



## Faith in Jesus: Is It Necessary? • Part 2

Lesson 8

*"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

*"The conviction is growing in evangelical circles that God is not planning to cast into hell the majority of the race who, through no fault of their own, have had no opportunity to become Christians. There are others, of course, who still wish to assert that is what will happen. For them, the love of God is not higher than, but on a level with God's freedom and wrath."*

~Clark Pinnock, Evangelical Theologian

❶ **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?

**Q 2** Is the work of Jesus necessary for salvation?

**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 God based on the light they have will be saved on the basis of the work of Jesus.

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.

**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.

*In their own words...*

"Divine grace and truth are found outside the church and Christian revelation." ~ Clark Pinnock

"Support for [inclusivism] arises from the growing recognition among Christians of the priority of God's love relative to other issues...Large number are coming to accept that at the top of the hierarchy of Christian truths, and of primary importance, is the will of God for the salvation of the race." ~ Clark Pinnock

"The conviction is growing in evangelical circles that God is not planning to cast into hell the majority of the race who, through no fault of their own, have had no opportunity to become Christians. There are others, of course, who still wish to assert that is what will happen. For them, the love of God is not higher than, but on a level with God's freedom [= sovereignty] and wrath." ~ Clark Pinnock

"I think it is God's universal salvific will that gives inclusivism basic plausibility and makes restrictivism [= exclusivism] seem unlikely...it is the presupposition that gives rise to wider hope and inclusivist theory and should be acknowledged." ~ Clark Pinnock

"When discussing the destiny of the unevangelized, I begin with two main teachings of Scripture. The first concerns Jesus' being the ultimate revelation of God and the particular person through whom God provides redemption for the human race. Jesus is the unique and unsurpassable revelation of God and is the only Savior (Jn 14:6-9; Acts 4:12; Heb 1:1-3)...The other biblical teaching that is extremely important to the subject...concerns God's magnanimous desire to save every human being, Jesus died for the sins of all people (Rom 5:8; 2 Cor 5:15; 1 Jn 2:2). Moreover, God wants the salvation Jesus provides to be made available to all people. It is God's will for everyone to share in this great blessing (Jn 12:32; 1 Tim 2:4). God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9)." ~ John Sanders

1. Some of the **PASSAGES** used by inclusivists to support this axiom that God desires that all people without exception have access to salvation and be saved. *John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9*

► *Maintain the Biblical Tension of John 3:16 and John 3:17-21.*

➤ *Maintain the Biblical Tension of 1 Peter 3:9 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26.*

➤ *Maintain the Biblical Tension of 1 Timothy 2:3 and 1 Timothy 2:4-7.*

2. Some of the **PROBLEMS** with the inclusivist axiom that God's love is the highest value and He wills that all people without exception have access to salvation and be saved.

➤ The focus is on God's love for people as **GREATER** than any of His other attributes such as His holiness and justice. *Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8; Exodus 33:18-19; 34:5-7; Romans 9:14-24*

➤ God's heart desire is mistaken for His sovereign will. His compassion for sinners is seen as being **EQUAL** to His actually choosing to save them. *Romans 9:14-24; Romans 3:3-6; Matthew 22:14; Matthew 24:21-22*

➤ *Maintain the Biblical Tension between God's Compassion Being without **EXCEPTION**, and God's Choice Being without **DISTINCTION**.*

**Next Week: Axiom #2**