

I'm a Christian because...

Of other religions

I recently saw a video on YouTube entitled “The Best Argument for Atheism,” posted by a user named MystryBox. In said video, MystryBox sketches out a scene, the point of which is to show you that you disbelieve in the thousands of other religions that have existed throughout time. MystryBox then says that if you were really honest with yourself, you would realize that all of the arguments you use to dismiss all of the other religions could be aimed right back at yours, so your own faith is in vain.

All religions are the same?

Mystrybox's hidden assumption is that all religions are equal in that they do not hold water under intellectual scrutiny; they can all be disproven by logical inconsistency, scientific discovery, archaeological inaccuracies, etc. The reason I chose to write about this video in particular is because this strain of argument is commonplace in contemporary society, where religious pluralism has shaped our society into one where many people believe that all religions are essentially the same in truth. The most common analogy for pluralism goes something like this: God is like a mountaintop, and all religious faiths take different paths up the mountain, but they all arrive in the same place in the end. It is because this idea is so pervasive in society that anytime one tries to make an exclusive truth claim, like “Jesus is the only way to God” for example, they are often branded as intolerant. When you think about it though, tolerance is a term that implies that there are exclusive truth claims. You can only “tolerate” something you agree with. So it is *not* “intolerant” to make an argument for the exclusive truth of Christian theism. However, I need to emphasize that in the Christian worldview, although we do disagree with spiritual worldviews other than our own, we treat people as ends in themselves and value them as equal human beings regardless of their ideas. Interfaith discourse, then should begin on the assumption that all *people* are equal, not necessarily that all *ideas* are equal.

Returning to the YouTube video, I want to make two points about the Christian faith in light of MystryBox's assertions. Please note that there is nowhere near enough space to give a fully developed defense of the uniqueness of the Christian faith here, but there are several compelling books if the topic interests you¹. In the space left I will try to briefly show that 1) There are good reasons for being a Christian and 2) the Christian faith is unique in its worldview and beliefs.

So why believe in Jesus?

What are the reasons for believing that Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish teacher and prophet of the first century, is the Son of God? Again, these are just a few of the many reasons you can find by reading more Christian authors. Probably the best reason to believe that Jesus was who he claimed to be is the wealth of historical evidence that supports the truth of Jesus' resurrection. There are several facts about the event that are widely accepted amongst contemporary New Testament scholars, many of whom are skeptics. These are: 1) Jesus was crucified, died as a result, and was buried in the family tomb of a Jewish councilman, 2) On the Sunday after his death, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers, 3) Thereafter, individuals and groups of Jesus' followers (up to 500 people), all experienced appearances of Jesus, in a bodily, resurrected form, and 4) the earliest disciples suddenly began to sincerely believe in the truth of Jesus' resurrection, and many of them went to their deaths proclaiming it. Of course, all kinds of naturalistic theories have been proposed to account for the facts. Jesus didn't really die, he just fainted. The disciples stole the body (the favorite amongst the earliest skeptics). The women went to the wrong tomb. The list goes on. Unfortunately for the naturalist, each theory lacks the explanatory power and scope of the supernatural resurrection. Consider these thoughts: why would the earliest disciples have made up the resurrection, and endure persecution and death for *what they knew* was a lie? Why would they have made up the fact that it was *women* who discovered the empty tomb, when in that cultural period in time, the testimony of a woman was automatically considered to be inferior to that of a man? If Jesus' appearances were hallucinations, how could 500 people all experience the same hallucination *at the same time*?

A Worldview that Works

The Christian worldview has incomparable explanatory power of the human experience. The concept of sin – the idea that although we know how we should act and have potential for good, we oftentimes do what we know is wrong and inevitably we all do things to others that we would never want done to ourselves – is foreign to many worldviews. It becomes obvious, however, by simply watching five minutes of the evening news how real sin is, and how fundamental of a disease it is. People kill, steal, lie, rape, abuse, torture, and do all kinds of other injustices to each other that we all consider “wrong,” so it's hard to deny the reality of sin. Also, the fact that we all recognize certain things as *objectively wrong* points to our being moral beings instilled with a universal law by a universal lawgiver. By “objectively wrong,” I mean that it is always wrong to, for example, torture an infant for fun, regardless of whether that's culturally accepted, and even if everyone on earth thinks its okay. That is a moral abomination. Where would we get this intrinsic sense of morality if it was not from a moral lawgiver who *by his very nature* has ordained what is right and what is wrong?

In conclusion, this has been a woefully short introduction to some defenses for the Christian faith. At the very least, I hope it has persuaded you that believing in the Christian faith is an *intellectually viable* option and not just a matter of blind trust. Jesus stands out amongst the religious leaders of history as one who made some of the most outrageous claims and espoused a unique brand of ethical standards previously unknown to mankind. In addition, there are also a plethora of good reasons to think that Jesus was more than just a man, that he was in fact the Son of God. Don't you owe it to yourself to investigate the possibility that Jesus was who he said he was, before you discount the Christian faith?

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¹ A good introductory book for those interested in the evidence supporting the Christian faith is Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ*.