

# Neighborly Apologetics

## 3. Only One Way & Religious Pluralism



# Neighborly Apologetics

The Royal Law  
Love your neighbor

God has entrusted the primary work  
of the Kingdom to the common  
Christian family

*with a priestly role in our neighborhoods*

Neighborly Apologetic  
Categories:

1. *Evil and Suffering*
  2. *Absolute Truth and Relativism*
  3. *“Only One Way” and Religious Pluralism*
  4. *Faith and Reason*
  5. *Free Will and Sovereignty*
  6. *God’s Existence and Nature*
  7. *Goodness of Man, Judgment and Hell*
  8. *Hypocrisy and Christian Crimes of the Past*
  9. *The Claims of Jesus and the Resurrection*
  10. *Miracles*
  11. *Science and Evolution*
  12. *The Veracity of the Bible and “Contradictions”*
- Plus: Burning Issues of our Day*



*Religious Pluralism*

*Is Jesus the Only Way?*

this is a very, very tough one to deal with

### *Religious Pluralism*

the belief that every religion is true and has provided a valid pathway to God

### *Religious Relativism*

the claim that there is no objective truth in any religion; each is simply true to the one who believes in it

### *Religious Exclusivism*

the claim that only one way is true and all others are false



*Religious Pluralism*

*and*

*malevolent compassion*

## *Religious Pluralism*

**charges:**

**intolerance**      *(pluralists are very intolerant of exclusivists)*

**narrow-mindedness**      *(pluralism is very narrow)*      *(all true truth is narrow)*

**intellectual imperialism**

*some pluralists claim that ideas of truth and meaning are fascist*

*pluralists claim that “truth” should be more democratic*

***burning of widows at Hindu husband funerals***

## *Religious Pluralism*

presuppositions:

there is something truly moral that transcends each religion

naturalism

the world is religiously ambiguous (the truth cannot be truly known)

dialogue is the only way to truth

relativism is true



## *Religious Pluralism*

problems:

what is the basis for the truth claim that all religions are the same?

if the claim of both-and is true, versus either-or, then we can have square circles or one-way streets that go both ways

Hindu pantheism is contrary to Christian theism:  
they are mutually exclusive

Islam denies/Christianity proclaims: Jesus' death & resurrection.  
These both cannot be true



*Religious Pluralism*

*and*

**Is Jesus the Only Way?**



**WHO IS JESUS?**



**Is Jesus the Only Way?**



**Is Jesus God?**

**The BIG Question**





**Is Jesus the only way?**

**The HARD Question**





**Is Jesus the only way?**

**The HARD Question**

**Exclusivity!**





**Is Jesus the only way?**

**The HARD Question**

**Intolerance!**





**Is Jesus the only way?**

**The HARD Question**

**In ~~to~~ ~~any~~ ~~ce~~!**







**Is Jesus the only way?**

**The HARD Question**

**Narr Bigotry!**



# Exclusivity

---

## Sample statements:

+ How could anyone assert that Jesus is the only way to God?

How can Christians be so sure that they're right and everyone else is wrong?

+ It's arrogant to think that Jesus is the only way.

There are many religions in the world that essentially teach the same thing.

+ Christianity is intolerant because it thinks it is the only true religion.

All religious paths lead to God. No religion can claim to be the only one.

+ I just can't buy the arrogance of Christianity when it thinks it has a lock on truth.

So, you think you're right and all good Buddhists are going to hell?

+ What about my atheist neighbor? He's a great husband, a great father, and a great friend?

How about the nice guy who grows up in the jungle of Africa and never hears about Jesus?



# Exclusivity

---

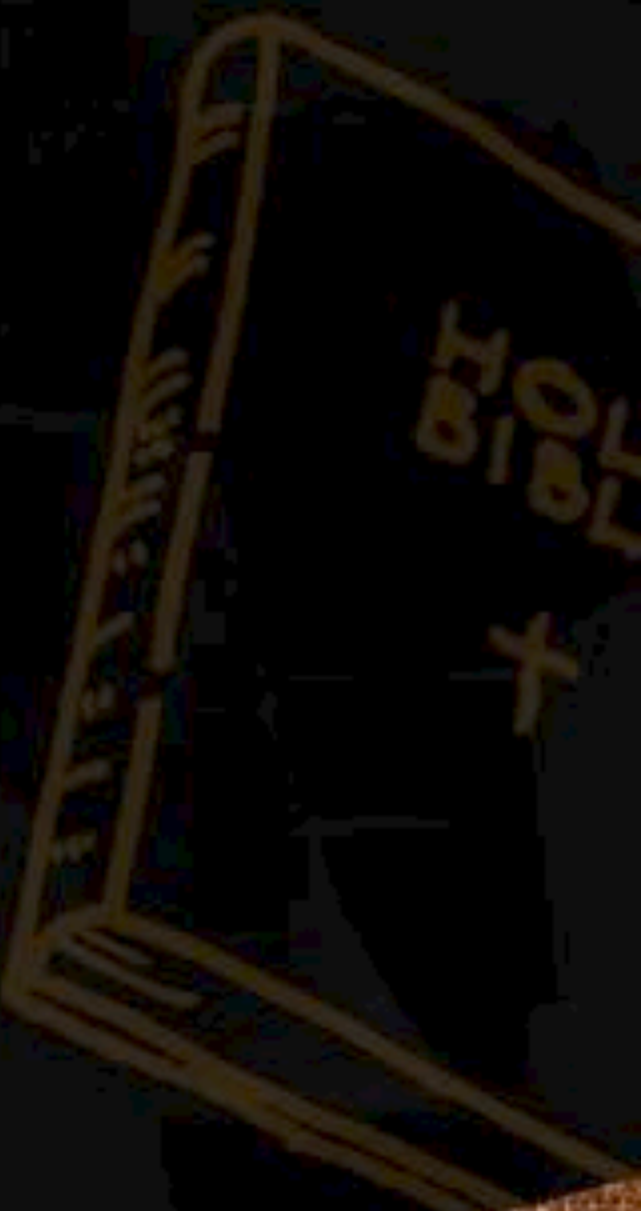
The easiest thing to do is just give in...

“Oh, I’m not saying that Jesus is the **ONLY** way.”

The problem of exclusivity isn’t new...

The early Christians faced the same thing.

- + Back then, you could be put to death in the athletic arena.
- + Today, it feels like being put to death in the social arena.



# Is Jesus the only way?

This is a really tough question.



“

During my nearly two decades in New York City, I've had numerous opportunities to ask people,

‘What is your biggest problem with Christianity?’

‘What troubles you the most about its beliefs or how it is practiced?’

One of the most frequent answers I have heard over the years can be summed up in one word: **Exclusivity.**

”

– Tim Keller

*The Reason for God*



# One way, or many?

---

+ “The soul of religion is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms.”

Mahatma Gandhi

+ “Jesus is the only way for me. I'm not in a position to judge other people.”

President Barack Obama

+ People who sincerely seek God and strive to do His will according to their conscience can be saved even if they do not know the Gospel of Christ.

Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 16



# One way, or many?

---

Charles Gibson of ABC News interviewed President George W. Bush...

**+** Gibson: “Do we all worship the same God, Christians and Muslims?”

Bush: “I think we do. We have different routes of getting to the Almighty.”

**+** Gibson: “Do Christians and non-Christians and Muslims go to heaven in your mind?”

Bush: “Yes they do. We have different routes of getting there.”









there are a lot of religions!



Witchcraft

Egyptian Mythology

Coexist Movement

Shamanism

Norse Pantheons

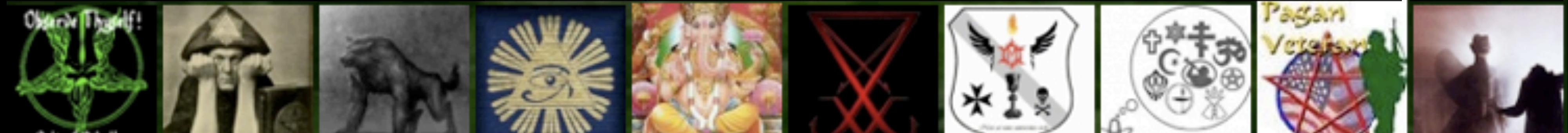
Demonology

Magickal

Astrology & Tarot

Hekate

Braucherei



Cult of Cthulhu

Aleister "Crowley"

LYCANTHROPY

Thelema

Hinduism

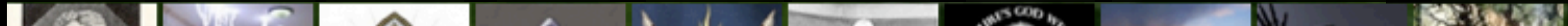
Left Hand PATH

Illuminati

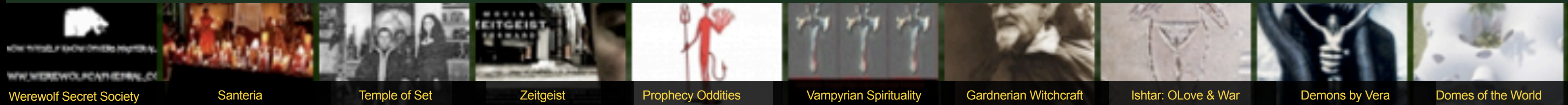
Atheism

Pagan Veterans

Demonology II



With all these religions, isn't it arrogant to think that yours is the only one that's RIGHT?



Werewolf Secret Society

Santeria

Temple of Set

Zeitgeist

Prophecy Oddities

Vampyrian Spirituality

Gardnerian Witchcraft

Ishtar: OLove & War

Demons by Vera

Domes of the World



Sith Religion

Haters

Santa Muerte: Goddess of Death

Objectivism

Jediism

Stregheria

Dianic Witchcraft

Alice Shadow

Occult Experience

Remote Viewing



Planet X Nibiru

Intellectual Design

Venus Project

Zeitgeist Religion

Fourth Way

Palo

Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

The Rosicrucian Order

Transcendental Meditation

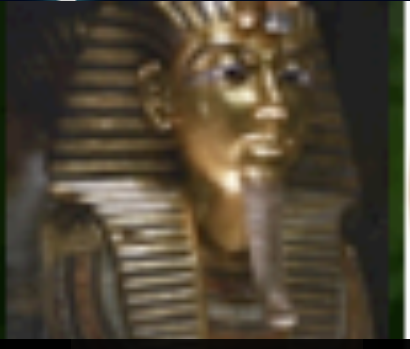
Krampus



# Do you think any of these are **w r o n g**?



Witchcraft



Egyptian Mythology



Coexist Movement



Shamanism



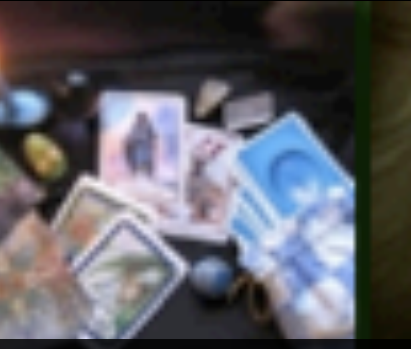
Norse Pantheons



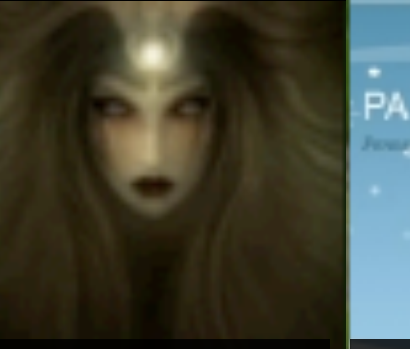
Demonology



Magickal



Astrology & Tarot



Hekate



Braucherei



Cult of Cthulhu



Aleister "Crowley"



LYCANTHROPY



Thelema



Hinduism



Left Hand PATH



Illuminati



Atheism



Pagan Veterans



Demonology II



Hellfire



Energy & Green



Ordo Templi Orientis



Paganism



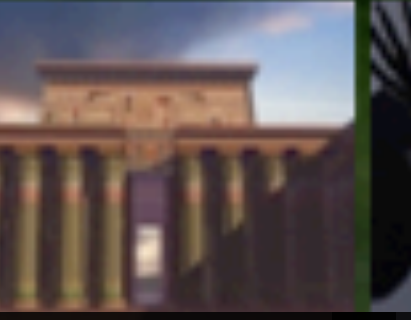
Lotus Blossom & Isis



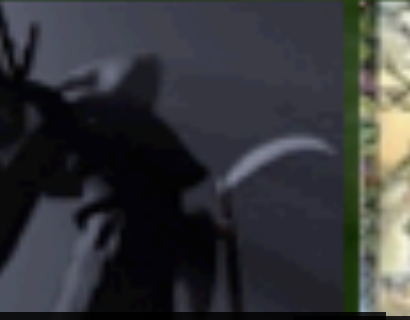
Alexandrian Wicca



World Union of Deists



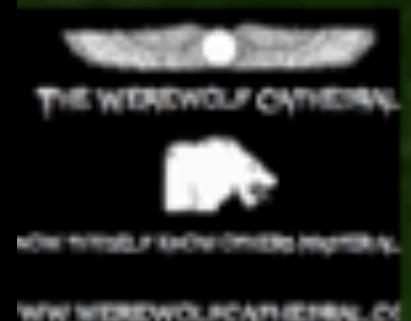
Temple of Ra



Demonolatr



Druid



Werewolf Secret Society



Santeria



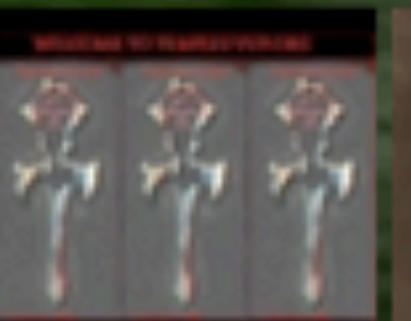
Temple of Set



Zeitgeist



Prophecy Oddities



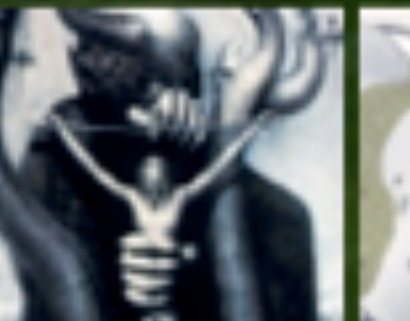
Vampyrian Spirituality



Gardnerian Witchcraft



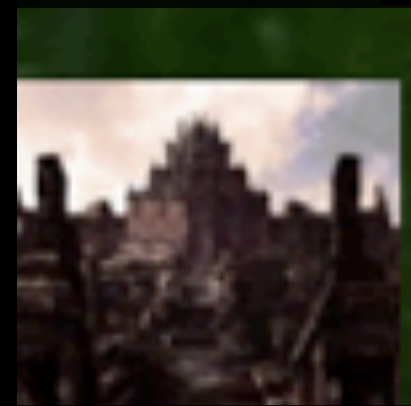
Ishtar: OLove & War



Demons by Vera



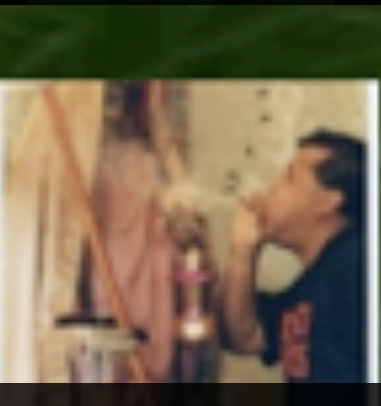
Domes of the World



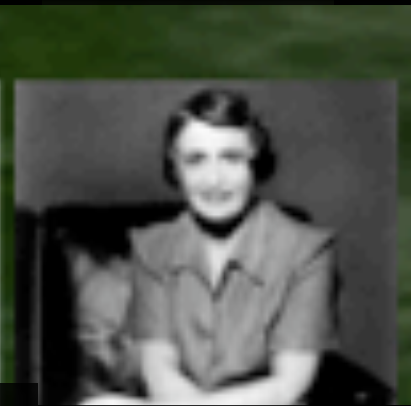
Sith Religion



Haters



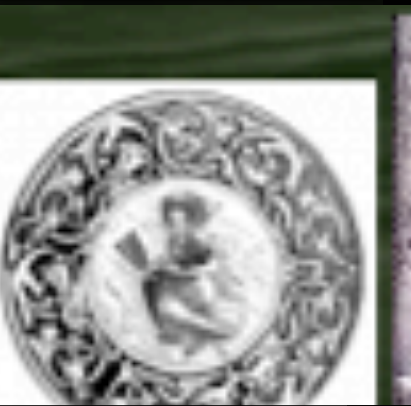
Santa Muerte: Goddess of Death



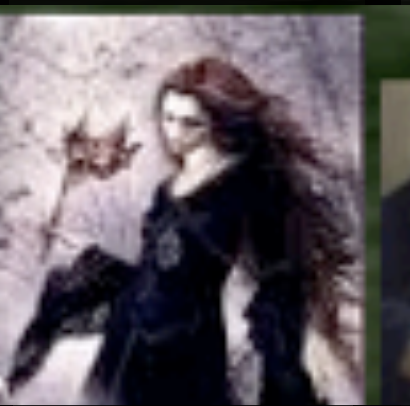
Objectivism



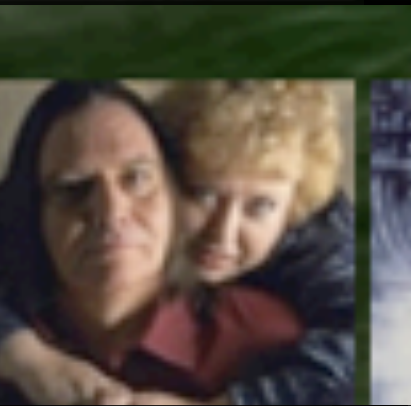
Jediism



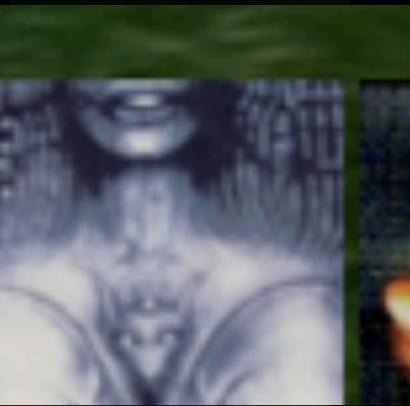
Stregheria



Dianic Witchcraft



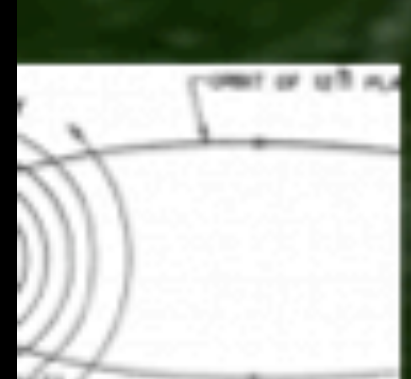
Alice Shadow



Occult Experience



Remote Viewing



Planet X Nibiru



Intellectual Design



Venus Project



Zeitgeist Religion



Fourth Way



Palo



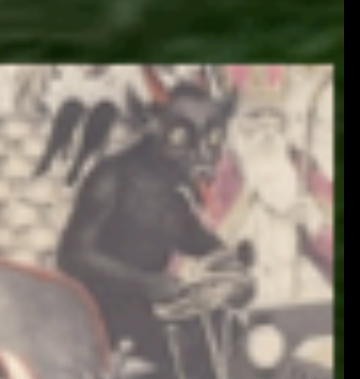
Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn



The Rosicrucian Order



Transcendental Meditation



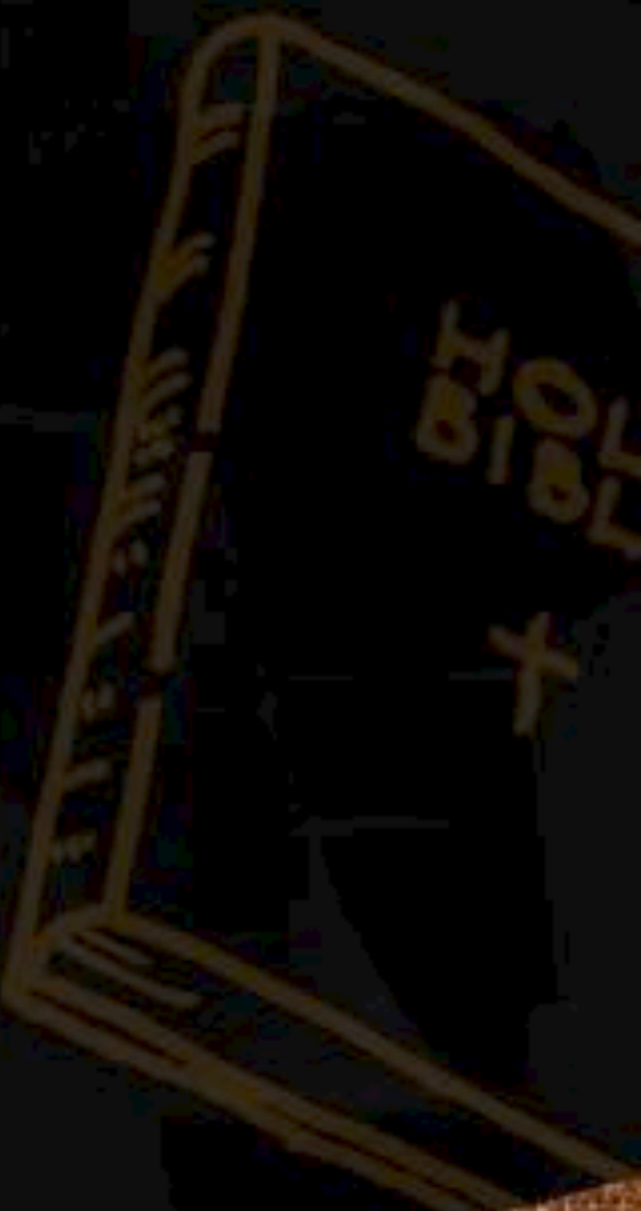
Krampus

# One way, or many?

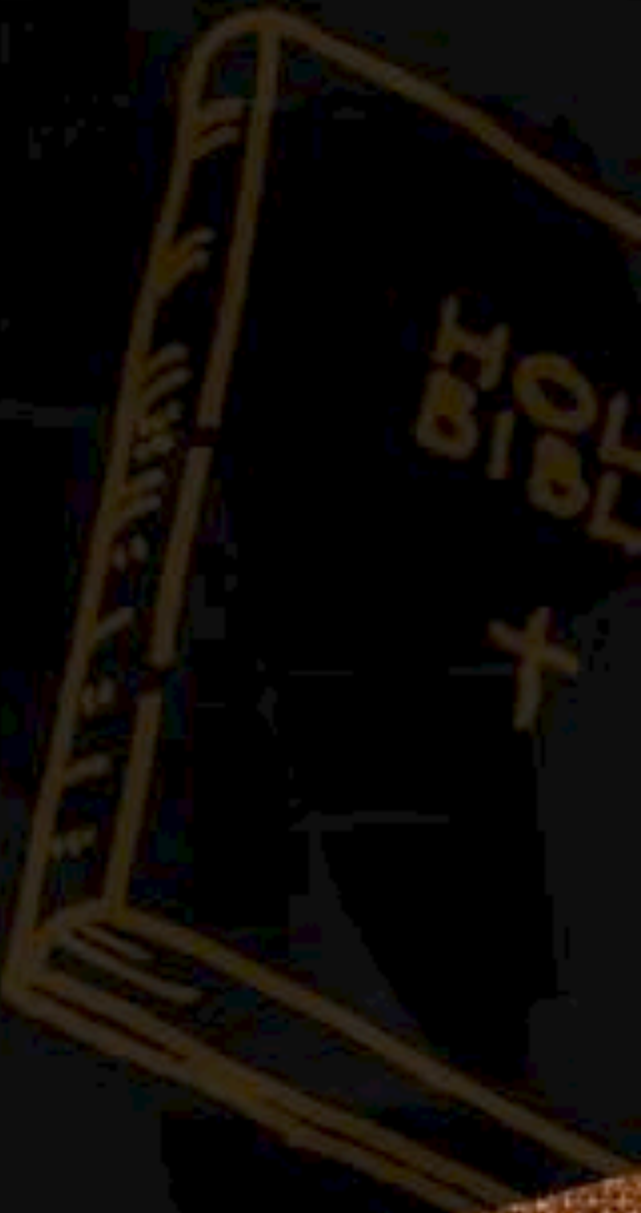
---

How do we deal with this tough question?

- + It doesn't logically make sense.



# Lee Strobel



# One way, or many?

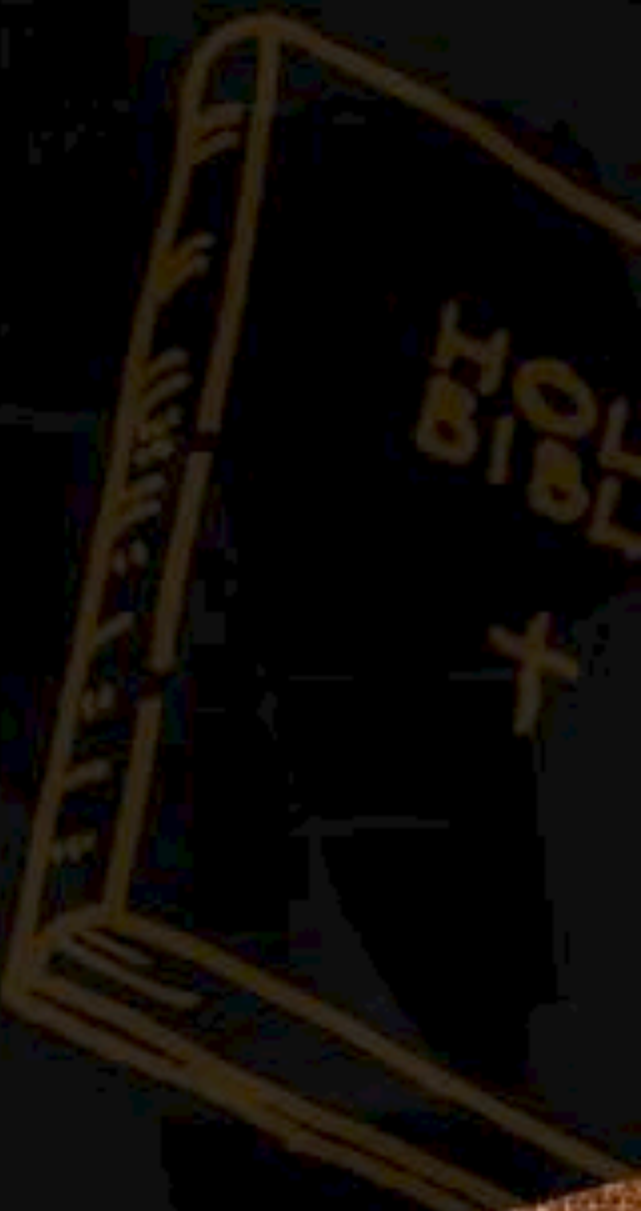
---

How do we deal with this tough question?

- + It doesn't logically make sense.

Reality is our best friend.

We live in a very “one way” world.





# One way, or many?

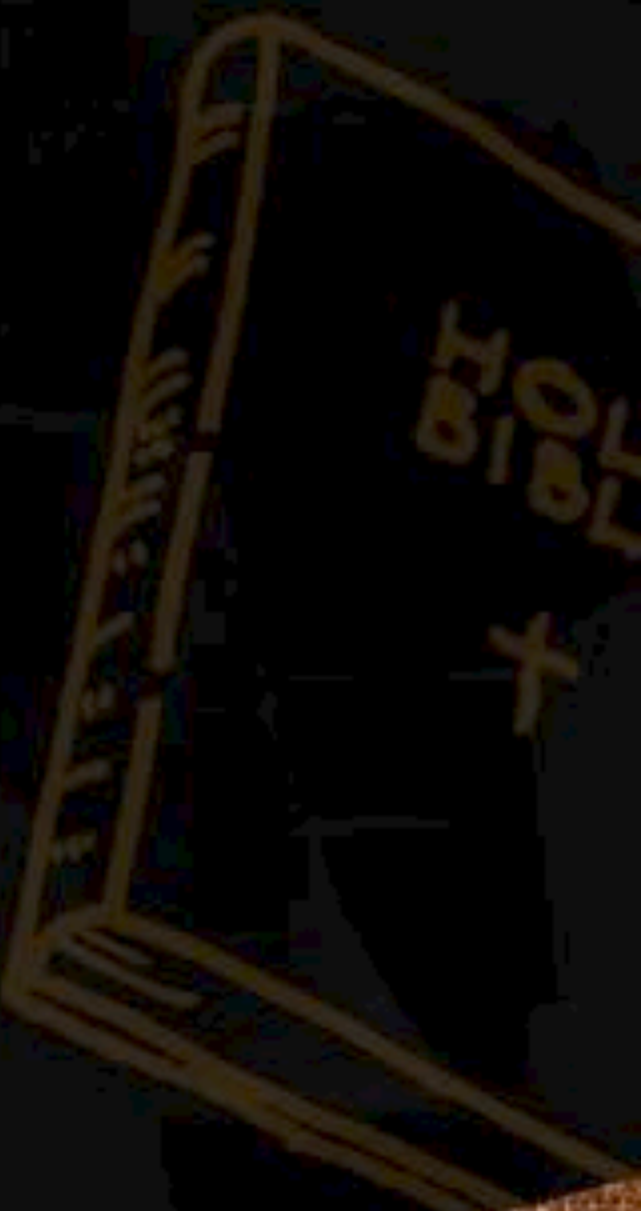
---

How do we deal with this tough question?

- + It doesn't logically make sense.

Reality is our best friend.

We live in a very “one way” world.

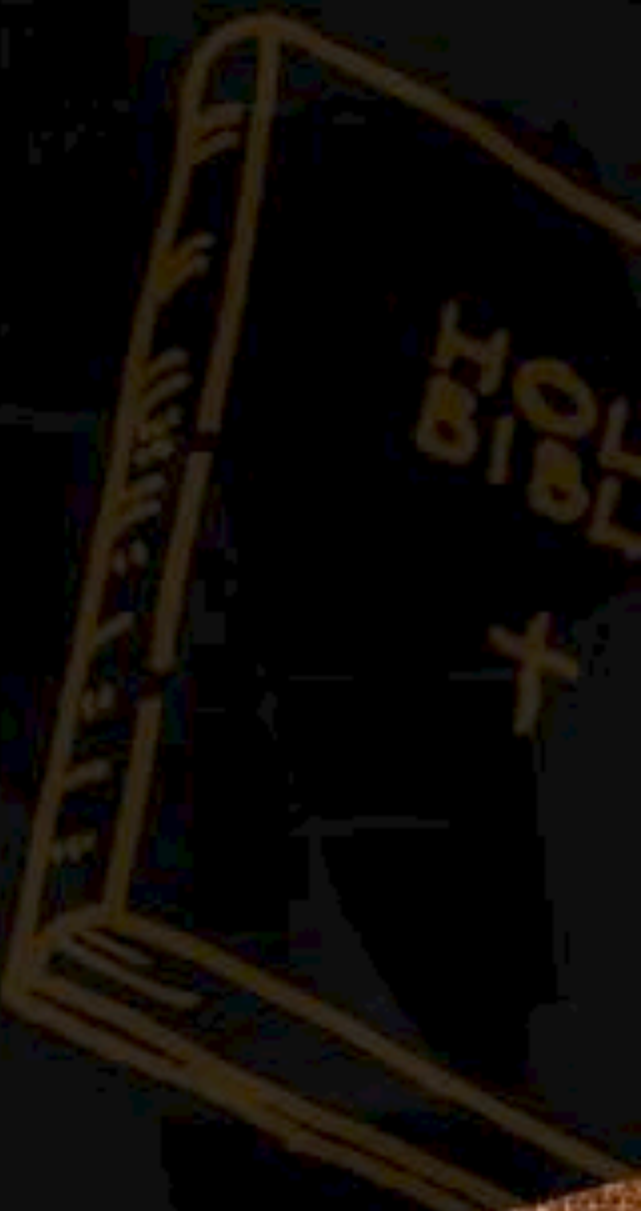


# One way, or many?

---

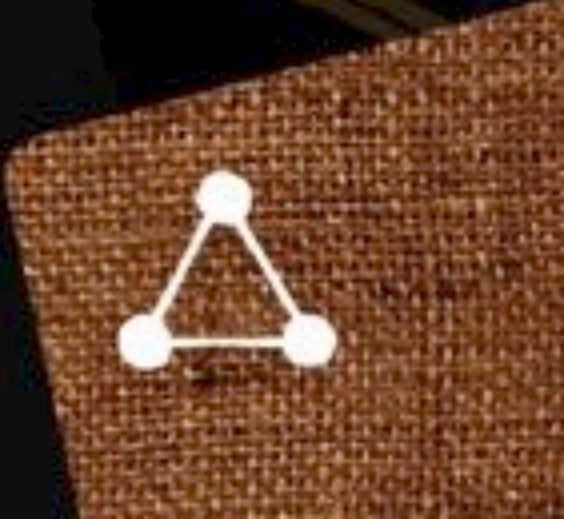
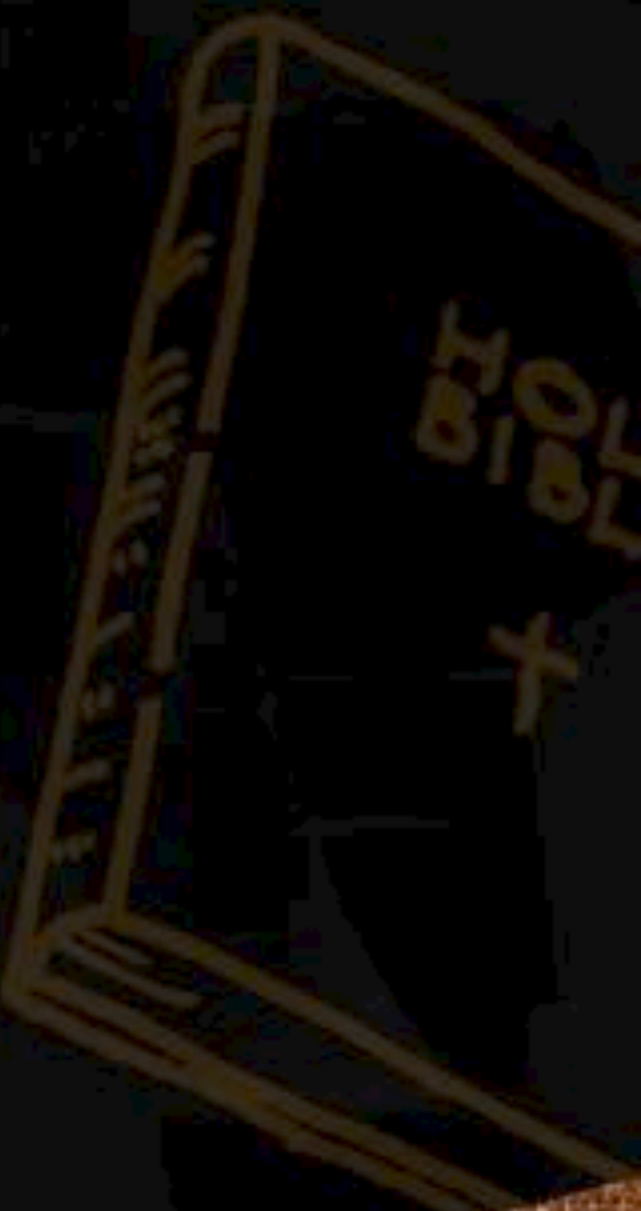
How do we deal with this tough question?

- + It doesn't logically make sense.
- + We didn't make it exclusive...Jesus did.





# Greg Koukl



# Jesus made it exclusive

“

All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

(Matthew 11:27)

”



# Jesus made it exclusive

“

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.

(John 6:40)

”



## Jesus made it exclusive

“

...everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

(Matthew 10:32-33)

”



# Jesus made it exclusive

“

Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’

(John 14:6)

”



# Jesus made it exclusive

“ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

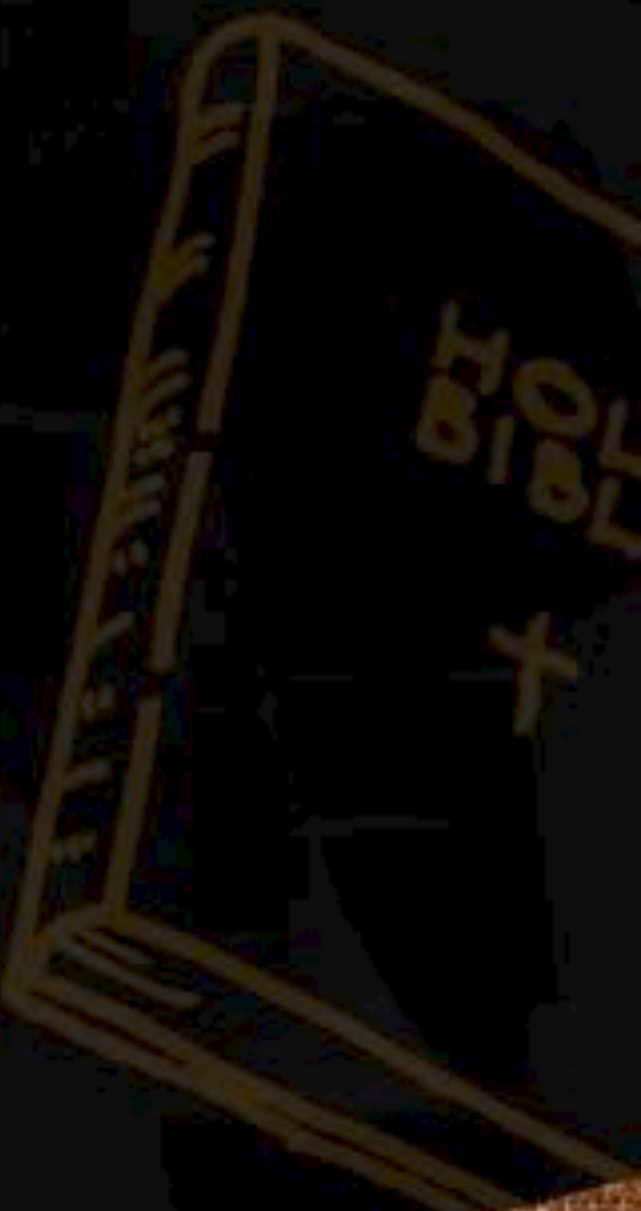
(John 3:14-18)



# Jesus made it exclusive

---

Jesus not only said He was the only way,  
but He declared that any other way was false.



# Jesus made it exclusive

“

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ...I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved...

(John 10:1, 9)

”





# Jesus made it exclusive

“

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

(Matthew 7:15)

”



## Jesus made it exclusive

“

...many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ... For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

(Matthew 24:11, 24)

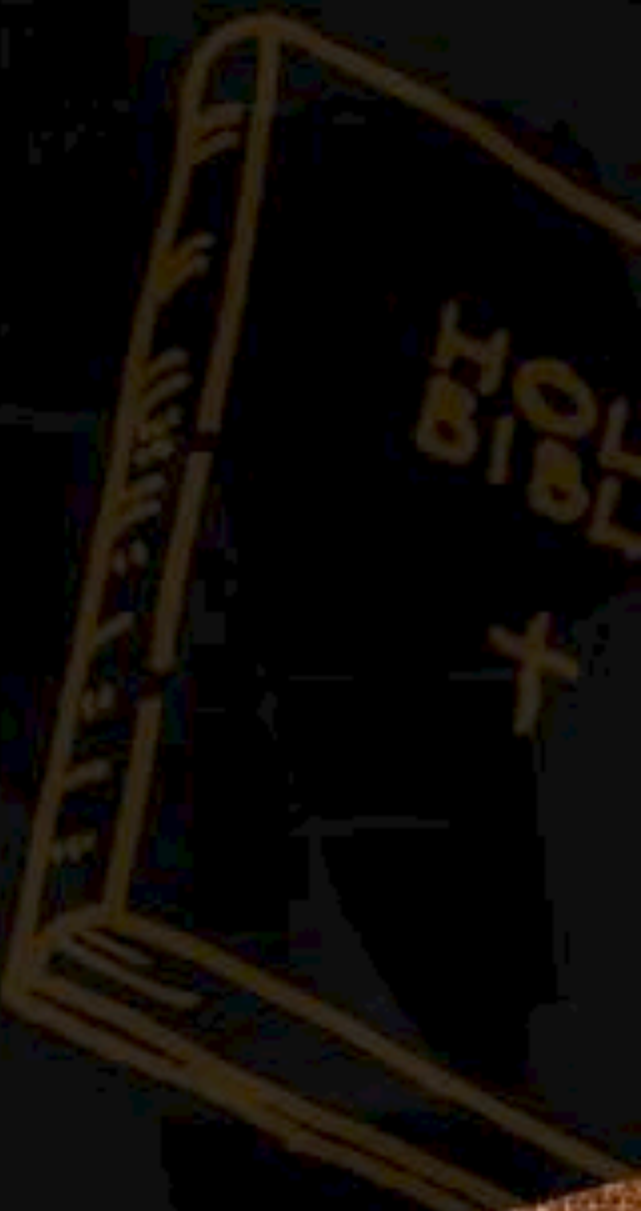
”



# Jesus made it exclusive

---

The disciples didn't misunderstand.



# “I am the only way” - Paul’s Understanding

“

For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth...yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

”

(1 Corinthians 8:5-6)



# “I am the only way” - Peter’s Understanding

“

Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in **no one else**, for there is **no other name** under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

”

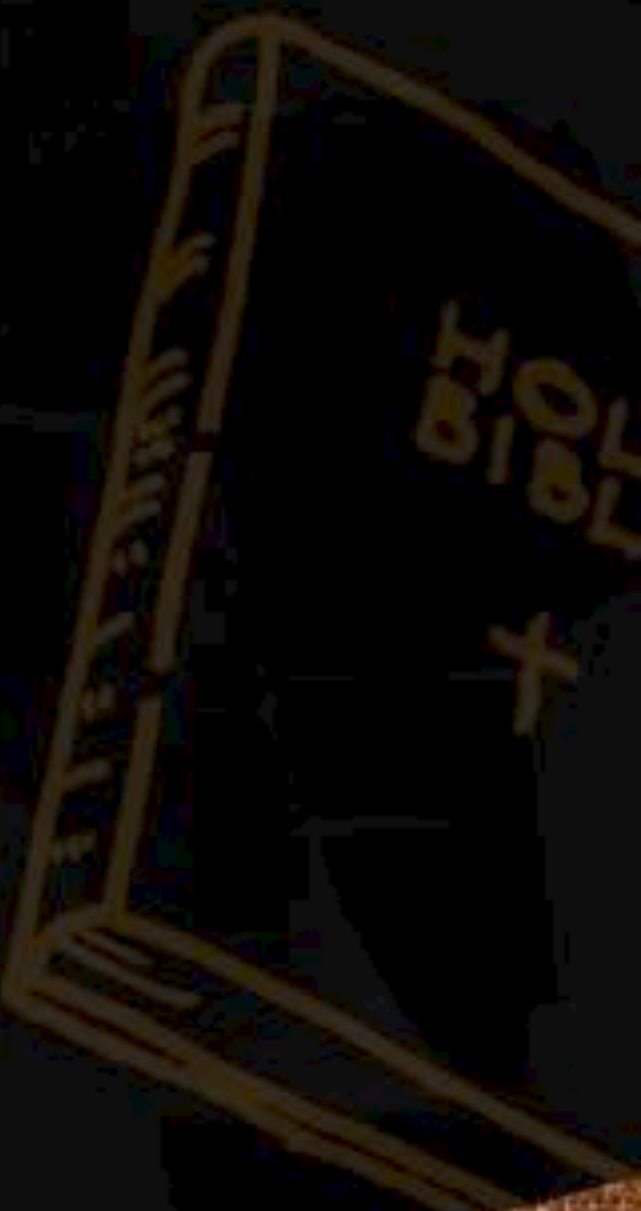
(Acts 4:8-12)



# Jesus made it exclusive

---

We struggle with exclusivity because we think  
too little of Jesus,  
and too little of what He did.



# The Atonement

- + The amazing atonement claim of Jesus...  
No other major religion makes this claim.
- + If Jesus is only one of many ways...  
What other ways could satisfy the wrath of a holy God?
- + If the works of man are sufficient, then why did Jesus die?  
God must be cruel.



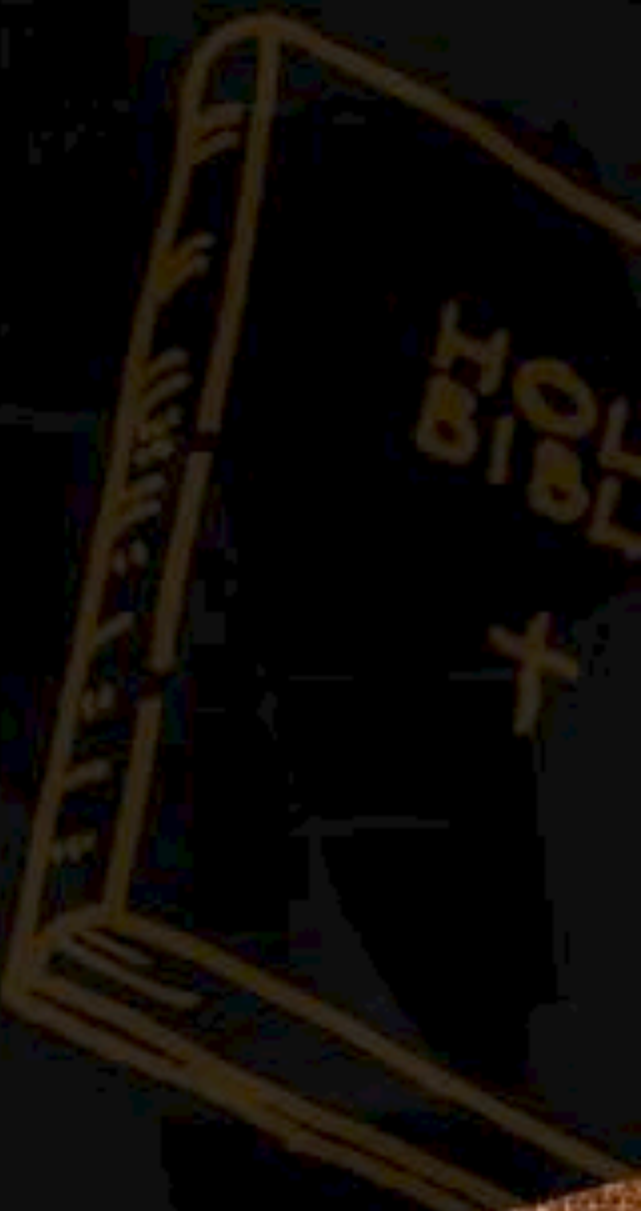
# One way, or many, or none?

---

A logical look at some of the arguments...

✚ “All religious roads lead to the same place.”

Tell me about that place...





# One way, or many, or none?

---

A logical look at some of the arguments...

- ✚ “All major religions are equally valid and basically teach the same thing and worship the same God.”

Tell me about those same things...

Tell me about that God...



# One way, or many, or none?

---

A logical look at some of the arguments...

- ✚ “Jesus never intended for His followers to make Him exclusive. This was just a power move by them.”

Can I share some of His statements with you...?



# One way, or many, or none?

---

A logical look at some of the arguments...

- + “Each religion sees part of spiritual truth, but none of them can see the whole truth.”

What is that whole truth...?



# One way, or many, or none?

---

A logical look at some of the arguments...

- ✚ “All belief is rooted in social constructs and can’t really be ‘truth.’”  
So, if you were born in Morocco, you might be saying the opposite of this. And that would mean that what you are saying right now: “all belief is rooted in social constructs” is merely the product of your own social constructs, and so it can’t be really true...  
right?



# One way, or many, or none?

---

A logical look at some of the arguments...

- + “It is arrogant to insist your religion is right and to convert others to it.”

Isn't it arrogant to believe this as well...?



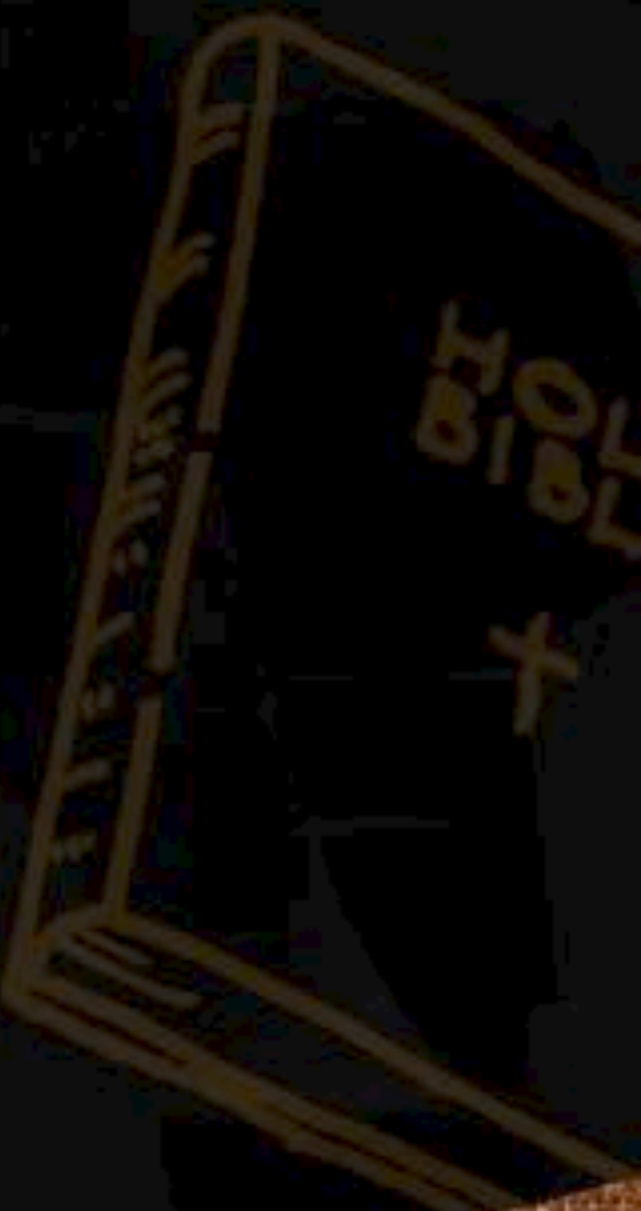
# One way, or many, or none?

---

A logical look at some of the arguments...

✚ “There can’t be only one absolute way.”

Why not? Our world is full of absolutes...



Revisiting the “big” question...

**Is Jesus God?**

Can the answer to the “big” question help us  
with the answer to the “hard” question?

**Is Jesus the Only Way?**



Revisiting the “big” question...

Is Jesus God?

What was the answer?

What is the problem with that answer?





# The Problem

- + “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”  
(Deuteronomy 6:4)
- + “...I am God, and there is no other...” (Isaiah 46:9)



# The “Clues” in the Shadows

- + “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”  
(Genesis 1:26)
- + “Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil...” (Genesis 3:22)
- + “Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language...” (Genesis 11:7)
- + “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isaiah 6:8)



# The Amazing Revelation

---

- + God is a socially complex Being
- + Jesus is God in the flesh



# The Application

- + If Jesus is merely a man, he is one among billions of men.
- + If Jesus is merely a prophet, he is one among dozens of prophets.
- + If Jesus is just a founder of a religious movement, he is one among many such founders.
- + If Jesus is just a god among many gods, he is just one among a pantheon of deities.

**But if there is only one God, and Jesus is that God,  
and He says that He is the only way...**

**Then Jesus has to be the only way. There is no other.**



# The Application

---

- + The higher one sees Jesus, the more “the only way” makes sense.
- + The lower one sees Jesus, the less it makes sense.



# The Application

- + There is no middle ground with Jesus.
- + “You are either with Me, or you are against Me.”  
(Matthew 12:30)

**Which is it?**



# The Conclusion

---

- + Logic and reality are friends.
- + Don't let people make you the author of Jesus's exclusivity...  
If you are the problem, you are insufficient to answer it.
- + If Jesus isn't the only way, then He is a liar...  
The atonement is worthless and cruel.
- + However, if Jesus claimed it, and He is God...  
He has the authority and proofs to back it up.



**Is Jesus the only way?**

It's **STILL** a really tough question.





# Telling the Story

**Is Jesus the only way?**

**It's STILL a really tough question.**

*Especially when you're in tough situations...  
like on a TV show,  
and Oprah is the host...*



**“...Many paths to god. ...” (Oprah)**

---



# Neighborly Apologetics

**Is Jesus the only way?**

**It's STILL a REALLY tough question.**

**How will you handle it?**

**Hopefully through a trusted relationship backed with  
fervent, sincere intercessory prayer**

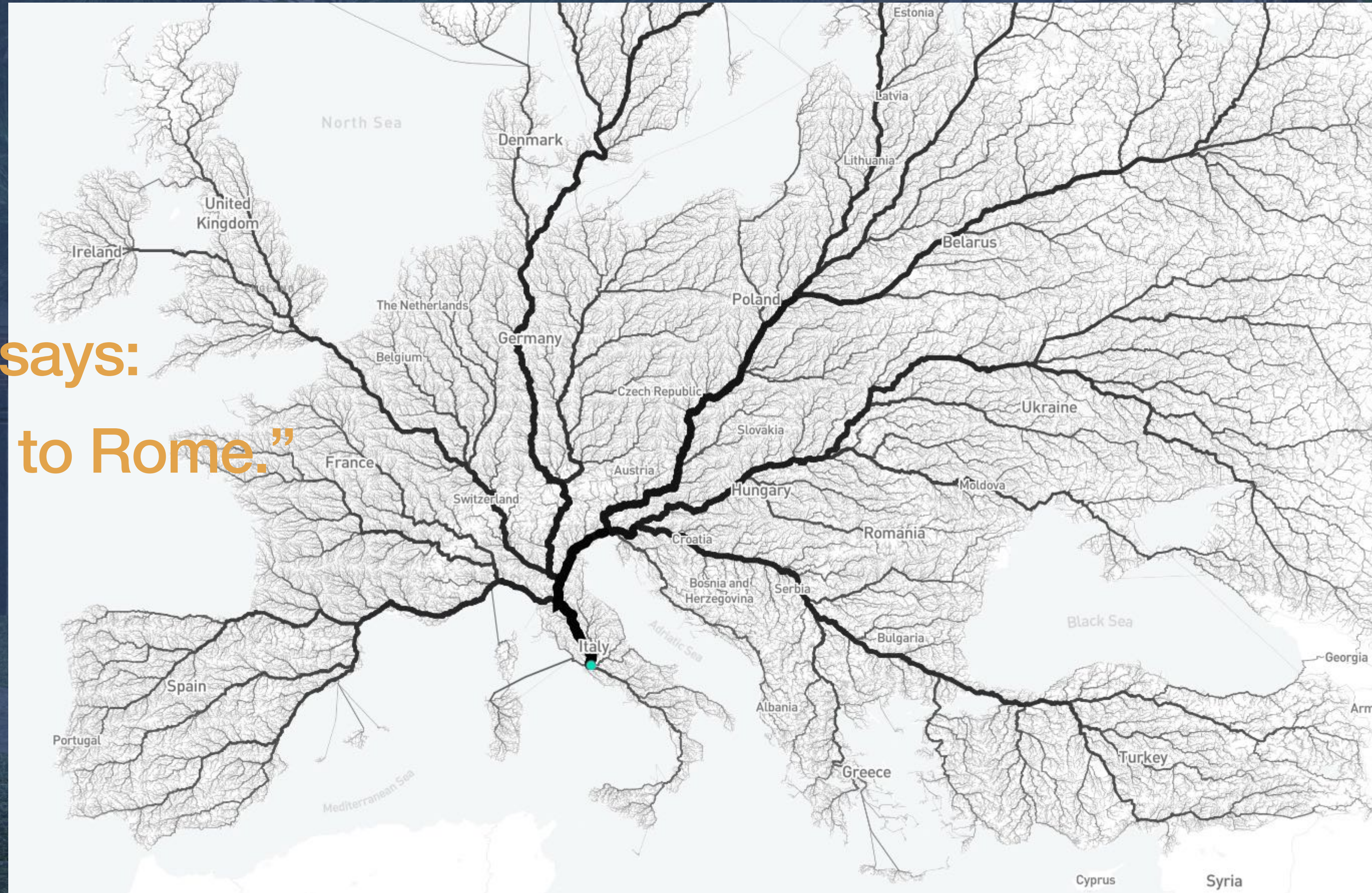
# Neighborly Apologetics

# Is Jesus the only way?

so, if Mrs. Smith says:

“Well, all roads lead to Rome.”

How will you  
handle it?



# Neighborly Apologetics

## 3. Only One Way & Religious Pluralism



Neighborly Apologetic  
Categories:

next



4. Faith and Reason

1. Evil and Suffering
  2. Absolute Truth and Relativism
  3. "Only One Way" and Religious Pluralism
  4. Faith and Reason
  5. Free Will and Sovereignty
  6. God's Existence and Nature
  7. Goodness of Man, Judgment and Hell
  8. Hypocrisy and Christian Crimes of the Past
  9. The Claims of Jesus and the Resurrection
  10. Miracles
  11. Science and Evolution
  12. The Veracity of the Bible and "Contradictions"
- Plus: Burning Issues of our Day