

How Do You Know Christianity Is the One True Way of Living? | Abdu Murray #SkepticsNight

(RZIM Q&A video transcribed with some editing) - The question essentially is that, given the world of pluralistic and multiple options in terms of religious and non-religious systems, isn't it arrogant to say one way is correct? How can we actually know that there is one way? I addressed this in my latest book "Saving Truth". I have a whole section on this.

The underlying assumption is that pluralism is good. It's a good thing in the sense that no one world view becomes forcibly dominant over others. We can't enforce Christianity or enforce Islam or atheism on people. Some people are trying to do these things but we shouldn't because I don't think force actually leads to truth. I think civilized debate leads to truth and the problem with the statement that "all religions are equally valid or maybe equally invalid", shuts down debate. When you call someone intolerant, you're no longer actually engaging in debate, you're just simply shutting them up. That's a way to force non-discussion. So you've hear this phrase "all roads lead to God", okay so here's the problem. The statement "all roads lead to God" is meant to respect all roads as if they're equally valid. It doesn't actually respect all roads, it disrespects all roads because they don't even all claim to lead to God. So if you're saying all roads lead to God, you're not taking any of them seriously. How do I know this?

Let's take a look at Buddhism. Buddhism as Buddha taught it, didn't teach you and me that we are going to go to heaven, it taught us that we don't even have a self. The self is an illusion. All we are is an accretion of karma and that once you (whoever you is, actually) works off your karma through the cycle of death and rebirth, you become extinguished. You don't go to God. Hinduism tells you that you are God and that I'm God, now, You're not "a God" and I'm not "a God". We are all "the God" so we're under the illusion of separateness. That is not the same thing that Islam teaches, which is that there is a God out there who is not me and that I am not to have a relationship with him beyond master and servant and that when I go to heaven, I go to a paradise God creates for me, but he himself is not there. Christianity says that we were made to be in relationship with God which is why Genesis chapter 3 says that God walked and talked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day and we are eventually going to get back to the state when we see God face to face. We are actually engaged in relationship eternally with him. So you see how all roads aren't even claiming to lead to God, so when you say all roads lead to God, you're not respecting them you're disrespecting them, because you're not taking them seriously. (Being raised a Muslim myself), I respect the Muslim too much to say that we believe the same thing. They're diametrically opposed. I believe that God is triune. One in his nature three in his persons and because of that God is truly great. A Muslim would say that's blasphemy. I take it seriously. Once we understand that this idea that they're all equally valid can't possibly be true (they could all be equally invalid).

Now the question is, how do we know that Christianity is also true. That comes back to me on two claims. First, that there is a God that exists and I have numerous philosophical arguments. Vince Vitale gave some on the scientific level, but I think there's also philosophical arguments as well to believe that there is a God. The very fact that the universe itself is contingent. In other words, it depends on something else to explain itself. Ultimately, you have to have a being. It has to stop somewhere. Everything that exists must be explained by something else, unless you come to an unexplained first cause. That's what God is.

There are other reasons I believe that God exists but why the Christian God? Because Jesus claimed to be the son of God incarnate who takes away the sins of the world and then he dies on a cross and then he rises from the dead. Now if he was wrong, he would have stayed dead. If he was right, he would have risen from the dead. They asked him a very reasonable question, "By what authority do you do these things", or who do you think you are? Jesus said "When you destroy this temple (meaning his body), I will raise it up again in three days." That's either true or its false, an opinion is irrelevant!

So if he died and stayed dead, we would not have any reason to believe him. If he died and rose again, we have every reason to believe him. People often ask me why Jesus and not Muhammad or Buddha or Confucius or Krishna. Here's the reason. Jesus died and rose from the dead and guys who rise from the dead tend to have credibility. So the question then becomes, how do you know that he rose from the dead? Without making the longer answer even longer...

I have four facts that are strong facts in other words scholars whether they're Christian or atheist or whatever, who study the historical Jesus, say is true about the historical Jesus:

- 1) That he died by crucifixion. We have to have a death before you have a resurrection that's kind of how it works and that's historically accurate. John Dominic Crossan says that his death by crucifixion is a sure a fact as any ever could be.
- 2) Then we have the appearances to the disciples, of the Risen Jesus. Skeptical non-christian historians say that the disciples saw something that convinced them that they saw, not the surviving Jesus, not the escaping Jesus, but the actual resurrected Jesus (with crucifixion scars on his hands and side). So we see that he appears to the disciples.
- 3) Then we see the skeptics Paul and James. The converted James was a skeptic as you can read in the Gospels. Paul was an enemy of the Christian faith. I'm a trial lawyer. Now when you have somebody on the other side who disagrees with you so very violently, in that sense that they're like the worst witness you could possibly have on other side of you, but they suddenly switch their position because they realize you're right, what do you do with that witness? You put him on the stand and you let him talk for days and days to the jury. The best kind of eyewitness testimony is somebody who thought you were so wrong, who now thinks you're right and it costs them something to say it. They're not just making it up, it costs them something. It's exactly what you have in Paul. It cost Paul everything. He was an enemy of the Christian faith and switched his claim to become the champion of the Christian faith based on his claim, "I saw him with my own eyes". If he didn't, he would have known he was lying. Why would he die on purpose for something he knew was a lie? That gets you nowhere. So we have the crucifixion, the appearances to the disciples, the skeptics Paul and James converted and then you have
- 4) the empty tomb. It was Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. We know that it was empty and the fact that women were the first witnesses is what's called an embarrassing admission that wouldn't be necessarily included in a factual claim, unless it was true. We know that three days later, his tomb was empty.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is both a sword and a shield. It defends against the attacks of Christianity, but it also offers you and me the hope that we will be raised as he is raised. It's also a sword that says that everything that comes against it is therefore false. So if you want to contend with the Christian faith, you contend with this central fact. The fact that says all other claims that deny the resurrection can't be true but this one is true and it's not just true in a way that excludes you, it's true in a way that includes you. He didn't die and rise for Christians, that doesn't even make sense. He died and rose so that we can all know Jesus, know God. That's the whole point. - Abdu Murray

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14ze_SVg-0E | Abdu Murray #SkepticsNight