

SOUND DOCTRINE AND IRREDUCIBLE TRUTH

True and False Doctrine

THOSE WHO IGNORE the overwhelming proof that the Bible is God's true word are left with only one alternative: False doctrine.

Abraham Lincoln reportedly asked a group of his commanding Generals: "If I had a sheep, and called his tail a leg, how many legs would my sheep have?" Most agreed the sheep would then have five legs until Lincoln pointed out, "Just because I call a tail a leg ... does not make it one!" Not everything one believes is true or Biblical.

God's ways and truths in Scripture lead to Christ and eternal life in relationship with God. Worldly views and philosophies may seem right to men but lead to destruction" (Proverbs 14:12, 16:25; Matthew 7:13-14). People tend to believe that whatever they believe is true. While no one intentionally believes a lie, God seeks more than human opinion or reason. God created every person with an inborn knowledge of His eternal power and deity – and declared those who suppress His truths to be without excuse (Romans 1:18-20). No one will ever stand before Almighty God and truthfully declare they did not know the truth, because God has made His truth known to all.

Scripture/the Bible is "sound doctrine." As the End Times on earth approach, "many will not endure sound doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:3-4). This alarming condition is evident today as the world blatantly ignores Scripture and calls the truth of God a lie, and the world's lies, the truth (cf. Romans 1:25; 2 Thessalonians 2). This condition will grow worse as the time to repent and turn to Christ grows shorter.

God's inspired Scripture/the Bible is the only fully reliable source of God's revealed ways and truths about Himself, Christ, life and hundreds of Spiritual matters. Today, parts of the Bible have been translated into 2200 languages and it is also available on the internet and in digital and audio formats for all who will see and hear.

Bible disbelief requires only disbelief, not truth or proof. The ever-changing rationale for disbelief is as endless as the supply of counterfeit bills. Just as treasury agents recognize counterfeit bills by studying genuine bills, counterfeit (false) doctrine is recognized by studying God's genuine, unchanging word of truth.

- "Common sense tells us what revelation commands: 'Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God'--'Search the Scriptures'--'Be ready to give to everyone a reason of the hope that is in you.' ... and yet, with Bibles in every home, many remain ignorant of its contents, of what Christ actually taught and of the Christian faith which many profess."

William Wilberforce --Theologian, Author,
Bible Scholar, Teacher)

Satan, "The god and prince of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4, John 12:31) eagerly fills the void between God's truth – and what people will believe, with lies and deception. But he is subtly deceptive and always wraps his lies in just enough truth to deceive and just enough deception to destroy.

Common beliefs that “sound good,” but are not Biblical

1. We’re all God’s children
2. The Bible is filled with errors and contradictions
3. All religions and holy books lead to God.
4. People say many things about God. No one knows the truth.
5. God is (only) Love.
6. Satan and hell do not exist.
7. Sin and temptation are manageable

1. **We’re all God’s children** (*Implied: “We are all on our way to heaven).*

All people are created in God’s image and loved by God, who desires an eternal, love-based relationship with each. However, no person is born into this world as a Spiritually alive son or daughter of God. Every person has the same lifetime opportunity to be adopted by God through faith in Jesus Christ. But, “Those who do not have the Son, do not have the Father” (I John 2:22-23, 5:12).

Only believers in Jesus Christ are “born again” to Spiritual life in God’s Holy Spirit as adopted sons and daughters of God.

John 1:10-13 (NASB) *“He [Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

Galatians 3:25-27 (NASB) *“But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”*

“*We’re all God’s children*” is only a minor variation of Satan’s deception of Adam and Eve in the Garden: “*Surely you will not die*” (Genesis 3:4). Satan’s lie is, “God’s truth doesn’t matter because *God loves you too much to allow the promised consequences of your own disobedience, to actually happen.*” Adam and Eve ignored God’s warning and believed Satan’s lies (Genesis 2:16-17). Had they obeyed God, they hypothetically would have lived forever in the Garden of Eden. Instead, sin and death entered the world and all of mankind since then has been infected with the “deadly sin gene.”

2. **The Bible is filled with errors and contradictions**

This often parroted claim typically refers to minor translation variations that have no substantive impact on the overall truth of Scripture. Claims of Bible errors and contradictions are as empty as claiming that twins who wear different clothes are no longer identical. These claims are typically made by Bible detractors (not Bible scholars or students), who, instead of studying Scripture for truth, only open the Bible to seek-out imagined variations they can exploit.

The truth of Scripture is readily discernible to those with God’s indwelling Holy Spirit. They build their knowledge of God’s truth “precept upon precept,” not based on their own interpretation of isolated passages. True Bible scholars and God-seekers do not avoid troublesome passages or things they do not understand. Instead, they recognize the misunderstanding is in them, not in God or Scripture. As Mark Twain once rightly quipped, “It’s not the things I don’t understand in the Bible that give me trouble; it’s the things I do understand.”

False pride accuses God, Scripture and Bible writers of duplicity or deception and becomes its own “trap.”

- (1) It undermines one’s basis for accepting any part of the Bible as true.
- (2) It’s an excuse for rejecting anything one doesn’t understand or agree with.
- (3) It creates the false idea that Bible truth depends on human approval.

The worldly are sure of everything, especially if it contradicts Scripture

- *“The observant man recognizes many mysteries into which he cannot pretend to see, and he remembers that the world is too wide for the eye of one man. But the modern sophists are sure of everything, especially if it contradicts the Bible”*

Charles Spurgeon, Theologian, Author, Bible Scholar (1834-1892)

3. *All religions and holy books lead to God*

To express tolerance for all religions and holy books, many diplomatically claim, “All religions and holy books lead to God.” Not even the adherents of the world’s different religions and holy books they claim to represent subscribe to such an absurd claim! Just as all planes and trains do not all ultimately arrive at the same destination, neither do all religions and holy books.

Over four-billion people (sixty-percent of the world’s 7.3 billion population) are adherents of God-centered religions (Christianity, Islam and Judaism, and their variants). Of those, about two and one-half billion are Christian. Another two and one-half billion (thirty-five percent) are adherents of non-God-centered religions (Buddhists, Hindus, Chinese folk religions.) [#101A]

Misguided attempts to express tolerance for all religious beliefs expresses intolerance toward the one true, sovereign, Almighty God and His revealed ways and truths! It says, “God, Scripture and truth are whatever people believe them to be,” which is the same as no belief .

The heart of Christianity and Scripture/the Bible is Jesus Christ, whom Scripture declares to be God incarnate and the Savior of the world. Scripture reveals that God is loving, kind, merciful and full of grace. He seeks a personal, eternal, love-based relationship with people who freely choose to love, believe and worship Him through Jesus Christ. Scripture also reveals that God is righteous, holy and just and those who choose a lifetime of sin and

rebellion, will suffer the “death wages of sin,” while faithful believers in Christ will be saved to eternal life in relationship with God.

God revealed His inspired ways, truths, plans, purpose and promises to mankind through forty prophets over fifteen-hundred years. Scripture/the Bible is God’s only eternal truth standard which enables mankind to distinguish between God’s truth and the lies of the world and Satan.

Islam and the Quran (Koran) originated with the prophet Mohammed over a 27-year period around 600 A.D. About 1.7 billion Muslims (adherents of Islam) believe Mohammed was a direct descendent of Ishmael, who was the son of Abraham and Hagar (Genesis 16, 17, 21, 25). Muslims acknowledge Jesus Christ as a great prophet, but not as God incarnate or the Savior of the world. They believe the path to Allah is works and strict adherence to Islamic principles. The Koran claims the prophet Muhammad was inspired by Allah, but offers no evidence to support that claim.

The Jewish Tanakh (Bible) includes all thirty-nine Old Testament books and shares many Bible proofs. However, Orthodox Jews embrace Old Testament laws and rituals, and are still waiting for the promised Messiah. Neither Jesus Christ or the New Testament are included in the Tanakh or acknowledged by Judaism.

Buddhism and its ‘holy book’ (Bhagavad Gita), is a philosophical system that follows the teachings of Buddha and has nearly 500-million adherents. Buddhists do not worship ‘God’ or worship Buddha as god, or believe their holy book is inspired by God. Buddha taught there is no God and that the Four Noble Truths and Eight-fold Noble Path are the keys to enlightenment. The Tripitika is the oldest compilation of sermons and doctrines documenting the Buddhist approach to life. [#134]

Hinduism and its ‘holy book/s (The Veda and subsets) is a loose collection of beliefs that worship literally thousands of deities, but no one supreme God

or Lord. There are about one-billion Hindus who believe Brahman is the force which sustains the universe, but is not a personal God to be worshipped.

Lumped together, one-billion atheists, agnostics and related philosophies are largely unified in their rejection of God, Christ and Scripture. Yet, even in their disbelief, they express a worship of “self” as the supreme authority in life. The consensus of these non-religions is this life is all there is and the only goal of life is to better one’s self and the world. Ironically, if carried to the end of this life, the non-believers disbelief becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Christianity and the Bible are unique among the world’s religions and holy books. Only the Bible is objectively verifiable, doctrinally unchanged and consistently reliable. No other holy book or religious philosophy even comes close to the Bible’s accurately fulfilled prophecy, scientific proof, literary evidence, archaeology, harmony, influence, indestructibility, eye-witnessed miracles and other objectively verifiable proofs.

The Bible uniquely acknowledges the sin of every person and the inability of mankind to overcome their own sin condition. Other religions recognize sin, but require sinful man to achieve goodness through the same good works, effort and intentions that chronically led them to failure in the past!

Scripture alone reveals God’s love and desire for an intimate, personal relationship with every person. Biblical laws and Commandments are only a ‘schoolmaster’ who reveals one’s fleshly sin and rebellion to each person. When people recognize their own sin and inability to keep God’s laws and commandments, they are led to repent of sin and find Salvation, eternal life in relationship with God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:26) [#136] [#147] In Christianity, God reaches out to man. In all other religions, mankind reaches up to God through ‘good’ works and effort. In Christianity God provides the way to Salvation, Spiritual life and eternal relationship with Himself. In other religions that acknowledge an infinite God, finite man must find his own way.

Christianity is not a “religion” of rules, laws and moral codes. It is a new, “born again” eternal Spiritual life lived in relationship with God through Jesus Christ, in the power of God’s indwelling Holy Spirit. The God and Christ of Scripture and Christianity are not reached through human prophets, rules, laws or moral codes, but, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Other self-proclaimed holy books are the writings or philosophy of individual “prophets” or philosophers (such as Mohammed and Buddha). The Bible comprises sixty-six individual books by forty writers (different languages, cultures, generations, locations) over 1500-years. Bible writers specifically claimed (5,000 times), that their words were the direct, divinely inspired words of God (“God says” or “the Word of the Lord”, etc.). The overall harmony of doctrine, life changing influence, indestructibility and other proofs (prophecy, science, archaeology, literature) defy any rational odds of this by human agency alone. Most other “holy books” truthfully claim only to be only the philosophies of wise-men and prophets, while the Bible claims to be God’s divinely inspired word of truth.

The notion that “all holy books and religions are the same or lead to the same God,” also attempt to justify apathy toward God and truth. Apathy toward God, Christ and Scripture, is the same as rejection and leads to eternal destruction.

4. People say many different things (Inferred: No one knows who or what to believe”)

Inspired Scripture/the Bible, not what others believe or say about the Bible or truth, is God’s unchanging truth standard. The lament of many is, “People say so many different things (about God and the Bible), no one knows who or what to believe. This only reflects one’s choice to place their faith in “the wisdom of men, instead of the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5). The world accepts and even applauds this approach, but, God does not! This post-modern view of relative truth has turned a politically correct society into “a cave of the lost majority.”

None of five lost explorers in the large, dark cavern knew which of many openings led to light and freedom. They agreed to follow separate tunnels to the end of each and then return to the main cavern when all the possibilities were explored. A short time later, excited shouting drew the other four explorers back to the main cavern. "I've found the way out" shouted one explorer, excitedly, pointing toward a small opening in the corner of the cavern.

"Do you have any proof? How can we be certain?" asked one skeptic. Another chimed in, "I haven't reached the end of my tunnel, like we agreed. Mine may really be a way out." Another declared, "there are so many tunnels and we have only partially explored a few. It is too early to settle on one tunnel already." The excited explorer was exasperated. "But, I've actually seen the light -- it is down this tunnel!"

The expedition leader spoke-up, "that's a dogmatic and narrow-minded attitude. There are five of us here and a lot of tunnels. The only fair way to settle this is by majority vote." The now frustrated explorer reluctantly agreed, "that certainly sounds fair, but this is the way out." "You are so intolerant," replied a voice in the dark.

"Okay, it's settled, let's vote," the leader continued. "How many think we should explore all the possibilities, including the tunnels in which we have already invested time and effort?" Four voices replied in unison, "I do." "That would seem to settle it," he said in a condescending tone, "but we must be absolutely fair and unbiased. How many think we should limit our thinking and efforts to one person's tunnel and narrow-minded viewpoint?" The excited explorer shouted, "me!" "Well, now that we've all had a chance to express our opinions, let's get on with our initial plan," declared the leader.

"But, but," sputtered the excited explorer. "The matter has been fairly settled!" the leader thundered. As the explorers returned to their tunnels, the no longer excited explorer muttered under his breath, "It is pointless to return

to my tunnel. I already told them what was down there and nobody believed me." He then headed off down an unexplored tunnel in another direction.

This illustration sounds preposterous, but it is not far from the "open-minded, tolerance-worshipping" attitudes of today. In the name of tolerance, all concepts of absolute truth are dismissed as narrow minded or dogmatic. Not wanting to appear intolerant, or narrow-minded, even some Christians meekly attach an "open-minded disclaimer" to socially unpopular Bible teachings: "*We can't really be certain;*" OR "*Only God knows for sure.*" etc.)

The commanded response of Christian disciples to Christ and Scripture is to openly present God's truth and lead the lost to Christ. Christ has not asked believers to defend Him against false beliefs, but to present His undiluted, uncompromised truth to a lost and dying world. Only born-again, Bible-believing Christians can speak with the timeless, authority of God's inspired word of truth.

According to Scripture, there are only two groups of people: those who trust Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord -- and those who do not. God's angels will eternally separate saved believers from lost non-believers.

Only God's ways and truths matter beyond this life and world. All empty human philosophies and opinions will fall away, leaving only one's personal response to God, Christ and Scripture during this lifetime. Only believers in Jesus Christ born again in God's indwelling Holy Spirit can understand God's ways and truths in Scripture. They alone can speak with God's eternal authority to a lost and dying world.

5. God is (only) Love. (Inferred: There is no condemnation, judgment or hell.)

God loves mankind and continues to reach-out to those who reject His truth, ways, love and offer of salvation and eternal life in Jesus Christ. However, the key question facing mankind is not whether God loves man, but whether man

loves God. God has demonstrated His love by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of mankind. The eternal question facing each individual is: “Did you love, believe and trust God and Jesus Christ in return?”

By itself, a belief in God’s love is as meaningless as a belief in God’s existence. God created mankind in His own image for a personal, eternal, love-based relationship. Without true free-will, one’s choice to love God is not love. Even Satan and most non-believers know God exists and that Christ was a great prophet and teacher. But that is not a belief in God or a trust in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior and Lord.

All authority in heaven and earth is vested in Jesus Christ, who is one with God and God incarnate (in the flesh). Christ is “the Word who was with God in the beginning.” He made Himself flesh and dwelled among us to reveal God’s glory to mankind. He is infinitely more than a great prophet, teacher or religious leader.

Christ alone was resurrected from the grave, appeared to hundreds for forty days and resides eternally in heaven (and within believers). He fulfills His promise to “never leave or forsake His followers” through the indwelling Holy Spirit. All people will one day be judged by the very words spoken by Jesus Christ and recorded in Scripture/the Bible (John 12:48).

6. “Satan, sin and hell do not exist”

God created Satan as a powerful, intelligent being. Satan’s role is to fill the void created by human unwillingness to believe God with lies and deception. Although there are over 200 direct references to Satan in the New Testament alone, some still imagine that Satan and hell do not exist.

Satan seeks the worship God rightfully deserves – and gains it by deceiving people into believing him rather than God. Satan is a created being who is mankind’s enemy because his goal is the worship or destruction of mankind.

God is not locked in a cosmic battle against Satan – We are! Christ defeated Satan, sin and death on our behalf. The only thing believers must fear from Satan is deception, not the loss of salvation or life.

God has not given Satan the authority or power to overcome human free-will and force people to embrace evil, reject Jesus Christ or “snatch one of God’s from His grasp.” But, neither does God forcefully snatch those who love evil and reject His love and grace, from the jaws of hell.

“...Satan is filled with great wrath, because he knows his time is short” (Revelation 12:12 ESV). He knows he will soon be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire and his lies and deception are growing so great that even believers would be deceived, if that were possible. As wickedness and deception grow, the professed love of God by many will grow cold and they will not endure sound doctrine. Many will call God’s truth a lie and Satan’s lies the truth. Those who suppress God’s truths and ways are without excuse and will heap unto themselves the seeds of their own destruction. (Revelation 12:12, Matthew 24:12, 24; 2 Timothy 4:3, Romans 1:18-25).

While Satan blinds the minds of non-believers to God’s ways and truths, he can only spread his lies and deceit in the hearts and minds of those who refuse to believe God and trust Jesus Christ.

“The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”
(2 Corinthians 4:4)

Ironically, some who hate Christians and Jews, refer to America and Christianity as “The Great Satan,” and Israel (the Jews) as “The Little Satan.” Yet, they persecute and murder Christians and Jews, just like those who rejected and crucified Christ. As the world moves enters the End Times, the persecution and deception of Christians will increase until “even believers would be deceived, if that were possible”

Sin and temptation are manageable:

People often read only part of Scripture or misquote it to avoid confronting sin or to create the belief they have sin and temptation under control.

- **“God will keep us from being tempted beyond our ability to resist”**
Truth: “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, **but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.** (1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV)
- **“If we resist Satan, he will flee from us”**
Truth: “*Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” (James 4:7 NIV) – Satan flees from God’s power and truth, not us! Satan does not fear us.
- **“God tempts people to test their faithfulness”**
Truth: “When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me. For **God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone**” (James 1:13 NIV)
- **“Christians are not to Judge”**
Truth: “**But he who is spiritual judges all things**, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. ...we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:15-16 NIV)
 Christians are to judge (discern) between right and wrong, according to God’s truth standard, Scripture/the Bible. Judging people is God’s role, but judging the truth of what is right or wrong is “rightly dividing God’s word of truth.”
- **“God helps those who help themselves.”**
Truth: Quoted by Ben Franklin in the 1757 Farmer’s Almanac. God resists the proud whose hope rests in themselves. He gives grace to the humble, defenseless and helpless whose hope rests in Him.

- **“All things work together for good.”**
Truth: “... all things work together for good **to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.** (Romans 8:28 NKJV)

FIVE IRREDUCIBLE TRUTHS OF SCRIPTURE AND CHRISTIANITY

All Bible truth is important and equally true, but not all Bible truth is equally important. Recognizing the Bible as a “good moral and ethical guide” may lead to good ethics but misses God’s eternal plan for mankind. The cults and many non-believers accept some of the Bible’s important truths and “even the demons know there is one God” (James 2:19). But, without the irreducible Bible truth of “Salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ,” one has missed the eternal spiritual life and relationship God offers.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Bible truth is straightforward and readily understood by God-seekers and even children, yet, “considered foolish by those who are not led by God’s Spirit” (2 Corinthians 2:14-15). Many acknowledge Jesus Christ is “the Lord,” but only those who repent of their own sin and trust Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord have salvation and eternal life. Jesus only truly reigns as Lord over the lives of those who submit to His Lordship. Paradoxically, only those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord are born again to spiritual life in God’s Holy Spirit, and only those with the indwelling Holy Spirit have the power to live under Christ’s Lordship.

Scripture is filled with these and thousands of God’s truths for human life, but no truth is greater than Salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ. This truth does not come by “wanting to go to heaven.” It is built on other irreducible, inter-dependent truths:

There is one true God

All people have an inborn knowledge of God’s existence, power and deity and those who suppress that knowledge and truth are without excuse (Romans

1:18-20). Scripture unflinchingly declares, “The fool says in his heart, There is no God.” (Psalm 14:1 KJV). God’s first uncompromising truth in Scripture is that God is the creator of the universe, world and life. God’s inspired Scripture reveals God’s nature, truths, ways, plans, purpose and promises for mankind.

The one, true, sovereign God created mankind in His own image to enjoy a personal, love-based relationship with Himself. He created people with free-will because love without free-will is not really love. If one chooses to not believe in God, one cannot love and worship the God “who is worthy of all glory, honor and praise.”

If God and Jesus Christ only *exist* for one in church on Sunday morning, He is not truly Lord of one’s heart and life. Holy God seeks a faith-driven, love-based, living relationship with each individual and will not settle for less.

Sin separates man from Holy God

For love to exist, free will must exist. For one to freely choose not to believe God and trust Jesus Christ as one’s Savior, an alternative belief must exist. Satan gave mankind a choice by filling the vacuum created by human rejection of God’s truth and ways with lies and deceit.

From the beginning, mankind used his free-will to reject and ignore God’s ways and truths for Satan’s lies and deceit, which is called “sin:” “*None is good, not one!*” “*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*” “*The wages of sin are death ... but, the gift of God is eternal life*” (Romans 3:10, 3:23, 6:23). 6:23, John 3:16).

Sin cannot exist in the presence of Holy, righteous God and must, therefore, be cast out or banished. Therefore, from the beginning, people have blinded themselves to their own sin and disobedience and sought to hide from God. God provided the Old Testament law and Commandments as a “teacher” to reveal the inner sin of each person, to them and to lead them to Salvation and life in Christ (Galatians 3:19-22).

God could have created sinless, obedient people in heaven or in a perfect, sinless world, but He desired a freely chosen, love-based relationship. God knew Adam and Eve would sin in the Garden of Eden, and that every person thereafter would be born into a sin-infected world. God's plan has always been to redeem mankind by grace. For grace and mercy (forgiveness) to truly exist, there must also be justice. God's justice is the "death wages of sin." Sinful man cannot satisfy the death wages of sin with his own sin-filled life; any more than one can pay a debt, with another debt.

God's greater plan is to overcome man's sin and separation from Holy God. He sent "His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ," to live a perfect, sinless life in the world. Christ then satisfied the "just wages of sin" with His own life, as the "Savior" of mankind. One cannot have and does not need a "Savior," unless one first acknowledges and repents of their own sin and Spiritually lifeless condition.

Jesus Christ is God incarnate

Christ's deity is a central theme of the New Testament and distinguishes Christianity and Christ from other religions and leaders. No other religious or philosophical figure claim to be God, much less the Savior of mankind ... and then supported that claim with their own bodily resurrection.

Jesus said, "All authority is given to me in both heaven and earth" and "I am the way, truth and life; no one comes to God, except by me;" and the truth. Scripture also declares, "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." Yet, only God has the authority and power over sin and death. The deity (incarnation) of Christ is the power that enabled Him to defeat sin and death with a perfect life, and then raise Himself (and His followers from the grave).

There is one true God and the worship of other 'gods,' humans, or created things is blasphemy. Yet, Christ received and accepted worship, praise, adoration and trust that God alone demands and deserves, without rebuking people

for idolatry (Matthew 14:33, John 20:28). Christ's deity is essential to worshipping God in Spirit and truth, since those who do not have the Son, also do not have the Father" (1 John 2:22-23, 5:12). Christ's deity is so significant, that denying it reveals one as a false Christian or a non-believer in the spirit of the anti-Christ" (1 John 4:3).

God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ is God, *He is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him*" (Hebrews 7:25). Christ's church of born-again believers on earth is, therefore, the only "...church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail" (Matthew 16:18). Christ's identity as "savior and Lord" of all is an irreducible fact of Scripture that is pivotal to Salvation and Spiritual life.

Salvation comes by Grace, through Faith in Jesus Christ

A Barna Research poll reported that 79-percent of Americans believe heaven exists and 64 percent believe they will go there after death. Fewer are certain of how they will get there or why. Of those who believe in heaven, 43 percent believe they will go there because they have confessed their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior; 50-percent believe one "earns" heaven though good works and claim: "I've tried to obey the Ten Commandments," "I am basically a good person," "I've never tried to hurt anyone" and "Since God loves all people, He will not allow any to perish."^[#160]

Scripture/the Bible is the only source of human knowledge of Jesus Christ, salvation, grace, heaven, hell and a hundred other Spiritual truths. Scripture could not be clearer about the irreducible truth of "Salvation by Grace through Faith in Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 2:8). Unless one first recognizes their own sin and need for a "Savior," one has no frame of reference for a savior or God's grace. Those who claim to be on their way to heaven apart from Scripture and Christ are as deceived as those who imagine they will become angels in heaven.

God's "grace" is God's unmerited, unearned favor. It cannot be earned through good works, religious ritual, intellectual assent to the right doctrines

or anything other way. If God simply imputed grace, forgiveness, salvation and eternal life to all; justice, Christ's death and sin's death wages would be meaningless. Unless one accepts God's offer of love, grace and salvation by faith in Christ, salvation and grace are like unopened gifts. They have been given, but have not yet, been received.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

One's belief in Christ, not one's belief in the resurrection, leads to Salvation and eternal life. However, a "dead savior" is an oxymoron. If He cannot save Himself, He saves no one else. That is why Scripture declares, "If Jesus Christ is not resurrected from the dead, His followers are also not resurrected." Christ's physical death made way for His resurrection to Spiritual life, which assures His followers of their own resurrection to eternal Spiritual life.

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15 More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19 (NIV)

Every Easter, billions celebrate Christ's resurrection two-thousand years ago. They cannot do that with Mohammed, Buddha, or the founder of any other religion, whose bones lie dormant in the grave. Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection alone stand in the gap between life in this world and the next.

Jesus Christ's resurrection proves physical death is not the end of human existence and assures believers they too will be raised. It demonstrates that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice on man's behalf and guarantees those who believe in Christ will not remain dead, but will be resurrected unto eternal life. The irreducible truth of Christ's resurrection is that Christ has overcome sin and death and His followers, likewise, will follow Him into eternal Spiritual life.

Summary:

Every person without Spiritual Life in Jesus Christ is already Spiritually dead and simply passing through the earth in the flesh. They lack the Spiritual life God created them to live and may never have it! Today is last day some will have on earth to believe God and trust Jesus Christ for Salvation and eternal Life. There will not be another opportunity beyond this life.

Satan's lie is, "There will always be time" (C.S. Lewis – *Screwtape Letters*). But minute-by-minute, each person moves inexorably closer to their own last days and the world's End Time.

The Bible is God's inspired word and truth standard and Jesus Christ is "God's only begotten Son" and offer of salvation and eternal life. Anyone who has rejected this truth is already standing "without excuse" before Almighty God. Saying "No" to God, and Christ, even when disguised as "Not now" or "maybe later," rejects the only life, truth and salvation God offers. To encounter the evidence of God's power and Godhead even once per day for fifty-years equals 18,000 rejections! (365 x 50). That is why the notion of "a second chance" or "one more opportunity" is blind and futile.

THE "BURDEN OF BELIEF VERSUS "THE 'BURDEN OF PROOF"

Some imagine that a "burden of proof" rests on God and Christians. "Prove it to me!" they demand; "Prove God exists," "Prove Christ is real," "Prove Scripture is true," "Show us miracles." "Make us believe!" as though their

disbelief arose from God's failure to provide sufficient proof, instead of their own unwillingness to honestly consider the evidence.

Every person is created with an inborn knowledge of God's power and deity. God's glory is also seen throughout creation by all who are willing. The compelling evidence of accurately fulfilled prophecy, archaeological artifacts, scientific evidence and unparalleled literary proof is available to all. Six-billion copies of parts of the Bible in 2,000 languages, plus billions of tracts, commentaries, videos, study guides, books and internet-teachings have made Scripture available to the entire world. The only remaining "burden" is a "burden of belief" resting squarely on every individual.

The prophets, apostles, Bible writers, and Jesus Christ never questioned the truthfulness or authority of a single passage of Scripture. All upheld the truth and universal application of Scripture/the Bible in every human life. No single statement, event, person, nation, or declared truth in Scripture has ever been disproved!

Starvation exists in the world, but not because God's failed to provide sufficient resources to feed mankind. Spiritual "starvation" and lifelessness also exist in the world, but not because God failed to provide sufficient truth, mercy, and grace. Billions believe God's truth and ways in inspired Scripture and live victorious, hope-filled lives. Billions more refuse to believe and trust the God and Christ of Scripture. They live with only the meaningless, temporary hope offered by human opinions and philosophies..

Contradictory beliefs and claims cannot all be true. "Agreeing to disagree" only agrees not to examine the truth more closely. This may keep-the-peace in trivial matters, but is like sticking one's head in the sand to avoid the eternally significant truths and ways of sovereign, Holy God. Some imagine they can escape accountability for their lives by ignoring or denying God, Jesus Christ and inspired Scripture, but that is only a temporary illusion.

"For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: 'As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow before Me; every tongue will confess to God.'" So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God"

Romans 14:10-12 (NIV)

The Bible uncompromisingly declares "All Scripture is inspired by God." It does not say, "Scripture contains God's Word" or "Pick and choose the parts you like and ignore the rest." A smorgasbord approach to Scripture undermines one's ability to believe any other part. It also makes it easy to ignore or reject the parts one doesn't understand. or like. But, if one believes their own opinions and beliefs have any bearing whatsoever on God's revealed and inspired truth, one has already declared themselves "god."