

# Occam's Razor

Occam's Razor, or the "Law of Parsimony" states that "*among competing hypotheses the one with the fewest assumptions should be accepted.*" Basically, simpler theories are preferable to more complex ones because they are more testable.

When it comes to Christian theology, complex systems are impossible to prove because they are based on many separate assumptions, most of which are very difficult or impossible to collectively prove or disprove. The result is endless, and for the most part fruitless, debate among brilliant theologians, none of whom agree with one another on most of the salient points of doctrine. What hope is there, then, for most of us, who would be considered rank amateurs at best when it comes to theological matters?

What I love the most about Jesus is that his theology was neither complex nor systematic. If it was important for us to understand all the details, I would assume that God would have made them plain to us, using clear and unambiguous terminology. Obviously, He did not do that. So, the most important and simple theological assumption I would have to make is that the details on which most theologians disagree must not be important to God.

Conversely, the details on which almost all of us agree are the most likely to be true. Most of us intuitively believe that love is better than hate, generosity is better than selfishness, and so on. Most would also agree that the moral and ethical principles that Jesus taught are equal to, and probably superior to, those of any other religious teacher. Jesus was a master of simplification. He reduced all the teachings of the Law and the Prophets to two very simple principles, with which most would agree, that we love God with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves. He avoided the use of complex theological formulas or doctrinal statements, the beatitudes being a minor exception. Mostly, he answered theological questions with simple stories and illustrations. His teachings focused on principles of living, not theological formulas and speculations. Jesus' theology had to do mostly with relationships, rather than abstract thought. He taught that God is our Father and we are His children. His teachings were not cryptic or esoteric. Instead, He taught in plain, easy-to-understand language.

For me, the simple truth that God is love is all I really need to know. With childlike faith, I believe my heavenly Father loves me, and it is my strong desire to conduct my life in ways that please Him. I don't know exactly what awaits me after death in heaven, but I do know that someone who loves me very much will be waiting for me there.

My Christian Universalist beliefs derive mostly from the above very simple assumptions.