Christianity’s Most Offensive Belief

NOT ALL ROADS LEAD to HEAVEN

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Pathway to Victory
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Sharing an Exclusive Jesus in an Inclusive World

Dr. Robert Jeffress
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Over the years, I have made frequent appearances on the Fox News show The O’Reilly Factor. What I appreciate most about Bill O’Reilly is his willingness to host on his program people with whom he disagrees (such as myself), which explains in part why his show remains the top-rated program in cable news. Although The O’Reilly Factor deals primarily with secular subjects, whenever Bill invites me to talk about religious topics the conversation invariably touches on the subject of this book: the exclusivity of Jesus Christ.

In a recent interview about the connection between Islam and terrorism, I recounted the violent track record of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. Bill asked, “How are we supposed
to look at Islam? Should we embrace our Muslim brothers and sisters?”

“Absolutely,” I said. “I tell my congregation, as individual Christians, we ought to pray for Muslims. We ought to pray and do everything we can to introduce them to faith in Jesus Christ.”

I had a feeling my answer might provoke a reaction . . . and it did.

“Are you saying we should proselytize them?” Bill wondered, probably knowing what my response would be.

“Absolutely,” I affirmed. “I teach my congregation—”

Bill cut in with another question. “Does that mean doing what you just did, though, nailing Muhammad as a violent guy? Is that the tack you take?” he asked with a smile.

“Well, you have to tell the truth,” I said. “And the truth is that Islam is a false religion, built on a false book, written by a false prophet,” I explained.¹

The show was flooded with reactions to the interview—both positive and negative. On the next broadcast, Bill read a viewer’s email: “Whenever Pastor Jeffress appears on The Factor he sounds reasonable, but then he loses all credibility with me when he insists that his way is the only way to heaven.”

O’Reilly accurately responded, “That’s what evangelicals believe.”²

That interview—and reaction to it—was a reminder to me that the single greatest stumbling block for nonbelievers coming to faith in Christ is the issue of exclusivity. You may sound “reasonable” in your explanation of Christianity, but trust me on this: you, too, will lose “all credibility” when you insist that faith in Christ is the only way to heaven.
Are You Ready for the Question?

Even as I am typing these words, I received an email from a church member informing me of a guest he was bringing to dinner for a question-and-answer time with me. “She is not a Christian, because she cannot accept the belief that there is only one way to heaven. Wanted to give you a heads-up so you’re ready for her question.”

I am ready for the question, primarily because I have spent months researching and writing about this subject. But my purpose in this book is to equip you to be ready to articulate and defend this foundational truth of the Christian faith. We must understand the doctrine of the exclusivity of Christ so that we are prepared to respond when people ask us, “Don’t all religions lead to heaven?”

The reality of salvation through Christ alone is not something we should shy away from in our conversations with unbelievers, thinking it keeps them out of heaven. In contrast, it is the only way for us to invite them in. The most loving thing we can do for our unbelieving family, friends, and people in our circle of influence—for anyone—is to clearly communicate this essential doctrine to them.

As we will see, the answer to the question is, “Not all roads lead to heaven—only the road through saving faith in Jesus Christ does.” As Bible-believing Christians, we must be prepared and willing to share the exclusive gospel in our inclusive world.
Clear Answers to Common Questions

Whenever we talk about this issue of the exclusivity of Jesus Christ for salvation, there are several questions that naturally come up, such as “What about all the people who lived before Christ?” and “What happens to young children and mentally challenged adults who are unable to understand the gospel?” and “What about those who have never heard the gospel?” As a pastor, I encounter these questions on a regular basis. And if you’ve ever had a conversation with unbelieving friends about the subject of salvation through Christ alone, then I bet you’ve heard these questions too. How should we respond to these questions that so often arise as we are sharing the gospel?

In this book, I will provide you with clear, biblical answers to the seven most common objections to the exclusivity of Christ. The chapters that follow will equip you to help those who are honestly struggling with this truth. However, note that the purpose of this book is not to provide you the ammunition to shoot down unbelievers in a verbal firefight. I have been in enough public debates and heated private conversations with people about spiritual issues to know that it is possible to win a rhetorical battle but lose the spiritual war for a person’s eternal soul. Remember, our goal is not to win an argument but to win the other person to faith in God’s only way to eternal life in heaven—through Christ alone.

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But before we explore in depth the seven core issues related to the exclusivity of Christ, I first want to address an important, underlying question: Why am I even writing about this topic? Isn’t this foundational issue of our faith—that the only way to heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ—something that all Christians already understand and agree on?

Sadly, the answer is no.

In the next chapter, we will discover a startling reason that you and I need to have a very firm grasp on this essential doctrine.