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WE CAN'T MAKE IT ON OUR OWN, WE WILL FALL SHORT

There is a great story in the Old Testament at the time of the Judges, around 1200 B.C. about the judge Gideon who came after the wonderful judge, Deborah. Gideon came from the weakest clan in Manasseh and felt of little use; perfect pickings for God to use.

After arguing that there was no way that he [Gideon] was able to save Israel from the Midianites; the Lord says “you can rescue Israel because I am going to help you! Defeating the Midianites will be as easy as beating up one man.” (Judges 6:16 LBCEV). The bad guys had an extremely large army, there were so many it would be easier to count the grains of sand on a beach than to count their camels (Judges 7:12 LBCEV). Here comes Gideon with his measly army of 32,000, but God stops him and says he has too many soldiers; so there is a process to reduce Gideon’s army and he reduces his troop level down to 300. Now these are not “crack troops”, oh no...just faithful followers...a “smart soldier”, relying on his military ability and





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force, would say the effort was suicide and leave to regroup and fight another day.

Gideon needed men of faith and not the best fighters that would rely on their own ability. It was clear what God had in mind; no one would ever assume Gideon was going to defeat all the eastern nations with their mighty army so vast it could not be counted, with 300 less than “crack troops”. So the stage is set.

You know, there is something you should keep in mind, God plus one is always a majority! Gideon and his faithful 300 blow their trumpets, break their jars, hold up their torches, and God delivers to them a great victory! Is there any question who brought victory? Is there any question who had the greatest power? No, and that’s the point of the story; this was God’s victory and not man’s! So, let me ask you this question: When “the bad guys” rise up against you, be they men or cancer cells, do you think you can make it on your own? I believe you will fall short without Jesus on your side.

Another way this can be illustrated is by the following example, not of my invention, but from an unknown source. Out in Southern California, there is an island off the coast called Catalina, twenty-six miles from the pier at Newport Beach. I actually had relatives go to this island every year for vacation, a beautiful place that will call you to it. Suppose that one day three men are standing on the end of the pier.

One is an alcoholic, grubby, sick, living in the streets. The second is the so-called “average American”, and the third is a fine, upstanding, pillar-of-the-community type of person.

All of a sudden, the alcoholic leaps off the edge of the pier five feet out into the water. The other two yell, “What are you trying to do?” The man in the water yells back, “I’m jumping to Catalina!”

The second man, the so-called average man on the street, says, “Watch me. I can do better than that!” He proceeds to jump, landing ten feet out, twice as far as the alcoholic. The third man, let’s call





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him Mr. Great, a very moral, upright, being the truly outstanding person that he is, laughs disdainfully at the two men in the water.

He moves back about fifty yards, takes a running leap and lands twenty feet out, twice as far as Mr. Average, and four times as far as Mr. Alcoholic...a little short of the 26 mile goal.

The Coast Guard comes along, fishes them out of the water and asks what do they think they are doing? To which all three reply, "We are jumping to Catalina"! Mr. Average boasts of his beating Mr. Alcoholic, and Mr. Great boasts of his accomplishment in beating both of them.

The Coast Guard officer could only shake his head and exclaim, "You fools! You are all still twenty-six miles short of your mark."

Although modern man considers himself better than, or at least as good as others, he is still far from the target God has set for us. It is impossible for anyone to jump from the pier to Catalina, and it is impossible for anyone to reach heaven by his own deeds and apart from Jesus Christ.

This comment is a mouth-full, and of course, it will be disputed by anyone from any other religion except Christianity. The P.C. police will say that this "Jesus is the only way" stance is a problem because it is argumentative and inflexible, and that is what's the matter with you Christians...you have no room for other opinions. Can't we all just get along; what makes you think you are correct?

Why would anyone want to water-down real Truth, just to get along with others who are going down the wrong road? Jesus didn't back down from the religious leaders that disagreed with His Truth at the time He walked this earth...of course they crucified Him for it, but we disciples are called to do the same...pick up your cross and follow Him.

Among the religious leaders who have attained a large following throughout history, Jesus Christ is unique in the fact that He alone claimed to be God in human flesh. A common misconception is that





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some or many of the leaders of the world's other religions made similar claims, but this is simply not the case.

Buddha did not claim to be God; Moses never said that he was Yahweh; Mohammed did not identify himself as Allah; and nowhere will you find Zoroaster (a Persian prophet for which the Iranian Religion "Zoroastrian" is named) claim to be Ahura Mazda (the Persian God). Yet Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth, said that those who had seen Him [Jesus] has also seen the Father (John 14:9).

Confucianism is a set of teachings; Confucius himself is not important. Islam is the revelation of Allah, with Mohammed being the prophet, and Buddhism emphasizes "the principles of the Buddha" and not Buddha himself. This is especially true of Hinduism, where there is no historic founder at all. However, at the center of Christianity is the person of Jesus Christ...the very person of Christ, who created the Universe and walked this earth and defeated death Himself by His resurrection. Jesus did not just claim to be teaching mankind the truth; He claimed that He was the Truth (John 14:6).

With Christianity being the ONLY WAY to God, as I believe, and realizing that no other religion is going to agree with that point of view, this would lead a person to refute the common held belief that all religions are ultimately the same, and that they all worship the same God. I am certainly not knowledgeable enough to know if all religions worship the same God or not. I would never be so arrogant to assume I know this information, but I do know that for me, Jesus is the only way, as the Bible so clearly states. Other religions can deal with themselves and their relationships to God in their own way; they certainly don't need me to be involved.

On one business trip to Denver, I was returning back to Denver International Airport in one of those blue vans. The driver was a very nice Muslim man. Being very kind, he shared his faith with me and was very direct and inflexible with respect to it's doctrine. I actually found his discourse interesting and I learned directly what his belief actually was; so often people make assumptions as to what a different religion's dogma is...I was getting Islam direct from





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a caring Muslim...actually very interesting. I shared my faith, though it was a little hard to get a word in edgewise; he certainly disagreed with me about who Jesus was/is and about Jesus being the only way. At the end of the van ride, standing beside the vehicle, he removed my bag and we actually hugged each other in friendship. While we shared our thoughts, neither one was changed in our beliefs. There were no sharp hateful disagreements, as I see among my liberal brethren. With this Muslim man, we experienced a nice exchange and I felt Jesus would agree with the way I handled myself...don't bend as a reed in the wind but in all things, love. In order to be calm and loving with those who disagree with you requires your preparation. You have to know what it is you believe in and be solid enough in that belief that there is no erosion of your theology. When you feel erosion is when you feel attacked; then the defense mechanisms set in and blood pressure goes up. This type of preparation will only come to you by you giving Jesus the preeminence in your life; put Jesus first and you will be supported like no other.

Okay, so I'll be supported...what else can I expect by putting Jesus Christ first in my life? What will happen if I give Him the preeminence in my life?

Amen and Blessings to you!

Haven "Muskrat" Mankin, author

This was Chapter 5B from my book titled, **11:11**
See the whole book at www.muskratbooks.com

