

**SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
BIBLE SCHOOL SECOND EDITION
SESSION 13 CULTS PART 2
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE**

1. Christianity: Simple Truth

Christianity rises to the top when you earnestly investigate the other theories, philosophies, movements and religions of the world. Yes, as hard as it is to hear in our pluralistic world community, Christianity is different than all the others. That may sound terribly dogmatic and narrow-minded, but the simple truth is that Christianity is the only true religion.

2. Christianity: Why Believe It's the Only Way

Christianity is not based upon evidence ... but it is backed by evidence. Obviously, anyone could "claim" to be God. The difference with Jesus is that His life completely backed those claims. Check out the history, check out the claims - it's an absolutely phenomenal study.

A primary focus for our study is that Jesus fulfilled over 300 Messianic prophecies written in the Old Testament scriptures. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the reliability of the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, both of which have been proven to exist prior to the time Jesus walked on the earth, you can be assured that these prophecies were not "conspired" after-the- fact. They were truly fulfilled by the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Examine the probability of one man fulfilling just a handful of the most specific prophecies, and you'll be amazed.

"And He [Jesus] said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me. Luke 24:44

Another focus for our study is to understand what Jesus said and did as a historical figure. No legitimate scholars today will deny that Jesus lived about 2,000 years ago, was a great teacher and doer of good works, and that he was crucified on a Roman cross for the crime of blasphemy among the Jews. The only dispute is whether Jesus rose from the dead three days after his **Crucifixion** and that He was, in fact, God incarnate. This is where everyone must test the evidence for the **Resurrection**, examine their hearts, and make a decision about who Jesus really was.

Jesus said that He alone was the way to the Father (John 14:6), that He alone revealed the Father (Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22). Christians do not go around saying Christianity is the only way because they are arrogant, stupid, or judgmental. They do so because, based on the evidence, they believe what Jesus said. Christians believe in Jesus, who claimed to be God (John 8:58; Exodus 3:14), who forgave sin (Mark 2:5; Luke 5:20; 7:48) and who rose from the dead. (Luke 24:23-29; John 2:19) Jesus said that He was the only way.

Jesus is unique. He was either telling the truth, He was crazy, or He was a liar. But since everyone agrees that Jesus was a "good man," how then could He be both good and crazy, or good and a liar? He must have been telling the truth. He is the only way.

Buddha didn't rise from the dead, nor did Confucius or Zoroaster. Muhammad didn't fulfill detailed prophecy. Alexander the Great didn't raise the dead or heal the sick. And though there is far less reliable information written about these "religious" leaders, they are believed in and followed by millions.

3. Christianity: Not Religion - A Relationship

Christianity is not really a religion; it is a relationship with God. It is trusting in Jesus and what He did on the cross for you (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), not on what you can do for yourself (Ephesians 2:8-9). Christianity is not about ornate buildings, flamboyant preachers, or traditional rituals. Christianity is about truly accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

4. Christian Doctrine: An Explanation for a Seeker

Christian Doctrine can appear convoluted and ritualistic to a seeker who has experienced the "traditions" of "organized religion." Some Christian churches actually hinder the clear presentation and understanding of Christian doctrine. For the "churched" or "un-churched" seeker, the only valid presentation of Christianity is through the Holy Bible.

5. Christian Doctrine: The Basics of Scripture

Christian doctrine can be summarized as follows: ***"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"*** (John 3:16).

We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins, and each of us can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done. For all have sinned; all have fallen short of God's glorious standard. Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us (**Romans 3 :22-25**) and rising from the dead three days later.

6. Christian Doctrine: Justification Through Gifts of Grace and Faith

One popular pastor of Christian doctrine refers to his congregation as "Sinners Anonymous." Justification means God accepts me "just as I am," because Jesus Christ lived the perfect life that we are unable to live. Jesus died on the cross and paid the penalty for our sin. We need to go to the foot of the cross and surrender our lives to God and claim from Him the merits of Christ's righteousness, so that through Him, we might stand purified before the Eternal Father, blameless in His sight. It is the gift of faith. It is the treasure claimed by believers everywhere, who have put their hopes not in high ideals and noble intentions, but in Jesus Christ.

Most "un-churched" seekers have heard of the 10 Commandments. These legal cornerstones of righteous living are established in the Old Testament and ratified in the New Testament. Christianity does not nullify these laws, but actually upholds them through faith and God's grace. The Law was never set forth as an avenue of earning salvation. Rather, the Law makes us aware of our sin. Furthermore, we feel the pressure of the Law; we know that it is our performance that justifies the wrath of a righteous and holy God (**Galatians 3: 10-13**). Christ sets us free by taking the curse of sin upon Himself. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (**Romans 5: 1**).

Many of us are clinging to our own way of getting right with God by trying to keep the Law (or our own version of it). For various reasons, many of us won't go along with God's way. Christ has accomplished the whole purpose of the Law. All who believe in Him are made right with God (**Romans 10:3-4**). All human attempts to justify ourselves apart from faith are futile. The scriptures warn against the folly of seeking justification through means which cannot bring it about. Salvation is by faith, alone, **"not by works, lest any man should boast"** (**Ephesians 2:9**). Christians are not justified by what they do for God, but they are justified by what God has done for them. Be it knowledge, law, morals, good intentions, noble ideals, rituals, or anything else under heaven, save Christ, none will justify.

7. Christian Doctrine: The Call to Live a Holy Life

Since the Christian doctrine of God's grace has set us free from the Law, does this mean we can go on sinning? No! Although this is not a matter of eternal salvation, genuine faith must and will be accompanied by a Godly lifestyle (Romans 6:15-18)

"But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1 :22).

We are encouraged to live a holy life. ***"But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1: 15-16).***

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3: 14).