

Why Christianity?

SOLVING
LIFE'S
MOST
IMPORTANT
QUESTION



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THE CHOICE

Imagine I offered you a choice of four gifts:

- The original Mona Lisa
- The keys to a brand new Lamborghini
- A million dollars in cash
- A parachute

You can pick only one. Which would you choose? Before you decide, here's some information that will help you to make the *wisest* choice: *You have to jump 10,000 feet out of an airplane.*

Does that help you to connect the dots? It should, because you *need* the parachute. It's the only one of the four gifts that will help with your dilemma. The others may have some value, but they are useless when it comes to facing the law of gravity in a 10,000-foot fall. The knowledge that you will have to jump should produce a healthy fear in you—and that kind of fear is good because it can save your life. Remember that.

Now think of the four major religions:

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Islam
- Christianity

Which one should you choose? Before you decide, here's some information that will help you determine which one

For most of humanity, death is a huge and terrifying plummet into the unknown.

is the wisest choice: All of humanity stands on the edge of eternity. We are all going to die. We will all have to pass through the door of death. It could happen to us in twenty years, or in six months, . . . or today. For most of humanity, death is a huge and

terrifying plummet into the unknown. So what should we do?

Do you remember how it was your knowledge of the jump that produced that healthy

fear, and that fear helped you to make the right choice? You know what the law of gravity can do to you. In the same way, we are going to look at another law, and hopefully your knowledge of what it can do to you will help you make the right choice, about life's greatest issue. So, stay with me—and remember to let fear work for you.

THE LEAP

After we die we have to face what is called “the law of sin and death.”¹ We know that Law as “The Ten Commandments.”

So let's look at that Law and see how you will do when you face it on Judgment Day. Have you loved God above all else? Is He first in your life? He should be. He's given you your life and everything that is dear to you. Do you love Him with *all* of your heart, soul, mind, and strength? That's the requirement of the First Commandment. Or have you broken the Second Commandment by making a god in your mind that you're comfortable with—

1. See Romans 8:2.

where you say, “My God isn’t a God of wrath, he’s a God of love and mercy”? That god does not exist; he’s a figment of the imagination. To create a god in your mind (your own image of God) is something the Bible calls “idolatry.” Idolaters will not enter Heaven.

Have you ever used God’s name in vain, as a cuss word to express disgust? That’s called “blasphemy,” and it’s very serious in God’s sight. This is breaking the Third Commandment, and the Bible says God will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Have you always honored your parents implicitly, and kept the Sabbath holy? If not, you have broken the Fourth and Fifth Commandments. Have you ever hated someone? The Bible says, “Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.”²

The Seventh is “You shall not commit adultery,” but Jesus said, “Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart”³ (the Sev-

2. 1 John 3:15.

3. Matthew 5:27,28.

enth Commandment includes sex before marriage). Have you ever looked with lust or had sex outside of marriage? If you have, you've violated that Commandment.

Have you ever lied? Ever stolen anything, regardless of value? If you have, then you're a lying thief. The Bible tells us, "Lying lips are abomination to the Lord,"⁴ because He is a God of truth and holiness. Have you coveted (jealously desired) other people's things? This is a violation of the Tenth Commandment.

LITTLE JESSICA

So that is God's moral Law that we each will face. We will be without excuse when we stand before God because He gave us our conscience to know right from wrong. Each time we lie, steal, commit adultery, murder, and so on, we know that it's wrong. So here is the crucial question. On Judgment Day, when God judges you, will you be found innocent or guilty of breaking this Law? *Think before you answer.* Will you go to Heaven or Hell? The Bible warns

4. Proverbs 12:22.

that all murderers, idolaters, liars, thieves, fornicators, and adulterers will end up in Hell.⁵ So where does that leave you?

Perhaps the thought of going to Hell doesn't scare you, because you don't believe in it. That's like standing in the open door of a plane 10,000 feet off the ground and saying, "I don't believe there will be any consequences if I jump without a parachute."

To say that there will be no consequences for breaking God's Law is to say that God is unjust, that He is evil. This is why.

On February 24, 2005, a nine-year-old girl was reported missing from her home in Homosassa, Florida. Three weeks later, police discovered that she had been kidnapped, brutally raped, and then buried alive. Little Jessica Lunsford was found tied up, in a kneeling position, clutching a stuffed toy.

HOW DO YOU REACT?

How do you feel toward the man who murdered that helpless little girl in such an unspeakably

5. See Revelation 21:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10.

cruel way? Are you angered? I hope so. I hope you are *outraged*. If you were completely indifferent to her fate, it would reveal something horrible about your character.

Do you think that God is indifferent to such acts of evil? You can bet your precious soul He is not. He is *outraged* by them.

The fury of Almighty God against evil is *evidence* of His goodness. If He wasn't angered, He wouldn't be good. We cannot separate God's goodness from His anger. Again, if God is good by nature, He *must* be unspeakably angry at wickedness.

But His goodness is so great that His anger isn't confined to the evils of rape and murder. Nothing is hidden from His pure and holy eyes. He is outraged by torture, terrorism, abortion, theft, lying, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, homosexuality, and blasphemy. He also sees our *thought-life*, and He will judge us for the *hidden* sins of the

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heart: for lust, hatred, rebellion, greed, unclean imaginations, ingratitude, selfishness, jealousy, pride, envy, deceit, etc. Jesus warned, “But I say to you, that *every idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment”⁶ (emphasis added).

The Bible says that God’s wrath “abides” on each of us,⁷ and that every time we sin, we’re “storing up wrath”⁸ that will be revealed on Judgment Day. We are even told that we are “*by nature* the children of wrath”⁹ (emphasis added). Sinning against God comes naturally to us—and we naturally earn His anger by our sins.

INSTANT DEATH

Many people believe that because God is good, He will forgive everyone, and let all sinners into Heaven. But they misunderstand His goodness. When Moses once asked to see God’s glory, God told him that he couldn’t see Him

6. Matthew 12:36.

7. See John 3:36.

8. See Romans 2:5.

9. See Ephesians 2:3.

and live. Moses would instantly die if he looked upon God. Consider this:

[God] said, *I will make all my goodness pass before you . . . And it shall come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with my hand while I pass by.*¹⁰

Notice that all of God's glory was displayed in His "goodness." The *goodness* of God would have killed Moses instantly *because of his personal sinfulness*. The fire of God's goodness would have consumed him, like a cup of water dropped onto the surface of the sun. The only way any of us can stand in the presence of God is to be pure in heart. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."¹¹ But as we've seen by looking at the Law, not a single one of us is "pure in heart."

These are extremely fearful thoughts, because the God we are speaking about is nothing like the commonly accepted image. He is

10. Exodus 33:18,22 (emphasis added).

11. Matthew 5:8.

not a benevolent Father-figure, who is happily smiling upon sinful humanity.

In the midst of these frightening thoughts, remember to let fear work for you. The fear of God is the healthiest fear you can have. The Bible calls it “the beginning of wisdom.”¹²

Again, your knowledge of God’s Law should help you to see that you have a life-threatening

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dilemma: a huge problem of God’s wrath (His justifiable anger) against your personal sins. The just penalty for sin—breaking even one Law—is death, and eternity in Hell. But you haven’t broken just one Law. Like the rest of us, you’ve no doubt broken all these laws, countless times each. What kind

of anger do you think a judge is justified in having toward a criminal guilty of breaking the law *thousands of times?*

12. Psalm 111:10.

LET'S SEE

Let's now look at those four major religions to see if they can help you with your predicament.

Hinduism

The religion of Hinduism says that if you've been bad, you may come back as a rat or some other animal.¹³ If you've been good, you might come back as a prince. But that's like someone saying, "When you jump out of the plane, you'll get sucked back in as another passenger. If you've been bad, you go down to the Economy Class; if you've been good, you go up to First Class." It's an interesting concept, but it doesn't deal with your real problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

Buddhism

Amazingly, the religion of Buddhism denies that God even exists. It teaches that life and death

13. "Is it possible for a man to be reborn as a lower animal?" Maharshi: "Yes. It is possible, as illustrated by Jada Bharata—the scriptural anecdote of a royal sage having been reborn as a deer." <www.hinduism.co.za/reincarn.htm>.

are sort of an illusion.¹⁴ That's like standing at the door of the plane and saying, "I'm not really here, and there's no such thing as the law of gravity, and no ground that I'm going to hit." That may temporarily help you deal with your fears, but it doesn't square with reality. And it doesn't deal with your real problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

Islam

Interestingly, Islam acknowledges the reality of sin and Hell, and the justice of God, but the hope it offers is that sinners can escape God's justice if they do religious works. God will see these, *and because of them*, hopefully He will show mercy—but they won't know for sure.¹⁵ Each person's works will be weighed on the Day

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14. "When you transcend your thinking mind in the realization of your own pure, timeless, ever-present awareness, then the illusion of time completely collapses, and you become utterly free of the samsaric cycle of time, change, impermanence, and suffering." <www.buddhistinformation.com>.
 15. "Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will be successful. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in hell will they abide" (Surah 23:102,103).

of Judgment and it will then be decided who is saved and who is not—based on whether they followed Islam, were sincere in repentance, and performed enough righteous deeds to outweigh their bad ones.

So Islam believes you can *earn* God's mercy by your own efforts. That's like jumping out of the plane, and believing that flapping your arms is going to counter the law of gravity and save you from a 10,000-foot drop.

And there's something else to consider. The Law of God shows us that the best of us is nothing but a wicked criminal, standing guilty and condemned before the throne of a perfect and holy Judge. When *that* is understood, then our "righteous deeds" are actually seen as an attempt to bribe the Judge of the Universe. The Bible says that *because of our guilt*, anything we offer God for our justification (our acquittal from His courtroom) is an abomination to Him,¹⁶ and only adds to our crimes.

Islam, like the other religions, doesn't solve your problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

16. See Proverbs 15:8.

Christianity

So why is Christianity different? Aren't all religions the same? Let's see. In Christianity, God Himself provided a "parachute" for us, and His Word says regarding the Savior, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁷ Just as a parachute solved your dilemma with the law of gravity and its consequences, so the Savior perfectly solves your dilemma with the Law of God and its consequences! It is the missing puzzle-piece that you need.

How did God solve our dilemma? He satisfied His wrath by becoming a human being and taking our punishment upon Himself. The Scriptures tell us that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. Christianity provides the only parachute to save us from the consequences of the Law we have transgressed.

BACK TO THE PLANE

To illustrate this more clearly, let's go back to that plane for a moment. You are standing on the edge of a 10,000-foot drop. You *have* to jump. Your heart is thumping in your chest. Why?

17. See Romans 13:14.

Because of fear. You know that the law of gravity will kill you when you jump.

Someone offers you the original Mona Lisa. You push it aside.

Another person passes you the keys to a brand new Lamborghini. You let them drop to the floor.

Someone else tries to put a million dollars into your hands. You push the person's hand away, and stand there in horror at your impending fate.

Suddenly, you hear a voice say, "Here's a parachute!"

Which one of those four people is going to hold the most credibility in your eyes? It's the one who held up the parachute! Again, it is your fear of the jump that turns you toward the good news of the parachute.

In the same way, knowledge of what God's Law will do to you produces a fear that makes the news of a Savior unspeakably good news! It solves your predicament of God's wrath. God loves you so much that He became a sinless human being in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Savior died an excruciating death on

the cross, taking your punishment (the death penalty) upon Himself. The demands of eternal justice were satisfied the moment He cried, "It is finished!"

The lightning of God's wrath was stopped and the thunder of His indignation was silenced at Calvary's bloodied cross: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."¹⁸ We broke the Law, but He became a man to pay our penalty in His life's blood.

Then He rose from the dead, defeating death. That means that God can now forgive every sin you have ever committed and commute your death sentence. If you repent and place your trust in Jesus, you can say with the apostle Paul:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.¹⁹

So you no longer need to be tormented by the fear of death, and you don't need to look

18. Galatians 3:13.

19. Romans 8:2.

any further for ways to deal with the dilemma of sin and God's wrath.²⁰ The Savior is God's gift to you. *The gospel is unspeakably good news for the entire, sinful human race!*

God Himself can "justify" you. He can cleanse you, and give you the "righteousness" of Christ. He can make you pure in heart by washing away your sins. He can shelter you from His fierce wrath, in the Rock of Ages that He has cleft for you.²¹

Only Jesus can save you from death and Hell, something that you could never earn or deserve.²²

DO IT TODAY

To receive the gift of eternal life, you must repent of your sins (turn from them), and put on the Lord Jesus Christ as you would put on a

20. Beware of cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. They masquerade as "Christian," but they are rooted in self-righteousness (trying to do good works to earn salvation).

21. See 1 Corinthians 10:4.

22. "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

parachute—*trusting* in Him alone for your salvation. That means you forsake your own good works as a means of trying to please God (trying to bribe Him), and trust only in what Jesus has done for you. Simply throw yourself on the mercy of the Judge. The Bible says that He's rich in mercy to all who call upon Him,²³ so *call* upon Him right now. He *will* hear you if you approach Him with a humble and sorrowful heart.

Do it right now because you don't know when you will take that leap through the door of death. Confess your sins to God, put your trust in Jesus to save you, and you will pass from death to life. You have God's promise on it.²⁴

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23. "For the scripture says, Whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich to all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:12,13).
24. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24).

Pray something like this:

“Dear God, today I turn away from all of my sins [name them] and I put my trust in Jesus Christ alone as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me, change my heart, and grant me Your gift of everlasting life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

Now have faith in God. He is absolutely trustworthy. Never doubt His promises. He is not a man that He should lie.

The sincerity of your prayer will be evidenced by your obedience to God’s will, so read His Word (the Bible) daily and obey what you read.²⁵

Then go to www.livingwaters.com and click on “Save Yourself

Forsake your own good works as a means of trying to please God (trying to bribe Him).



25. “He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

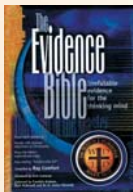
Some Pain.” There you will find principles that will help you grow in your faith. (For other helpful resources, see the following Resources page.)

Please don't toss this booklet aside. If it's been helpful to you, pass it on to someone you care about—there's nothing more important than where they will spend eternity.²⁶ Thank you for reading this.

May God continue to bless you and yours,



OTHER RESOURCES FOR GROWTH



The Evidence Bible

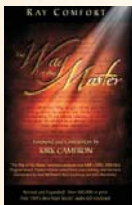
Answers 100 of the most common questions about the Christian faith. Its informative commentary will help you to grow as a Christian.

26. Additional booklets are available for a low price from www.livingwaters.com.



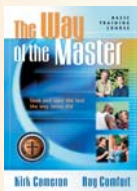
The Way of the Master Radio

To help you learn more about your new faith—and how to share it—listen freely online at www.WayoftheMasterRadio.com.



The Way of the Master

Teaches how to share the gospel simply, biblically, and without fear. You will become equipped to help anyone understand what it means to be a true and active follower of Jesus Christ.



The Way of the Master Basic Training Course

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