

EBBF

Evidence Based Faith

What's in a Name?



Recap

Lots of science stuff

4 out of the 5 of the smartest people ever were
Christians and 5 out of 5 were theists



All religions are the same

Is Christianity unique?



Definition of Religion

"Try to define religion and you invite an argument."

Patrick H. McNamara

"Religion is comparable to childhood neurosis." Sigmund Freud

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature... a protest against real suffering... it is the opium of the people... the illusory sun which revolves around man for as long as he does not evolve around himself." Karl Marx

"All religion, my friend, is simply evolved out of fraud, fear, greed, imagination, and poetry." Edgar Allan Poe





Definition of Religion

“a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden -- beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church all those who adhere to them.” **Emile Durkheim**

belief (worldview), behaviour (rituals) and
the beyond (after life)



Definition of Religion

Anthropological Constant

the study of human societies and cultures
and their development.

As we have explored our planet and encountered
various people groups (unconnected) we have
discovered intricate religious systems that mirror
creation, fall, sin and atonement



Afterlife

Buddhism-Nirvana is the state of final liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. It is also therefore the end of suffering. The literal meaning of the word is "to extinguish," in the way that a fire goes out when it runs out of fuel.

Islam-a garden, sensuality "Within gardens and springs, Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other...We will marry...fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes." (Qur'an, 44:52-54, 55:56,58, 76.11-22)

Hinduism-individual Atman is believed to merge into the cosmic Brahma "a drop merging into an ocean" loss of self and individuality



General Statements

Human created religions have
individuals at the centre

All religions are the same when lived out passively

All faiths believe they are right



Justice

Alexis de Tocqueville was the famous 19th century French statesman, historian and social philosopher. He traveled to America in the 1830s to discover the reasons for the incredible success of this new nation. He published his observations in his classic two-volume work, **Democracy in America**.

“I sought for the key to the greatness and genius of America in her harbours...; in her fertile fields and boundless forests; in her rich mines and vast world commerce; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic **Congress** and in her matchless **Constitution**.”



Justice

“Not until I went into **the churches of America** and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.”

“In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom marching in opposite directions. **But in America I found they were intimately united** and that they reigned in common over the same country.”

“The safeguard of morality is religion, and morality is the best security of law as well as the surest pledge of freedom...**Christianity is the companion of liberty in all its conflicts** -- the cradle of its infancy, and **the divine source of its claims.**”



Justice

“For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and wrongdoing.” [Isaiah 61:8a](#)

“This is what the Lord Almighty said: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.’” [Zechariah 7:9-10](#)

“Evildoers do not understand what is right, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully.” [Proverbs 28:5](#)

“The Lord loves righteousness and justice” [Psalm 33:5](#)

“Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations.” [Isaiah 51:4](#)



“Christianity has functioned for the normative self-understanding of modernity as more than a mere precursor or a catalyst. Egalitarian universalism, from which sprang the ideas of freedom and social solidarity, of an autonomous conduct of life and emancipation, of the individual morality of conscience, human rights, and democracy, **is the direct heir to the Judaic ethic of justice and the Christian ethic of love...** To this day, there is no alternative to it.”

Jürgen Habermas, Atheist

Effort

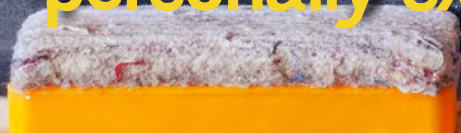
World religions are based on human effort

8 Fold Path, 5 Pillars, Karma

The Eightfold Path of Buddhism, also called the Middle Path or Middle Way, is the system of following these eight divisions of the path **to achieve** spiritual enlightenment and cease suffering

The Five Pillars of Islam are the **five obligations** that every Muslim must satisfy in order to live a good and responsible life according to Islam.

Karma, a Sanskrit word meaning 'act', 'action', or 'word'. The law of karma teaches us that all of our thoughts, words and actions begin a chain of cause and effect, and that **we will personally experience the effects of everything we cause.**



Effort (Ours)

All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and **all our righteous acts are like filthy rags**; **Isaiah 64:6**

Therefore **no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law**; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. **Romans 3:20**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**not by works, so that no one can boast**. **Ephesians 2:8-9**



Effort (Gods)

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” **He redeemed us** in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Galatians 3:13-15

He was delivered over to death for our sins Romans 3:25a

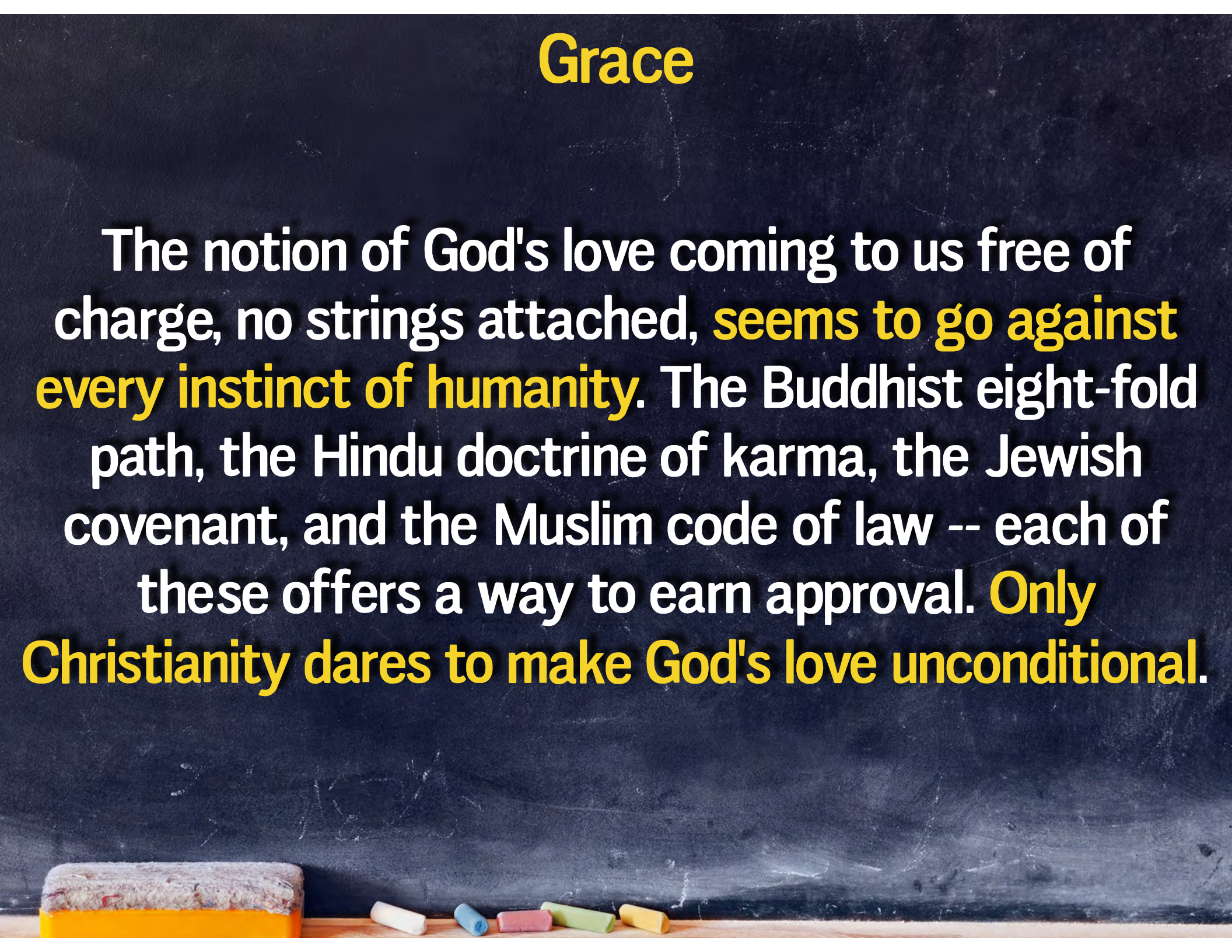
For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. 1 Peter 3:18

But **he was pierced** for our transgressions, **he was crushed** for our iniquities; the **punishment that brought us peace was on him**, and by **his wounds** we are healed. Isaiah 53:5



Grace

The notion of God's love coming to us free of charge, no strings attached, **seems to go against every instinct of humanity**. The Buddhist eight-fold path, the Hindu doctrine of karma, the Jewish covenant, and the Muslim code of law -- each of these offers a way to earn approval. **Only Christianity dares to make God's love unconditional.**

A dark chalkboard with a piece of eraser and several pieces of chalk at the bottom. The text is written in white and yellow chalk.

Grace

Presupposes that God loves you
completely and lavishly

That love is not a characteristic but
His very nature

Grace is not a reflection on who we are
but about who He is

The infiniteness of God can only be
expressed in grace, which is love
stretched beyond our comprehension



Grace

“Religious faith—for all its problems, despite its maddening tendency to replicate ungrace—lives on because we sense the numinous beauty of a gift undeserved that comes at unexpected moments from Outside. Refusing to believe that our lives of guilt and shame lead to nothing but annihilation, we hope against hope for another place run by different rules. **We grow up hungry for love, and in ways so deep as to remain unexpressed we long for our Maker to love us.**”

Philip Yancey

“Grace teaches us that God loves because of who God is, not because of who we are.”



“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.” Acts 17:24-25

