

current sermon series

3 Questions

Is there just one true religion?

Was Jesus just a good teacher?

Does religion save?

Acts 17:16-34

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.

¹⁷ So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.

Acts 17:16-34

¹⁸ Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbler wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

Acts 17:16-34

¹⁹ And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰ For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” ²¹ Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there

Acts 17:16-34

would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. ²² So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³ For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship,

Acts 17:16-34

I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴ The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵ nor is he served by human hands,

Acts 17:16-34

as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶ And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,

Acts 17:16-34

²⁷ that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’”

Acts 17:16-34

²⁹ Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. ³⁰ The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,

Acts 17:16-34

³¹ because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” ³² Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said,

Acts 17:16-34

“We will hear you again about this.”³³ So Paul went out from their midst.³⁴ But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Is there only one true religion?

A faith without some doubts is like a human body without any antibodies in it. People who blithely go through life too busy or indifferent to ask hard questions about why they believe as they do will find themselves defenseless against either the experience of tragedy or the probing questions of a smart skeptic.

Is there only one true religion?

A person's faith can collapse almost overnight if she has failed over the years to listen to her own doubts, which should only be discarded after long reflection. Believers should acknowledge and wrestle with doubts—not only their own, but their friends' and neighbors

Objection #1

God can't be all good and all powerful because there is too much suffering in the world.

C.S. Lewis

My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of 'just' and 'unjust'? What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?...Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own.

C.S. Lewis

But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too—for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my private fancies... Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple.

Objection #2

How can a good God send people to hell?

Tim Keller

If I don't believe that there is a God who will eventually put all things right, I will take up the sword and will be sucked into the endless vortex of retaliation.

Objection #2

All sin will be punished—either by the sinner in hell or in Christ on the cross.

The Question

Is there only one true religion?

Tim Keller

If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all that he said; if he didn't rise from the dead, then why worry with anything he said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like his teaching, but whether or not he rose from the dead.