

Wednesday Night Apologetics: Topic #3 – Salvation & Other Religions

I. Salvation

A. Definition

1. Eternal Life with God

B. How are we saved?

1. Must be baptized (John 3:5) “No one can enter Heaven without being born of water and Spirit (baptism).”
2. Obey the Commandments (Mark 10:19-21) Rich mans asks Jesus what he must do to be saved
3. Do the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21) “Only he that does the will of the Father (will enter Heaven)”
4. Believe in Jesus - Faith (Acts 16:30-31) “Believe in Jesus and your household will be saved”
5. Perform good works and deeds (James 2:14-26) “Faith without works is dead”

II. Christians

A. Definition

1. Search on Google.com returns 17 separate definitions
2. Webster defines it as someone who believes in Jesus Christ
 - a. Satan believes in Jesus, is Satan a Christian – NO!
3. Catholic Definition
 - a. Believe that Jesus is the Christ – the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament
 - b. Believe in the Holy Trinity
 - c. Must have been validly baptized
 - i. Form – Trinitarian formula: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
 - ii. Matter – Water (sprinkled or total immersion, it doesn’t matter as long as water is used.)
 - d. Attempt to follow Christ’s teachings

III. Non-Christian groups (Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc.)

A. Jews

1. Don’t believe that Jesus is the Christ. Still waiting for the Messiah (Savior) to come, but different groups have different ideas of how he will come and what he will do. (Jesus is the only Savior, none before or after Him.)
 - a. Sadducees – Did not believe in Eternal Life. Liked Roman occupation in Jerusalem
 - b. Zealots – Thought the Messiah would be a conqueror like David.
 - c. Pharisees – Did believe in Eternal Life. Observed the written law and oral tradition to point of hypocrisy

B. Mormons

1. Don’t believe in the Trinity, therefore their baptisms are not valid
 - a. God the Father is God
 - b. Jesus is a separate, lesser god
 - c. Holy Spirit is not God or a god, but rather, a force
2. Other Strange beliefs
 - a. Jesus and Satan are “spirit brothers” (Pearl of Great Price - Book of Moses 4:1-4). Both Satan and Jesus want to redeem mankind. God chooses, Jesus, and casts Satan out and Satan “becomes” the devil.
(<http://scriptures.lds.org/moses/4>)

C. Jehovah’s Witnesses

1. Don’t believe in the Trinity, therefore their baptisms are not valid
 - a. God the Father is God
 - b. Jesus is the Archangel Michael
 - i. “The foremost angel, both in power and authority, is the archangel, Jesus Christ, also called Michael.”
(http://www.watchtower.org/library/w/1995/11/1/the_truth_about_angels.htm)
 - c. Holy Spirit is not God or a god, but rather, a force
2. Other Strange beliefs
 - a. Only 144,000 are in Heaven with God
 - b. Anyone born after a certain date (1940?) will not be in Heaven, but in the “Great Crowd” on earth, which is no longer a fallen world, but perfect existence.

IV. Salvation of the Un-baptized (Non-Christians)

- A. Some Martyrs died before they were baptized, we believe they are in Heaven and call theirs a Baptism of Blood
- B. Some people actually express the desire to be baptized but die before they can receive the sacrament. We believe there is hope for their salvation and call theirs an Explicit Baptism of Desire
- C. Some people sincerely try to do what is right and just in the world (follow “moral law”) but through no fault of their own, they have not had the opportunity to learn about Christ. We believe there is hope for their salvation as well and theirs would be considered an Implicit Baptism of Desire.
 1. Biblical Basis in Matt. 25 – parable of Last Judgment: they ministered to Christ in the poor, hungry and needy, but were unaware of His presence

- D. Do not underestimate God's Mercy!!
- E. The Great Commission – Mark 16:15-16: “Go out into the **whole world** and proclaim the Gospel **to every creature**. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned.”
 - 1. Have we fulfilled this commissioning?
 - 2. Only those who have heard the Gospel and still do not believe are condemned.
- F. **Do not judge others!!!** (Matt. 7:1-5)
- V. Protestants (Non-Catholic Christians)
 - A. Define salvation as “accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior”
 - 1. Are Catholic's saved?
 - a. We have been saved
 - i. Ephesians 2:5-8 – Saved by Grace
 - b. We are being saved
 - i. Philippians 2:12 – Work out Salvation in fear and trembling
 - c. We hope to be saved
 - i. Matt. 10:22 – Whoever endures to the end will be saved
 - d. Salvation can be lost!!**
 - i. 2 Peter 20-22 - For if they, having escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of (our) Lord and savior Jesus Christ, again become entangled and overcome by them, their last condition is worse than their first. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment handed down to them. What is expressed in the true proverb has happened to them, "The dog returns to its own vomit," and "A bathed sow returns to wallowing in the mire."
 - B. Protestants and the Bible
 - 1. Sola Scriptura – Protestants believe in the Bible Alone as their source for truth and direction
 - a. The Church, not the Bible, is the Pillar and Foundation of the Truth (1 Timothy 3:15)
 - b. The many, many quotes in Bible about the “Word of God” makes no mention if that Word was written or spoken; however 2 Thessalonians 2:15 specifically states that we are to hold fast to the tradition that we were taught either by oral statement or written letter.
 - c. Sola Scriptura is UNBIBLICAL!!! Ask a protestant to show you IN THE BIBLE where it says that the Bible ALONE is the final authority of God.
 - d. The Bible itself warns against private interpretation of scripture (2 Peter 1:20-21, 3:16-17)
 - e. The Catholic Church compiled and protected the Bible from the beginning, yet has no authority to interpret it? Does this make any sense?
 - 2. Sola Scriptura Minus 7
 - a. They are missing 7 books of the Old Testament. See note from last week's handout.
 - C. Protestants and their Worship
 - 1. Mostly gather for mutual praise, worship and encouragement
 - 2. Do not believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist
 - a. Cannot receive communion at a Catholic Mass
 - 3. Do not believe in the sacrificial nature of Mass
 - a. Do not have “Lord's Supper” at every service
 - D. Contact with Protestant (and Non-Christian or atheistic) Friends or Strangers
 - 1. Must be firm in your faith so as to be able to defend your beliefs
 - a. You are responsible for knowledge of Church Doctrine and Teachings
 - 2. If you are weak in your faith, or are unsure how to answer attacks against the Catholic Church, you should not have contact with people who will question you regarding the Church, even if it means breaking friendships
 - a. Many arguments they use are misleading, and are used to purposefully confuse you
 - b. Get the facts before attempting to confront them with answers
 - c. Talk to a priest if you have ANY doubts about the Catholic Church
 - 3. We are called to evangelize everyone (Great Commission) but we must do so with CHARITY (Love)
 - 4. Good intentions often come across without Charity, hence the great Catholic vs. Protestant debates that do not seem to have one ounce of love in them.
 - 5. If someone will not accept the Fullness of Truth that the Catholic Church teaches, you can't force them. Give it up to God. (Don't throw your pearls before swine.)

VI. Conclusions

- A. You must be baptized to be saved
- B. It is possible, through God's Infinite Mercy for the unbaptized to be saved
- C. The Protestant view of Salvation is inadequate and unbiblical
- D. The Protestant stance of Sola Scriptura is unbiblical
- E. Doctrinal differences prevent Protestants from receiving the Eucharist at a Catholic Mass (and vice versa)
- F. We are called to Evangelize all non-Catholics: Christian and Non-Christian, Pagan or atheists; however, we must be strong in our faith and do so with true Charity since all men and women are made in the image and likeness of God.