

## 6. Why are there so many religions?

Many see all the different religions in the world today and conclude that God is confused or does not exist. However, nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus gives us three reasons why the majority rejects truth and how you can avoid the deception. "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:13-16) The first reason why there are so many religions and spiritual expressions is because people seek the easy way and reject the hard way. People are like sheep that follow the majority. The majority of people simply do what feels good. God's truth is difficult and turns many away. Jesus said it would be this way. The second reason why there are so many different religions is because of false prophets. False prophets dress up like they are authentic, but they are not (see Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:18-22; 2 Peter 2:1-3). Jesus said you would know them by their fruit. This leads to the third reason why there are so many false religions – people refuse to discern the fruit of false prophets. Instead of refusing them, people join them. The danger of not believing God's word as absolute truth is that you end up believing in anything. God is calling you to look at the fruit of false prophets so you will not be deceived. He has given his Son so that you would know the truth. He wrote it down in his word so you could search and test it for yourself. Don't let false religion or empty spirituality or atheism deceive you; reject the majority opinion and enter by the narrow way, and you will find true life.

The one unique characteristic about biblical Christianity is found in a God who seeks and saves those who are lost. Every religion, spirituality, or atheism has men seeking to gain God or society's acceptance by some human effort done by human good works. This is the basis of all false religion. Only biblical Christianity calls men to come to God, not on the basis of some human effort or "good works," but by faith alone in what God has done in Christ alone. On the basis of this grace, God calls all men to come and have a relationship with him. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Bible passages to read: 2 Peter 1-3; Deuteronomy 13:1-5, 18:18-22

Questions to ponder:

1. Why did Jesus say there would be many who reject him?
2. What are the characteristics of a false prophet?
3. Does the existence of many other religions make them true?
4. Have you been influenced by false teachers and prophets?
5. What is a unique characteristic of biblical Christianity when compared to every other religion? Do you accept this?