

where
does your
path
Lead?

Everyone is going somewhere along a trail through life. Like all trails, this one has a trailhead and a destination. As I've traveled and explored the globe, I've heard a common statement with regard to the spiritual paths people follow. Most of the world's backpackers seem to subscribe to this understanding:

"All religions are the same, all paths lead to God."

Today, as you go, whether enjoying nature, adventure, or escape, I would like to challenge this prevailing thought.

**Are all beliefs the same?
Do all paths really lead to God?**

As a hiker or trekker, I'm sure you can appreciate these two questions. The path under your feet has a destination. Maybe it's a lake, a mountain hut, a beautiful viewpoint, or a summit. If you brought a map, you can take a look and see that not all of the trails are going to the same place. But more important than today's hike is the big trail of life upon which we all tread. Where is this trail taking you? I would be so bold to say that most people probably haven't consulted a reliable map to find out the final destination of their beliefs. Wouldn't it be foolish to set out on a trek and yet not know where the trail ended? But you're no fool; the fact that you can read this is proof of that. As such, you have a mind with which you can think and reason, so read on and reason with me for a few minutes. Then, be open enough to explore the truth. In this tract, we'll take a look at the different belief systems of the world. We'll see if all these "paths" truly lead to the same place (i.e. God), or if they all are actually leading to another place. In the end, I'll share with you what I've discovered, having personally explored every major spiritual belief system known to man. So, lace up your boots and let's explore these paths together...

WHERE DO THE PATHS OF EASTERN RELIGIONS LEAD?

Much of what the typical backpacker believes today comes from the the Eastern religions. Hinduism and Buddhism are similar and rooted in karma, a system whereby a person's good and bad deeds are weighed in the balances. The outcome determines the destination for that person's next life, hence reincarnation. What many people fail to understand is that reincarnation in these religions is actually considered a punishment or curse for not getting it right the first time. In the end, Hinduism teaches that many reincarnations will lead to an absorption into one's already pre-existing god-self. Buddhism says the end is "nirvana" which means "nothingness." So, to follow Buddha, to collect good karma, to be reincarnated thousands of times, well . . . you still end up with nothing. If any of this sounds familiar, it's because modern Western culture has become infatuated with the yoga, meditation, and inner "peace" that these religions claim to offer. In reality, the Eastern philosophies that Westerners find so captivating are nothing more than works-based religions that have led untold millions to despair and destruction across the centuries.

WHERE DOES THE PATH OF ISLAM LEAD?

Islam began in the deserts of Saudi Arabia with the worship of the moon god Allah. Though it claims to be a religion of peace, this couldn't be farther from the truth. Historically, the path of Islam has always led to bloodshed and destruction amongst those that come into its path. The Quran speaks of a paradise for those faithful to the teachings of Mohammed and

hell for those who disobey or refuse to submit. Unfortunately for many Muslims, Mohammed himself said he didn't even know where he was going after his earthly death (Surah 46:9). If Mohammed didn't even know where he was going, how can he be trusted to lead others down the right path?

WHERE DOES THE PATH OF ATHEISM LEAD?

Many think it would be great if God wasn't real, so they simply deny his existence. Without God and absolute truths to govern society, people actually digress instead of progress. Recent historical examples of taking an atheistic worldview to its logical conclusions can be seen with Communism and Nazism. Both ideals have been responsible for the death and despair of countless millions. While rejecting God, atheists just substitute a "salad" religion for themselves, a little bit of everything. The end result is another works-based religion with self as a finite god destined to die. If there is no God, Hitler got away with everything he ever did, and we are no better than him.

WHERE DOES THE PATH OF CHRISTIANITY LEAD?

Most of what calls itself "Christianity" today is merely a works-based religion better termed "Churchianity." Catholicism and Mormonism, for example, base eternal salvation on merit, much like the other religions we've already explored. However, the New Testament itself says "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). So, the path of any works-based version of Christianity goes the way of all manmade religion, to hell. As the Bible says "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15). There is more to say on True Christianity, but first let's look at its source:

WHERE DOES THE PATH OF JUDAISM LEAD?

We have Judaism to thank for many things such as civil law and justice, sanitation, education, basic human rights, etc. This path has an amazing history and future. Let's take a closer look at what the Jewish Bible says . . . First, Abraham was the father of the Jewish people. He had a personal encounter with the Creator God, and God made him an eternal promise: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). Then, God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel. This Divine Law shows that we all are personally guilty before God and must pay a penalty for our sin and rebellion. For example, have you ever lied, stolen, lusted, dishonored your parents, or failed to love God above all else? Undoubtedly YES, so you are guilty of breaking God's law. Isaiah 59:2 says "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God." The penalty for your sins is "the wicked shall be turned into hell" (Psalm 9:17). And don't forget God judges the heart, not the outward appearance (I Samuel 16:7).

Thankfully, in time, God made King David a promise that Messiah would come from his lineage (Jeremiah 23:5). The Messiah is clearly revealed throughout Holy Scripture to be God Himself, the Saviour of Israel and the world. Through the prophets, God also proclaimed that "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel...for I will forgive their iniquity" (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Over the next thousand years, many Jewish prophets told the nation of Israel that Messiah would come. They gave certain criteria that He would meet to prove He was the one true Messiah. Here are just a few of many examples:

Messiah would be preceded by a messenger (Isaiah 40:1-5).
Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
Messiah would be born into the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10).
Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).
Messiah would be God in human flesh (Isaiah 9:1-6, 11:1-10).
A star would announce Messiah's first coming, a scepter His second (Numbers 24:17).
Messiah would open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf (Isaiah 35:4-6).
Messiah would be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12-13).
Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).
Messiah would be crucified (Zechariah 12:10, Psalm 22).
Messiah would be rejected, suffer, die, and rise again as a sacrifice for the sins of the people (Isaiah 53).
Jerusalem would be destroyed after Messiah was rejected (Daniel 9:26, fulfilled in AD 70).

This is difficult criteria to meet, especially considering that no mere man could control the location or lineage of his birth, perform miracles, or raise up from the dead. Many men in history have claimed to be the Messiah; modern Judaism says he hasn't yet come. But, an honest look at the life of one man reveals that only He fulfilled all these prophecies and is the true Messiah. Who is this man, and what can we learn of Him?

WHERE DOES THE PATH OF JESUS LEAD?

Did you know that Jesus was Jewish and a direct descendent of Abraham and King David? He was the only one to perfectly keep the entire Law of Moses and fulfill the specific prophecies of Messiah, including all those listed above. You may have been told not to learn about Jesus, but I challenge you to investigate His claims and the prophecies surrounding Him. You can read about the life of Jesus and the many detailed prophecies He fulfilled in the New Testament. Here's a sample of some of the most important things said by Him and about Him by Jewish eyewitnesses:

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

"Thou art the Christ [i.e. Messiah]" (Matthew 16:16).

"For even Christ i.e [Messiah] our Passover is sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47).

"Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58).

"Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

"For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (John 11:25).

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (Revelation 22:13).

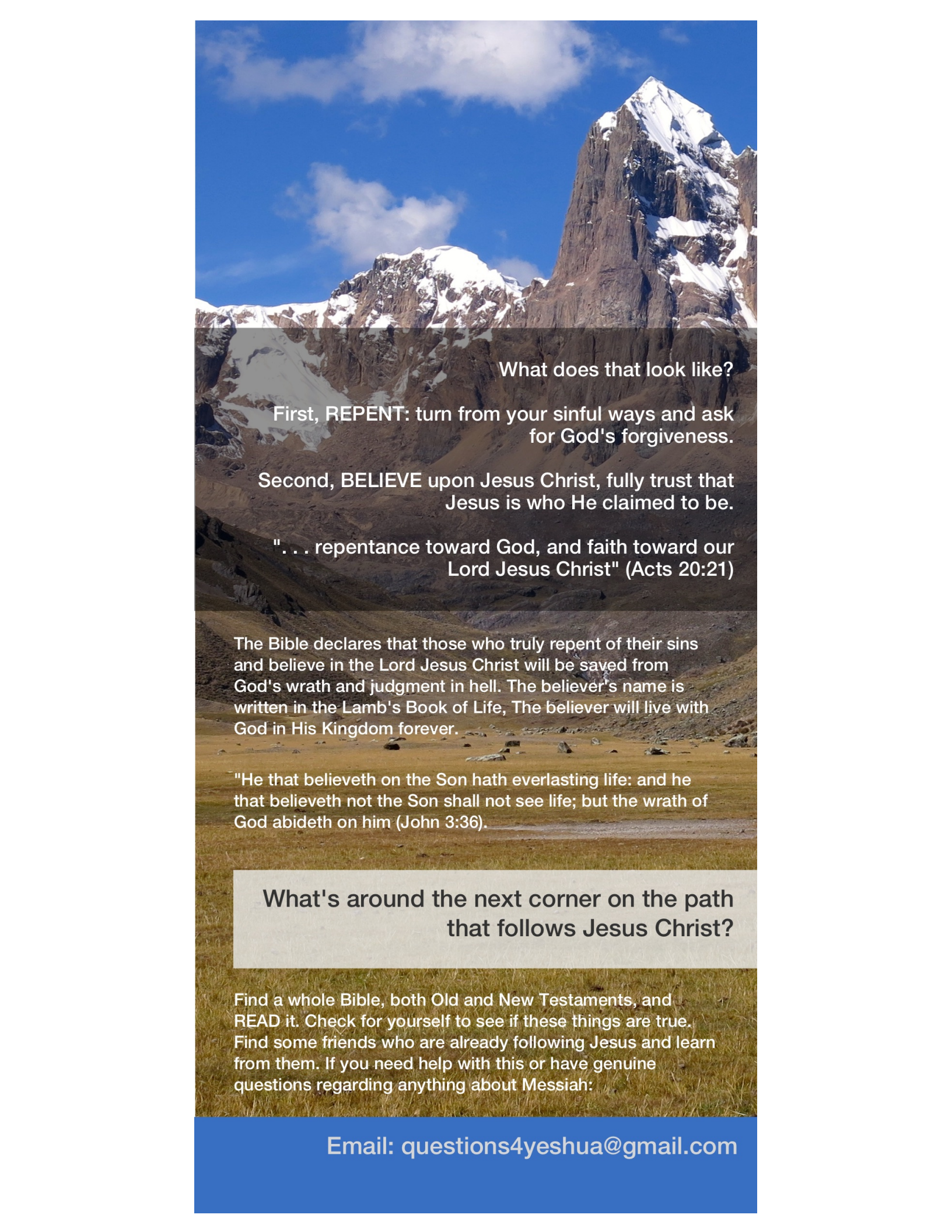
"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death" (Revelation 1:18).

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12).

In all my searching, I've seen and walked many paths found in this life, but only one will bring forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. This path is the one that follows Jesus the Jewish Messiah; this, my friend, is True Christianity not to be confused with man-centered "Churchianity." Remember, "Christ" means "Messiah." This path isn't so much a religion as it is a relationship with the one true and living God of Israel, the Creator of heaven and earth. As Jesus the Jewish rabbi and Messiah said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

So, do all paths lead to God? No. It's obvious by looking at what the different religions say about themselves that they don't. What path are you walking, and where is it going? Years ago, I discovered that my own path was taking me down a wide road to destruction, a road that leads to hell. I was an agnostic with no hope or knowledge of God, and I cared nothing for spiritual things. Thankfully, someone shared with me the truth about Jesus and showed me how to follow Him. If you, too, would like to follow Jesus and believe in Him as your Messiah and Savior, you'll need to put your faith in Him . . .



What does that look like?

First, **REPENT**: turn from your sinful ways and ask for God's forgiveness.

Second, **BELIEVE** upon Jesus Christ, fully trust that Jesus is who He claimed to be.

"... repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21)

The Bible declares that those who truly repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved from God's wrath and judgment in hell. The believer's name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life, The believer will live with God in His Kingdom forever.

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).

What's around the next corner on the path that follows Jesus Christ?

Find a whole Bible, both Old and New Testaments, and **READ** it. Check for yourself to see if these things are true. Find some friends who are already following Jesus and learn from them. If you need help with this or have genuine questions regarding anything about Messiah:

Email: questions4yeshua@gmail.com