

REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION

Jehovah's Witnesses Buddhism
Bahá'í Faith New Age
Spiritualism Scientology
Humanitarianism Confucianism
Taoism Judaism
Christianity
Islam Unitarianism
Humanism
Agnosticism Atheism
Mormonism
Mysticism Hinduism

THE FINALITY OF JESUS CHRIST

EXPLODING THE MANY-ROADS-TO-GOD MYTH

JIM ANDREWS
JULI ANDREWS GROSE

The Finality of Jesus Christ

The Finality of Jesus Christ

EXPLODING THE MANY-ROADS-TO-GOD MYTH

JIM ANDREWS
JULI ANDREWS GROSE



Truth Encounters Publishing
Portland, Oregon

The Finality of Jesus Christ - Revised and Expanded Edition
© 2016 by Truth Encounters Publishing
ISBN 978-0-9891549-5-6

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, or by any information storage and retrieval system, except for brief quotations for the purpose of review, without written permission from the authors.

All inquires should be addressed to: (info@jim-andrews.org)

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission.

The reader will often find within those quotations italic or bold text, or bracketed words, phrases, etc., intended by the authors to clarify the biblical text.

Page design and typesetting by Lynne Mackey

Cover design and artwork by Mari Kaeding

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	11
Introduction.....	13
The Scriptures: Our Supreme Court	17
Two Ways to Approach the Question	17
The Old Testament Verdict: Designer Religion Unacceptable.....	19
The New Testament Verdict: Christ Is the Doorway of Salvation ..	21
The Savior: Our Singular Substitute	31
Why Would God be So Inflexible?	31
How Did God Accept People Before Christ Came?	36
But Where is Christ in the Old Testament Scheme of Salvation?...	38
What is Another Analogy for the Plan?.....	39
What is the Status of Adherents of Non-Christian Religions?.....	42
Summary.....	47
Appendix: How Do I Become a Christian?.....	51
Repentance	51
Baptism in the Name of Jesus for Forgiveness of Sins	52
Receiving the Gift of the Holy Spirit	54
About the Authors.....	58

Acknowledgements

We, the authors, would like to express our extreme gratitude to Jimmy Park for producing the first edition of *Finality*. Jimmy and his wife, Ivo, have given their selfless and energetic service to the Lord in many ministries.

We would also like to thank the following people for their invaluable contributions, without which this project would have never come to fruition. These folk utilize the skills and gifts God gave them to partner with us, in spirit of Philippians 1:5, to spread the Gospel to the glory of God.

Paul Grose was editor-in-chief for the project, coordinating with us and supervising all aspects of production. Lynne Mackey formatted the book for this second edition with her usual talent for beautiful layout. Mari Kaeding designed and created the new front and back cover, and Brian Overholt developed the graphics for the inside pages. Ross Crowley made it possible for people to purchase this book on www.jim-andrews.org. And finally, Jan Van Horn, Rita Hughes and others proofread the manuscript. We are deeply indebted to these members of our technical team.



Introduction

Today, many people share the opinion of the famed Mahatma Gandhi, who reportedly remarked that God has no religion, meaning that, with God “any dab will do ya.” However, on what basis did Gandhi have the authority to pontificate about such matters? Of course, I have no clue, since these matters are well beyond his knowledge, and he had no benefit of divine revelation.

Such is the arrogance of modern man.

Years ago, a lady (I’ll call her Mary—not her real name) who had just begun attending our church scheduled an appointment to talk to me about spiritual issues. Of course I was happy to oblige.

When we met shortly thereafter, she described herself as an earnest seeker. Indeed, she appeared to be a very sincere, intelligent lady with honest questions.

Mary related to me a life trauma that had disoriented her spiritually and then had eventually led her to us. She expressed her initial relief and delight to “at last encounter someone who stood for something.” Yet later, she lamented that during communion the previous Sunday, her hope of finding what she was seeking had been shaken. For during that monthly observance, I had declared sweepingly that Jesus was “the way and the truth and the life,” emphasizing to boot that “no one

comes to the Father except through [Him]” (John 14:6) [NIV, brackets mine].

“At that point,” she related, “I was so disappointed. I more or less just kind of slumped in my seat ... I had always believed that there were many ways to God.”

To Mary, my remarks about the finality of Christ as the one and only divinely acceptable approach to God came across as narrow-minded, though she was too kind and diplomatic to put it that bluntly. It was hard for her to fathom how I could hold allegiance to Jesus Christ as the only approved pathway to the Father. Isn't that being exclusive toward unbelievers? Why would God be so inflexible? And, by the way, how did God accept those who lived before Christ came? What about those reared in non-Christian cultures who never had an opportunity to receive or reject Christ? Wouldn't that, in effect, condemn the adherents of other religious traditions who refuse to acknowledge the God of the Bible as the one true God and Jesus Christ as *the* Lord and Savior? Was it fair of God, she wondered, to punish people such as these?

These were all valid and significant questions.

This allegedly exclusive aspect of the Gospel message is a sore point with many non-Christians. Always has been. Always will be. Some of our theology at this point simply mystifies people (as in the case of Mary). Others it infuriates.

So here, we begin to expound upon Mary's first two questions, **“Is there *really* only one way to God? Isn't that being exclusive?”**

Let me deal with the second question first. The term, “exclusive,” may be misleading. Why? Because *anybody* can come to God. For the Apostle Paul teaches us in Romans 10:13 that the invitation is open to all, “... *WHOSOEVER* WILL CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED” [italics mine]. So then,

the welcome mat is extended to all people universally. What *is* exclusive is the *way* of salvation. It is exactly like buying bread. Anybody is welcome to purchase it. The store is not a private club. However, the item can be purchased only on the store's terms. They, for example, accept only American currency, not Monopoly money. So, it is the *means* of salvation that is exclusive, not the invitation. This is because, as the Apostle stated above under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, God welcomes all men to receive the gift of salvation, which is available to *everyone*, but only on the basis of faith in Christ alone.

However, in this climate of arbitrary political correctness and muddled postmodern thinking (in which pluralism is “In” and truth as a fixed, objective entity is “Out,” especially in religious and moral matters), many see one's religious beliefs as something considerably less consequential than matters of life and death. To these people, the world is a mall of religious boutiques. Curiosity in religion is chic. Religious options are much like a spiritual cafeteria where culinary choice is no big deal ... simply a matter of personal taste and cultural preference. To unbelievers, it's totally annoying when we Christians come along, like the functional equivalents of militant environmentalists, and insist that the choice is not so benign as all that ... that in fact, figuratively speaking, the decision comes down to a fateful choice between healthful, life-giving cuisine and toxic fare that ultimately kills its consumers.



The Scriptures: Our Supreme Court

Two Ways to Approach the Question

Before I address other issues that Mary raised, we must understand that there are only two ways we can approach her first question: **Is there *really* just one way to God?** First, we can merely speculate about spiritual reality by believing and promoting what seems right in our own eyes (Judges 21:25). Or, we can ground our conclusions on biblical teaching—that is, God’s revealed message through His prophets and apostles. Historic Christianity considers this message to be absolutely authoritative when it comes to faith (what we believe) and practice (how we act) because it has been revealed by our Creator.

This first option, human speculation, is an intellectual dead end ... a dead end because the subject matter is transcendent, which means that it is well beyond the competence of unaided human reason to determine. So, speculative thinking about such theological matters is about as enlightening as two blind men arguing about the colors of a rainbow.

Thus, all you get is a fact-free clash of discordant voices from opinionated people (such as Gandhi) speaking in cadences that make them sound more knowledgeable than they really are. The fact is, coming from this position, they know absolutely

nothing—zero—concerning the theological matters about which they confidently speak. Why? Because, as we pointed out earlier, they have no authority upon which to base their conclusions. For apart from God’s revelation, such answers are inaccessible and little more than vapors of intellectual gases.

So then, the Bible has to be our *starting point* in any theological question. As orthodox Christians, we affirm the Scriptures as the repository of what God has chosen to reveal to man. But why do we so adamantly adhere to such a proposition? It is because this foundational premise is not based on a so-called leap of “blind” faith, as some think; rather, it is a theological position derived from evidence *within* the Scriptures and strongly supported by evidences *external* to it. For example, the Scriptures are replete with detailed prophecies written hundreds of years before their fulfillment. The fact that these predictions predate the fulfillment of the specified historical events is verified by scholars the world over.

Perhaps one of the most poignant prophecies is Isaiah 53, in which the prophet predicts the suffering, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without question, scholars confirm the ancient date of this passage to be at least 700 years before Christ. And the same is true for prophecies of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection in Psalms 22 and 16, written by King David a thousand years before the events.

Moreover, in New Testament (NT) times, there were hundreds of people who witnessed the very events Isaiah and David prophesied about Christ. And these events were recorded within a generation of their actual occurrence, not only preventing the possibility of legends developing, but verifying the mindboggling accuracy of such predictions. Those are just *some* of the reasons (among many others) why we treat the Bible as our “supreme court.” Thus, our position

is that whatever the Bible teaches, God teaches, and that is the end of the discussion.

Naturally then, we Christians are obliged to conform to what the Bible prescribes for our beliefs and practice, just as our civil government, in all its arms and agencies, is bound to conform to the principles and prescriptions of the U.S. Constitution.

The Old Testament Verdict: Designer Religion Unacceptable

Therefore, since the Bible is our starting point in *any* theological question, it is thus inconceivable that anyone at all familiar with biblical literature could postulate that God “puts out the welcome mat” for people to approach Him any way they please. From the standpoint of biblical theology, such a view is as intellectually absurd as the weird notions of the Flat Earth Society.

If there is one motif that resounds all through the Old Testament (OT) like an echo in a canyon, it is this: *God’s creatures will approach Him in His way or no way.* That was the recurring message of all the biblical prophets. And this message is that the Judeo-Christian God forbids any rivals. It is intolerable for the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who is also the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for men to worship any god other than Himself. This law is literally etched in stone in the first of the Ten Commandments:

You shall have no other gods before [that is, besides]
Me. (Exodus 20:3) [brackets mine]

To keep reading...

Visit <http://jimandrewsbooks.com/the-finality-of-jesus-christ/> to order this and other books by Jim Andrews in print or e-book.

Download Daily Bible Teaching

TheFinalWordRadio.com



The Final Word is a daily Bible-teaching radio program from Pastor Jim Andrews of Lake Bible Church in Lake Oswego, Oregon. It currently airs in Portland, Oregon, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. However, we hear from listeners all over the world who listen in via our web site.

Pastor Jim typically teaches through the books of the Bible in a verse-by-verse expositional style. Past messages are available in the podcast archive. We currently have available expositions of thirty books of the Bible, as well as six topical studies, with more studies added annually. We encourage you to take advantage of this extensive, free resource as you endeavor to understand and apply Scripture to your daily life.

Our contact information is:

The Final Word
4565 Carman Drive
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97035

(503) 699-9840
info@thefinalwordradio.com

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jim Andrews, senior pastor of Lake Bible Church in Lake Oswego, Oregon, is the author of *Polishing God's Monuments, A Life Worth Dying For, Marriage Without Remorse, and Dispatches from the Front Lines* (all available on www.jim-andrews.org). His degrees are in Journalism, New Testament Literature and Exegesis, and Classics. Prior to assuming his shepherding role at Lake, he taught for 21 years in Bible college and seminary. Pastor Andrews teaches a weekday Bible radio program, *The Final Word*, which he founded in 2002. Jim and his wife Olsie, have two married children, Kristi and Juli, and two married grandchildren, Alex and Ashley.

Juli Andrews Grose is the younger daughter of Jim and Olsie Andrews. She earned her undergraduate degree in Piano Performance from Wheaton Conservatory of Music, where she met her husband, Paul, who was also a Piano Performance Major. Paul also added a degree in Ethnomusicology in hopes that they could use their musical gifts for evangelistic purposes on the mission field. However, they were both struck with ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis, a.k.a. chronic fatigue syndrome) shortly thereafter, resulting in severe illness, pain and disability. Their story is recounted in Jim's first book, *Polishing God's Monuments: Pillars of Hope for Punishing Times*.

God has used her parents' influence, Jim's Bible teaching, and this devastating trial to instill a profound dependence upon and love for God's Word. Since Juli has been almost completely bedbound for most of her illness, she has been given the opportunity, within her limitations, to uniquely focus on listening to the expositional teaching of the Bible. She dictated her contributions and edits for *Finality* to Paul, who has been the editor for several of Jim's books.

Is There Really Only One Way to God?

Many people love to challenge Christians with that question! Pluralism, the notion there are many paths to God's acceptance, is the reigning fashion today. Unthinkably, that concession is even leaking into the mindset of some Christians. Was Jesus mistaken when He claimed to be ". . . the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6)?

For us Christians, it is a fool's errand to try to convince (against their wills) those who base their postmodern "theology" about this central question upon human speculation. However, for those who are willing to listen to the witness of divine revelation, biblical testimony is copious, clear and compelling on this point. There is no evading the finality of Jesus Christ. End of story!



Truth Encounters Publishing
Portland, Oregon

www.jim-andrews.org

ISBN: 978-0-9891549-5-6