

The Confusion of Religion

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Contrary to the popular teaching of value relativism, right and wrong *do* exist — even fake TV characters know it.

*Right and wrong do exist. Just because you don't know what the right answer is—maybe there's even no way you could know what the right answer is—doesn't make your answer right or even okay. It's much simpler than that. It's just plain wrong.**

In medicine, you're either right or wrong. Heal the patient or kill him. There's no middle ground, no passing the buck, no value relativism. Similarly in the game of Blackjack, for any given situation exactly *one* correct move exists. Other possibilities may work out once in a while, but that's just luck, not sound analysis.

So what absolute standard exists for the questions of life?

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- Where am I going?
- How did I get here?

If you're looking at any candidate solution, it must provide answers to *all* these questions. Atheists point to evolution — a subject we've been over before as lacking any proof[†] — we won't cover it more.

You must look for a religion which can answer *all* the basic questions, *while remaining internally consistent*. If a god exists, and *if* he's all-powerful, and *if* he transmitted a message to us, it must be consistent, must it not? Thus if a candidate religion contains obvious falsehoods it must be eliminated from contention.

First off, the so-called “Eastern Philosophies” don't merit consideration as they simply can't answer the question of our existence — most of them don't even try. You'll quickly discover you're left with Christianity, Judaism, and Islam as three candidates, along with their offshoots Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons, and others. But specifically, you'll notice Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses are *not* consistent as we shall quickly see.

The question is always Who is Jesus? That question always divides — it's acceptable to discuss god, religion and virtually any other topic, but ask about Jesus and people get uneasy. It's also where religions diverge; both Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses deny the deity of Jesus (He's not God). That's a perfectly acceptable position you're free to accept or reject as you wish, but you'll quickly find it causes problems with other positions they claim to hold — they can't all be correct.

First off, let's find out who God is. Consider the following passage, and ask who Isaiah speaks about?

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Isaiah 6:1–5 KJV

Well, that's Jehovah God they'll say. Right? Right! No disagreement exists on that passage — it's the

* “House” (the TV Show) Season One, Episode 121 “Three Stories” <http://www.housemd-guide.com/characters/houserules.php>

† <http://www.dyeager.org/search/node/evolution>

Lord (Jehovah, God) Isaiah sees. Now consider a passage in John:

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him.

John 12:37-41 KJV *

Pronouns[†] fill this passage, so do a little digging for yourself and determine who they all refer to (we'll wait). OK, you're back. Notice the "he" refers to Jesus — no disagreement should exist here either. The context of the passage is clear "though he had done so many miracles before them" — the "he" is Jesus. Right? Right!

Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses state Jesus isn't God. A perfectly acceptable position, as many groups (atheists included) make the same statement. The truth or falsity of the claim isn't important (and we're not going to enter the discussion), because *for our purposes it doesn't matter*. What *does* matter is both Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and other groups, while claiming Jesus isn't God, *do* claim to accept the Bible as the authoritative Word of God.

And that's when the problems start.

Your bible likely notes John chapter 12 verse 41 alludes to Isaiah 6 — "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory, and spoke of him"[‡]. And who (we've already agreed) does Isaiah speak of in chapter six? Jehovah God! Now wait a minute, John (we've also already agreed) discusses Jesus, so Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus and that was God (Jehovah, Father God). So . . . wait for it . . . Jesus is God.

Okay, maybe you don't like that example or somehow rationalize it away. Let's look at some other famous passages.

Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, the first, and with the last; I am he.

Isaiah 41:4 KJV

* This passage also shreds the Deutero-Isaiah hypothesis — the idea multiple authors actually wrote the book bearing Isaiah's name. Note this passage contains two quotes from Isaiah — Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10, with the connecting phrase "because that Isaiah said again". John attributes both quotes (from different halves) to Isaiah; *if* the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God, you know who wrote Isaiah (all of it).

† For those who remember Schoolhouse Rock, a pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun, like He, I, You, and so on

‡ Or, replacing the pronouns, "These things said Isaiah, when Isaiah saw Jehovah's glory, and spoke of Jehovah"

Who is the first and last? Jehovah God, right? Right!

Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isaiah 4:6 KJV

Who is the first and last? Jehovah God, right? Right!

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," saith the Lord, "which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 1:8 KJV

Who is the Alpha and Omega, first and last, beginning and end? Jehovah God, right? Right!

Saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

Revelation 1:11 KJV

Who is the Alpha and Omega, first and last, beginning and end? Jehovah God, right? Right! Are we beginning to see a pattern here? God is the first and last, beginning and end, alpha and omega — all express the same idea. It's Jehovah God, the Father, the eternal God, or however you want to express it — now consider one more verse.

And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 1:17-18 KJV

Who is the first and last? Jehovah God! But wait, he was living, then dead, now alive for evermore? That only fits Jesus. Again Jesus is God. Period. If you want to dig into this more yourself, look at verse 5 of Revelation chapter one where the later pronouns refer back to — it's specifically Jesus Christ. Mentioned in chapter one are John, Jesus, and God. So

even in verses 8 and 11, the pronoun refers back to Jesus, and in red-letter Bibles appears in Red to indicate it's words of Jesus.

The Bible makes it clear. Once again, you're free to disagree Jesus is God if you wish, you're free to reject the Bible, you're free to believe the moon is made of cheese, you're free to believe anything you want; none of that is in jeopardy here, and we're not in any way telling you to believe one way or the other — believe as you will.

However, *if* you state Jesus isn't God, *and* claim you accept the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, you've got trouble. To get out of this paradox you have to state the Bible isn't authoritative, and not all of it is true (we've yet to encounter a Jehovah Witness or Mormon making that claim, and it doesn't appear to be official church teaching of either to our knowledge).

They've got big problems in river city — something doesn't fit as two contradictory positions can't *both* be correct. Which is it? Is the Bible correct, or extra-Biblical teaching? It's your choice, but consider what Paul said in Galatians.

*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But **though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.***

Galatians 1:6-8 KJV

If an angel or anyone else contradicts the gospel, where does Paul say the error lies?

With Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses, and others having other books (Pearl of Great Price, etc), disagreeing with the Bible (Jesus is not God) you've got a choice — either they're right, or the Bible is. We're not even entering into a discussion of *which* is correct, as for this point *it doesn't matter*, only one *can* be correct, so you've got a problem illustrated by the following. Suppose person "A" says the sky is orange, while person "B" says the sky is purple. What possibilities exist?

- "A" is right and "B" is wrong.
- "A" is wrong and "B" is right.
- Both "A" and "B" are wrong.

But note, *they can't both be right*. Thus, if the Bible states Jesus is God, and yet a group maintains Jesus isn't God while accepting the authority of the Bible, that makes no sense as both "A" and "B" can not be right — it's just not possible (at most one is correct, or they're both wrong). You can choose which you wish to believe, but a hopeless paradox exists attempting to force contradictory ideas into agreement.

But in light of Paul's warning, *if* you accept the Bible, Paul is quite clear what position the other teaching should hold. Now, *if* you decide to reject the Bible as authoritative, no problem and no contradiction exists.

After presenting groups with these facts, usually they bid a hasty retreat. At that point, simply say "wait a minute, I'm not finished yet, you knocked on my door, and now you don't want to talk?"

But another issue presents itself best illustrated by a Jon Courson story. Suppose you're in church minding your own business. Suddenly a person comes in wearing a long trench-coat, and acting quite suspicious. He opens up his coat, tosses in a grenade, and walks out. Everyone freezes. But one person springs into action, grabbing the little old lady sitting next to him, throws her on the grenade before it explodes, saving everyone.

What would you think? Sure, he saved everyone, but why did he force someone else to do something he himself was unwilling to do? That's not fair!

Exactly. And yet if Jesus isn't God, the same situation exists — God created something to do the job He was unwilling to do. What kind of God is that?

Too much confusion exists over religion — you're free to believe *whatever* you want. But God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). Who benefits from confusion? Do your homework and come to your own conclusions. It's your choice, after all — be sure to get it right.

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