he is gracious, he does not cast anyone out who comes to him. No matter how vile, no matter how wicked a life he may have

led, there is salvation for all who come to faith in Christ. And so Christianity, in that sense, is inclusive.

Truth Discovered in a Person

But this is why we can say as Christians that the Christian faith is the only true religion. Because it is only the Christian faith that brings us to Jesus Christ. And it is only Jesus Christ who can save us from our sin. Jesus said, I am the truth. I am the truth.

At the very deepest level, truth is not merely a matter of correct ideas and notions that correspond to reality. Of course, truth is that. Whatever is true to reality is true. But truth is not ultimately found in a worldview or a philosophy or a religion. But truth ultimately is found in a person, in a person. Truth is truth. Truth is what it is because God is truth. God is truth. God is the source and the origin of all truth.

And Jesus claimed that for himself. Jesus did not say, I am the rabbi from Galilee who teaches the truth. I am the man who knows the truth and proclaims the truth. Jesus said, I am the truth. I am the truth. And for that reason, coming to know the truth is more than just coming to agree with the doctrines, the teachings of Christianity, but coming to know the truth means coming to know Jesus, the person, the Son of God.

And this is why we can say as Christians that the Christian faith is the only true religion. It's because it is only through the gospel that the truth himself comes to us, that the truth makes himself known to us for our salvation, for our comfort, for our hope. What the Apostle Peter declared in Acts chapter 4 verse 12 was true then, it is true today, it will be true until the end of the world. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Let's pray.