

All the Same?

AS we sat enjoying the sunshine, my colleague and I started an unexpected conversation. Rather than discussing the company's performance, or plan for the coming quarter-year, he opened with a question. "So tell me about your faith."

I started to do so, but stopped. He is an atheist. Why does he care about my faith? "Where is this coming from?" I asked, "What do you really want to know?"

"I want to understand why you think your belief is different, why you believe what you do. As far as I can tell, all religions are the same. You have blind faith in a higher power and going to a better place after death."

His observation wasn't accurate, of course, but it is a commonly held view. Are all faiths the same?

Authority

The starting point for any belief system should be its authority. Who established it and how do we know we can trust them?

If we believe the Bible, then we are accepting the authority of Almighty God. He declares that He created the universe, and that He has a plan for the earth and mankind upon it.

For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth

and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:18).

He also states here that He is the only God, there is no other authority. This is just one of many similar statements which we can find throughout the Bible, and it shows clearly the power behind a Bible-based faith.

The Apostle Paul made a similar statement to Timothy, a younger believer:

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7).

Evidence

However, a sensible approach to considering faith will look for reasons to believe the assertions made in the Bible. Put simply, can we trust it?

The short answer is 'yes', and here are a few reasons to believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

◆ **Prophecy:** The Bible contains many hundreds of prophecies about the future. Almost all of them have come true, and the remainder clearly point to events still in the future. These prophecies are very specific, sometimes giving actual time periods in years.

Those still future are detailed and are part of an unfolding plan, so we can see how they relate to each other. Men and women cannot tell the future, so the Bible must have been inspired by God.

- ◆ **Internal consistency:** The Bible was written over a period of about 1600 years, by more than 40 different people, ranging from kings and priests to tax collectors and shepherds. It was penned in places as far apart as Babylon, Jerusalem and Rome, in three different languages. Despite this, it is one harmonious whole, with a single message throughout its pages. Only God could have had such a book written.
- ◆ **Ahead of its time:** The Bible talks about public health safeguards such as washing hands and quarantine, thousands of years before humans had identified them. It also describes the earth as a globe and details the water cycle, long before contemporary science had done so. Again, only God could be the true author.

There are many other examples, and *Glad Tidings* looks at all of them from time to time.

The Bible is the Word of God and we can trust it. Its consistency in the past gives us confidence for the future it lays out. This makes a Bible-based faith different from any other.

Only One Way

Jesus Christ made it very clear that there is only one way to God, and that he is it:

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me (John 14:6).

He explained to his followers that many would fail to find the way to eternal life:

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it (Matthew 7:13–14).

The Bible promise is life forever in the Kingdom of God – a main theme in *Glad Tidings*. Here is one description of that future time:

I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:3–4).

Faith in God as explained in the Bible is like no other. It is one based on evidence, built on a true authority and with a confident hope for the future.

Please visit our website for a video on this subject - and more!

www.gladtidingsmagazine.org