

Why are there Different Denominations of Christianity?

When Jesus began to teach the Gospel, many people were astonished at what he taught. Some were so astonished they could not, nor would not accept who he was, or what he taught.

Even to this day, there are people who dispute Jesus was the Son of God, or that the Gospel is the Word of God. And if they believe the Gospel is the Word of God, they dispute exactly what Jesus meant in some passages of the Gospel. This has led to some people believing in different “interpretations” of the Gospel which has resulted in different denominations of Christianity.

However, despite there being different denominations of Christianity there are several Truths that all Christians agree on:

- There is only One God, and Jesus and the Holy Spirit are an extension of God’s Love and Grace and thus form the Holy Trinity;
- Jesus is the only begotten Son of God who was free of all sin and corruption from birth;
- Every person on earth is a Child of God because God is a Spirit and our souls are made in His Image. However, we must choose whether or not we want to be free of sin and corruption and be part of God’s Spiritual Family;
- Jesus established a New Covenant between God and mankind when he fulfilled the prophecy of the Old Testament of a Messiah to come making it possible for each of us to guarantee our salvation into the Kingdom of God; and
- The Gospel, as recorded by his followers Matthew, Mark, Luke and John is the written record of the Teachings of Jesus Christ.

No matter what language of the Gospel you read, or despite some words being different in each translation or generation of the Gospel you read (i.e., King James Version; American Standard, New Revised Standard Version, etc.) the basic teachings of the Gospel remain the same. As Jesus said, **“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”** (The Gospel, Mark 13:31)

The Path to Eternal Salvation

When Jesus was walking from town to town teaching the Gospel to all people, he said to one of his original twelve Apostles:

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. [19] And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (The Gospel, Matthew 16:18-19)

Peter was the first “Pope” of the church that Jesus established which is today the Catholic Church. The main reason different denominations of Christian churches rose up centuries after Jesus appointed Peter to lead his church was because some Christians began to “interpret” certain parts of the Gospel to mean something different than what the Catholic Church supported. This is a very important point to understand because some Christian denominations teach a different path to eternal salvation due to how they “interpret” the Gospel.

For example, in some Protestant denominations they teach that a person's soul enters the Kingdom of God the moment they "believe" Jesus is the Son of God and by his death we are permanently cleansed from all our sins. They believe it is by this "faith alone" their eternal salvation in the Kingdom of God is guaranteed. They believe this because of scripture in the Gospel where Jesus says:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: [15] That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. [16] For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. [17] For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. [18] He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [19] And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. [20] For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. [21] But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (The Gospel, John 3:14-21)

When it comes to eternal salvation, Catholic denominations teach that a person must accept Jesus as our Savior, but also *do* the Will of God before we can enter the Kingdom of God. They believe this because of scriptures in the Gospel where Jesus says:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [23] And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. [24] Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: [25] And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. [26] And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: [27] And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.” (The Gospel, Matthew 7:21-27)

So what is the answer? Is our eternal salvation with God guaranteed the moment we accept Christ into our lives as our Savior, or do we also need to do the Will of God before we can enter God's Kingdom?

Whenever there is a question about God's Authority, we do not have to rely on someone's "interpretation" of the Gospel to understand what Jesus said or meant. If we want to know what the Word of God says on a particular topic, all we have to do is read for ourselves what Jesus said:

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. [4] And Jesus answered him, saying, “It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (The Gospel, Luke 4:3-4)

According to the passage we just read, if we believe Jesus is the Son of God who came to teach us the Word of God, then we must believe every word Jesus taught us. Referring back to John 3:14-21, Jesus

clearly says, *“whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”* and, *“He that believeth on him is not condemned”*.

Jesus also clearly says in Matthew 7:21-23, *“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”*

If we believe the Gospel is the Word of God, and we believe Jesus when he said in Luke 4:3-4, *“That man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God.”* then we must believe that our salvation is not guaranteed by “faith alone” but by believing in Jesus’ authority from God *and* by living our lives according to his teachings and commandments.

To say we “believe in” something, and then not model our lives after what we say we believe in, is the same as saying, *“I believe exercise will keep my body healthy”* but then never actually doing any exercise. As we all know, if we only say we believe in exercise, but then do not actually do any exercising, then our bodies will not benefit from what we believe in.

Other passages from the Gospel where Jesus says we must follow his teachings to enter the Kingdom of God with him are:

But he [Jesus] answered and said unto him that told him, *“Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? [49] And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! [50] For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”* (The Gospel, Matthew 12:48-50)

Jesus said, *“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. [39] He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”* (The Gospel, Matthew 10:38-39)

Jesus said, *“And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”* (The Gospel, Mark 9:47)

Jesus said, *“Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [20] For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (The Gospel, Matthew 5:19-22)*

But Jesus called them unto him, and said, *“Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. [17] Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” [18] And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? [19] And Jesus said unto him, “Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. [20] Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.” [21] And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. [22] Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, *“Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have**

treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.” [23] And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. [24] And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! [25] For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (The Gospel, Luke 18:16-25)

Jesus said, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: [32] And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: [33] And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. [34] Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: [35] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: [36] Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. [37] Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? [38] When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? [39] Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? [40] And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. [41] Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: [42] For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: [43] I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. [44] Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? [45] Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. [46] And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” (The Gospel, Matthew 25:31-46)

Doing the Will of God is so important to entering the Kingdom of God that Jesus compared himself and the Gospel to “food” that we must eat if we are to have everlasting life. Just as we eat food every day that becomes part of our bodies and enables our bodies to live, so must we digest the Word of God and make it part of our hearts and souls if we are to understand exactly what Jesus was trying to teach us about entering the Kingdom of God.

Simply put, Jesus “walked the talk” and told us we must do the same if we are ever to enter the Kingdom of God. This is why Jesus referred to himself and the Gospel as “the bread of life”.

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, “Murmur not among yourselves. [44] No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. [45] It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. [46] Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. [47] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. [48] I am that bread of life. [49] Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. [50] This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. [51] I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” [52] The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? [53] Then Jesus said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say

unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. [54] Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. [55] For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. [56] He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. [57] As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. [58] This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.” [59] These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. [60] Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? [61] When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, “Doth this offend you? [62] What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? [63] It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. [64] But there are some of you that believe not.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. [65] And he said, “Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” (The Gospel, John 6:43-65)

Anyone who tries to live by Jesus' Teachings knows how our hearts and souls become transformed and purified the more we draw closer to God and live by His Authority. In order to continue to purify our souls, we must leave the life of “self-centeredness” we are born into and enter a life of “self-sacrifice” as Jesus taught us through his words and actions. When we do this, we can actually feel the Love of God (the Kingdom of God) grow within us. As Jesus said, it is like a mustard seed that grows into a great tree:

And he [Jesus] said, “Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? [31] It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: [32] But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.” (The Gospel, Mark 4:30-32)

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he [Jesus] answered them and said, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: [21] Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” (The Gospel, Luke 17:20-21)

If we are not willing to free our hearts and souls of all sin and corruption in this life, and fill our hearts with the Love of God (the Kingdom of God) while in this world, then it will be by the Grace and Mercy of God that we will be allowed to live in His Presence in Heaven one day. According to the Gospel, this will be determined by Jesus on the day of our Judgment:

Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, “Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” [15] The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole. [16] And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. [17] But Jesus answered them, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” [18] Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. [19] Then answered Jesus and said unto them, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. [20] For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him

greater works than these, that ye may marvel. [21] For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. [22] For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: [23] That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. [24] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. [25] Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. [26] For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; [27] And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. [28] Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, [29] And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. [30] I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. [31] If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. [32] There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. [33] Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. [34] But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. [35] He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. [36] But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. [37] And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. [38] And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. [39] Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. [40] And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. [41] I receive not honour from men. [42] But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. [43] I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. [44] How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? [45] Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. [46] For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. [47] But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (The Gospel, John 5:14-47)

Jesus said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: [22] But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." (The Gospel, Matthew 5:21-22)

Jesus said, "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come. [33] Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. [34] O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. [35] A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. [36] But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. [37] For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (The Gospel, Matthew 12:32-37)

Remember, we do not have to rely on what someone tells us about the Gospel, or how they “interpret” the Gospel. We can read the Gospel and believe for ourselves what Jesus said and meant.

God’s peace be upon you,
-the Staff at MuslimsSeekingJesus.com