

***SOTERIOLOGY:
DOCTRINE
OF
SALVATION
- Part 1***



SOTERIOLOGY

- ❑ In Christianity, the theological study of salvation is called Soteriology from the Greek:
 - σωτηρία (sōtēria): "salvation" from σωτήρ (sōtēr): "saviour, preserver"
 - λόγος (logos): "study" or "word"

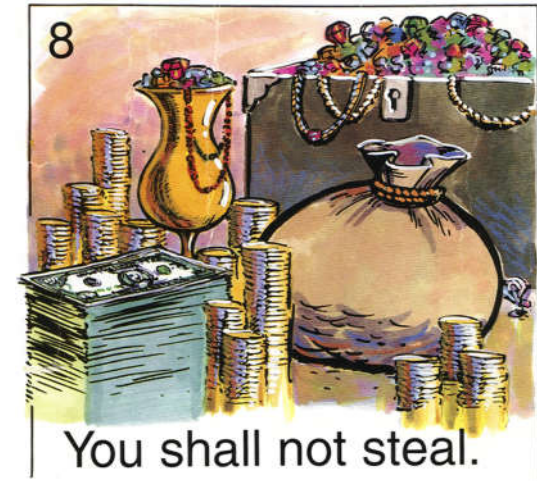
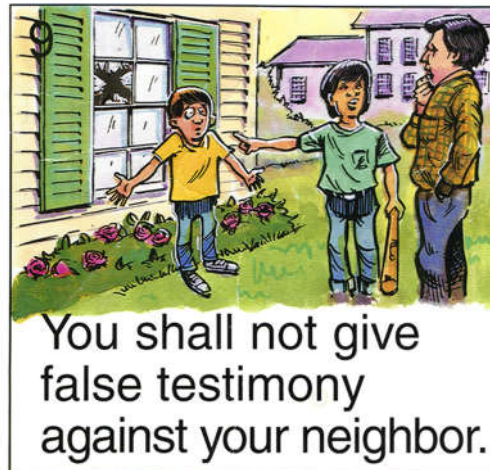
Why Salvation Is Needed

❑ Q: What do we need to be saved from?

➤ A: SIN

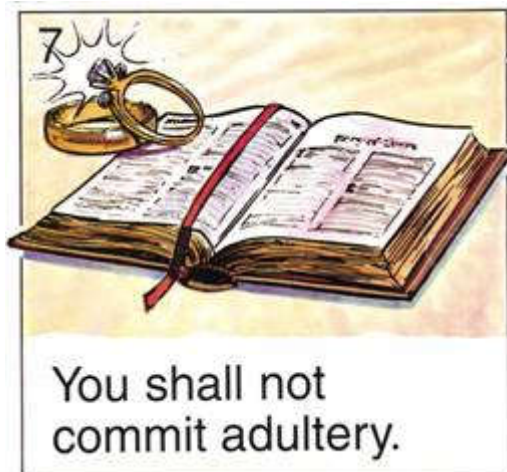
❑ What is sin?

➤ Sin is breaking God's law or falling short of the standard that God has set.



Why Salvation Is Needed

- ❑ So sin is always against God. Although David committed adultery with Uriah's wife and was responsible for his death, he sees his sin as against God - not Uriah.
- Psalm 51:1,4 (NIV) Have mercy on me, O God... Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.



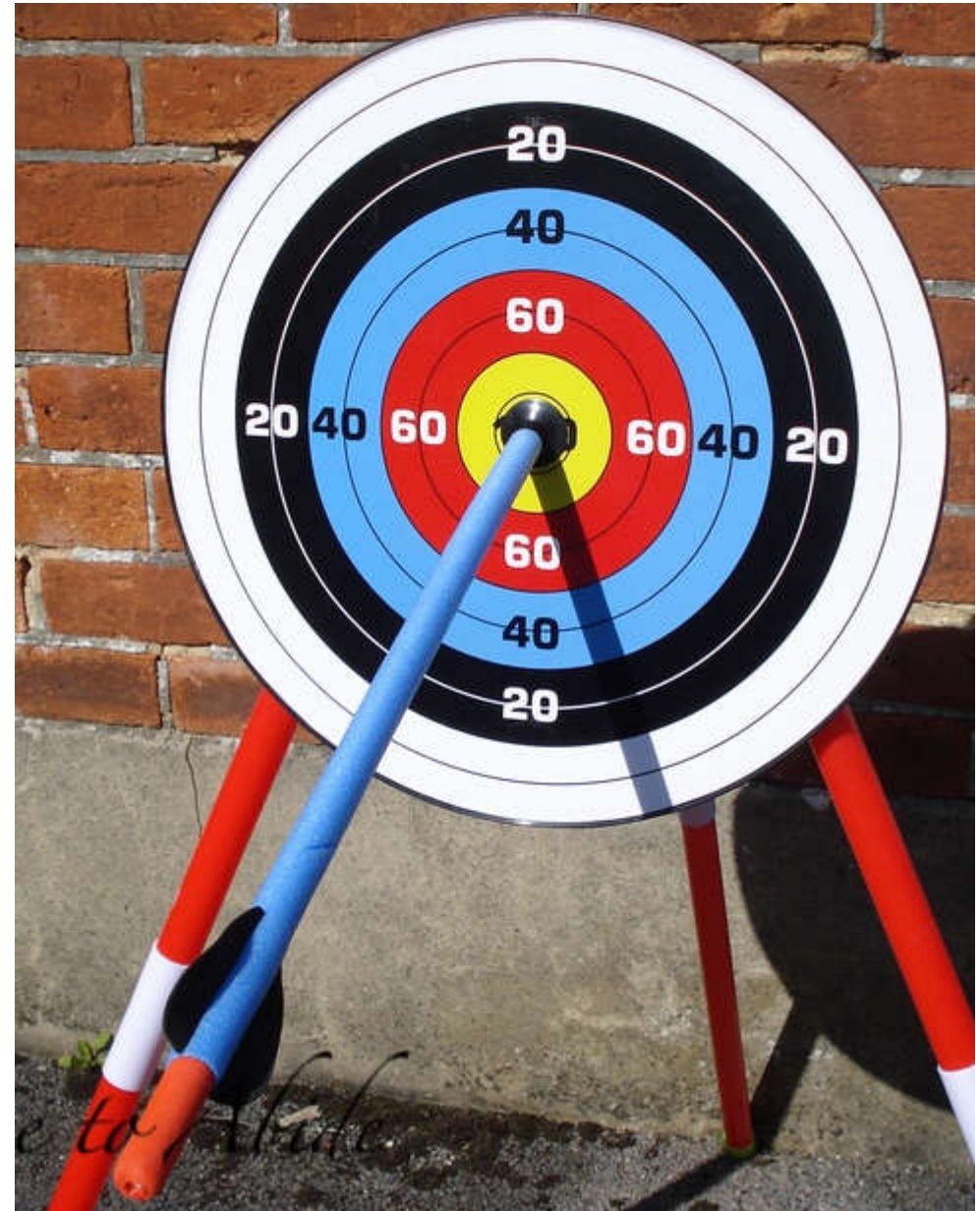
Falling short of the target

- ❑ Sin is "falling short of the target" that God has set.
- Romans (NIV) 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...



What is God's target?

- ❑ God's target is perfection - which no man can achieve through his own efforts.
- ❑ We might think we're okay when we compare ourselves to others - but that is not God's target.
- ❑ God's "pass mark" is not 50% like you might have on a school test - it is 100%
- ❑ God is perfect because He is sinless - and his target is nothing less.



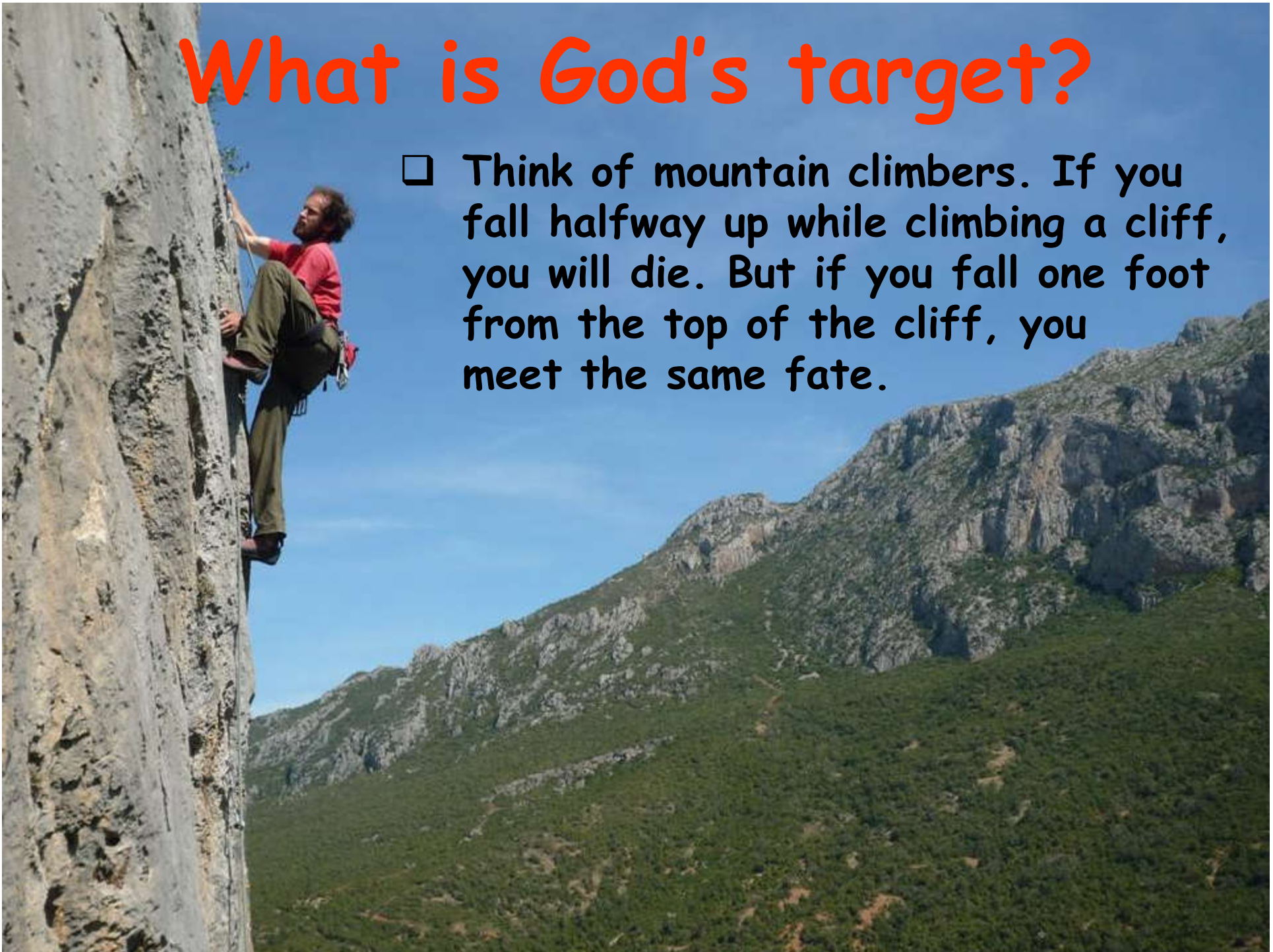
What is God's target?

- ❑ Say you want to buy something at the shop for R100 but only have R50 you will be unable to purchase it. But you will have just the same problem if you have R95.



What is God's target?

- Think of mountain climbers. If you fall halfway up while climbing a cliff, you will die. But if you fall one foot from the top of the cliff, you meet the same fate.

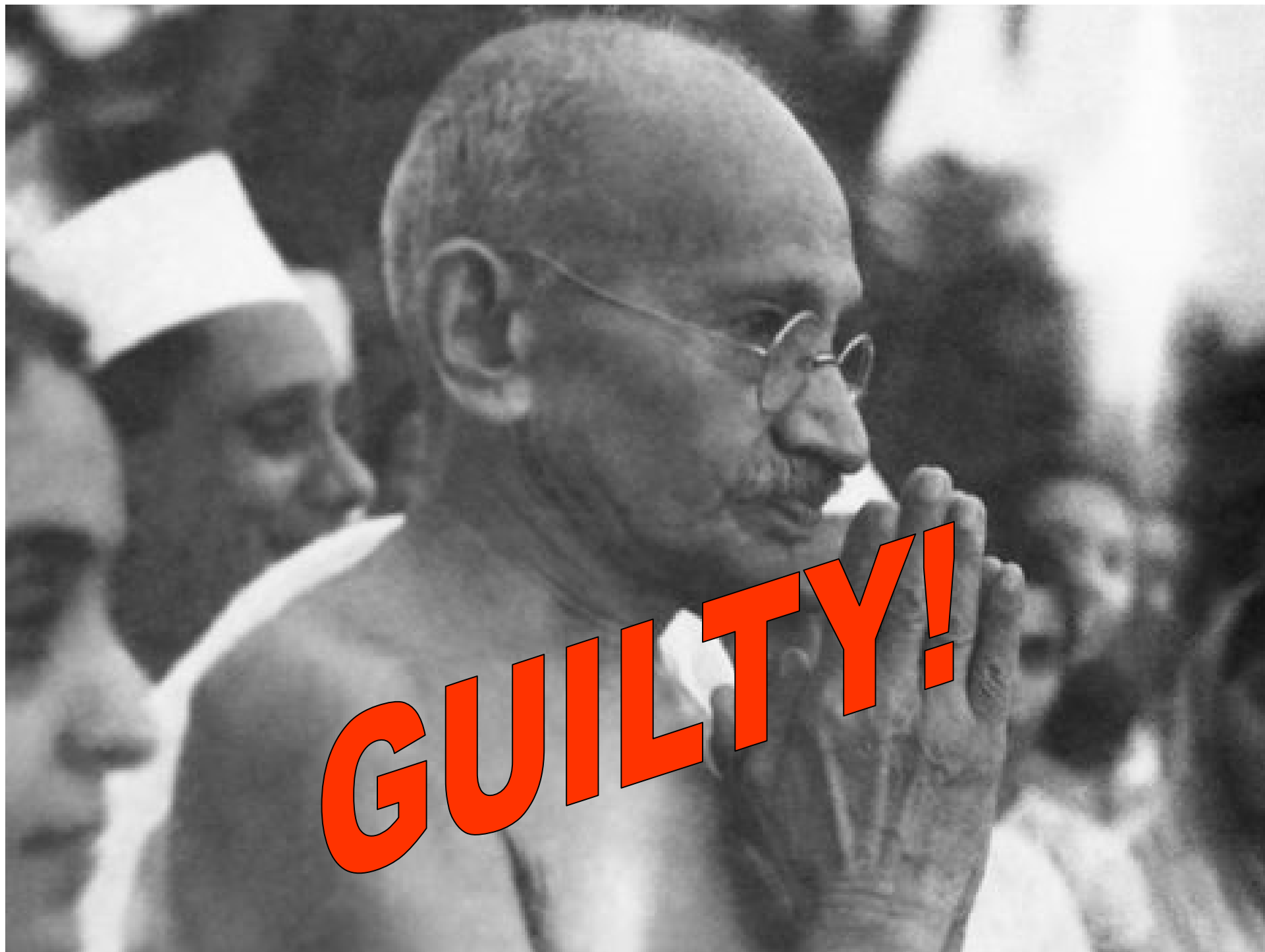


UNIVERSALITY OF SIN

- ❑ The Bible teaches us that none of us can reach God's target:
 - Romans 3:23 (NIV) for **all have sinned...**
 - Proverbs 20:9 (NIV) Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin"?
 - 1 John 1:8 (NIV) If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
 - Romans 3:10 (NIV) ... There is no one righteous, **not even one...**













Why are we all sinners?

- ❑ ORIGINAL SIN: Adam is the head of the entire human race and when he fell through sin, we fell with him.
- Rom (NIV) 5:15-19 ...the many died by the trespass of the one man... just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men ... through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners...



Why are we all sinners?

- ❑ We are born sinners as a result of 'the fall of man' through the first sin of Adam and Eve in Eden.
- Psalm 51:5 (NIV) Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

**WE ARE NOT SINNERS
BECAUSE WE SIN;**

**WE SIN BECAUSE WE
ARE SINNERS.**

Why Salvation Is Needed

- Consequences of sin

- Romans 6:23 (NIV)
For the wages of
sin is death...

- Sin separates
us from God
because He
is holy and
sinless.



**If you die in your sins you will be
eternally separated from God in hell.**

Why Salvation Is Needed

- Rev 20:11-15 (NIV) Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.



WORLD RELIGIONS

	Monotheism	Polytheism	Pantheism
Examples	Christianity, Judaism, Islam	Greek & Roman Paganism, Shinto, Mahayana & Tibetan Buddhism, Wicca	Hinduism, Taoism, Animism (ancestor worship), Wicca
Concept of God	Single creator God	Pantheon of gods & goddesses distinct from creation	No personal God. God and the creation are the same.

Salvation Concept In Other Religions

- ❑ The pantheistic religions of the East regard salvation as an impersonal merging with the Absolute.¹
- ❑ In contrast, the three largest monotheistic religions of the world—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—associate salvation with freedom from the bondage of sin and the reestablishment of personal communication with the creator.¹
- ❑ The 3 monotheistic religions differ on the role played by Jesus in our salvation.

¹ Wikipedia: Salvation

Salvation Concept In Other Religions

- ❑ Adherents of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism do not believe in salvation in the sense understood by most Westerners. They do not focus on Hell or Heaven as the end of a soteriological choice, but on knowledge. They believe in reincarnation (Buddhism rebirth) after death. According to this belief, one's actions or karma allow one to be reborn as a higher or lower being. If one is evil and has a multitude of bad actions, one is likely to be reborn as a lower being. If one has a multitude of good actions or karma, one is likely to be reborn as a higher being, perhaps a human with higher status or in a higher caste.¹

¹ Wikipedia: Salvation

Salvation Concept In Other Religions

- ❑ Eventually one is able to escape from the cycle of death and rebirth by reaching the highest spiritual state.¹ This state is not one of individual happiness but often a merging of oneself with collective existence. Sometimes, as with nirvāṇa, it is a cessation of existence.
- ❑ Basically, because existence is the source of pain, nirvāṇa is attained when you cease to exist. This is not the same as the Christian concept of heaven, which is seen as a tangible place where we are reunited with our creator God. What a thing to aspire to - to cease to exist - when Jesus promised eternal life!

¹ This state is called moksha (or mukti) in Hinduism, Sac Khand in Sikhism, moksa or nirvana in Jainism and nirvāṇa in Buddhism.

THE PROBLEM WITH REINCARNATION

- ❑ Reincarnation and karma doesn't solve the problem of evil - it perpetuates evil.
 - E.g. If I beat my wife, I'll come back as a wife who must be beaten. However the husband who beats me must then come back as a wife who must be beaten etc. etc.
- ❑ In Christianity Jesus PAYS the price for sin. The debt is settled.
 - Heb 9:26-27 (NIV) ... But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment...

THE PROBLEM WITH UNSETTLED DEBT

- ❑ Let's say I owe a large amount of money to a shopkeeper and I never pay, but keep on buying more goods. My debt increases all the time.
- ❑ One day I come to realise that this is bad and so from then on I start paying for everything. While that might be good it doesn't settle my previous account.



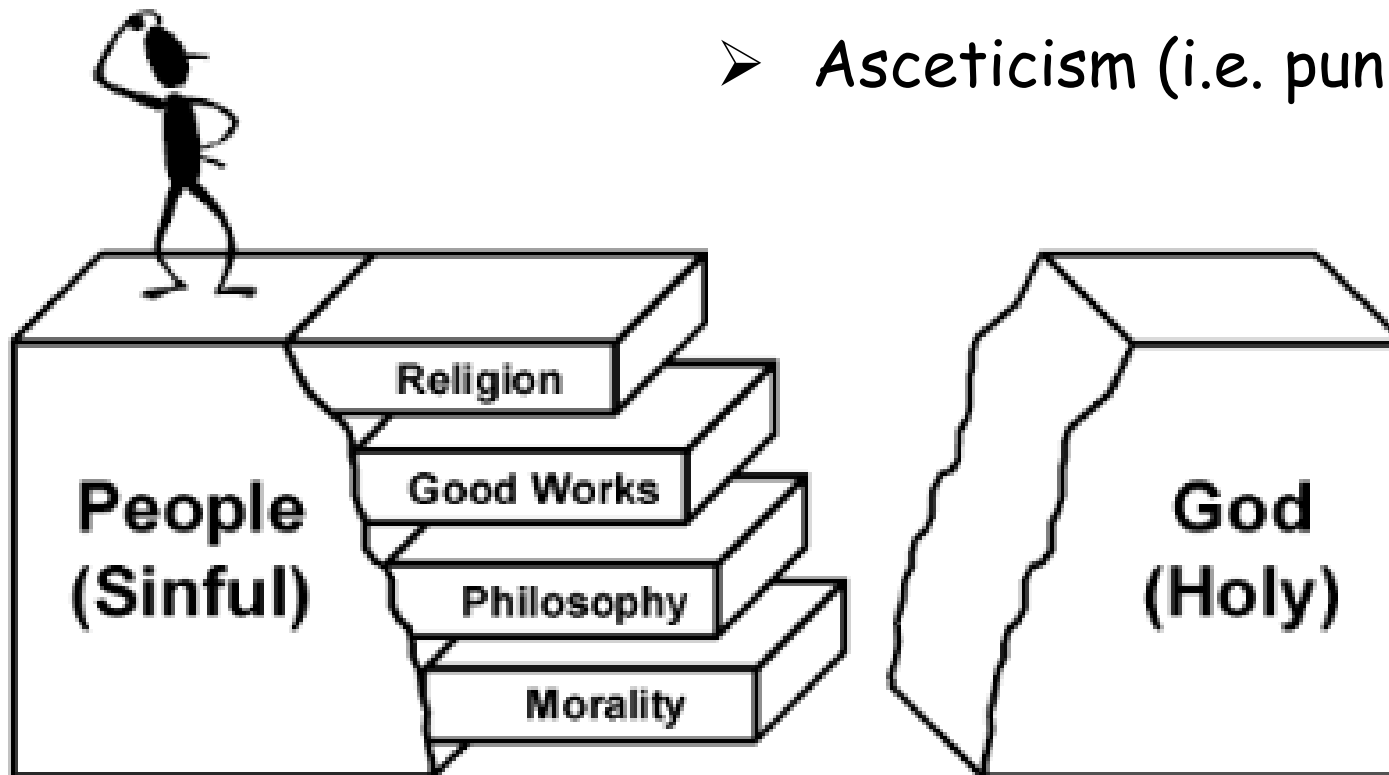
THE PROBLEM WITH UNSETTLED DEBT

- ❑ Jesus not only gives us the power to live holy lives by the Spirit - he settles the outstanding debt. That is why he died in our place to pay for sin.
- 2 Cor 5:21 (NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



Salvation Concept In Other Religions

- ❑ Most religions claim that salvation can be attained by using only inner human resources such as:
 - Accumulation of wisdom or knowledge
 - Asceticism (i.e. punishing your body)
 - Good works
 - Meditation
 - Rituals



Difference with Christianity

- ❑ The Christian perspective on salvation is that no one can merit the grace of God through human effort (performing rituals, good deeds, asceticism or meditation).
- ❑ The Bible teaches that man is born into a state of sin. This is a result of a sinful nature which we inherited from our first parents. So sinful man is the problem and not the solution to the problem of sin.
 - Believing that you can save yourself is like a drowning man believing he can pull himself to safety by grabbing his beard. He needs an external agent like a rock or a boat to hold on to.
 - Man can no more save himself than an empty glass can fill itself - again an external agent is needed.

Difference with Christianity

- ❑ Christianity teaches that humans can be saved only through the grace granted by an external agent (Jesus). We must realise the impossibility of being saved by our own efforts, and accept God's grace unconditionally.
- ❑ GRACE is unmerited (or undeserved) favour.
 - MERCY is God not giving us what we deserve.
 - GRACE is God giving us what we don't deserve.

God's

Riches

At

Christ's

Expense

Difference with Christianity

- ❑ Contrary to all other religions, Christianity offers free salvation.

- Rom (NIV) 3:24-28 and are justified freely by his grace

- ❑ Christianity teaches that man cannot reach God by his own efforts and that God has to bring about our redemption because we are incapable of doing so.



Difference with Christianity

- ❑ All other religions are man trying to reach up to God.
- ❑ Christianity is God reaching down to man.



VIEWS ON SALVATION

	Eastern religion	Christianity
God	The sum of all creation – we're all a part of God.	A personal creator distinct from his creation.
Heaven	Nirvana – we cease to exist because existence is the source of pain	A physical place where we meet our creator God – who loves us
Death	You keep coming back until you cease to exist.	You live once and die once. After death you are judged.
Salvation	Good works, asceticism	Jesus paid the price for our sin – we must believe in him.

VIEWS ON SALVATION

	Judaism	Islam	Christianity
Muhammad	A false prophet	The last and greatest prophet but a man	A false prophet
Jesus	Not the Messiah	A great prophet, but not the Son of God	The Son of God, Son of Man & Saviour / Redeemer of man
Salvation	The law (good works)	Good works must outweigh bad works	Jesus paid the price for our sin – we must believe in him.

TOLERANCE

- ❑ Today, many people think that it doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe something. Of course they only use this sort of logic when it comes to religion - everywhere else, truth matters.
- ❑ In our age of "tolerance," moral relativism is touted as the supreme virtue. Every philosophy, idea, and faith system has equal merit, says the relativist, and is worthy of equal respect. Those who favour one faith system over another or—even worse—claim a knowledge of absolute truth are considered narrow-minded, unenlightened, or even bigoted.¹

¹ SOURCE: <http://www.gotquestions.org/tolerance-Christian.html>

TOLERANCE

- ❑ Of course, different religions make mutually exclusive claims, and the relativist is unable to logically reconcile outright contradictions. For example, the Bible makes the claim that “man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment” (Hebrews 9:27), while some Eastern religions teach reincarnation. So, do we die once or many times? **Both teachings cannot be true.** The relativist essentially redefines truth in order to create a paradoxical world where multiple, contradictory “truths” can co-exist. ¹

¹ Ibid

TOLERANCE

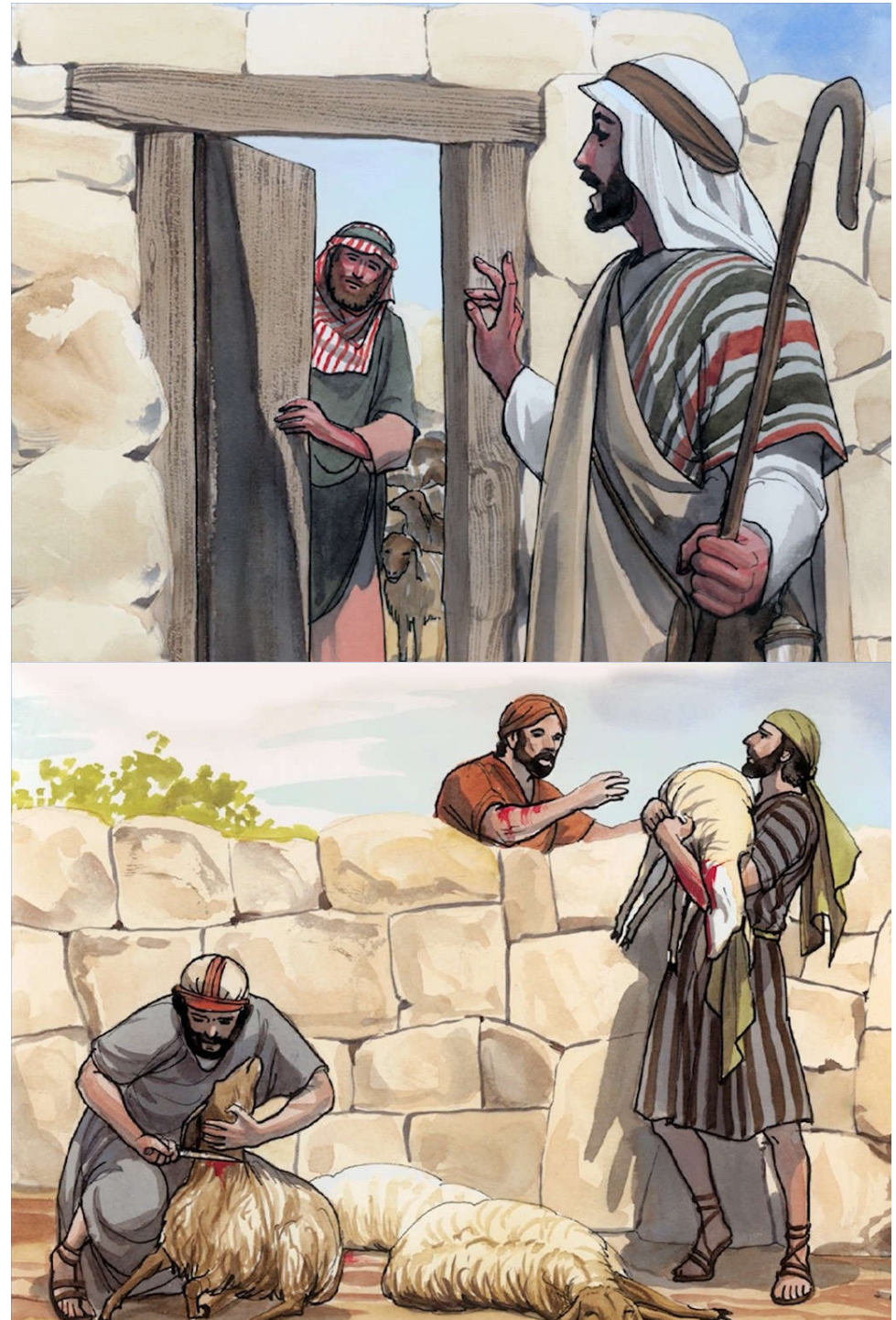
- ❑ Even when disputing/dialoguing over prominent doctrines, a Christian should exercise restraint and show respect. It is one thing to disagree with a position; it is quite another to disparage a person. We must hold fast to the Truth while showing compassion to those who question it.¹
- ❑ Peter indicates the balance we need to have in sharing our faith, without being obnoxious about it:
 - 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. **But do this with gentleness and respect.**

¹Ibid

Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

- ❑ Contrary to many religions, Christianity claims exclusivity i.e. it is the only way to God. This claim came from Jesus himself. Jesus claimed to be the only way to God.
- ❑ John 14:6 (NIV) Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
 - Jesus didn't say, "I am A WAY"
 - He didn't even say, "I am THE BEST WAY".
 - He said, "I am THE WAY". He claimed to be the ONLY WAY and that "no one comes to the Father EXCEPT THROUGH ME."

- John 10:7-10 (NIV)
Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."



Matt 7:13-14 (NIV) "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it."



❑ **Sincerity is not enough.** You can be sincerely wrong.

- Proverbs 14:12 (NIV) There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.
- Matt 15:14b (NIV) If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit



Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

- ❑ Sincerity is not enough. You need the truth.
 - Jesus said, "I am... the truth" (John 14:6)
- ❑ John 8:31-32 (NIV) ... Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
 - Note that we are only set free when we hold to the truth of Jesus' teaching.

SINCERITY IS NOT ENOUGH

- ❑ Let's say you are sick and you need the doctor to give you oxygen. There is a tank marked 'oxygen' but it has actually mistakenly been filled with ammonia. The doctor might be sincere when he tries to help you, but you will still die. Having poisonous gas (sincerely) cannot compare to getting the oxygen you need.



Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

- John 15:1-6 (NIV) "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes a so that it will be even more fruitful... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."

Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

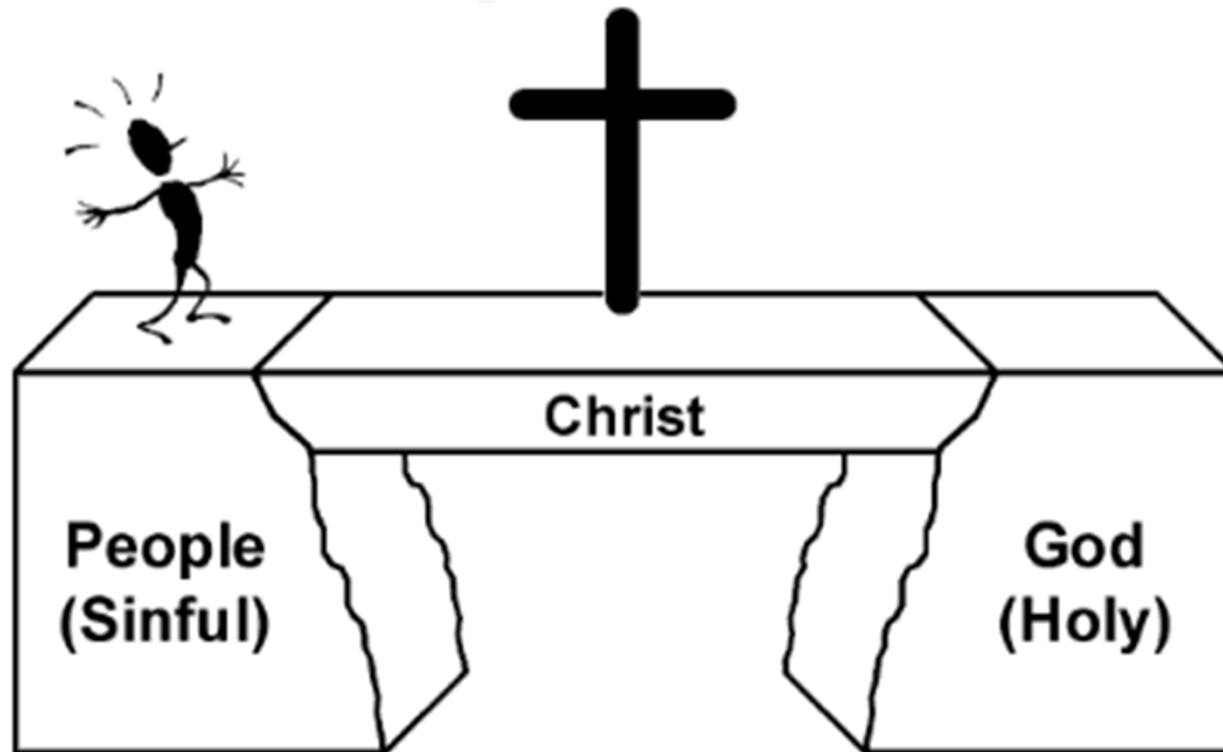
- ❑ John 3:16-19 (NIV) "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."
- ❑ John 3:36 (NIV) "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

- ❑ John 8:24 (NIV) "I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."
- ❑ Sin is like an outstanding debt to God. There are only 2 ways to pay for it:
 1. Either you will pay for it yourself by going to hell.
 2. You can allow Jesus to pay for your sin.

Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

- Acts 4:11-12 (NIV) "He (*Jesus*) is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."



❑ Jesus is the only one who died for his followers (as a redeemer):

- John 10:11-12 (NIV)
"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it."



IS EVERYONE A CHILD OF GOD?

John 3:3 (NIV) In reply Jesus declared,
“I tell you
the truth,
no one can
see the
kingdom of
God unless
he is born
again.”



Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

- ❑ Christianity is not just religion (which normally speaks of ritual), but a relationship:
 - John 3:3 (NIV) In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."
 - John 1:12-13 (NIV) Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Why The Christian Concept Is The Only Truth

- ❑ If we could be saved by another way, then Jesus died for nothing.
 - Gal 2:21 (NIV) I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!
- 1. Our redeemer had to be sinless. Only God is sinless.
- 2. Our redeemer had to be related to us, so he had to be a man.
 - That is why Jesus was both God and man so that he could be an effective redeemer. Only Jesus was God in flesh.

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