

## Four Misunderstandings of Christianity 6-30-12

Have you ever had someone tell you that they thought the Bible taught these things:

Three Wise Men came to Jesus' birth?

There is an the Angel of Death?

There are Seven Deadly Sins?

We are Saved by Faith Only?

Most of us know that these idea are found nowhere in the Bible. But still people believe in them. Why? Because of preconceived notions. Too often people believe what we are told rather than what we know to be true. One study shows misinformation remains even after cognitively corrected<sup>1</sup>. These are simple errors to correct, but what about the big ones? Let us suggest that there are four big false ideas about Christianity:

Christianity is about making life better

Christianity is an inclusive belief system

Christianity is a part of our life

Christianity is for everyone

First, we need to make clear that Christianity is not about making life better. Simply stated, Christianity cannot make a better world. It cannot cure poverty; it cannot create social justice; it will not save the planet. Christianity may not improve your life. Paul said that "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12). He also said "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22b). While there are benefits to the Christian life (marriage, home, etc), there is no promise to a better life now. Simply put, Christianity is about the next life, not this one. (Hebrews 10:35-39)

Second, Christianity is an EXCLUSIVE system of belief. Meaning, it does not permit variation or opinion. Christianity is fundamentally intolerant, exclusive and limited. We conform ourselves to belief, not the other way around. Jesus said "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6); he also said "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:14). Anyone who believes that God allows us to believe Him at our own pace has missed the mark entirely.

Third, it is NOT lifestyle; no one is a Christian "part-time". Christianity is all encompassing of every part of our life. According to Colossians 3:1-11, we received a new life, a new name, a new family, and a new purpose when we became Christians. We might say it like this: there are no democrats, republicans, Oregonians, Americans, etc in heaven. Only Christians will be permitted. We need to adjust our view of ourselves accordingly.

Fourth, Christianity is not for everyone. This may sound contrary to statements made by God to His desire that all men should be saved. What we mean is this: there are only a limited number of people who fit the first requirements of being a Christian. Jesus said He could only save Sinners (Mark 2:15-17). It is true that all men sin (generally speaking), but since only a few realize it, only the ones who so see themselves can be saved. Jesus said many were unsavable because of this "blindness" (John 9:39-41).

The reality of Christianity is this:

Christianity is about the next life, not about this one

Christianity is an exclusive and narrow way, and it requires conformity

Christianity is the entirety of our life, not a portion

Christianity is only for Sinners, and anyone who does not accept this is not invited

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://gma.yahoo.com/why-people-believe-misinformation-even-corrected-162943705--abc-news.html>