DIFFERENT GOSPELS

How Biblical Christianity Compares, in Each Group's Own Words



Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Oneness, Catholic teaching, Judaism, Islam and other paths, measured by the Bible

ANDREW DOMINGUEZ

TRINFINITY
Enterprises

Different Gospels

How Biblical Christianity Compares, in Each Group's Own Words

Andrew Dominguez

Different Gospels: How Biblical Christianity Compares, in Each Group's Own Words

Copyright 2026 by Andrew Dominguez.

I own the copyright to everything in this book. I freely allow anyone to read, copy, print, quote, share, and teach from it, and to hand out or post copies, at no cost, as long as the text is not changed and this notice stays with it.

Publishing this book, meaning releasing it as an edition of your own in print or electronic form, whether sold or given away, requires my written permission first. Requests go to andrew@trinfinityenterprises.com.

The full text can be read, printed and downloaded free at trinfinityenterprises.com.

Scripture quotations are taken from the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB), with familiar English forms of personal names, copyright 2026 Andrew Dominguez. The complete SLB is free to read at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb.

Independently published.

Trinfinity Enterprises, Dayton, Nevada.

Short quotations from other groups' scriptures and publications are used for comment and comparison. Where a teaching is described without quotation marks, it is a summary in the author's words; readers are encouraged to check each group's official sources, listed in Appendix B.

A note before you begin. This book is written to teach the Bible and encourage faith. It shares my understanding of Scripture and is offered for study and spiritual growth. It is not counseling, medical, legal, or financial advice. If you are facing a crisis, a health problem, or a legal or money problem, please reach out to a qualified professional as well as your pastor and church family. To the fullest extent the law allows, Andrew Dominguez, Trinfinity Enterprises, and Andrew Dominguez's heirs, estate, successors, and assigns accept no liability for how this material is used.

A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

Contents

Before You Begin 1

Part One: The Measuring Line

Chapter 1: Why Comparing Matters 4
Chapter 2: The Gospel We Measure By 6

Part Two: Groups That Use Christian Words

Chapter 3: The Latter-day Saints 10
Chapter 4: Jehovah's Witnesses 14
Chapter 5: Oneness Pentecostalism 17
Chapter 6: Roman Catholic Teaching 19

Part Three: Other Faiths

Chapter 7: Judaism 23
Chapter 8: Islam 26
Chapter 9: Other Paths 29

Part Four: Speaking the Truth in Love

Chapter 10: Talking with Friends of Other Faiths 32
A Closing Word 34
Appendix A: The Four Questions Side by Side 35
Appendix B: Sources 36
Appendix C: Scripture Index 37
About This Book 38

Before You Begin

> *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting from the **One** who called you in **the** grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another, except **that** there are some who are troubling you and wanting to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel out of heaven, should preach the gospel to you contrary to what we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, even now I say again: if anyone is preaching the gospel to you contrary to what you received, let him be accursed.*
>
> Galatians 1:6-9 (SLB)

Paul wrote those words to churches he had started himself. Only a few years after he left, some of them were listening to teachers who still talked about Jesus, still used the Bible, and still called themselves Christians, but who had changed the message about how a person is made right with God. Paul didn't call it a slightly different flavor of the same thing. He called it a different gospel, and he said it was no gospel at all.

Over about 40 years of work and years of leading Bible studies, I have known people from many faiths. Many were sincere neighbors who used the same Bible words I use but meant something very different by them. I wrote this book to compare what each group actually teaches, in its own words, so everyday Christians can get clear, fair answers without picking a fight.

That is why this book exists. Today there are many groups that use Christian words like God, Jesus, grace, salvation and Bible, but fill those words with very different meanings. There are also great world faiths, like Judaism and Islam, that honor Jesus in some way but deny who the Bible says He is. A Christian who loves his neighbor needs to understand what those neighbors actually believe.

My Promise to Be Fair

This is not a book of insults. I will not call anyone names, and I will not use the word "cult" as a label, because a label can stop a conversation before it starts. My goal is to let each group speak for itself.

So here is my promise. Wherever I put a group's teaching in quotation marks, the words come from that group's own scripture, creed, council or official publication, and I tell you where. Where I could not check a group's exact wording, I describe the teaching in my own words, with no quotation marks, and point you to the official source so you can read it yourself. Appendix B lists every source.

I will also say what each group gets right, or where we agree, because that is honest and because it is where real conversations start.

How We Will Measure

Each chapter asks the same four questions: Who is God? Who is Jesus? How is a person saved? What is the final authority? Chapter 2 gives the Bible's answers. Every chapter after that holds a group's answers up against them. Appendix A puts all the answers side by side in one chart.

A Few Notes

Scripture quotations come from the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). Words set in bold italics inside a quotation are words added in English to make the sentence read clearly. I capitalize pronouns that refer to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Inside quotations from other books and groups, I leave their wording and capitals exactly as printed.

This book holds the view of the Bible taught in all my other books, including a pre-tribulation view of the end times. Where faithful Christians differ on smaller questions, I say so. The differences in this book are not small ones. They touch who God is, who Jesus is, and how we are saved.

Part One: The Measuring Line

Chapter 1: Why Comparing Matters

> *But I am afraid lest perhaps, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your thoughts may be corrupted from the simplicity that **is** toward Christ. For if indeed the one coming preaches another Jesus whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit which you did not receive, or a different gospel which you did not accept, you would bear **with it** well.*
>
> 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (SLB)

Some people think comparing beliefs is unkind. "Why not just let everyone believe what they want?" Everyone is free to believe what they want, and Christians should defend that freedom. But being free to believe something doesn't make it true. And when the question is how a person can be right with God forever, the truth matters more than anything else.

Same Words, Different Meanings

Paul warned the Corinthians about three things: another Jesus, a different spirit, and a different gospel. Notice that the false teachers didn't stop talking about Jesus. They preached a Jesus. It just wasn't the Jesus the apostles preached.

That is the most important thing to understand about many of the groups in this book. If you ask a Latter-day Saint, a Jehovah's Witness, or a Oneness Pentecostal whether they believe in Jesus, they will say yes, and they mean it sincerely. The question is not whether they use the name. The question is whether the Jesus they describe is the Jesus of the Bible.

So in every chapter, we will look past the shared words and ask what the words mean.

Why It Matters So Much

Jesus Himself said that what we believe about Him is a matter of life and death.

> *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am **He**, you will die in your sins.* (John 8:24)

John wrote his whole Gospel so that people would believe the right things about Jesus and have life.

> *but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* (John 20:31)

If Jesus is only a great prophet, or a created angel, or a man who became a god, then He can't do what the Bible says He did. Only God can bear the sins of the whole world and give eternal life. That is why the apostles fought so hard for the truth about Jesus, and why we must too.

Test Everything

The Bible doesn't ask us to believe every teacher who sounds spiritual. It tells us to test them.

> *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits **to see** whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ having come in **the** flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ having come in **the** flesh is not of God. And this is the **spirit** of the antichrist, which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.*
> (1 John 4:1-3)

The test is always the same: what does the Bible say? The people of Berea are praised because they checked even Paul's teaching against Scripture every day (Acts 17:11). If Paul's words could be tested, every teacher's words can be.

With Love, Not Pride

Comparing beliefs is not about winning arguments. Paul said that his heart ached for his own people who did not believe in Jesus (Romans 9:1-3). That is the attitude we need. If we understand another person's faith, we can talk with them honestly, answer their real questions, and point them to the real Jesus.

> *but speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the head, Christ*
> (Ephesians 4:15)

Study Questions

1. Read 2 Corinthians 11:3-4. What three things did Paul warn could be "another" or "different"?
2. Why is it not enough to ask someone "Do you believe in Jesus?"
3. Read 1 John 4:1. Why does God tell us to test teachers instead of trusting them?

Chapter 2: The Gospel We Measure By

> *Now I make known to you, brothers, the gospel which I preached to you, which you also received, in which you also have stood, through which you also are being saved, in what word I preached **it** to you, if you hold **it** fast, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you among **the** first **things** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He has been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*
>
> 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (SLB)

To spot a counterfeit bill, bank tellers spend their time studying the real thing. The same is true here. Before we look at any other group, we need to be clear about what the Bible teaches. Here are the four questions we will ask in every chapter, and the Bible's answers.

Question 1: Who Is God?

There is only one true God. He has no equal and no rival, and there was never a time when He became God.

> *You **are** My witnesses, declares the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe Me and understand that I **am** He. Before Me no god was formed, and after Me **there** will be none.* (Isaiah 43:10)

> *Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, the LORD of armies: I **am** first and I **am** last, and besides Me **there is** no God.* (Isaiah 44:6)

This one God exists eternally as three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They are not three gods, and they are not one Person wearing three masks. Each is fully God, and there is one God. Jesus told His followers to baptize "in the name" (singular) "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). My book One God, Three Persons walks through this in detail.

Question 2: Who Is Jesus?

Jesus Christ is God the Son. He did not begin at Bethlehem. He was with the Father before creation, and all things were made through Him (John 1:1-3). He became a real man, born of the virgin Mary, without ceasing to be God. He lived a sinless life, died on the cross for our sins, rose bodily from the dead, and will come again.

> *No one has ever seen God; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made **Him** known.* (John 1:18)

The Father Himself calls the Son God.

> *But to the Son: "Your throne, O God, **is** to the age of the age; a scepter of uprightness **is** the scepter of Your kingdom."* (Hebrews 1:8)

And Jesus accepted worship as God, as when Thomas fell before Him and said, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28).

Question 3: How Is a Person Saved?

We are saved by God’s grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, apart from our works. Good works are the fruit of salvation, not the price of it.

> *Therefore we reckon a man to be justified by faith apart from works of law.* (Romans 3:28)

> *Now to the one who works, the wage is not reckoned according to grace but according to debt; but to the one who does not work but believes on the **One** who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness* (Romans 4:4-5)

Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was complete. It does not need to be repeated, added to, or finished by us.

> *By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest indeed stands every day ministering and repeatedly offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at **the** right hand of God, from then on waiting until His enemies are placed **as** a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.* (Hebrews 10:10-14)

And there is only one way to God.

> *For **there is** one God, and one mediator of God and men, **the** man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5)

Question 4: What Is the Final Authority?

The Bible, the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God. It is complete, and nothing is to be added to it or taken from it.

> *Beloved, while making all diligence to write to you concerning our common salvation, I had necessity to write to you, exhorting **you** to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.* (Jude 1:3)

> *For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues which have been written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from **the** book of life and out of the holy city, and **from** the things written in this book.* (Revelation 22:18-19)

That doesn’t mean Christians ignore history, teachers or tradition. It means every teacher and every tradition must bow to Scripture, and not the other way around.

The Four Answers in Short

Question	The Bible's answer
Who is God?	One God, eternally Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Who is Jesus?	God the Son, fully God and fully man, eternal, Creator, risen in the body
How is a person saved?	By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; works follow as fruit
What is the final authority?	The Bible alone, complete and unchanging

Study Questions

1. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. What are the main facts of the gospel Paul preached?
2. Which of the four questions do you think is most often misunderstood today?
3. Read Romans 4:4-5. What is the difference between a wage and a gift?

Part Two: Groups That Use Christian Words

Chapter 3: The Latter-day Saints

> *Watch out that no one will be the **one** who takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to Christ*
>
> Colossians 2:8 (SLB)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was organized in New York in 1830 by Joseph Smith. Its members are often called Mormons, though the church today asks to be called by its full name. Latter-day Saints are known for strong families, hard work, clean living, and generous care for their members. Many of them love Jesus sincerely and speak of Him often. Those are good things, and a Christian should say so.

But the church teaches that the true church was lost after the apostles died, and that God restored it through Joseph Smith. Along with the restoration came new scriptures and new teachings about God, Jesus and salvation. Those are what we need to measure.

What They Say: The Final Authority

The church's Eighth Article of Faith, written by Joseph Smith, says:

> "We believe the Bible to be the word of God, as far as it is translated correctly; We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God." (Articles of Faith 8)

The church also accepts the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price as scripture, and it holds that its living prophet and apostles receive revelation for the church today.

The Book of Mormon says that many things were taken out of the Bible:

> "...many parts which are plain and most precious..." (1 Nephi 13:28, describing what it says was taken away from the Bible)

What the Bible Says

Jesus said, "The heaven and the earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The Bible we have is backed by thousands of manuscripts, and the Dead Sea Scrolls show the Old Testament was copied with great care over a thousand years. My book Dug Up and Written Down and the book Which Bible, Which Books? give the evidence. Jude says the faith was delivered "once for all" (Jude 3). A later book that changes the core of that faith is not a restoration of it.

What They Say: Who Is God?

The First Article of Faith sounds familiar:

> "We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost." (Articles of Faith 1)

But the church does not mean one God in three Persons. It teaches that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate beings, united in purpose. The Doctrine and Covenants says:

> "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit." (Doctrine and Covenants 130:22)

A well-known couplet from Lorenzo Snow, the church's fifth president, sums up a teaching about God and people:

> "As man now is, God once was: As God now is, man may be."

The church's own Gospel Topics essay Becoming Like God quotes that couplet and adds that "little has been revealed about the first half of this couplet, and consequently little is taught." So I want to be fair: many Latter-day Saints today would not say much about God once being a man. But the second half, that faithful people may become like God and be exalted, is still taught.

What the Bible Says

God says there was no God before Him and will be none after Him (Isaiah 43:10). He knows of no other (Isaiah 44:8). And He is not a man.

> *God **is** not a man, that He should lie, and a son of mankind, that He should relent. Has He said, and will He not do **it**? And has He spoken, and will He not establish it?* (Numbers 23:19)

Jesus said, "God ***is*** spirit" (John 4:24). The Father does not have a body of flesh and bones. The Son took on a human body when He became a man, and He still has it, risen and glorified. God has always been God. He did not become God, and we will never become what He is. We will be made like Christ in holiness (1 John 3:2), but we will always be creatures worshiping our Creator.

What They Say: Who Is Jesus?

The church teaches that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior, and the Firstborn of the Father's spirit children. In its teaching, all people lived with God as spirit children before birth, and Jesus was the eldest. Latter-day Saints believe He suffered for our sins in Gethsemane and on the cross, and rose from the dead.

What the Bible Says

The Bible agrees that Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior, crucified and risen. Those are precious truths to share. But the Bible says the Son is not one of many spirit children. He is the Creator of everything that was made (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17). "Firstborn" in Colossians 1:15 means first in rank and heir, the

one who is over all creation, because the next verse says all things were created by Him. He is "the only begotten Son" (John 1:18), eternally God the Son.

What They Say: How Is a Person Saved?

The Third Article of Faith says:

> "We believe that through the atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel." (Articles of Faith 3)

The Book of Mormon puts it this way:

> "...for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do." (2 Nephi 25:23)

The church teaches that almost everyone will be raised and receive some degree of glory, but that the highest glory, called exaltation, requires faith, repentance, baptism by priesthood authority, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, temple ordinances such as sealing in marriage, and faithful obedience to the end. To be fair again: in recent years church leaders have spoken a great deal about grace, and many explain "after all we can do" as meaning grace is present all along, not only at the end. Even so, the ordinances and covenants remain required for exaltation.

What the Bible Says

The Bible says we are saved by grace through faith, "not from works" (Ephesians 2:8-9). If we add our obedience to Christ's work as a condition, grace stops being grace (Romans 11:6). Eternal life is a gift given now to the one who has the Son.

> *And this is the testimony, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The one who has the Son has life; the one who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*
> (1 John 5:11-12)

The Bible has no temple sealing, no baptism for the dead as a saving ordinance, and no levels of exaltation earned by covenants. It has a Savior who said "It has been finished" (John 19:30).

Talking with a Latter-day Saint

Start with what you share: love for Jesus, the importance of family, and a desire to obey God. Ask questions rather than make speeches. You might ask, "What does it mean to you that it's by grace we are saved after all we can do? How do you know when you've done all you can?" Many sincere Latter-day Saints carry a heavy weight here. Then show them the gift in 1 John 5:13: "so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Study Questions

1. What good qualities do you see in Latter-day Saints you know?

2. Compare Articles of Faith 1 with Isaiah 43:10 and Isaiah 44:6. What is different about the meaning of “God”?

3. Read 1 John 5:11-13. How would this verse speak to someone who is not sure they have done enough?

Chapter 4: Jehovah's Witnesses

> *so that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*
>
> John 5:23 (SLB)

Jehovah's Witnesses grew out of a Bible study movement started by Charles Taze Russell in Pennsylvania in the 1870s. The name Jehovah's Witnesses was adopted in 1931. The group is led by a Governing Body at its headquarters in New York, and it publishes its teaching through the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, including the magazine The Watchtower and the website jw.org.

Witnesses are known for going door to door, for courage under persecution, for honesty, and for taking the Bible seriously enough to study it every week. Many Christians could learn from their zeal. But their teaching about Jesus and the Holy Spirit is very different from the Bible's.

What They Say: Who Is God?

Witnesses believe in one God, whose personal name is Jehovah, and they are right that God has a personal name in the Old Testament. But they reject the Trinity. Their brochure Should You Believe in the Trinity? says:

> "Jehovah God alone is Almighty."

And about the Holy Spirit, the jw.org article What Is the Holy Spirit? says:

> "The holy spirit is God's power in action, his active force."

So in their teaching, the Spirit is not a Person but a force, like electricity.

What the Bible Says

The Bible agrees there is one God, and it uses the name the Lord (Yahweh, often written Jehovah in older English) thousands of times. But the Holy Spirit is not an "it." He speaks (Acts 13:2), He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), He can be lied to, and lying to Him is lying to God (Acts 5:3-4). He teaches and reminds (John 14:26). A force can't do any of those things. My book One God, Three Persons covers this.

What They Say: Who Is Jesus?

The same brochure says of Jesus:

> "Jesus, even in his prehuman existence, is also separate and distinct, a created being, subordinate to God."

"Jesus was created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations."

Witnesses also teach that before He came to earth, Jesus was the archangel Michael, and that He rose from the dead as a spirit, not in His physical body. You can read these teachings for yourself on jw.org. The group's own Bible, the New World Translation, adds the word "a" in John 1:1, so that the verse says the Word was a god rather than that the Word was God.

What the Bible Says

Jesus is not a created being. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that has been made (John 1:3). If He made everything that was made, He can't be one of the things made. The Father says to the Son, "Your throne, O God, ***is*** to the age of the age" (Hebrews 1:8).

He is not an angel either. Hebrews 1 was written to show that the Son is far above the angels.

> *But to which of the angels has He ever said, "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth for service for the sake of those who are about to inherit salvation?* (Hebrews 1:13-14)

God commands all the angels to worship the Son (Hebrews 1:6). Angels refuse worship (Revelation 22:8-9), but Jesus accepted it (Matthew 14:33; John 20:28). And the Father wants all people to honor the Son just as they honor the Father (John 5:23).

Jesus also rose in His body. He told His disciples, "touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, just as you see Me having" (Luke 24:39). He ate in front of them. The tomb was empty because the same body that died was raised.

What They Say: How Is a Person Saved?

Witnesses teach that Jesus' death was a ransom that opens the way to salvation. But they teach that only 144,000 faithful Christians will go to heaven to rule with Christ. Most faithful people, whom they call the "other sheep" or "great crowd," hope to live forever on a restored paradise earth. They teach that a person must stay faithful to Jehovah through His organization, and that a final judgment comes after a thousand years of testing. They also teach that the wicked are not punished forever but simply cease to exist. Again, their official statements on jw.org lay these out.

What the Bible Says

The 144,000 in Revelation 7 and 14 are named as 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Right after them, John sees "a great multitude which no one was able to number, out of every nation" standing before God's throne in heaven (Revelation 7:9). Heaven is not limited to a small group.

Salvation is not earned by faithfulness to an organization. It is received by faith in a Person. "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life" (John 3:36). Every believer is born again (John 3:3), is a child of God (John 1:12), and will be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Talking with a Jehovah's Witness

When Witnesses come to your door, thank them. Have your Bible ready. A good question is: "Who do you say Jesus is? Read John 1:3 with me. If all things were made through Him, could He be a created thing?" Another is Hebrews 1:6: "Why would God command angels to worship another angel?" Be patient. Witnesses are trained to stay in their own literature, so keep pointing gently to the text.

Study Questions

1. What can Christians learn from the zeal of Jehovah's Witnesses?
2. Read John 1:3 and Hebrews 1:6. How do these verses show Jesus is not a created being or an angel?
3. Read Revelation 7:4-9. Who are the two groups John sees?

Chapter 5: Oneness Pentecostalism

> *And now You, Father, glorify Me with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*
>
> John 17:5 (SLB)

Oneness Pentecostalism began in 1913 and 1914, in the early days of the Pentecostal revival, when some leaders began to teach that baptism should be done only in the name of Jesus, and then that there is only one Person in God. The largest Oneness group is the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI). Oneness believers love Jesus deeply, worship with great joy, and live with real holiness. Most of them strongly believe that Jesus is God, and that is right.

The difference is in how they understand God, and in what they say is required for salvation.

What They Say: Who Is God?

The UPCI's statement "The One True God" says:

> "We believe in the one ever-living, eternal God: infinite in power, holy in nature, attributes and purpose;" (UPCI Articles of Faith)

And it says this one God:

> "...has revealed Himself as Father; through His Son, in redemption; and as the Holy Spirit, by emanation." (UPCI Articles of Faith)

In Oneness teaching, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three Persons but three ways the one God has shown Himself. Jesus is the Father, and the Son is the human nature of Jesus.

What the Bible Says

Oneness believers are right that there is one God and that Jesus is God. But the Bible shows the Father and the Son speaking to each other, loving each other, and sending each other. At Jesus' baptism, the Son is in the water, the Spirit comes down like a dove, and the Father speaks from heaven (Matthew 3:16-17). Before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed to the Father about glory They shared before the world existed (John 17:5). Jesus said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). He said "one," not "one Person." The word "are" is plural. One God, more than one Person.

> *I and the Father are one.* (John 10:30)

What They Say: How Is a Person Saved?

The UPCI statement on salvation teaches repentance, baptism in water, and receiving the Holy Spirit. On baptism it says:

> "...baptism in water by immersion in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." (UPCI Articles of Faith)

Many Oneness churches teach that the full new birth includes being baptized with the words "in Jesus' name" and receiving the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. Some Oneness believers are more flexible on this, but the official teaching ties these steps to salvation.

What the Bible Says

The Bible teaches baptism, and Christians should be baptized. In Acts, believers were baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38), meaning by His authority and into His name. Jesus Himself gave the words "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Both are faithful.

But the thief on the cross was promised paradise without baptism (Luke 23:43). The household of Cornelius received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized (Acts 10:44-48). And Paul said Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:17), which he could not have said if baptism were part of the gospel itself. Speaking in tongues is a real gift, but Paul asked, "Do all speak in tongues?" (1 Corinthians 12:30). Salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). Baptism follows faith as obedience. My mini book Understanding Baptism covers this.

Talking with a Oneness Believer

Begin with what you share: Jesus is God, and Jesus is Lord. Then ask about John 17: "Who was Jesus talking to when He prayed? What glory did He share with the Father before the world began?" And ask with care, "If someone trusted Jesus but died before they could be baptized, are they lost?" Point to the thief on the cross.

Study Questions

1. What do Oneness believers get right about Jesus?
2. Read Matthew 3:16-17. Where are the Father, the Son and the Spirit in this scene?
3. Read Acts 10:44-48. What happened first, receiving the Spirit or baptism?

Chapter 6: Roman Catholic Teaching

> *By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest indeed stands every day ministering and repeatedly offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at **the** right hand of God, from then on waiting until His enemies are placed **as** a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*
>
> Hebrews 10:10-14 (SLB)

This chapter needs extra care, because the Roman Catholic Church is not like the other groups in Part Two. It holds the historic Christian creeds. It confesses one God in three Persons, the full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His death for sinners, His bodily resurrection, and His return. Christians in every tradition stand with Catholics on those truths, and many Catholics truly know and love the Lord.

The differences are about authority and about how the grace of Christ comes to a person. They are not small, and the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s was fought over them. Martin Luther's story is told in my book The Door at Wittenberg.

Below I describe the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in my own words and give the paragraph numbers. You can look each one up in any copy of the Catechism, or on the Vatican's website. The one direct quote is from the Council of Trent, from a public domain English edition.

What They Teach: The Final Authority

The Catechism teaches that Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition together form one deposit of the Word of God, and that the teaching office of the church, the Magisterium, made up of the pope and the bishops in union with him, has the task of giving the authentic interpretation of it (Catechism 95). It teaches that the pope has full and supreme authority over the whole church (Catechism 882).

What the Bible Says

The Bible honors faithful teachers and the passing down of truth (2 Timothy 2:2). But Jesus corrected the religious leaders of His day for setting aside God's commandment for the sake of their tradition (Mark 7:8-13). Scripture alone is "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). Traditions and teachers are useful, but they must be tested by Scripture, because only Scripture can't be wrong.

What They Teach: How Is a Person Saved?

Catholic teaching says salvation is by God's grace, and that no one can earn the first grace of justification. That is important to say clearly, because many Protestants think Catholics believe in simply earning heaven. They do not. But Catholic teaching says grace is poured into the soul, mainly through the sacraments, which it calls necessary for salvation for believers (Catechism 1129). A person cooperates

with that grace, can grow in justification, can lose it by mortal sin, and can regain it through the sacrament of confession.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), answering the Reformers, said:

> "If any one shall say, that by faith alone the impious is justified; so as to mean that nothing else is required to co-operate in order unto the obtaining the grace of justification, and that it is not in any respect necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema." (Council of Trent, Session VI, Canon IX, Buckley translation, 1851)

In 1999, the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation signed a Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, saying they agree on basic truths about grace. But that statement did not withdraw Trent, and real differences remain.

What the Bible Says

Paul says, "we reckon a man to be justified by faith apart from works of law" (Romans 3:28). God "justifies the ungodly" who does not work but believes (Romans 4:5). Justification is a legal declaration: God counts the believer righteous because Christ's righteousness is credited to him (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9). It is not a process we keep up. It is a verdict that stands. Good works follow, and must follow, but they are the fruit, not the root (Ephesians 2:10; James 2:17).

What They Teach: The Mass, Purgatory and Mary

The Catechism teaches that in the Mass the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ in substance, which it calls transubstantiation (Catechism 1374, 1376), and that the Mass makes present the one sacrifice of the cross. It teaches that those who die in God's grace but are not yet fully purified go through a final purification called purgatory (Catechism 1030-1032). And it teaches that Mary was conceived without original sin (Catechism 491) and was taken body and soul into heaven (Catechism 966), and it asks for her prayers.

What the Bible Says

Hebrews says Christ offered Himself once for all, and that by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being made holy (Hebrews 10:10-14). "Now where ***there is*** forgiveness of these, ***there is*** no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18). For the believer, to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8), and the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin (1 John 1:7). Mary was a woman of great faith, and all generations call her blessed (Luke 1:48). But she called God "my Savior" (Luke 1:47), and there is one mediator between God and people, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5). My book The Lord's Table explains the Lord's Supper more fully.

A Note on the Orthodox Churches

The Eastern Orthodox churches also hold the ancient creeds, and they differ from both Rome and the Reformers. They do not accept the pope's authority over the whole church. They speak of salvation as a lifelong process of being united with God, and they place great weight on the tradition of the early church and the sacraments. Much of what this chapter says about authority and grace applies to them too, in a different form.

Talking with a Catholic Friend

Start with the creeds you share. Then ask, "If you died tonight, how sure are you that you would be with God, and why?" Many Catholics are taught that no one can be sure. Read 1 John 5:13 together, and Romans 4:4-5. Don't attack their church. Point them to the finished work of Christ.

Study Questions

1. What truths do Catholic and Protestant Christians share?
2. Read Romans 3:28 and the Trent canon above. What is the main difference?
3. Read Hebrews 10:10-18. What does "once for all" mean for how we understand the cross?

Part Three: Other Faiths

Chapter 7: Judaism

> *Brothers, the desire of my heart and the supplication to God on behalf of Israel is for salvation. For I bear witness about them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being unaware of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit to the righteousness of God. For Christ **is the** end of law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*
>
> Romans 10:1-4 (SLB)

Every Christian owes a great debt to the Jewish people. The patriarchs, the prophets, the covenants, the Law and the Scriptures came through Israel. Jesus was a Jew, born under the Law. Every apostle was a Jew. The first church was entirely Jewish. Paul wrote that to Israel belong "the adoption as sons, and the glory, and the covenants" and "from whom ***is*** the Christ according to the flesh" (Romans 9:4-5). Christians who hate or look down on Jewish people have forgotten who their Savior is.

Paul loved his people so much that he said he could wish himself cut off from Christ for their sake.

> *I speak **the** truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience bearing witness with me in **the** Holy Spirit, that I have great grief and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I myself was wishing to be accursed from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to **the** flesh*
> (Romans 9:1-3)

Judaism today is not one thing. There are Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and other Jewish communities, and many Jewish people are not religious at all. What they share is a faith in the one God of Israel and a rejection of the claim that Jesus is the Messiah and God the Son. There are also Messianic Jews, Jewish people who believe in Jesus as Messiah.

Translating the Steadfast Literal Bible word for word gave me deep respect for the Hebrew Scriptures and the Jewish roots of my faith. I believe God's promises to Israel are literal and will still be kept. Understanding Judaism on its own terms helps Christians read the Old Testament with far more care.

What They Teach: Who Is God?

Judaism confesses one God, using the words of the Shema: "Hear, Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD ***is*** one" (Deuteronomy 6:4, SLB). The medieval teacher Moses Maimonides, in his Thirteen Principles of Faith, summed up common Jewish belief that God is one, has no body, is eternal, alone is to be worshiped, and will send the Messiah. In that view, God becoming a man is not possible.

What the Bible Says

Christians confess the Shema too. Jesus called it the greatest commandment (Mark 12:29-30). The Hebrew word for "one" in the Shema, echad, can describe a united oneness, as when a man and woman become "one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). The Old Testament itself hints that the one God is more than one Person: "Let

Us make mankind in Our image" (Genesis 1:26), and the speaker in Isaiah 48:16 who says, "the Lord GOD has sent me, and His Spirit".

What They Teach: Who Is the Messiah?

Judaism teaches that the Messiah will be a human king from David's line who will bring peace, gather Israel and rebuild the temple. Since the world is not at peace, Jesus could not have been the Messiah. Many Jewish teachers, following the medieval commentator Rashi, read the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 as the nation of Israel, not one person.

What the Bible Says

The prophets spoke of a Messiah who would suffer before He reigns. Isaiah 53 describes a servant who is innocent, who suffers for the sins of others, and who is cut off for "the transgression of My people" (Isaiah 53:8). Israel can't be the one suffering for Israel's sins.

> *He **was** despised and rejected by men, a man of pains and acquainted with sickness; and like a hiding of **the** face from Him, He **was** despised, and we did not value Him. Surely our sicknesses He Himself bore, and our pains, He carried them; and we, we considered Him stricken, struck by God, and afflicted. And He **was** pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the chastening of our peace **was** on Him, and by His wound **there** was healing for us. All of us like the sheep have gone astray; each to his own way we have turned; and the LORD has caused to fall on Him the iniquity of all of us.* (Isaiah 53:3-6)

David wrote of One whose hands and feet would be pierced.

> *For dogs have surrounded me; a company of evildoers has encircled me; they pierced my hands and my feet.* (Psalm 22:16)

And Zechariah wrote that Israel would one day look on the One they pierced, and mourn.

> *And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplications; and they will look to Me, **to Him** whom they have pierced; and they will mourn over Him like a mourning over the only **son**, and **they will** show bitterness over Him as **one** shows bitterness over the firstborn.* (Zechariah 12:10)

After His resurrection, Jesus showed His disciples that all of the Old Testament was about Him.

> *And He said to them, "These **are** the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all the things which are written concerning Me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled."* (Luke 24:44)

The kingdom of peace is still coming, when Jesus returns. He came first to suffer, and He will come again to reign. My book Foretold walks through every prophecy of the Messiah.

What They Teach: How Is a Person Made Right with God?

Since the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70, there have been no sacrifices. Judaism teaches that God forgives through repentance, prayer and good deeds, and that the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) is a day of turning back to God. Judaism focuses more on how to live faithfully now than on what happens after death.

What the Bible Says

God is merciful, and repentance is real. But the Law itself taught that sin requires a sacrifice of blood (Leviticus 17:11). The sacrifices of the temple pointed forward to the one perfect sacrifice. "Christ ***is the*** end of law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4).

Talking with a Jewish Friend

Listen first. Many Jewish families carry painful memories of how people who called themselves Christians treated them. Don't speak of "converting" to another religion. Faith in Jesus is faith in Israel's own Messiah. Read Isaiah 53 together and ask, "Who do you think the prophet is talking about?"

Study Questions

1. What do Christians owe to the Jewish people?
2. Read Isaiah 53:3-8. What clues show the servant is one person who suffers for others?
3. Read Romans 9:1-3. How should Paul's attitude shape the way we talk with Jewish friends?

Chapter 8: Islam

> *Therefore God also highly exalted Him and granted to Him a name, the **one** above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of **those** in heaven and **those** on earth and **those** under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ **is** Lord, to **the** glory of God **the** Father.*
>
> Philippians 2:9-11 (SLB)

Islam began in Arabia in the early 600s through Muhammad, whom Muslims believe was the last prophet of God. Its holy book is the Quran, which Muslims believe is the exact word of God given to Muhammad. Islam is one of the largest religions in the world. Muslims are known for daily prayer, fasting, care for the poor, and a deep reverence for God. Many Christians have been put to shame by a Muslim neighbor's faithfulness in prayer.

Islam also speaks of Jesus, more than many people realize. The Quran calls Him a prophet and the Messiah, and says He was born of a virgin and did miracles. But it denies that He is the Son of God, and it denies that He died on the cross.

The quotations below are from the English translation of the Quran by Marmaduke Pickthall (1930), from the public domain edition on Project Gutenberg. Muslims hold that only the Arabic is truly the Quran, so any English version is an explanation of its meaning.

What They Teach: Who Is God?

Islam teaches that God (Allah in Arabic) is one, and that saying God has a Son is a great sin. Surah 112 says:

> "He begetteth not nor was begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him." (Quran 112:3-4, Pickthall)

And Surah 4 speaks directly to Christians:

> "...say not 'Three' - Cease! (it is) better for you! - Allah is only One Allah. Far is it removed from His Transcendent Majesty that He should have a son." (Quran 4:171, Pickthall)

What the Bible Says

Christians agree that God is one, and Christians do not believe in three gods. When the Bible calls Jesus the Son of God, it does not mean God took a wife and had a child, which is what many Muslims think Christians mean. It means the Son shares the Father's nature and has been with Him forever, as a son shares his father's nature (John 1:1-2, 18). "Begotten" in the Bible's sense is not about a beginning. It is about the same kind of being. My book One God, Three Persons explains this.

What They Teach: Who Is Jesus?

The Quran says of the Jews' claim to have killed Jesus:

> "...they slew him not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them..." (Quran 4:157, Pickthall)

Most Muslims believe God took Jesus up to heaven alive, and that someone else was crucified in His place or that it only looked like He died. They believe He will return before the end.

What the Bible Says

The death of Jesus on the cross is one of the best attested facts of the ancient world. All four Gospels describe it. Paul, writing within about twenty-five years, calls it the first thing in the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:3). Outside the Bible, the Roman historian Tacitus and the Jewish historian Josephus both record that Jesus was put to death under Pontius Pilate. Dug Up and Written Down and Foretold give the sources. Jesus Himself said He came "to give His life ***as*** a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Without the cross, there is no forgiveness.

The Bible also says Jesus is more than a prophet. Every knee will bow to Him and every tongue will confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:9-11), and He calls Himself the Alpha and the Omega.

> *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, **the** beginning and **the** end," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty."* (Revelation 1:8)

What They Teach: How Is a Person Saved?

Islam teaches that a person must believe in God and His prophets and do good works, including the Five Pillars: the confession of faith, the five daily prayers, giving to the poor, fasting during Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able. On the Day of Judgment, deeds will be weighed.

> "Then those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful. And those whose scales are light are those who lose their souls, in hell abiding." (Quran 23:102-103, Pickthall)

Muslims hope for God's mercy, but no one can be sure ahead of time that his good deeds will be enough.

What the Bible Says

The Bible says no one's scales would ever be heavy enough, because "all sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). God doesn't save by weighing deeds. He saves by laying our sin on His Son and giving us His righteousness. That is why a Christian can know, with confidence, that he has eternal life (1 John 5:13). It isn't pride. It's trust in what Jesus did.

Talking with a Muslim Friend

Show respect for God's name and for the Bible. Many Muslims are surprised to find Christians who pray and fast. Ask, "How do you know if your good deeds will be enough?" Read the Gospel of Luke together, and talk about the cross. And be patient: in many families, a Muslim who follows Jesus pays a heavy price.

Study Questions

1. What does the Quran say about Jesus that is true? What does it deny?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. Why is the cross "of first importance"?
3. Compare Quran 23:102-103 with 1 John 5:13. What is the difference in how a person can know where they stand with God?

Chapter 9: Other Paths

> *So then God, having overlooked the times of ignorance, now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has set a day in which He is about to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom He has appointed, having provided assurance to all, having raised Him from **the** dead.*
>
> Acts 17:30-31 (SLB)

There are many more beliefs than this book can cover. This chapter looks briefly at a few that a Christian is likely to meet, and at the most common belief of all in our time: that all paths lead to God. For these, I describe the teaching in my own words and point to the group's own writings.

Between field work, technical training and running my own computer repair business for ten years, I have talked with people holding almost every worldview you can name. Knowing where a friend is coming from is the first step toward sharing the truth clearly.

Christian Science

The Church of Christ, Scientist was founded by Mary Baker Eddy in Boston in 1879. Its main book is her Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, first published in 1875. Christian Science teaches that God is good and is all there is, and so matter, sin, sickness and death are not truly real but errors of the mortal mind. Healing comes by understanding that truth through prayer. In its teaching, Jesus was the man who showed the Christ-idea most fully, and His death and resurrection showed that death has no real power.

The Bible says sin is very real, real enough that the Son of God had to die for it (Romans 5:8). Jesus' body really died, and it was really raised (Luke 24:39). Sickness is real, and God often heals, but Christians also use doctors (Colossians 4:14 calls Luke "the beloved physician").

Unitarian Universalism

Unitarian Universalists come from two old movements that denied the Trinity and taught that all people will be saved. Today the Unitarian Universalist Association has no required creed. Members may be Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, humanist or atheist, and the church centers on shared values such as justice and respect for each person's search for truth. Jesus is honored by many as a great moral teacher.

But Jesus didn't leave room to be only a teacher. He said He is the only way to the Father (John 14:6). A good teacher who says that and isn't telling the truth isn't good.

Hinduism and Buddhism

Hinduism is a very old family of beliefs from India. Many Hindus worship many gods, while others see them as faces of one ultimate reality. Hinduism teaches karma, that actions bring their own results, and reincarnation, being born again and again until the soul is set free. Buddhism began with Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, about five hundred years before Christ. It teaches that suffering comes from desire,

and that a path of right living and meditation leads to nirvana, the end of desire and of rebirth. Most forms of Buddhism do not center on a personal Creator God.

The Bible teaches one personal God who made all things (Genesis 1:1). Each person lives once and then faces judgment (Hebrews 9:27). And freedom doesn't come from our own long effort over many lives. It comes as a gift from a Savior who paid for sin once.

All Paths Lead to God

Perhaps the most common belief today is that all religions are different paths up the same mountain. It sounds humble and kind. But it isn't really humble, because it tells every religion that it is wrong about what it says is most important. Islam says Jesus didn't die. Christianity says He did, and that this is the center of everything. Both can't be true.

Paul spoke to people with many gods in Athens. He started with respect, pointing out their altar "to an unknown God."

> *And Paul, having stood in **the** midst of the Mars' Hill, said, "Men, Athenians, I see you as very religious in all things. For passing through and observing your objects of worship, I found also an altar on which had been inscribed, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Whom therefore you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you."* (Acts 17:22-23)

Then he told them plainly that God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day of judgment and has proved it by raising Jesus from the dead (Acts 17:30-31). The resurrection is what sets Jesus apart. Other founders died and stayed dead. Jesus rose.

Study Questions

1. Which of these beliefs have you met in friends, coworkers or family?
2. Read John 14:6. Why can't Jesus be "just a good teacher"?
3. Read Acts 17:22-31. How did Paul show respect and still speak plainly?

Part Four: Speaking the Truth in Love

Chapter 10: Talking with Friends of Other Faiths

> *but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **be** ready always for a defense to everyone who asks you an account concerning the hope in you, with gentleness and fear*
>
> 1 Peter 3:15 (SLB)

Knowing what others believe is only half of the job. The other half is speaking with them in a way that honors Christ. Peter says to be ready to give an answer, and to do it with gentleness and respect.

I have learned that nobody listens to a lecture from someone who will not listen first. When I talk with someone of another faith, I try to ask questions, let them explain their view in their own words and keep my tone calm. You do not have to compromise what you believe to treat a friend with patience and respect.

Start with a Friend, Not a Target

People are not projects. Most people come to Christ through someone who cared about them. Invite your neighbor over. Ask about their family and their faith, and listen. You earn the right to speak by first listening.

> *Walk in wisdom toward those outside, redeeming the time. **Let** your word **be** always in grace, seasoned with salt, to know how you must answer each one.* (Colossians 4:5-6)

Ask Good Questions

Jesus asked questions all the time. A good question lets a person think instead of defend. Here are some that work for nearly anyone:

- Who do you believe Jesus is?
- How does a person get right with God, in your faith?
- How sure are you of where you will go when you die? Why?
- Where does your faith get its answers? How do you know it's true?

Know the Bible Better Than the Arguments

You don't need to master every group's history. You need to know the Bible's answers to the four questions in Chapter 2, and where to find them. Mark these verses in your Bible: John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:8, Romans 4:4-5, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 10:10-14, 1 Timothy 2:5, and 1 John 5:11-13.

Be Patient and Kind

Paul told Timothy how to deal with people who oppose the truth.

> *And a slave of **the** Lord must not quarrel, but be gentle toward all, able to teach, patient when wronged, in meekness disciplining those who oppose, if perhaps God may give them repentance*

> *to **the** full knowledge of **the** truth, and they may return to soberness out of the snare of the devil, having been captured by him for the will of that one.* (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

Notice who does the changing: God grants repentance. Your job is to be faithful, gentle and clear. You can win an argument and lose a friend. It's better to keep the friend, keep praying, and let God work.

Count the Cost for Them

For some people, leaving their family's faith may cost them their marriage, their job, their family's love, or even their safety. Be gentle and patient, and be ready to stand with them if they do come to Christ. Jesus said that those who leave home and family for His sake will receive many times more in this age, and eternal life in the age to come (Luke 18:29-30). Let them find that family in you and your church.

Keep Jesus at the Center

In the end, the question is not which religion is best. It's who Jesus is. Every chapter of this book comes back to that. Point people to Him. Let them read the Gospels. Let them meet the real Jesus, God the Son, who died for sinners and rose again, and who gives eternal life as a free gift.

> *but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* (John 20:31)

> *Lord, give me love for my neighbors who believe differently, and courage to speak about You. Help me listen well, answer gently, and point them to the real Jesus. Open their eyes to see You as You are. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Study Questions

1. Who in your life believes something different? How can you be a better friend to them?
2. Which of the four questions do you find easiest to talk about? Which is hardest?
3. Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26. Who grants repentance? How should that change how we talk with people?

A Closing Word

We have looked at many beliefs. Some use the name of Jesus and fill it with another meaning. Some honor Him as a prophet but deny that He died and rose. Some say every path leads to the same place. Measured by the four questions, they each fall short in the same place: who Jesus is, and how a sinner is made right with God.

The Bible's answer is still the good news. There is one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is God the Son, who became a man, died for our sins, and rose bodily from the grave. Whoever trusts in Him alone is forgiven, made right with God, and given eternal life as a free gift. And the Bible, complete and unchanging, is where we learn it.

If you are reading this book from another faith, thank you for reading this far. I hope I have been fair to you. I ask you to read the Gospel of John for yourself and ask God to show you who Jesus really is. And if you are a Christian, I hope this book makes you less afraid and more loving toward your neighbors, and more ready to tell them about the real Jesus.

Appendix A: The Four Questions Side by Side

This chart sums up each chapter in a few words. The chapters give the sources and the full picture.

Group	Who is God?	Who is Jesus?	How is a person saved?	Final authority
The Bible	One God in three Persons	God the Son, eternal, fully God and man, risen bodily	By grace through faith in Christ alone	The Bible alone
Latter-day Saints	Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate beings; Father has a body	Firstborn spirit child of the Father; Savior	Grace with obedience and ordinances; exaltation by covenants	Bible as far as translated correctly, plus Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, Pearl of Great Price, living prophets
Jehovah's Witnesses	Jehovah alone; the Spirit is a force	A created being, the archangel Michael before birth; raised as a spirit	Faith in the ransom plus faithfulness; most hope for earth, 144,000 for heaven	The Bible as taught by the Governing Body
Oneness	One God, one Person, shown as Father, Son and Spirit	God; the Father in the flesh	Repentance, baptism in Jesus' name, receiving the Spirit	The Bible
Roman Catholic	One God in three Persons	God the Son, fully God and man, risen bodily	Grace through faith, sacraments and cooperation; can be lost and regained	Scripture and Tradition, interpreted by the Magisterium
Judaism	One God, one Person, no body	Not the Messiah; a man	Repentance, prayer and good deeds	The Hebrew Bible and the Jewish tradition of interpretation
Islam	One God, who has no son	A prophet and Messiah, born of a virgin, not crucified	Faith and good deeds, weighed at the judgment	The Quran
Christian Science	God is all; matter is not real	The man who showed the Christ-idea	Understanding that sin and sickness are not real	Bible with Science and Health
All paths	Many views	A good teacher	Many ways	Personal experience

Appendix B: Sources

Where I quoted a group's own words, these are the sources. Where I described a teaching without quoting, the source to read is named so you can check it yourself.

- Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 13:28 and 2 Nephi 25:23 (public domain text, Project Gutenberg eBook 17).
- Articles of Faith 1, 3 and 8, as printed in James E. Talmage, The Articles of Faith (Project Gutenberg eBook 42238).
- Doctrine and Covenants 130:22.
- Gospel Topics essay Becoming Like God, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, churchofjesuschrist.org.
- Should You Believe in the Trinity? (Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society brochure). What Is the Holy Spirit? (jw.org article). Teachings on Michael, the 144,000 and the resurrection: jw.org.
- United Pentecostal Church International, Articles of Faith (UPCI Manual), sections on the one true God and on salvation.
- Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, translated by Theodore Alois Buckley (London, 1851), Session VI, Canon IX (Wikisource).
- Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 95, 491, 882, 966, 1030-1032, 1129, 1374 and 1376 (vatican.va). Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999).
- Moses Maimonides, Thirteen Principles of Faith; Rashi on Isaiah 53 (described, not quoted).
- The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, translated by Marmaduke Pickthall (1930), Surahs 4:157, 4:171, 23:102-103 and 112:3-4 (Project Gutenberg eBook 16955).
- Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (described, not quoted).
- Unitarian Universalist Association, uua.org (described, not quoted).

Appendix C: Scripture Index

This index lists the Bible passages quoted or cited in this book. The numbers after each passage are chapter numbers. “Intro” is Before You Begin, and “Back” is the closing pages.

- **Genesis:** 1:1 (9); 1:26 (7); 2:24 (7)
- **Leviticus:** 17:11 (7)
- **Numbers:** 23:19 (3)
- **Deuteronomy:** 6:4 (7)
- **Psalm:** 22:16 (7)
- **Isaiah:** 43:10 (2, 3); 44:6 (2, 3); 44:8 (3); 48:16 (7); 53:3-6 (7); 53:3-8 (7); 53:8 (7)
- **Zechariah:** 12:10 (7)
- **Matthew:** 3:16-17 (5); 14:33 (4); 24:35 (3); 28:19 (2, 5)
- **Mark:** 7:8-13 (6); 10:45 (8); 12:29-30 (7)
- **Luke:** 1:47 (6); 1:48 (6); 18:29-30 (10); 23:43 (5); 24:39 (4, 9); 24:44 (7)
- **John:** 1:1 (4); 1:1-2 (8); 1:1-3 (2, 10); 1:3 (3, 4); 1:12 (4); 1:18 (2, 3, 8); 3:3 (4); 3:36 (4); 4:24 (3); 5:23 (4); 8:24 (1); 10:30 (5); 14:6 (9); 14:26 (4); 17:5 (5); 19:30 (3); 20:28 (2, 4); 20:31 (1, 10)
- **Acts:** 2:38 (5); 5:3-4 (4); 10:44-48 (5); 13:2 (4); 17:11 (1); 17:22-23 (9); 17:22-31 (9); 17:30-31 (9)
- **Romans:** 3:23 (8); 3:28 (2, 6); 4:4-5 (2, 6, 10); 4:5 (6); 5:8 (9); 9:1-3 (1, 7); 9:4-5 (7); 10:1-4 (7); 10:4 (7); 11:6 (3)
- **1 Corinthians:** 1:17 (5); 12:30 (5); 15:1-4 (2); 15:3 (8); 15:3-4 (8)
- **2 Corinthians:** 5:8 (6); 5:21 (6); 11:3-4 (1)
- **Galatians:** 1:6-9 (Intro)
- **Ephesians:** 2:8-9 (3, 5, 10); 2:10 (6); 4:15 (1); 4:30 (4)
- **Philippians:** 2:9-11 (8); 3:9 (6)
- **Colossians:** 1:15 (3); 1:16-17 (3); 2:8 (3); 4:5-6 (10); 4:14 (9)
- **1 Thessalonians:** 4:17 (4)
- **1 Timothy: 2:5 (2, 6, 10)**
- **2 Timothy:** 2:2 (6); 2:24-26 (10); 3:16 (6)
- **Hebrews:** 1:6 (4); 1:8 (2, 4, 10); 1:13-14 (4); 9:27 (9); 10:10-14 (2, 6, 10); 10:10-18 (6); 10:18 (6)
- **James:** 2:17 (6)
- **1 Peter:** 3:15 (10)
- **1 John:** 1:7 (6); 3:2 (3); 4:1 (1); 4:1-3 (1); 5:11-12 (3); 5:11-13 (3, 10); 5:13 (3, 6, 8)
- **Jude:** 1:3 (2)
- **Revelation:** 1:8 (8); 7:4-9 (4); 7:9 (4); 22:8-9 (4); 22:18-19 (2)

About This Book

Many groups use Christian words like God, Jesus, grace and salvation, but mean very different things by them. Different Gospels lets each group speak for itself, from its own scriptures, creeds and official writings, and then holds its answers up to the Bible.

The book asks the same four questions of every faith: Who is God? Who is Jesus? How is a person saved? What is the final authority? It looks at the Latter-day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Oneness Pentecostalism, Roman Catholic teaching, Judaism, Islam, Christian Science, Unitarian Universalism, Hinduism and Buddhism, and the idea that all paths lead to God.

It is written to be fair, with no name-calling. Each chapter says where we agree, shows where we differ, and ends with tips for talking with friends of that faith, plus study questions. A side-by-side chart and a full list of sources are at the back.