

TRUTH MATTERS! WHAT WE BELIEVE MATTERS!

I. [Galatians 1:8-9](#) [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#) [John 3:16-18](#) [Acts 4:12](#) [Matthew 11:27-30](#)

A. Let's begin this morning with the two Scriptures we concluded with last Sunday when we talked about false prophets and false gospels. If you were trying to get from here to Cleveland, a map of Ohio would be helpful; a map of Utah would not. And if I insisted that the map of Utah would get you to Cleveland, I'd either be deceived or lying. In the same way, if I told you there are ways to heaven beyond what the Scriptures say, I'd either be deceived or lying. The truth matters! And when Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but by Me," He was either deceived, lying, or telling the truth...

1) [Galatians 1:8-9](#) (ESV) is a part of that fiery letter Paul wrote to the church in Galatia because they started embracing a false Gospel: *8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.*

2) [1 Corinthians 15:1-4](#) (NIV) is written to a church where some were doubting the resurrection (of Jesus and us) so their gospel was incomplete. While I commend to you the whole chapter, Paul affirms: *1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...*

B. Now it's one thing to give mental ascent to the notion that there was a good Man named Jesus, that He was crucified to death, buried, and purportedly rose up from the grave three days afterwards. (*An atheist could affirm that.*) It's quite another thing to believe from your heart of hearts that Jesus was the only Son of God, who was crucified to death on that cross, bearing the punishment for your sin and mine, extinguishing God's wrath against our sin, was buried in a grave that could not hold Him, and rose up from that grave victoriously demonstrating that our sins had been atoned for, totally forgiven, with eternal life bestowed upon those whom He died for. Which scenario does the Bread & Cup remind you of?

C. A famous quote by the former atheist turned believer, [C.S. Lewis](#) bears repeating: "A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this Man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

D. Back in the 70's there was a popular duo, *Seals & Crofts*. Several of their songs topped the charts. Some friends and I went to one of their concerts in Columbus. As the

concert was concluding, they invited people to come towards the stage and hear about a religion that embraced all religions. They illustrated a mountain with multiple pathways leading to God at the top. What was the name of this religion? The Baha'i faith. An offshoot of Islam, Jesus to them was just a mere reflection of God, liken to Moses or Buddha or Confucius, certainly not the incarnate Son of God from eternity past who came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of man. Hearing this from guys who sang about a *diamond girl*, *hummingbirds*, and *fine summer breezes*, was very disappointing. Truth matters!

E. Seals & Crofts might as well have passed out maps of Hawaii, Alaska, Idaho and Utah and declared that no matter which map you choose, they'll get you to Cleveland, Ohio. Jesus said He and He alone was *THE* Way, *THE* Truth, and *THE* Life and no one gets to the Father but by Him! Some would rail, '*that's egotistical!*' But it's only egotistical if He's deceived or lying. It's fabulous good news if it's the Truth! That's only audacious if He's not God the Son who co-created all things seen and unseen! He's the Maker of Stars & galaxies! Atoms & molecules! He's also our Savior, our Redeemer! He's WHO He says He is! The Bread & Cup remind us!

F. So why have you been privileged to hear this Good News? (1) That you might hear it and be regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit--born anew, born again, made alive in Christ! (2) The second reason is so that Spirit that has birthed you from death unto life, might sanctify you, transform you into the likeness of Christ Jesus our Lord. (3) And thirdly, so you can proclaim this same Good News to others!

G. Listen to a familiar passage but let it resound brand new yet again. These are Jesus' red letter words to the very religious Pharisee, Nicodemus: **John 3:16-18 (ESV)** says: **16** *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. 18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*

H. Let's unpack it even further: **16 For God so loved the world, (Who did He love? Are you included in that number?) (And how did He demonstrate His love?) He gave His only Son, (Gave Him how? As the Law-keeper for the lawbreakers--us! To die for the sins of those lawbreakers--us!) (And the result?) whoever believes in Him should not perish (Perish how? Perish in the second death, hell!) but have eternal life. (Eternal life is not just quantity--forever; it's quality--life more abundantly, joy to the fullest and in unimaginable measure!) 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. (Moses, Mohammad, Buddha, Confucius didn't do that! Couldn't do that!) 18 Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (And yes, the Bread & Cup remind us...)**

I. If you were in a high rise building that caught on fire and smoke was rising through the stairwells and elevator shafts and then all of a sudden a fireman burst into your room and shouted, "*Follow me--I know the only way outta here!*" Would you think him arrogant? Or would you maybe follow him? He then hauls you out a window, onto a balcony, where there's a metal fire escape; would you despise the man? Would you think

this fireman was being audacious or egotistical? Then once safely to the ground in the arms of loved ones, would you turn to that fireman and thrash him for insisting the way he led you out of that inferno was the only way to escape death? Or would you be grateful? Would you be forever indebted? Would you laud him as your brave rescuer?

J. When Peter and John were drug before the angry Sanhedrin, the pompous Jewish leaders of their day, livid because they'd healed a crippled man in the name of Jesus, they got an earful from Peter. He and John did not shrink back from the Gospel. And Peter declares this to them, found in Acts 4:8-13 (NIV): **8** *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!* **9** *If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed,* **10** *then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.* **11** *Jesus is 'the Stone you builders rejected, which has become the Cornerstone.'* **12** *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."* **13** *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. (Here's the truth: Salvation is found in no one else, there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved. And the Bread & Cup remind us.)*

*** Pray & Officiate Communion...**

Matthew 11:27-30 (ESV) takes us home today: **27** *All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.* **28** *Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* **29** *Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.* **30** *For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.*

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Galatians 1:8-9 (ESV)

8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9** As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (NIV)

1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. **2** By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. **3** For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

John 3:16-18 (ESV)

16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. **18** Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

Quote by C.S. Lewis

“A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this Man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.”

Acts 4:8-13 (NIV)

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! **9** If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, **10** then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. **11** Jesus is ‘the Stone you builders rejected, which has become the Cornerstone.’ **12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved. **13** When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Matthew 11:27-30 (ESV)

27 All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him. **28** Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

Bonus Goodies

The Supremacy of Christ - John Piper

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeKgfUGtcl0>

The Truth Divides - R.C. Sproul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXafiauD8MM>

What is the Truth? - Greg Laurie

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bndI3FIPFaM>

If God is Not Sovereign - Tim Challies

<https://www.challies.com/articles/if-god-is-not-sovereign/>

[More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras](#)

[John 1:1-14 \(ESV\)](#)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the Light, but came to bear witness about the Light. **9** The true Light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. **11** He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. **12** But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, **13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. **14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[John 8:31-32 \(ESV\)](#)

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

[John 14:6 \(NKJV\)](#)

6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

[John 16:12-15 \(ESV\)](#)

12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. **13** When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. **14** He will glorify Me, for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you. **15** All that the Father has is Mine; therefore I said that He will take what is Mine and declare it to you.

[Luke 12:4-7 \(AMP\)](#)

4 "I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have nothing more that they can do. **5** But I will point out to you whom you should fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority and power to hurl [you] into hell; yes, I say to you, [stand in great awe of God and] fear Him! **6** Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? Yet not one of them has [ever] been forgotten in the presence of

God. **7** Indeed the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not be afraid; you are far more valuable than many sparrows.

1 Timothy 2:5-6 (ESV)

5 For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

1 John 5:9-12 (NLT)

9 Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about His Son. **10** All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about His Son. **11** And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **12** Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.

Quote by Martin Luther

"At these words I was utterly stupefied and terror-stricken. I thought to myself, 'With what tongue shall I address such majesty, seeing that all men ought to tremble in the presence of even an earthly prince? Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty? The angels surround Him. At His nod the earth trembles. And shall I, a miserable little pygmy, say 'I want this, I ask for that'? For I am dust and ashes and full of sin and I am speaking to the living, eternal and the true God.'"

Quote by Frederick W. Robertson (English Clergyman 1816 - 1853)

"Truth lies in character. Christ did not simply speak the truth; He was truth; truth, through and through; for truth is a thing not of words, but of life and being."

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"Nothing makes a man so virtuous as belief of the truth. A lying doctrine will soon beget a lying practice. A man cannot have an erroneous belief without by-and-by having an erroneous life. I believe the one thing naturally begets the other."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end; if you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin, and in the end, despair."

Quote by Augustine

"A thing is not necessarily true because badly uttered, nor false because spoken magnificently."

Little Old Lady and Her Atheist Neighbor

Author Unknown

There was a little old lady who would come out every morning on the steps of her front porch, raise her arms to the sky and shout, *"Praise the Lord!"*

Well, one day an atheist moved into the house next door. Over time, he became irritated at the little old lady. So every morning he would step out onto his front porch and yell after her, *"There is no Lord!"*

Time passes with the two of them carrying on this way every day. Then one morning in the middle of winter, the little old lady stepped onto her front porch and shouted, *"Praise the Lord! Lord, I have no food and I am starving. Please provide for me, oh Lord!"*

The next morning, she stepped onto her porch and there were two huge bags of groceries sitting there. *"Praise the Lord!" she cried out. "He has provided groceries for me!"*

The atheist jumped out of the hedges and shouted, *"There is no Lord. I bought those groceries!"*

The little old lady threw her arms into the air and shouted, *"Praise the Lord! He has provided me with groceries and He made the devil pay for them!"*

What is the Baha'i Faith?

By S. Michael Houdmann

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Bahai-faith.html>

Question: *What is the Baha'i Faith?*

Answer: The Baha'i faith is one of the newer world religions stemming originally from Shi'ite Islam in Persia (modern-day Iran). However, it has come to achieve a unique status of its own. The Baha'i faith has distinguished itself as a unique world religion because of its size (5 million members), its global scale (236 countries), its practical autonomy from its parent religion of Islam (there is little blurriness between the two), and for its doctrinal uniqueness, being monotheistic yet inclusive.

The Baha'i faith's earliest forerunner was Sayid Ali Muhammad who on May 23, 1844, declared himself the Bab ("Gate"), the eighth manifestation of God and first since Muhammad. Implicit to that statement was the denial of Muhammad as the last and greatest prophet and a denial together of the unique authority of the Koran. Islam did not take kindly to such thoughts. The Bab and his followers, called Babis, saw heavy persecution and were part of great bloodshed before the Bab was executed as a political prisoner just six years later in Tabriz, Ádhirbáyján, July 9, 1850. But before he died, the Bab spoke of a coming prophet, referred to as "He whom God will Manifest." On April 22, 1863, Mirza Husayn Ali, one of his followers, declared himself the fulfillment

of that prophecy and the latest manifestation of God. He donned the title Baha'u'llah ("glory of God"). The Bab was therefore viewed as a "John the Baptist"-type of forerunner leading up to Baha'u'llah who is the more significant manifestation for this age. His followers are called Baha'is. The uniqueness of this budding Baha'i faith, as it has come to be called, becomes clear in the Baha'u'llah's declarations. Not only did he claim to be the latest prophet foreseen in Shi'ite Islam, and not only did he claim to be a manifestation of God, but he claimed to be the second coming of Christ, the promised Holy Spirit, the Day of God, the Maiytrea (from Buddhism), and the Krishna (from Hinduism). A kind of inclusivism is apparent from the early stages of the Baha'i faith.

No other manifestation is said to have come since Baha'u'llah, but his leadership was passed on by appointment. He designated a successor in his son Abbas Effendi (later, Abdu'l-Baha "slave of Baha"). While the successors could not speak inspired scripture from God, they could interpret scripture infallibly and were viewed as the maintenance of God's true word on earth. Abdu'l-Baha would appoint his grandson Shoghi Effendi as successor. Shoghi Effendi, however, died before appointing a successor. The gap was filled by an ingeniously organized governing institution called the Universal House of Justice which remains in power today as the governing body for the Baha'i World Faith. Today, the Baha'i faith exists as a world religion with yearly international conferences convening at the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, Israel.

The core doctrines of the Baha'i faith can be attractive in their simplicity:

- 1) Adoration of one God and the reconciliation of all major religions.
 - 2) Appreciation of the diversity and morality of the human family and the elimination of all prejudice.
 - 3) The establishment of world peace, equality of women and men, and universal education.
 - 4) Cooperation between Science and Religion in the individual's search for truth.
- To these may be added certain implicit beliefs and practices:
- 5) A Universal Auxiliary Language.
 - 6) Universal Weights and Measures.
 - 7) God who is himself unknowable nevertheless reveals himself through manifestations.
 - 8) These manifestations are a kind of progressive revelation.
 - 9) No proselytizing (aggressive witnessing).
 - 10) The study of different Scriptures besides simply Baha'i books.
 - 11) Prayer and worship is obligatory and much of that according to specific instructions.

The Baha'i faith is quite sophisticated, and many of its followers today are educated, eloquent, eclectic, politically liberal, yet socially conservative (i.e., anti-abortion, pro-traditional family, etc.). Moreover, Baha'is are not only expected to understand their own uniquely Baha'i scriptures, but are also expected to study the scriptures of other world religions. Therefore, it is quite possible to encounter a Baha'i who is more educated on Christianity than is the average Christian. Furthermore, the Baha'i faith has a strong emphasis on education combined with certain liberal values such as gender egalitarianism, universal education, and harmony between science and religion.

Nonetheless, the Baha'i faith has many theological gaps and doctrinal inconsistencies. Compared to Christianity, its core teachings are only superficial in their commonality. The differences are deep and fundamental. The Baha'i faith is ornate, and a full critique would be encyclopedic. So, only a few observations are made below.

The Baha'i faith teaches that God is unknowable in His essence. Baha'is have the difficulty of explaining how they can have an elaborate theology about God yet assert that God is "unknowable." And it does not help to say that prophets and manifestations inform mankind about God because, if God is "unknowable," then humanity has no reference point whereby to tell which teacher is telling the truth. Christianity rightly teaches that God can be known, as is naturally known even by non-believers, though they may not have a relational knowledge of God. [Romans 1:20](#) says, "For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead..." God is knowable, not only through the creation, but through His Word and the presence of the Holy Spirit, who leads and guides us and bears witness that we are His children ([Romans 8:14-16](#)). Not only can we know Him, but we can know Him intimately as our "Abba, Father" ([Galatians 4:6](#)). True, God may not fit His infinity into our finite minds, but man can still have partial knowledge of God which is entirely true and relationally meaningful.

About Jesus, the Baha'i faith teaches that He was a manifestation of God but not an incarnation. The difference sounds slight but is actually enormous. Baha'is believe God is unknowable; therefore, God cannot incarnate Himself to be present among men. If Jesus is God in the most literal sense, and Jesus is knowable, then God is knowable, and that Baha'i doctrine is exploded. So, Baha'is teach that Jesus was a reflection of God. Just as a person can look at a reflection of the sun in a mirror and say, "There is the sun," so one can look at Jesus and say, "There is God," meaning "There is a reflection of God." Here again the problem of teaching that God is "unknowable" surfaces since there would be no way to distinguish between true and false manifestations or prophets. The Christian, however, can argue that Christ has set Himself apart from all other manifestations and has confirmed His self-attested divinity by physically rising from the dead ([1 Corinthians 15](#)), a point which Baha'is also deny. While the resurrection would be a miracle, it is nonetheless a historically defensible fact, given the body of evidence. Dr. Gary Habermas, Dr. William Lane Craig, and N.T. Wright have done well in defending the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Baha'i faith also denies the sole sufficiency of Christ and of Scripture. Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Bab, and Baha'u'llah were all manifestations of God, and the latest of these would have the highest authority since he'd have the most complete revelation of God, according to the idea of progressive revelation. Here, Christian apologetics can be employed to demonstrate the uniqueness of Christianity's claims and its doctrinal and practical truthfulness exclusive of contrary religious systems. The Baha'i, however, is concerned for showing that all the world's major religions are ultimately reconcilable. Any differences would be explained away as:

- 1) Social Laws—Instead of supra-cultural Spiritual Laws.
- 2) Early revelation—As opposed to the more "complete" later revelation.
- 3) Corrupted Teaching or Misinterpretation.

But even granting these qualifications, the world's religions are too varied and too fundamentally different to be reconciled. Given that the world's religions obviously teach and practice contrary things, the burden is on the Baha'i to salvage the world's major religions while dismantling almost everything foundational to those religions. Ironically, the religions which are most inclusive—Buddhism and Hinduism—are classically atheistic and pantheistic (respectively), and neither atheism nor pantheism is allowed within the strictly monotheistic Baha'i faith. Meanwhile, the religions that are least theologically inclusive of the Baha'i faith—Islam, Christianity, Orthodox Judaism—are monotheistic, as Baha'i is.

Also, the Baha'i faith teaches a sort of works-based salvation. The Baha'i faith is not much different from Islam in its core teachings about how to be saved except that, for the Baha'i, little is said about the afterlife. This earthly life is to be filled with good works counterbalancing one's evil deeds and showing one's self deserving of ultimate deliverance. Sin is not paid for or dissolved; rather, it is excused by a presumably benevolent God. Man does not have a significant relationship with God. In fact, Baha'is teach that there is no personality in God's essence, but only in His manifestations. Thus, God does not submit easily to a relationship with man. Accordingly, the Christian doctrine of grace is reinterpreted so that "grace" means "God's kind allowance for man to have the opportunity to earn deliverance." Built into this doctrine is a denial of Christ's sacrificial atonement and a minimization of sin.

The Christian view of salvation is very different. Sin is understood as being of eternal and infinite consequence since it is a universal crime against an infinitely perfect God ([Romans 3:10, 23](#)). Likewise, sin is so great that it deserves a life (blood) sacrifice and incurs eternal punishment in the afterlife. But Christ pays the price that all owe, dying as an innocent sacrifice for a guilty humanity. Because man cannot do anything to unblemish himself or to deserve eternal reward, he either must die for his own sins or believe that Christ graciously died in his place ([Isaiah 53](#); [Romans 5:8](#)). Thus, salvation is either by God's grace through man's faith or there is no eternal salvation.

It is no surprise then that Baha'i faith proclaims Baha'u'llah to be the second coming of Christ. Jesus Himself warned us in the Gospel of Matthew concerning the end times: "Then if any one says to you, 'Lo, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect" ([Matthew 24:23-24](#)). Interestingly, Baha'is typically deny or minimize any miracles of Baha'u'llah. His unique spiritual claims are based on self-attested authority, uncanny and uneducated wisdom, prolific writing, pure living, majority consensus, and other subjective tests. The more objective tests such as prophetic fulfillment employ heavily allegorical interpretations of Scripture (see *Thief in the Night* by William Sears). The belief in Baha'u'llah largely reduces to a point of faith—is one willing to accept him as the manifestation of God, in the absence of objective

evidence? Of course, Christianity also calls for faith, but the Christian has strong and demonstrable evidence along with that faith.

The Baha'i faith therefore does not accord with classical Christianity, and it has much to answer for in its own right. How an unknowable God could elicit such an elaborate theology and justify a new world religion is a mystery. The Baha'i faith is weak in addressing sin, treating it as if it were not a big problem and is surmountable by human effort. Christ's divinity is denied, as is the evidential value and literal nature of Christ's resurrection. And for the Baha'i faith, one of its biggest problems is its pluralism. That is, how can one reconcile such divergent religions without leaving them theologically gutted? It is easy to argue that the world's religions have commonalities in their ethical teachings and have some concept of ultimate reality. But it is another beast entirely to try to argue unity in their fundamental teachings about what the ultimate reality is and about how those ethics are grounded.

- While he is not the author of every article on GotQuestions.org, for citation purposes, you may reference our CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.