

Why There Can Only Be One True Religion

By [Chuck May](#)

- *What is truth and does it exist?*
- *Is truth exclusive?*
- *Is truth relative or absolute?*
- *Where can truth be found?*

John chapter 18 describes a conversation between Christ and Pilate prior to Christ's crucifixion. At the end of this encounter Pilate asks Jesus the most important question any human being can ask, only he did not wait for the answer. *Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out...* (John 18:38).

Many in our culture today either don't believe truth exists or they believe that all truth is relative. Relative truth states, "that may be true for you but not for me." What good does it do to tell someone about Jesus if he doesn't realize that you are saying, "This is true for everyone, everywhere, at all times and it is not compatible with any other system of beliefs." This brochure seeks to determine whether Christians are philosophically sound in their assertions that Christianity is true and that truth by definition is absolute and exclusive.

What Is Truth?

"Truth is defined as conformity to fact or actuality, reality" ("The American Heritage Dictionary," 3rd Edition). In other words, truth is the way things actually are. If I assert that there is a parrot on my shoulder, then either that bird is there or it isn't. If the parrot is sitting next to my head when I make the statement, then I have uttered truth. If, on the other hand, I have a bare shoulder, then I have made a false statement. My statement cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense.

This leads us to a truth test. One kind of logic is called either/or logic, also known as the Law of Non-contradiction. This law basically states that "A cannot be non-A." For example, if the parrot is on my shoulder (A), then it cannot be not on my shoulder at the same time (non-A). From this we can infer that all truth, by definition, is exclusive. You can test this with any statement. For example, a math teacher may ask the class to solve for 3+5. If I say the answer is 7 and Fred says the answer is 8, then either he is right, or I am right, or, in this case, there could be a third alternative that we are both wrong. But we cannot have different answers and both be right. This is because the answer 8, which corresponds to reality, is exclusive (i.e. there is only one true, right answer). Notice that in this and in the previous example there was, in fact, a situation which corresponded to reality (there was a true answer).

Incidentally, when the popular philosophers of our time state "there is no such thing as truth," our immediate response to them should be, Is that statement true? This is because the statement, "there is no such thing as truth" is itself either a true statement or a false one, there are no other options. If that statement is false, then there is such a thing as truth. If, on the other hand, the statement is true, then the statement defeats itself because it is, in effect, saying "there is no truth except the truth that there is no truth." In other words, he is assuming his statement to be true in order to prove there is no such thing as truth. Truth cannot be denied unless some truth is affirmed.

Can a Religion that Excludes People Be True?

The question is often posed to Christianity, Why is it so exclusive? That is, why does it claim to be the only true religion, the only way to God. This is quite an unfair criticism because, in fact, all religions are exclusive. In fact, any statement that asserts absolute truth is, by definition, exclusive (i.e., the opposite of that statement is assumed to be false). All religions, whether they admit it or not, make absolute, exclusive truth statements. For example, Buddhism was born out of Hinduism because Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) rejected the Hindu doctrines of the caste system and the authority of the Vedas. Another way to say this is, you are excluded from being a Buddhist if you accept the Vedas or the caste system as true.

Hinduism strongly affirms a pantheistic, monistic world-view and the karmic law while rejecting any system which states the opposite. Hinduism also says that since everything is divine it is in some way true, hence their view that all religions are true and all roads lead to God. Sounds all-inclusive, but when you press a Hindu, he will never let go of the doctrine of reincarnation or his pantheism. In fact, when you question him on his "all religions are true stance," he will eventually

exclude Christians. This is because the Christian theist will claim that only Christianity is true, not that everything is true. The Hindu will counter, "Christianity is false, everything is true." The problem is, he has just refuted himself. If Christianity is false, then not everything is true. But if Christianity is true, then Hinduism is false because Christ claimed to be the only way to God. The Hindu becomes mired in an endlessly repeating and self-refuting argument. Eventually, you will be excluded from Hinduism if you believe Christianity is right.

You will find the same is true in atheism. If you assume that God exists, you are excluded from membership in atheism.

Islam also has its points of exclusion. If the Christian affirms that Christ is the final authority and greatest prophet of God, the Muslim will exclude him from Islam. Islam, while affirming a high position for Christ, says that there was a greater prophet, Muhammad, and his revelation supersedes Christ's.

You will also be excluded from Mormonism if you assert, as biblical Christianity does, that Christ and the Father are One and that at no time was the Father a mortal man.

It is true that Christianity is exclusive, but so are all other religions.

What Christ claimed ...

Because the law of non-contradiction applies to reality, we can conclude that when Christ claimed to be the only way to God, He was making a most reasonable statement. In point of fact, it is more reasonable to state that all religions are false than to say that more than one religion is true.

There is either one true religion or all religions are false.

Jesus claimed to be God (John 8:58; 10:30), to have life in Himself (John 5:26), to be the Light of the world (John 8:12), to be the only way to eternal salvation (John 17:3; 14:6), to be the Judge of the world (John 5:22). In fact, Jesus claimed to be truth itself (John 14:6). Either these statements were true or they were false, they can not be both (law of non-contradiction). Truth can be found in Christ. That is, as God, everything He says corresponds to reality.

“That might be true for you, but it’s not true for me.”

If Christ is, in fact, God, then He is God for everyone. If what He said is true, then everyone who has ever lived will face Him to give an account of what they did with the statements He made. In other words, there is no such thing as relative truth. Either He is the only way to salvation or He is not. It can't be true for me and not for everyone else. Either Christ is absolute truth or He is no truth at all.

Questions and Answers

Q: *What is truth and does it exist?*

A: Truth is what corresponds to reality. Objective truth does exist.

Q: *Is truth exclusive?*

A: Yes. All truth is exclusive. You can't affirm anything without excluding its opposite.

Q: *Is truth relative or absolute?*

A: Truth is absolute. Any truth statement will apply at all times to all people in all places.

Q: *Where can truth be found?*

A: Jesus, being God, is where truth can be found. Therefore, everything He says corresponds to reality (John 14:6).