

Answers for Chris Lesson 3

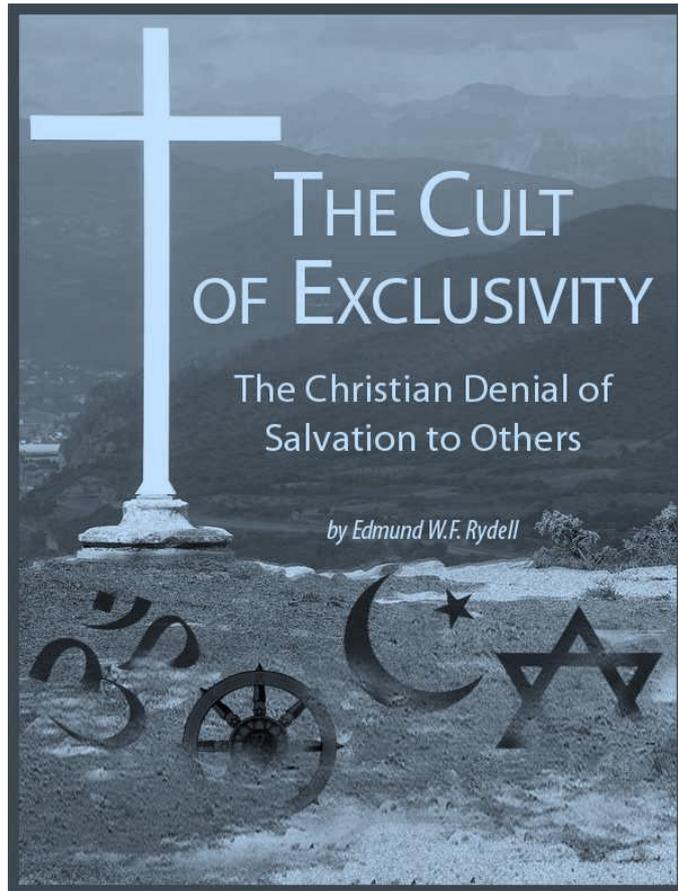
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Answers for Chris

Course Overview

- ▶ Lesson 1 - Chris' World – Values, Meaning and Truth in Our Culture
- ▶ Lesson 2 - Questions About God, Suffering and Pain
- ▶ Lesson 3 - Questions About Christian Exclusivity, Judgment and Hell
- ▶ Lesson 4 - Questions About Genocide and Slavery in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 5 - Questions About Sexism and Homosexuality in the Bible
- ▶ Lesson 6 - Questions About the Bible and Science
- ▶ Lesson 7 - Questions About the Bible, Superstition, and Mythology
- ▶ Lesson 8 - Questions About the Message and the Messenger

Christian Exclusivity



- ▶ I don't think any religion can claim to be uniquely true. Doesn't this narrow exclusivity just lead to intolerance, division, and war?

All Belief Systems Claiming to be True are Inherently Exclusive

- ▶ Chris' view appears to be open-minded and inclusive but it is actually “absolute non-absolutism”
 - ▶ “Absolute non-absolutism” only accepts those who agree with it and can be just as intolerant, divisive, and oppressive as any religion
- ▶ The solution is not to find a non-exclusive belief system (there is none) but to find the belief system best addressing humanity's real problem

Human Violence Transcends Religion Because its Roots are Buried in the Human Heart

- ▶ It is absolutely true that religious belief has been at the center of human division, conflict, and killing
 - ▶ So has everything else humanity is passionate about, including sports
- ▶ It is equally true that the greatest violence against humanity has come from atheistic regimes that suppressed or controlled all religion
- ▶ The answer is not to condemn or eliminate religion but to find the belief system best addressing humanity's real problem

Christianity addresses the real problem of humanity...even its own followers

- ▶ Christianity is honest about the existence, seriousness, and spread of evil
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the violence of humanity
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the misuse of religion even amongst its own followers
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the fallibility of its followers
- ▶ Christianity is honest about the need for a real solution and God's provision to address the problem

Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.

- G.K. Chesterton

Judgment and Hell



- ▶ I don't believe in a God of judgment. If he is God, he wouldn't be so insecure as to cast down wrath upon those who don't agree with him.
- ▶ How can a loving God ever send anyone to a hell of everlasting torment?

God and Judgment

- ▶ Judgment, justice, and standards (aka rules or laws) are all tightly bound together
 - ▶ Humanity believes in justice but we tend to want it on our terms, according to our cultural standards
 - ▶ However, dictating standards of justice based on our cultural beliefs is both relative and subject to error
- ▶ When God's biblical standards and cultural standards collide, humanity tends to redefine God as the "senile benevolent grandfather" (Lewis)
 - ▶ "A God of love wouldn't judge"
 - ▶ Translated..."a God of love would let us make the rules"

God is a Warrior King, not a Senile Benevolent Grandfather

- ▶ The “Warrior King” is both passionately loving toward his people and fiercely angry toward his enemies
 - ▶ His fierce anger is driven by his passionate love
 - ▶ His anger is directed at those who would violate his creation and compromise his dominion
- ▶ The “Warrior King” archetype is compelling when we think of a King David or Aragorn
 - ▶ We tend to see no contradiction between their simultaneous passionate love and fierce wrath
 - ▶ We see a contradiction with God because we are trained to believe he has no enemies which is simply not true

God and Hell

- ▶ According to Christian doctrine, Hell is a state of eternal, conscious, misery reserved for the enemies of God
 - ▶ This misery appears to be caused by eternal separation from God and—some have suggested—the continued trajectory of human depravity
- ▶ The doctrine of Hell is obviously uncomfortable and has been watered down/eliminated in many Christian circles, however:
 - ▶ The less serious we take hell, the less serious we take love
 - ▶ The less serious we take hell, the less serious we take God's provision of salvation through Jesus Christ