**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

***God Speaks to Us: Hebrews 1:1***

***The Son, The Way, Ekklesia, Congregation, Assembly***

May 26th, In the Year of Our Lord 2024

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

Sermon Audio: roundtopchurch.org / Under Member’s tab

The fallen world has always had alternative messages leading people away from God our Creator Father. Genesis 3 details the fall of man with the account of Adam and Eve willfully choosing to believe lies and rebel against God. However, God did not stop communicating to His people that He created in His image to have a relationship with Him. God speaks to us through His Prophets (Bible), His Creation (Nature: what He has made: Psalm 97, 104; Romans 1:18ff), His Incarnation-voice through “**The Way**.” Remember, Jesus said, "**I am the way**, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14:6). This is an exclusive statement but not like many think. This statement is not made in a field of many equal choices as some would have you to think. Jesus’ exclusive statement is exclusive because all other options are a dead end. Meaning that all other options do not satisfactorily answer the eternal questions for the individual.

Western “modernist” teach that truth cannot be known. With this worldview being pervasive through Western culture. . . the Jesus message is diluted to be one of many in a field of delusional choices. Instead of truth as in 2 + 2 = 4 being accepted, the modernist culture will argue the point. Google the question “does 2 +2 always equal 4,” and see what you get. The modernist cannot even agree on basic mathematics.

How exclusive is the Jesus Message. . . think of “you can only live if you breath air, drink water, and eat food.” You would say. . . “of course, that is the only way to stay alive.” When you compare what Jesus teaches, which is a restatement of God’s plan for life in the Old Testament, to any other world religion or life-system, Jesus teaches the superior plan. God’s eternal-life-plan, Who is the Creator of life, has the only life-plan to sustain life to its fullest and achievable level which includes the plan for the individual’s eternal life. Jesus’ plan is the “exclusive way” because it works where all others fail at some point.

**World Population 8.1 billion**

**2.6 billion Christians in the World: World Religion Database,**

There will be over 2.6 billion Christians worldwide by the middle of 2023 and around 3.3 billion by 2050, according to a report published in early January by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. The 2,604,381,000 estimates for mid-year 2023 Christian population total is a 44,506,000-person increase from the mid-year 2022 total. https://goodfaithmedia.org/global-christian-population-projected-to-reach-3-3-billion-by-2050/

**15.7 million Jews (2023)**

**As of 2022: Jews in U.S. 6 million, Jews in Israel 6.93 million,**

446.000 France, 393,000 Canada, 292,000 U.K., 150,000 Russia,

118,000 Germany, 175,00 Argentina, 118,00 Australia, 91,000 Brazil

<https://www.jewishagency.org/jewish-population-5782/>

Jesus’ plan transitions Believers (The Individual) to life after temporal death. Our recent study on Near Death Experiences highlights the fact that our lives, our conscious being, our spirit, our soul. . . does not die. I like Dr. Raymond Moody’s phrase “Life after Life” which is part of the title of one of his books *Proof of Life After Life:* *7 Reasons to Believe There is an Afterlife.* Remember, God’s plan is for the eternal existence of the individual person. And . . . God promises Believers are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (Ephesians 1:13) so that you may know that you have eternal life (1 John 5:13) and Jesus said, “I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 "I and the Father are one." (John 10:28-30)

 **Jesus in contrast to Hinduism** (1.2 billion) that teaches:

Everything disappears into the Supreme One. For an unimaginable period of time chaos and water alone exist. Then once again Lord Vishnu appears, floating on the vast ocean. From Lord Vishnu comes forth Lord Brahma of the new universe and the cycle continues for ever.

[**https://college.holycross.edu/projects/himalayan\_cultures/2006\_plans/sswift/Hinducreationstory.htm**](https://college.holycross.edu/projects/himalayan_cultures/2006_plans/sswift/Hinducreationstory.htm)

Hinduism also teaches **. . .** This is not the first world, nor is it the first universe. There have been and will be many more worlds and universes than there are drops of water in the holy river Ganges. The universes are made by Lord Brahma the Creator, maintained by Lord Vishnu the Preserver and destroyed by Lord Shiva. Since the universes must be destroyed before they can be recreated, Lord Shiva is called the Destroyer and Re-creator. These three gods are all forms of Supreme One and part of the Supreme One. The Supreme One is behind and beyond all.

Everything disappears into the Supreme One. For an unimaginable period of time chaos and water alone exist. Then once again Lord Vishnu appears, floating on the vast ocean. From Lord Vishnu comes forth Lord Brahma of the new universe and the cycle continues for ever.

**https://college.holycross.edu/projects/himalayan\_cultures/2006\_plans/sswift/Hinducreationstory.htm**

 **Jesus in Contrast to Islam** (1.9 billion; Pew Research)

 Islam was created 600 years after God’s Incarnation as Jesus Christ. Islam was created by Arab leaders to be a geopolitical movement for the conquest. Islam borrowed (highjacked) Jewish creation accounts from the Tora. Regarding a person’s final destination in the next life, there is great consternation in Islam. This is why Muslims are taught to die in holy war; in killing the enemies of Islam is a guaranteed to go to heaven. Islam teaches that if a person has been really good and devout their whole life, Allah could still reject them because it is the will of Allah.

 **Jesus in Contrast to Buddhism** Buddhism (500 million)

The standard Buddhism history teaches that Buddha lived about 500 years before Jesus in north eastern India. Buddhism is the quest to get away from pain and suffering. This is understandable being that Buddha grew up seeing the Hindu caste system which enslaved most people to a life-long servitude to an upper class similar to chattel slavery of Colonial Europeans. So, Buddha sought deep meditation to escape this world of pain; Buddha sat under a fig tree for seven days to achieve a god-consciousness. . . “nirvana” which is to be “enlightened.” Concerning the creation . . . The Buddha argued that there is no apparent rational necessity for the existence of a creator god because everything ultimately is created by mind.[[2](https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/33133%22%20%5Cl%20%22ref_2)] Belief in a creator is not necessarily addressed by a religion. <https://encyclopedia.pub/entry/33133>

 The Goal of Buddhism is Nirvana which is an enlightened state of being that is free from suffering. A person lives countless reincarnations to achieve Nirvana.

 Buddhism is in contrast to Jesus’ teaching which is to engage the world in an effort to witness to others about the love of God (John 3:16). Jesus’ mission was about others in that He suffered and died for the sins of the world. Jesus called for people to surrender their heart to God and receive His Holy Spirit to guide a person through this life. Buddhism does not recognize God as the Creator with a purpose for human life, to experience love. I see that Buddhism is centered on the self and to escape contact with the world.

 **From a brief study of the major world religions,** we can see that all other beliefs do not answer sufficiently the basic questions pertaining to our creation, purpose for existence, source of life and the universe and our eternal life. Hinduism, Buddhism, all eastern mystic religions, and Islam, all are short of teaching the grace and love God has for His creation. Hinduism and Islam demand people appease a god or gods to gain material and spiritual goals in this life and the next. Buddhism does not recognize God.

The book of Genesis provides the answer to human existence and the creation of the Universe and the purpose for life.

 **With the above comparison in mind, let us review a few Scriptures and receive God’s Word in that transitional time 2000 years ago. What a difference His plan has made.**

We read in the New Testament book of Hebrews that points back to the “First Family” (Abel being the son of Adam and Eve) in order to see how God has a relationship faith-plan for people to be with Him.

**Hebews 11:4**  By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, **he still speaks.**

Through the writer of Hebrews, God details His “sacrificial plan” that is predicated on a surrendered heart displayed as faith, but not an agreement-faith but a *cut-the-heart* faith (Deut 30:6). We see this in David’s prayer in Psalm 51:17, The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

Regarding Abel’s righteousness, which was highly esteemed by the Jews, he is not forgotten and is highlighted to the Jews in order to demonstrate that Jesus is superior. Remember, the Old Testament, the Law, was partial and never intended to take away the penalty for sin (Hebrews 10). Jesus was that perfect unblemished sacrifice. . .that fulfilled the Law. Jesus completed what the Law on its own could not accomplish.

 **Hebrews 12:24** and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel.

The book of Hebrews details God’s communication to all people.

**Hebrews 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**

Now, let us turn to the Apostle Peter’s preaching after his Pentecost Holy Spirit empowerment.

**Acts 2:17-21**

17 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says,

'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;

 18 EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN,

I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT

And they shall prophesy.

19 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.

20 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME.

21 'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'

In comparison to Acts 2. . . read God’s prophet Joel, who lived about 600 years before Jesus.

**Joel 2:28-32**

28 "It will come about after this

That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions.

 29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

 30 "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth,

Blood, fire and columns of smoke.

 31 "The sun will be turned into darkness

 And the moon into blood Before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

32 "And it will come about

that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered;

For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape,

As the LORD has said, Even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Peter’s Holy Spirit preaching bears the fruit of salvation.

Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

**The rise of Christianity** is traditionally marked by the Incarnation, life and ministry of Jesus Christ reaching fulfillment in the Cross, Resurrection and Ascension. All of these events are miracles. . . in that God our Creator made a willful decision to intervene in the affairs of men. But then, wait. . . God created the earth and life; therefore, it is a normal expectation for Him to want to be involved in our lives. God’s uncompromising eternal love is the origin of His reaching out to all of us. God patiently waits for each one of us to surrender our hearts to Him.

**Joel 2:32**

"And it will come about that whoever calls on the name of the LORD Will be delivered;

(Paul cites this verse to the Believers in Rome: Romans 10:13)

**Amen**