





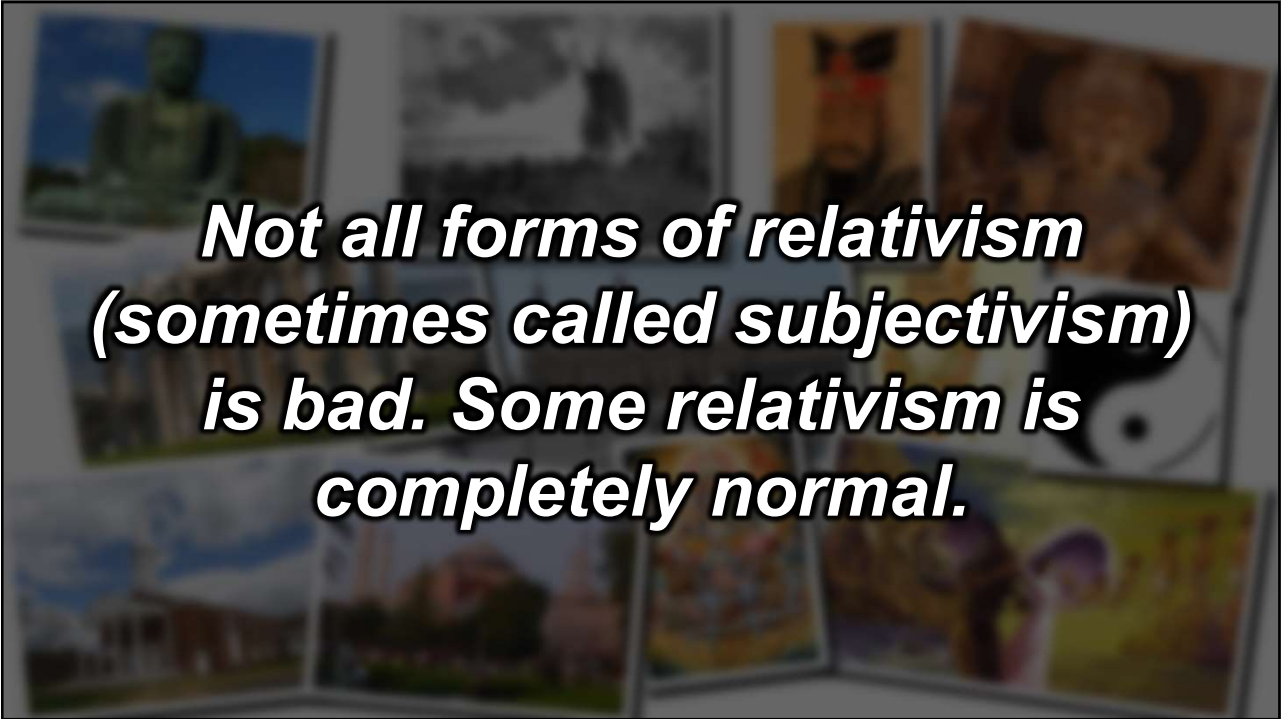
## *∞ Skepticism ∞*

*grants that there may be  
objective truth about X, but we  
cannot know what that truth is.*

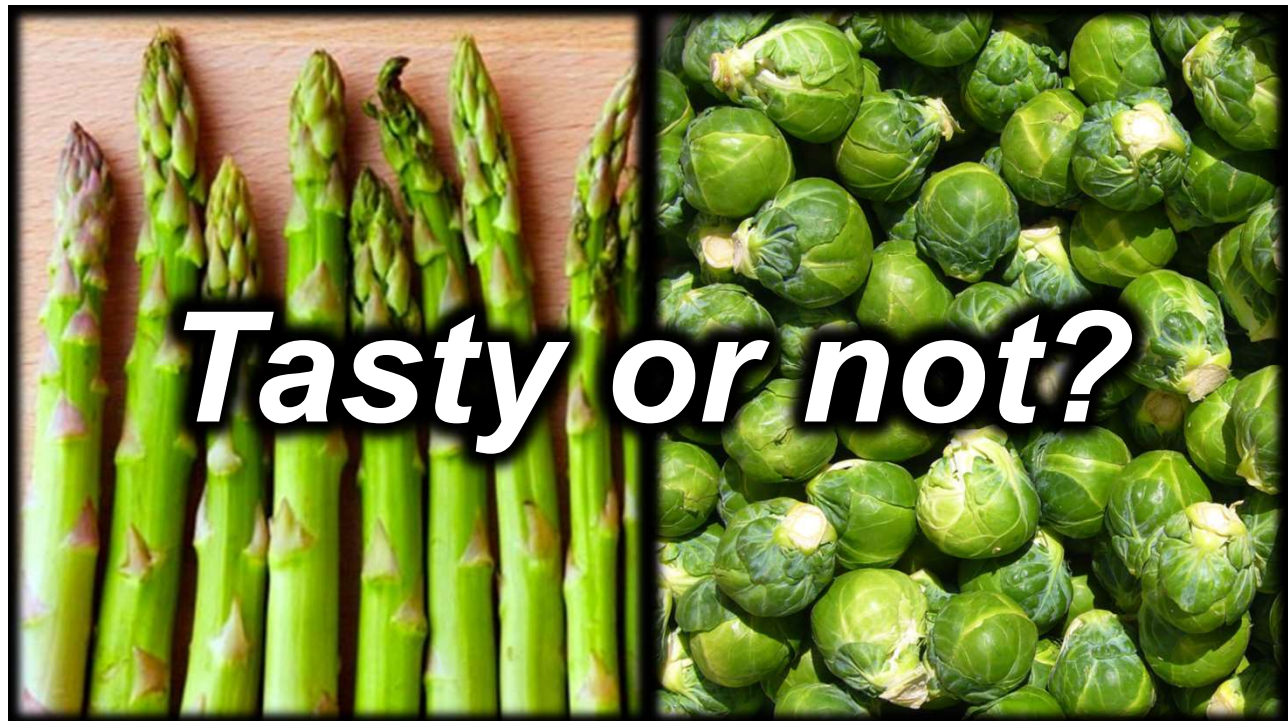


## *∞ Pluralism ∞*

*is a species of relativism that  
denies objective truth  
specifically about religion.*

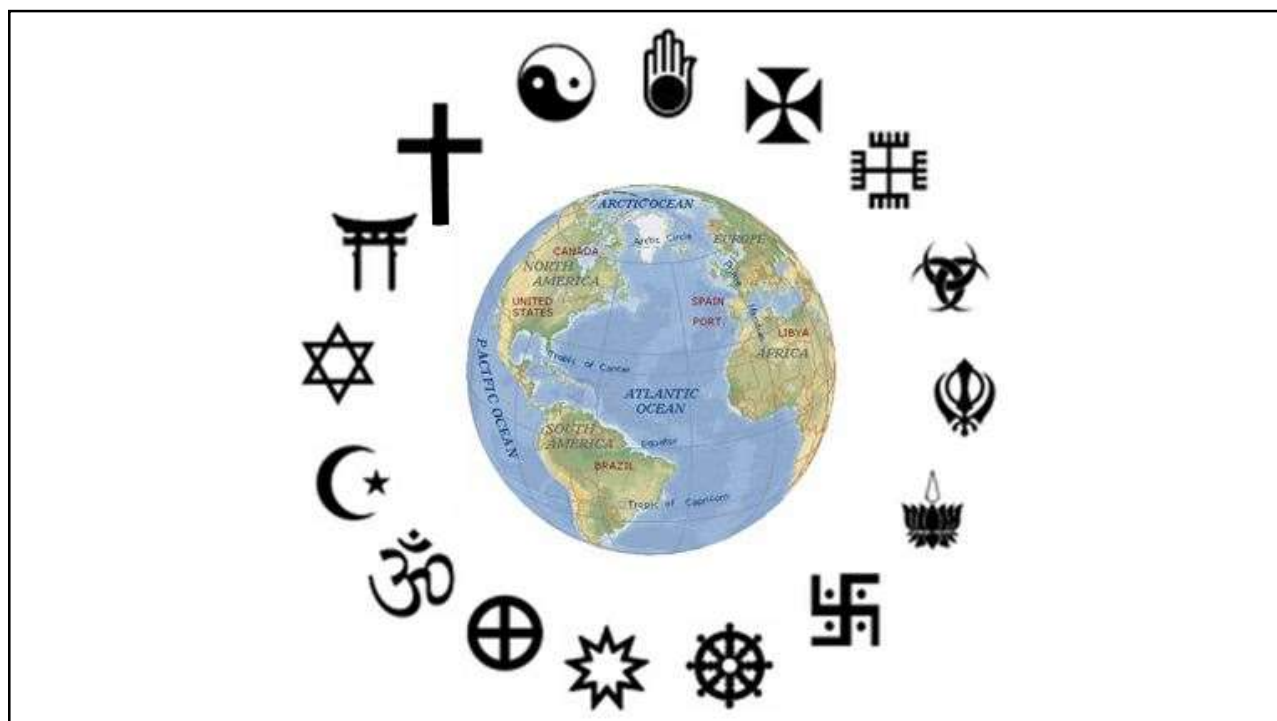


***Not all forms of relativism  
(sometimes called subjectivism)  
is bad. Some relativism is  
completely normal.***







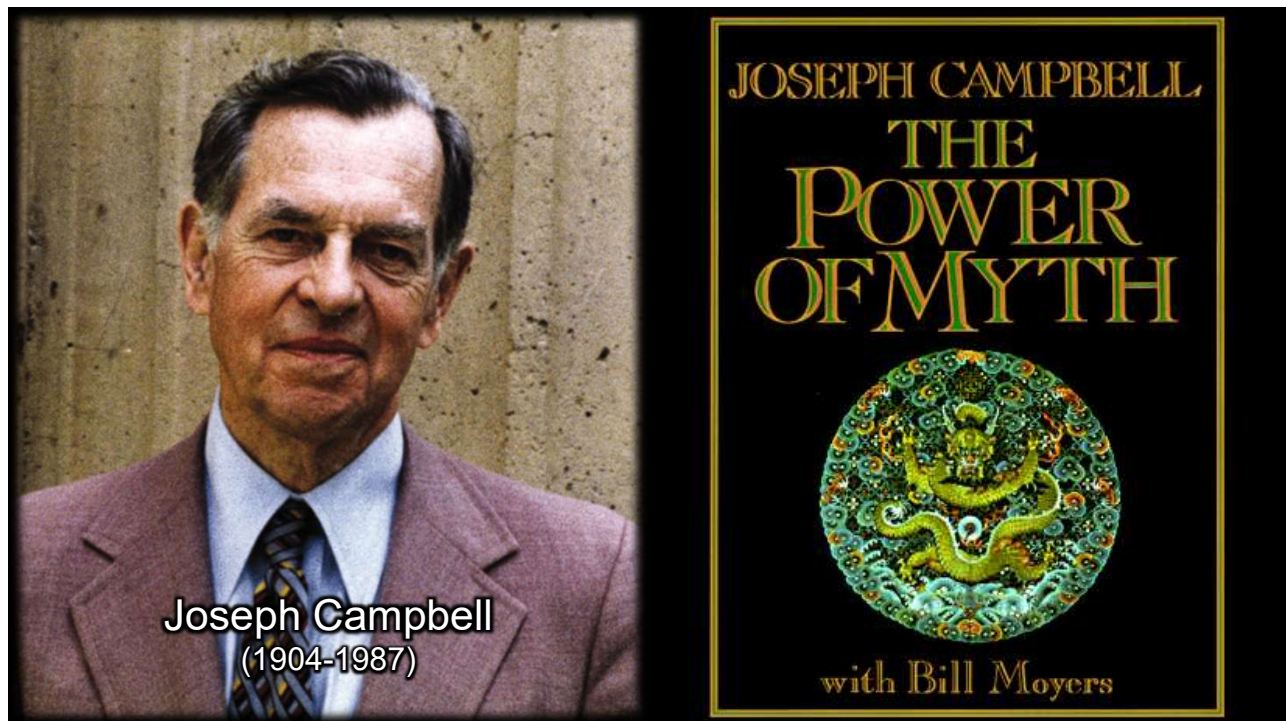


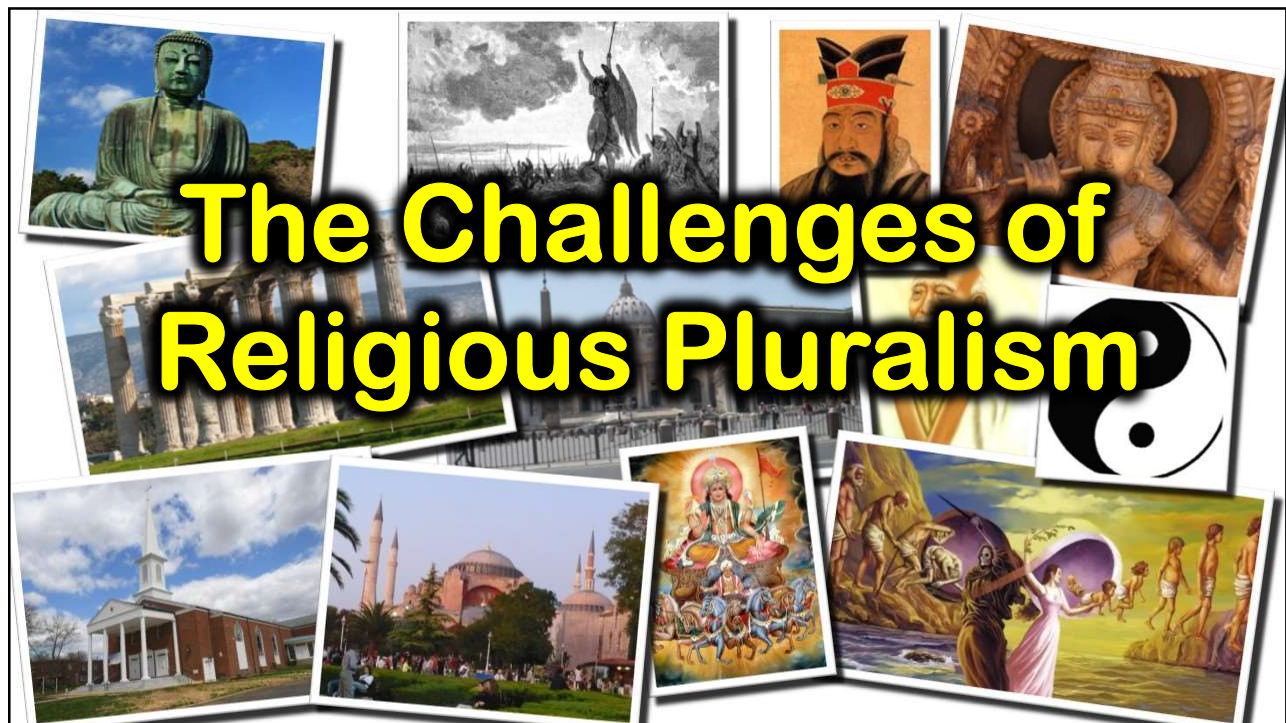
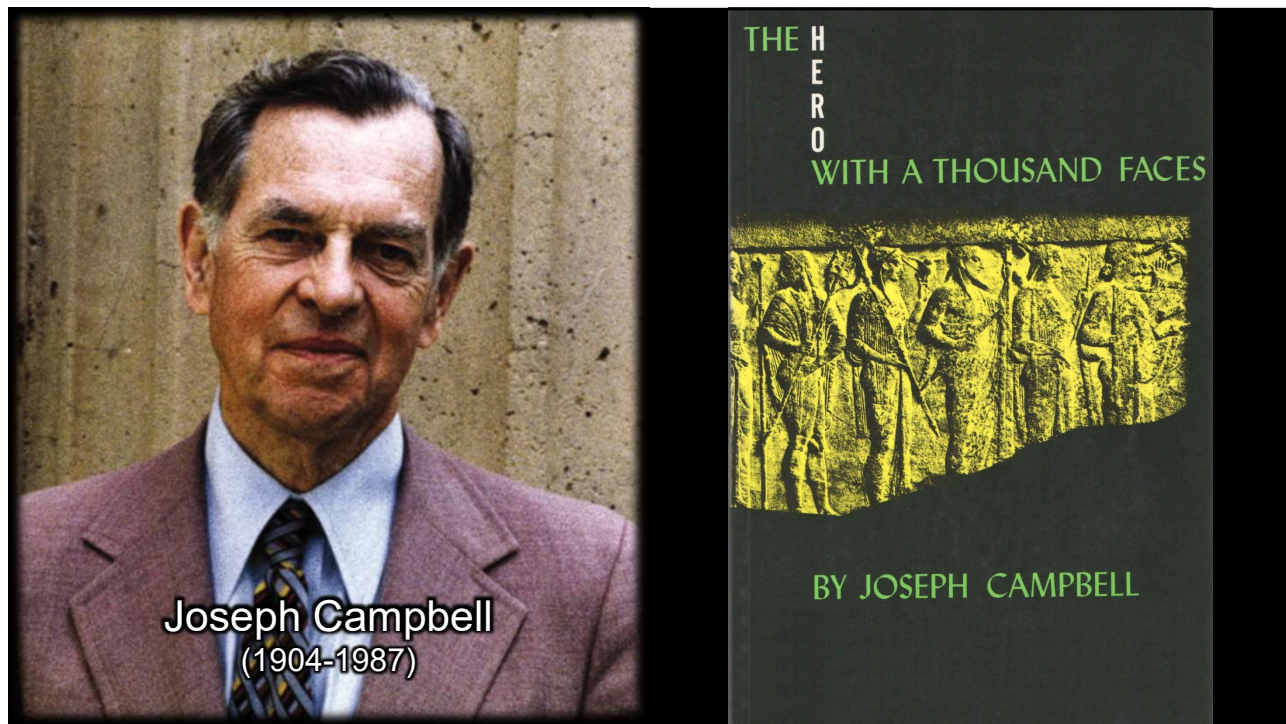
***However, relativism about religion (religious pluralism or religious diversity) is not always so benign or harmless.***



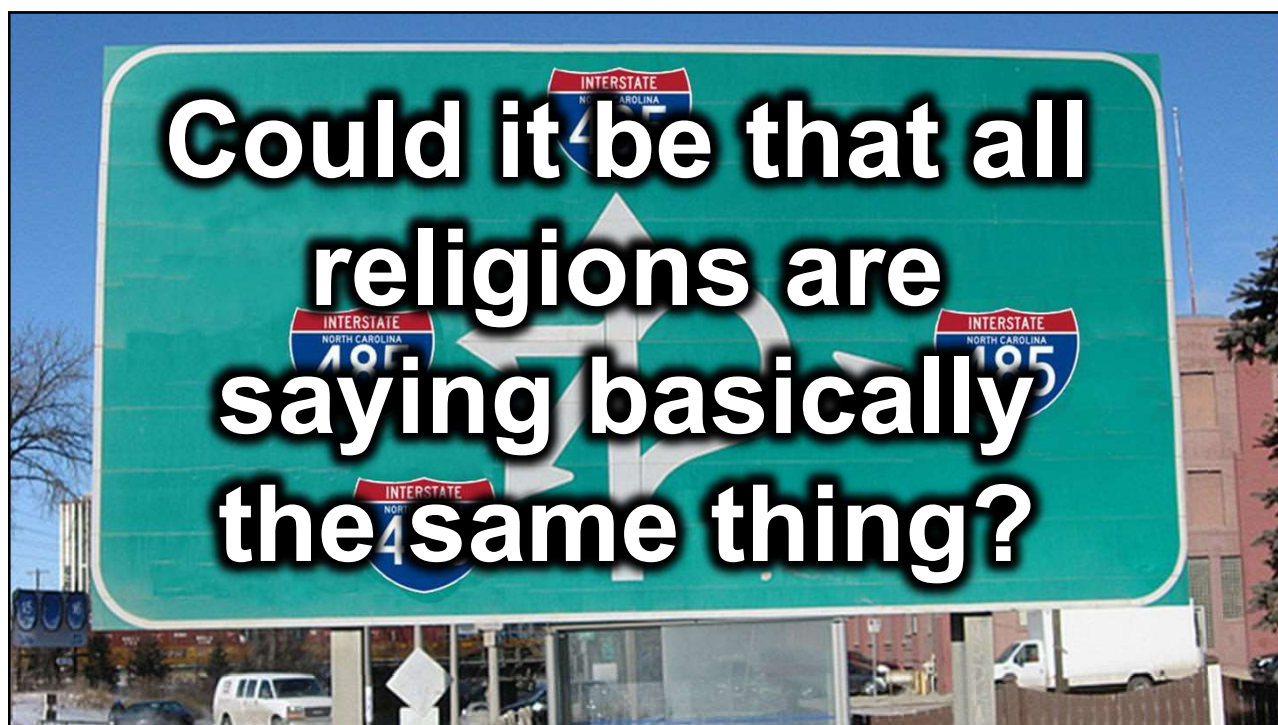
***Religious pluralism generally regards religious differences to be either:***

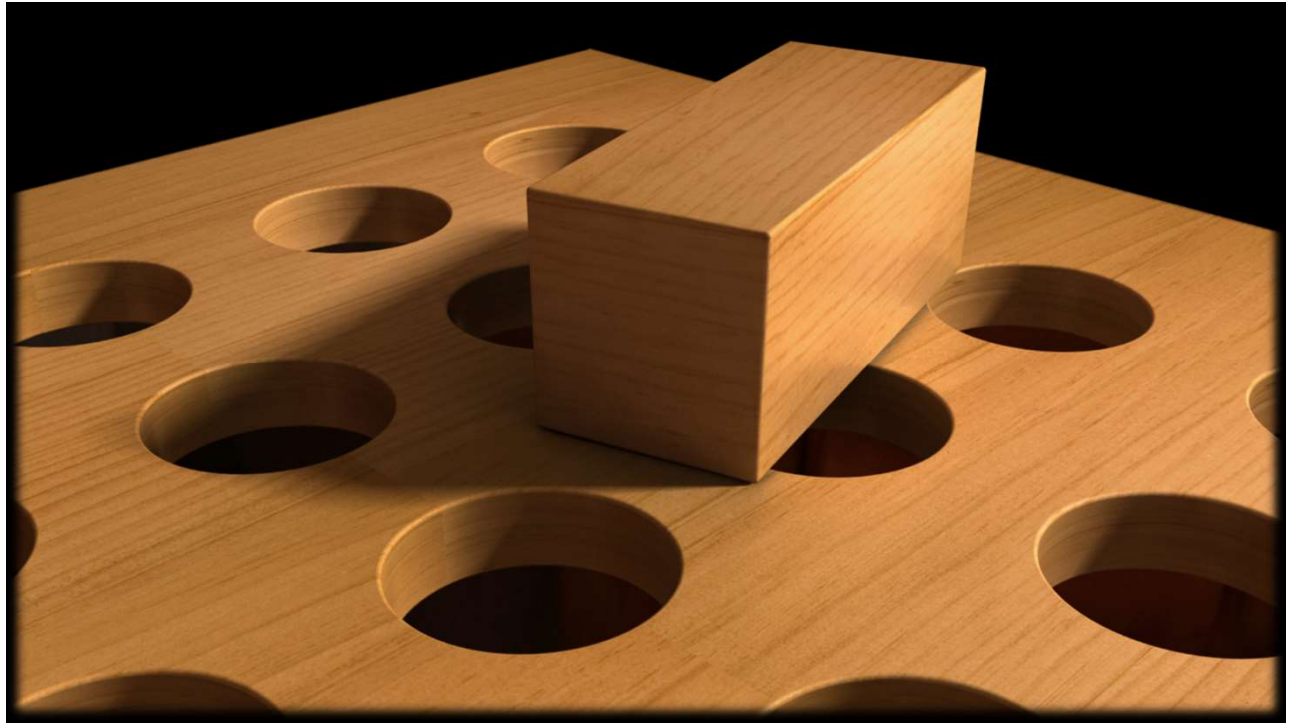
- a. largely cultural and unconnected to specific truth claims about reality, or***
- b. representative of deeper truths unified as an expression of something residing deeply in the human psyche.***











**Or is it that other religions  
are making claims that are  
incompatible with the  
claims of Christianity?**



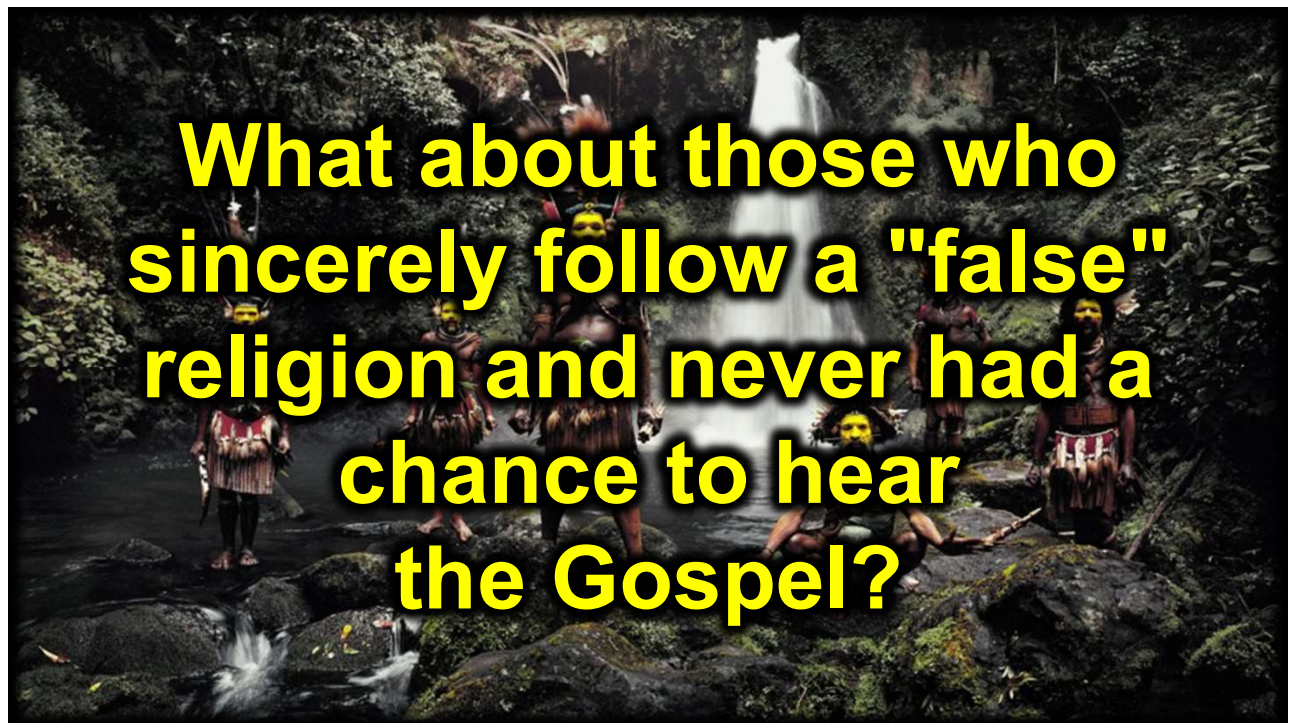


**Since there are so many  
different religions, how  
can the Christian  
maintain that only  
Christianity is true?**

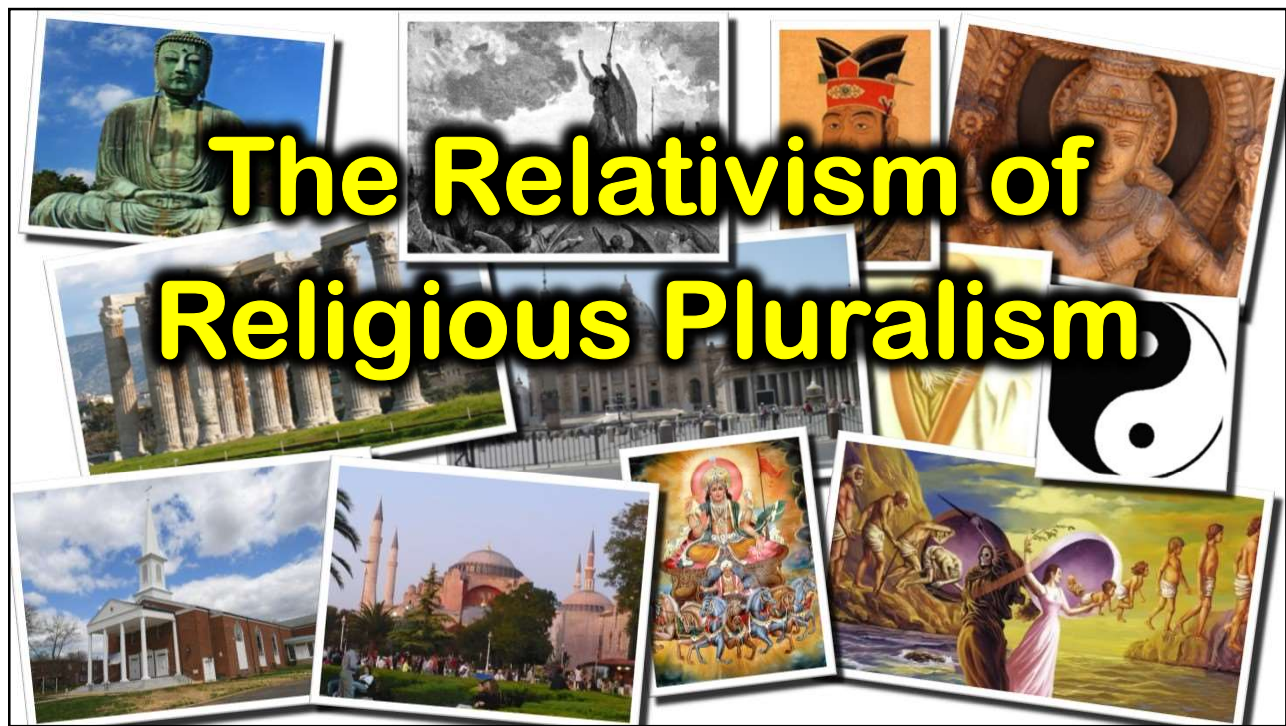


**If it is the case that only  
Christianity is true, are the  
followers of those  
religions eternally lost?**

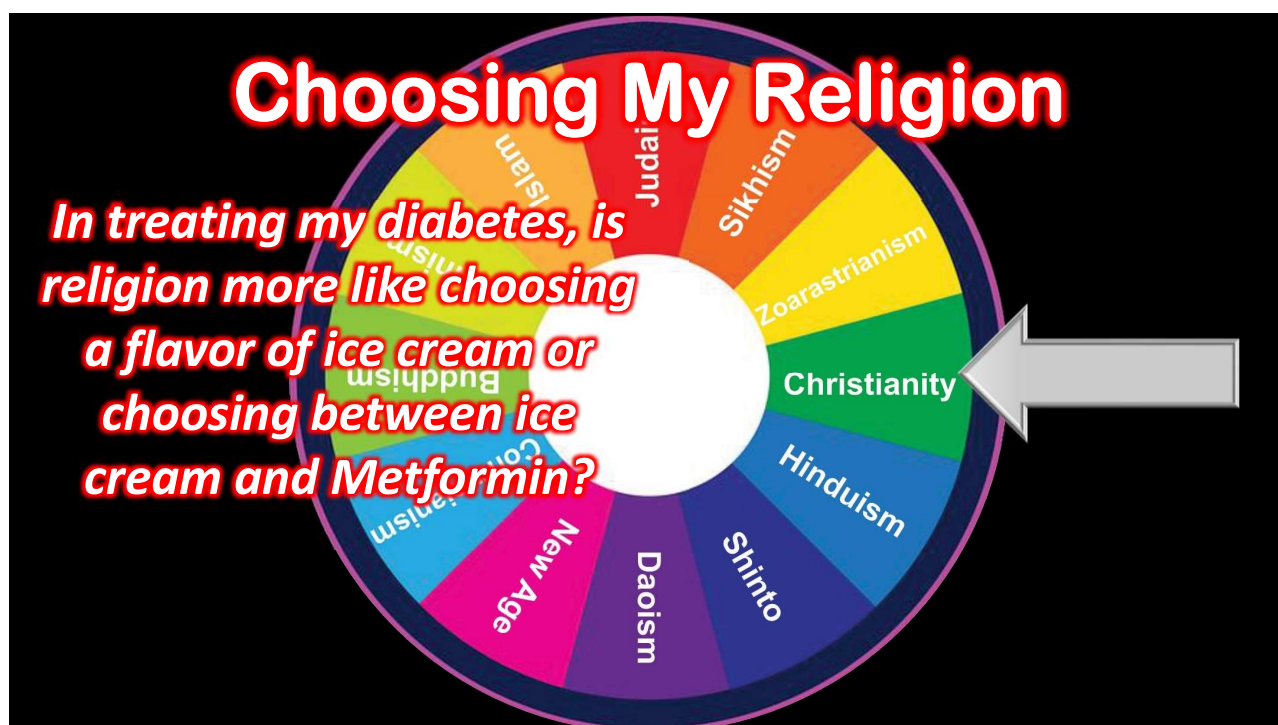












# Choosing My Religion

*Is it possible for a religion  
to be true for one person  
and not true for another or  
does religion deal with  
facts?*



*Many people have a  
functional understanding  
of religion.*



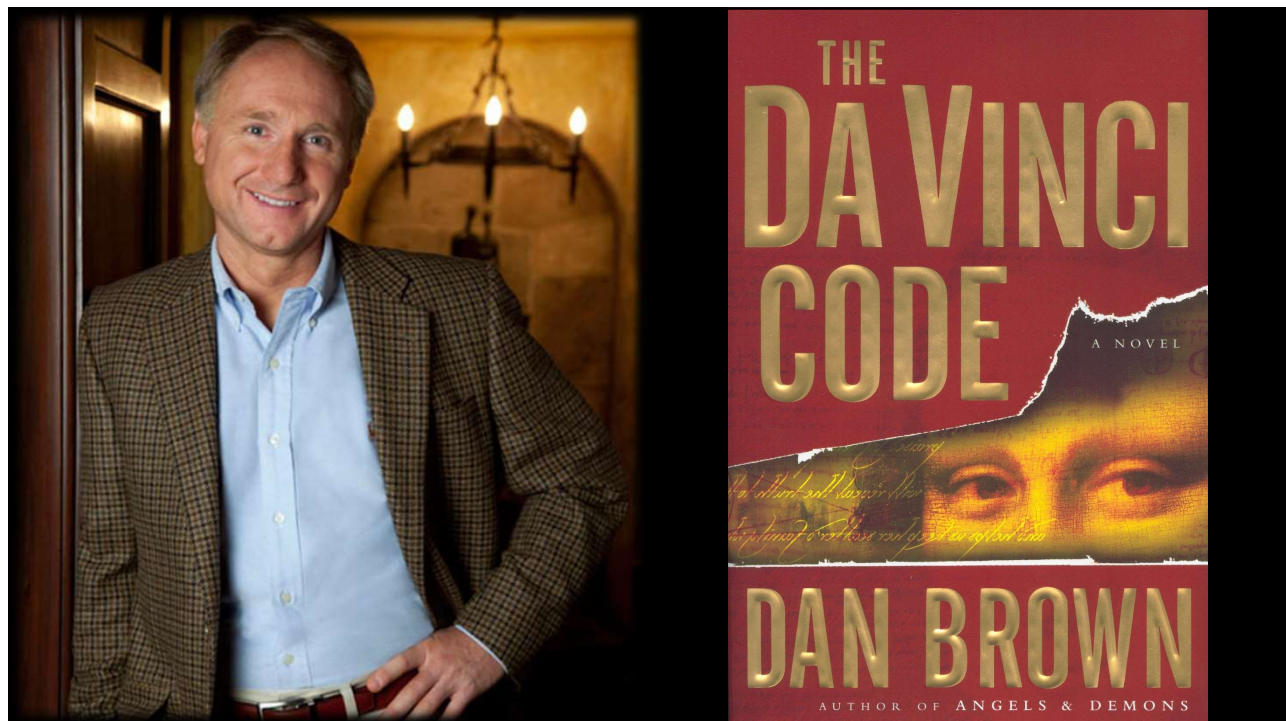
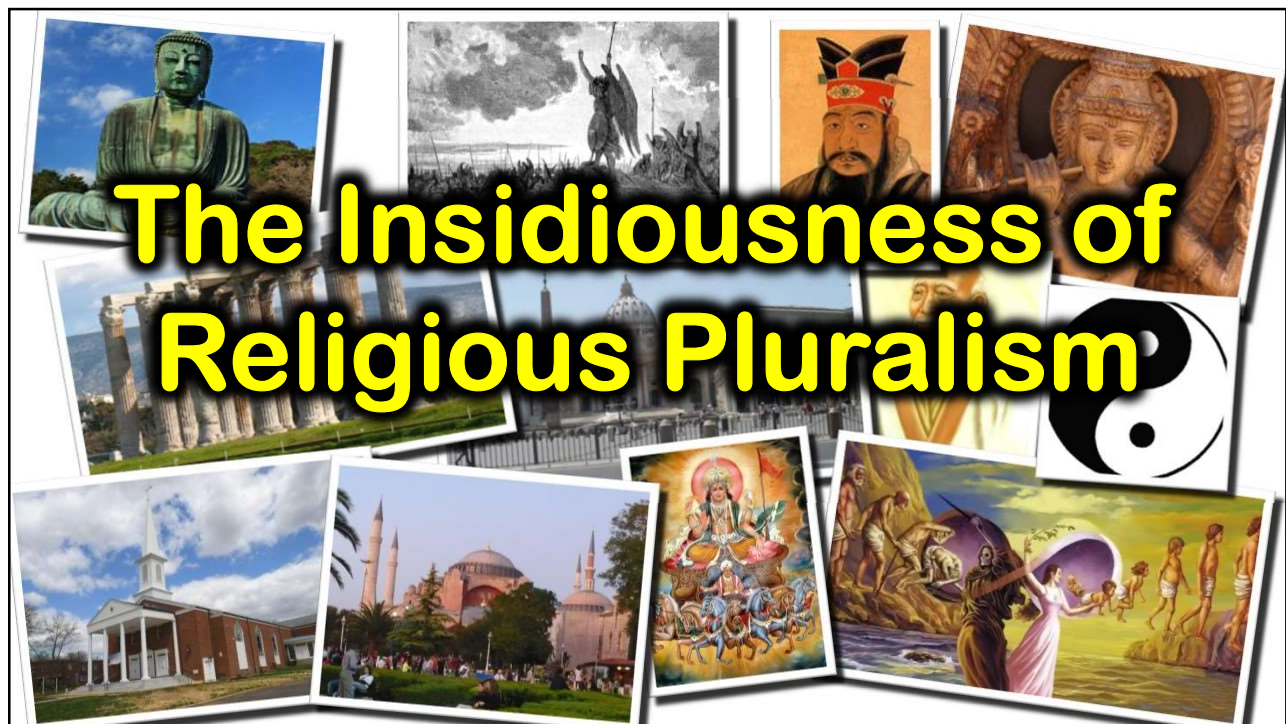


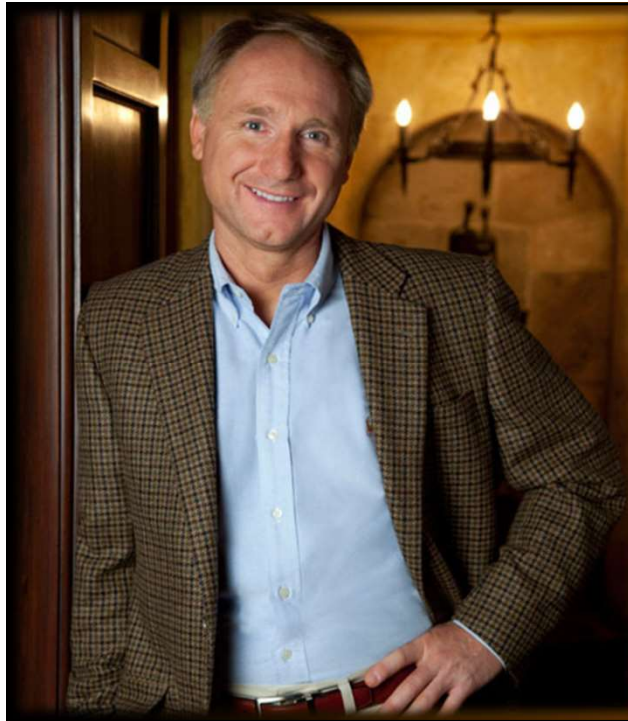


## What about Religion?

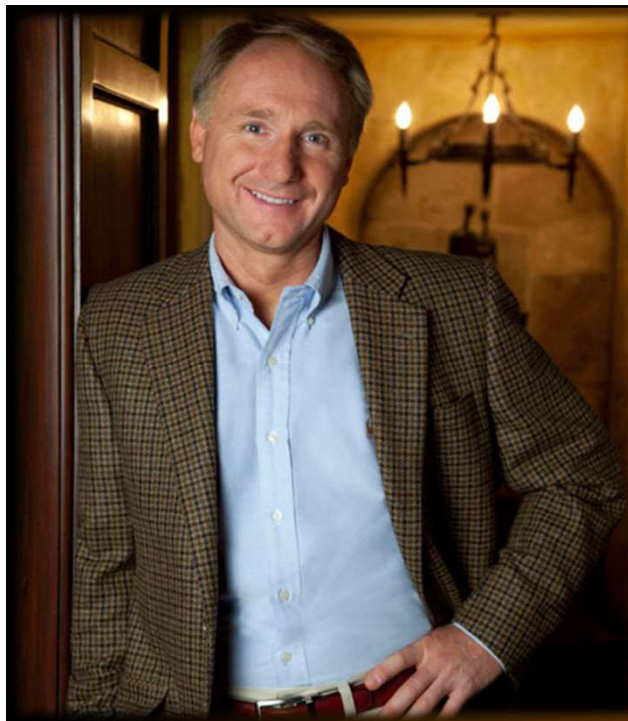
- ❖ It **proclaims** specific truths, and, thus, obligates certain **beliefs**.
- ❖ It **proscribes** a way of life, and, thus, obligates certain **behaviors**.





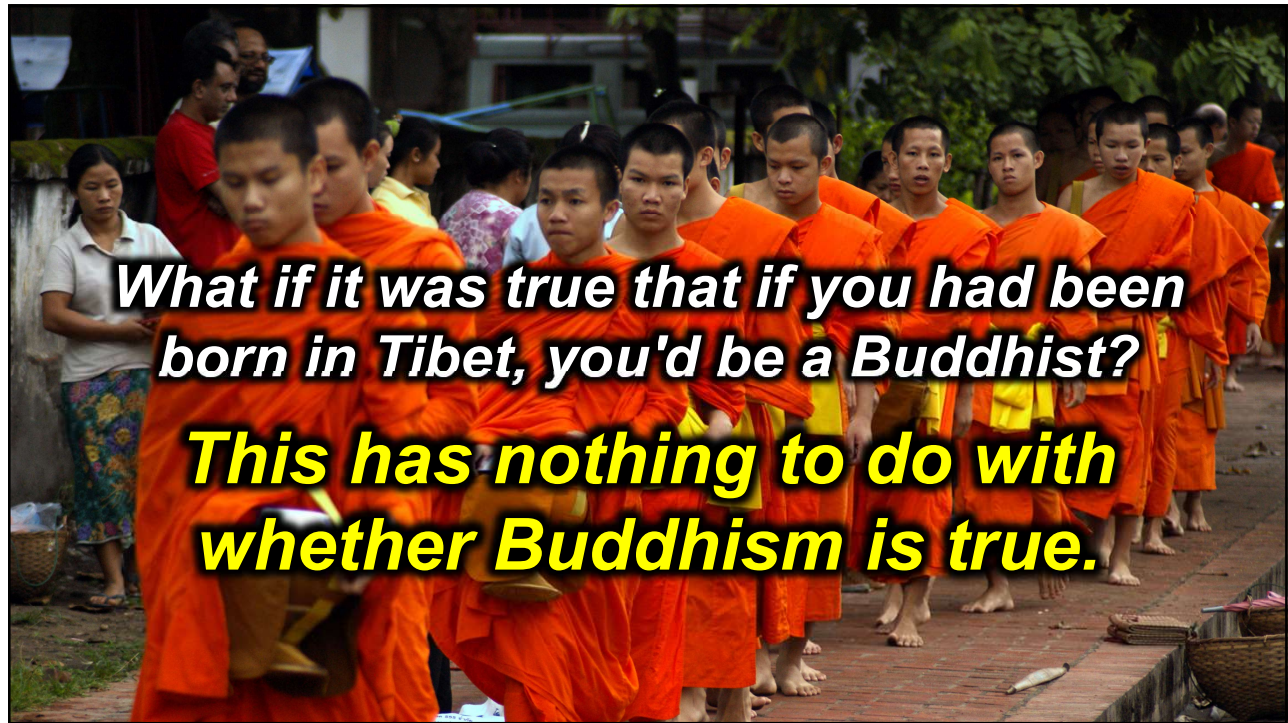


***"I humbly submit that if all of us in this room had been born in Tibet, probably a lot of us would be Buddhist. I think the chance is pretty good."***



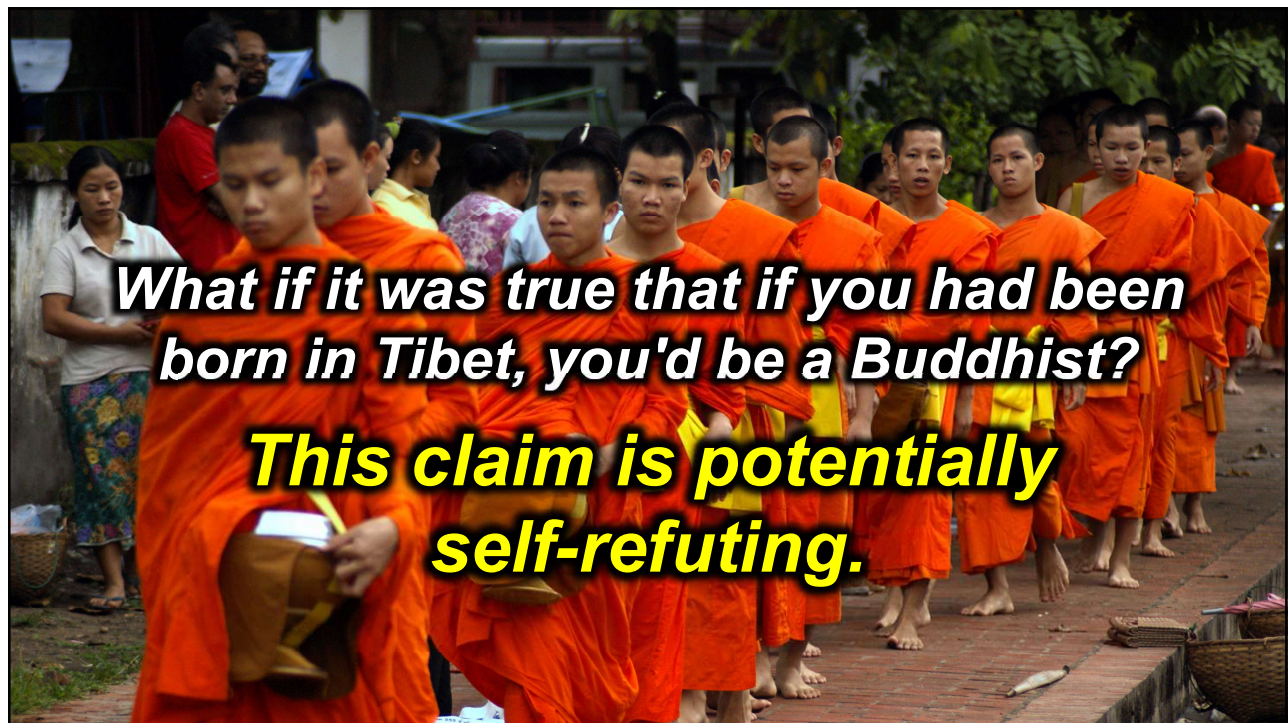
***"And I also think we'd hold on to that Buddhist philosophy with all the passion that some of us might hold on to our Christian ideals."***





***What if it was true that if you had been  
born in Tibet, you'd be a Buddhist?***

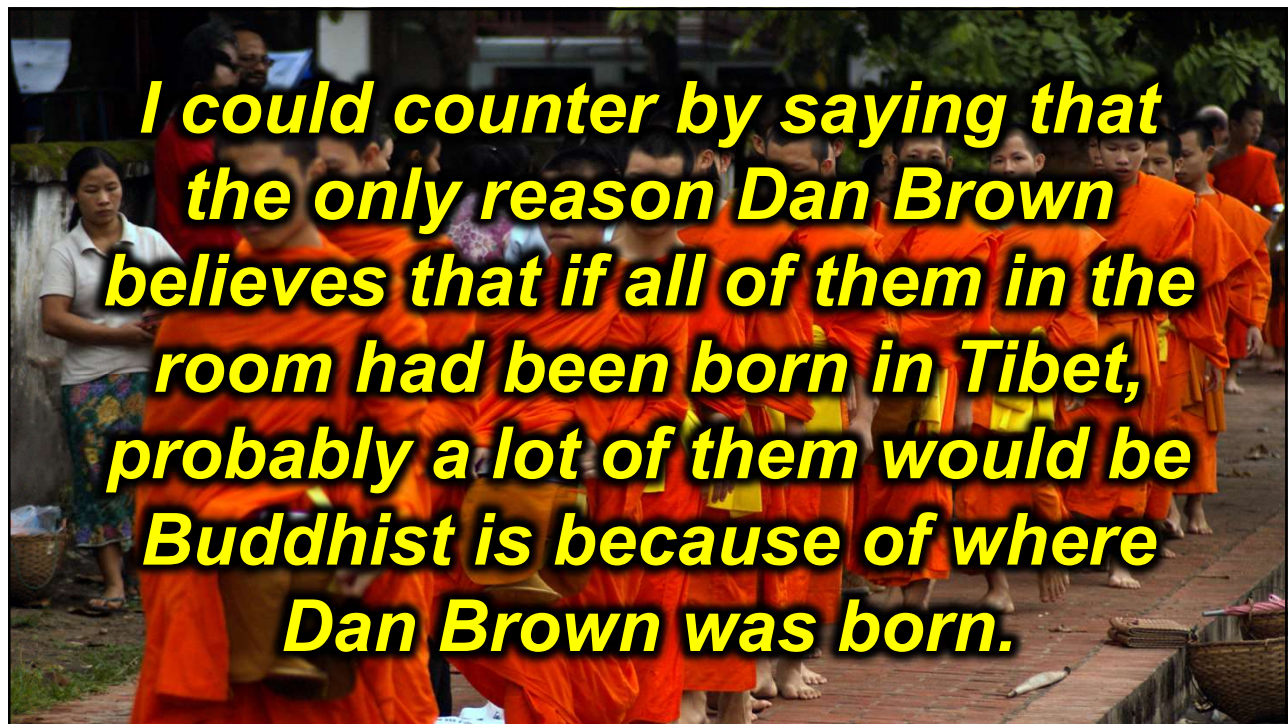
***This has nothing to do with  
whether Buddhism is true.***



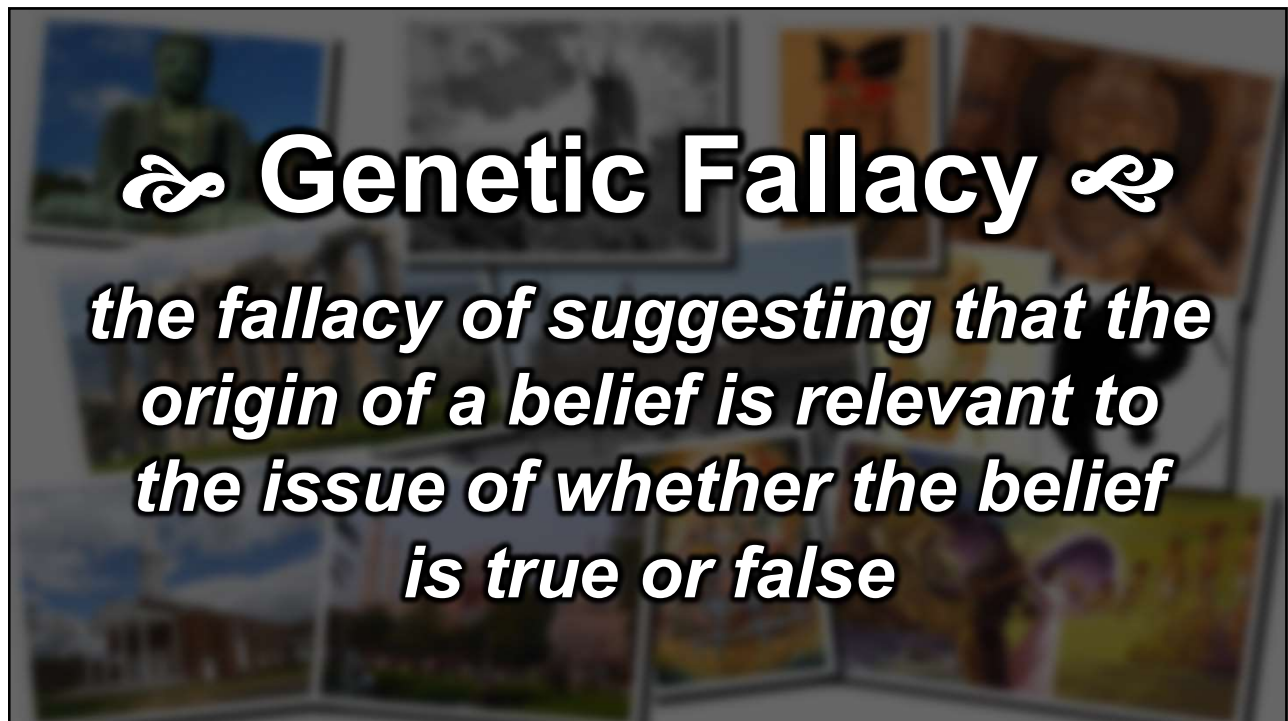
***What if it was true that if you had been  
born in Tibet, you'd be a Buddhist?***

***This claim is potentially  
self-refuting.***





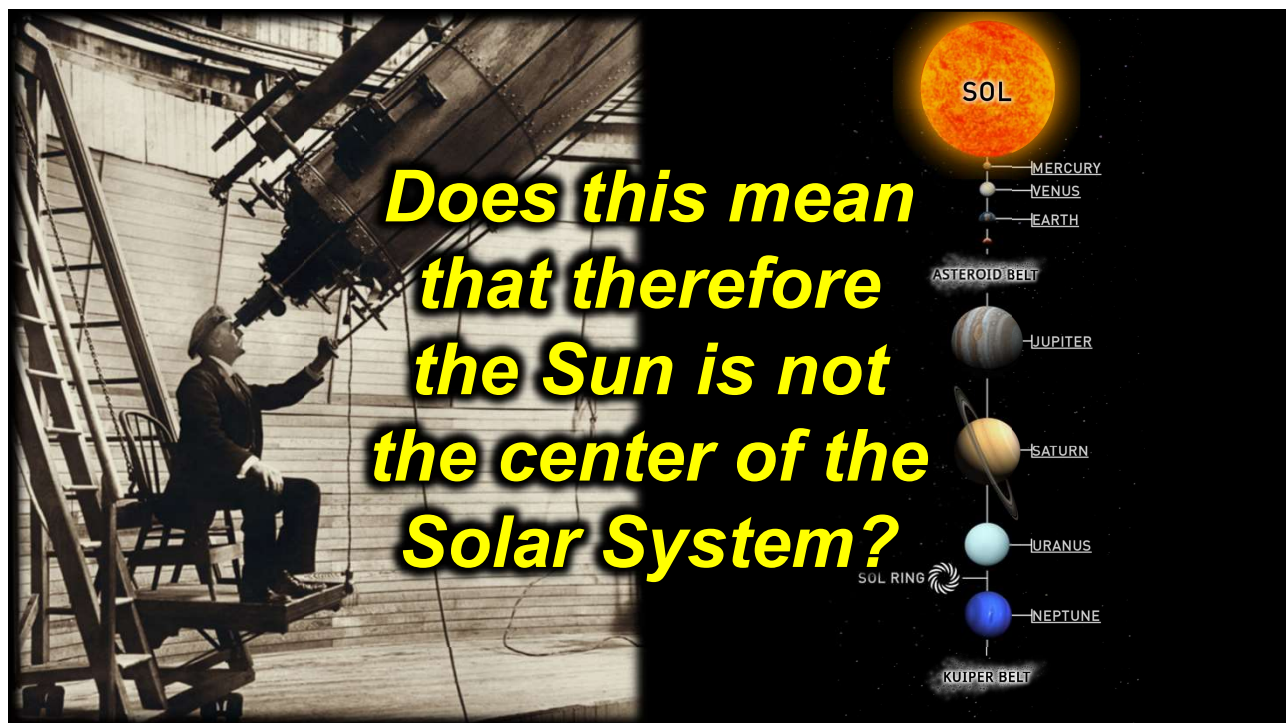
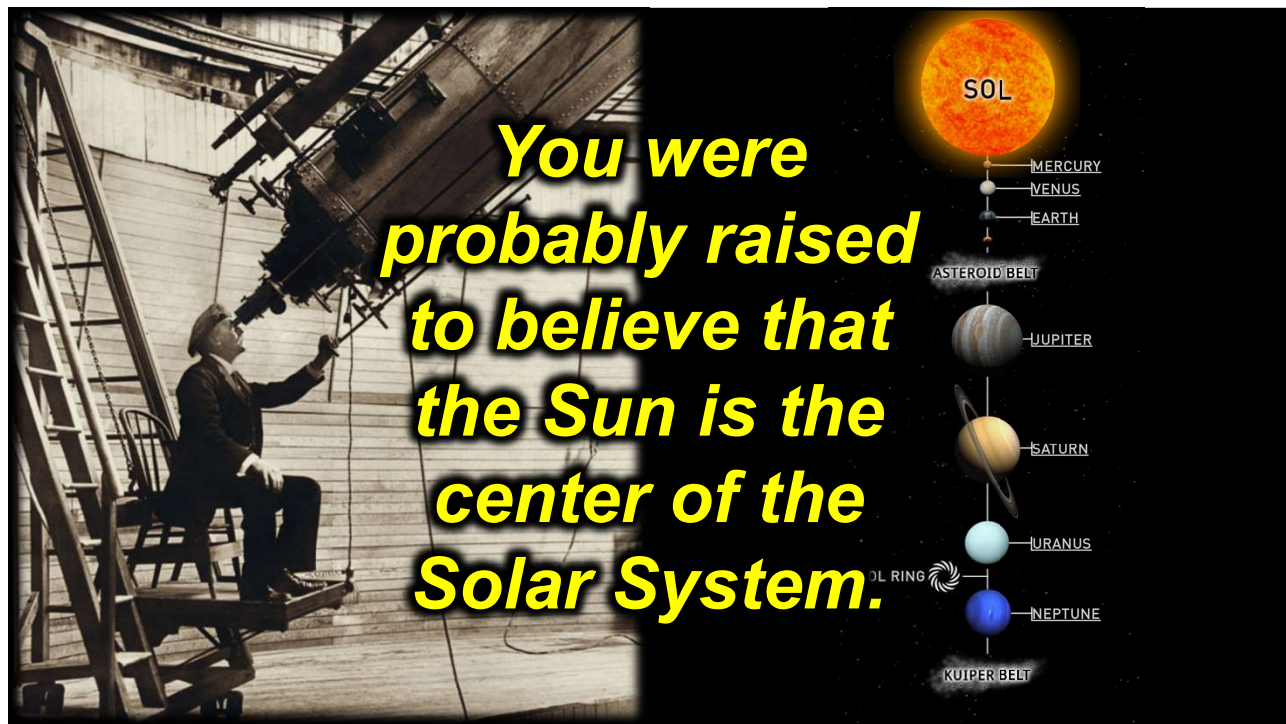
***I could counter by saying that the only reason Dan Brown believes that if all of them in the room had been born in Tibet, probably a lot of them would be Buddhist is because of where Dan Brown was born.***

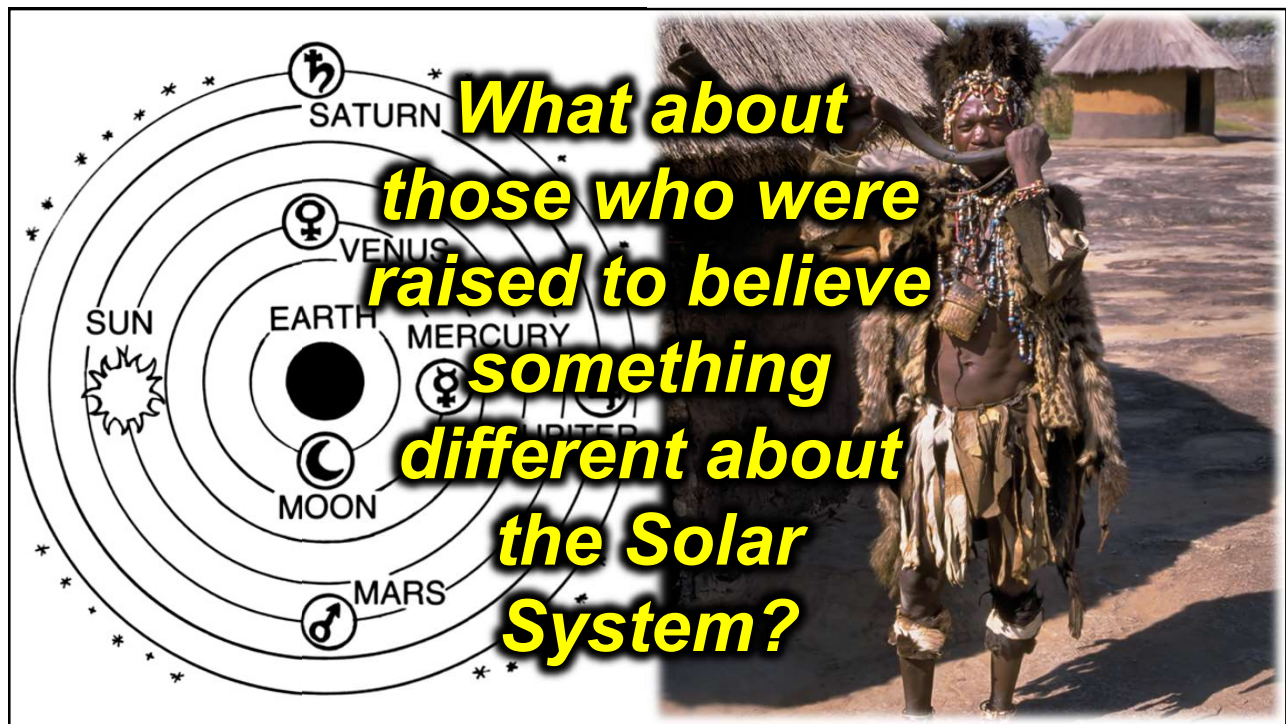


## **∞ Genetic Fallacy ∞**

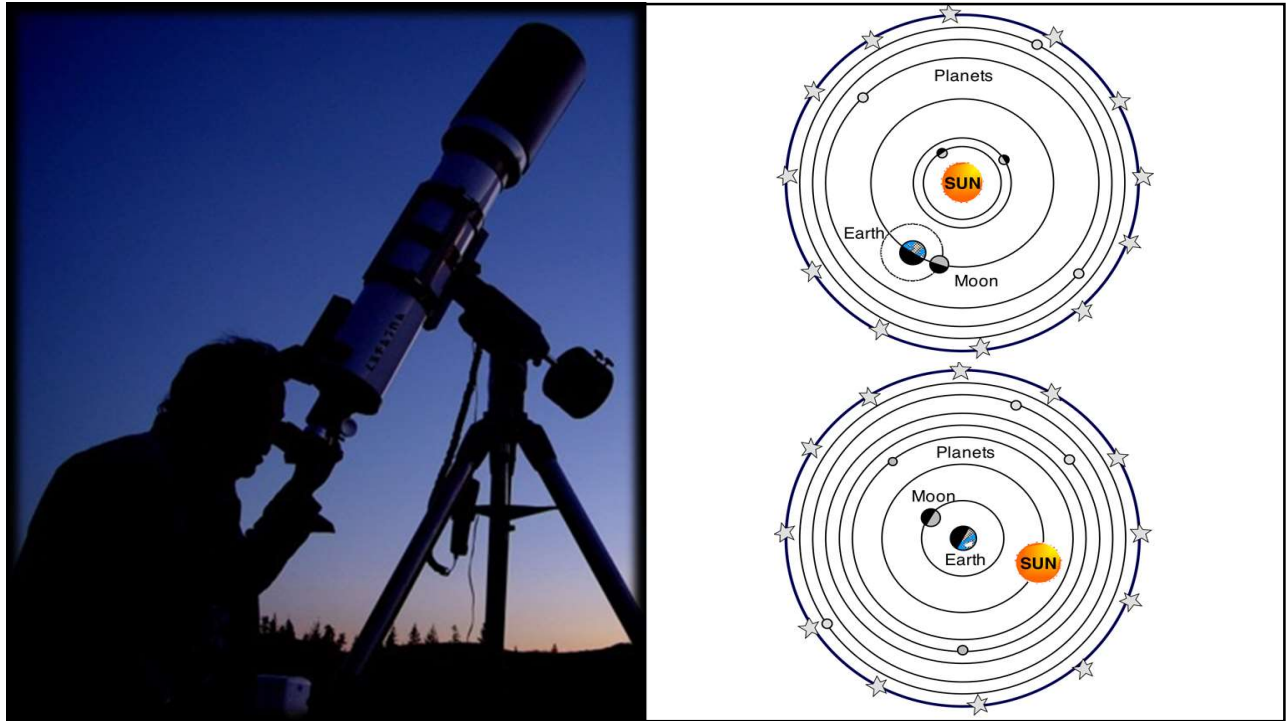
***the fallacy of suggesting that the origin of a belief is relevant to the issue of whether the belief is true or false***

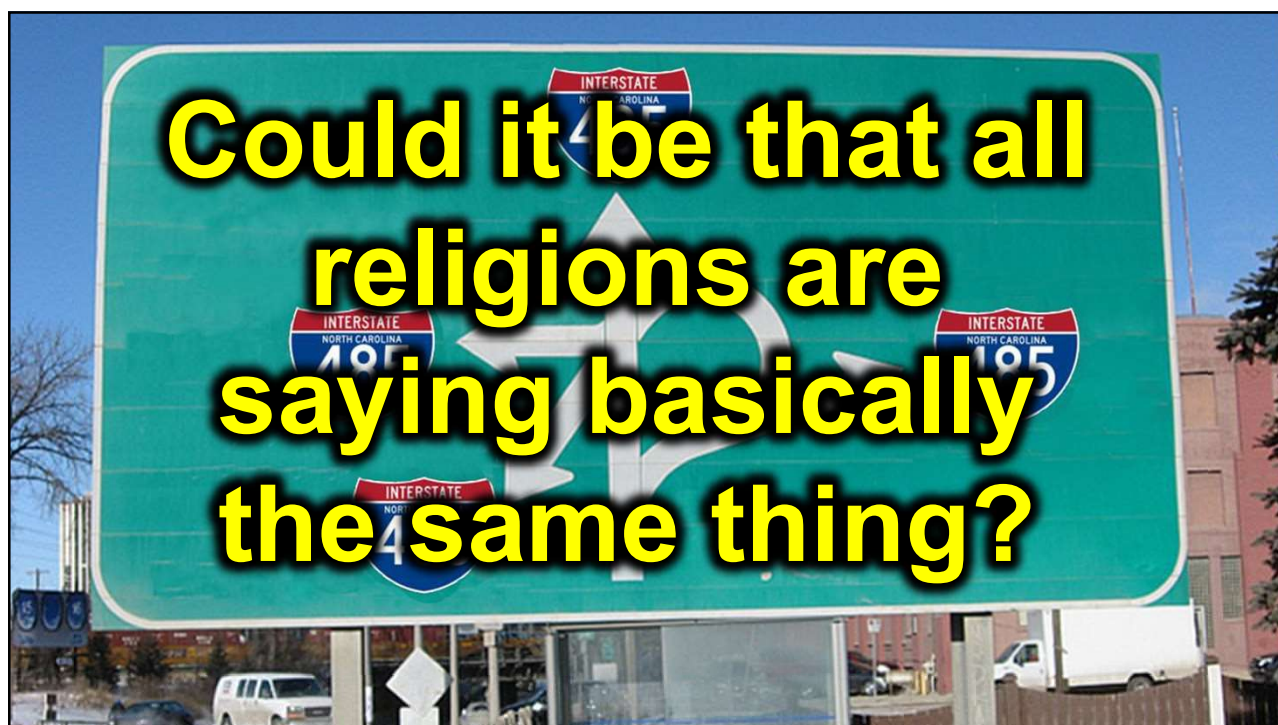




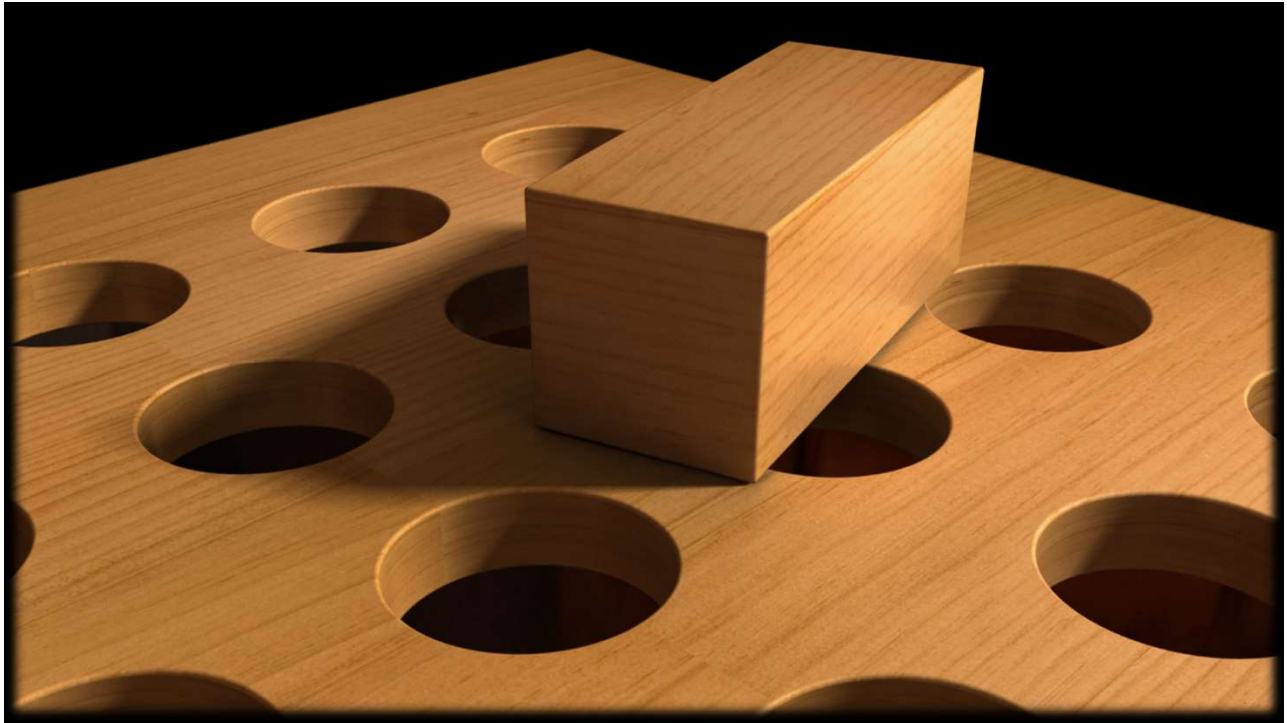













**Or is it that other  
religions are making  
claims that are  
incompatible with the  
claims of Christianity?**

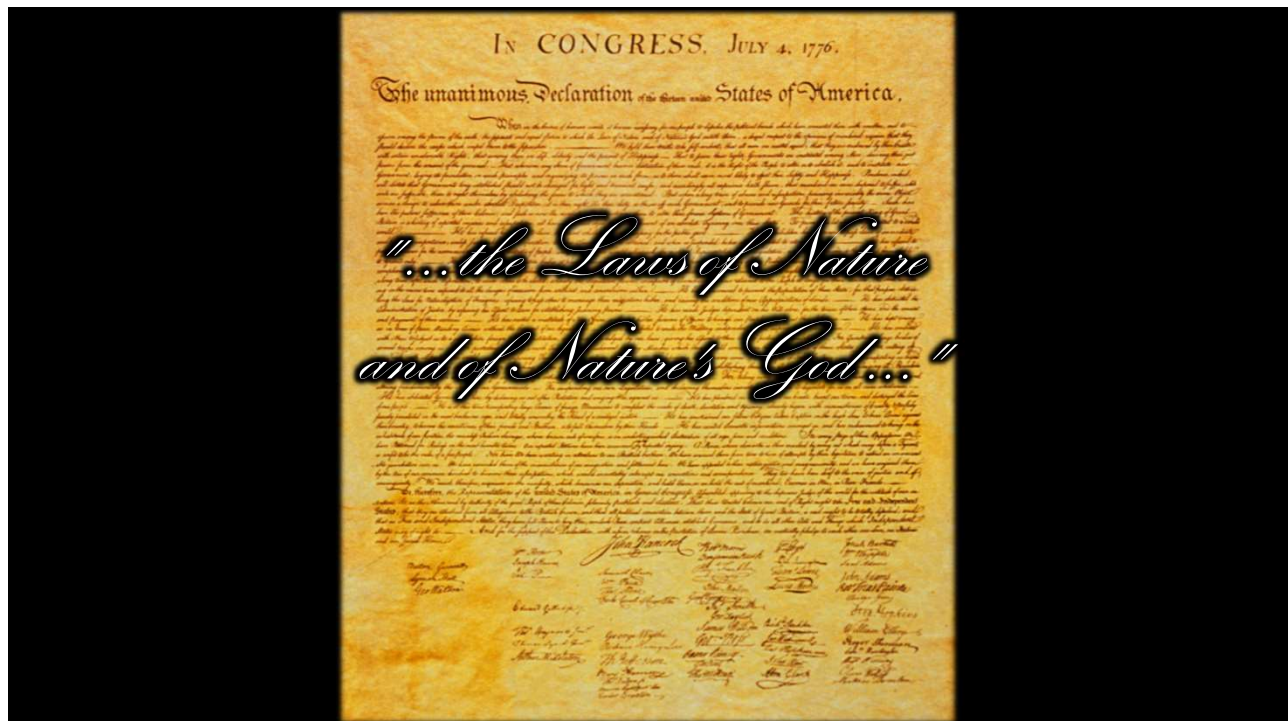
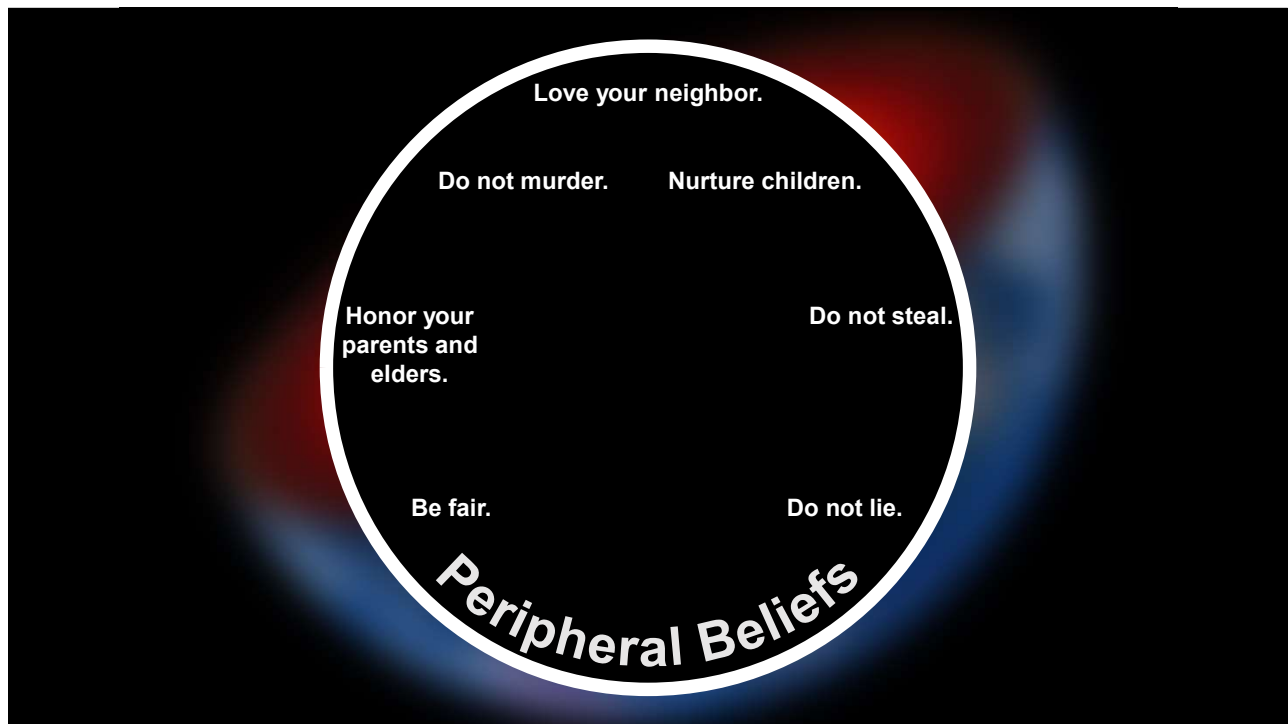


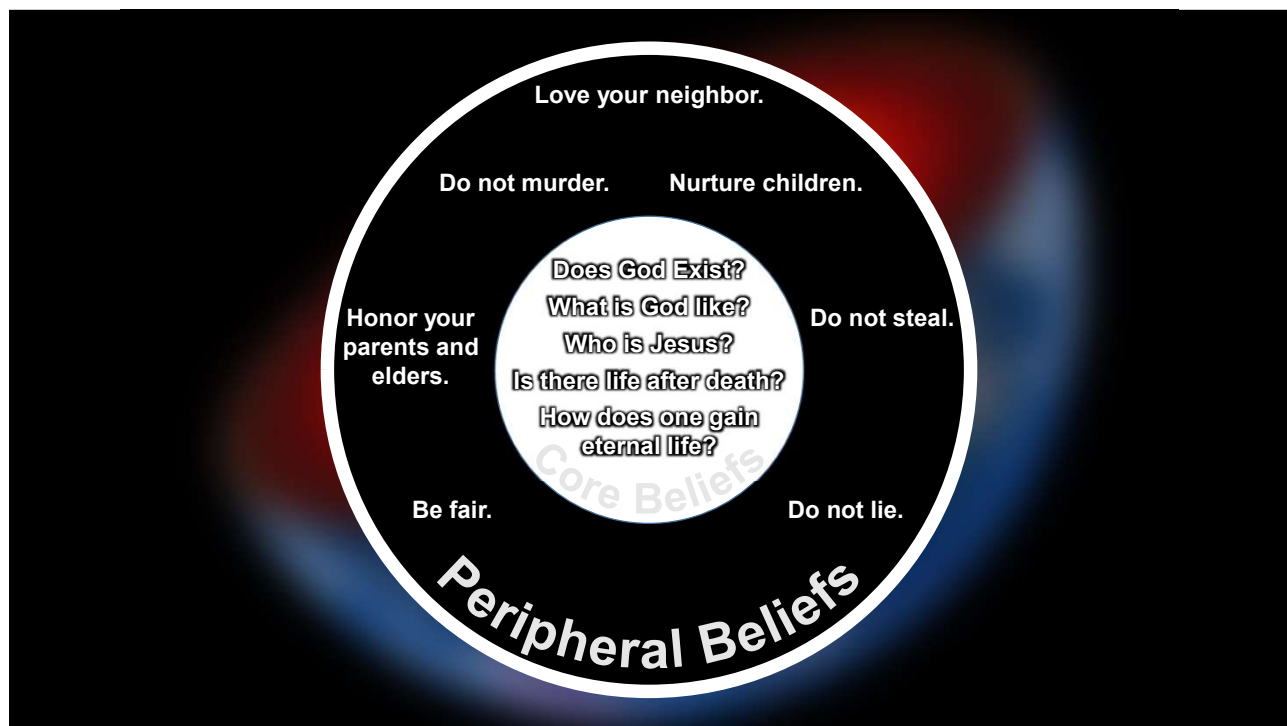
***Are Not All  
Religions the  
Same at the  
Core?***



***Core Beliefs  
vs.  
Peripheral Beliefs***








**"What are the things that men consider right? Kindness on the part of the father, and filial duty on that of the son; gentleness on part of the elder brother, and obedience on that of the younger; righteousness on the part of the husband, and submission on that of the wife; kindness on the part of elders, and deference on that of juniors; with benevolence on the part of the ruler, and loyalty on that of the minister; —these ten are the things which men consider to be right."**

Book of Ritual 7.2.19



**Confucius**  
551-479 BC





# Hinduism

***"Utter not a word by which anyone  
could be wounded."***

***"A sacrifice is obliterated by a lie and  
the merits of alms by an act of fraud."***

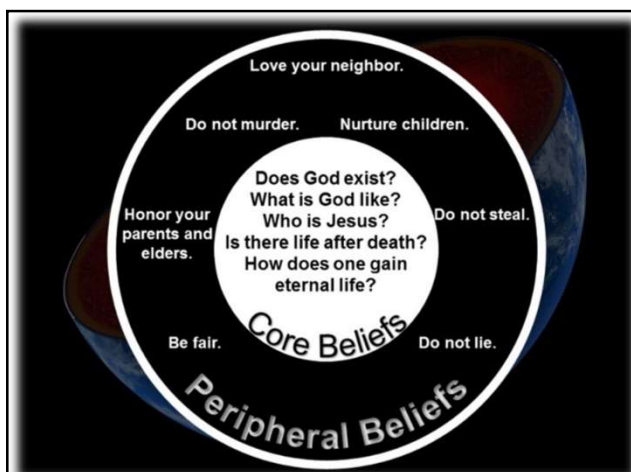
***"One should never strike a woman, not  
even with a flower."***



# Buddhism

***"Supporting one's father and mother,  
cherishing wife and children and a  
peaceful occupation; this is the  
greatest blessings."***

*Sutta Nipata 262*



**Does God exist?**  
**What is God like?**  
**Who is Jesus?**  
**Is there life after death?**  
**How does one gain eternal life?**

**Buddhism**

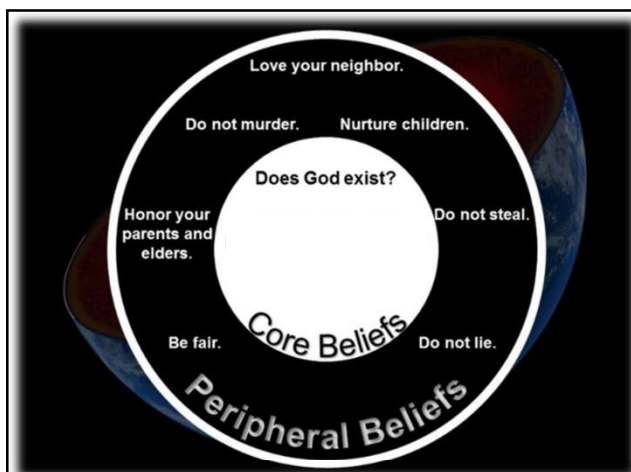
**Hinduism**

**Confucianism**

**Judaism**

**Islam**

**Christianity**



**Does God exist?**



**Buddhism:** Theravada Buddhism has no God. various schools of Mahayana Buddhism (e.g., Tibetan Buddhism) have many gods.



**Hinduism:** Early Vedic Hinduism was very nearly monotheistic. Upanishadic Hinduism is pantheistic. Bhakti Hinduism is polytheistic.



**Confucianism:** Confucius's teachings contain no gods, no religious worship, and no revelations.



**Judaism:** There is only one God.

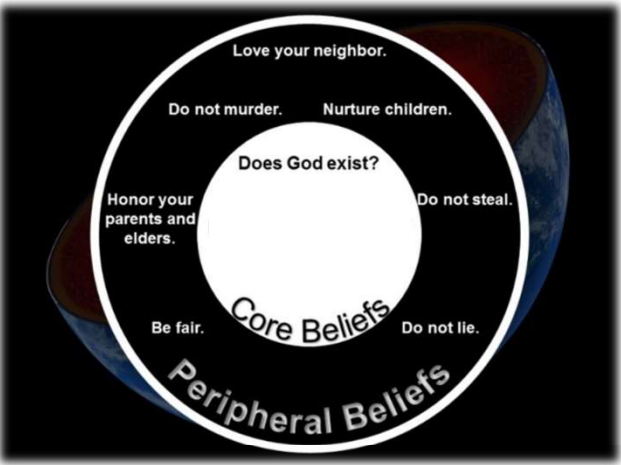


**Islam:** There is only one God.



**Christianity:** There only one God.





**Buddhism:** Theravada Buddhism has no God. various schools of Mahayana Buddhism (e.g., Tibetan Buddhism) have many gods.

**Hinduism:** Early Vedic Hinduism was very nearly monotheistic. Upanishadic Hinduism is pantheistic. Bhakti Hinduism is polytheistic.

**Confucianism:** Confucius's teachings contain no gods, no religious worship, and no revelations.

**Judaism:** There is only one God.

**Islam:** There is only one God.

**Christianity:** There only one God.

## Does God exist?



**Buddhism:** The gods of Tibetan Buddhism are angelic and demonic beings.

**Hinduism:** Early Vedic Hinduism God = the "father of heaven;" Upanishadic Hinduism God = all; Gods of Bhakti Hinduism are finite

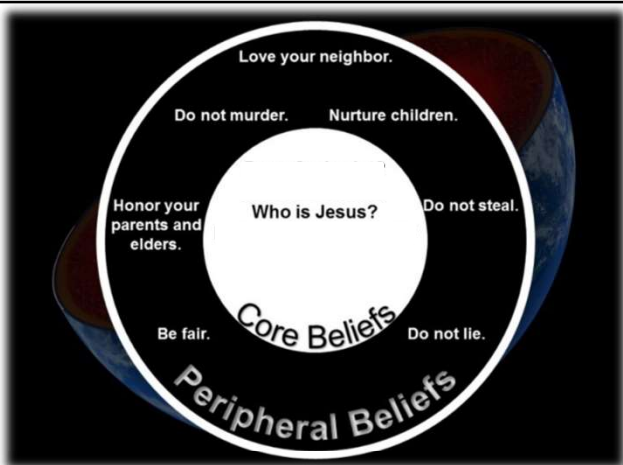
**Confucianism:** Being atheistic, there is nothing for God to be like.

**Judaism:** The one, true God created the heavens and the Earth and revealed Himself to Abraham and Moses.

**Islam:** The one true God created the heavens and the Earth and revealed Himself to many prophets, the last of whom was Mohammed.

**Christianity:** There only one God. This God is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## What is God like?



**Buddhism:** Some Buddhist see Jesus as one among many "enlightened ones" or Buddhas.

**Hinduism:** In Bhakti Hinduism, Jesus is one of virtually countless "gods" to whom one can attach himself in devotion for "salvation."

**Confucianism:** Given that there is no God, Jesus is nothing more than a man.

**Judaism:** Jesus was a well intentioned (if misguided or misunderstood) Jewish rabbi but was not the promised Messiah of Israel.

**Islam:** Jesus was one of the greatest prophets (born of a virgin and a miracle worker) but he did not die on the cross or resurrect from the dead.

**Christianity:** Jesus is the unique Son of God (God in the flesh) who died for the sins of the world.

## Who is Jesus?



**Buddhism:** Theravada Buddhism seeks to lead one to Nirvana which is extinction of desire. Pure Land Buddhism seeks to lead one to a heaven.

**Hinduism:** The Hindu afterlife (deliverance from reincarnation) varies from absorption into the pantheistic God to a paradise of delights.

**Confucianism:** Confucius's emphasis was on the ordering of society in this life. He avoided speculating about any afterlife.

**Judaism:** Modern Judaism focuses on the life that one lives in the here and now.

**Islam:** Heaven awaits those who are counted worthy by Allah. Hell awaits all infidels and those on whom Allah's favor does not fall.

**Christianity:** Heaven awaits all who believe the Gospel of Jesus. Hell awaits all unbelievers.

## Is there life after death?



## How does one gain eternal life?

**Buddhism:** In Theravada Buddhism, Nirvana is by the Eight-fold path. In Pure Land Buddhism one finds heaven by the favor of Amida Buddah.

**Hinduism:** One must break the cycle of reincarnation by working off one's Karma.

**Confucianism:** There is no afterlife to attain.

**Judaism:** There is little to no emphasis on any kind of afterlife in modern Judaism.

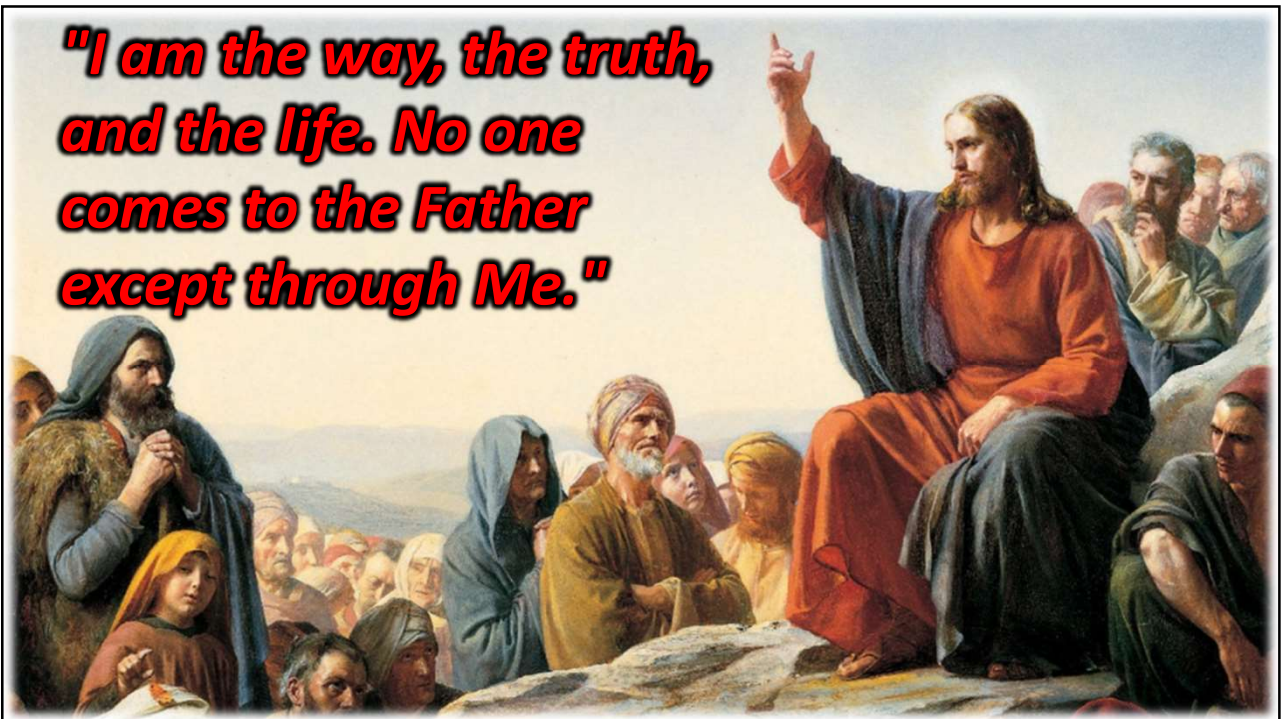
**Islam:** Heaven is gained by service to Allah. Only a few can have any assurance of avoiding hell.

**Christianity:** Eternal life is a gift that cannot be earned. It comes to those who trust God's provision in Jesus.



**Since there are so many  
different religions, how  
can the Christian  
maintain that only  
Christianity is true?**

***"I am the way, the truth,  
and the life. No one  
comes to the Father  
except through Me."***



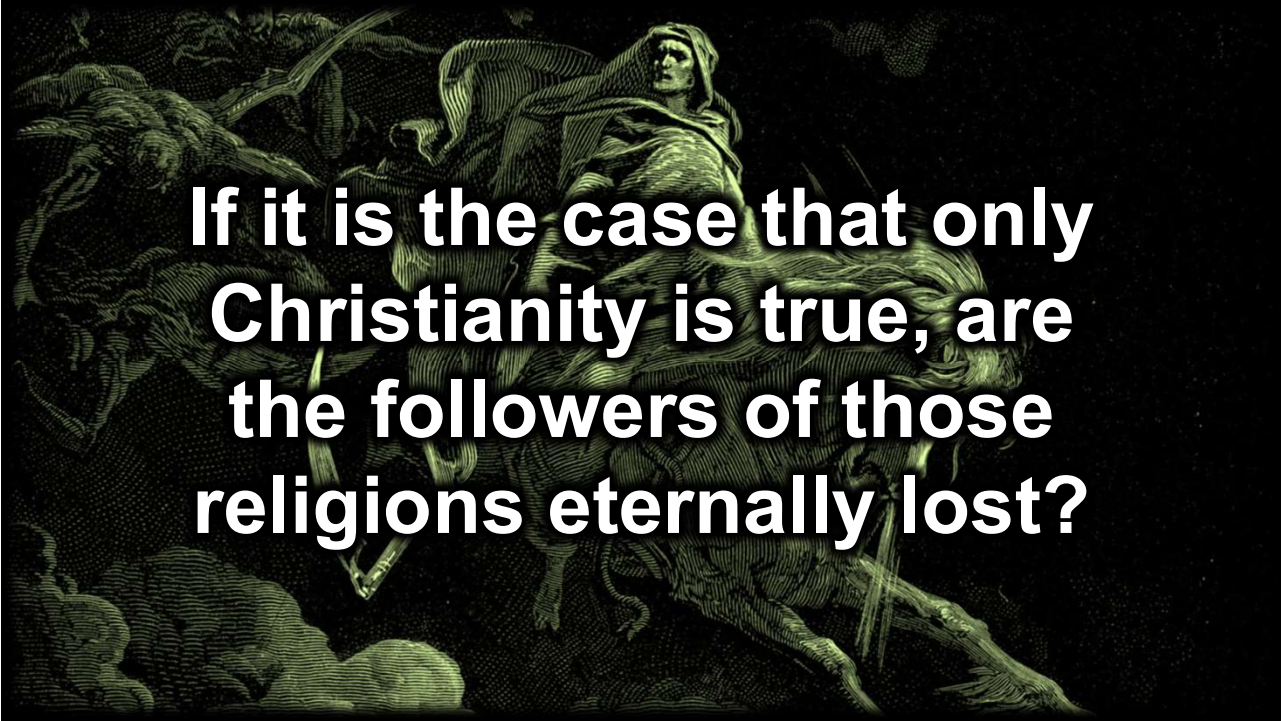




***"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;"***

1 Peter 3:15





**If it is the case that only  
Christianity is true, are  
the followers of those  
religions eternally lost?**

## **Universalism**

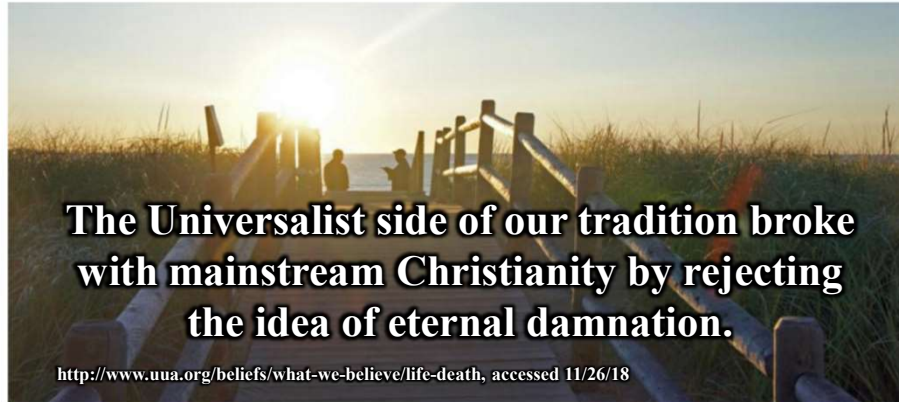
***Everyone is ultimately saved  
regardless of what they believe.***

***Universalists reject the notion of  
eternal damnation.***





HOME > OUR FAITH > BELIEFS & PRINCIPLES > LIFE AND DEATH



**The Universalist side of our tradition broke with mainstream Christianity by rejecting the idea of eternal damnation.**

<http://www.uua.org/beliefs/what-we-believe/life-death>, accessed 11/26/18

BELIEFS ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

***"In my view, the cosmic optimism of the great traditions—their proclamation that a limitlessly better existence is available to all because it is rooted in the ultimate structure of reality—strongly suggests that all will in the end, perhaps after many lives in many worlds, attain to [universal salvation]."***

["A Pluralistic View," in Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 45]



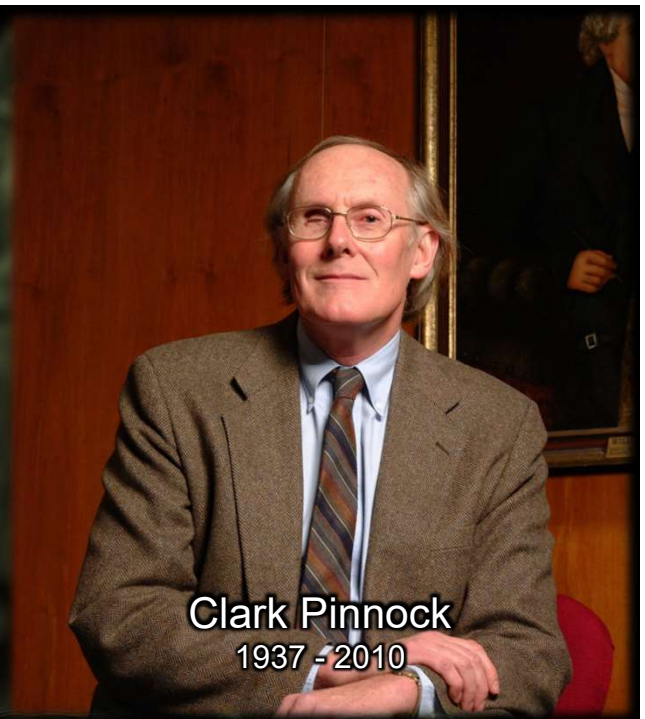
**John Hick**  
1922 - 2012

# ∞ Inclusivism ∞

***Christ saves not only those who consciously believe the gospel, but also all who never heard the gospel but fulfilled other requirements (e.g., responded to what they knew)***

***"Inclusivism believes that, because God is present in the whole world ..., God's grace is also at work in some way among all people, possibly even in the sphere of religious life ... It entertains the possibility that religion may play a role in the salvation of the human race, a role preparatory to the gospel of Christ, in whom alone fullness of salvation is found."***

["An Inclusivist View," in Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 98]



**Clark Pinnock**  
1937 - 2010



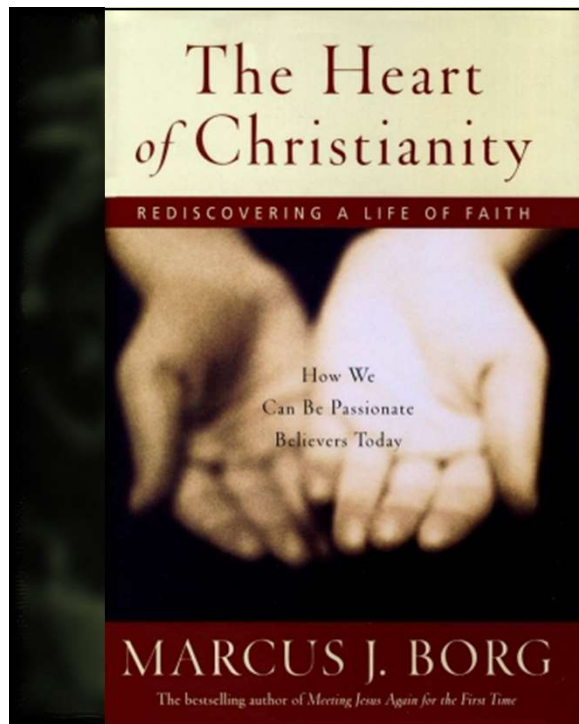
## **Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church**

**"Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or his Church, but who nevertheless seek God with a sincere heart, and, moved by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience—those too may achieve eternal salvation."**

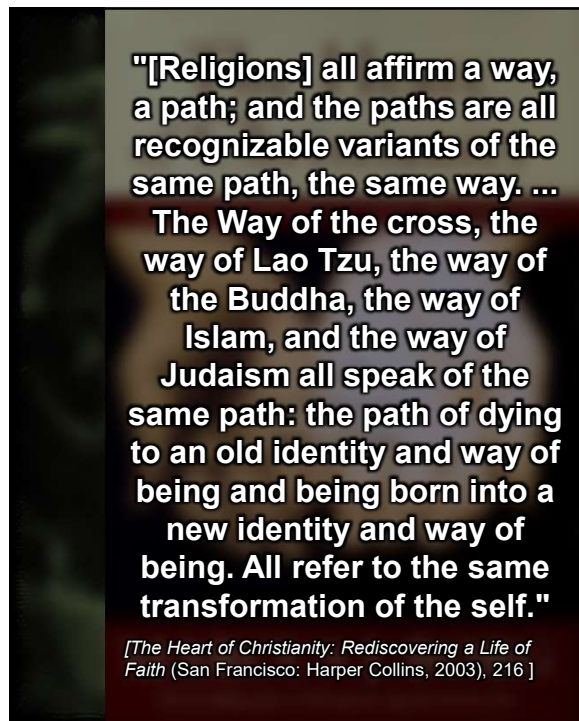
[*Lumen gentium* II, 16, §128 ([http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19641121\\_lumen-gentium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html)) as cited in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference-Librerie Editrice Vaticana, 1964), §847, p. 224]

## **∞ Pluralism ∞**

***All religions can lead to God. Salvation is not necessarily based on Jesus Christ. For some, Pluralism is distinguished from Universalism in that Pluralism says that any religion can save but not necessarily all will be actually saved.***

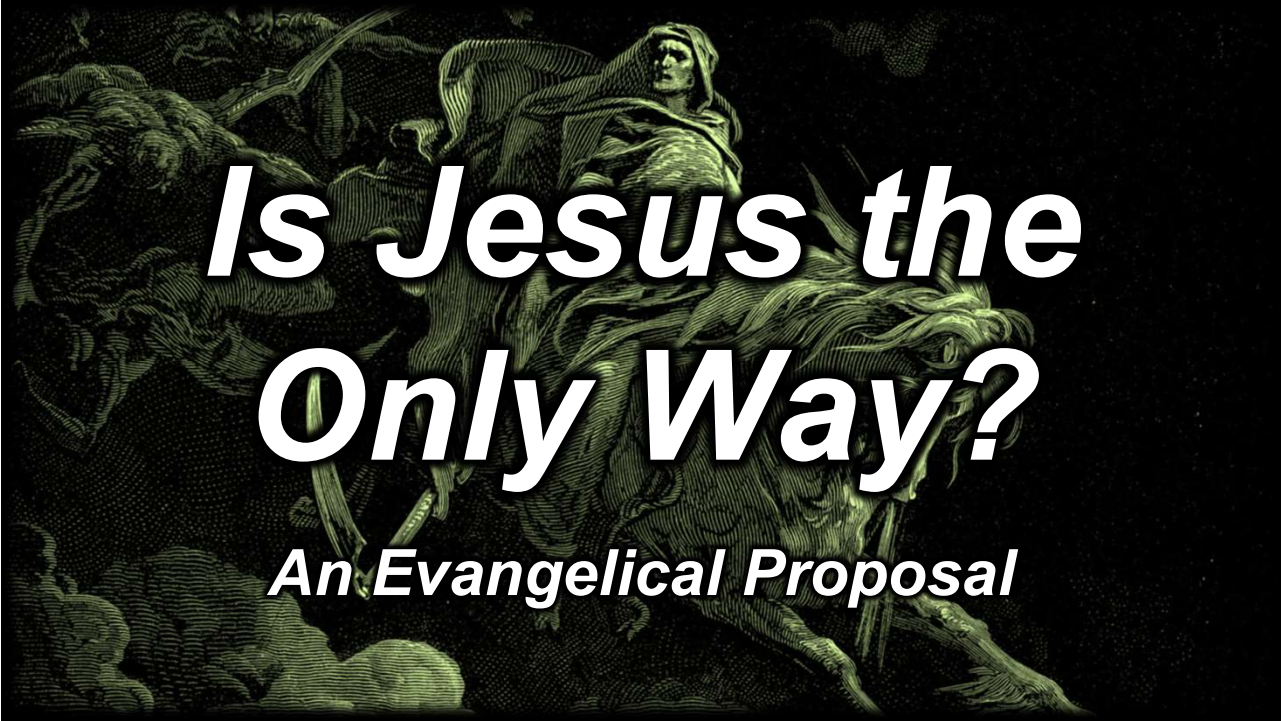


Marcus Borg  
1942 - 2015



Marcus Borg  
1942 - 2015





# ***Is Jesus the Only Way?***

***An Evangelical Proposal***

## **∞ Exclusivism ∞**

***Also called Particularism, Exclusivism says that Christ saves only those who consciously believe the gospel that are mentally capable. Thus, all those who die without hearing the gospel (and thus without believing the gospel) are condemned.***



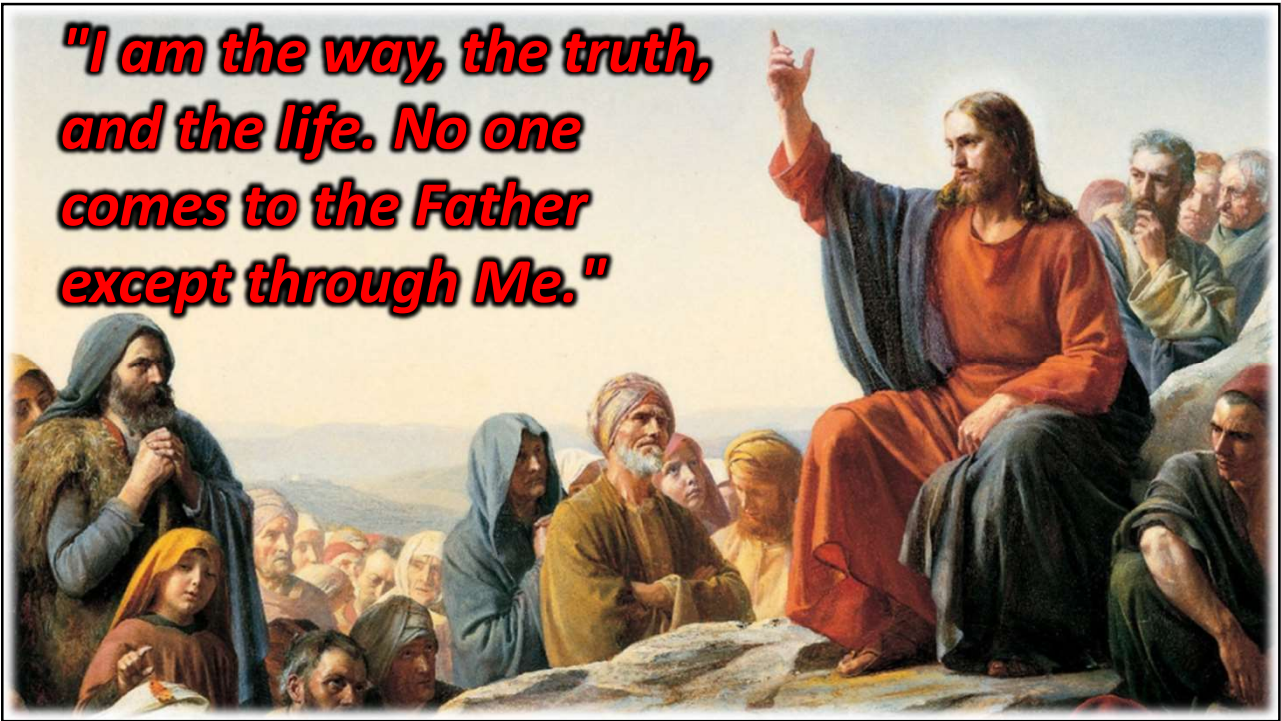
# ***The Case for Exclusivism***



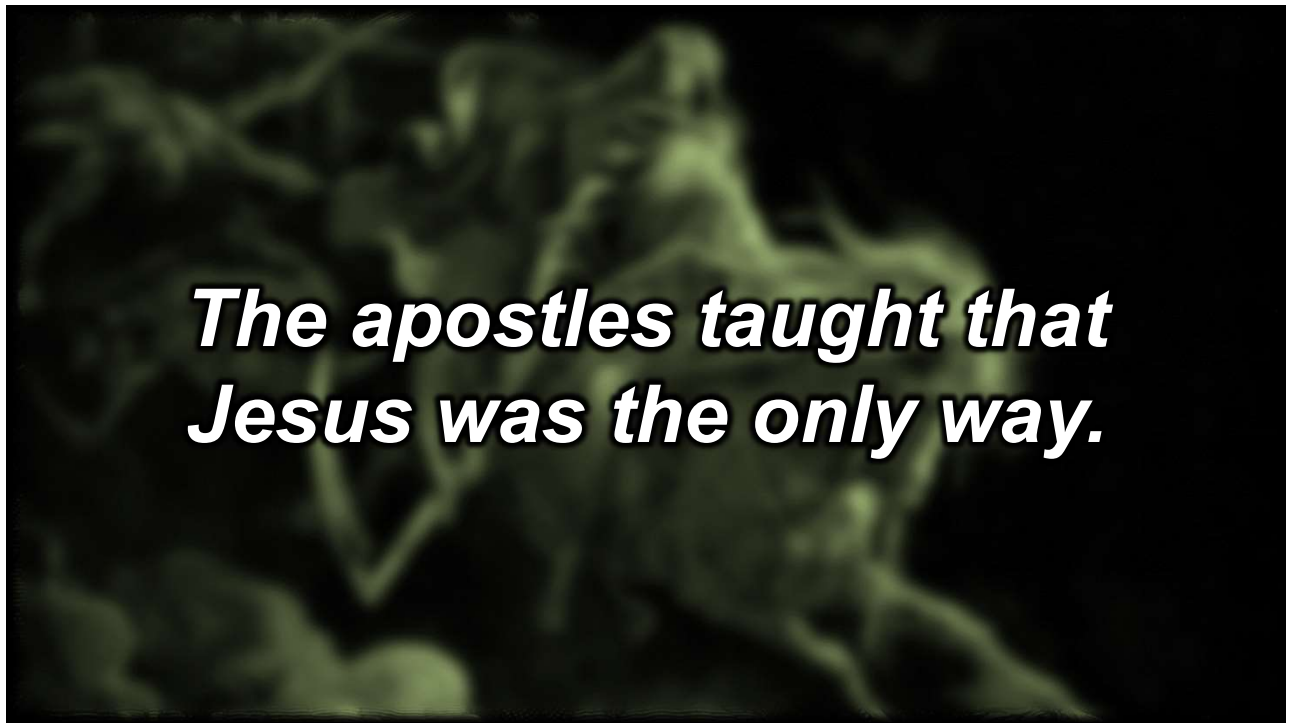
***Jesus taught that He  
was the only way.***

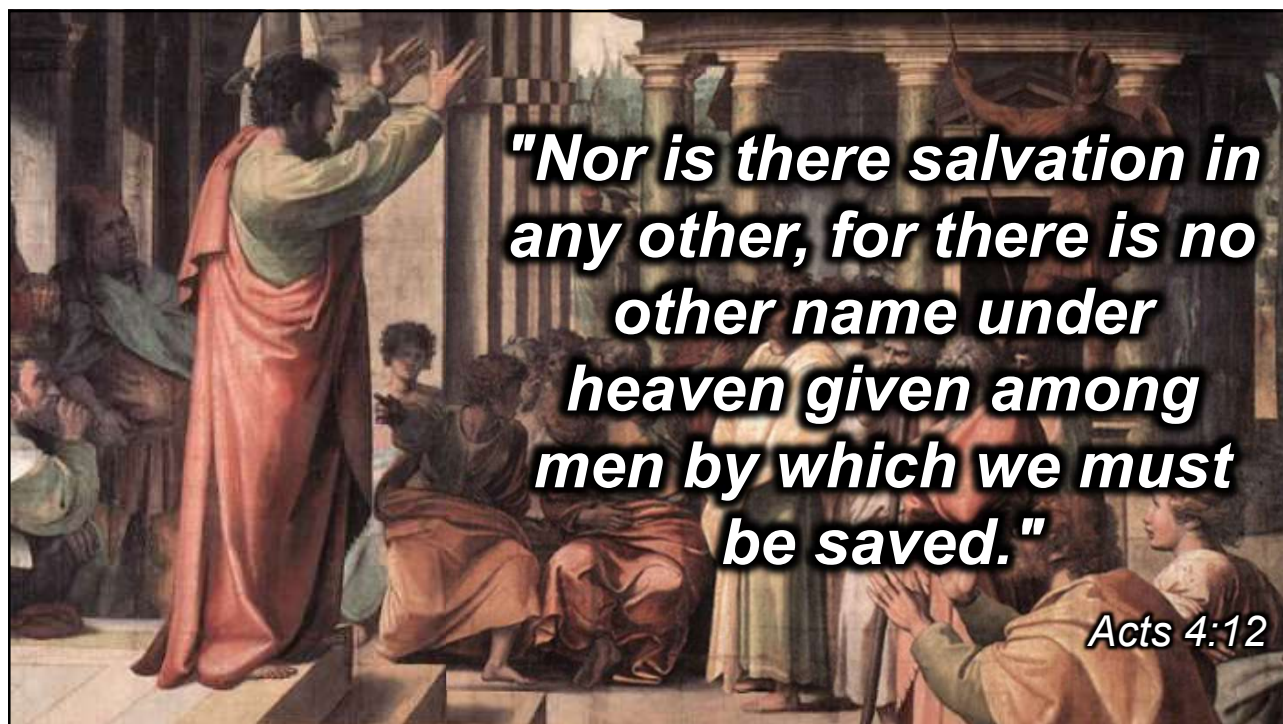


***"I am the way, the truth,  
and the life. No one  
comes to the Father  
except through Me."***



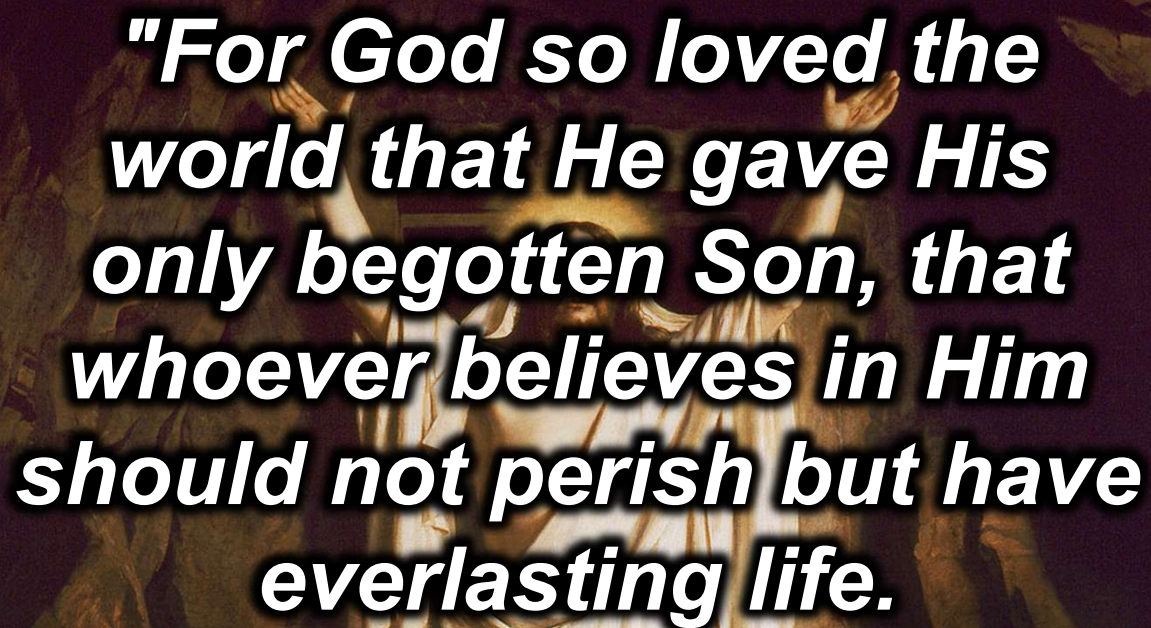
***The apostles taught that  
Jesus was the only way.***





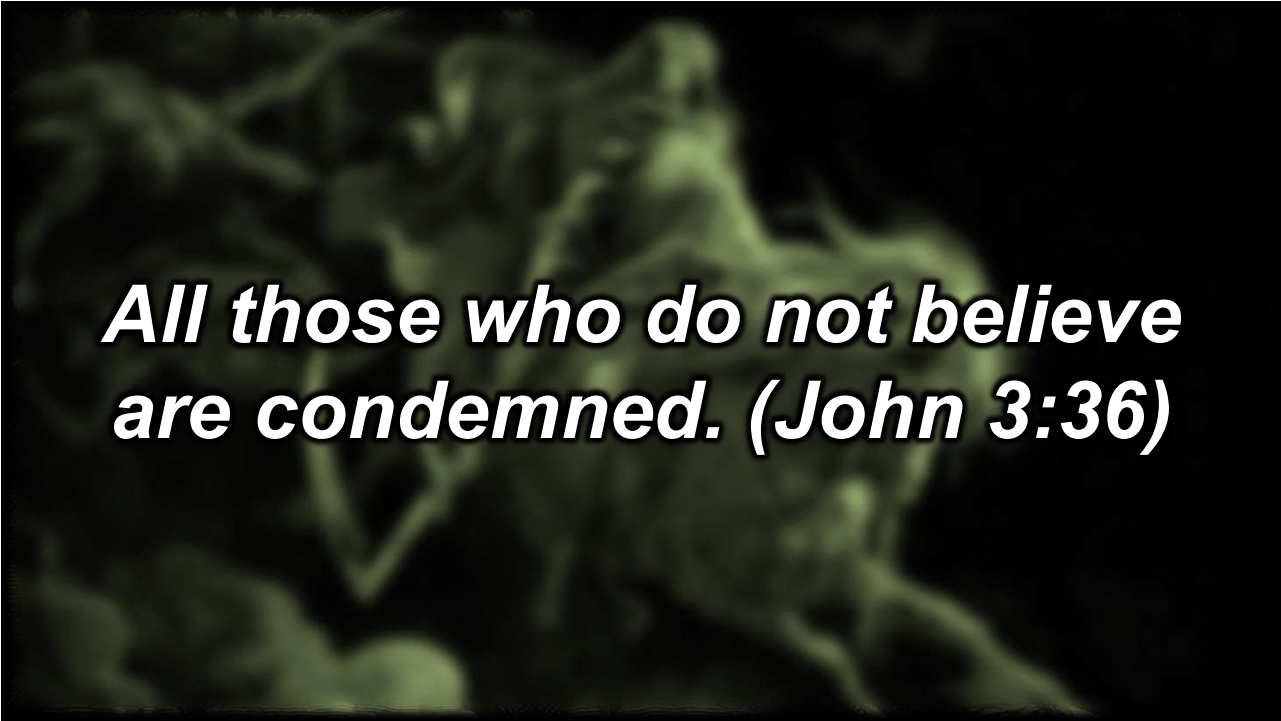
***One has eternal life by  
believing on Jesus.***



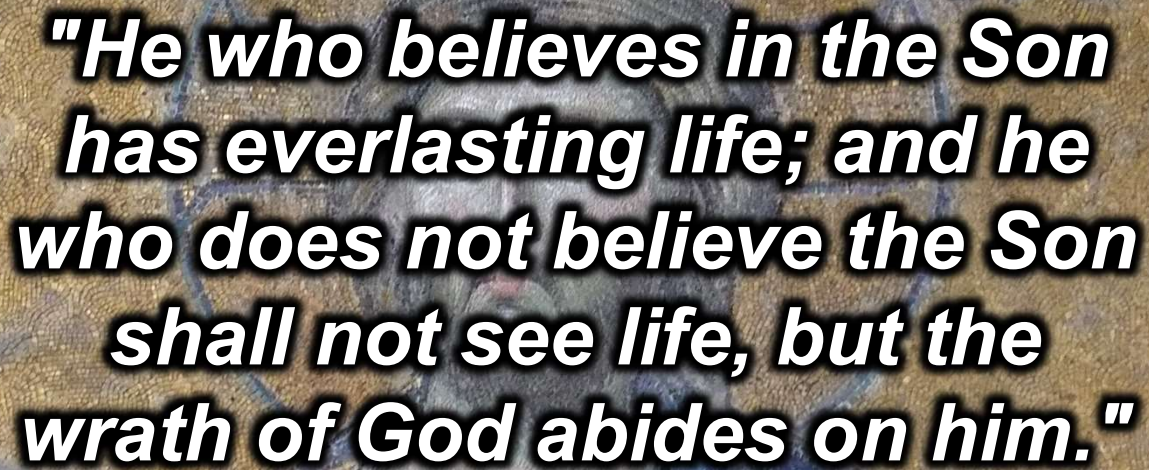


***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."***

*John 3:16*

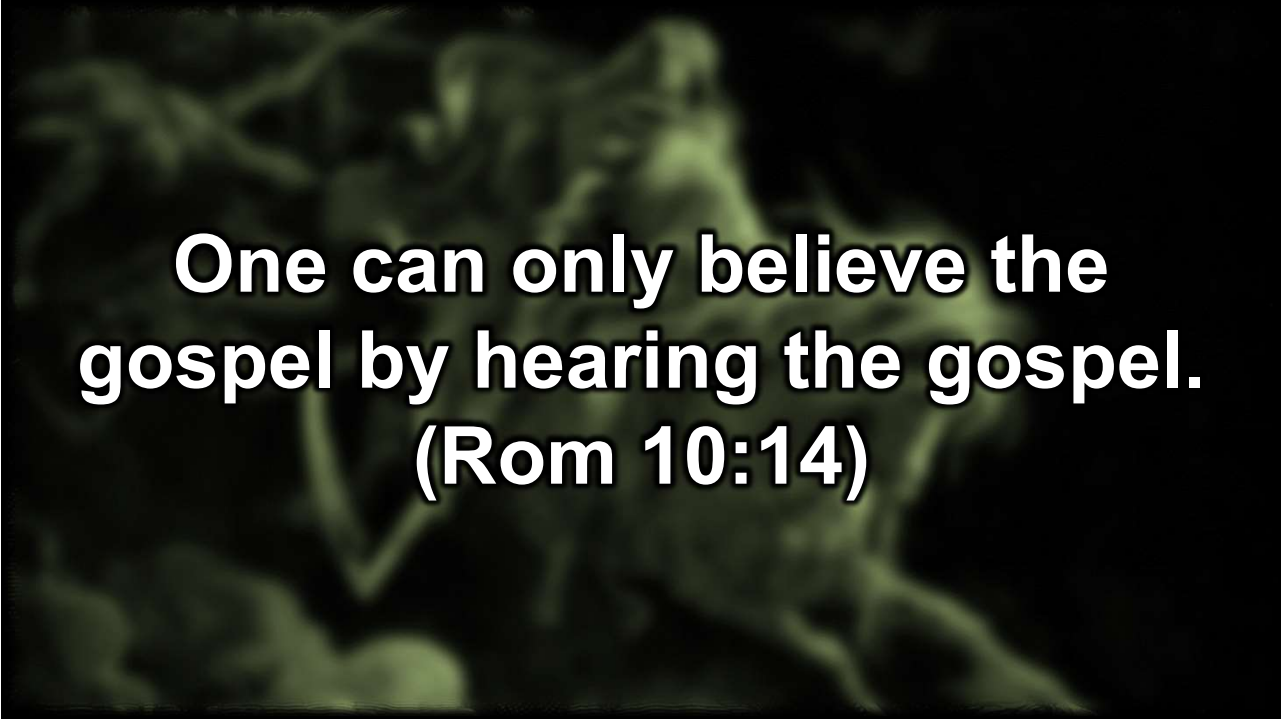


***All those who do not believe are condemned. (John 3:36)***



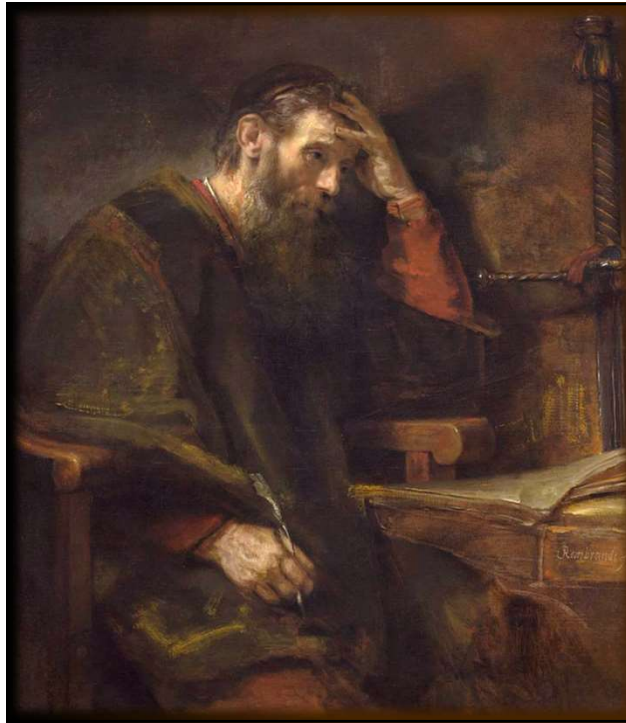
***"He who believes in the Son  
has everlasting life; and he  
who does not believe the Son  
shall not see life, but the  
wrath of God abides on him."***

*John 3:36*



**One can only believe the  
gospel by hearing the gospel.  
(Rom 10:14)**

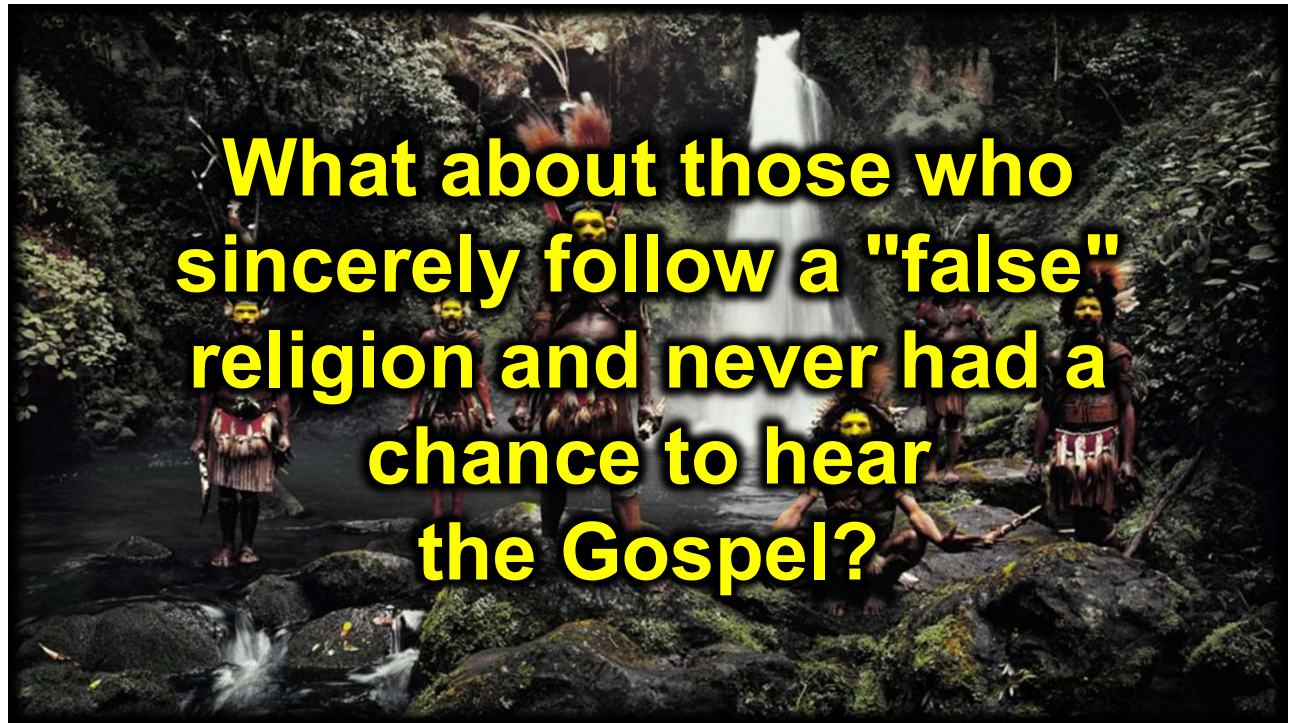




***"For 'Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"***

*Romans 10:13-14*





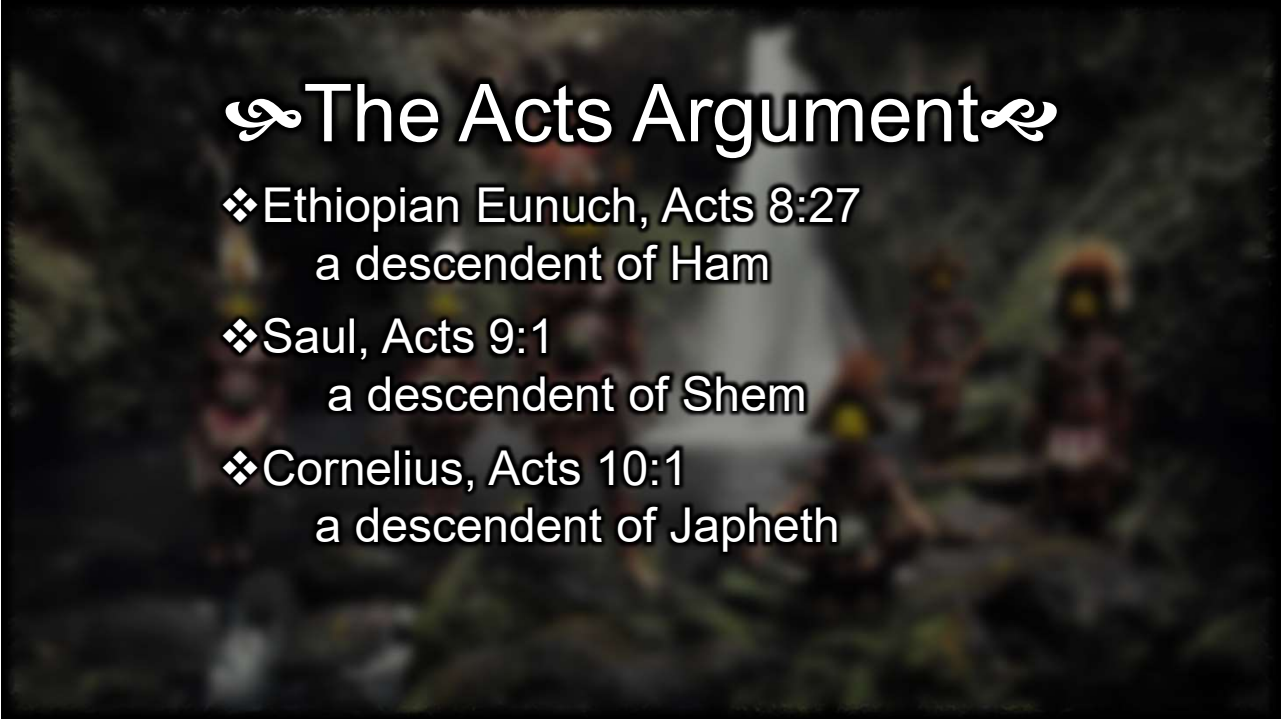
# What About Those Who Have Never Heard the Gospel?

**Richard G. Howe, PhD**

Emeritus Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics,  
Southern Evangelical Seminary

President, International Society of Christian Apologetics





## ❧The Acts Argument❧

- ❖ Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8:27  
a descendent of Ham
- ❖ Saul, Acts 9:1  
a descendent of Shem
- ❖ Cornelius, Acts 10:1  
a descendent of Japheth