



Faith in Jesus: Is It Necessary? • Part 1

Lesson 7

"There couldn't possibly be one way to God."

"I am a Christian who believes there are certainly many more paths to God other than Christianity—so—I am a freethinking Christian who believes that—who believes in my way but I don't believe it is the only way with 6 billion people here on the planet."

~Oprah Winfrey, New Age Spiritualist

"We do not need to think of the church as the ark of salvation, leaving everyone else in hell; we can rather think of it as the chosen witness to the fullness of salvation that has come into the world through Jesus." ~Clark Pinnock, Evangelical Theologian

"Anonymous Christianity means that a person lives in the grace of God and attains salvation outside of explicitly constituted Christianity — Let us say, a Buddhist monk — who, because he follows his conscience, attains salvation and lives in the grace of God; of him I must say that he is an anonymous Christian; if not, I would have to presuppose that there is a genuine path to salvation that really attains that goal, but that simply has nothing to do with Jesus Christ. But I cannot do that. And so, if I hold if everyone depends upon Jesus Christ for salvation, and if at the same time I hold that many live in the world who have not expressly recognized Jesus Christ, then there remains in my opinion nothing else but to take up this postulate of an anonymous Christianity." ~Karl Rahner, Jesuit Theologian

🕒 What Is This Series All About? Three Questions in One: Is Jesus the **only** way to salvation?

Q 1 Will anyone experience eternal, conscious torment under God's wrath in hell?

Universalism says: **NO!** In the end all people will be saved, even the devil and his demons.

Conditional Immortality says: **NO!** Unbelievers will suffer temporarily, but at the final judgment they will be annihilated and no longer exist.

Jesus says: **YES**, and I love people enough to come to earth, warn them about it with conviction and compassion, and offer Myself as the only Way out of it. *Matthew 25:31-46*

Q 2 Is the work of Jesus necessary for salvation?

Pluralism says: **NO!** There are many paths to God; he has many faces.

Jesus says: **YES!** I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. *John 14:6*

Q 3 Is conscious **FAITH** in Jesus necessary for salvation?

Inclusivism says: **NO!** Those who have never heard of Jesus, but sincerely respond in faith to the Light they have will be saved on the basis of the work of Jesus. There is a wideness to God's mercy for those who have never heard through no fault of their own.

Jesus says: **YES!** Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow *is* the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. *Matthew 7:13-14*

So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen. *Matthew 20:16; 22:14*

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. *John 3:36*

And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. *John 17:3*

Peter agrees: **YES!** Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. *Acts 16:31*

Paul agrees: **YES!** But what does it say? *"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"* (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. *Romans 10:8-10*

John agrees: **YES!** The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. *1 John 5:10-12 NAS*

Asking the Hard Question

Exclusivism	QUESTION	Pluralism
The belief that Jesus is the only Savior for all humanity and that it is not possible to attain salvation apart from explicit knowledge of Him and conscious faith in Him.	What about those who have never heard of Jesus, and, therefore, never had a chance to trust in Him?	The belief that the major world religions provide independent paths to salvation and the divine reality, whatever that is.

Exclusivism	Inclusivism = Evangelical Pluralism	Pluralism
Jesus is the only Savior for all humanity and it is not possible to attain salvation apart from explicit knowledge of Him and conscious faith in Him.	The unevangelized may be saved on the basis of the work of Christ, if they respond in faith to God based on the light/revelation they have.	The major world religions provide independent paths to salvation and the divine reality, whatever that is.

People are saved on the basis of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Some consciously place their faith in Him.	People are saved on the basis of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Many who never hear unconsciously do so.	People are saved on the basis of a variety of ways and by a variety of means.
The lost must hear the gospel and believe in Jesus to be saved by Jesus.	The lost do not need to hear or believe in Jesus to be saved by Jesus.	The lost not need Jesus at all to be saved.

Dividing Point
FAITH in Jesus is Necessary

Dividing Point
JESUS Is Necessary

Both universalism (all will be saved in the end) **and pluralism** (many paths to salvation) are advanced **by means of inclusivism** (many will be saved on the basis of the work of Christ but apart from hearing the Gospel or trusting in the name of Jesus Christ).

Two Axioms Drive Inclusivists

Axiom 1 The **LOVE** of God for all people and His desire for universal salvation. *John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9*

Axiom 2 The **NECESSITY** and finality of Jesus Christ for salvation. *Acts 4:12; John 14:6*

What About Those Who Have Never Heard?

Are You Prepared to Give an Answer for the Hope that Is in You?