

Is Jesus the *Only* Way to Heaven?

Although most Americans believe in God, relatively few believe that Jesus is the *only* way. For instance, Oprah Winfrey claimed, “There couldn’t possibly be only *one* way.” An audience member reminded Oprah that Jesus declared, “No one comes to the Father except through me.”¹ Unfortunately, since she does not consider the Bible authoritative, Oprah was not persuaded. If you were in the audience, how would you have responded to her rejection of Christ’s exclusive claim? I probably would have tried to demonstrate the truth of Christ’s claim philosophically. One way to do so is the “The Argument from Infinite Holiness.” It’s an attempt to demonstrate that Jesus is the only logically possible way to Heaven.

The Presumption

The “Argument from Infinite Holiness” begins with the inference that moral crimes, of the same nature, vary in their severity depending upon the being against which they are committed. For instance, most humans agree that torturing animals for entertainment, even cockroaches, is morally wrong. However, the same crime committed against a greater being, such a puppy, is a far greater offense. Likewise, torturing a human baby is greater transgression than torturing a stray dog. Moreover, even among humans there are degrees of offense. For example, suppose this article offends you—inciting you to slap me in the face. Such a crime would invoke, at most, a small fine. On the other hand, suppose you committed the same offense against the President of the United States. The consequence would be significant. Correspondingly, suppose you performed the same offense against a king, such as the King of Saudi Arabia, while sitting on his royal throne. Most likely, your execution would ensue without delay.

The Catch

All sin is ultimately committed against God. For instance, after committing adultery and murder, King David confessed to God, “Against you, and you alone, have I sinned.”² When we sin, we are essentially slapping God in the face. However, the difference between slapping an

¹John 14:6

²Psalms 51:4

earthly king in the face, and the infinitely holy “King of kings” is immeasurable. Since God is infinitely just, he is obligated (by his own nature) to dispense perfect justice. Unfortunately, perfect justice for an infinitely heinous crime demands an infinite punishment. Edwards reasoned, “If there be any such thing as a fault infinitely heinous, it will follow that it is just to inflict a punishment for it that is infinitely dreadful.”³ Fortunately, in addition to being infinitely holy and just, God is also loving and merciful. Although he would have been entirely justified in condemning every sinner to Hell, he satisfied justice by paying the penalty for all who will receive him.

The Cruc

Here is the argument’s crux: Only an infinite, uncreated being could pay for an infinite amount of sin in a finite amount of time. If Jesus were finite, then he would have had to suffer for an infinite amount of time to pay the penalty for even one sin of one sinner. However, since Jesus is God—infinite and uncreated—he could suffer for a finite amount of time (several hours on a cross) and pay an infinite penalty. Consequently, Jesus is the only logically possible savior. A created savior would still be paying for the first sin, of the first sinner. Consequently, the created Jesus of both Mormonism and the Jehovah’s Witnesses could not possibly pay for even one sin of one sinner. Only the uncreated Jesus of the Bible possesses the currency to pay our infinite debt.

The Choice

In short, Oprah is wrong—Jesus is the only logically possible way to Heaven. Consequently, C. S. Lewis concluded, “You must make your choice. . . You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God.”

³Jonathan Edward in “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.”