

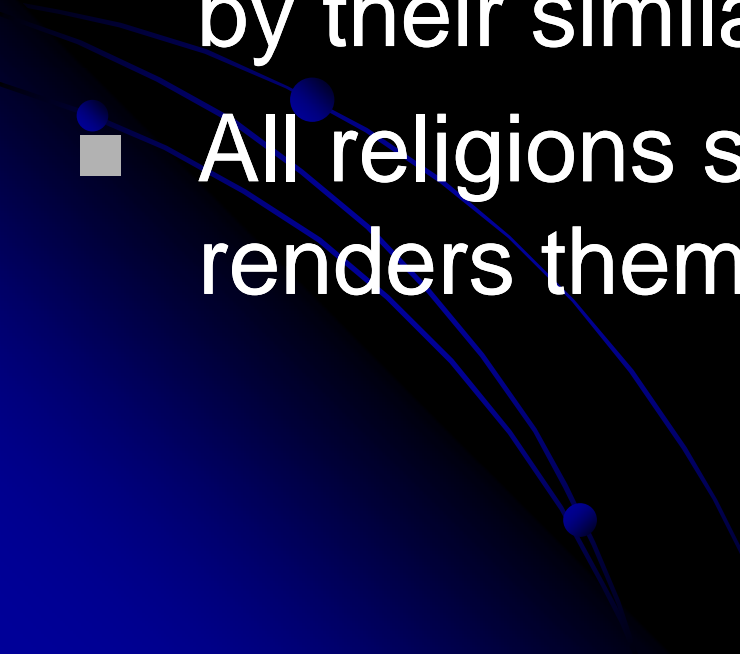


Religious Pluralism

OUTLINE

1. What is Religious Pluralism
2. Why Study Religious Pluralism
3. Historical Perspective
4. Can all religions be True?
5. What is Truth?
6. Is there only one way?
7. The Case for Christianity

1. Religious Pluralism

- There are many ways to God
 - There are only superficial differences among all religions
 - These differences are greatly overshadowed by their similarities.
 - All religions share a fundamental unity that renders them equally valid.
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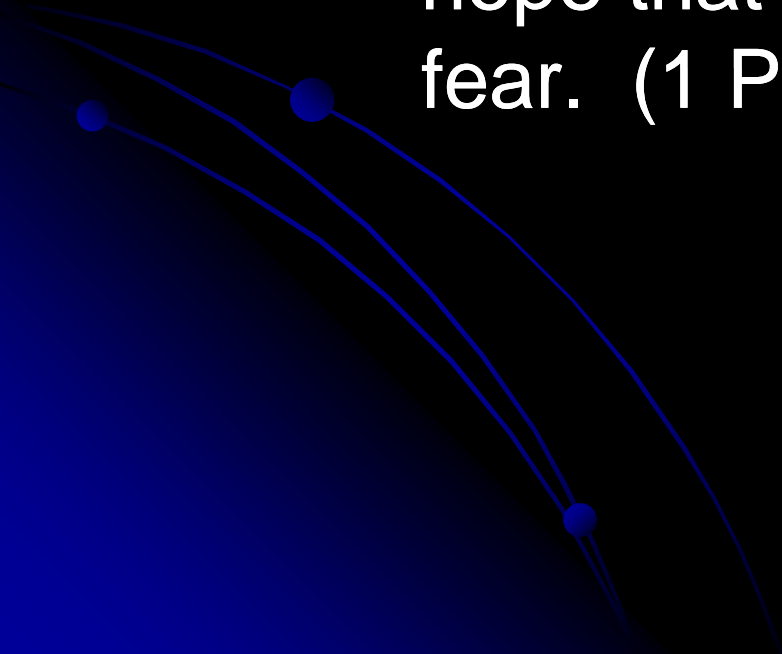
Religious Pluralism

- Rather than dominating others with our "version of reality," we should accept all beliefs as equally valid.
- Openness without the restraint of reason, and tolerance without moral appraisal are the new tenets of Religious Pluralism.
- That's what makes evangelism so unfashionable on campuses today.

Religious Pluralism

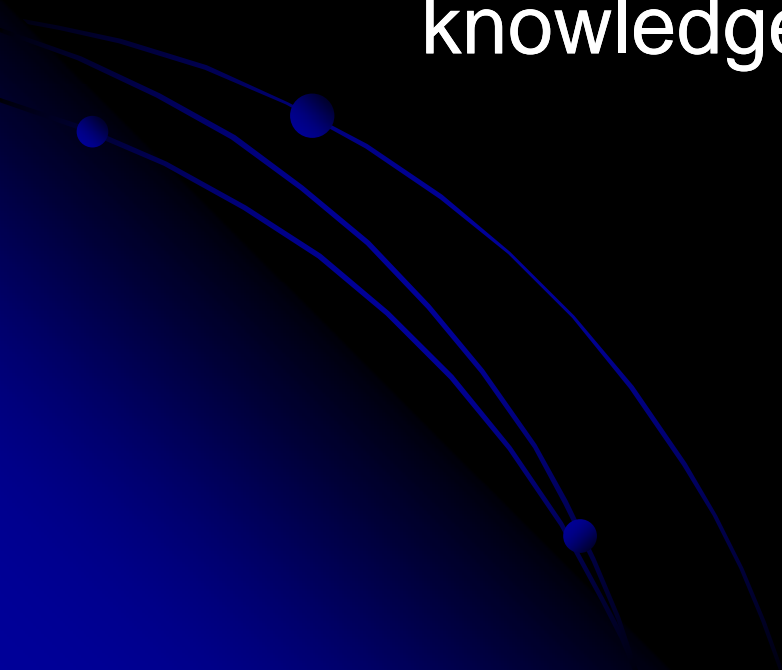
- Religious pluralism means that we look at one another's beliefs and in effect say, "I'm OK and you're OK."
- A remark often heard, especially on campus is: **"I don't think it really makes much difference what you believe as long as you're sincere."**

2. Why Study Religious Pluralism

- **We are Commanded to defend our Christian faith:**
 - Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. (1 Peter 3:15)
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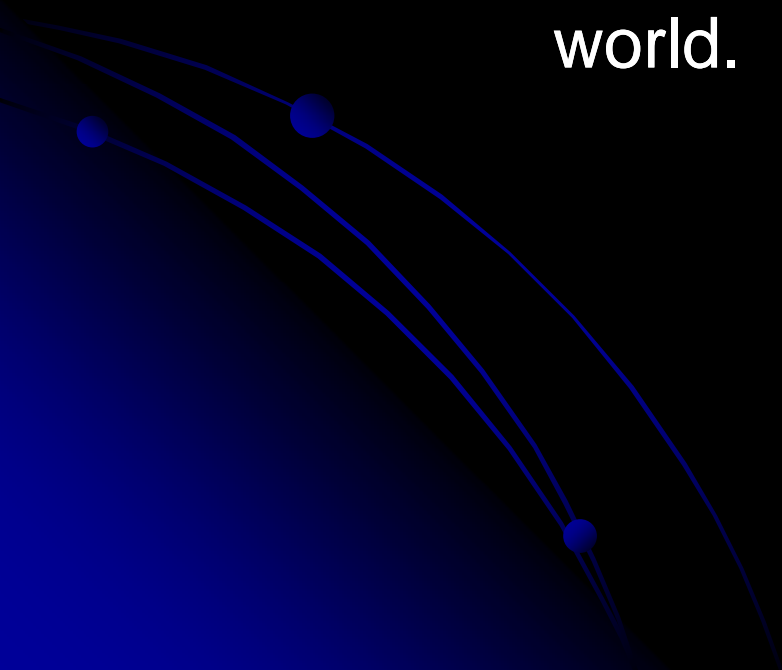
Why Study Religious Pluralism

- **We are Commanded to Refute False Ideas About God**
 - Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. (2 Cor 10:5)



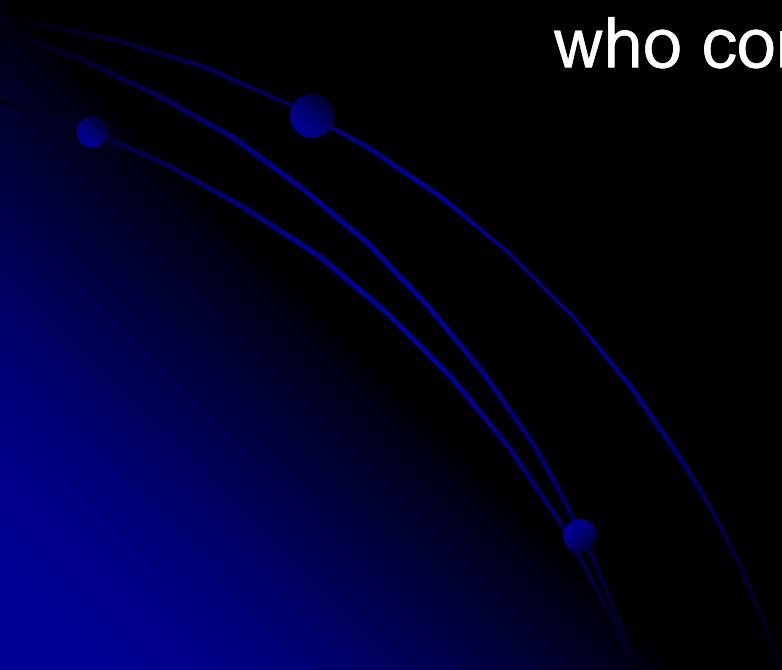
Why Study Religious Pluralism

- **We are Commanded to Discern True from False Prophets**
 - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

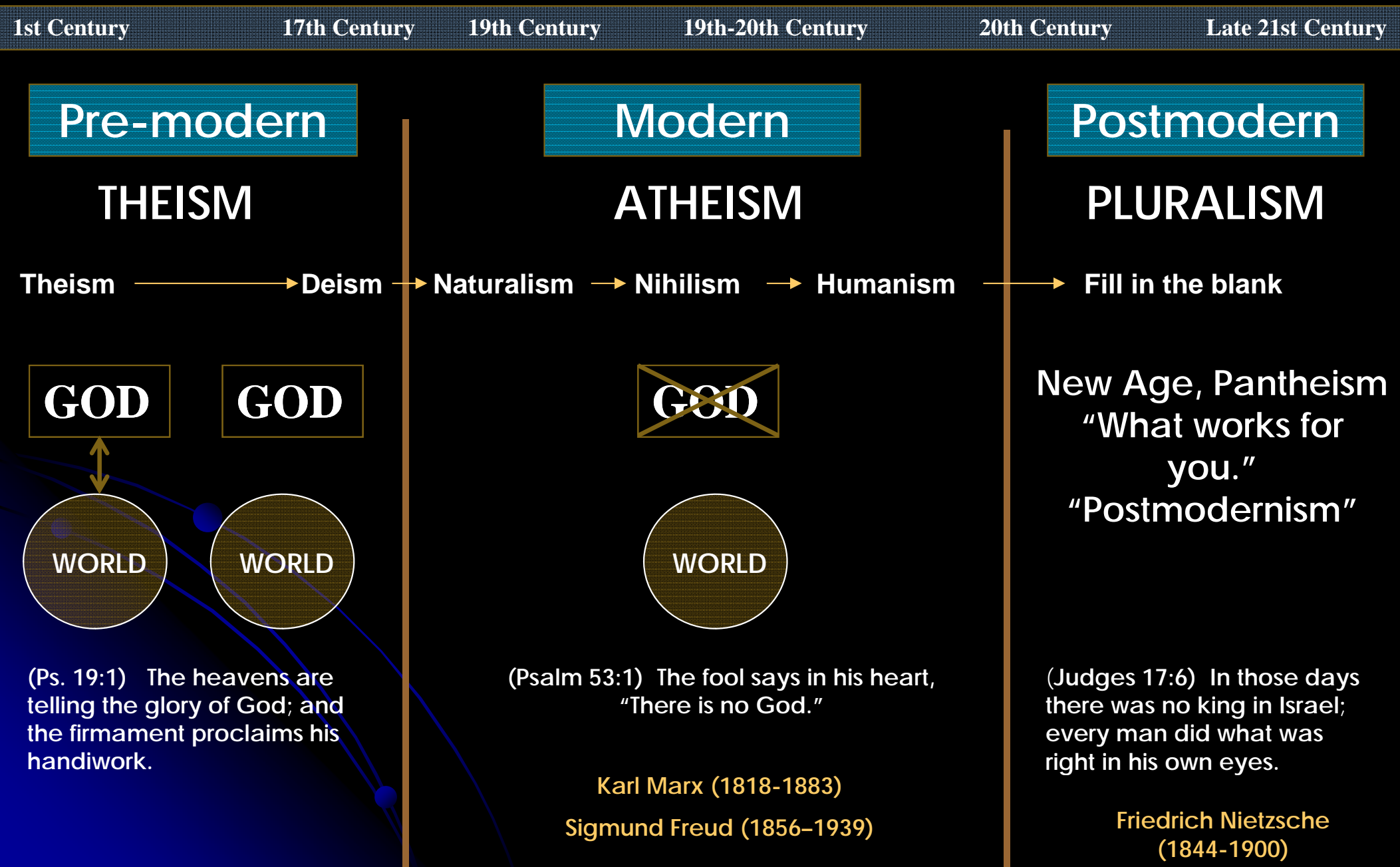


Why Study Religious Pluralism

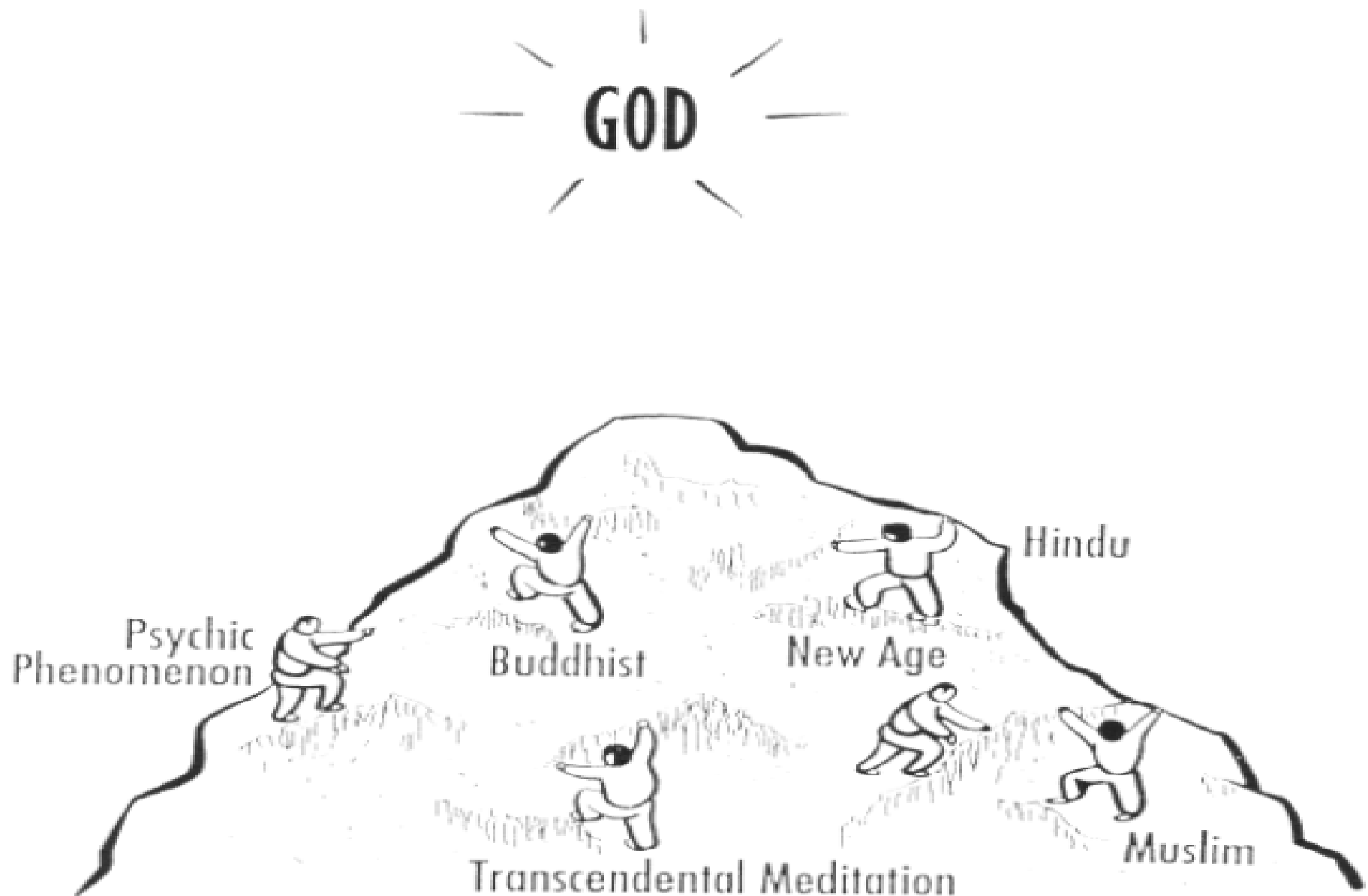
- **Paul Refuted Those who Opposed the Truth**
 - Holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by **sound doctrine**, both to **exhort** and **convict** those who contradict. (Titus 1:9)



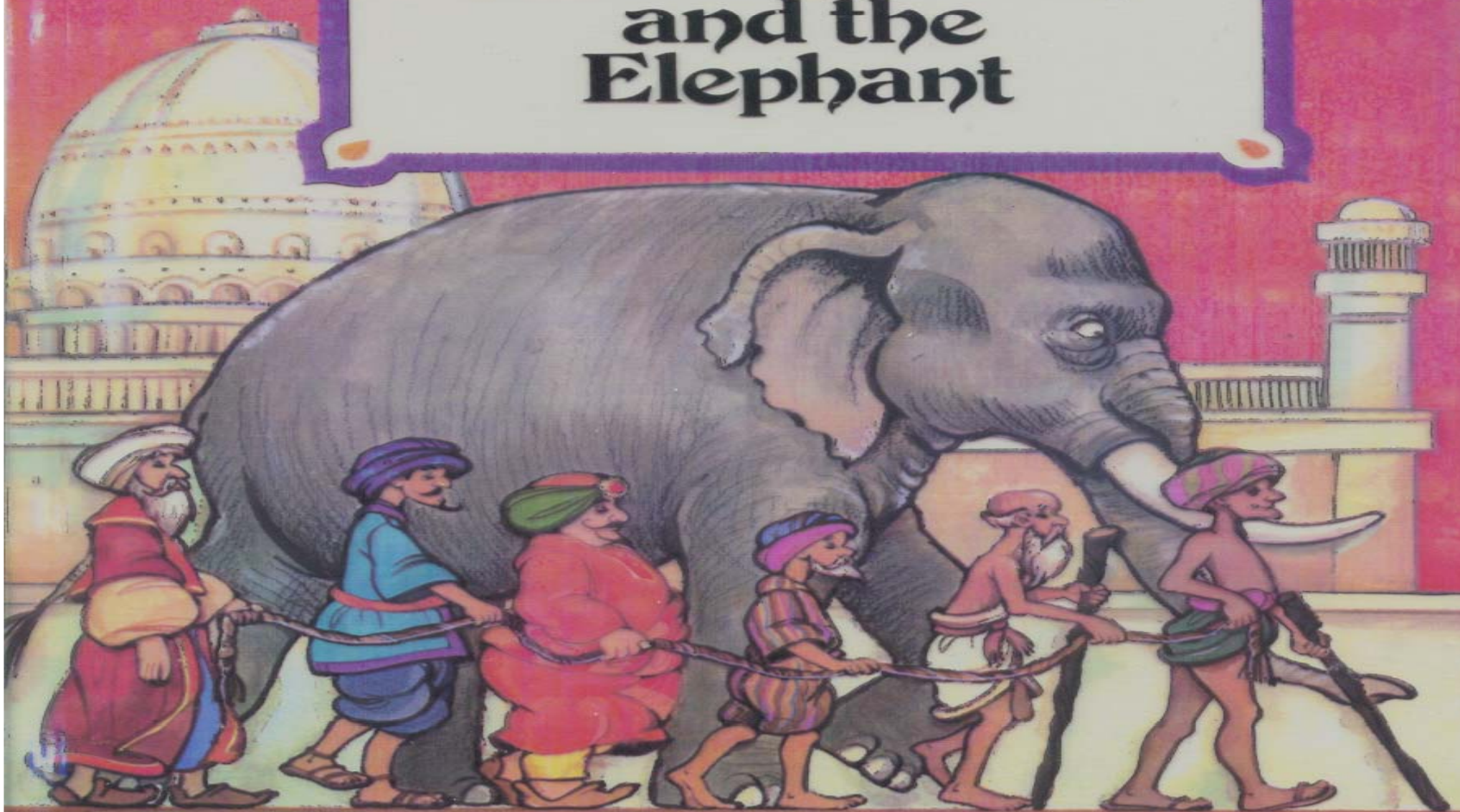
3. Historical Perspective



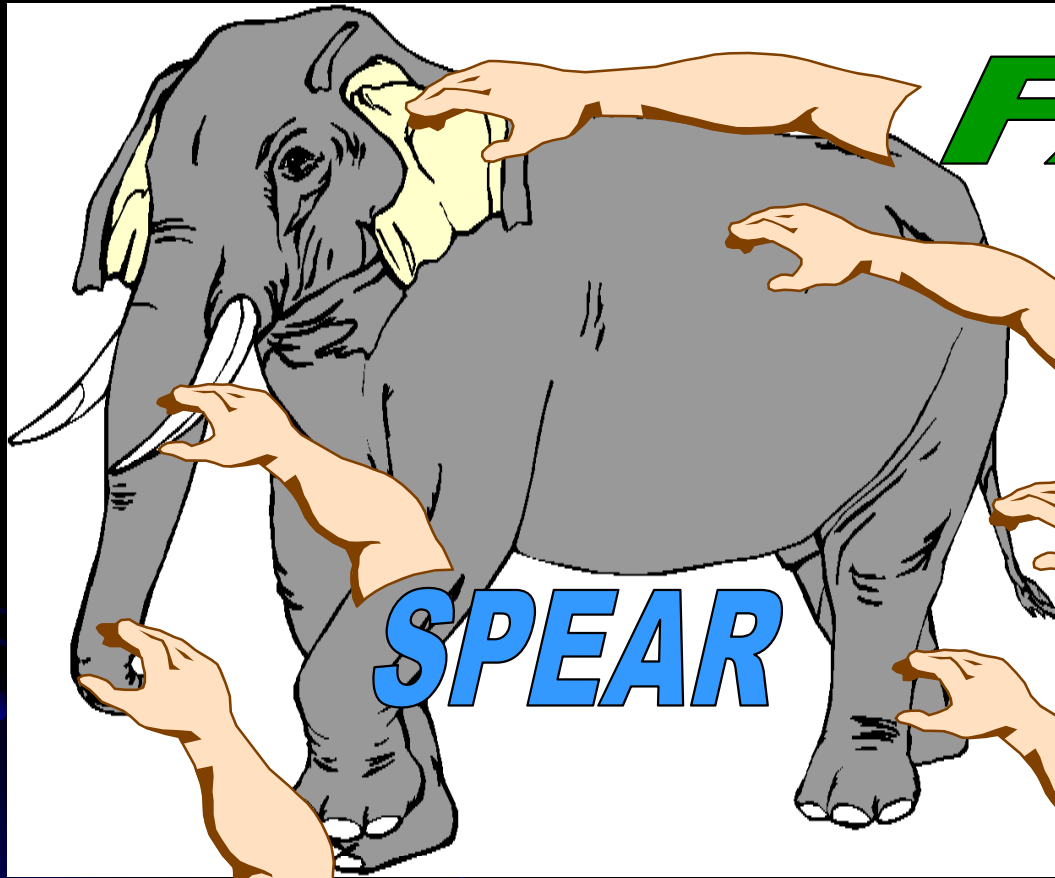
4. Can All Religions Be true



Six Blind Men and the Elephant



Six Blind Men



FAN

WALL

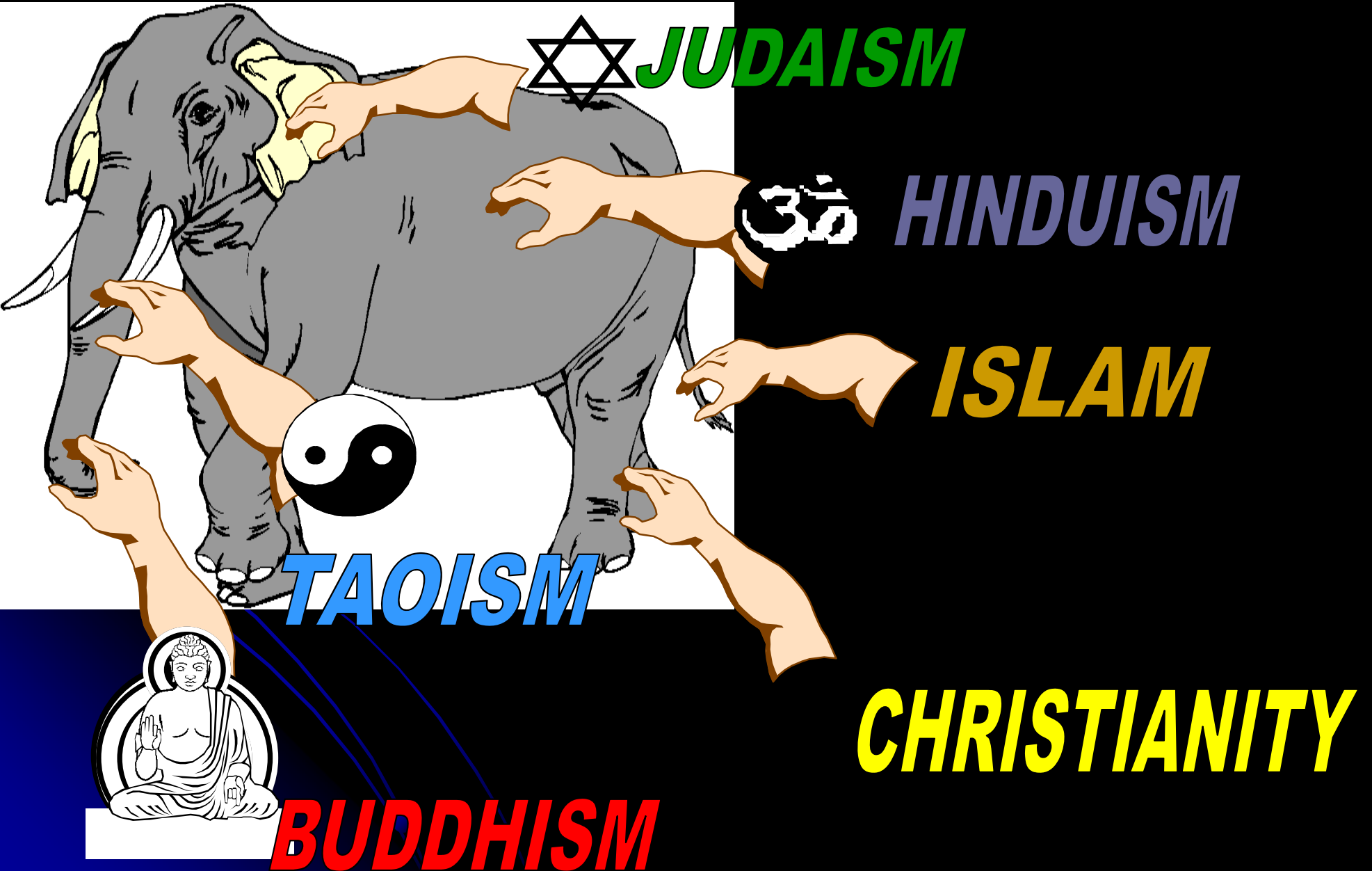
ROPE

TREE


SPEAR

SNAKE

Six Blind Men



The Case for the Elephant Story

- This story is used to illustrate 1 of 2 points.
 1. Every faith represents just one part of a larger truth about God. Each has only a piece of the truth, ultimately leading to God by different routes.
 2. Cultural biases have blinded us that we can never know the true nature of things. This view is called post-modernism.
- 

The Parable Fails For the Following Reasons:


- As appealing as this story is, it leaves one important question unanswered:
 - How do we know the blind men were all describing the same elephant?
- The pluralist has the one true perspective. He has the “privileged” access to the truth. He must have a full and accurate view of the entire picture
 - This privileged view is precisely what advocates of religious pluralism deny
 - To claim that each religion has part of the truth, the pluralist must know what the whole truth is.

The Parable Fails For the Following Reasons:

- Even though the men are blind, the elephant isn't necessarily mute. This is a factor the illustration doesn't allow for: **What if the elephant speaks?**
- The claim of Christianity is that man doesn't learn about God by touching blindly.
- Instead, discovery is through God's own self-revelation.
- He is not passive and silent, leaving us to guess about His nature.
- God tells us what He is like and what He wants.

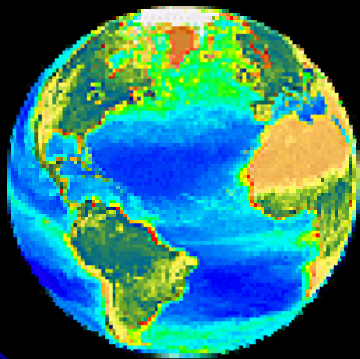
The Bottom Line

**The pluralist
believes
everyone is blind
but him!**



The Law of Non-Contradiction

***Opposite ideas cannot both be true
at the same time and in the same sense.***



The Earth is
Round



The Earth is
NOT Round

All Religions Can't Be True: They Teach Opposites

ISLAM

GOD: absolute one

HUMANITY: good by nature

JESUS: major prophet but was not God

DEATH OF CHRIST: he didn't die or rise

SALVATION: good deeds must outweigh bad ones

CHRISTIANITY

GOD: 3 persons in 1 essence

HUMANITY: sinful by nature

JESUS: Second person of the Trinity (God Incarnate)

DEATH OF CHRIST: He died and rose in glorified body

SALVATION: Working faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

The 3 Major Religious World Views



Judaism

Christianity

Islam

Theism

God made all



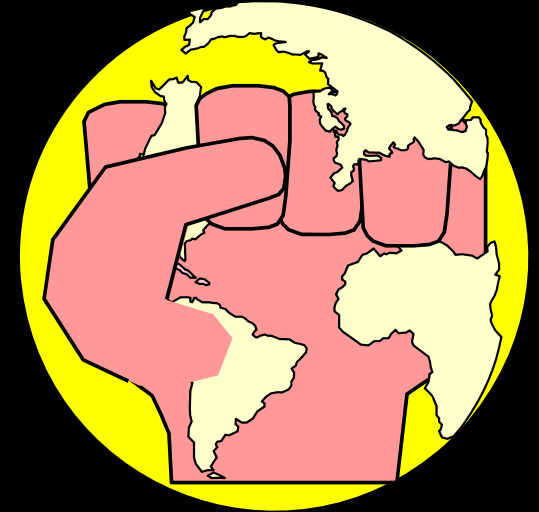
Secular

Humanism

Naturalism

Atheism

No God at all



Buddhism

Hinduism

New Age

Pantheism

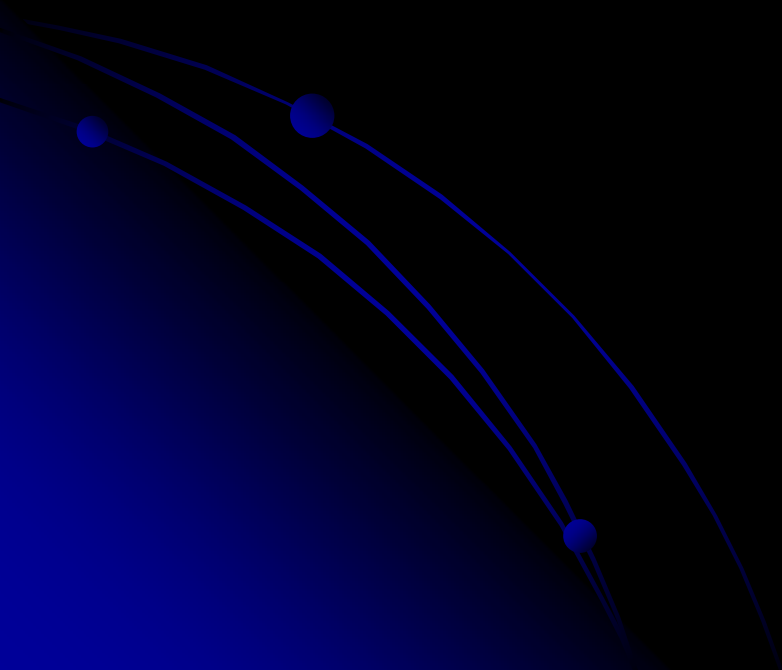
God is all

All religions are the same: They all teach love

1. No religious code matches the agape love found in the person of Jesus Christ
2. Wrongly assumes if a part is true the whole must be true
3. Wrongly assumes “loving one another” is chief end of man (it isn’t: loving God is)
4. Magnifies superficial similarities but ignores essential differences

The “CREED” by Steve Turner

- The British poet and journalist Steve Turner wrote a poem called “Creed” which comments on modern Western religious thinking.



The Creed – con't

- We believe in Marxfreudanddarwin
We believe everything is OK
as long as you don't hurt anyone,
to the best of your definition of hurt,
and to the best of your knowledge.
- We believe in sex before during and after marriage.
We believe in the therapy of sin.
We believe that adultery is fun.
We believe that sodomy is OK.
We believe that taboos are taboo.
- We believe that everything is getting better
despite evidence to the contrary.
The evidence must be investigated
And you can prove anything with evidence.

The Creed - con't

- We believe there's something in horoscopes, UFO's and bent spoons; Jesus was a good man just like Buddha, Mohammed, and ourselves. He was a good moral teacher although we think His good morals were bad.
- We believe that all religions are basically the same-- at least the one that we read was. They all believe in love and goodness. They only differ on matters of creation, sin, heaven, hell, God, and salvation.
- We believe that after death comes the Nothing Because when you ask the dead what happens they say nothing If death is not the end, if the dead have lied, then it's compulsory heaven for all except perhaps Hitler, Stalin, and Genghis Khan.

The Creed - con't

- We believe in Masters and Johnson.
What's selected is average.
What's average is normal.
What's normal is good.
- We believe that man is essentially good.
It's only his behavior that lets him down.
This is the fault of society.
Society is the fault of conditions.
Conditions are the fault of society.
- We believe that each man must find the truth that is right for him.
Reality will adapt accordingly.
The universe will readjust.
History will alter.
We believe that there is no absolute truth
except the truth that there is no absolute truth.

The Creed - con't

- We believe in the rejection of creeds,
and the flowering of individual thought.

If chance be the Father of all flesh,
disaster is his rainbow in the sky,

- And when you hear
State of Emergency!
Sniper Kills Ten!
Troops on Rampage!
Whites go Looting!
Bomb Blasts School!
- It is but the sound of man worshiping his maker.

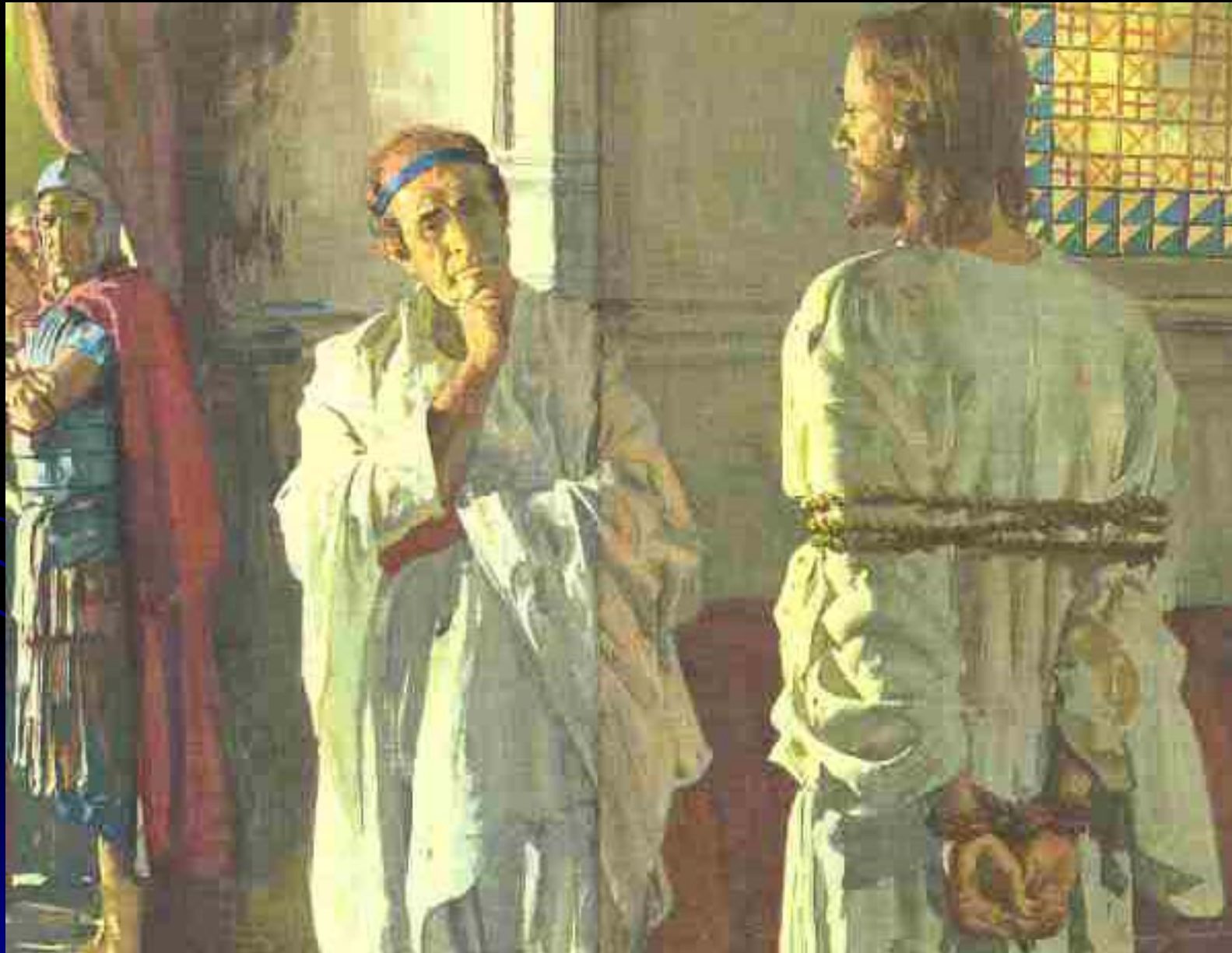
What About Those Who Are Sincere?

- **Sincerity is not a test for truth.**
 - You can be sincerely wrong
 - **There is a way that seems right to a man,
But its end is the way of death. (Prov.
14:12).**

- **Sincere Belief:**
 - **This ship
is unsinkable!**



5. What is Truth?



John
18:38

What is Truth?

- Truth:

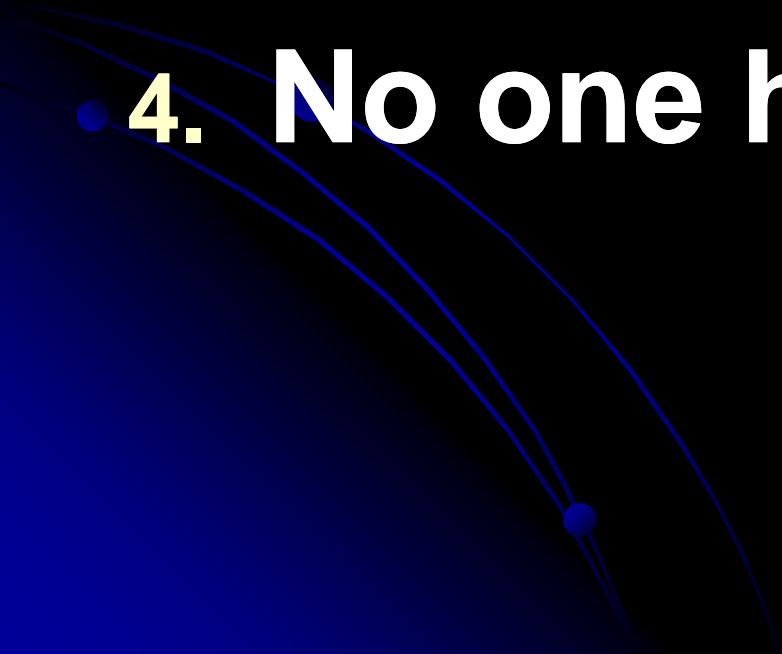
- Corresponds to reality
- Objective
- Transcendent
- Exclusive

What is Truth?

- Truth:

- Absolute
- Has inescapable Consequences
- Revealed (Discovered)
- Saves (2 Thess. 2:10, 1 Tim 2:4, John 8:32)
- Jesus Christ

Objections to Objective Truth

1. Truth does not exist
 2. You can't know truth
 3. Truth is relative
 4. No one has the truth
- 

Answering Objections



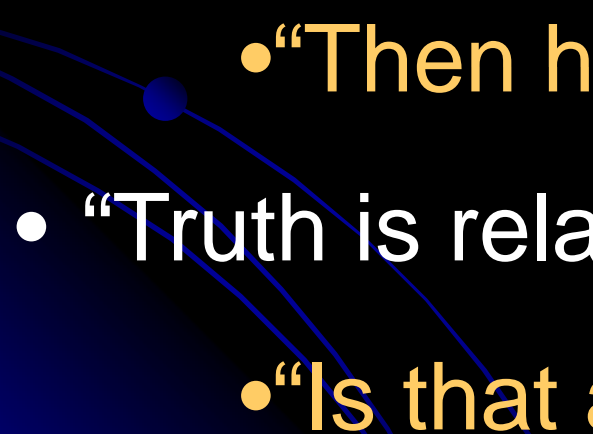
Apply the claim to itself!



Examples . . .



Answering Objections

- There is no Truth
 - Is that True?
 - “You can’t know truth.”
 - “Then how do you know that?”
 - “Truth is relative!”
 - “Is that a relative truth?”
- 

People demand absolute truth when it comes to:

Safety

Money

Medicine

• **Relationships**

Transportation



So why not religion?

We Suppress the Truth


Rom 1:18-25:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and unrighteousness of men who **suppress the truth** by their wickedness, so that men are without excuse... who **exchanged the truth for the lie** and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen

We love Darkness

John 3:19

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because **their deeds were evil.**



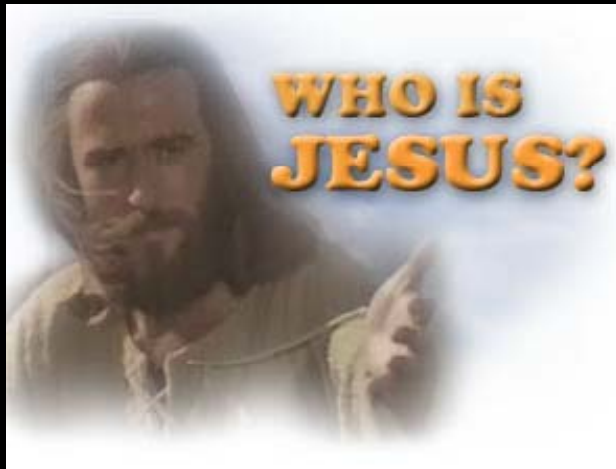
We want to Suit our Desires

2 Timothy 4:3-4

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but **according to their own desires**, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

6. Is There Really Only





C.S. Lewis
Mere Christianity
pp. 55-56



- “I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish things that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.”

The Uniqueness of Christianity

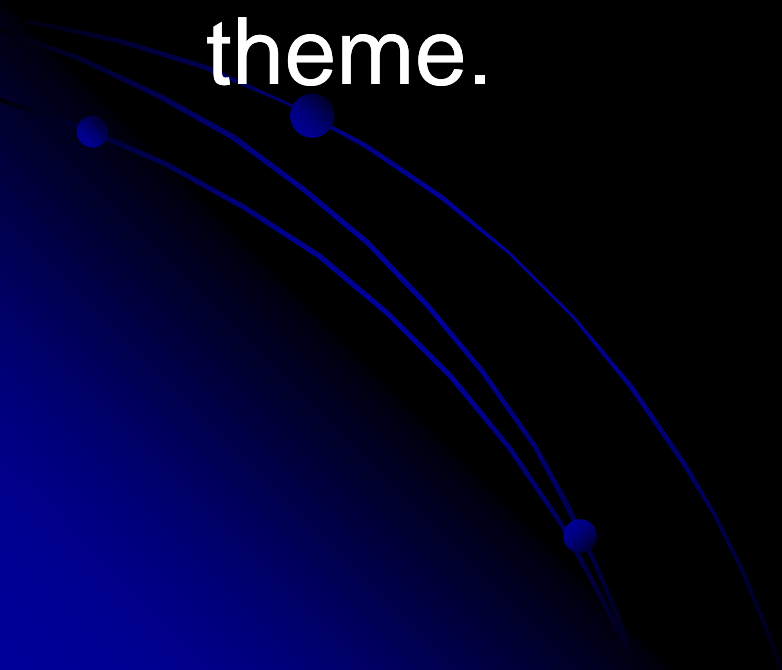
- Unlike Buddha, Mohammad, and others, Christ is alive today.
- Christians are capable of being united with He who died and rose for them.
 - This relationship is not found in any other religion.
- The Author of our faith claims to be God incarnate, a claim that was never made by any other religious leader.

The Uniqueness of Christianity

- God is perfect. Human Beings are imperfect.
 - As a result mankind can only create imperfect religions.
 - All man-created religions are imperfect and have common characteristics.
 - This makes the one religion created by God unique, because it has characteristics only God could give it.

The Uniqueness of Christianity

- In no other religion does the leader of that religion die so that his followers may live.
- Christianity is the only religion in which love, including love of enemies, is the central theme.



7. The Case for Christianity

1. The Reality of the Existence of Christ

- A large portion of the Bible is made of eyewitness accounts of people who were actually there.
- Christians do not depend on a single individual's revelation of the truth (as, for example, in Islam and Buddhism).

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- (1 John 1:1)

The Case for Christianity

1. The Reality of the Existence of Christ (con't)

- The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who was not a Christian, wrote in 93-94 A.D.: "At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and [he] was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders." Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII.iii.3

The Case for Christianity

2. The Divinity of Jesus Christ

- Christ's authority over the law, creation, sin, and death.
- Christ's sinlessness. No one could make this claim.
- Christ's countless miracles.
 - Miracles are a powerful confirmation because it authenticates the creator's authority over His creation.
- Christ and the fulfillment of prophecies.
 - The prophecies included the city of birth, His method of dying, His betrayal, His resurrection, etc.

The Case for Christianity

3. The Resurrection of Christ

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. But did He rise from the dead?
- For the apostles, what was there to gain from preaching that Christ was risen from the dead if He really had not risen ?

The Case for Christianity

3. The Resurrection of Christ

- If they did not believe in the resurrection, they would have known that what they were preaching was a lie. Do you know anyone who would knowingly die for a lie?
- There was no financial gain; there was no social prestige; there was no political power to come as a result of their preaching the resurrection.

The Case for Christianity

3. The Resurrection of Christ (con't)

As an atheist, lawyer and journalist Lee Strobel did a two-year investigation on the resurrection interviewing some of the great scholars on both sides. He finally concluded in his book *The Case for Christ*,

“In light of the convincing facts I had learned during my investigation, in the face of this overwhelming avalanche of evidence in the case for Christ, the great irony was this, it would require much more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to trust in Jesus of Nazareth.”

The Case for Christianity

4. The Authenticity of the Holy Bible

- The Holy Bible proves to be true historically and scientifically.. *(Read the Case for Christ by Lee Strobel & Evidence that demand a verdict by Josh McDowell)*
- The Bible answers the major questions all belief systems must answer.
 - Where did we come from?
 - What is the nature of the divine?
 - What is the nature of man?
 - What is the answer to the human predicament?
 - What happens after death?
 - How do we explain evil?

Concluding Remarks

- The problem here is the fundamental attitude of the human race: that we want to make the rules; we want to create and design our own options; we want to dictate our own terms
- The premise of this world is that there is no God – If there is no God, there is no Absolute Truth. If there is no God, there is only the individual.... Each individual can, then, make up his own truth.
- We want, if we may, to construct our own reality. We don't want to be compelled to submit to a reality that lies beyond us