

One and Only

One Among Many?

In a culturally diverse world, it is easy to see Christianity as simply one more religion among many. Jesus could easily be seen as just one more holy person among many. In fact, even those who initially encountered Jesus thought that he might simply be one more prophet among many. In order to answer this question as accurately as possible, we have to look at the evidence. Is there any evidence that could lead us to staking our entire lives on the Christian claim? And the entire Christian claim rises and falls on the answer to this one question: is Jesus merely one among many? Or is he the One and Only?.

Discussion Questions

1. What is one thing that you used to believe that you don't believe anymore? What new information was given that changed your mind? On another note: what is one thing that you used to *not believe* that you now do believe? What happened? What new information changed your mind?
2. What do you think of the claim that a person does not have a right to have an opinion on a topic unless they have sufficient information? Can you think of a time when you may have held an opinion without sufficient information? Why do you think that was?
3. If someone asked you why you are a Catholic, what reasons might you be able to offer? Keep in mind that those reasons might not be enough for *them*, but are they enough for you?
4. Have you ever had the experience of someone challenging that foundation of your faith in Jesus or in the Bible? What was that like? What kinds of questions did they ask? How did you respond? If you were stuck by their questions, have you ever taken the time to look for a better way to respond to their challenge? If so, what did you learn? If not, why not?
5. Which of the brief arguments that Father Mike presented on the evidence that Jesus is unique resonated the most with you (if any)? How come?
6. Do you find yourself treating Jesus as if He is merely one among many "important" things in your life? Or as if He is truly the One and Only? If you struggle with this, what are Christ's chief rivals in your life?

God in Real Life

- I. Most often, we do not intentionally choose to place Jesus as one among many in our lives. Rather, He just slips out of first place. This means that keeping Him as the One and Only requires a degree of forethought and effort. What is one way that you could place Jesus in His rightful place in your life this week? What do you anticipate will be the biggest obstacle to this? Be prepared to face that obstacle.

Be Transformed

Jesus Christ did not merely claim, but demonstrated that He was both Messiah and Lord:

- A. The prophet Isaiah foretold the manner in which the Messiah would suffer and die. He wrote these words at least 600 years before Jesus. They are so compelling that later skeptics thought that someone interjected the prophecies into the text. This skeptic's challenge was disproved by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. (Isaiah 53)
- B. Saint Peter's Second Letter notes that he (and the others who witnessed Jesus' miracles and resurrection were not making things up. In reference to his own eyewitness testimony of the Transfiguration, Peter writes that these stories are not myths. (. God wills that ALL come to knowledge of Him and salvation. (2 Peter: 1:16)
- C. When it comes to the fact of the Resurrection, the "Argument from Embarrassment" is unique but convincing. The Gospels recount that it was women who first announced that Jesus was alive. In both Roman and Jewish culture, a woman's testimony was easily disregarded (my apologies, sisters). This inclines us to believe that the only reason it was included in the Gospels is because *that's how it actually happened*, even if it would have been embarrassing in that culture. (see Luke 24, Matthew 28, Mark 16, John 20).
- D. Saint Polycarp was born in the first century. He is described as having spent time with many of the many eyewitnesses of the Resurrection. He writes: "may he give to you a share and a place among his saints, and to us with you, and to all those under heaven who will yet believe in our Lord and God Jesus Christ and in his Father who raised him from the dead."
- E. The Catechism of the Catholic church notes: "The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56 St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. . ." The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus" (CCC 639).

To the Heart

“Jesus said to him,

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves. (John 14:6-11)