

Why so many religions (which is the right denomination)?

D E Wasake Esq. April 2021

Introduction

The work of trying to figure out which religion is right is not a pleasant work. People are inevitably offended and this message might offend some, yet that is not the intention. You see there will be no Catholics or Anglican or even Muslims in heaven and I will explain why and who will be in later. Instead, the intention is to get you to know Jesus – personally, not just know about him as billions of us do – all our lives, as I did for over 20 years.

For the 6 years I attended boarding school, it was compulsory to attend church (Anglican) every morning for about 15 minutes and then the Sunday service which was about 2 hours. This is a lot of church attendance and yet despite this, by the time I left secondary school to join University, I had all but left the faith – I was of course still a Christian in name – but I practically functioned like a non-believer, until in May 2017, when I had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit. I became born again and shortly thereafter got baptised in a church in Jersey, UK.

4 years later, I am now at the foot of a mountain that is about to move in Faith. That same Spirit of Jesus who led me to God has grown me spiritually and now asks me to cover this tough topic with you.

This article covers:

- The troubling question of human origin
- If Christianity is the right religion, why are there divisions?
- Which religion has the Spirit of Christ and which one the spirit of Anti Christ
- Is there one True Christian denomination?
- What caused and still causes divisions in the Churches

Here is a fun fact: There are 30,000 Christian clergy of all types, and more than 80,000 registered witches and fortune tellersⁱ. If it was a numbers game - the right religion is the one with the most people or leaders. But it's not a numbers game. The wide road is not always the right one.

Here is a not so fun fact: Every day, in Britain, around 300 couples are divorced. Somebody calls the *Samaritans* (suicide hotline) every six seconds. A 2015 study for the British House of Lords on the impact of pornography on societyⁱⁱ showed that:

- 1 in 5 children aged 12 – 13 think watching pornography is normal
- 1 in 10 of these children might be addicted to pornography
- 1 in 5 had seen pornographic images that upset them
- 12% admitted to making or being part of a sexually explicit video.

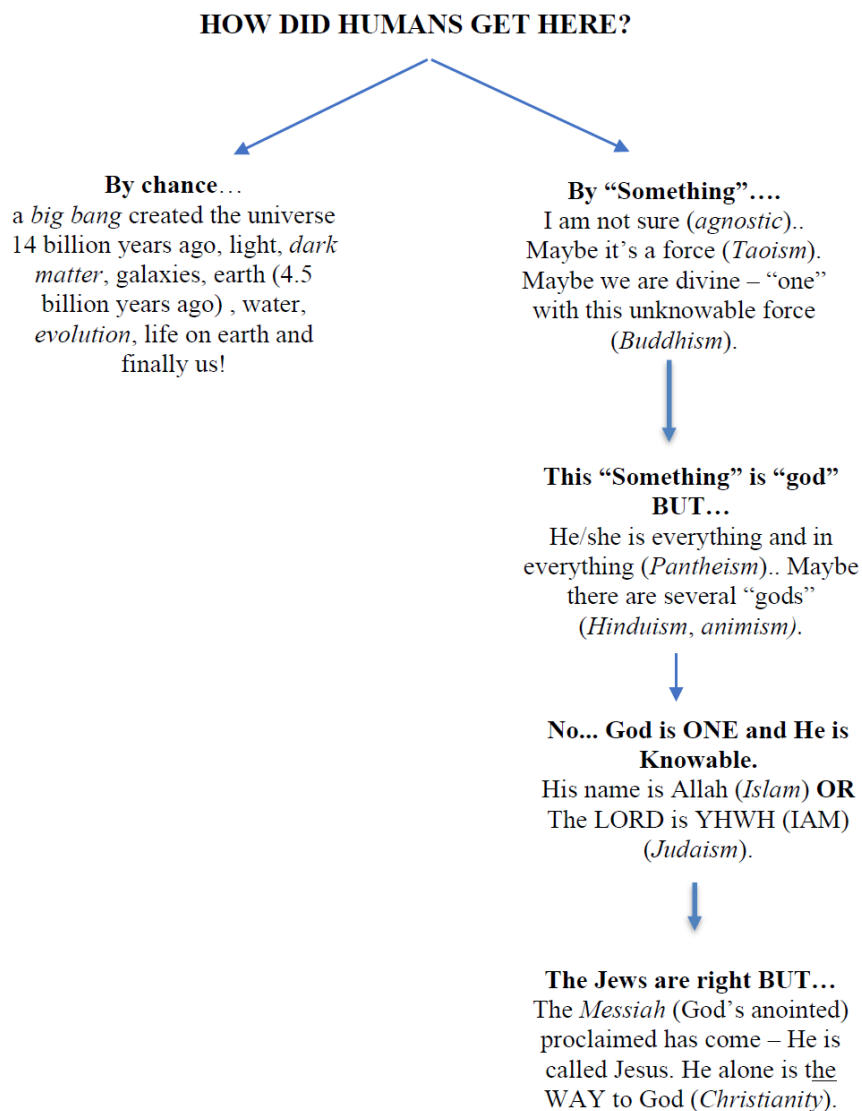
The fact is that society is trying to shut God out and they will tell you as Karl Marx said, “religion is the opium of the masses” yet, as the moral fabric of a nation dies, we see more trouble every day.

The solution therefore is not to shut God out but to get to work and ask the real question. Which is the right religion or rather the right denomination. This article will help to take this topic and cover the basics so you can start your own search. May God help me – and help you too!



The troubling question of human origin

Religion wouldn't be such a troubling matter for almost all humans if we didn't all at one point ask ourselves that pesky little question which gives both scientists and priests a hard time – "how did we get here". The origin of humans – in all their complexity and the universe around us means we must all encounter it and so by default, we must answer the "God questions". The Christian just like the non-Christian and even non believer inevitably encounters this question. The difference is how they approach it – and believe you me, both the scientist/atheist and religious take steps of faith – the scientist just calls it an "assumption". They are placing faith in their assumptions being true. For example, that the rate of change (for example in carbon dating) is constant – hence giving rise to our universe 14 billion years ago. But what if this wasn't true? That is, that the rate of change was not always constant? See how it takes faith? Well, below is a snap shot of the main beliefs in today's world to help you come to the core Christian beliefs.



If Christianity is right, why are there divisions in the Christian church?

Having understood the origins of the Christian faith and their claim to all follow Jesus, a casual observer will notice that there are divisions in the church today. The main Christian denominationsⁱⁱⁱ are:

- **Catholics** with over 1.3 billion members – making up about 50% of all Christians.
- **Protestant churches** (including Anglicanism, Baptists, Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism and Pentecostalism) – about 800m – 1 billion or up to 47% of all Christians.
- **Eastern Orthodox Church** – with about 230 million or about 12% of all Christians.

How did the divisions arise? We will cover that later below but first, why the divisions?

The simple answer according to the bible is so that the truth will be known.

“First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God’s approval will be recognized!” 1 Corinthians 11:18-19 NLT

So, Jesus the night before he was killed prayed for his disciples to be one, that is united (John 17:21). Nevertheless, the above passage of the Holy Spirit speaking through Paul the Apostle who wrote the above passage shows us that the existence of divisions acts like a sieve to the person seeking to know the truth – helping them know which Church or indeed religion is led by the Holy Spirit, who is the mark of the true Christian and which one is false – with the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

Who has the Spirit of Christ and who the spirit of the anti-Christ?

“Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world. This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here.” 1 John 4:1-3 NLT

The Litmus test is this:

Preaching about Jesus’ incarnation is the test of the one with the true Spirit of Christ.

“Let God’s curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News than the one we preached to you. I say again what we have said before: If anyone preaches any other Good News than the one you welcomed, let that person be cursed.” Galatians 1:8-9 NLT

So, the right denomination must first of all preach the correct gospel/good news of Jesus:

- Jesus came to the Earth - in the flesh.
- He died.
- He rose again.
- He is alive forever and sits at the right hand of God, as God promised David.

That is the core of the gospel and the core test of a person or church with the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

Jesus' death and resurrection while a low threshold for believe – as even many false prophets and Christian cults believe all the above about Jesus, it is still a good sieve for the true gospel of Christ and a saving faith. For example:

While Islam^{iv} believes that Jesus (Isa ibn Maryam) was a prophet, born of a virgin, performed miracles and was raised to heaven, it denies that he died and was crucified on a cross. It also denies his divinity – that he was the son of God.

Islam therefore doesn't portray the good news preached in the bible. Here is an example of that full good news from the bible:

Example from Peter on Pentecost: Jesus was indeed crucified

“People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus the Nazarene by doing powerful miracles, wonders, and signs through him, as you well know. But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip.” Acts of the Apostles 2:22-24 NLT

The Apostles writing in the new testament therefore show the core of what the “gospel” or “good news” is.

Is There One True Christian Denomination?

First, the different Christian denominations all agree on certain common aspects^v including: the existence of a mysterious trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), The Nature of Christ – fully human and fully God, The Resurrection of Christ was a real historical event and there is original sin (by Adam).

The most serious divisions however arise over: the authority of the bible, whether salvation is by faith or works, whether salvation can be lost, whether humans have free will or a pre destined by God and over the nature of Mary (immaculate conception – Mary was without original sin and remained a virgin).

Second, there are genuine Christians in different denominations - because the Church of Christ is universal - unified by the mark of Christ which every true believer has. Just like those belonging to the Anti-Christ will get a mark at the end, the True Christian has a mark. What is that mark? It is the Holy Spirit!

“And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised.” Ephesians 1:13 GNT

Therefore everyone, everywhere who has this stamp - Christ recognises as his own, this is they who are described as the “church” or the “one body” of Christ.

Having different denominations therefore doesn't necessarily mean they are not part of Christ's body - the differentiator is whether they have the Holy Spirit and whether they hold fast to the Apostle's teaching - the teaching handed down from Christ to his appointed representatives.

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer.” Acts of the Apostles 2:42 NLT

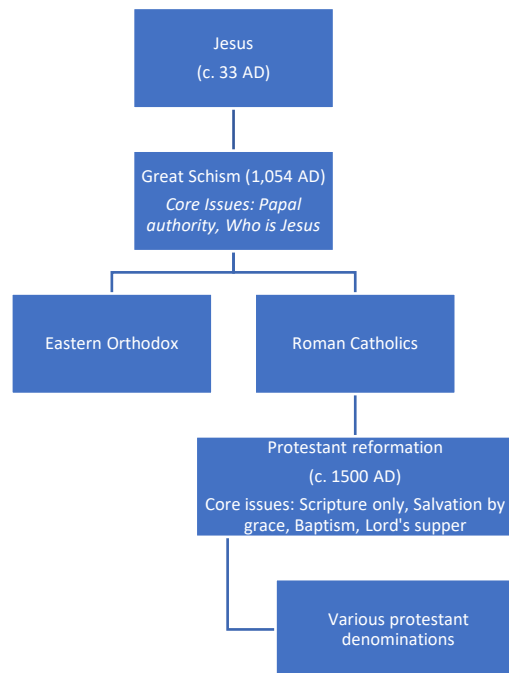
The only ones who will be in heaven will therefore be those who have the Holy Spirit – not whether they were good Catholics or Anglicans or even Pentecostals. Which means that it’s not religion which is important – it is relationship. At the end of time, Jesus illustrated it as follows when telling some to get away from him:

Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’ Matthew 7: 21-23.

Many of us think it’s about performing the sacraments (holy communion, penance, baptism) or even having the gifts (speaking in tongues, prophesy) but It has always been about obedience to Jesus – doing his will. You cannot do the will of someone you don’t know – hence why it’s about relationship!

What caused and still causes the divisions in the church?

A quick history ^{vi}is as follows:



Here are the core differences among denominations ^{vii}including the protestants^{viii}

- **Salvation**
 - God’s grace by faith and ongoing works/sacraments: *Roman Catholic, Orthodox:*
 - God’ grace by Faith alone: *All others (e.g., Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Assembly of God, Reformed, Methodist, Baptist, Pentecostal*
- **Basis for doctrine/authority**
 - *Roman Catholic:* bible, church fathers, bishops, pope.

- *Anglican*: bible and church fathers.
- *All others*: Bible alone (“sola scriptura”).
- **Baptism:**
 - *Baptists, many independent or non-denominational churches, and Pentecostals* -only adults should be baptised after they make a decision to follow Jesus
 - *Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Reformed, Roman Catholic and Methodist churches* – baptise children.
- **Predestination/Election vs calling:**
 - God chooses who will be saved (predestination): *Lutheran, some Anglican, Presbyterian, Assembly of God, Catholic and Reformed churches* –
 - God has only made salvation available and we need to choose Him first: *Methodists and many Baptists*
- **Eternal security (can salvation be lost)**
 - *Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian*– No.
 - *Assembly of God, Lutheran, Methodist, Roman Catholics*– Yes.
- **Women ordination**
 - *Anglican, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecostal* – Mainly no but it varies from church to church (not universal).
 - *Others* – Yes, women can be ordained.
- **Dominant Worship style**
 - *Roman Catholic, Anglican Methodist, Lutheran, Anglican, Episcopalian* – traditional (liturgy)
 - *Baptist, Assembly of God, Pentecostal* – contemporary/free (non liturgical) worship.

Other differences exist^{ix} over aspects like: creeds and confessions, atonement and sacraments.

Conclusion of the matter

The purpose of providing the differences in the different religions is not simply an academic exercise to give you knowledge. It is to show that through it all, there is a common thread that brings together true Christians, whatever their denomination. They know Jesus personally and have an ongoing relationship with him through the Holy Spirit. These Christians may for example worship in different styles, BUT they know Jesus – not just know about him. There will indeed be no Catholics or Protestants or Orthodox in Heaven and neither will there be Muslims or Hindu. It is not about religion. The only people who will be in Heaven will be those who were sealed by the Holy Spirit and did the will of God by washing their garments in the blood of the lamb. Have you washed your garment in Jesus’ blood? Do you know Jesus or do you simply know about Jesus?

Let us pray.

How can I pray for you?

- You are a believer but you fear your faith journey has become replaced by the routines of religion. You need the Lord’s help to return to his grace.
- You used to be a believer, but are a prodigal son/daughter. Nevertheless, the Lord is calling you back, saying “I don’t want to say, I knew you not, come and eat with me again”
- You have never received the gift of Christ, being eternal life and neither have you received his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to put a seal on you. Jesus is calling.

Write to me so I can pray further for you: dwasake@shaweleroad.com Be blessed. END.

Next steps

- Visit our website which shows the steps it takes to get to know Jesus and his truth.

<https://www.shaweleroad.com/what-must-i-do-to-get-saved>

Information notice board

- 1) **About me.** Before I became a devoted Christian, I spent 20 years of my life being a hedonist – one who seeks pleasure for the sake of it, yet Love also brought pain! Since God humbled me to turn me into his servant and I got baptized in May 2017, he has enabled me to experience his amazing grace and to live by the Holy Spirit. You can read my full testimony [here](#):
- 2) **About these series.** The Lord Jesus gave me a single word “Go” as I was praying for a word for this season and series. This word will define a series of 12 topics he has also given me to tell his church in order to fulfil the “Great Commission”. This lesson is one of those messages.
- 3) **Pray for us!** Without the Lord, our effort is in vain. Pray that we remain faithful, humble servants.
- 4) **Subscribe to** our [YouTube Channel](#) and keep up with our videos which support the website.
- 5) **Looking for a ministry to partner with (pray, volunteer, give, subscribe to)?**

<https://immanuelodessa.com/index.php>

Immanuel means “God with us.” We believe God has empowered us with his presence for his glory, the world, our city, and you.

Notes

ⁱ <https://bibleinoneyear.org/bioy/commentary/3305>

ⁱⁱ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/LLN-2015-0041/LLN-2015-0041.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denomination

^{iv} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_in_Islam

^v <https://www.learnreligions.com/comparing-christian-denominations-beliefs-part-1-700537#:~:text=Christian%20denominations%20differ%20in%20what,the%20Gospels%2C%20and%20church%20fathers.&text=Lutheran%3A%20The%20Bible%20only>

^{vi} <https://www.biblword.net/what-is-the-difference-between-the-major-christian-denominations/>

^{vii} <https://www.learnreligions.com/comparing-christian-denominations-beliefs-part-1-700537#:~:text=Christian%20denominations%20differ%20in%20what,the%20Gospels%2C%20and%20church%20fathers.&text=Lutheran%3A%20The%20Bible%20only>

^{viii} <https://www.dummies.com/religion/christianity/comparing-beliefs-across-the-christian-church/>

^{ix} <https://www.learnreligions.com/comparing-christian-denominations-beliefs-part-1-700537#:~:text=Christian%20denominations%20differ%20in%20what,the%20Gospels%2C%20and%20church%20fathers.&text=Lutheran%3A%20The%20Bible%20only>