

IS ALL SPIRITUALITY HELPFUL?

HOW DO WE KNOW THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY ARE TRUE?

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT CHRISTIANITY VS. OTHER RELIGIONS?

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The Christian View of Spirituality

The only “spirituality” that is helpful is that which comes from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior as presented in the Holy Scriptures. The entire theme of Scripture is the redemption of man, and the way to claim that redemption is clearly laid out in Scripture. God gives stern warnings to those who tamper with the truth laid out in the Scriptures.

Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar (Proverbs 30:5-6).

As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:9).

When we confess our sins and accept Christ as our Savior, we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The extent to which we are “spiritual” is the extent to which we “walk in the Spirit” letting him take control of our lives and directing us toward God’s will for our lives.

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:13,14).

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; (1 Corinthians 6:19).

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature....But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:16,22-25).

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your *spiritual* act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1,2).

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:6-9).

Modern Day Religious Pluralism

Religious pluralism is the view that all religions are equally valid as ways to God. Pluralists believe that there are many paths to God, and differences among the religions are superficial, and we shouldn't allow them to divide us because they all have the same goal. It includes the concepts of religious tolerance and relativism. There are MAJOR problems with this reasoning:

1. Jesus explicitly communicated that he was the only way to truth and life, and that perverting this truth is a very serious matter with eternal consequences, “ As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!” (Galatians 1:9). Jesus said, “*I am the way and the truth and the life*. No one comes to the Father *except through me*.” (John 14:6). Also, in Acts, Paul states “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

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2. Other religions' teachings about God contradict that taught in Scripture and held by Christians. For example, Hindus are pantheists or polytheists. Buddhists are atheists or pantheists. Muslims are theists but Unitarian. In accordance with Scripture, Christians are theists but Trinitarian. It is impossible that all views are at the same time true!
3. Other religions' teachings about man and salvation are contradictory. Only Christians believe that Christ is the Son of God, and IS God and believe in the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Again, it is impossible that all views are at the same time true!
4. The contention that what really matters is not the objective teaching or doctrine, but the moral and spiritual transformation that results from a religion is groundless. On what authority can we say that this is so? In addition, the belief that all religions are true in the sense that they all bring us to God, requires that we believe they are all false in what they objectively teach - because they are contradictory!
5. The fact that there may appear to be similarities in some of the effects in the lives of followers of different religions is not proof that they are identical. Jesus drew a strong distinction between external morality and piety and true internal spirituality (Matthew 5-7).

Warnings against Falsehood

God, in his foresight, warned us that false teachings would arise:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God-- *having a form of godliness but denying its power*. Have nothing to do with them. They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over weak-willed women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, *always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth*. (2 Timothy 3:1-7).

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when *men will not put up with sound doctrine*. Instead, *to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear*. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: *Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God*, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. *They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them*. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. *This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood* (1 John 4:1-6).

Ultimately - Faith

Ultimately, those who accept Christ as their savior, and so accept the claims of Christianity will do so by faith. Faith does not require evidence. It requires putting your trust in the only true God and allowing him to change you and increase your faith.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Hebrews 11:1).

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17).

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However, for the Christian, the many evidences in support of scripture are encouraging, and for the non-Christian, may, with the help of the Holy Spirit, move them toward a saving faith in Christ.

Authenticity of the Bible

We can know the claims of Christianity are true because of the many evidences that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

Experience

The Bible changes lives. Peoples' experiences are a valuable testimony to the truth of the scriptures. Countless of thousands of people are living examples of how the truth has completely transformed their lives.

For the Christian, the Spirit itself testifies to him/her that the scriptures are true and that God, through the Holy Spirit, lives within them.

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children (Romans 8:16).

Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us (1 John 3:24).

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit (1 John 4:13).

Science

The hydrological cycle

The hydrological cycle was stated in Scripture long before it was explained by modern science.

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it (Isaiah 55:10-11).

He draws up the drops of water, which distill as rain to the streams; the clouds pour down their moisture and abundant showers fall on mankind. Who can understand how he spreads out the clouds, how he thunders from his pavilion? (Job 36:27-29)

He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses (Psalm 135:7).

The sphericity of the earth and its position in space

Prior to the 1500's, people generally thought that the earth was a flat disc, but Scripture has references to the sphericity of the earth and its being held in space:

He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. (Isaiah 40:22).

He spreads out the northern [skies] over empty space; he suspends the earth over nothing (Job 26:7).

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Isostasy

Isostasy is the scientific study of the balance of the earth. Equal weights are necessary to support equal weights. (e.g. a basketball out of balance will not rotate evenly). Land mass must be equally supported by water mass etc. Scripture explained this balance centuries before science even conceived of the phenomenon.

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? (Isaiah 40:12).

Practical Laws for Public Health and Agriculture

God's Law's for the Israelites included many practical measures scientifically known today to promote sanitary conditions and prevent the transmission of disease. Some examples:

Good public health measures: (1) washing after handling the carcass of an animal (Lev. 11:27,28); (2) quarantine of people with contagious diseases (Lev. 13:45,46); (3) washing and bathing if contaminated by an issue of blood, etc., from the human body (Lev. 15); (4) burying human waste (Deut. 23:13).

In addition, many farming practices given to the Israelites promoted the health and longevity of productive land before modern science could explain why.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics

The second law of thermodynamics is the scientific law that though mass and energy are always conserved, they nevertheless are breaking down and going from order to disorder, from cosmos to chaos, from system to non-system. The Bible, contrary to the theory of evolution, affirms that. As matter breaks down, and energy dissipates, ultimately the world and universe as we know it will become dead.

In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded (Palm 102:25,26).

That the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (Romans 8:21,22).

God's Sustaining Power

There are forces that scientists cannot explain, but only describe. For example, the force of gravity and the so-called "strong force" that keeps positively-charged protons in the nucleus of an atom from repelling one another. These can be explained by the truth of Scripture that the Creator sustains or holds together the universe.

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:16,17).

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word (Hebrews 1:3).

Historical Accuracy

While historical accuracy alone does not prove the inspiration of scripture, it certainly add credence to it, especially considering the literary unity of the many books written over such a large time span.

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No references to historical events, historical characters, ancient customs, geographical and astronomical records abounding in the Bible have been proved incorrect (Wm. C. Irvine).

Archeology

The excessive skepticism shown toward the Bible by important historical scholars has been progressively discredited. Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history.

...“it must be extremely significant that, in view of the great mass of corroborative evidence regarding the Biblical history of these periods, there exists today not one unquestionable find of archaeology that proves the Bible to be in error at any point.” (Henry M. Morris - archaeologist)

To name just a few examples, archeology has been able to add credence to the following historical facts as accounted in the scriptures. (Some of the incidents and/or places in the Bible were contested in the past as false or unreliable until recent archeological finds substantiated them).

1. The ancestry of Israel from Mesopotamia as told in Genesis.
2. The likelihood of all languages coming from one source as Genesis explains with the accounting of the tower of Babel.
3. The city of Jericho and the evidence that its walls fell outward allowing the Israelites to enter the city (Joshua 6:20).
4. The existence of Abraham.
5. The social customs of the period and region of the patriarchs as accounted in the Old Testament.
6. The customs, practices and conditions of the 2nd half of the 1st century as seen in the new Testament.
7. The Roman census that took place when Quirinius was Roman governor of Syria, and that everyone in the Roman world had to return to their ancestral home to register.
8. Most of the ancient cities mentioned in the book of Acts, and many more obscure individuals mentioned in the New Testament.
9. The civic assembly Paul mentions in Ephesus when describing the riot that took place and the theater where it occurred (Acts 19:23-40).
10. Evidence for the basis of the riot that took place in the temple in Jerusalem (Acts 21:38).
11. Sites with no other record than in the New Testament, such as the Stone Pavement (Gabbatha) where Jesus was tried before Pilate (John 19:13), and the Pool of Bethesda.

Christ's Claims about Himself

Unfortunately, critics can no longer refute that fact that Jesus existed. Too many historians' writings in the 1st and 2nd centuries affirm the existence of Jesus Christ. There are references to his miracles, his crucifixion, his following, even the eclipse that occurred at the time of the crucifixion as told in the Bible. With this evidence, no serious historian would venture to state he didn't exist.

Many scholars, not able to deny his existence, have postulated that Jesus Christ was merely a great moral teacher. This assertion has serious flaws as well. Consider this reasoning:

1. Jesus Christ is the only “recognized” religious leader to have ever claimed to be God and convinced a large portion of the earth's population that he is. These claims must be either true or false.
2. If his claims were false, he was a liar and a hypocrite. He was a hypocrite because he told others to be honest, whatever the cost, while himself teaching and living a colossal lie. He would also be a demon, because he told others to trust him for their eternal destiny. If he could not back up his claims, and knew it, he was unspeakable evil. *Remember, he died on account of his claims of being God.* What mere man would pay this price for continuing to propagate an illusion?
3. If he actually thought himself to be God, but was mistaken, he must have been a lunatic. But for someone to think that he is God and go around telling people they should put their eternal destiny in his hands in a culture that was

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extremely monotheistic is no idle mistake, but the actions of a lunatic in the fullest sense of the word. After all, *he was put to death for claiming that he was God.*

However, some people reject the evidence because of the moral implications involved.

Standards of Righteousness

“No single virtue or standard of righteousness taught elsewhere eclipses that taught in the Scriptures” (Wm. C. Irvine). Yet, at the same time, the Bible gives a uniquely realistic view of the nature of man (ref. Abraham, Gen. 12:10-20 and David, 2 Samuel 11:2-27—just two examples of many!). In fact, many of our current laws are based on Judeo-Christian “tradition,” which is actually based upon the Scriptures.

Prophetic Accuracy

Lending credence to the inspiration of scripture is the tremendous amount of fulfilled prophecy *years after the predictions were written*. These include predictions of the fate of certain towns, cities, nations etc. Many of these predictions have already been fulfilled, as evidenced by archaeology, and some by events in recent history. Following are just two sets of predictions as examples. Many more are effectively summarized in Josh McDowell’s book “Evidence that Demands Verdict.”

Babylon

1. Babylon to be like Sodom and Gomorrah (Isaiah 13:19).
2. Never inhabited again (Jeremiah 51:26, Isaiah 13:20).
3. Desert creatures will infest the ruins (Isaiah 31:21).
4. Stones will not be removed for other construction projects (Jeremiah 51:26).
5. The ancient city will not be frequently visited (Jeremiah 51:43).
6. Covered with swamps of water (Isaiah 14:23).

Palestine

1. Palestinian cities will resemble waste (Leviticus 26:31,33).
2. Desolation will come over the sanctuaries (Leviticus 26:31)
3. Desolation will come over the land (Leviticus 26:32,33)
4. Palestine will be inhabited by enemies (Leviticus 26:32)
5. People of Israel will disperse (Leviticus 26:33)
6. Jews will be persecuted (Leviticus 26:33).
7. Palestine will become re-inhabited by Jews, cities will revive and the land will be farmed (Ezekiel 36:33-35).

In addition, the Old Testament contains a couple hundred prophecies concerning the birth, life, sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ which were fulfilled in the New Testament. A few examples

1. Born of the seed of a woman, of a virgin (cp. Gen. 3:15 and Isa. 7:14 with Matt. 1:18-25 and Luke 1:26-35).
2. Born in Bethlehem (cp. Mic. 5:2 with Matt. 2:1-8 and Luke 2:4-7).
3. Ministered in Galilee (cp. Isa. 9:1,2 with Matt. 4:12-16).
4. Healed the sick (cp. Isa. 32:1-4 with Matt. 9:35).
5. Entered Jerusalem on a donkey and received worship (cp. Zech. 9:9 and Psalms 118:25,26 with Matt. 21:5-11 and Luke 19:35-38).
6. Betrayed (cp. Psalms 41:9 and Zech. 11:12,13 with Matt. 26:14-16,47-50 and 27:3-10).
7. Crucified (cp. Psalms 22:14-16 with Luke 23:33 and 24:39).
8. Suffered in body and soul from man (cp. Psalms 22:7,8 and 69:7,9,12,19,20 and Isa. 53 with Matt. 26:57-27:44).
9. Forsaken by God (cp. Psalms 22:1 with Matt. 27:46).
10. Buried in a rich man’s tomb (cp. Isa. 53:9 with Matt. 27:60).
11. Resurrected (cp. Psalms 16:10 and 30:3 with Luke 24:46 and Acts 2:30-32).
12. Ascended to heaven (cp. Psalms 68:18 with Luke 24:50,51, Acts 1:9, and Eph. 4:8).

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Literary Unity

The Bible is a book of books written over a 1,500 year span, 40 generations, by over 40 authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, a doctor etc. It was written in many different places; a wilderness, a dungeon, a palace, inside prison walls, while traveling, on an isolated island, and during military battle - in times of war, and in times of peace. Some authors wrote from the heights of joy and others from the depth of despair. The various books were written in different languages; some in Hebrew, some in Aramaic and some in Greek. Its content includes coverage of hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity.

What is absolutely miraculous and divine about these books is that, when bound together, they present *one unique whole*; a continuity of thought, with no contradictions, no errors and one unfolding theme - the redemption of man!

No collection of books from such a wide array of sources, written in such varied circumstances over such a time span could possibly achieve this without divine authorship.

This is the inspired Word of God.

The inexhaustible riches of the Bible

“The Bible’s spiritual treasures are inexhaustible. Every year produces scores of volumes, thousands of sermons, and tens of thousands of articles—all of which seek to exploit the unreachable riches of Christ [Eph. 3:8], and the precious truths and teaching found in the Bible. Can this be said of any other book?” (Wm. C. Irvine).

The Resurrection

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born (1 Corinthians 15:2-8).

When an event takes place in history and there are enough people who were alive who were eyewitnesses of it or had participated in the event, and when the information is published, one is able to verify the validity of an historical event (circumstantial evidences).

We can accept the truth of the events of the resurrection (and other miracles) described in the New Testament, because it documented eyewitnesses. The events took place only 30 to 40 years previously. It would have been impossible for these documents to be accepted and cherished if the stories of abnormal events in it were false or mythical, because the memory of all elderly persons regarding events of 30 to 40 years before is perfectly clear.

Accuracy of Current Versions of Original Manuscripts.

If one accepts the original scriptures as the inspired Word of God, one can be confident that they have been passed down through the centuries without corruption, through divine providence. Following is

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an excerpt from a tract written by Paul Canner entitled “Answers to Questions By Muslims About the Bible:”

There are thousands of manuscripts of both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament dating from the first century B.C. (Old Testament) and 2nd century A.D. (New Testament) to the days of Muhammad in the 7th century. There is a translation (called the Septuagint) of the Old Testament into Greek dating back to the second century B.C. There are translations of the New Testament into the Latin, Syriac, Egyptian, Gothic, Armenian, and Ethiopic languages dating back as early as the 4th century A.D. No substantial differences have been found among all these manuscripts-thus no evidence of corruption of the Scriptures-over this span of time.

The Old Testament was given by God first of all to the nation of Israel. God used Israelites (now called Jews) to write it down in the Hebrew language. They are the ones who cherished it, protected it, and so carefully copied it by trained scribes. The New Testament was given to Christians. God used Christian apostles and prophets to write it down in the Greek language. They are the ones who cherished it, protected it, and so carefully copied it by trained scribes. The New Testament contains many, many quotations from the Old Testament. The New Testament also contains many, many fulfilled prophecies written down in the Old Testament, particularly concerning the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the original revelation was corrupted, then it had to be done in such a sophisticated and widespread manner that the Old Testament prophecies recorded by Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi concerning the Messiah, and their literal fulfillment in the birth, life, suffering, and death of Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospels, would all be corrupted in a highly consistent manner. Also, incredibly, such corruption somehow had to be reflected in *every single one* of the thousands of manuscripts that exist of the Old and New Testament. In conclusion, there is not *one shred* of evidence that the Old and New Testaments given by God were ever any different from the way they read now.

With regard to the Old Testament, Christ’s words recorded in the New Testament frequently referred to historical events of the Old Testament and frequently quoted Old Testament passages. For example, Matt. 12:3-4,40-42; 4:4,7,10; 5:21,27,33.

Prior to 1947, many scholars refuted the authenticity and accuracy of ancient scriptures such as Isaiah and Psalms. However, in 1947 ancient manuscripts were discovered which contained the full text of Isaiah. This manuscript was 1,900 years old, 1000 years older than the then oldest known manuscript. The text had no meaningful differences in whatsoever, proving the exactness and accuracy with which manuscripts had been copied over a 1,000 year period.

Note that many other religions either claim that these original scriptures have been corrupted, or that a new prophet/teacher/wise person has authoritatively been given revelations to modify and/or supercede the original scriptures. For example, John Smith and Mormonism, Muhammad and Islam. But note Scripture’s own warning against this:

Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar (Proverbs 30:5-6).

As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned! (Galatians 1:9).

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever (Isaiah 40:8).

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APPENDIX

Many verses claim that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God - unchangeable, infallible and everlasting. It is THE truth.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Peter 1:20-21

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever.

Matthew 5:18

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

Exodus 24:12

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction."

2 Samuel 22:31

As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

Psalms 12:6

And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.

Psalms 19:7-8

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

Psalms 119

4. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.
30. I have chosen the way of truth; I have set my heart on your laws.
89. Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

Proverbs 30:5

Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

Mark 12:24

Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

Mark 13:31

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

John 8:31-32

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

1 Corinthians 2:13

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

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1 Peter 1:23-25

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

John 17:17

Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Galatians 1:11-12

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

The Truth about Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God the Father, and the Son and the Father are one. Other religions have prophets and teachers; Christianity has Christ.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe (Hebrews 1:1,2).

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35).

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world (1 John 4:1-3).

God's Plan of Redemption for man and the Resurrection of Christ

Only Christianity presents a perfect sinless sacrifice as an atonement for the sins of men—to all who will believe. This required the resurrection of Christ to prove that death has no power over him.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus (Romans 3:21-26).

...but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness--for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification (Romans 4:24,25).

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith (1 Corinthians 15:13,14).

Contrast: Other religions focus on what man can **do** to reach God (or some spiritual state). Christianity focuses on what Christ has already **done** to redeem man.