

Why You Can't Say All World Religions Are the Same

The beginning of a new year is often a time for introspection. A time for new year's resolutions. Even a time to explore religion and spirituality as a way to start the new year "right." But are all world religions the same?

Some people think so. And if all religions carry equal weight, then it's easy to cobble together aspects of various religions to satisfy their preferences. They view religion as menu items on an old Chinese take-out menu—pick one from column A and 2 from column B, and you've got a version of religion that meets your inclinations.

So let's take a look ... are all religions really the same? Of all the current world religions:

—How many of their founders were prophesied to come?

It doesn't take much for someone to appear on the scene without any warning and make authoritative claims. It's an entirely different situation for hundreds of prophecies over thousands of years to point to one person—and have this one person fulfill them.

Only Jesus Christ was prophesied to come. Through His life, death and resurrection, Jesus fulfilled more than 300 prophecies—a statistical impossibility by human standards.

—How many founders of world religions have died and remain buried or cremated?

All of them—except one. The founder of every world religion has had his death documented. Their burial sites (or cremation) have also been documented.

But Jesus Christ is the only one whose tomb is empty (Mark

16:6). Multiple historical evidences prove the resurrection. For more information, please check out *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel.

–How many founders not only claimed to be God, but proved it by miraculous acts documented by eyewitnesses?

Jesus Christ performed miracles attesting to His claims and authority—miracles documented in the Bible (Matt. 9:5-6). Now before you dismiss the Bible as a biased book written by His followers, remember there were thousands of unbelievers present at the time the New Testament Scriptures were written. Any of them could have refuted the documented events included in the Bible if those events were not true.

–How many world religions require a life of good works to achieve heaven?

When religion requires a life of good works, it creates a conundrum. In simple terms, how many good works are enough? How do you know when you've met the minimum requirement? Do you even know what the minimum is?

Christianity is the only religion that starts by saying we cannot do enough good works to be accepted by God (Eph. 2:8-9). It's impossible for sinful humanity to clean itself up to meet a holy God's standards. Instead, God came down to us—He became man in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only person to live a perfect life, die a sacrificial, substitutionary death on our behalf, and be resurrected (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

No one else offers this *grace*. Grace gives us what we don't deserve: God's love and acceptance. A good thing, too, because we could never earn what God gives freely.

–How many world religions provide you with a divine helper to assist you in living a life honoring the one in whom you believe?

Only one: Christianity. Before Christ's death, He promised to send the helper who would indwell every believer (John 14:16). Though our good works cannot earn us a place in heaven, they are our way of showing our gratitude for the gift of salvation. If I have been saved from eternal death, how could I not want to live a life honoring the one who saved me?

The Holy Spirit lives and works in every believer (1 Cor. 3:16) to prompt, convict, encourage and empower us. This enables us to live in a way that testifies to the power of God in the life of His children.

Religion or Relationship?

Christianity may be characterized as a world religion, but in reality, it's more of a *relationship* than a religion. Christianity, in its truest, biblical form, is personal. It's an individual choice to surrender to the God who created you, loves you and saved you.

Before you dismiss it as just another world religion, you owe it to yourself to explore the claims of Jesus Christ. Read the Bible and ask God to show you the truth.

If you do, your life will never be the same. {eo}

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This article originally appeared at .