

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 8:37-59

Lesson #33

Bad Religion

03/20/2016

Who does this profile describe?

- Outside the political establishment.
- Shows little respect for opponents - name calling, taunting, calling them liars.
- Divides the community with no regard for potential violence as a result.
- Promises to make everything great if he is in charge.
- Makes promises that no mortal could realistically fulfill.
- Demands unquestioned trust & respect.
- Threatens doom and gloom if he is not followed.

1

Interpretive paraphrase of John 8:37-59

"You are so proud of your heritage but your real father is the devil. You fight over who is most faithful to the founding documents but in reality you are blind leaders. I preach the truth and you try to destroy me. You spread lies about my background because you are like your father who is the father of lies. If you want to talk about backgrounds, let's talk about backgrounds. Your heritage and trademarks are lying and murder, which spring from your true nature. You think I am crazy and yet it is you that have the demons.

Let me say this, if you will trust and follow me you will have eternal life. You claim that I have no authority to say this. But if I deny this, I would be lying and lowering myself to your level. I know more about the founding documents than your fathers did and if they were alive today they would be supporting me not you. I don't have to subject myself to your abuse so if you will excuse me, I am out of here."

2

John 8

"39 If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. . . 43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. . . 51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." 52 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon." . . 54 "It is My Father who glorifies Me, . . . 55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you, . . ."

3

What is the point that Jesus makes?

- All who claim to believe in God do not have saving faith.
- It is possible to believe in the man Jesus but not affirm him as the Christ or as God.
- The true test of saving faith is not sincerity, moral discipline, or zeal.

Romans 10

"2 For I bear them witness that **they have a zeal for God**, but not in accordance with knowledge.

3 For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."

4

"People don't reject Christ so much as a distorted characterization of him."



Bill Bright

5



What did Abraham do that marked him as a man of faith?

- He was willing to risk change **when it meant going to an unknown place** - (the promised land). (**Body of Christ**)
- He was willing to believe God's promise **when it seemed impossible** - (the promised seed). (**Jesus Christ**)
- He was willing to follow God's will **when it made little sense** - (sacrificing Isaac). (**free from the Law**)

7

Consider the narrative of John 8

- **Vs. 1-11** It started with the religious Jews' prosecution of an immoral woman **where Jesus forgives her sin and exposes the hypocrisy of the religious Jews.**
- **Vs. 12-30** It follows with a discourse on Jesus as the light of the world **where forgiveness is linked to faith in him.**
- **Vs. 31-59** It ends with Jesus prosecution of the religious Jews for their unbelief **and with their trying to stone him.**

8

Consider the narrative of John 8

- It seems that Jesus got it mixed up.
- The adulterous woman was of the devil while sincere, disciplined Jews should be given some respect.
- **Luke 15:11-32** The Prodigal Son and the older brother reveal a parallel message.
- This explains the targeting of religion that had been hijacked by human pride, and fear.

9

A popular pyramid of religious acceptability.

Orthodox Christians

Other forms of Christianity

Abrahamic Religions

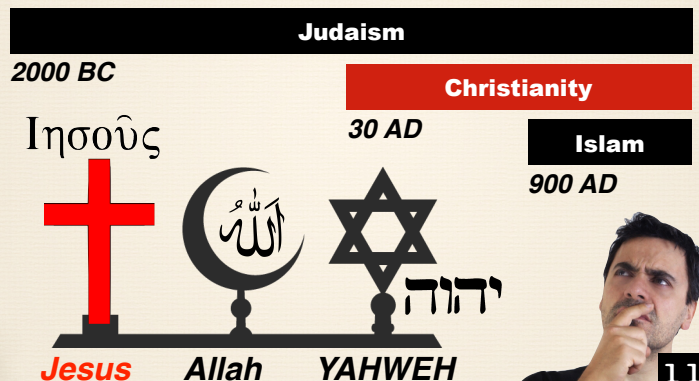
Other Theistic Religions

Pagans & Atheists

Moral discipline, religious zeal, and sincerity of faith are viewed as more important than the Word of the Cross

10

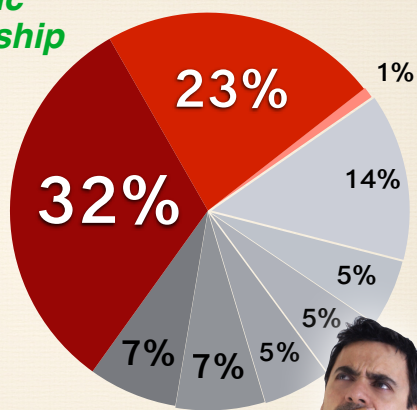
Do the Abrahamic religions all worship the same God?



11

Do the Abrahamic religions all worship the same God?

- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Chinese religions
- Others
- Nonreligious theists
- Agnostic / atheist



Do the Abrahamic religions all worship the same God?

- This does not mean that there is no **common ground** between the three Abrahamic religions.

They share a common:

- **Ancestor** - Abraham
- **City** - Jerusalem
- **Scripture** - Torah
- **View of time** - linear
- **Hope** - Messiah

- John's Gospel is quite clear - **if you don't receive the Son you don't know, love, or receive the Father.**



"There are few things worse than bad religion and there are few things better than good religion."

Billy Graham

Jesus and his Apostles had little tolerance for bad religion, which is the point of this passage.

- John 8:1-11 suggests that spiritual adultery is worse than sexual adultery.
- The real enemy is demonic deception, and destruction disguised as religious dogma.

14

Jesus and the Apostles were more concerned about religious apostasy than pagan immorality for one simple reason

the Cross would cover the sins of the world but not the unbelief of the world.

15

Don't make the mistake of defining your faith in terms of sincerity, discipline, and religious zeal rather than

confidence in the person and work of Christ.

16

But how are we to identify "bad religion"?

That is the subject of next weeks lesson.



17