

THE UNIQUENESS OF BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY.

August 24, 2008.

Introduction.

I am a Christian. I am not a Christian because I was born into a Christian home to Christian parents. I was born into a Hindu home to Hindu parents. One day the true and living God intervened in our home and saved my father. His radically changed life and his teaching of the gospel to us began to influence me. Four years after my father's conversion to Christ, the Lord intervened and saved me. From a human standpoint I made a deliberate and rational decision to follow the Lord Jesus Christ, to put my trust in Him to save me. I was born into this world in 1950. I was born again into the kingdom of God in 1962.

All religions in this world, including the Christian religion, stand together and function under the same basic general principles. Biblical Christianity stands uniquely alone and functions by different principles. If you are born into a Hindu home, you are a Hindu. If you are born into a Muslim home, you are a Muslim. If you are born into a Buddhist home, you are a Buddhist. If you are born into a Mormon home you are a Mormon. If you are born into a Roman Catholic home you are a Roman Catholic. If you are born into an Anglican home you are an Anglican. Some religions may have initiatory rites through which the children are formally inducted into their parent's religion. But the key point here is that the children are not allowed a choice in the matter. They may be initiated as babies or at an age that is early enough to rule out any form of resistance.

My purpose today is to share with you what the Bible teaches about Christianity. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will help you to understand that Biblical Christianity is not only different and unique but also your only hope of salvation. And without this salvation that comes to you in Christ you have no hope of eternal life and heaven. Let us begin by taking a brief survey of some of the unique claims found in the Bible. In this survey I will just use a sampling of verses in seeking to show what the Bible teaches.

The Unique Claims Concerning God.

Firstly, the unique claims concerning God.

1). The Bible teaches that God has revealed Himself to us. *Psa.9:16* says, “The LORD has made Himself known.” In *Gen.17:1* God appeared to Abraham and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before Me and be blameless.” In *Heb.1:1-2* we read, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son.”

Man did not discover God and could not discover God. *1Cor.1:21* says, “in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God.” God had to reveal Himself to man. Biblical Christianity is not about man creating a religion and writing about God as he conceives of God. Man’s conceptions about God are usually idolatrous and mythical. Biblical Christianity is about this God who could not be discovered through man’s wisdom revealing Himself to man. Biblical Christianity is about man recording God’s revelation of Himself under the inspiration of God. (*2Tim.3:16-17*).

2). The Bible teaches us that this God who revealed Himself to us is one. *Deut.6:4* says, “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the Lord is one.” This declaration is repeated in *Mk.12:29*. In *1Cor.8:4* Paul wrote, “there is no God but one.”

3). The Bible teaches that this God who is one is the only true and living God. *2Kings 19:15* says, “You are the God, You alone.” *Jer.10:10* says, “the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King.” In *Isa.45:5* we read, “I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God.” *Jn.17:3* says, “that they may know You, the only true God.” In *1Thess.1:9* Paul wrote, “you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.” The one true and living God is set in contrast to all other gods and idols. The one true and living God means that all other gods are no gods. They are false and dead.

4). This one true and living God has revealed to us His name. When God appeared to Moses, Moses asked Him, “What is [Your] name?”. And He answered Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And then He shortened it to “I AM”. (*Exod.3:13-14*). The name God gave is the Hebrew word **Yahweh**. In *Exod.6:2-3* God said to Moses, “I am the LORD; and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.” The word “**LORD**” is also a translation of the Hebrew word **Yahweh**. *Jer.33:2* says, “Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed and established it, the LORD is His name.”

In a number of modern translations of the Bible, wherever the Hebrew name **Yahweh** is found its translation is always in capital letters. For example, in the **NASB** when you find the name **LORD** in capital letters you will know immediately that it is a translation of **Yahweh**. In David’s prayer in *2Sam.7:18-29* the name **Yahweh** is translated as **LORD** and **GOD**. I want to make it clear that name matters. The revealed name of God cannot be simplistically dismissed as a matter of language. God has said that His covenant name is **Yahweh**. When the Bible is translated into other languages, the translators must find a word that must uniquely identify God’s name and convey its revealed meaning to the reader.

Name matters when it comes to your salvation. In *Isa.45:22* God said, “Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.” And in *Isa.43:11* God said, “I, even I, am the LORD; And there is no savior

besides Me.” Who is the God you are turning to for your salvation? What is His name? Are you turning to the one true and living God whose name is the LORD? Or are you using a name that the one true and living God has not revealed nor given to Himself?

5). The one true and living God whose name is the LORD has revealed Himself to us as the Triune God. He has revealed Himself to us in three distinct persons. This is called the doctrine of the Trinity or the Tri-unity of God. The Trinity does not mean that God has revealed Himself in three different roles. He has revealed Himself as three distinct persons : the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (*Isa.63:16; Phil.2:11; Gal.4:4; Jn.5:17-18, 20; Gen.1:2; Jn.14:17, 26*). The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father. The Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Son. The Father is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. God the Father did not die for you on the cross. It was God the Son who died for you on the cross.

This is not the time to try to prove to you this mysterious doctrine that is clearly taught in the Bible. I have given you in your notes a few verses that you can look at. But I want to say very clearly that the Bible teaches there is one God. This one God has revealed Himself to us in three distinct persons. The three are one. The three are fully and equally God, as the old theologians said, “*God of very God.*” Jesus is not a lesser God. The three have distinct roles and overlapping roles.

How could one be three and three be one? If I knew I would tell you. But this is why God is God. There is mystery about Him that finite minds would never be able to fully understand. For a finite man to fully understand God, he would have to become infinite. If a finite man becomes infinite, then he is also God. The temptation Satan placed before Adam and Eve and that they fell for is never far from our minds and desires. Satan promised them, “you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (*Gen.3:5*). The unbridled lust to want to understand everything about God before believing in God is the unbridled lust to become a divine being. This unbridled lust is the manifestation of the soul-destroying idolatry that lives in fallen man.

The Unique Claims Concerning Man.

Secondly, let us look briefly at the Bible's unique claims concerning man. The Bible makes it very clear that God is the Creator and that He created mankind. He created them distinctively male and female. (*Gen.1:27*). God placed man under His command. (*Gen.2:15-16*). But man listened to and believed Satan's lies and rebelled against God's clear command. Let us survey the consequences of Adam's disobedience to God

Firstly, Adam's disobedience brought about his own fall into sin and all of mankind's fall into sin. And sin brought upon Adam and all of mankind the penalty of death. *Rom.5:12* says, "just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." *Rom.6:23* says, "the wages of sin is death." The point in *Rom.5:12* is that when Adam sinned, all of mankind sinned with him. In other words, the entire human race yet to be born sinned with Adam, fell with Adam and died with Adam.

Secondly, sin corrupted man's entire being. There is nothing in man's being, physical, spiritual, and intellectual that was not corrupted by sin. (cf. *Rom.3:10-18*). Everything that man is and does is not merely tainted by sin. Everything that man is and does is corrupted by sin. Man's mind or heart and will have been enslaved by sin and are controlled by his fallen nature. (cf. *Rom.8:5*). *Jer.17:9* says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" Every good work a man does is corrupted by sin. *Isa.64:6* says, "all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment." Paul described all his righteous deeds as rubbish in God's eyes. (*Phil.3:8*). It is because of this moral corruption sin worked in fallen man that we are told in *Rom.3:10, 12*, "There is none righteous, not even one; ... There is none who does good, not even one."

Thirdly, the Bible says fallen man is hostile toward God, unable to obey God and cannot please God. (*Rom.8:7-8*). *Eph.2:1-3* tells us that fallen is dead; dominated by the world; dictated to by sin; dedicated to the flesh; and destined for hell.

Fourthly, the Bible teaches that every human being born into this world is born a sinner. They are not born as innocent sinless little children who become sinners after they commit their first sin. They are born as sinners and sin because they are sinners. *Psa.58:3* says, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.” In *Psa.51:5* David said, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” *Isa.48:8* says, “you have been called a rebel from birth.”

All parents in this world, including Christian parents, give birth to children who are sinners. Regardless of the religion these parents may belong to, the true and living God says they give birth to children who are sinners. These children are sinners in need of salvation in Christ and without salvation in Christ they are on their way to hell. Christian parents, your children are not Christians. They are sinners. As a matter of fact your children have no religion. It is only when they repent of their sins and believe in Christ for salvation that they become Christians.

Lastly the Bible clearly teaches that fallen man cannot save himself. His good works cannot save him because his good works are corrupted by sin.. They are filthy rags (*Isa.64:6*) and rubbish (*Phil.3:8*) in God’s sight. *Eph.2:9* says that salvation is “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (cf. *Tit.3:5*; *2Tim.1:9*). *Rom.3:20* says, “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in [God’s] sight.” Jesus also made it plain that if a man owned all the wealth in this world that would not be enough to save him. (*Matt.16:26*). Peter said silver and gold cannot redeem you. (*1Pet.1:18*).

The Unique Claims Concerning Christ.

There are those who say that Jesus was a good man who lived an exemplary life but who was tragically martyred by those who hated Him. Some would say He was the most perfect man who ever lived. They would say His life and teachings about life are most worthy of following. Even many who claim to be Christians see Jesus as nothing more

than the best example of how life must be lived, an example they should follow. All of this sound very wonderful but the Bible does not teach these things.

The Bible makes the bold claim that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the second person in the Triune God-head. He is God of very God. He is God who came into this world as a man. As God He is perfectly equal with the Father. The Bible makes the exclusively absolute claim that fallen man's only hope of salvation is the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other Savior of sinners in this world. If Jesus is not your Lord and Savior you are on your way to hell. Let us consider the following verses.

The angel told Mary that the Holy Child she will give birth to "shall be called the Son of God." (*Lk.1:35*). *Matt.1:23* says Jesus is "God with us." In *Matt.3:17* the Father declared concerning Jesus, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." In *Jn.1:1* John wrote concerning Jesus, "the Word was God." In *vs.3* Jesus is described as the Creator. In *Jn.5:17* Jesus called God "My Father." The Jews clearly understood the implication. They said Jesus "was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal to God." (*vs.18*). In *Jn.20:28* Thomas called Jesus, "My Lord and my God." In *Tit.2:13* Jesus is described as "our great God and Savior."

Jesus' death was not a martyrdom. Jesus' death was by divine design and with divine purpose. *Acts 2:23* says Jesus died according to "the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God." *Gal.4:4-5* says, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Jesus said in *Jn.10:15*, "I lay down My life for the sheep." In *vs.18* He said, "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again."

What was the divine design in Jesus' death? The divine design was the redemption of sinners. Jesus died to give His life a ransom for sinners. (*Mk.10:45*). Jesus died for the ungodly, for sinners. (*Rom.5:6, 8*). *1Cor.15:3* says, "Christ died for our sins." *Gal.1:4* says Christ "gave Himself for our sins." Jesus died to save sinners.

Matt.1:21 says, “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” *1Tim.1:15* says, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Jesus is the only Savior of sinners in this world. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (*Jn.14:6*). There are no exceptive clauses after “**no one**”. Regardless of whether you are a nobody or a somebody, regardless of whether you are a beggar or a king, regardless of whether you are a pauper or a prince, regardless of whether you are an atheist or highly religious, regardless of whether you are a monk or a pagan, regardless of whether you are educated or uneducated, if you want to be saved you must humbly come to Jesus and through Jesus.

Peter declared to the highest Jewish religious court, “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” (*Acts 4:12*). And this name is Jesus. Note the word “**must**” in Peter’s statement. The word “**must**” means this is God’s design. This is not Peter’s design. This is God’s design. If the Pharisees want to be saved, they must come to Jesus. If the Sadducees want to be saved, they must come to Jesus. If the high priest wants to be saved, he must come to Jesus. There is no exception to this divine design.

How To Become A Christian?

For our final point I want to answer the question, How can a person become a Christian? How can a sinner become a saint? How can a person without hope and without salvation receive salvation? The answer is in one word, Jesus. But let me develop the answer for you.

The Bible teaches us that the penalty for sin is death. *Rom.6:23* says, “The wages of sin is death.” When man fell into sin he died. *Firstly*, he died spiritually. Paul said to

the Ephesians that before God saved them they “were dead in [their] trespasses and sins.” (*Eph.2:1*). Paul repeated in *vs.5*, “we were dead in our transgressions.” In *Col.2:13* Paul wrote, “you were dead in your transgressions.” *Rom.8:5* says, “The mind set on the flesh is death.” The mind that is controlled by our fallen sinful corrupt nature is death. The verse does not say, “*The mind set on the flesh will die.*” The verse says, “The mind set on the flesh is death” – it is death itself.

Secondly, sin has also brought upon fallen man physical death. *Ezek.18:4* says, “The soul who sins will die.” *Vs.20* says, “The person who sins will die.” *Heb.9:27* says, “it is appointed for men to die once.” The epitaph on every person’s life is, “*and he died*”; “and she died.” Methuselah lived for **969** years. But we read, “and he died.” (*Gen.5:27*). Babies die in the womb. Babies die after they are born. Children die. Young people die. Your adults die. Middle age people die. People who live full lives die. The Bible says the outer man, the physical body will decay and we will die. (*2Cor.4:16*).

Thirdly, because of sin man is facing the second death. *Rev.20:11-15* tells us that final judgment is coming before God’s throne. At this judgment the book of life will be opened. And we are told in *vs.15*, “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.” *Vs.14* describes the lake of the fire as “the second death.” The lake of fire is commonly called “**hell**”. In *Matt.25:41 & 46* Jesus said when the wicked are judged they will be cast “into the eternal fire”, into the place of “eternal punishment”.

I want you to understand three other facts. *Firstly*, after death comes the judgment. *Heb.9:27* says, “it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” No changes will take place after death. If you die as a sinner and without salvation in Christ, this is how you will face your final judgment. There is no teaching in the Bible that says there is a period of grace after you die. Jesus said the rich man died and in Hades he opened his eyes and he was immediately in torment. (*Lk.16:23*). He

closed his eyes in death, saying goodbye to this world, and opened his eyes in Hades and said hello to torments.

Secondly, I want you to clearly understand that the penalty for sin is death. The penalty for sin is not the hope that your good works will outweigh your bad works. The penalty for sin is not religious works. The penalty for sin is not charitable works. **Rom.6:23** says, “the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Note carefully that this death is set in contrast to eternal life. This death is the very opposite of eternal life. This death is the second death, eternal fire, eternal punishment.

Thirdly, if you die as a sinner, without salvation in Christ, you have no hope and you are beyond the reaches of any help. The prayers of priests and loved ones cannot help you. There is the practice in various religions that when a loved one dies, prayers are offered on their behalf. Special religious services are held on their behalf. Financial donations to churches or charities are made on their behalf. I want you to understand that from a Biblical perspective all of these practices are useless. None of these things can help the dead. The rich man in Hades discovered that after death he was beyond the reaches of all help.

The issues regarding your soul’s eternal salvation must be dealt with when you are alive. When you are dead it is forever too late. Now the choice you face is very simple : either you pay for your own sins for all eternity in hell or you embrace and accept Christ’s death as the payment for your sins. There are no third options. If you choose to pay for your own sins, that payment is eternal. The rich man discovered that those who are in hell cannot leave. They are there for all eternity.

How can you accept Jesus’ payment for your sins? You must believe the Biblical teachings concerning Jesus. You must believe that He is God, the Son of God, the second person in the Triune God-head. You must believe that He came into this world as a man, lived a perfect life and then laid down His life in order to pay the penalty for your

sins. In the mysteries of God, from Gethsemane to the cross, Christ Jesus endured your eternal punishment for your sins. You must believe that He was buried and on the third day He rose triumphantly from the grave.

You must recognize the fact that you are a sinner, a transgressor of God's laws. You are fully deserving of God's judgment and eternity in the lake of fire. You must fully accept the truth that only Jesus can save you. You must repent of your sins and turn away from them. (*Lk.13:3,5*). And you must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, you must put your trust in Him to save you. (*Acts 16:30-31*). Like Thomas, you must confess him as your Lord and God.

The Bible teaches us that those who are saved, those who have become disciples of Jesus must be baptized. The Bible teaches believer's baptism. (*Matt.28:18-20*). In *Acts 2*, those who repented of their sins and believed in Jesus were baptized. (*Acts 2:38, 41*). In *Acts 10:47-48* Cornelius and his family were baptized after they were saved. In *Acts 16* Lydia and her family and the jailer and his family were baptized after they were saved. (*vss.15, 30-33*). Baptism does not save you. Baptism is the public testimony that Jesus has saved you.

This is the Biblical teaching. This is the uniqueness of Biblical Christianity. The Bible clearly teaches that you cannot be a Christian unless you are converted to Christ. You cannot be a Christian unless you hear, understand and believe the gospel of Christ. If you did not become a Christian by conversion to Christ, then you are not a Christian. And you are on your way to hell.

I urge you on the behalf of Christ to repent of your sins and believe in Jesus today.