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Who Do You Worship?

The world is full of 'gods'. Which do you worship?

And does it matter?

by James McBride

'There are many roads to God' is a common enough idea. It underpins the various attempts not only to bring together all Christian churches - the 'Ecumenical Movement' - but also inter-faith dialogue. At the same time, all the major religions actively promote their vision of 'god'. Islam has *Allah*. Christians have *the Trinity*. Judaism holds to the God of the Torah. The major gods of Hinduism are *Shiva*, *Rama*, *Krishna*.

Yet the apostle Paul wrote, *"We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father"* (I Corinthians 8:4-6). Just as today, there were in his time multitudes of 'idols' - false gods. Athens, for example, was *'given over to idols'*. Christians, then, are obliged to reject the notion that we can pick and choose the god we worship without consequence: *'There is no other God but one'*. But how can we identify that one God?

Every major religion is a patchwork of often conflicting interpretations of their underlying faith. *Islam* has its factions - often in mortal combat. *Judaism*, too, has its diversity. *Hinduism* is more an individually interpreted philosophy built around a kaleidoscope of festivals, and gods galore. And the variety of *Christian* belief is notorious. Even the apparent unity of the Church of Rome is superficial.

Tangled Web

Even in its early years - in New Testament times - Christianity had become a tangled web of conflicting doctrine. The apostles constantly battled an influx of perverse teachings and self-serving deceptive practice. But their bottom line was that there was a *'faith once for all delivered to the saints'*. All else was a step farther away from 'the truth of the Gospel'. Two thousand years, near enough, of human thought have shunted that original truth into a theological graveyard. The faith once delivered is now widely viewed as heresy! The 'new Christianity' is alien to that portrayed in the Scriptures.

It is generally believed that the three great 'monotheistic' religions accept the same God. Yet that's not so! *Judaism*, certainly, derives from the Old Testament - as does Christianity. But it, too, has strayed from the *Torah*, having added doctrines and practices not in the Scriptures. Today's Judaism would barely be recognized by a resurrected Moses! Then there's *Islam*. Its theologians claim doctrinal descent from Abraham. In reality it is firmly rooted in an ancient moon cult. Nothing to do with the true God of the Old Testament.

At what point, then, does this 'new Christianity' become a different religion?

Diversity

Undoubtedly, there's room for some diversity of teaching - especially now. Aspects of the Bible's teaching are open to some interpretation. We are twenty centuries removed from its culture, from its language, from its idiom. Yet its foundation teachings are 'plain as a pikestaff'. Insidiously over the centuries theologians have absorbed - and promoted - concepts totally foreign to the Scriptures, and derived from idolatry. These false teachings have all but strangled the pure religion of the Bible. Judge for yourself whether or not the 'new Christianity' has tipped over into a new religion. *[You are invited to request the free article **Babylon - Fountain of Error** for a bird's eye view of this idolatry.]*

Each religion has teachings that distinguish it from another. Perhaps the most obvious is the form of worship. You would not, for example, mistake Islam for Judaism or for the new Christianity. Muslims worship on Friday, Jews on Saturday, Christians on Sunday. And the rites performed on those weekly days of worship are obviously different. Each, too, has its own annual celebrations. Other visible differences - especially among the devout - are their attire or their daily observances. All such practices emphasize that each is a different religion - vigorously defended and often fought over to the death.

But probe further and we find surprising similarities.

Who Do You Worship?

More of the Same

Each has its version of 'heaven and hell' - not markedly different from one another. The foundation for these teachings is the age-old - but utterly false - notion that man has an 'immortal soul'. Death is not the end, but the beginning of eternity.

For Islamic martyrs this may be in 'paradise'. For new Christians it means heaven - or hell if you fail to measure up to divine standards. Judaism holds the conflicting doctrines of resurrection and the soul's immortality - with the 'disembodied bliss of the soul as the ultimate state to which the righteous will attain'. The Roman church - the largest new Christian denomination - encourages prayer to and for the 'souls of the departed'. After death the faithful are admitted to heaven, perhaps after a suitable purging of venal sin in Purgatory. Few of Protestant persuasion do not believe in 'heaven or hell'. The notion of an immortal soul is virtually universal. It is the original lie, subtly spoken by Satan: "*You will not surely die*" (Genesis 3:4).

Bible Truth

Whatever you may think of the Bible, even a superficial reading sets the religion of Jesus apart from all other faiths. Remember that according to the Scriptures God does not change in His fundamentals. Consider the following:

- divinely revealed worship pinpoints the *seventh* day of the week - Saturday - as His weekly day of worship. Not Friday, not Sunday. The Sabbath, not Sunday, was observed by the New Testament church
- the Bible gives precise guidance as to when Christians meet for *annual* festivals: Leviticus 23 outlines the seven divinely-inspired annual festivals. There's evidence that these, based as they are on the harvest seasons, were observed from the beginning of human history. There is also clear evidence that they were observed by Jesus, the apostles and by the early church. There is no instruction to observe Easter, Christmas, saints days *etc* - imports from idolatry. Indeed these are treated negatively in the Scriptures
- there is no hint in the Scriptures of the concept of an 'immortal soul' except to brand it as a Satanic deception - a lie. The twisted doctrines of *heaven* and a *fiery hell* derive from this false notion. So, too, prayers to - and for - the dead, the assumption to heaven of Mary the mother of Jesus, the idea of purgatory, all contact with 'the other side' through mediums *etc*
- the notion that everyone who isn't 'born again' will burn for eternity in hell-fire is negated by the sane Biblical teachings

- the Christian Bible finds no room for the perception of God as a 'trinity' - a belief often considered as an identifying sign of a Christian, and one which derives from non-Biblical religions

So - a yawning chasm of differences. They place modern Christianity alongside all other non-Biblical faiths.

However, there is no doubt that the ethical teachings of the Bible have, through Christian influence, had a civilizing effect on nations, on religions and on individuals. '*My Word*', says God, '*will not return to me void, but shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it*' (Isaiah 55:11). Christian missions have sent the Scriptures winging to nearly every corner of the world.

The Great Deception

But there are also a mountain of similarities which brand the 'new Christianity' as part of Satan's great deception. From the earliest days of Christianity dark forces were at work to distort the true Gospel. The apostle Paul - and others - wrote about it: "*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you in the grace of Christ to a different gospel*" (Galatians 1:6). But it's not *obviously* different, he says: "...*which is not another*" (v.7). Twice he states that whoever preaches any deviation from the message Paul taught was '*accursed*' (vv.8, 9). It is perverted (v.7). And to the Corinthians he writes: "*If he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted - you may well put up with it...*" (II Corinthians 11:4). Another Gospel. Another Jesus. Another spirit.

Jesus, according to the apostle John (John 1:9), is '*the true Light that gives light to every man that comes into the world*'. These false apostles - preachers - bring a false Gospel. They use 'Christian' terms: Jesus, Spirit, Gospel, repentance, baptism, light. It is, in other words, a subtle deception. Paul again: "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works*" (II Corinthians 11:13-15).

It's only by an open-minded, prayerful and diligent study of the Scriptures that we can determine which God we worship. Accept the teachings of these false apostles and you may share their destiny.

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