

# Why Are Some Religions *Potentially* Dangerous?

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Of all the controversies surrounding Christianity, none is more delicate than suggesting a major faith, religion, or church isn't valid – or that one faith, religion, or church is “better” than another – or that one faith, religion, or church may be engaged in false prophecy.

So why are we broaching such a delicate subject? Because we believe that the most important Christian theme to believers is our salvation – our gift, from God, of eternal life. We also believe that the requirements for salvation are clearly expressed in the Bible and should not be “fiddled” with. Unfortunately, it appears some religions have strayed from the Bible's clear requirements for salvation, and that concerns us. Imagine that you followed a faith, trusting it will get you into heaven, finding out too late, on Judgement Day, that the faith was built around a false prophecy. Why is this so concerning? Because the loss of eternal life is not temporary – it is permanent. Since eternal life is so important to us, we better get it right.

Please understand, and let us say at the outset, it is not our intent in this document to propose that any particular faith, religion, or church is bad, invalid, or better than. We think most of the commonly recognized religions share three common principles:

1. They want us to believe in God.
2. They want us to live a life that will get us into heaven to enjoy eternal life with God.
3. They want us to believe in the Bible, and if not the Bible, then some other doctrine of faith.

We do not think Jesus Christ would argue with any of these three observations, and neither will we. However, we do think Jesus would warn all of us (and He does so repeatedly in the Bible) that the devil is in the details, and we should always be on guard against participating in the teachings of false prophets. Matthew 7:15-20 provides an example of His warnings.

*“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits.”*

So, what are these details that concern us and lead us to think some faiths, religions, or churches might be *potentially* dangerous?

## Our Core Beliefs Regarding Salvation and Eternal Life

As Biblical Christians, our core beliefs regarding salvation and eternal life include the following:

- ✚ **We believe the Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and occasionally metaphorical Word of God and that there is no other valid version of God's Word. While interpretations of God's Word are occasionally necessary (and ideally, Scripture should be used to make such interpretations), additions to and subtractions from God's Word must be avoided.**

*“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* John 1:1

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”* 2 Timothy 3:16-17

*“And the Scripture cannot be broken.”* John 10:35b

*“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* Matthew 5:17-20

- ✚ **We believe that any faith or practice that could jeopardize our salvation should be thoroughly questioned and evaluated before being adopted or practiced. We suggest that if a faith or practice does not align with what Scripture tells us is required for salvation, it should be rejected.**

*“And He called a child to Himself and set him before them [His disciples], and said, ‘Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children [loving, obedient, trusting, and faithful], you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble [sin or lose faith], it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.’”* Matthew 18:3-6

- ✚ **God is the one and only deity that we, as Biblical Christian believers, are to worship. To worship anyone other than God is, we believe, idolatry and strictly forbidden in Scripture – in both the Old and the New Testaments.**

*"You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth." Exodus 20:3-4*

*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." Matthew 6:24*

✠ Jesus Christ is our one and only access to heaven.

*"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'" John 14:6*

*"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." Acts 4:12*

✠ Jesus Christ built His church on the belief that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Messiah, God incarnate, and our sole Savior, and those who believe these facts about Christ constitute His church. We further believe that His church is not a one-dimensional, human-driven, hierarchical institution, but rather a world of believers joined together in fellowship with Christ and guided by God's Word, the Bible.

*"He said to them [His Apostles], 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.'" Matthew 16:15-19*

*"The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me." John 17:22-23*

*"For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." Romans 12:3-5*

✠ Salvation, and its promise of eternal life, is granted to us as a **free gift**, solely by the grace of God, through our abiding and repentant faith in His Son, Jesus Christ, and our belief in the Gospel that Jesus Christ, as God incarnate, died to forgive us our sins and was raised on the third day.

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." Ephesians 2:8*

*"Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve." 1 Corinthians 15:1-5*

*"Jesus answered and said to her [a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well whom Jesus had asked for a drink of water], 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'" John 4:10*

*"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He [God], you will die in your sins.'" John 8:24*

## Practices, Faiths or Beliefs That Could Endanger Our Salvation and Block Our Access to Eternal Life

Listed below are some of the practices, faiths, or beliefs that we suggest you avoid if eternal life is important to you.

1. **Avoid any faith or practice that allows you to worship anyone but the living God of the Bible.** This is considered idolatry and a sin.
2. **Avoid any frequent or repetitive sinful practices that would indicate you have not truly renounced sin.** Given our sin nature, sinning is inevitable, for only God is perfect. But the goal of repentance is to consciously strive, every day, to avoid sin and mean it. Any intentional, continued practice of sinful behavior may block our salvation.
3. **Avoid any faith that teaches Christ was just a prophet and not the Son of God and the Messiah.** The New Testament makes it clear: Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God, and God incarnate. This is critical because the blood sacrifice of a mere prophet would be insufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of all of humanity, once and forever.
4. **Avoid any faith, belief or practice that ignores or contradicts the Gospel of Jesus Christ.** As expressed above, the Apostle Paul confirms in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the foundation of our salvation. Paul also tells us in Romans 1:16: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also the Greek [Gentile]."*

5. **Avoid any faith that teaches that good works alone will bring salvation, or that faith plus works is how you “earn” salvation.** Remember, in this day and age, we are under the New Covenant of Christ, and under this Covenant, salvation is a free gift from God through His grace; thus, salvation cannot be “earned”. As Romans 11:6 confirms: *“But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.”*  
And God’s grace is given *because of our faith in His Son*. Remember what Ephesians 2:8 tells us: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith”* [emphasis added]. Also, a sincere faith in Jesus will automatically generate good works – but it is the faith, not the deeds, that saves.
6. **Avoid any faith that professes to follow the Bible but constantly refers to other documents as their core doctrine, especially if that doctrine alters the expressed intent of Scripture regarding one’s salvation.** Example: “You will go to heaven if you donate generously to our church.” Nowhere in the Bible will you find this.
7. **Avoid any faith that teaches, or belief that espouses, that someone other than God or His Son Jesus Christ (God incarnate) can forgive sins.** For us, it is only through the blood covenant of Christ and His sinless blood sacrifice that our sins are forgiven and forever forgotten by God. And when, because of our sin nature, we do sin, it is only God to whom we can turn and ask for forgiveness. As 1 John 1:9 tells us: *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* A priest cannot forgive sin.
8. **Avoid any practice that requires continuous sacrifices to maintain one’s salvation.** Christ’s crucifixion paid the price, *in full*, for our sins. Christ’s last statement on the cross was *‘It is finished’* (John 19:30). The actual Greek term used in New Testament Scripture is *“tetelestai”*, which means to bring to a close, to complete, to fulfill. *Tetelestai* is also a Greek accounting term meaning “paid in full”. No other practice, other than our repentant, abiding and enduring faith and sincere belief in Christ as our Lord and Savior (that He died to forgive our sins, rose on the third day, and was God incarnate) is required to maintain our salvation.
9. **Avoid any faith that claims the authority to rewrite God’s Word.** The Bible stands on its own as a set of books written by men but authored by the Holy Spirit. Although the Bible has gone through language translations and has been rendered into many “versions” over the centuries, it is important to remember that the Bible translations and versions all stem from the same set of original or scribed texts. Those texts record historical events and in the case of the New Testament, were written no later than roughly 95 AD. So, if a person comes along a thousand years later and claims to have been moved by the Holy Spirit and given the authority to add to or replace parts of the Bible, we suggest you be quite suspicious. Remember what Jesus tells us in Matthew 5:17-19:

*“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”*

## **Summary**

Believing in the teachings of well-known and highly respected spiritual leaders like Buddha, Confucius, Gandhi, and others, is a well-documented path towards learning how to lead a life of bliss. We would be wrong to dispute this. But we are not talking about bliss. We are talking about salvation and eternal life; and for biblical Christians, there is only one source for salvation and eternal life.

Our salvation and eternal life are not based on any particular church affiliation, religious preferences, or promises made by any Pastor, Priest, or any other church official – regardless of their rank. Our salvation and eternal life are based solely on the promises and truths found in the Word of God, the Bible. The Bible tells us our salvation and eternal life are given by the grace of God and are cemented by our personal relationship with, and our abiding, repentant, and enduring faith in, His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Our faith must include believing in the Gospel – that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins, and He rose on the third day, evidencing eternal life – and believing that Jesus was, indeed, the physical incarnation of the invisible God, and thus, our Lord and Savior. What our relationship with Christ should look like, and the behaviors in which it should manifest itself, are not determined by us or any mortal church hierarchy, but rather are explained clearly in God’s Word, the Bible. If anyone or any group directs you to a source other than the Bible, just know it is not God’s Word and it may, in fact, be a false teaching to be avoided.

Our path to salvation results in a permanent outcome so it should be chosen with the utmost of care. As Jesus tells us in His Sermon on the Mount:

*“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to [eternal] life, and there are few who find it.”* Matthew 7:13 – 7:14