

What About Those Who Have Never Heard the Gospel?

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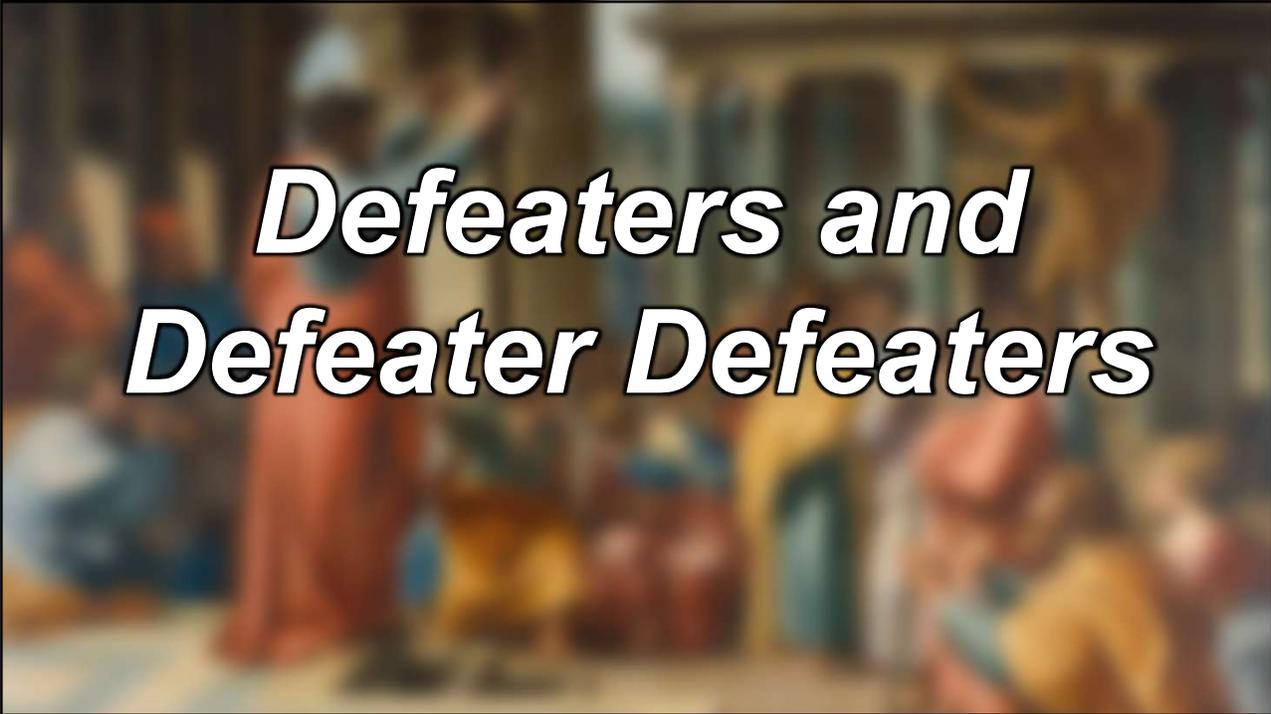
Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics

Southern Evangelical Seminary

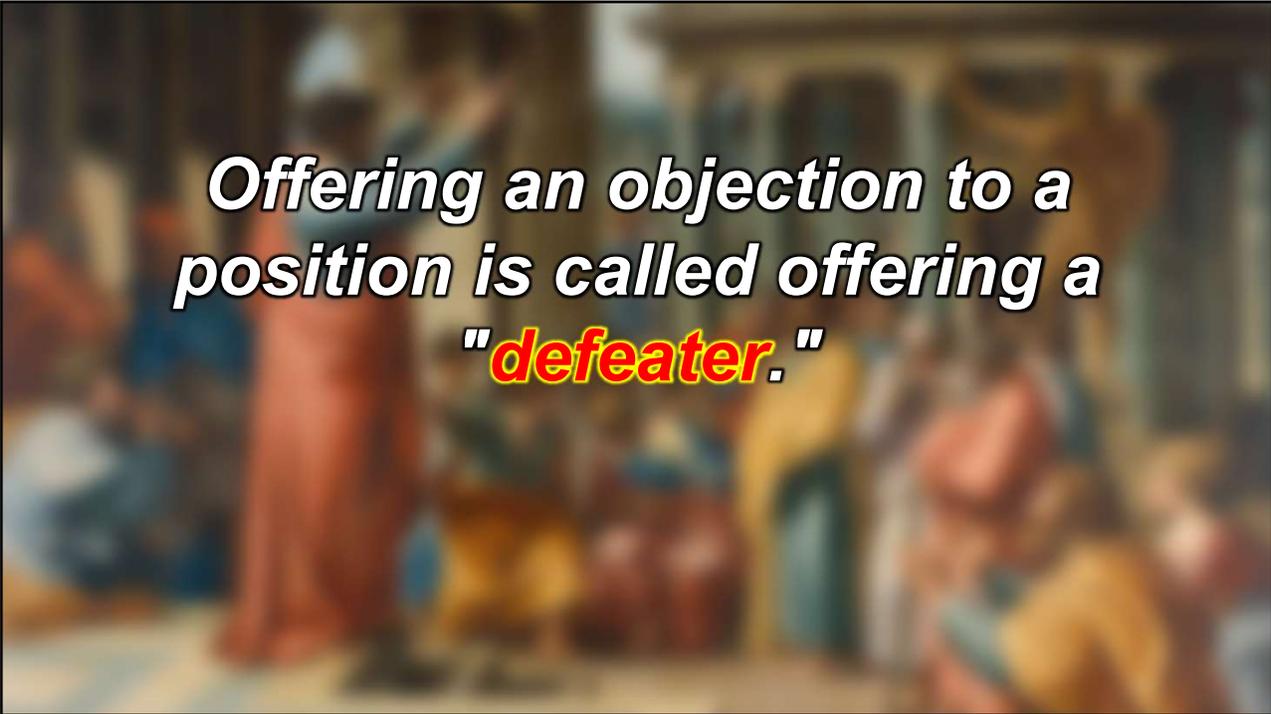
Past President, International Society of Christian Apologetics



Some Initial Comments



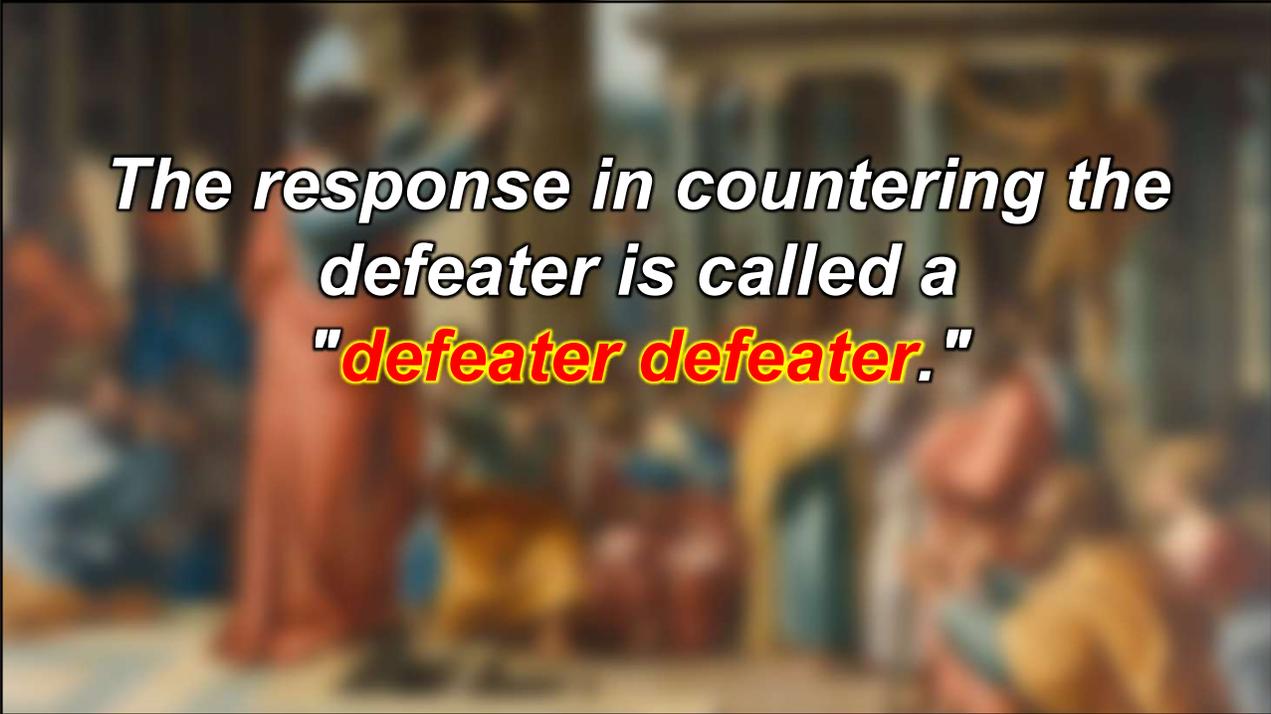
Defeaters and Defeater Defeaters



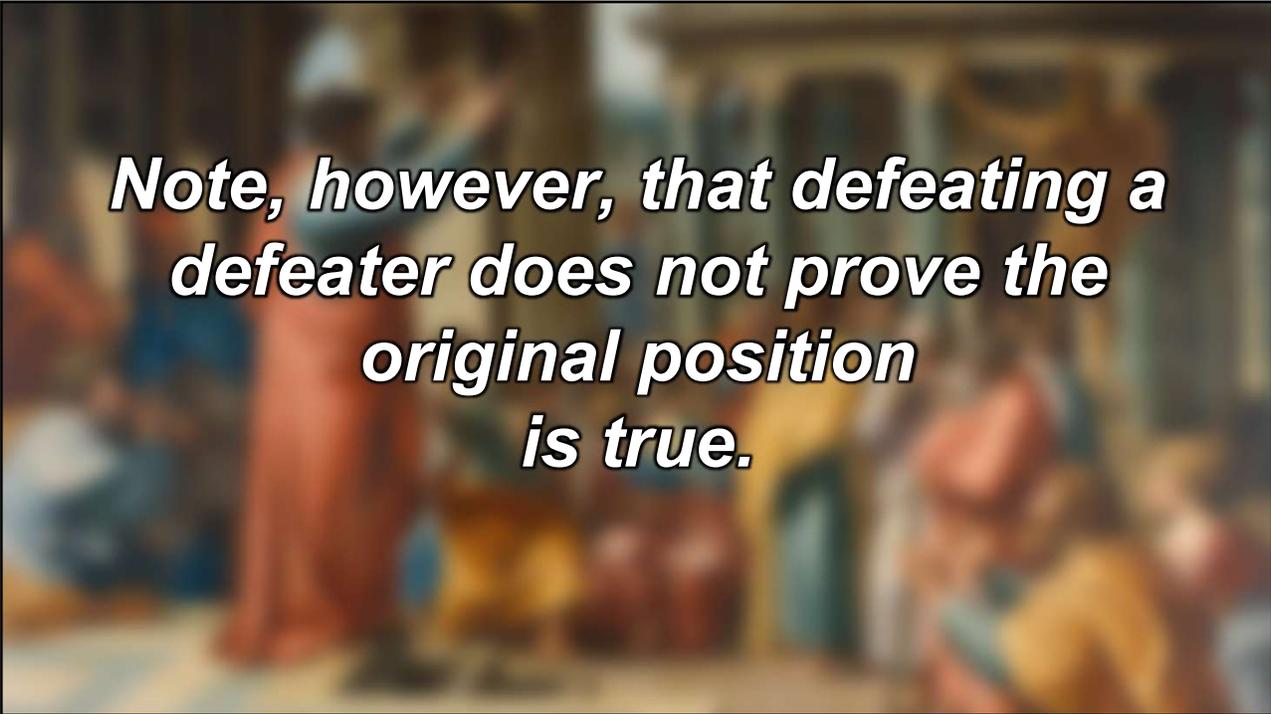
*Offering an objection to a
position is called offering a
"defeater."*

Offering an objection specifically against an argument FOR a position (without necessarily showing that the position is false) is called an "undercutting defeater."

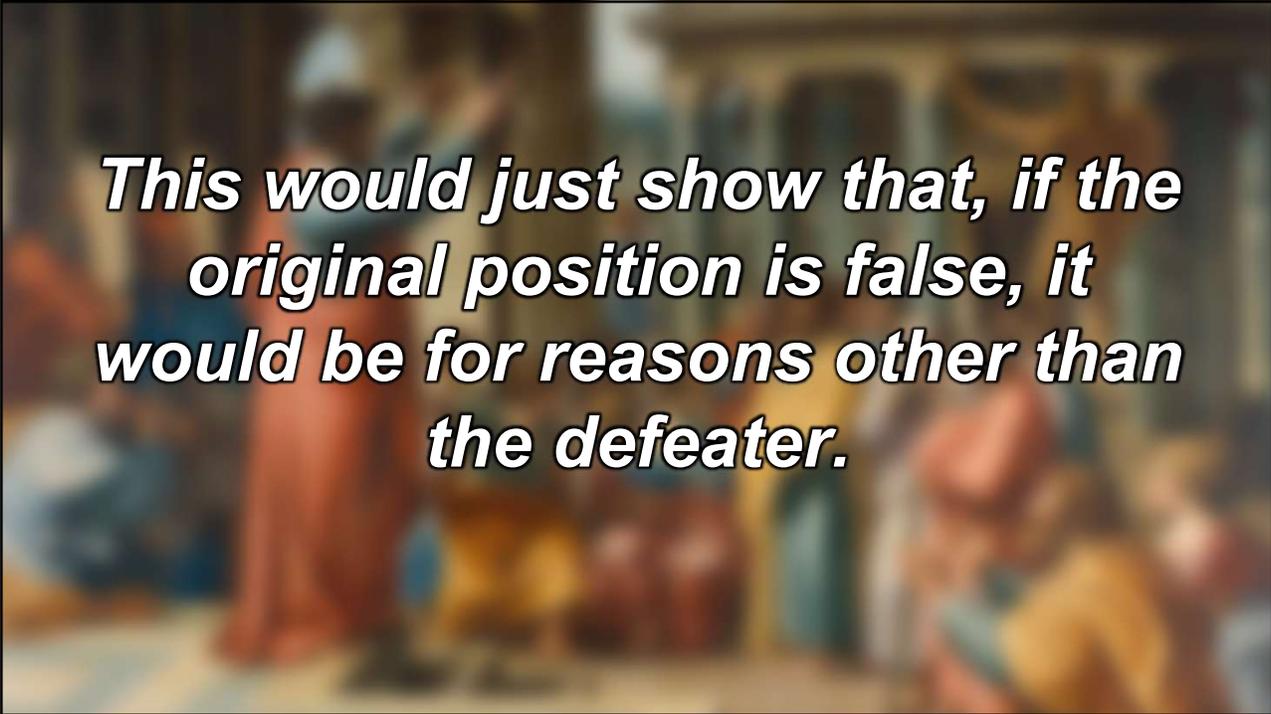
Offering an objection specifically against the position directly is called a "rebutting defeater."



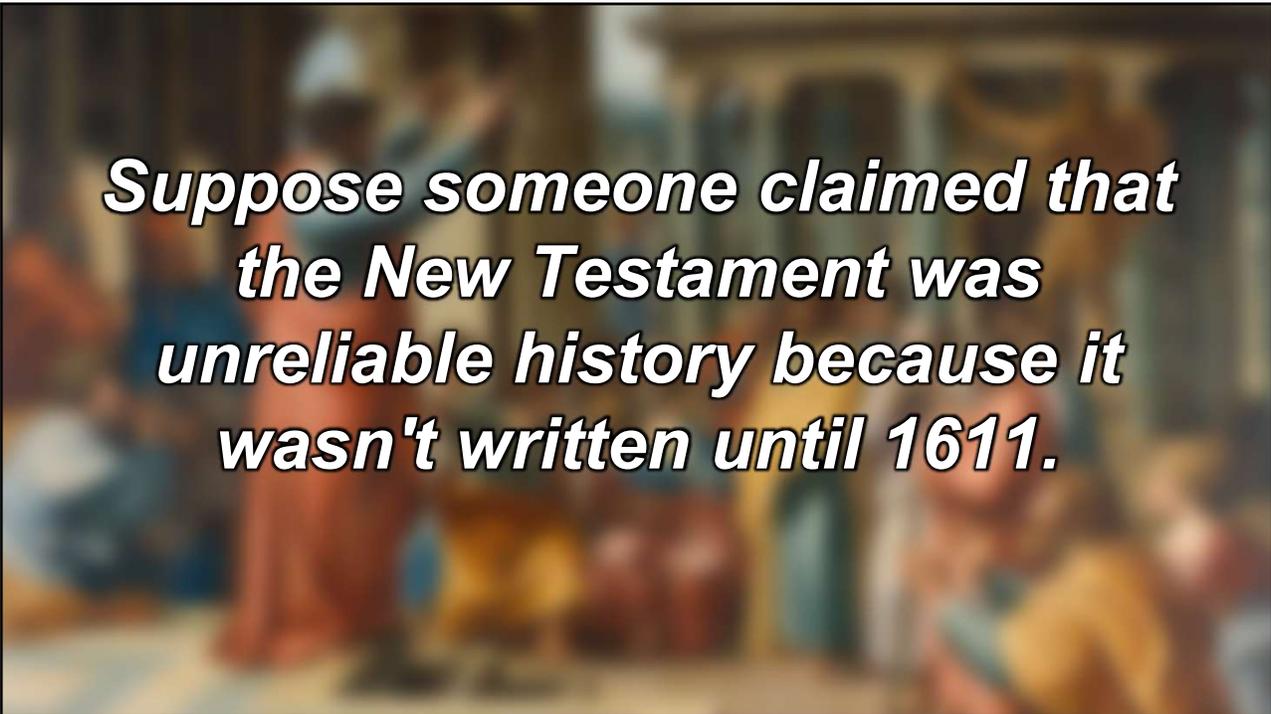
*The response in countering the
defeater is called a
"defeater defeater."*



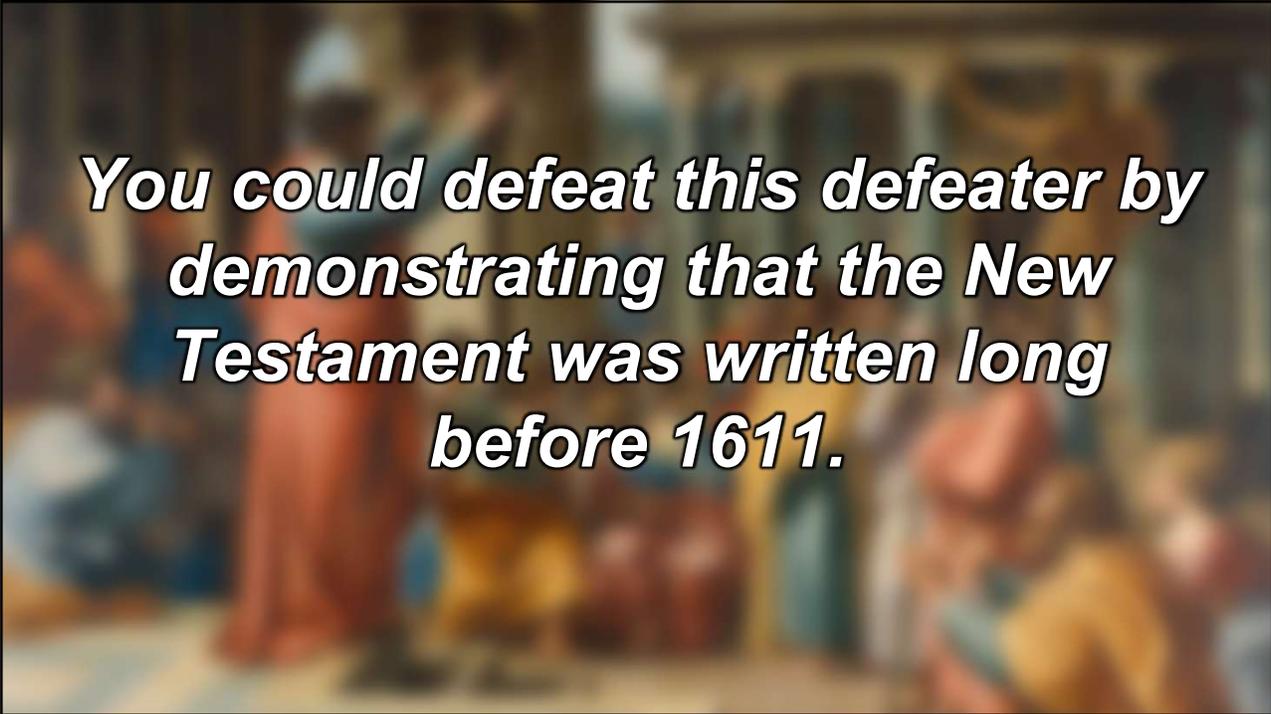
*Note, however, that defeating a
defeater does not prove the
original position
is true.*



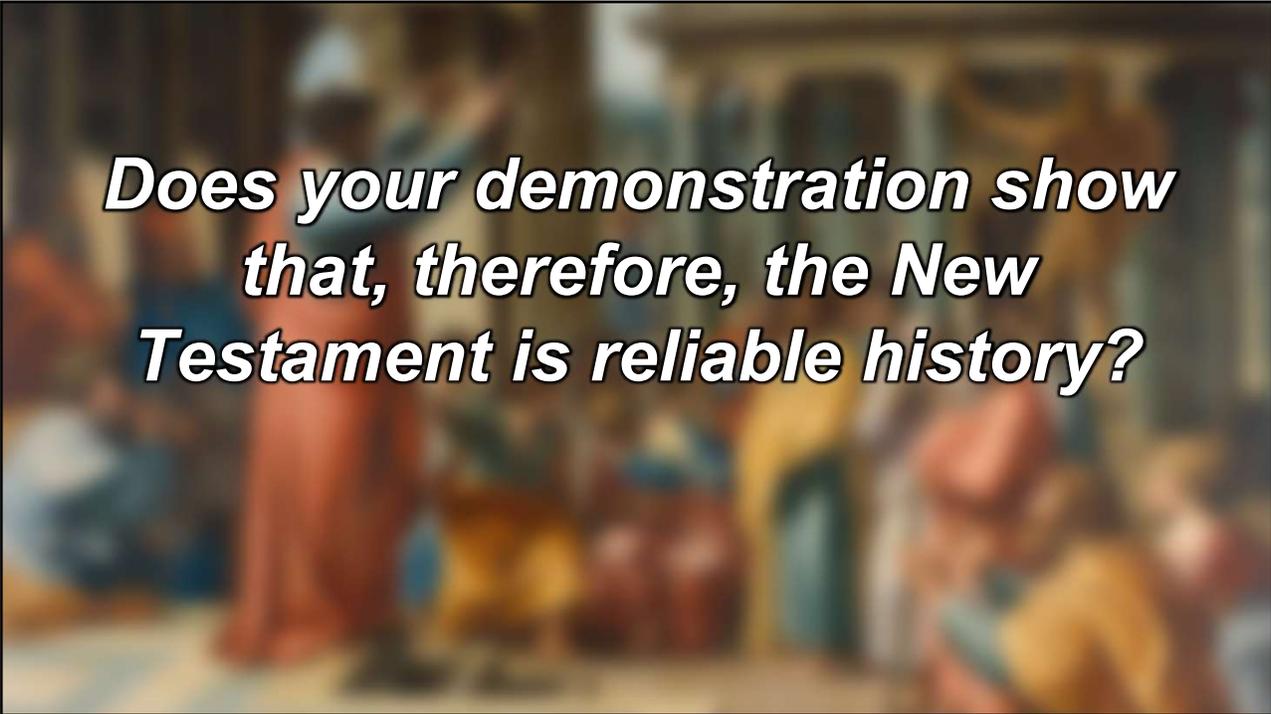
This would just show that, if the original position is false, it would be for reasons other than the defeater.



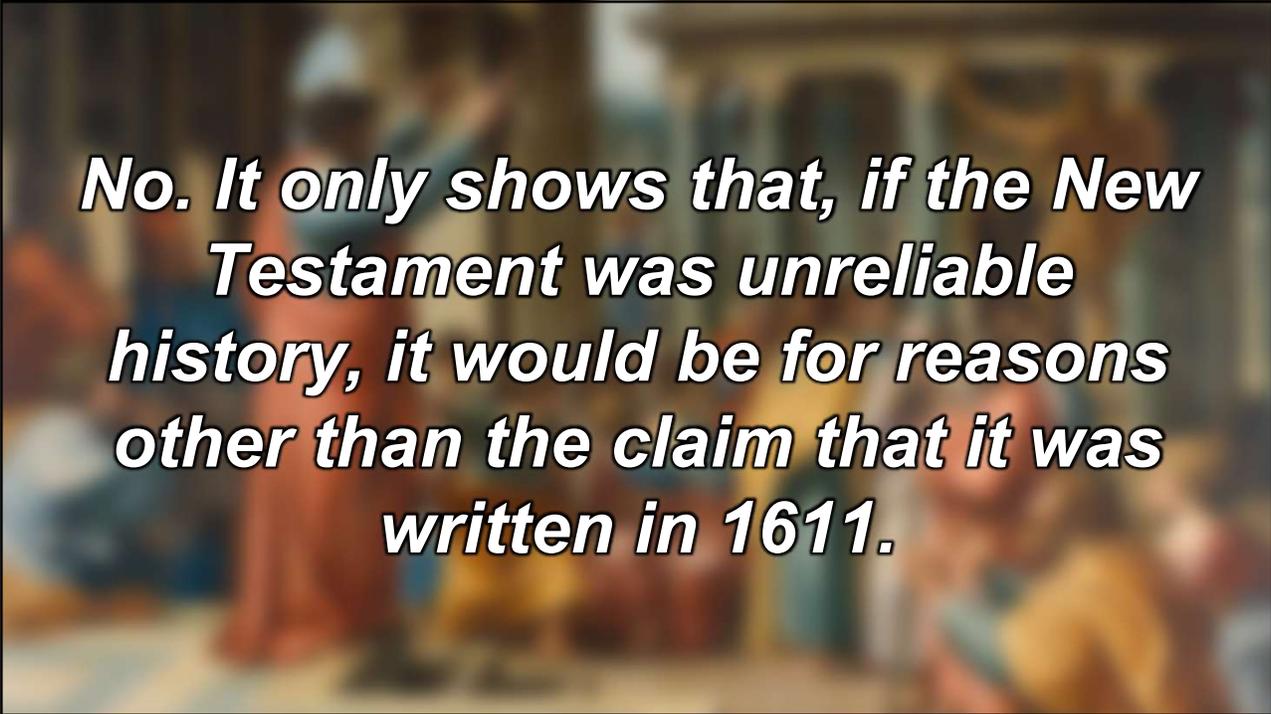
Suppose someone claimed that the New Testament was unreliable history because it wasn't written until 1611.



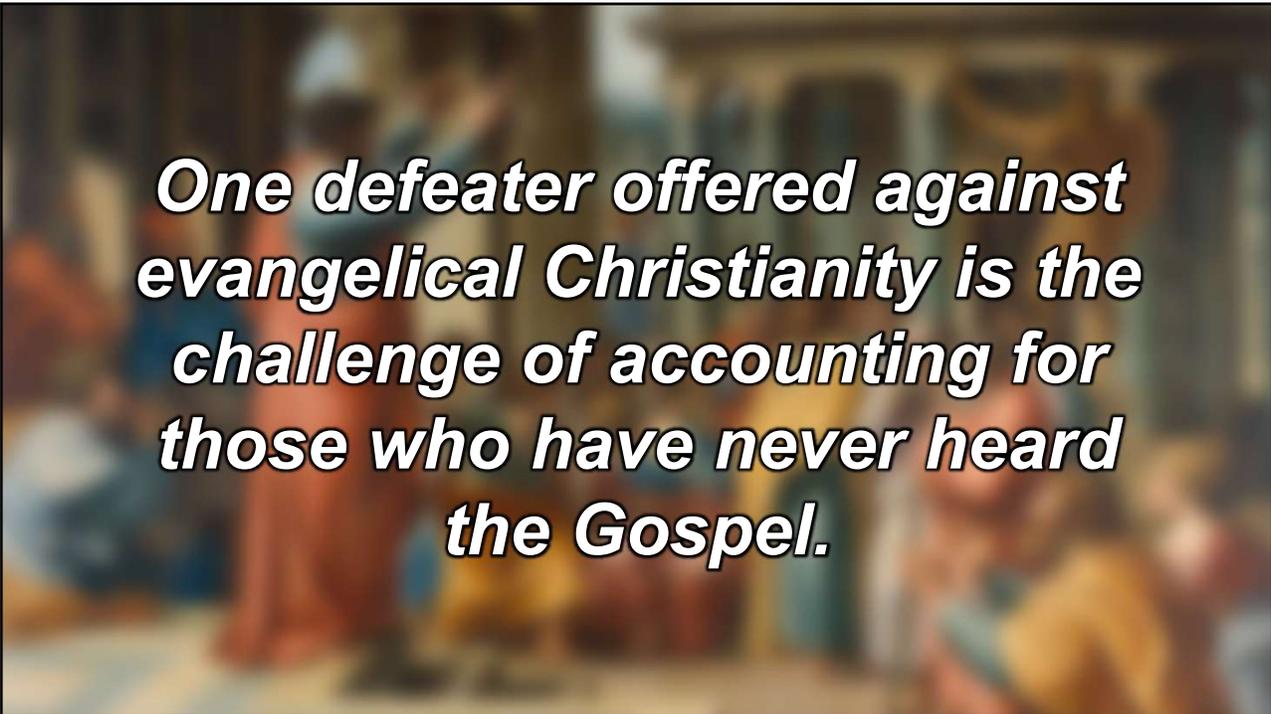
You could defeat this defeater by demonstrating that the New Testament was written long before 1611.



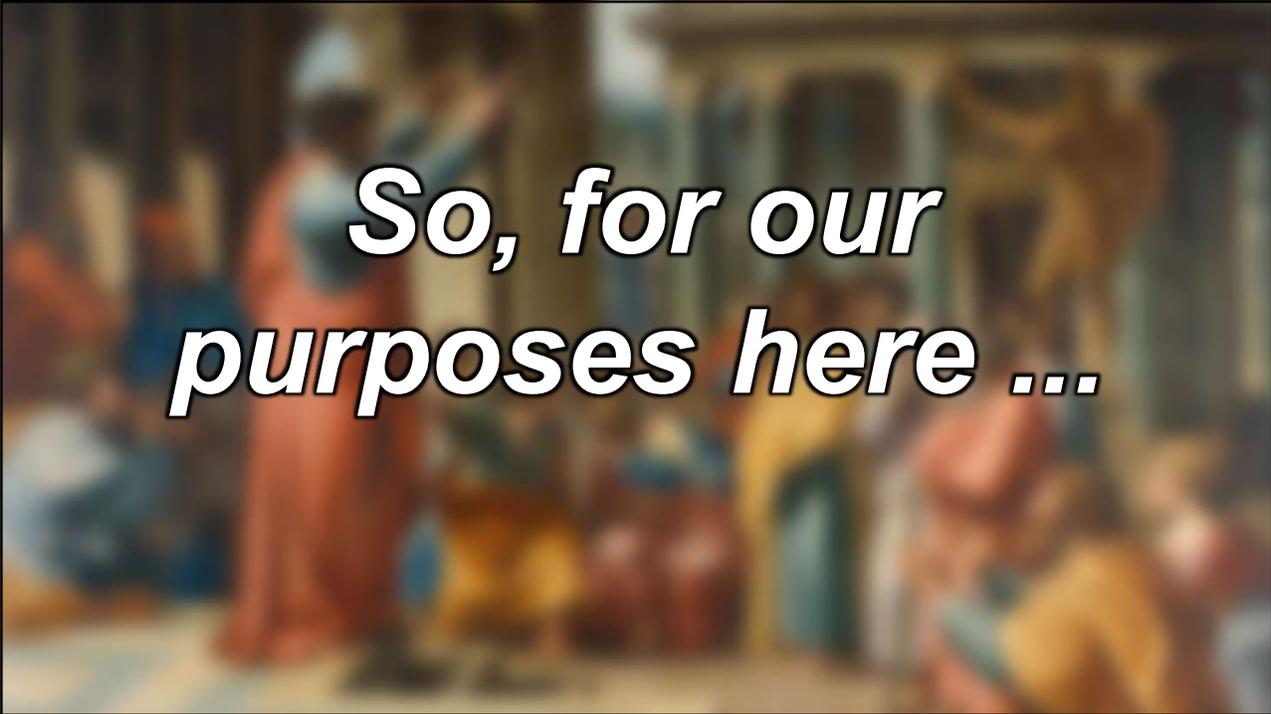
Does your demonstration show that, therefore, the New Testament is reliable history?



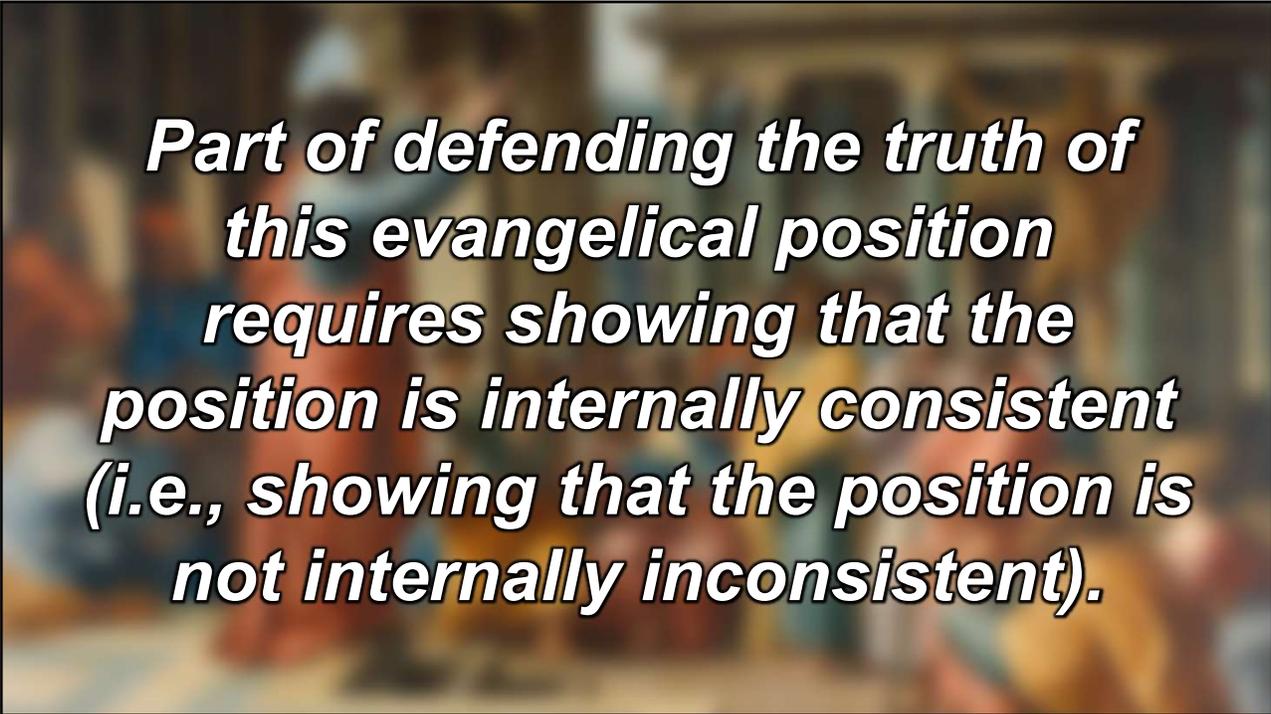
No. It only shows that, if the New Testament was unreliable history, it would be for reasons other than the claim that it was written in 1611.



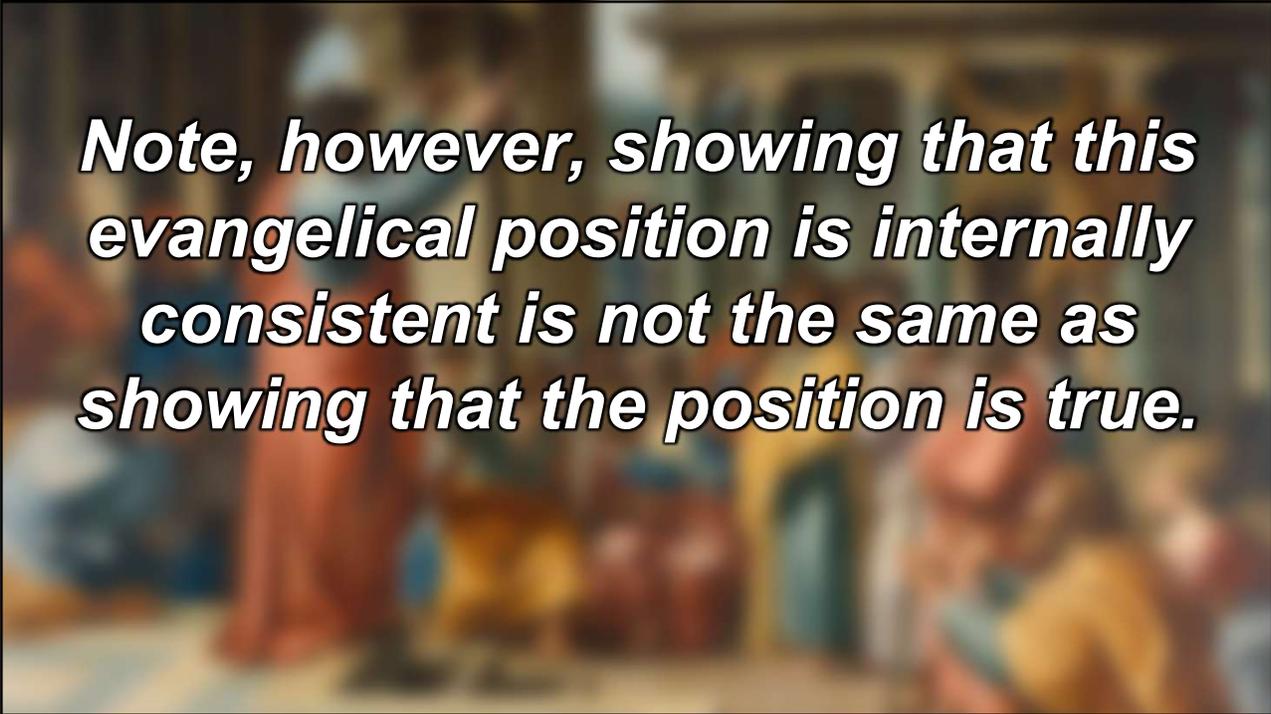
One defeater offered against evangelical Christianity is the challenge of accounting for those who have never heard the Gospel.



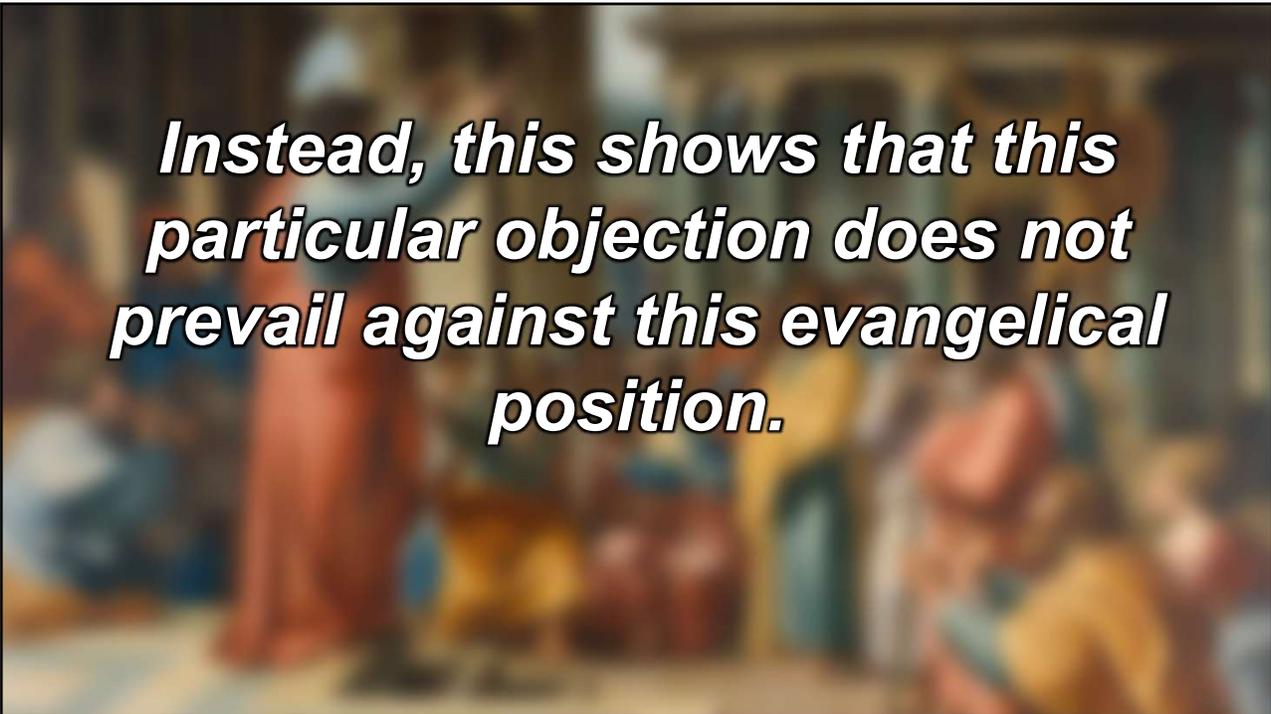
***So, for our
purposes here ...***



***Part of defending the truth of
this evangelical position
requires showing that the
position is internally consistent
(i.e., showing that the position is
not internally inconsistent).***



Note, however, showing that this evangelical position is internally consistent is not the same as showing that the position is true.



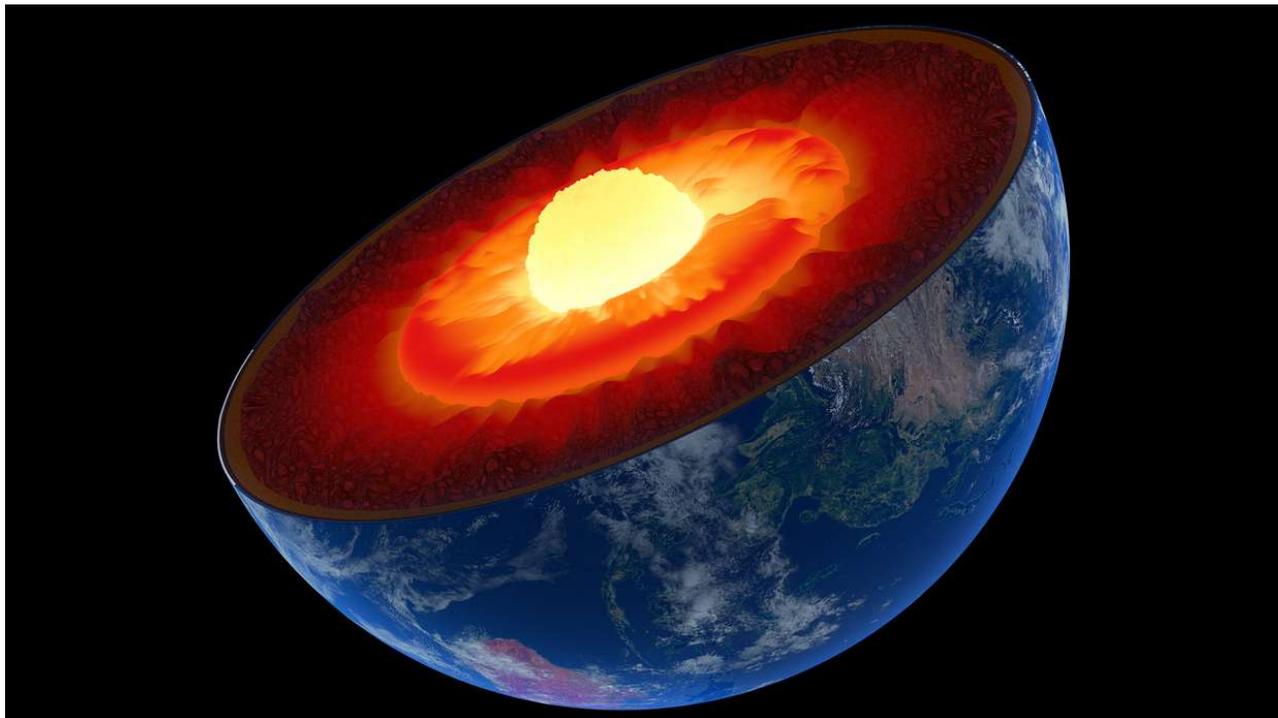
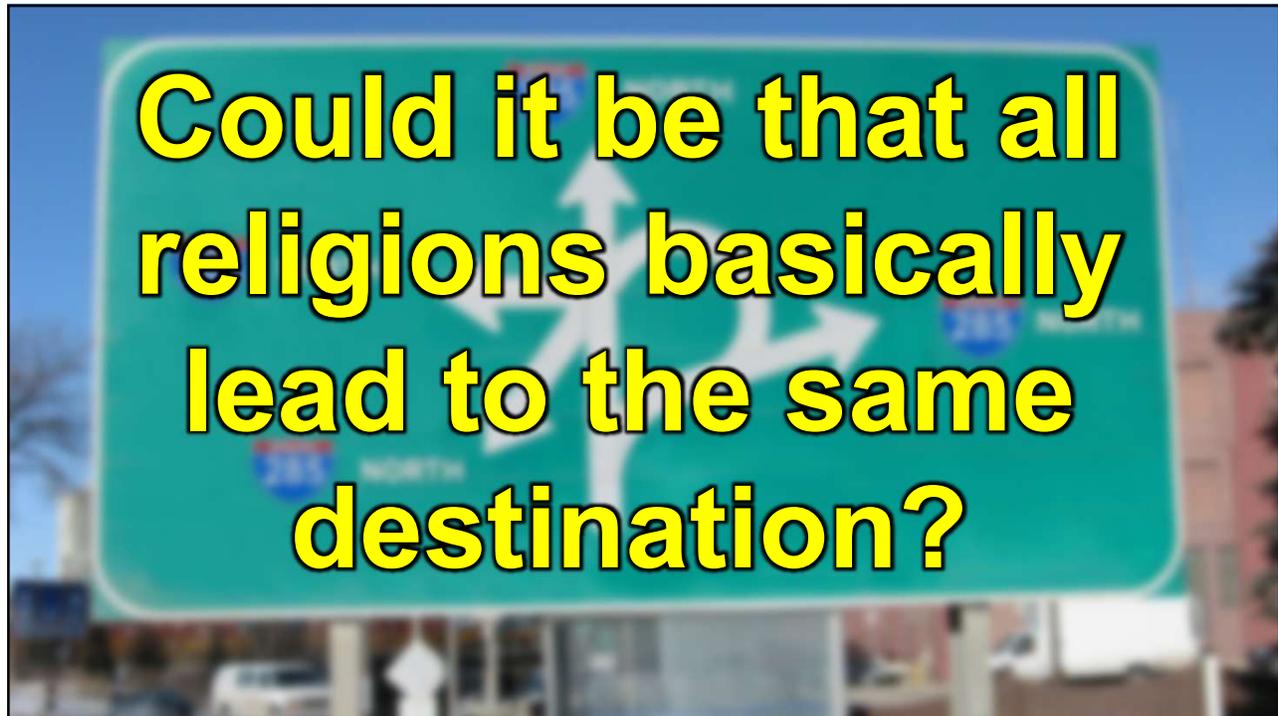
Instead, this shows that this particular objection does not prevail against this evangelical position.



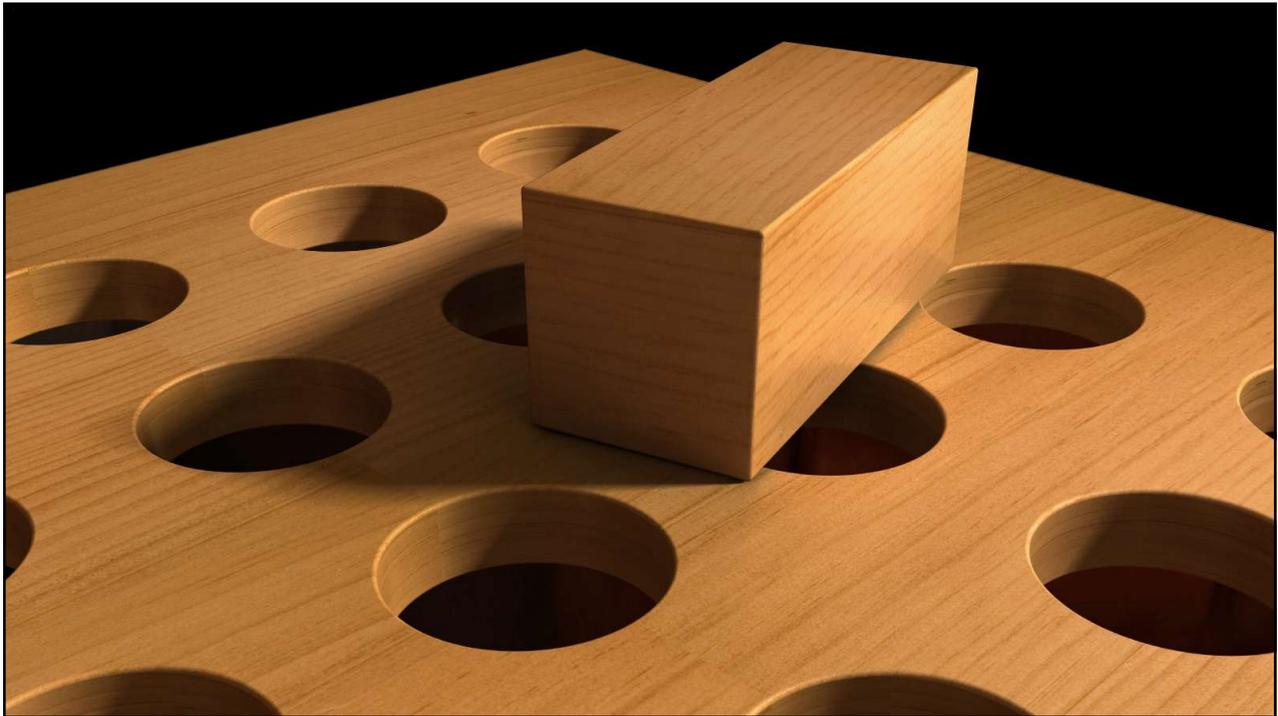
Often the expression 'religious pluralism' is nothing more than the observation that there are many religions in the world.

The presence of so many religions in the world poses a number of challenges to the Evangelical (i.e., biblical) Christian.





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



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



**If the world's religions are
making different claims,
how can the Christian
maintain that only
Christianity is true?**

HINDUISM

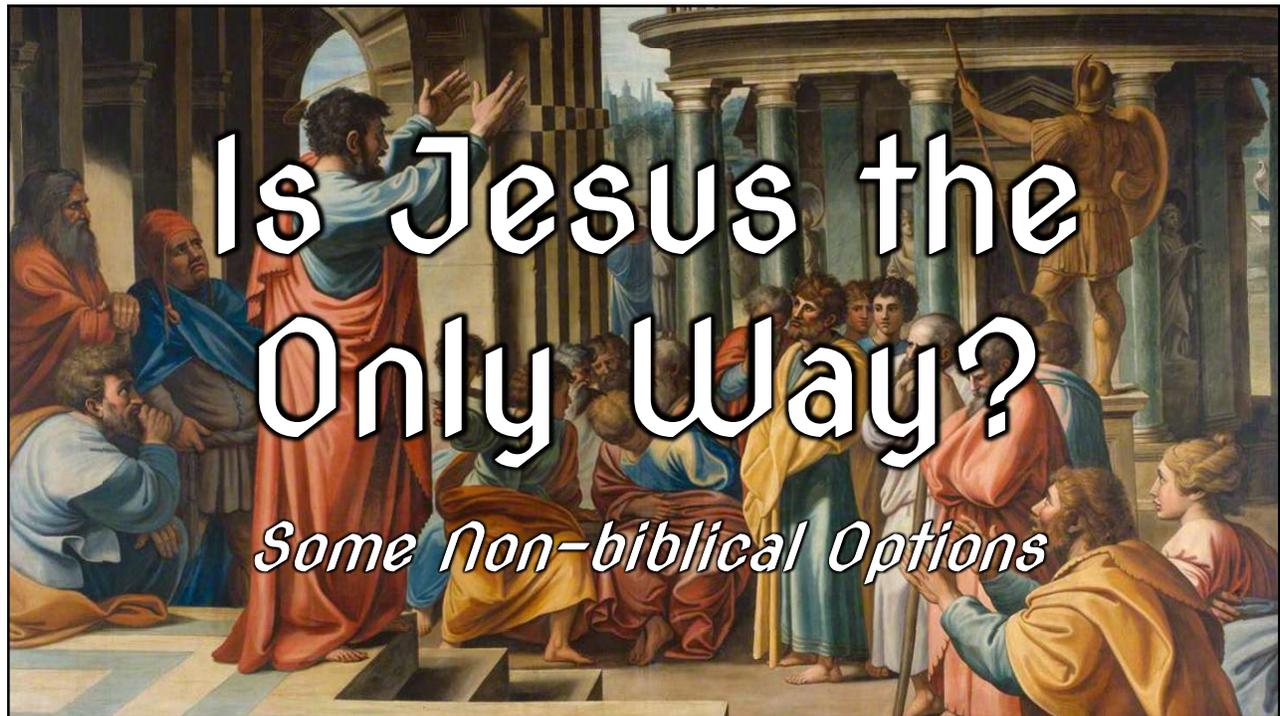
BUDDHISM



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



What about those who sincerely follow a false religion and never had a chance to hear the Gospel?



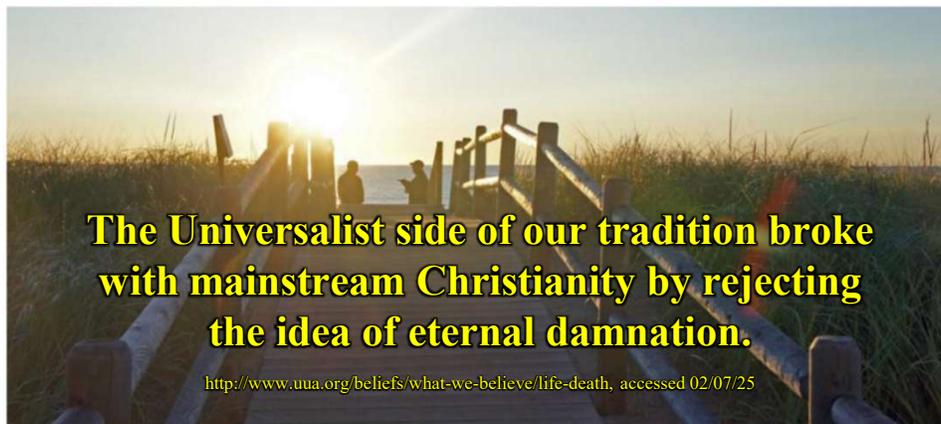
☞ Universalism ☞

Everyone is ultimately saved regardless of what they believe.

Universalists reject the notion of eternal damnation—even those who may not hold to any notion of eternal life.



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



BELIEFS ABOUT LIFE AND DEATH IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

MERCY ON ALL

+

SEARCH

What Is Christian Universalism? Well, Here's What It Isn't

OCT 26, 2019 | TIM HALL | APOLOGETICS

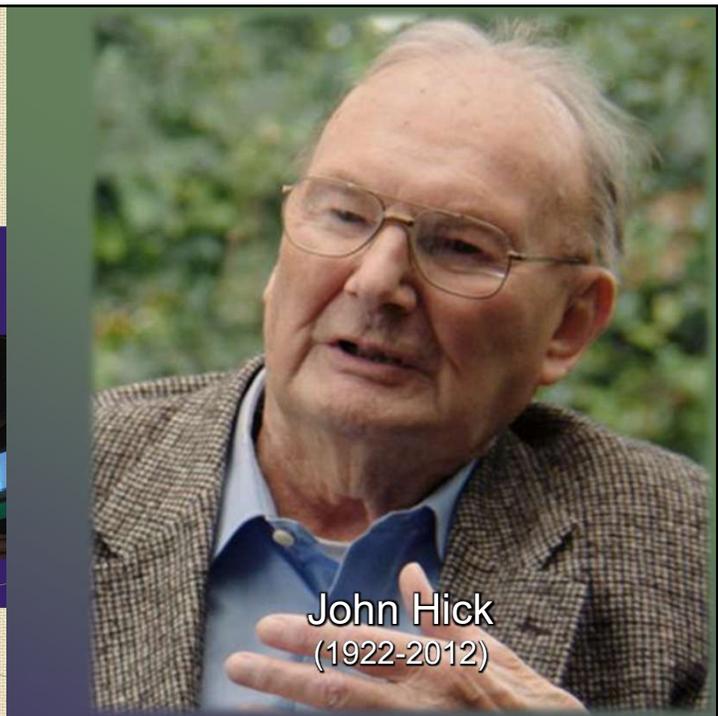
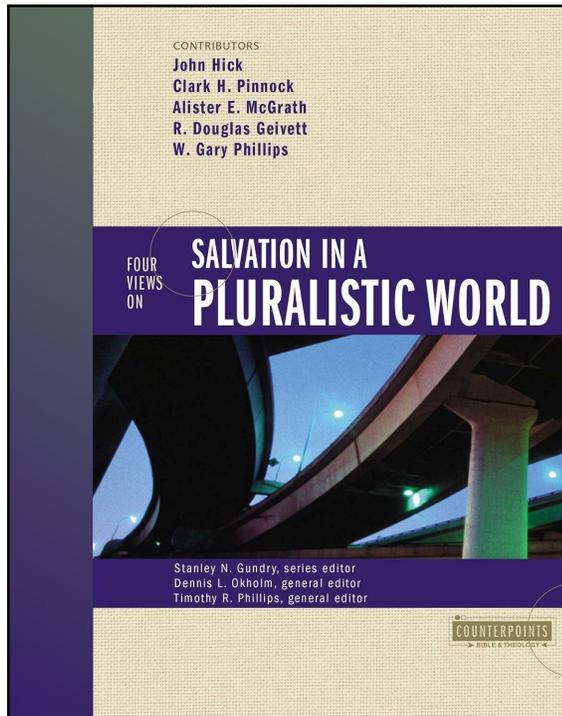
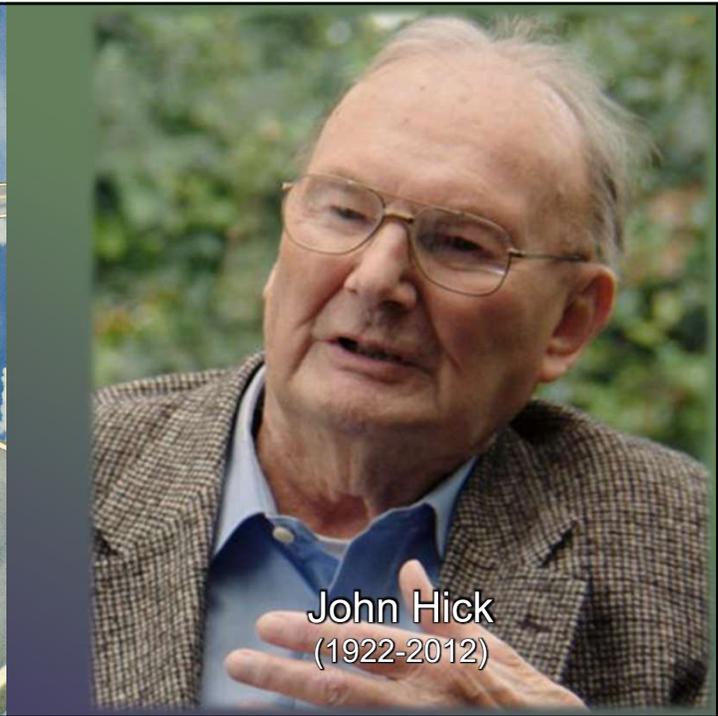
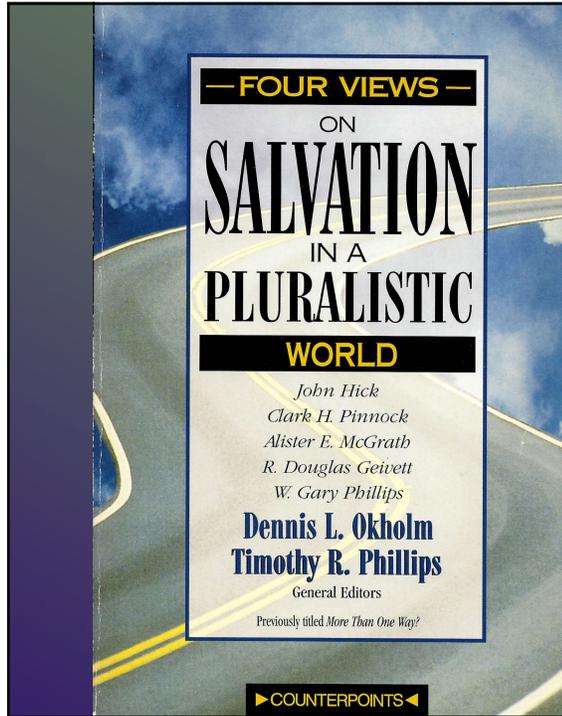
Written by [Tim Hall](#) Oct 26, 2019

Introduction

When I tell someone I am a Universalist, I'm usually met either with stunned incredulity or an accusation of some kind: "Oh, so you don't believe in hell." "Oh, so you think all paths lead to God." "Oh, so you don't believe the Bible." "Oh, so you're a heretic." Depending on whom you're talking to, some of these accusations may be applicable, but

"Universal salvation does not deny the fact of future punishment or penalty—it denies that the penalty shall be an everlasting and pointless suffering in which evil and sin have free reign within the confines of hell while the saints sing "Victory in Jesus" in Heaven. In Scripture, punishment is presented as a means of divine correction—not simple retribution or human vengeance."

[<https://www.mercyonall.org/posts/what-is-christian-universalism>, accessed 02/07/25]



"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]."

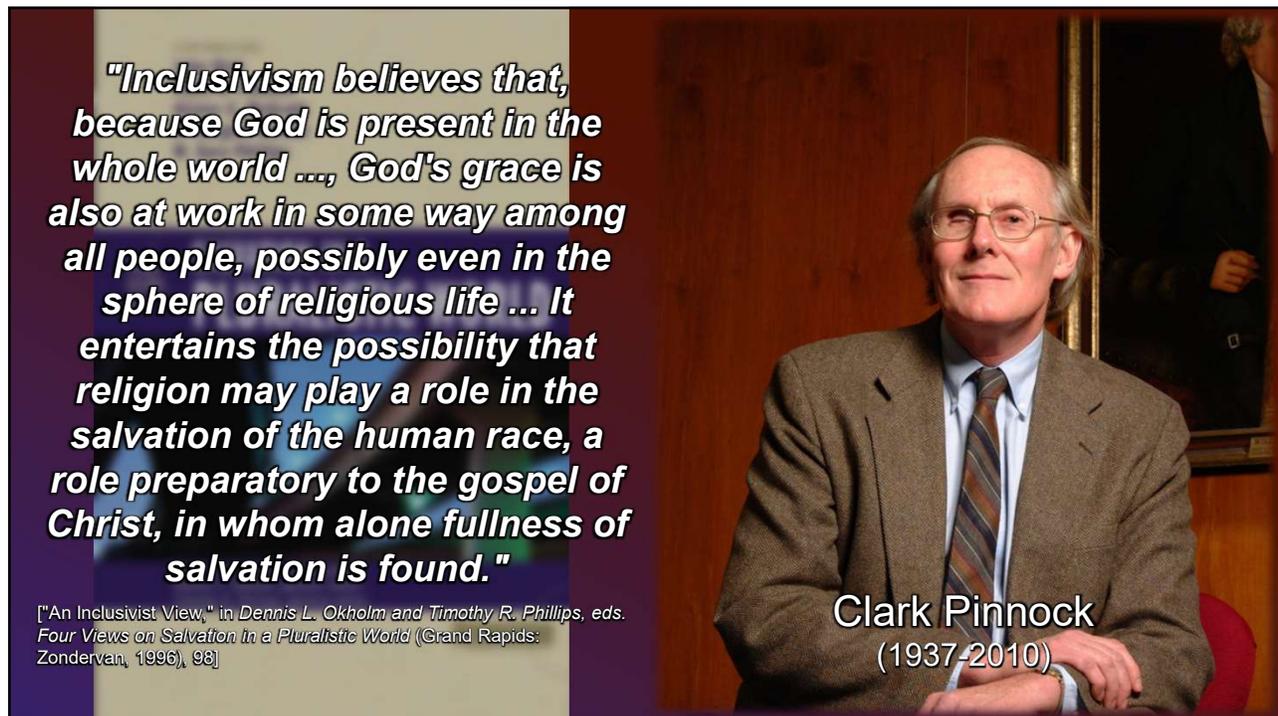
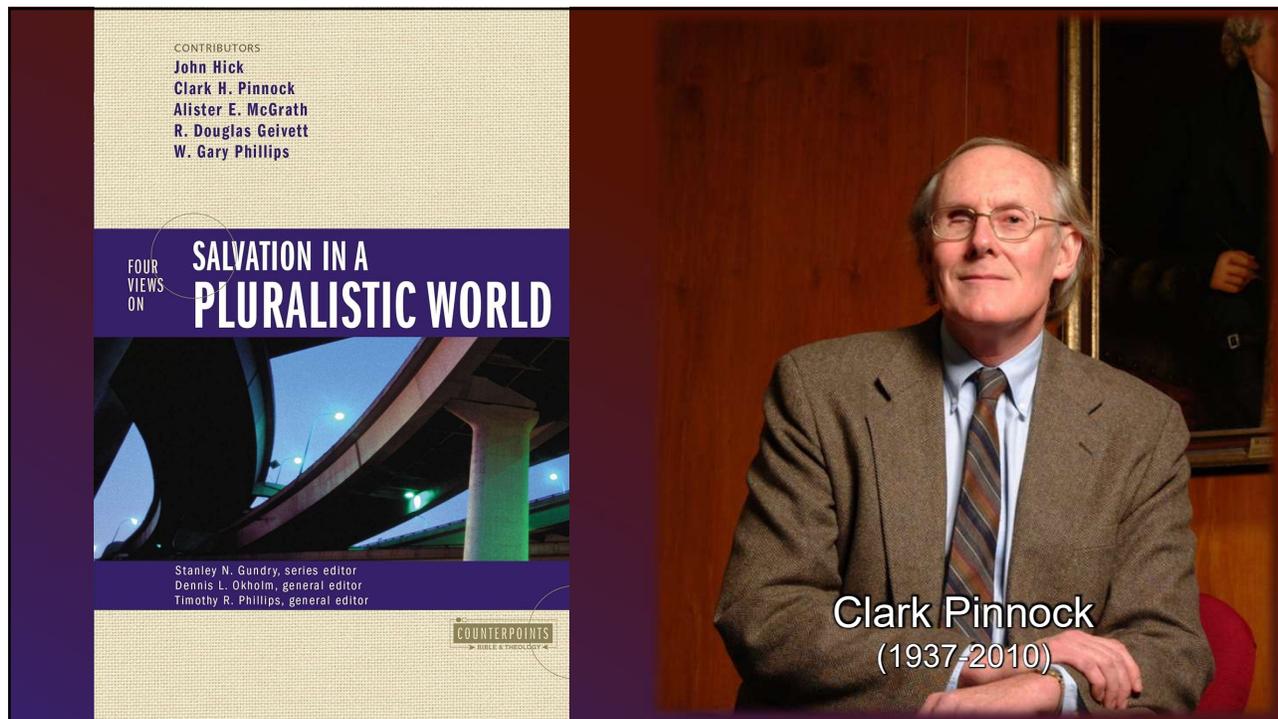
["A Pluralistic View," in Dennis L. Okholm and Timothy R. Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 45]



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)





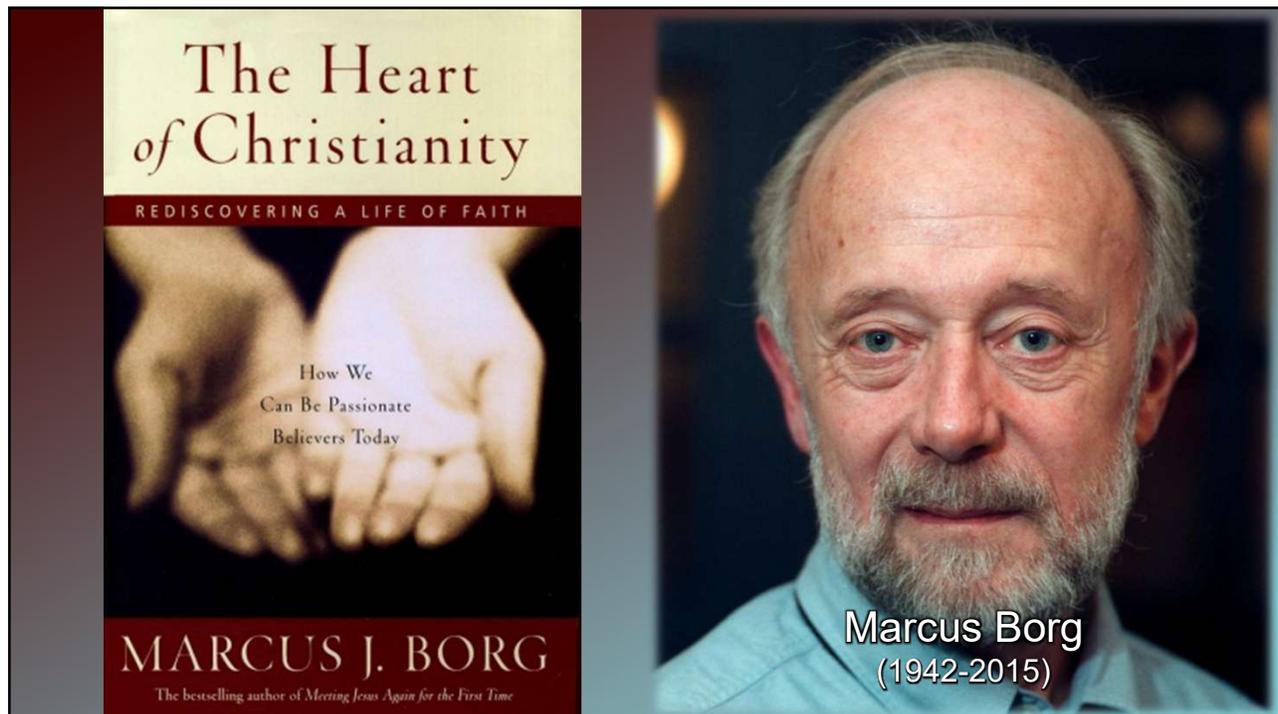
Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church

"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, accessed 02/07/25) as cited in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference-Librerie Editrice Vaticana, 1964), §847, p. 224]

∞ Pluralism ∞

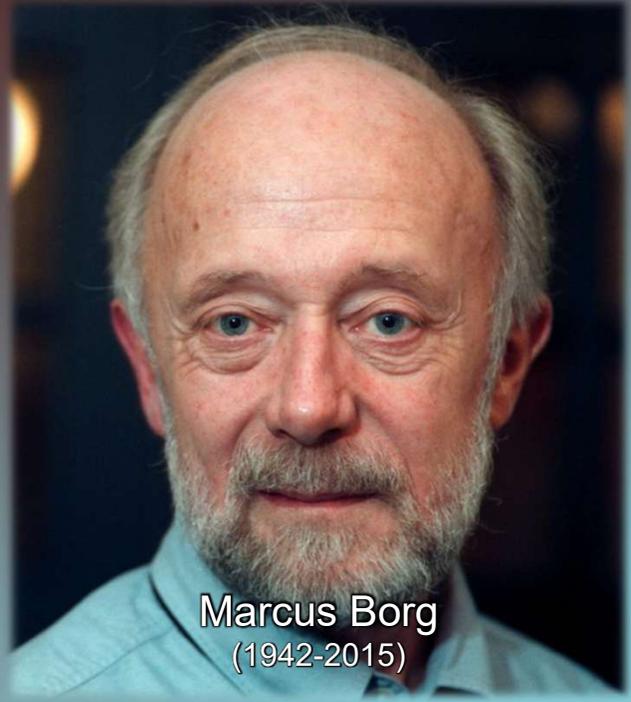
All religions can lead to God. Salvation is not necessarily based on Jesus Christ. For some, Pluralism is distinguished from Universalism in that Pluralism says that any religion can save but not necessarily all will be actually saved.



"[Religions] all affirm a way, a path; and the paths are all recognizable variants of the same path, the same way. ...

The Way of the cross, the way of Lao Tzu, the way of the Buddha, the way of Islam, and the way of Judaism all speak of the same path: the path of dying to an old identity and way of being and being born into a new identity and way of being. All refer to the same transformation of the self."

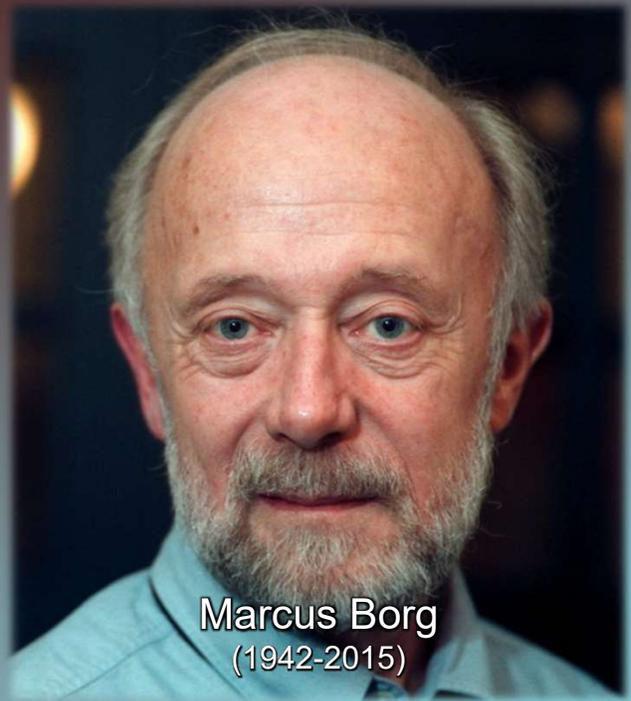
[The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2003), 216]



Marcus Borg
(1942-2015)

"The biblical understandings of salvation are focused on this world, not the next. Though salvation is central to the Bible, heaven as life after death is not. ... So what about an afterlife? ... To speak very personally, I don't have a clue about what happens after death. ... I see no way of deciding among these different ways of imagining what lies beyond death."

[The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2003), 216]

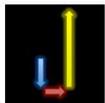


Marcus Borg
(1942-2015)

Annihilationism

Not everyone will be saved, but no one will suffer eternal damnation in hell.

Instead, all those who die unsaved will be annihilated and will cease to exist.



Reforming Hell

God's justice is reforming all things—even hell—to the way He intended—wholeheartedly delighting in Him together forever—

Shalom!

[7 Myths About Universalism](#)
[Promoting Greater Hope](#)
[Key Proponents](#)
[Book Reviews](#)
[Engaging People](#)
[Q&R](#)
[About](#)

Dr Robin Parry

Dr Robin Parry's book, *The Evangelical Universalist*, was what finally convinced me that Christian Universalism was more biblical than the alternatives—admittedly I'd already read Keith DeRose's excellent introduction, *Universalism and the Bible*, and Tom Talbott's, *The Inescapable Love of God* so I wasn't entirely ignorant of the biblical case.

He wrote the most popular article on my website, *7 Myths About Universalism*. He contributed a chapter to Zondervan's important, *Four Views on Hell*, and has been interviewed about Christian Universalism countless times and is the most sort after international speaker on the topic.

Movies

[Hellbound?](#)

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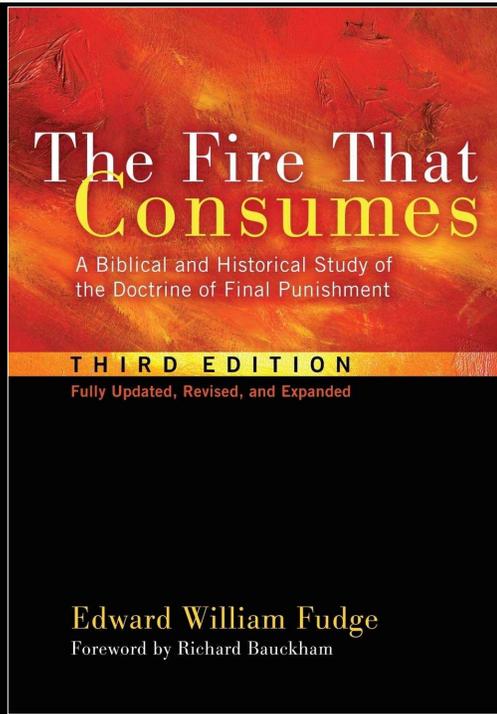
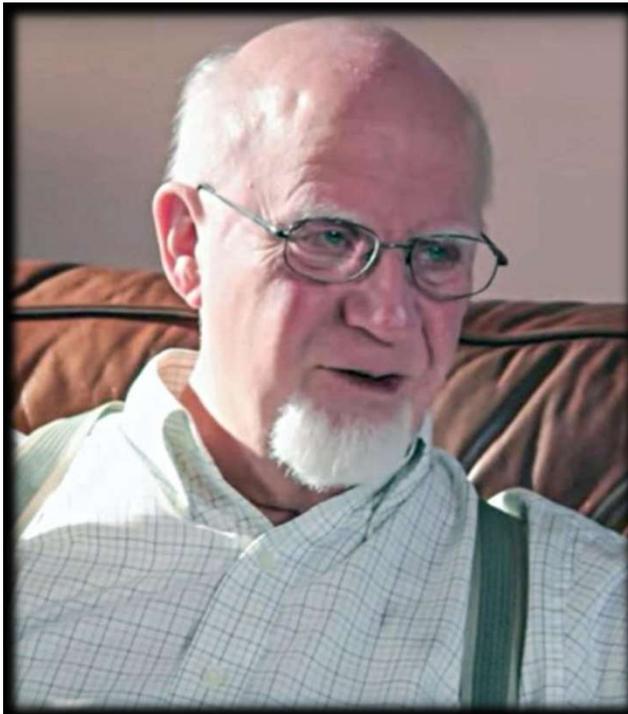
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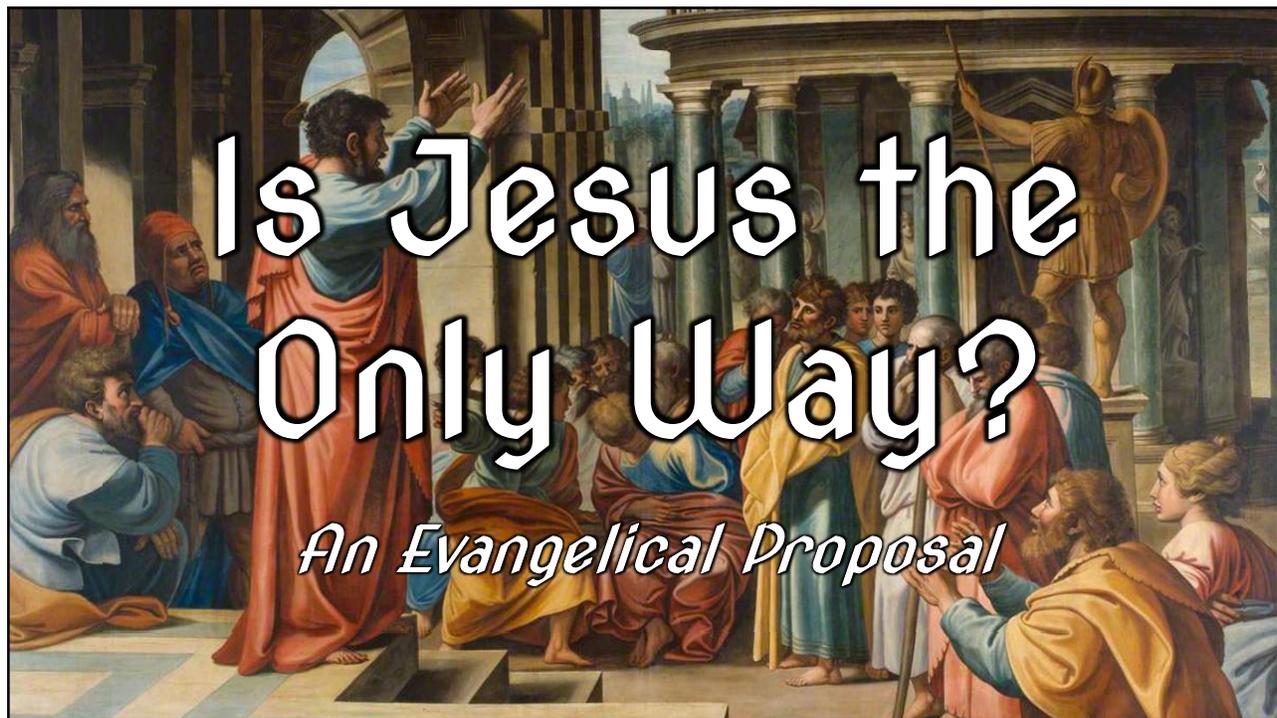
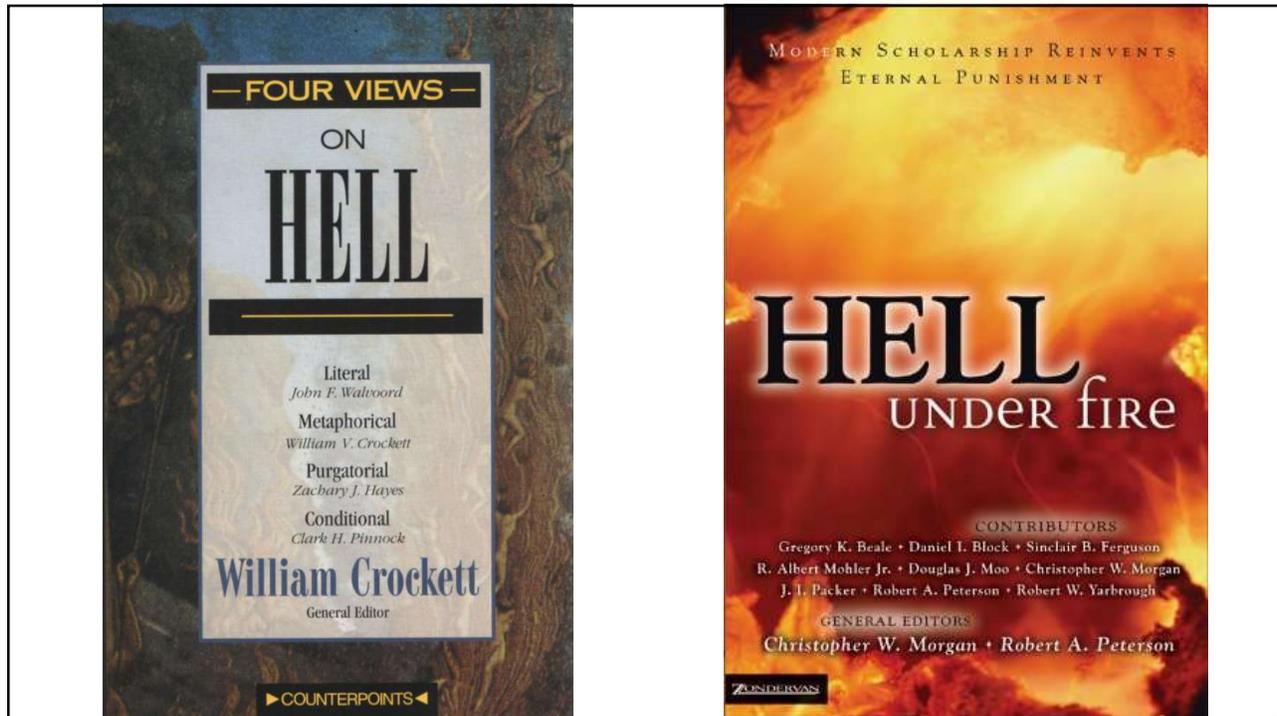
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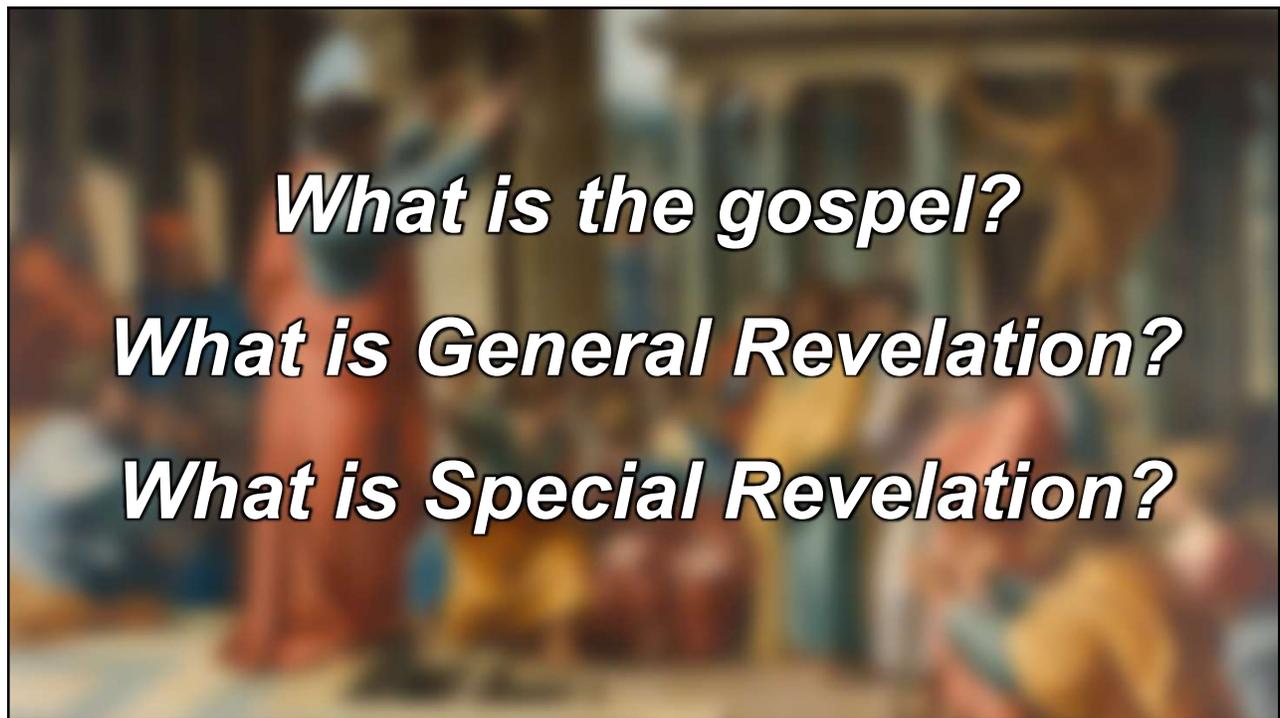
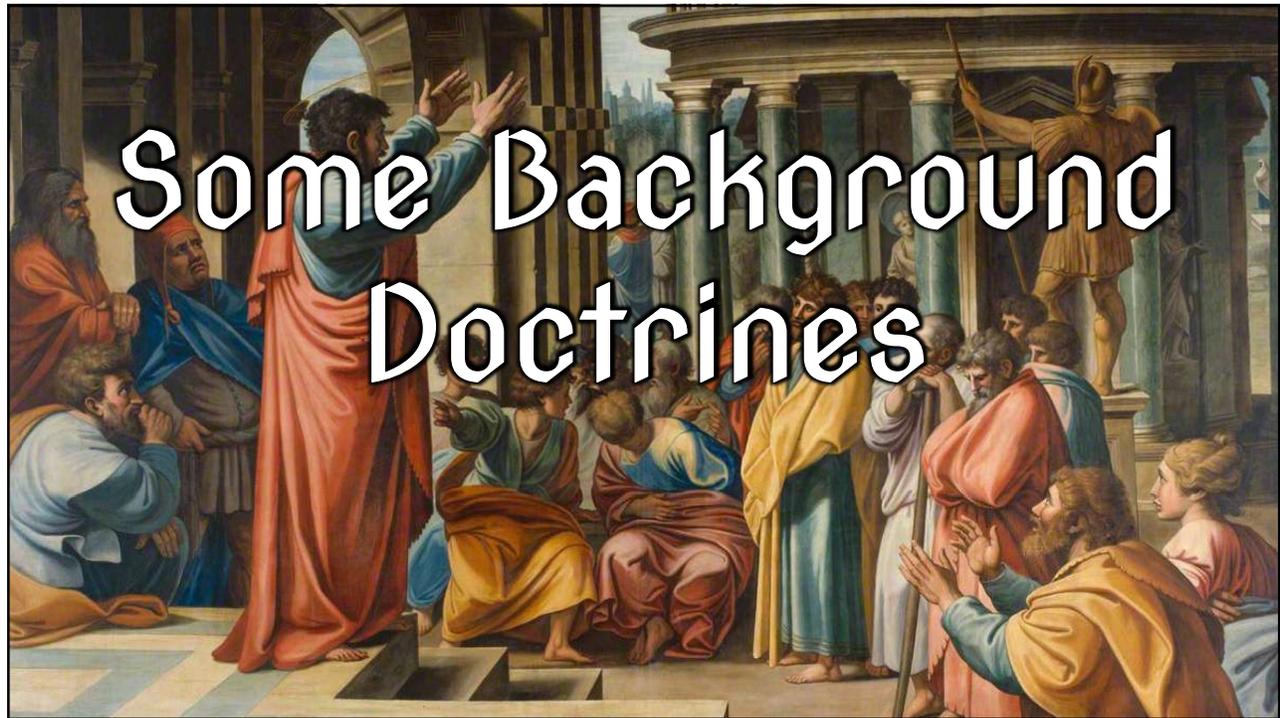
GAUNTLET THROWN DOWN BY EVANGELICAL UNIVERSALISTS—MOORE COLLEGE

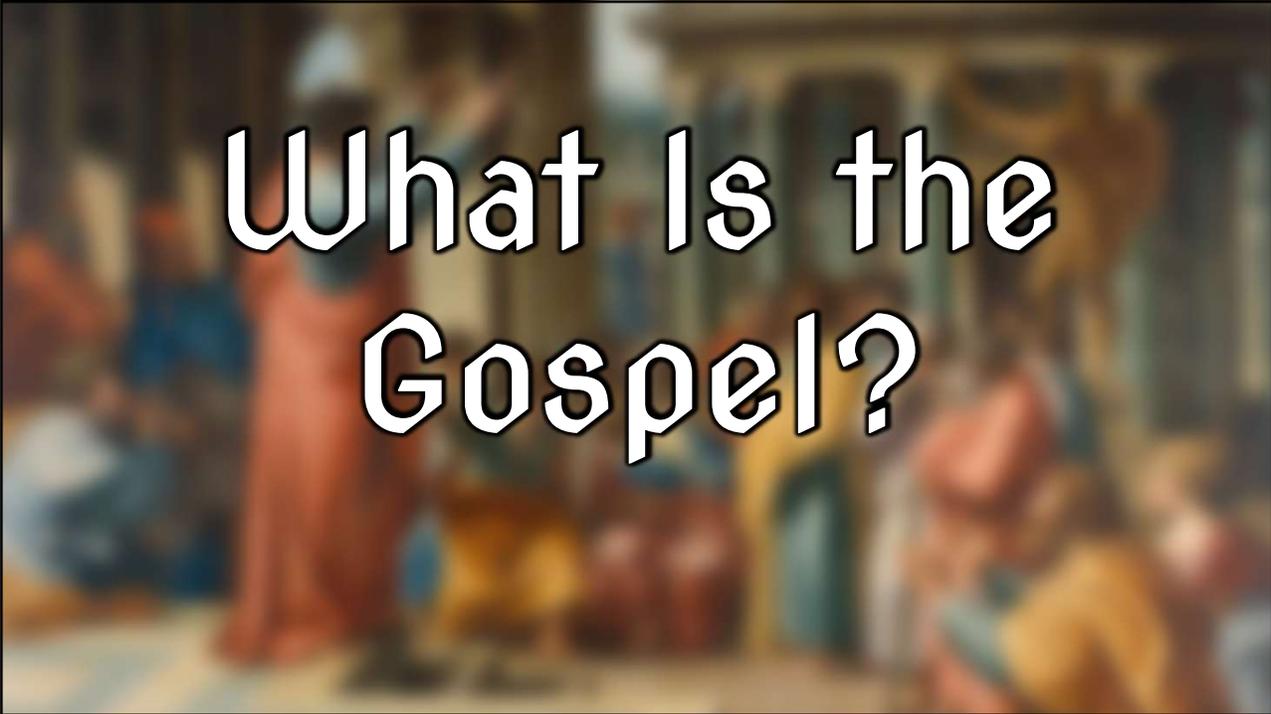
The Gauntlet Thrown...

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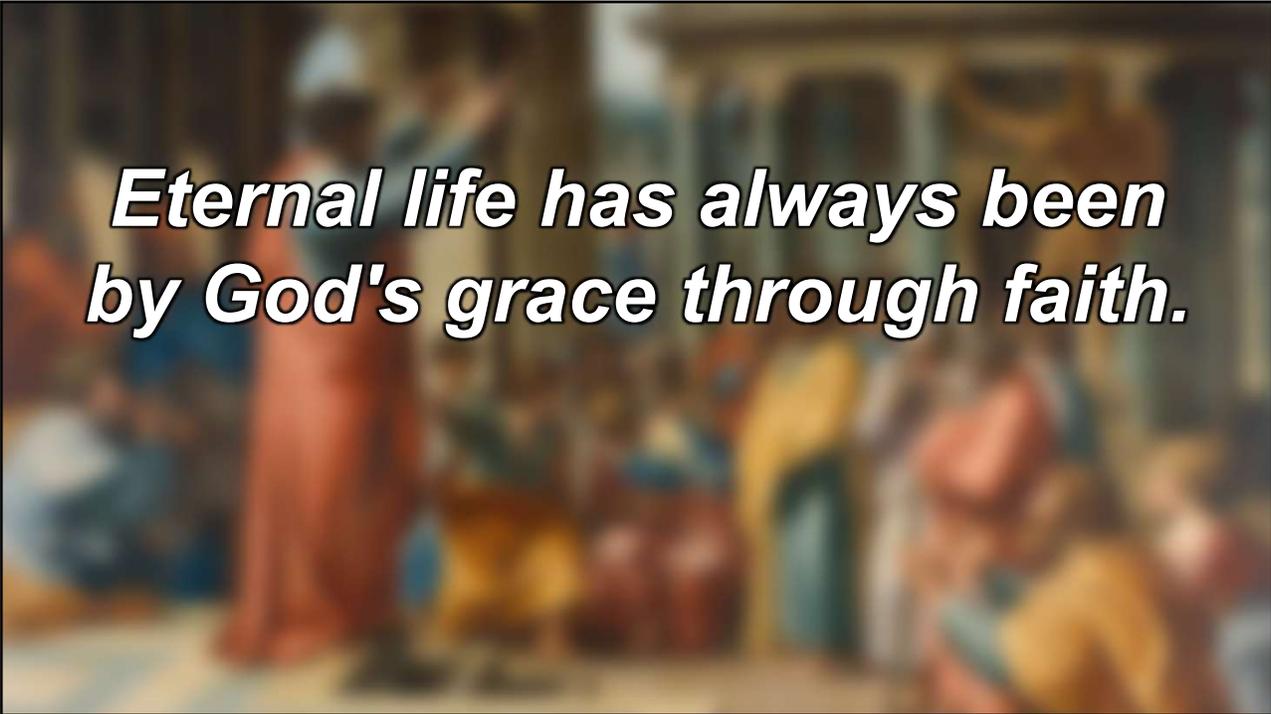








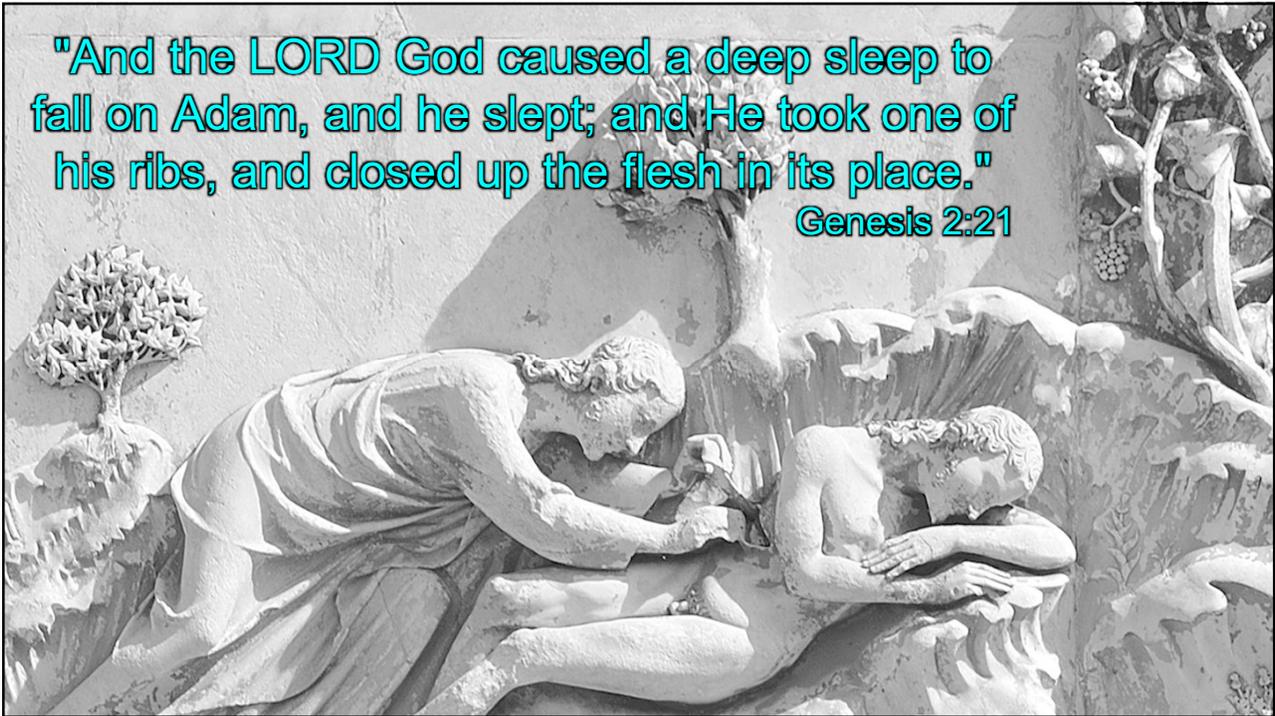
What Is the Gospel?



Eternal life has always been by God's grace through faith.

"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place."

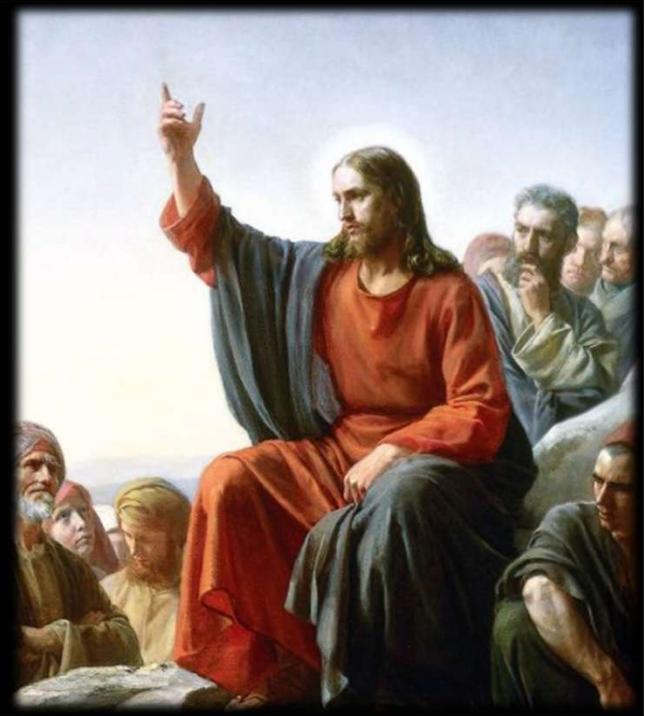
Genesis 2:21



***Because of our sin, we need
the sacrifice of the Lord
Jesus for our salvation.***

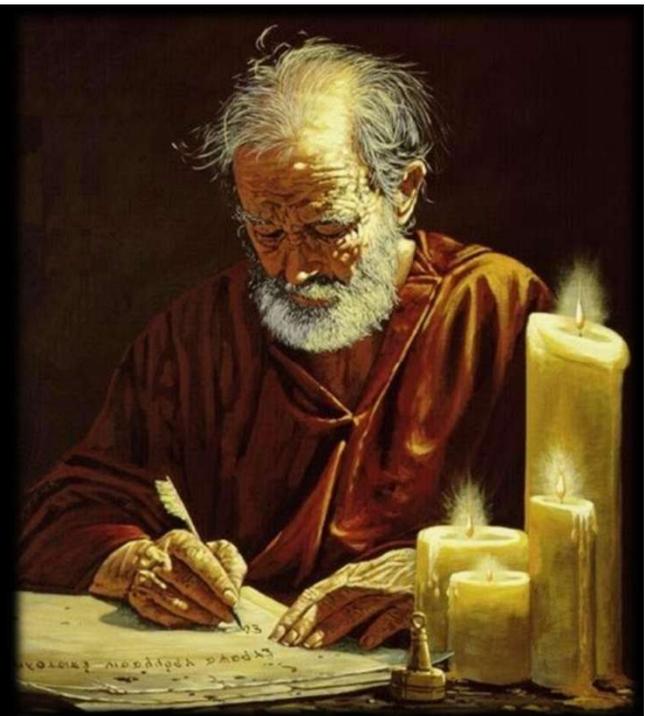
*Jesus said to him, I
am the way, the
truth, and the life. No
one comes to the
Father except
through Me.*

John 14:6



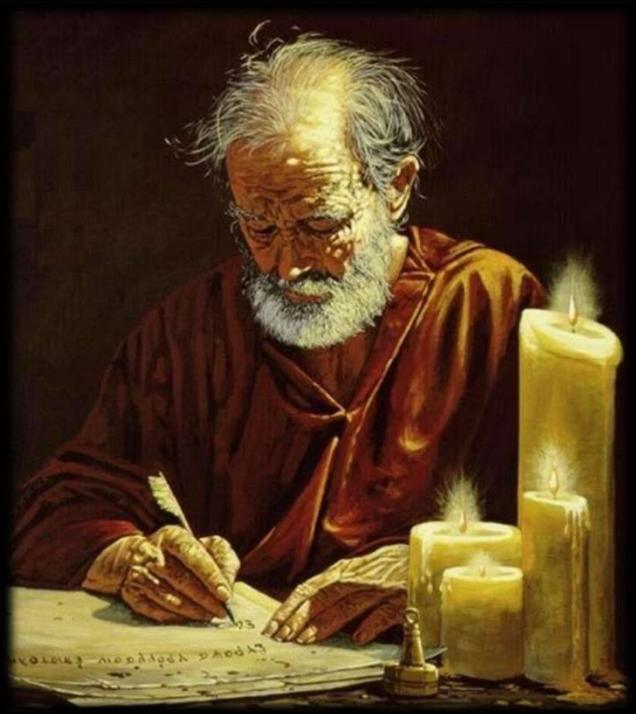
*To Him all the
prophets witness that,
through His name,
whoever believes in
Him will receive
remission of sins.*

Acts 10:43



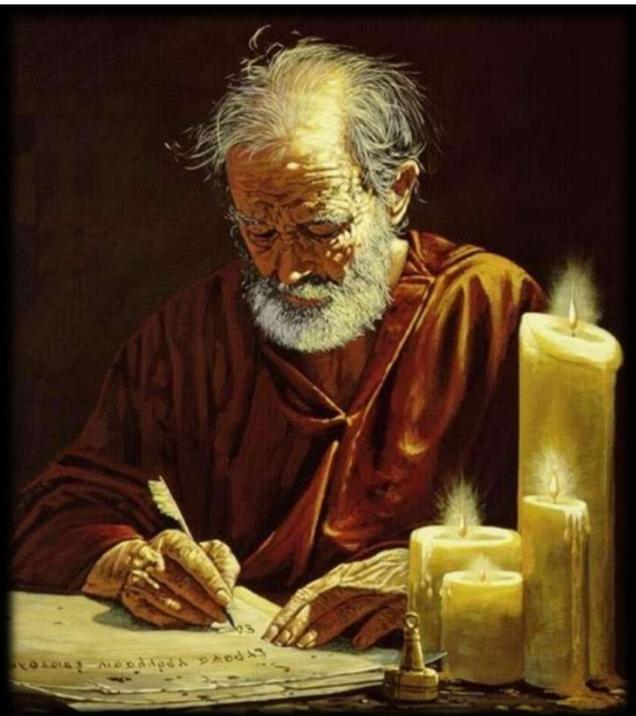
*For He made Him
who knew no sin
to be sin for us,
that we might become the
righteousness of God in
Him.*

2 Corinthians 5:21



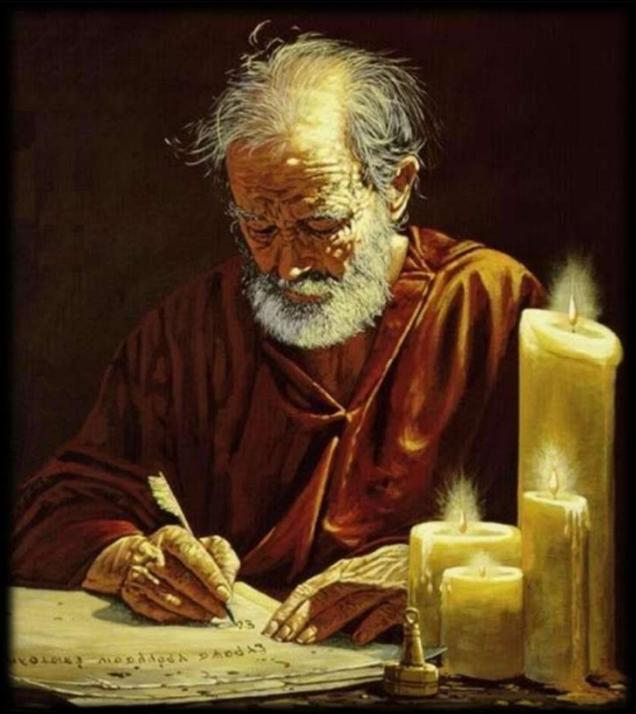
*Therefore let it be known to you,
brethren, that through this Man
is preached to you
the forgiveness of sins;
and by Him everyone who
believes is justified from all
things from which you could not
be justified by the law of Moses.*

Acts 13:38-39



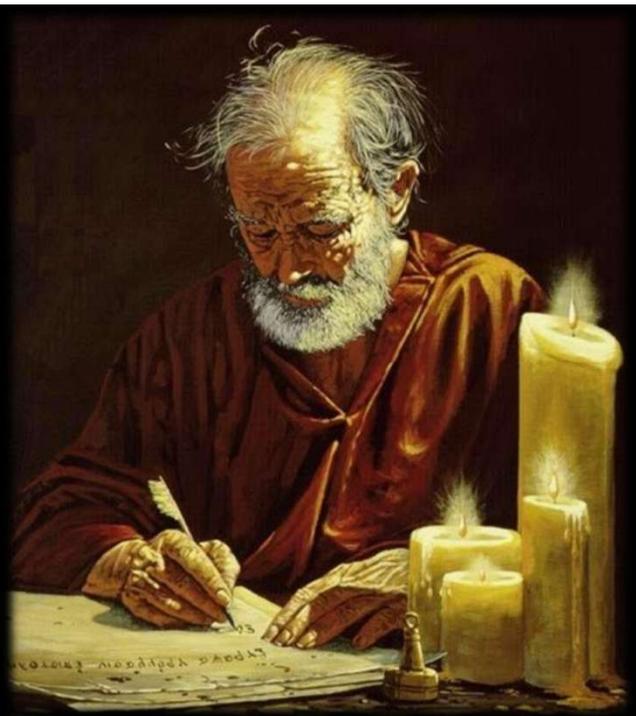
*For by grace you have
been saved through
faith, and that
not of yourselves;
it is the gift of God,
not of works,
lest anyone should boast.*

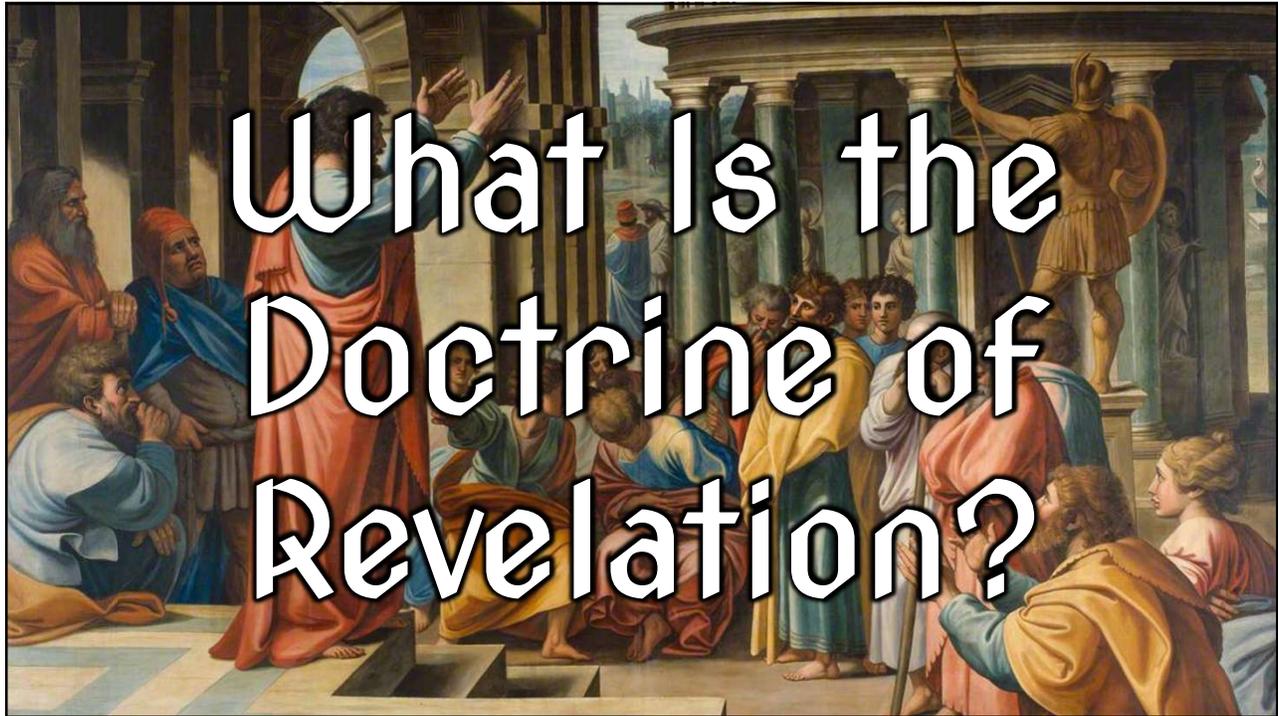
Ephesians 2:8-9



*Now to him who works, the
wages are not counted as
grace but as debt. But to
him who does not work but
believes on Him who
justifies the ungodly, his
faith is accounted for
righteousness,*

Romans 4:4-5





Revelation is God making known to mankind His divine person and divine truths that would otherwise be unknown. It means "to unveil."



How Do Revelation and Inspiration Differ?

Revelation

God making known to mankind His divine Person and divine truths that would otherwise be unknown

Giving of the truth

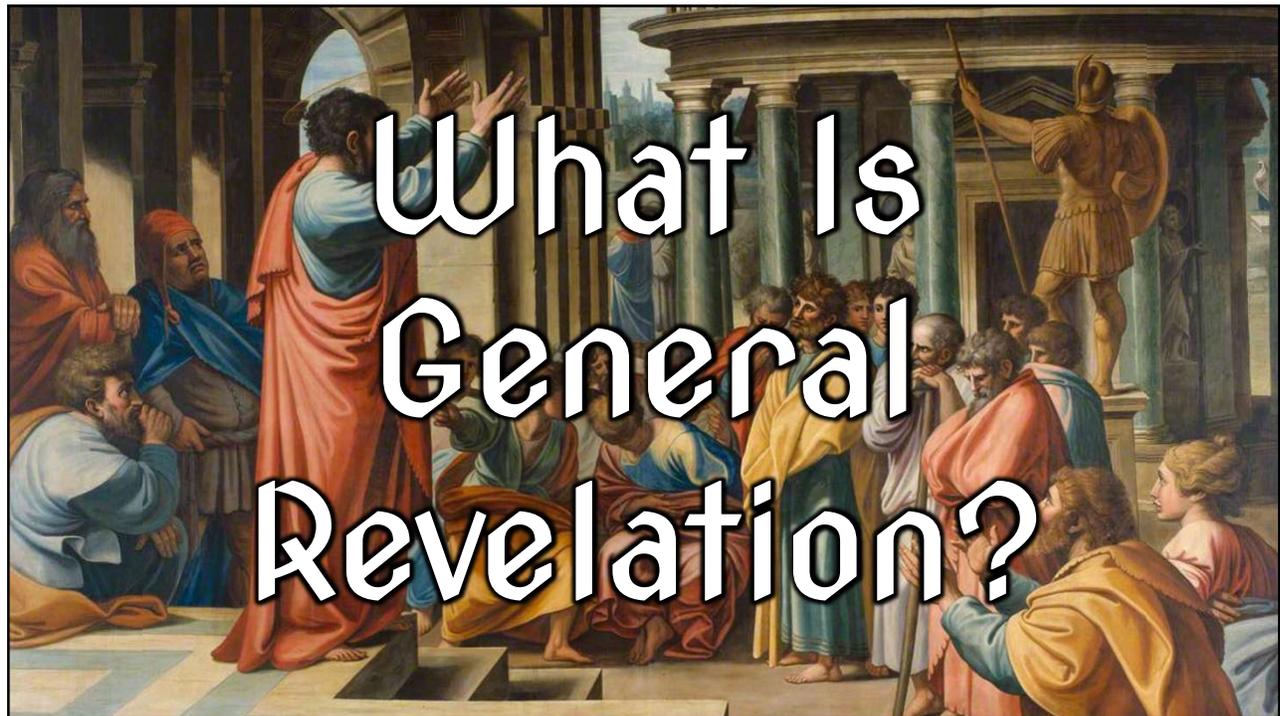
Inspiration

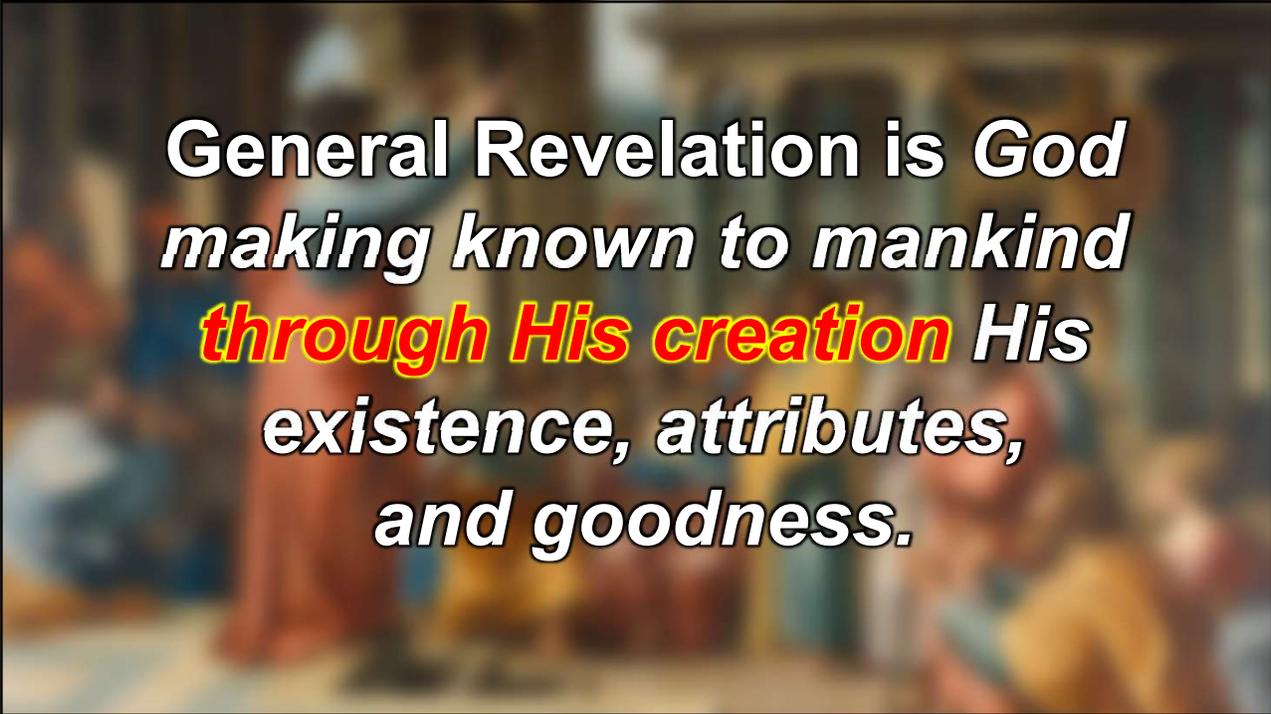
God transferring to mankind His divine Person and divine truths through human agency into written language form for mankind to understand

Recording of the truth

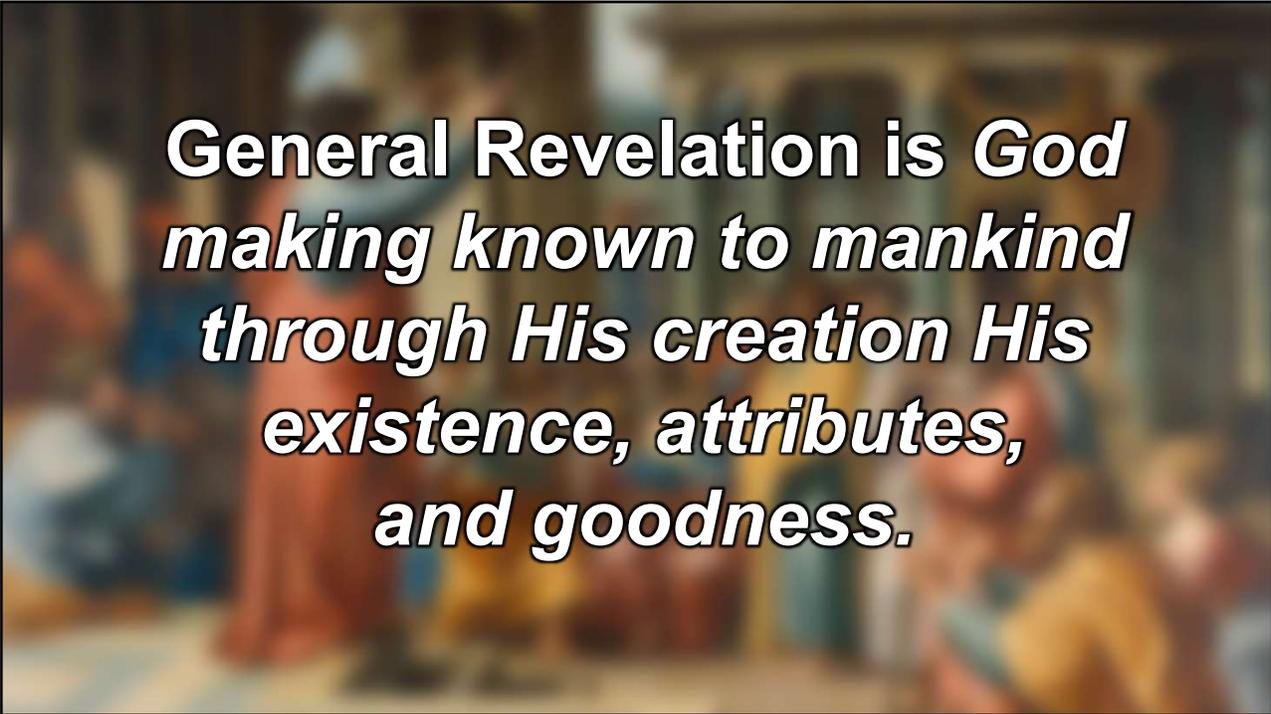
(from Earl D. Radmacher "Bibliology and the Doctrine of Man" series)

The Theological Doctrines of General and Special Revelation

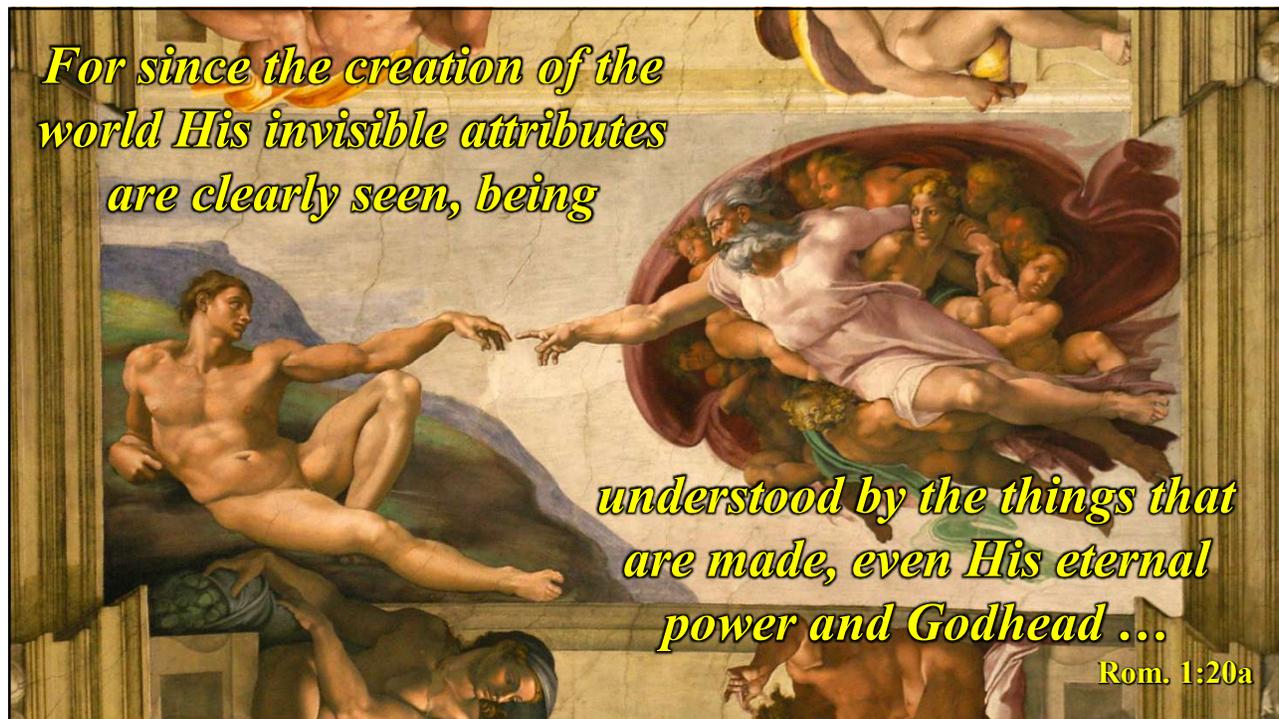




**General Revelation is God
making known to mankind
through His creation His
existence, attributes,
and goodness.**



**General Revelation is God
making known to mankind
through His creation His
existence, attributes,
and goodness.**



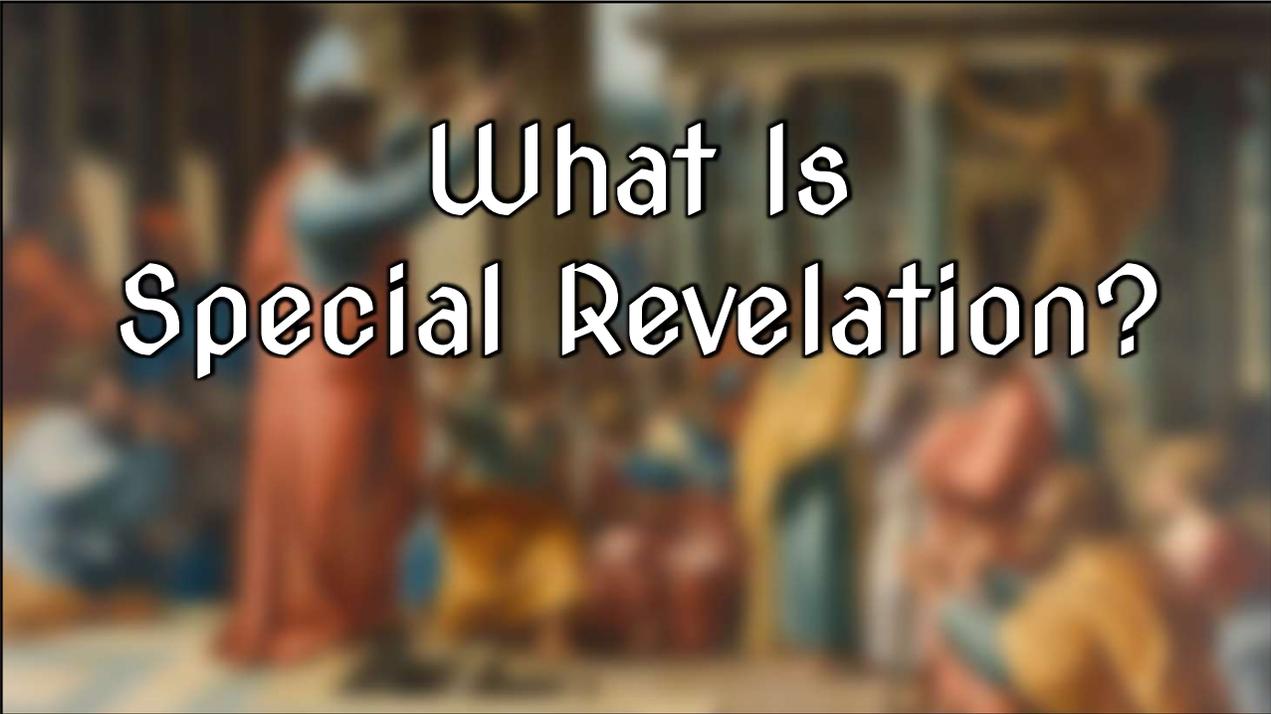
What Does General
Revelation Tell Us
About God?

By observing the wonders of God's creation, people have been able to come to a basic and relatively sound understanding of God's existence and attributes.

But as more toxic philosophical voices have fogged the conversation throughout history, the need has arisen to appeal to deeper issues in philosophy to demonstrate God's existence and attributes "through the things that are made" (Rom. 1:20).



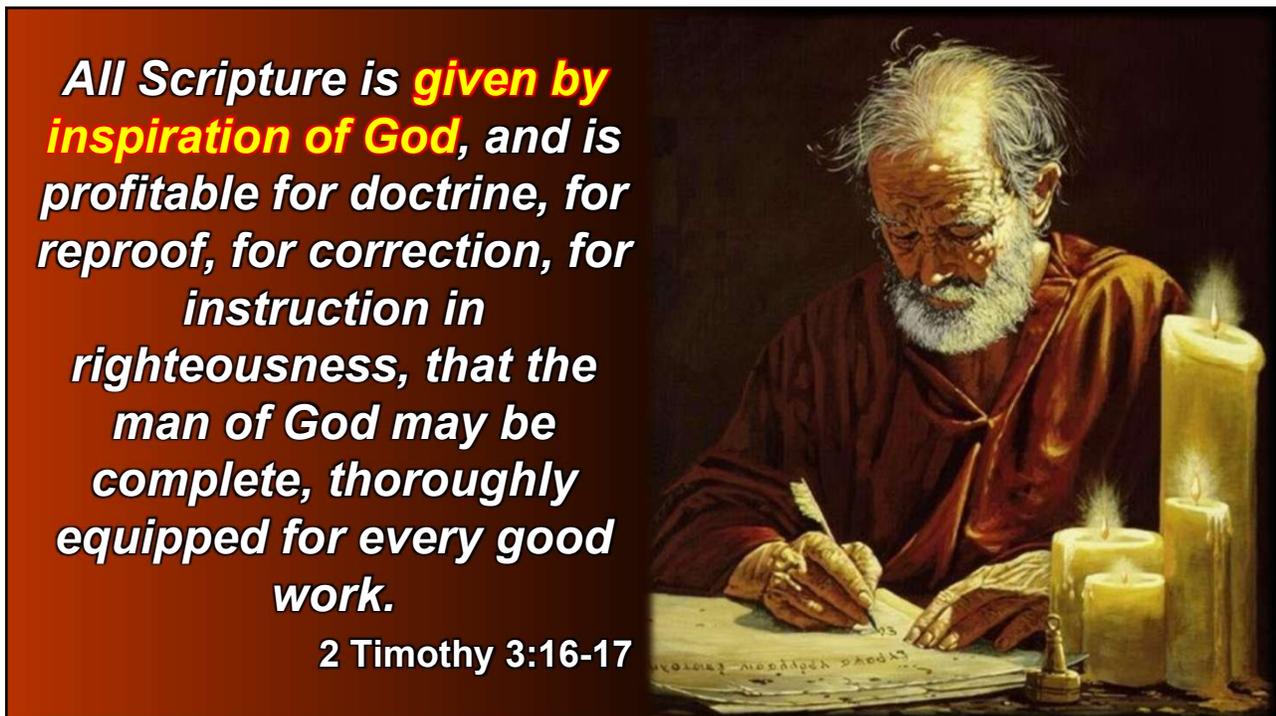
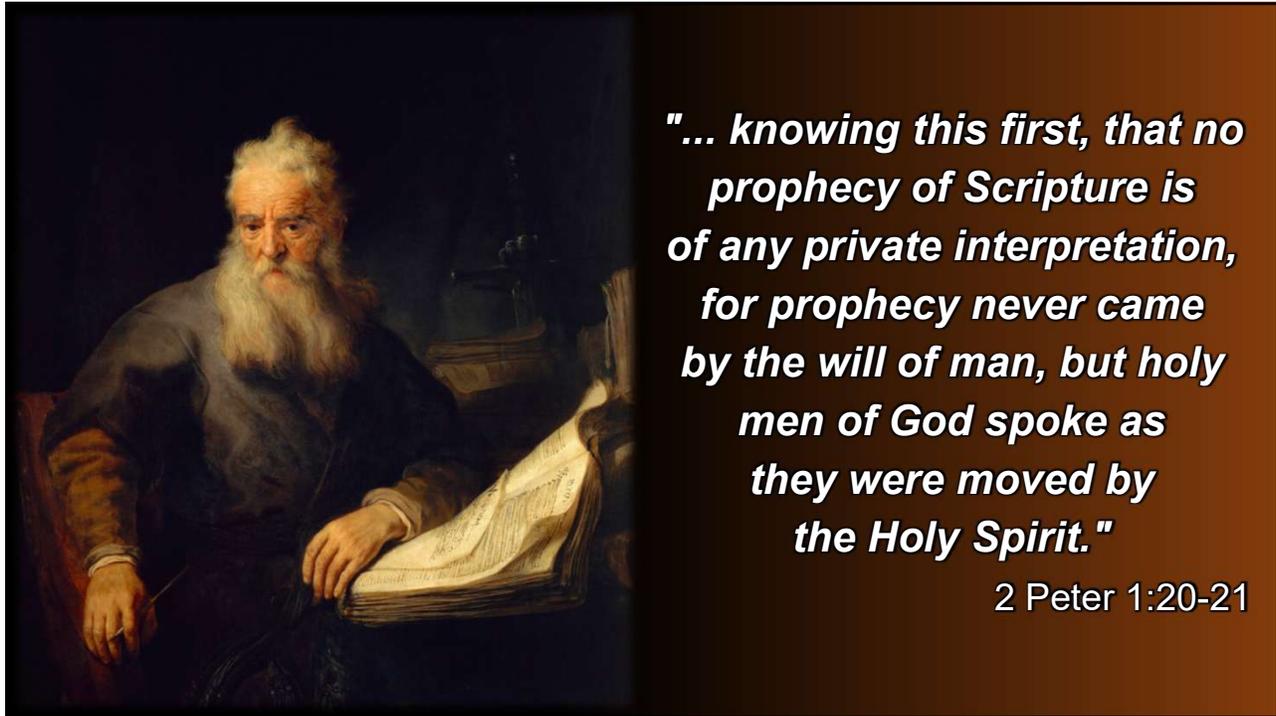
The application of sound reason in understanding God's revelation of Himself through creation gives rise to Natural Theology.



What Is
Special Revelation?

Special Revelation is God making known to mankind through His prophets, apostles, and His Son His nature and will that could not necessarily be known through General Revelation.





All Scripture is **given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

theopneustos
(θεόπνευστος) = God breathed

theos (θεός) = God

πνεῶ, pneuma (πνέω, πνεῦμα) = I breathe, breath, spirit, Spirit

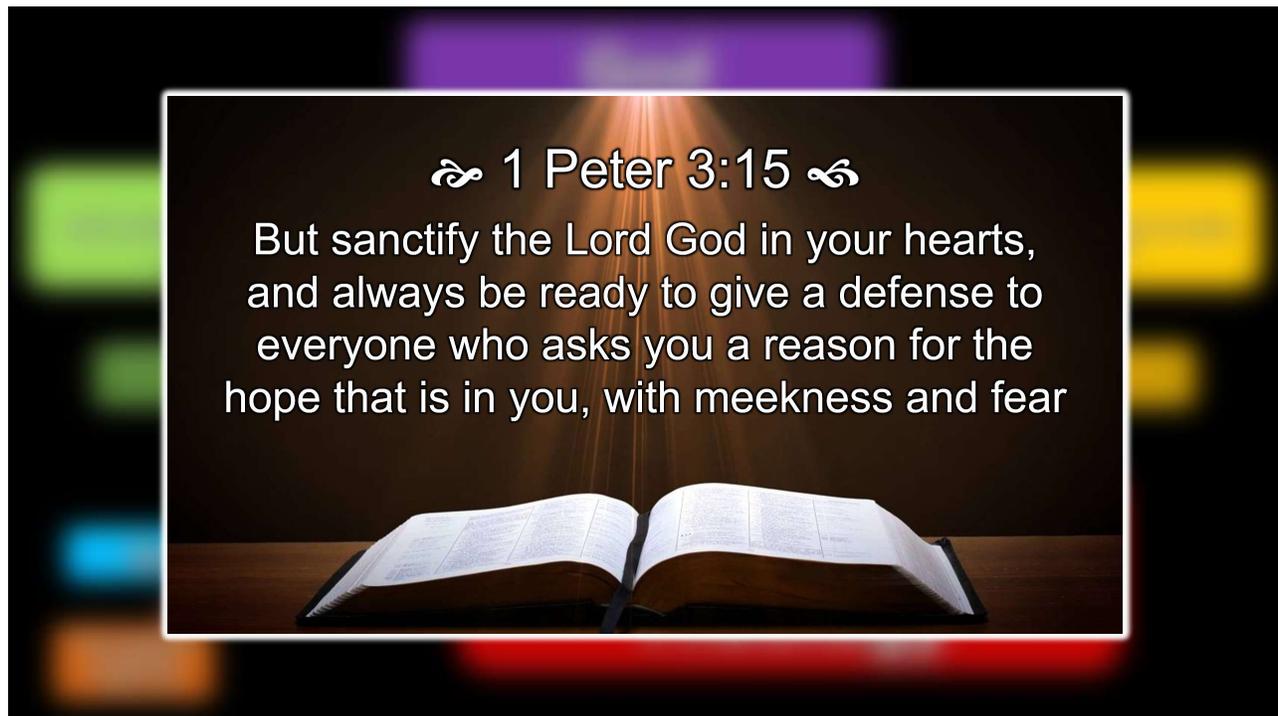
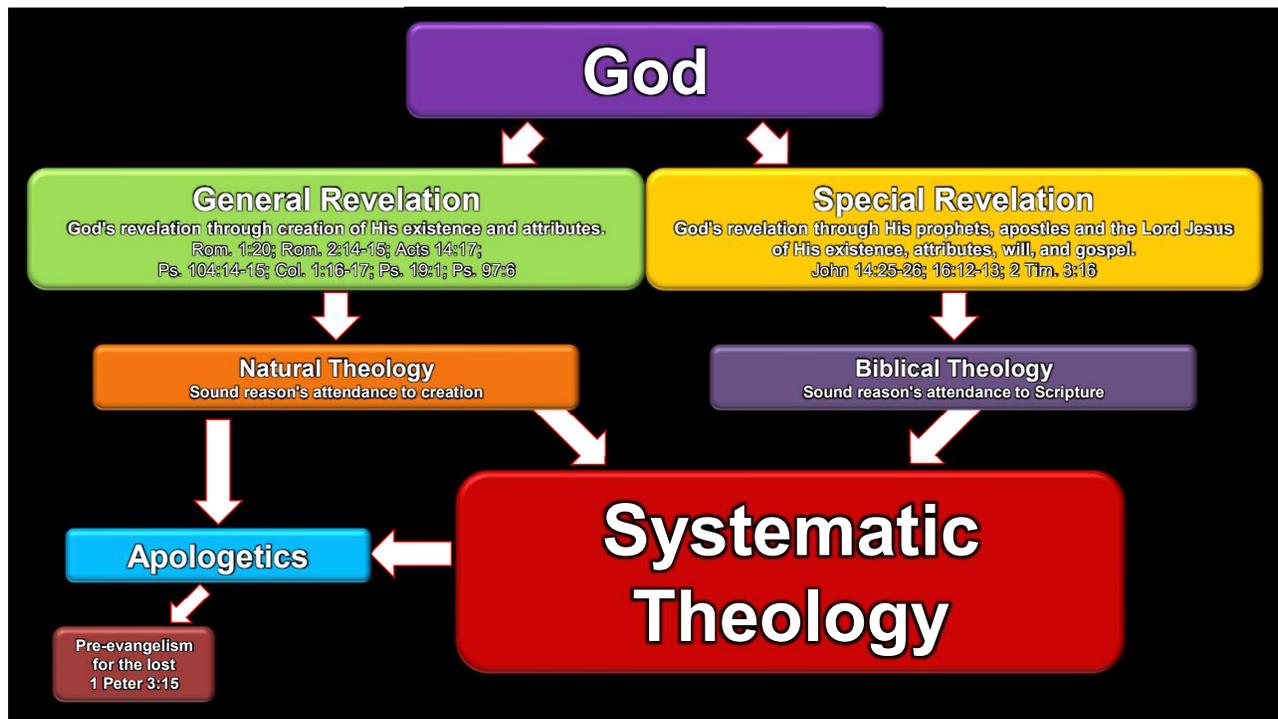
All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

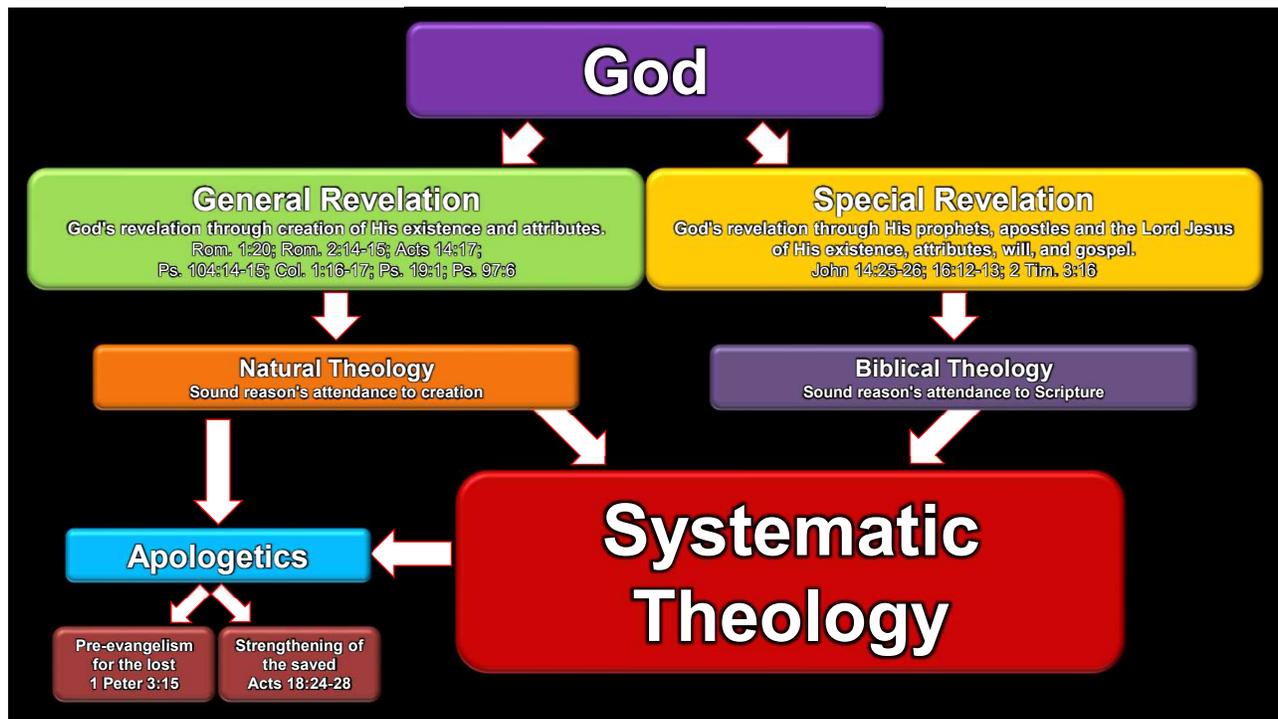
2 Timothy 3:16-17

RIGHTEOUSNESS



SIN

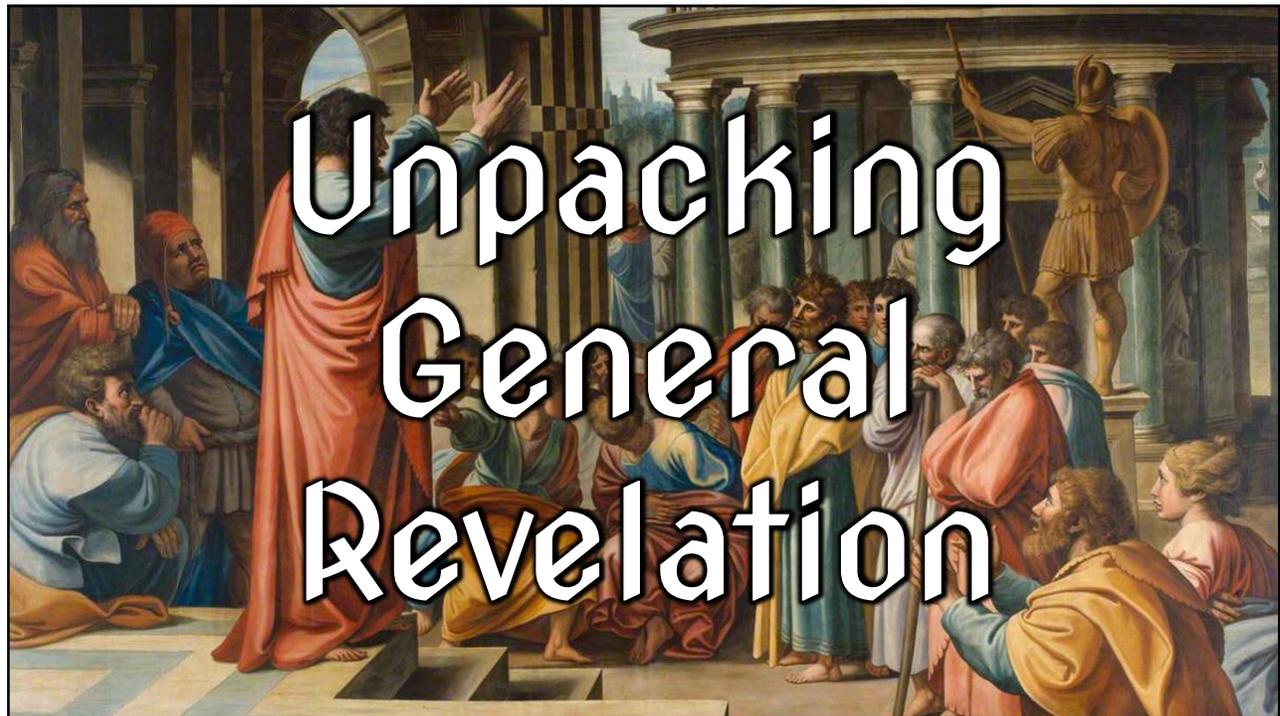
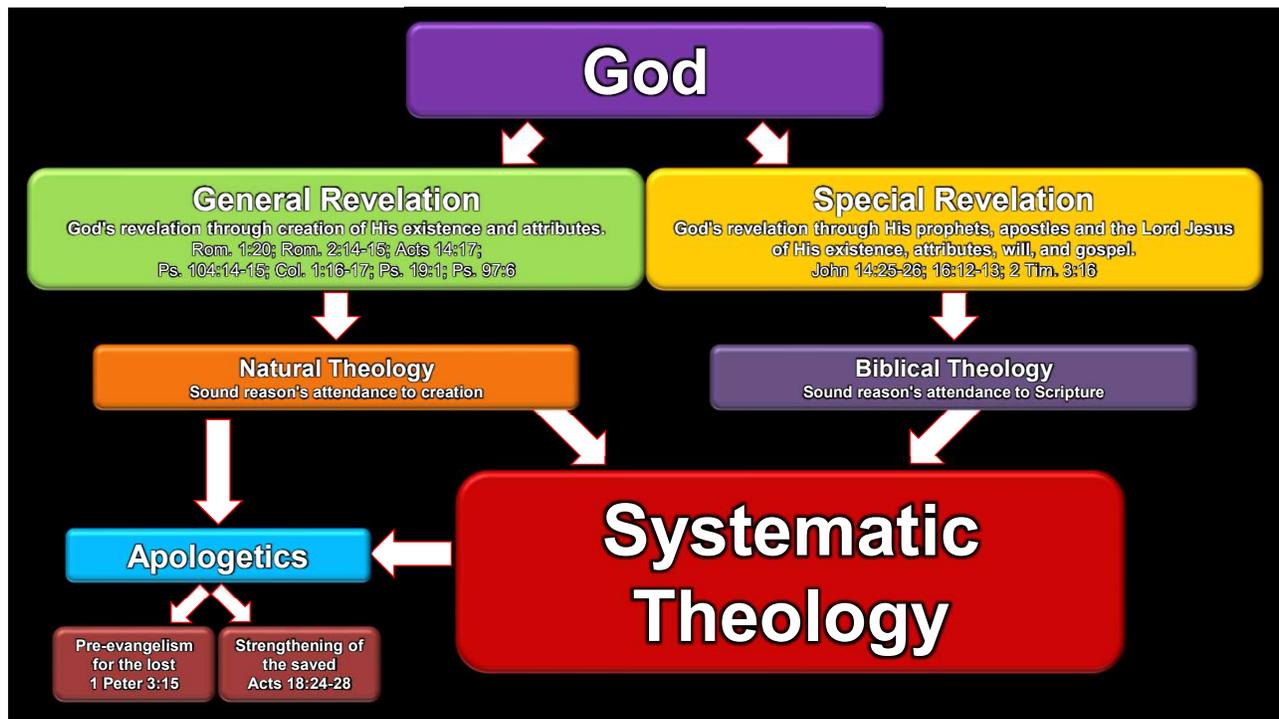




Acts 18:24, 27-28

Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. ... {27} And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; {28} for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.







The Nature of General Revelation

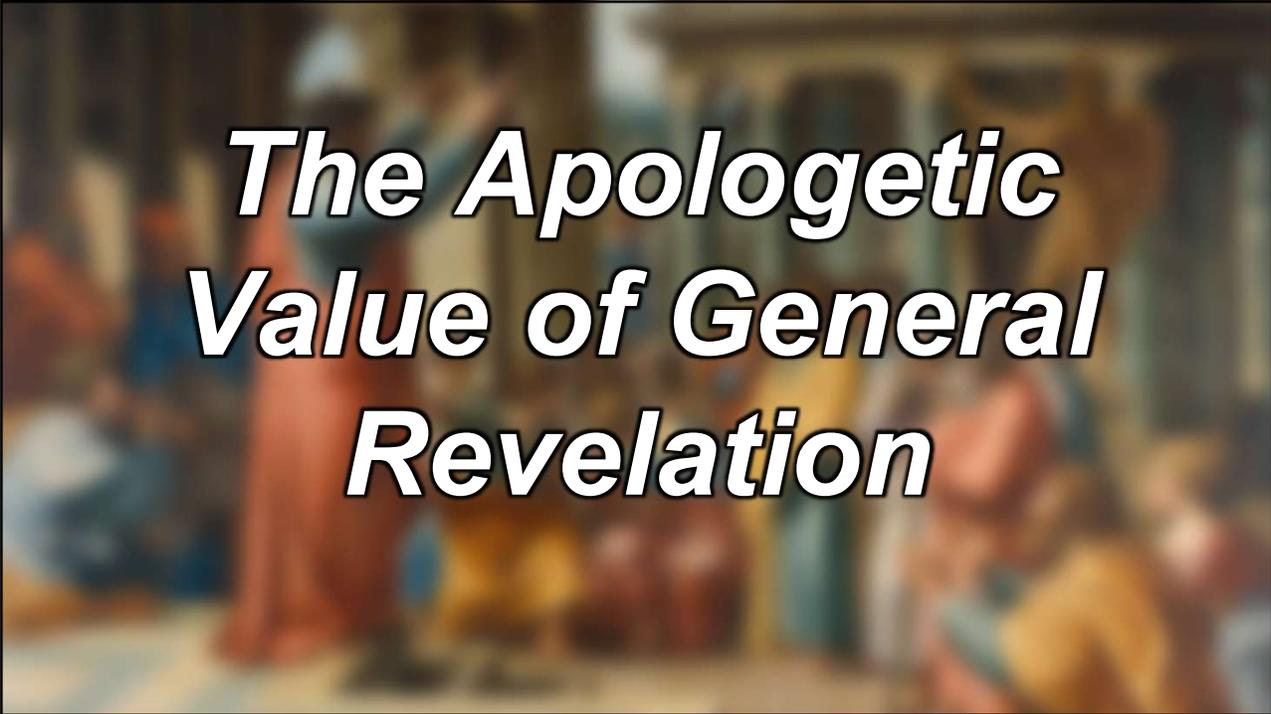
- 1. It is based on the creation of both the material (sensible) and immaterial universe.**

2. It is addressed to human beings as intelligent creatures.

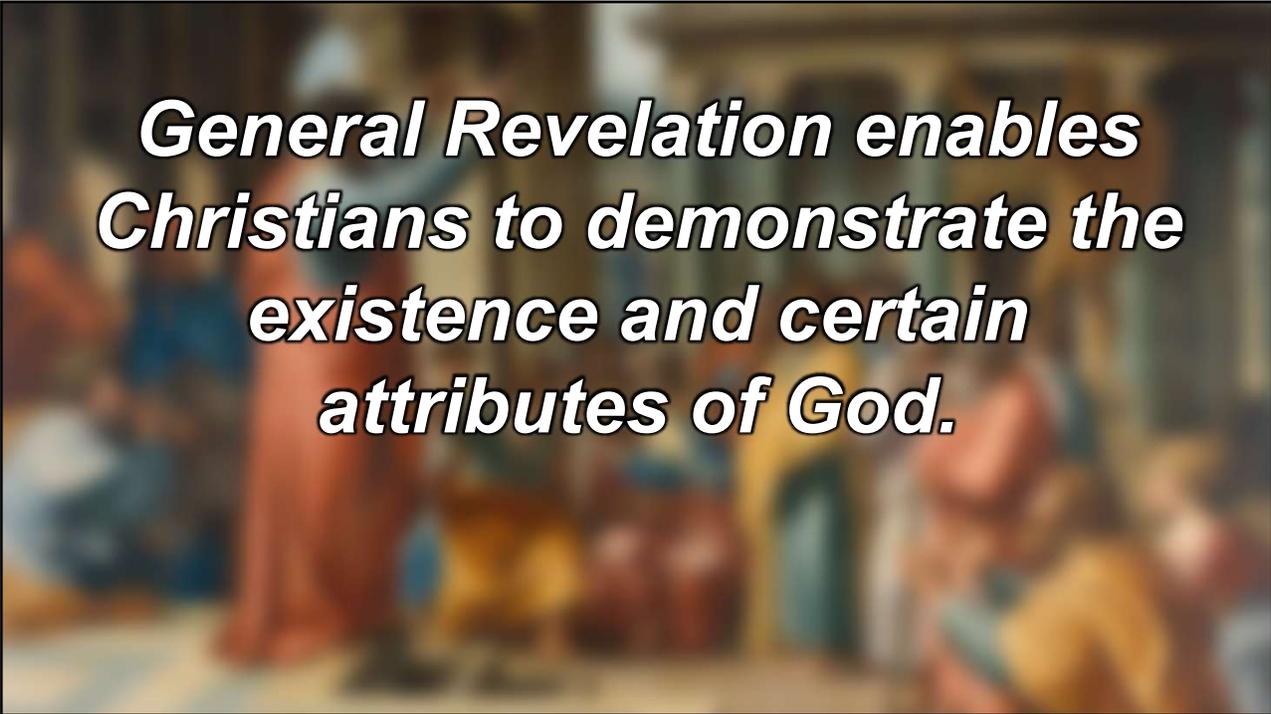
- ❖ *not necessarily addressed to human beings as regenerate*
- ❖ *in light of the ability of humans to have knowledge (which begins in senses and is completed in the intellect) of the creation*

3. It is accessible to all men.

- ❖ *No person has a more privileged access to the creation because of his geography (where he is).*
- ❖ *No person has a more privileged access to the creation because of his chronology (when he is).*



***The Apologetic
Value of General
Revelation***



***General Revelation enables
Christians to demonstrate the
existence and certain
attributes of God.***

We can appeal to aspects of reality that point to God that are knowable by any human by virtue of being human (senses and intellect).

What Is
Natural Theology?

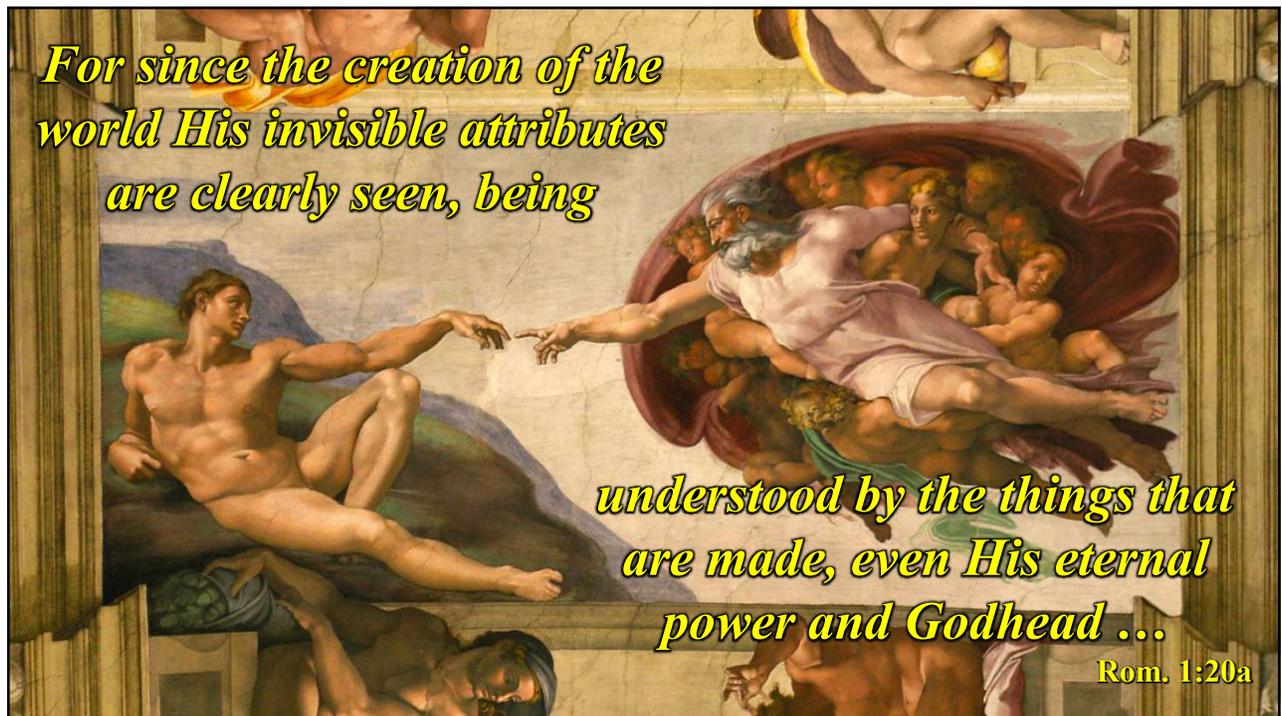
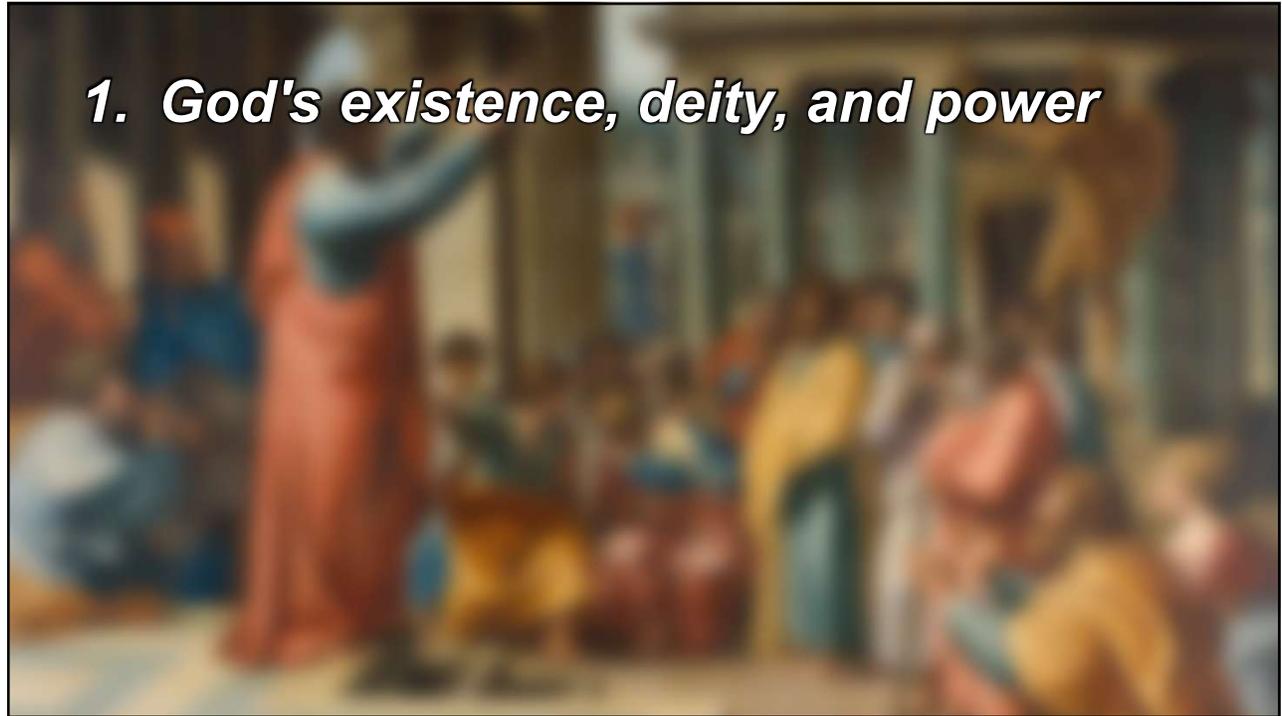
The truths knowable by sound reason through General Revelation constitute what is known as Natural Theology.

Natural theology is that body of knowledge about God's existence and nature that can be acquired by natural human reason as it attends itself to the sensible world (i.e., things encountered by the senses) around us.

What Does Natural Theology Tell Us About God?

Since Natural theology is a human effort, it should not be surprising that Christians might disagree as to the exact nature and content of Natural Theology.

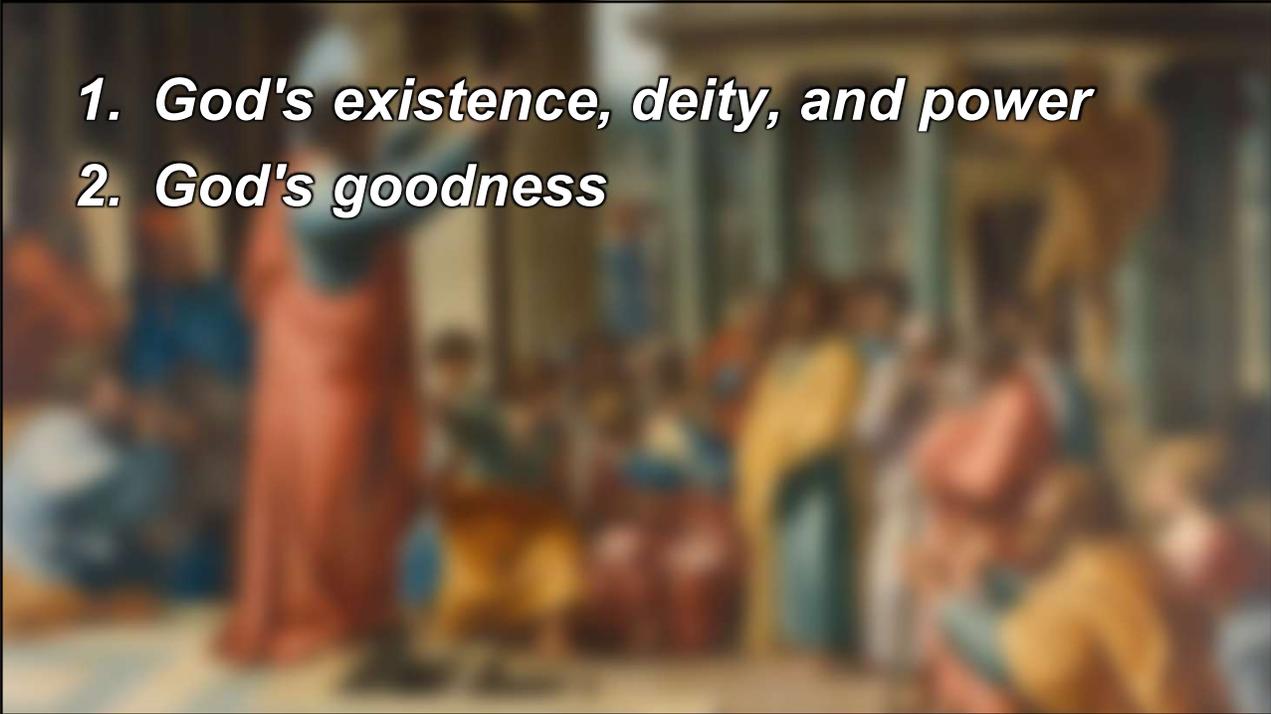
1. God's existence, deity, and power

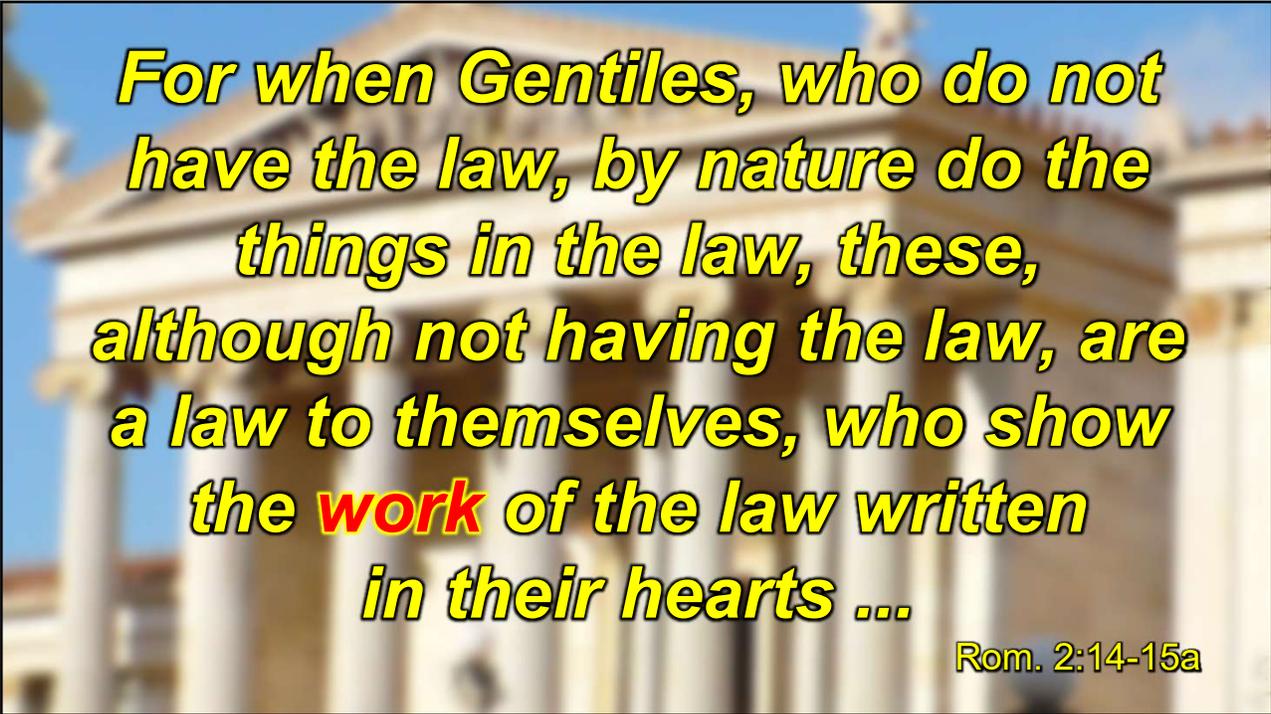


For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being

understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead ...

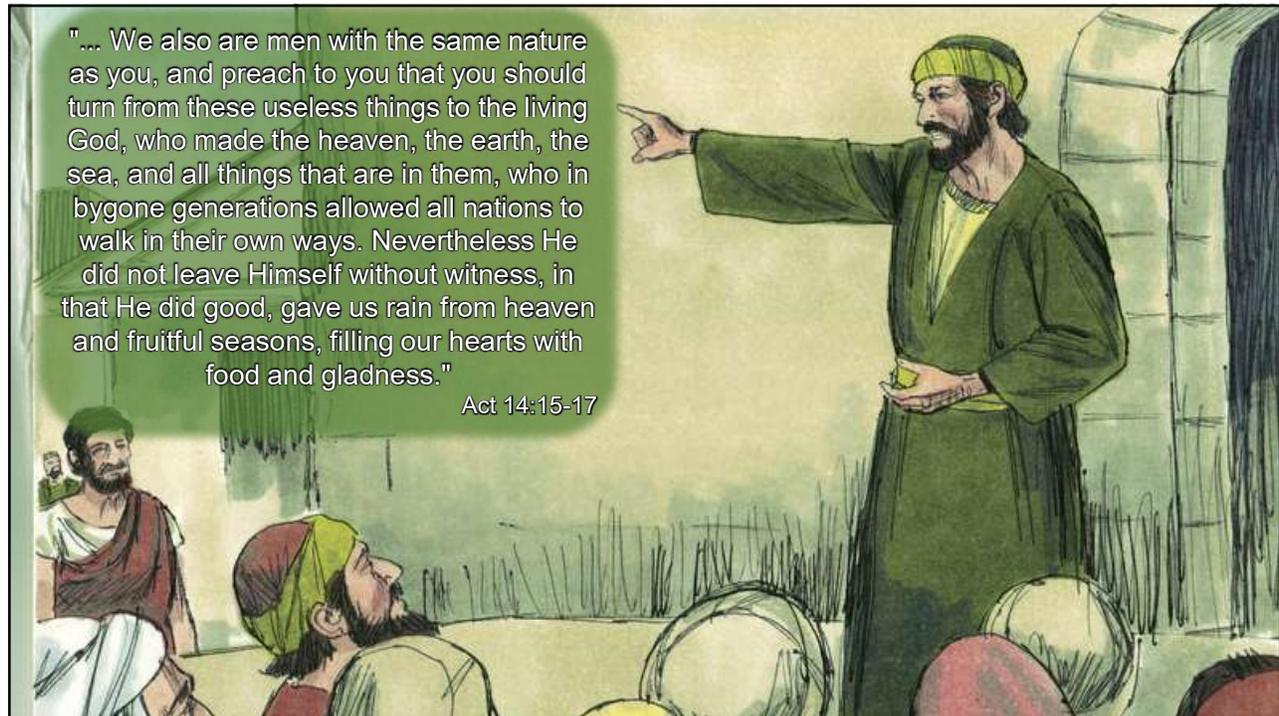
Rom. 1:20a

- 
1. *God's existence, deity, and power*
 2. *God's goodness*

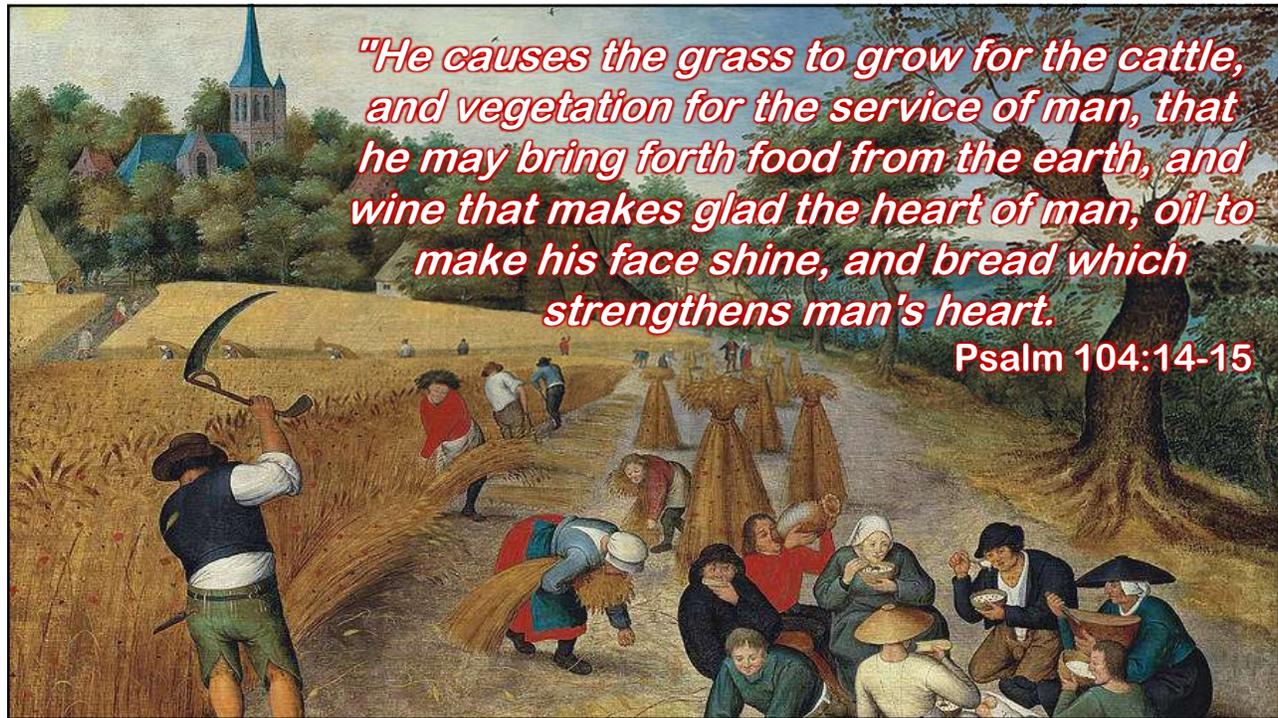


*For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the **work** of the law written in their hearts ...*

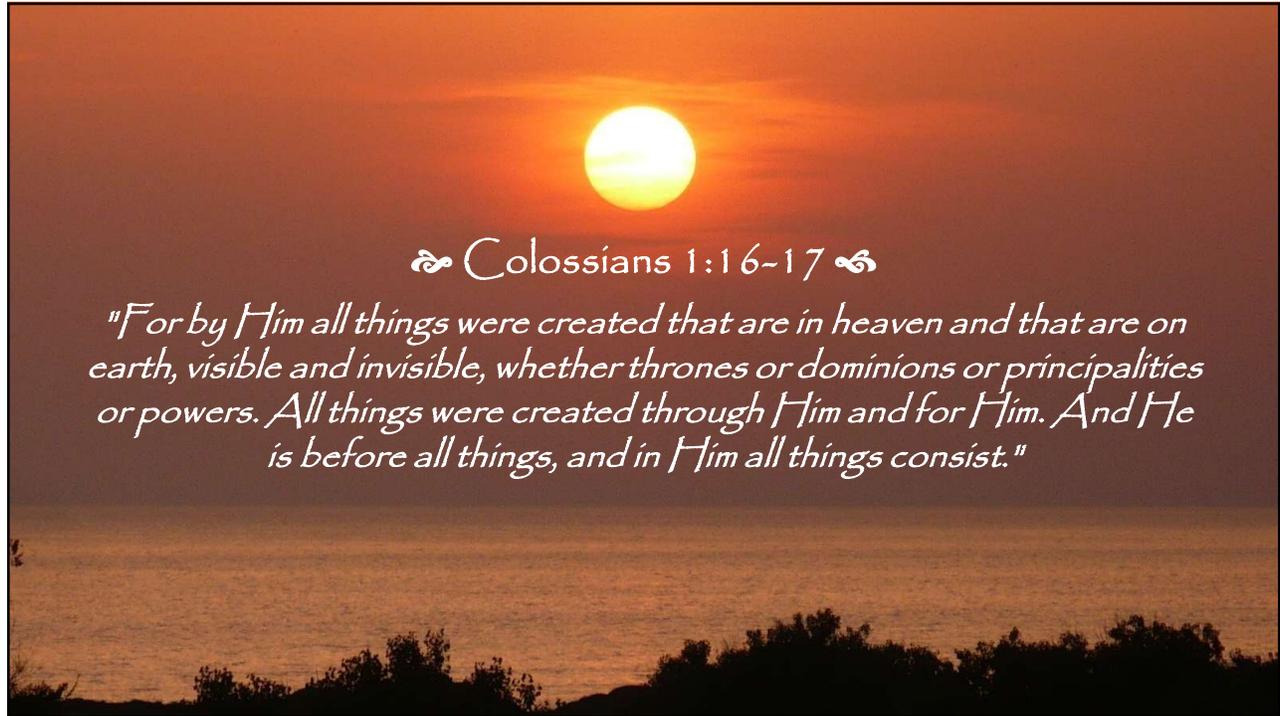
Rom. 2:14-15a

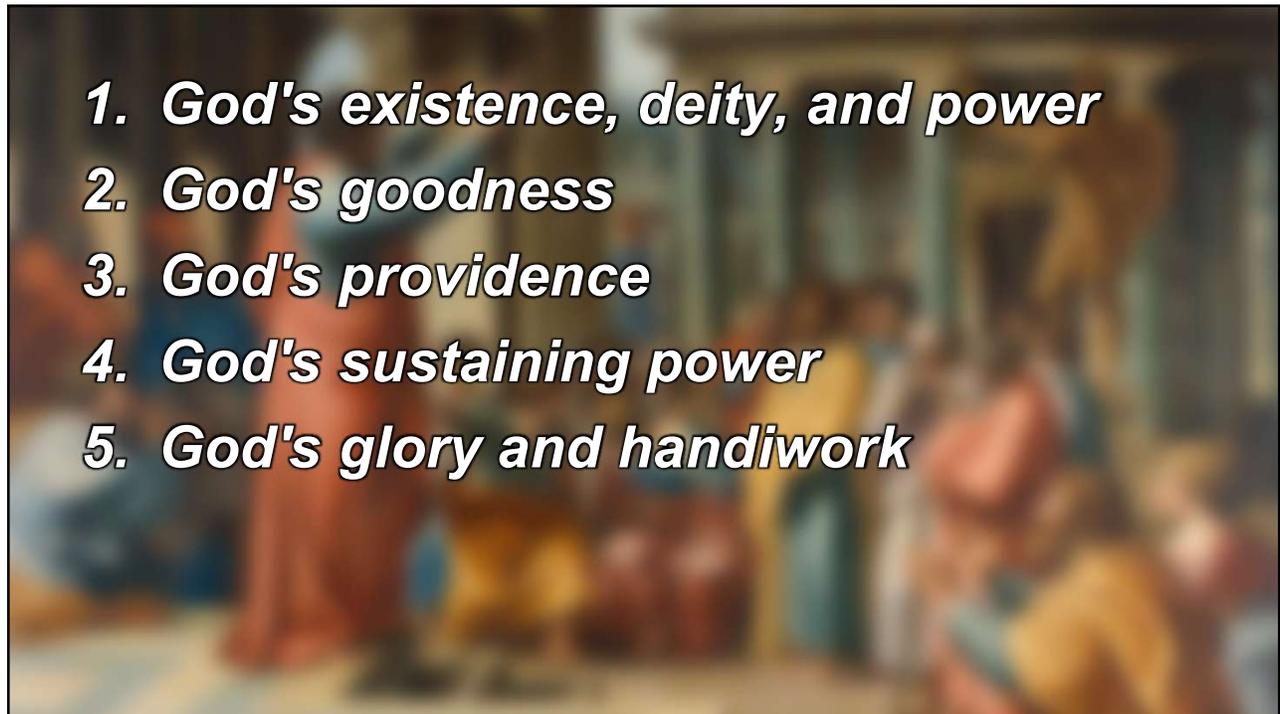


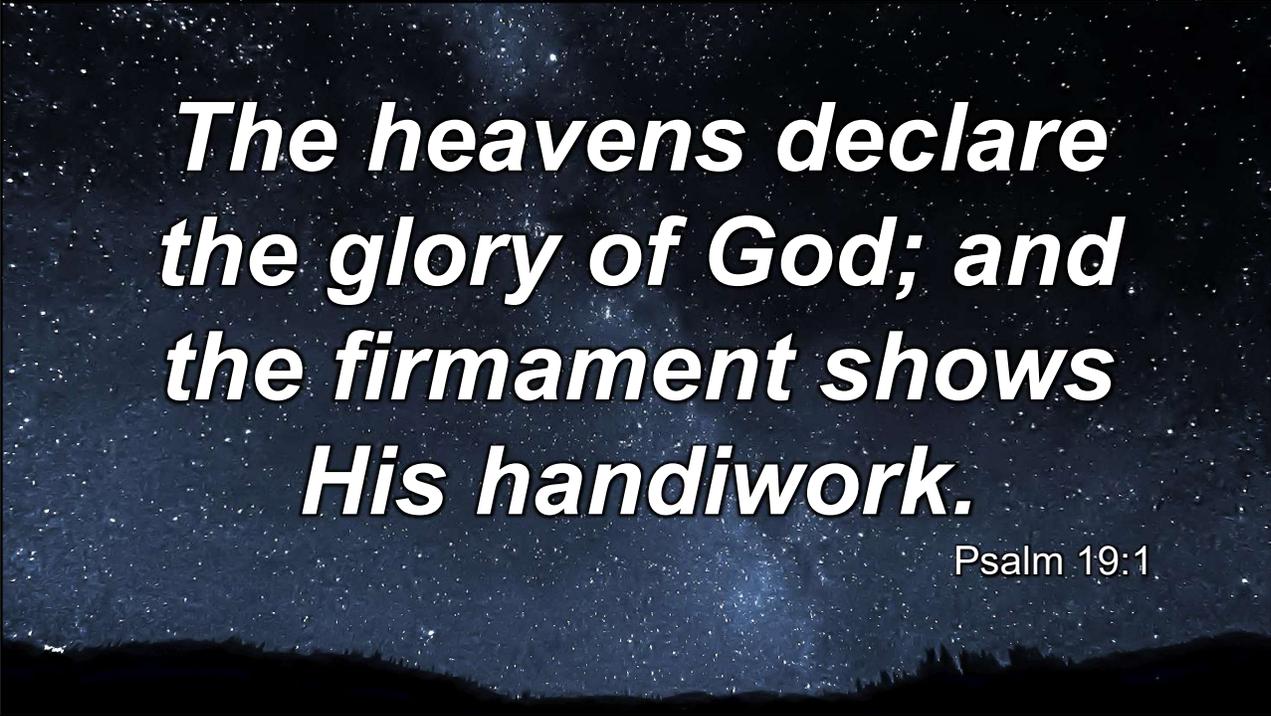
- 1. God's existence, deity, and power**
 - 2. God's goodness**
 - 3. God's providence**
-



- 1. God's existence, deity, and power**
- 2. God's goodness**
- 3. God's providence**
- 4. God's sustaining power**

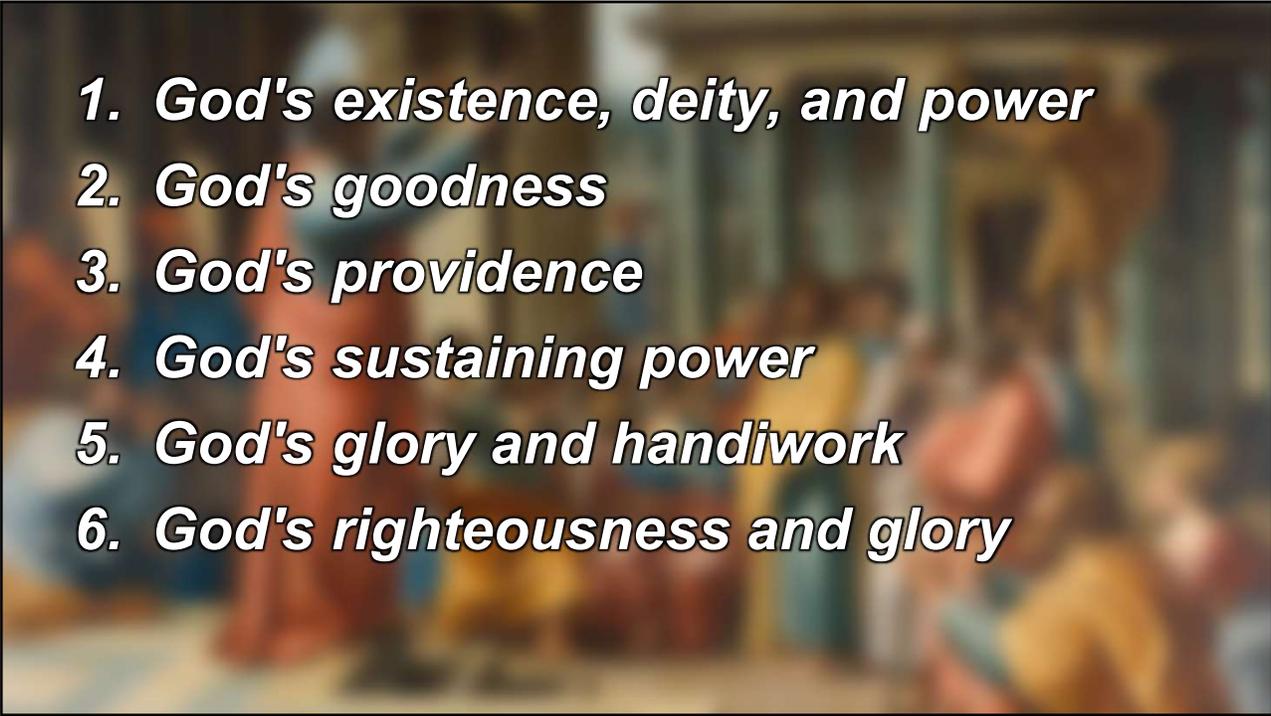


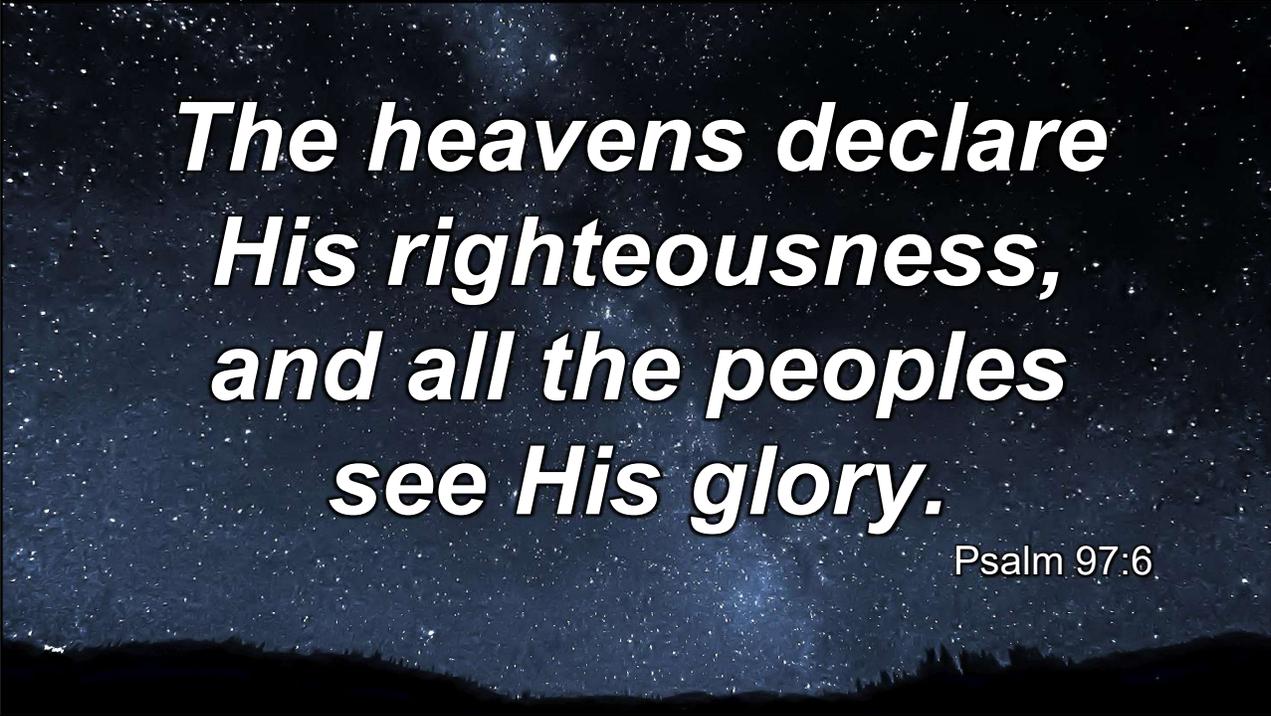
- 
- 1. God's existence, deity, and power**
 - 2. God's goodness**
 - 3. God's providence**
 - 4. God's sustaining power**
 - 5. God's glory and handiwork**



***The heavens declare
the glory of God; and
the firmament shows
His handiwork.***

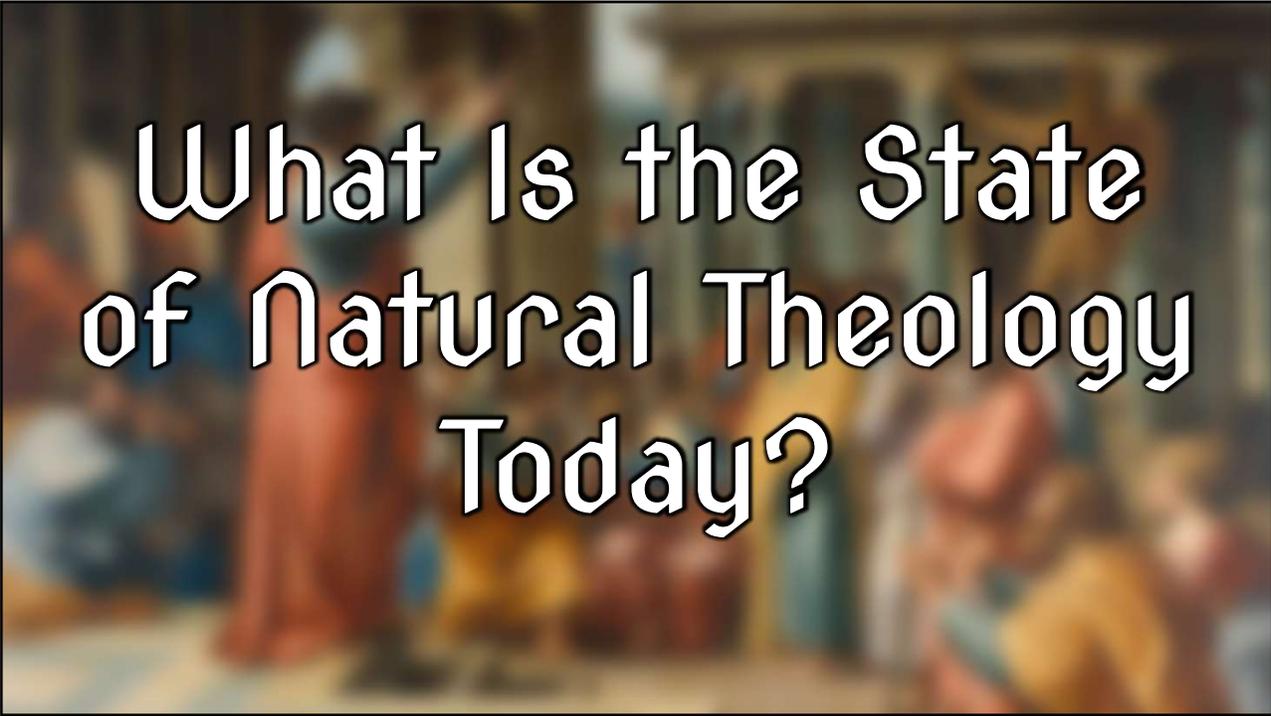
Psalm 19:1

- 
- 1. God's existence, deity, and power***
 - 2. God's goodness***
 - 3. God's providence***
 - 4. God's sustaining power***
 - 5. God's glory and handiwork***
 - 6. God's righteousness and glory***

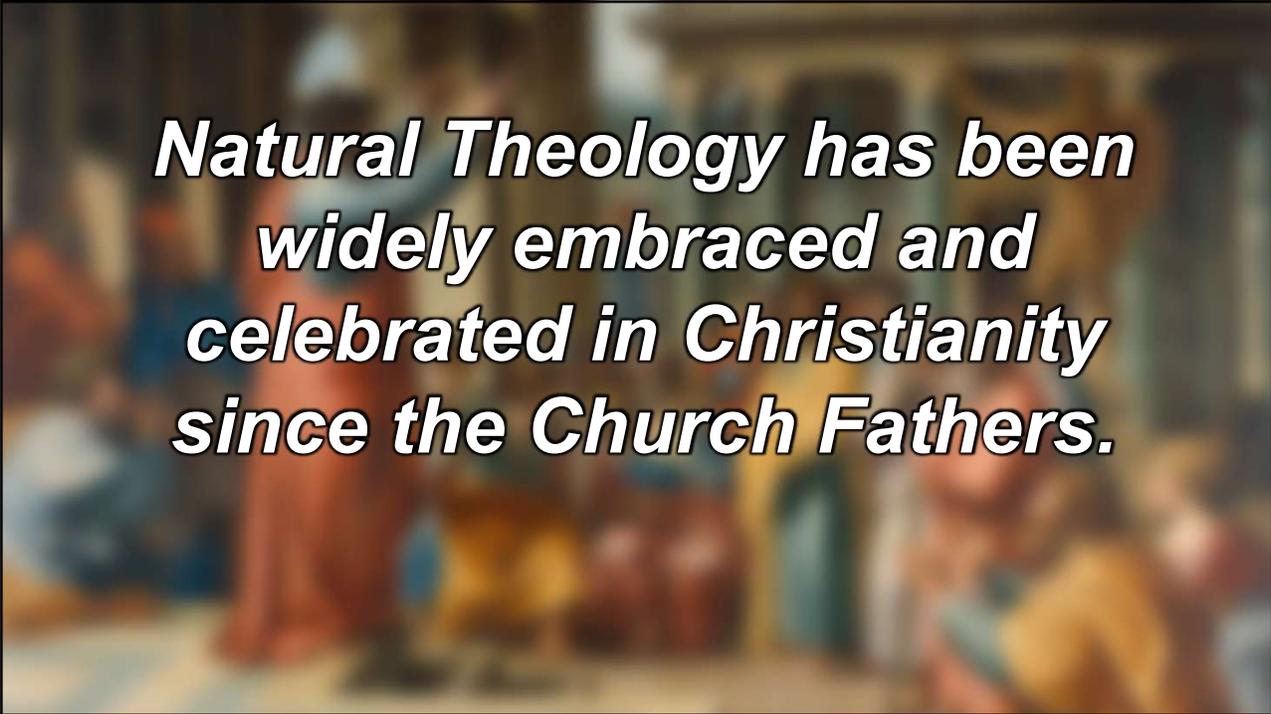


***The heavens declare
His righteousness,
and all the peoples
see His glory.***

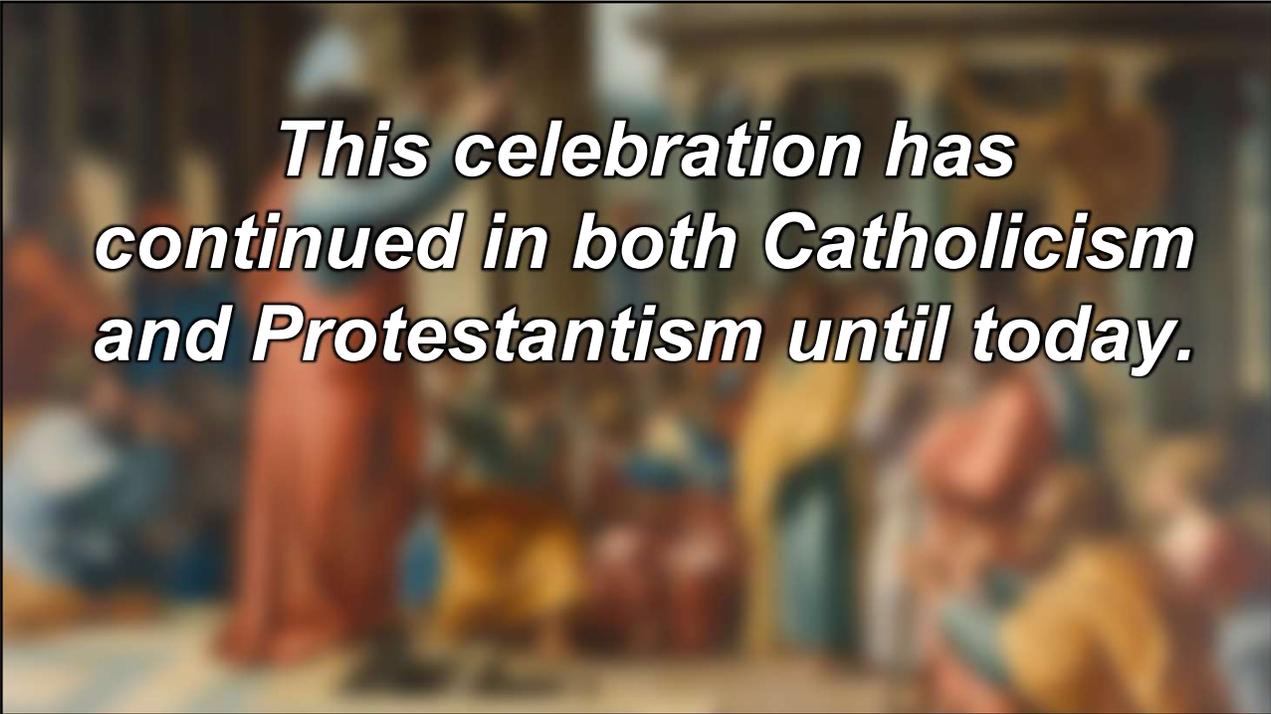
Psalm 97:6



**What Is the State
of Natural Theology
Today?**

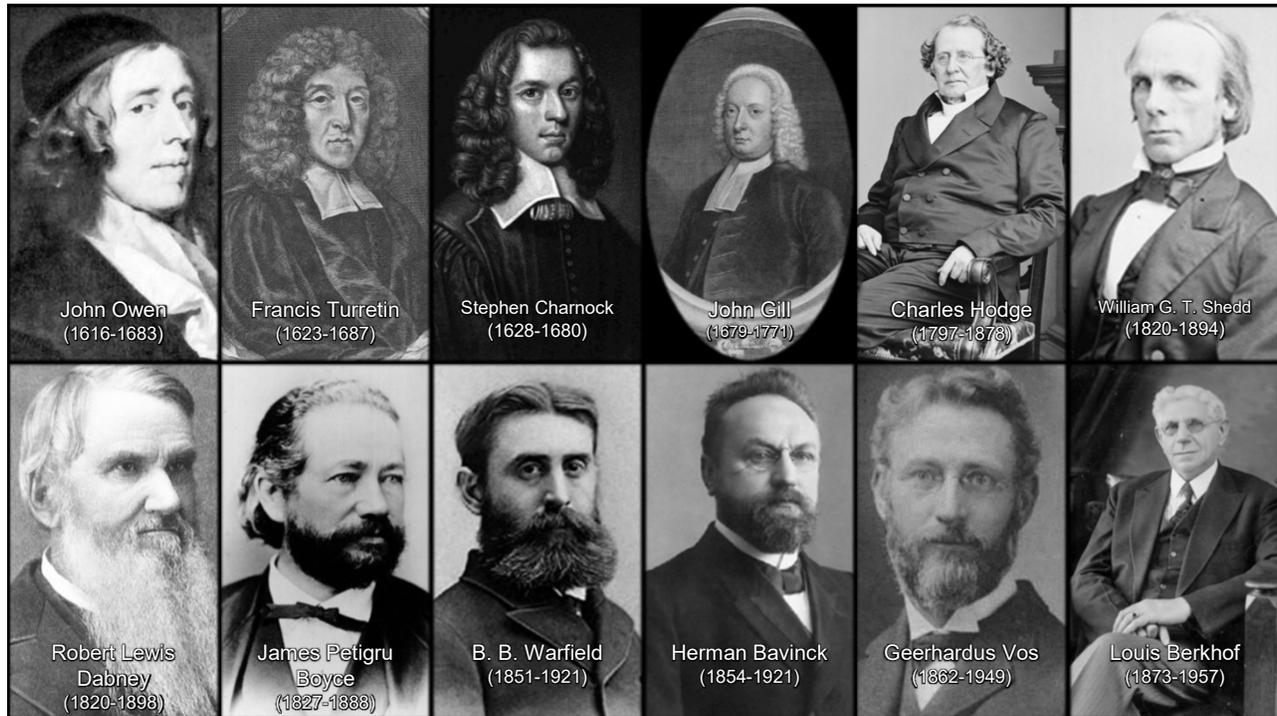


Natural Theology has been widely embraced and celebrated in Christianity since the Church Fathers.



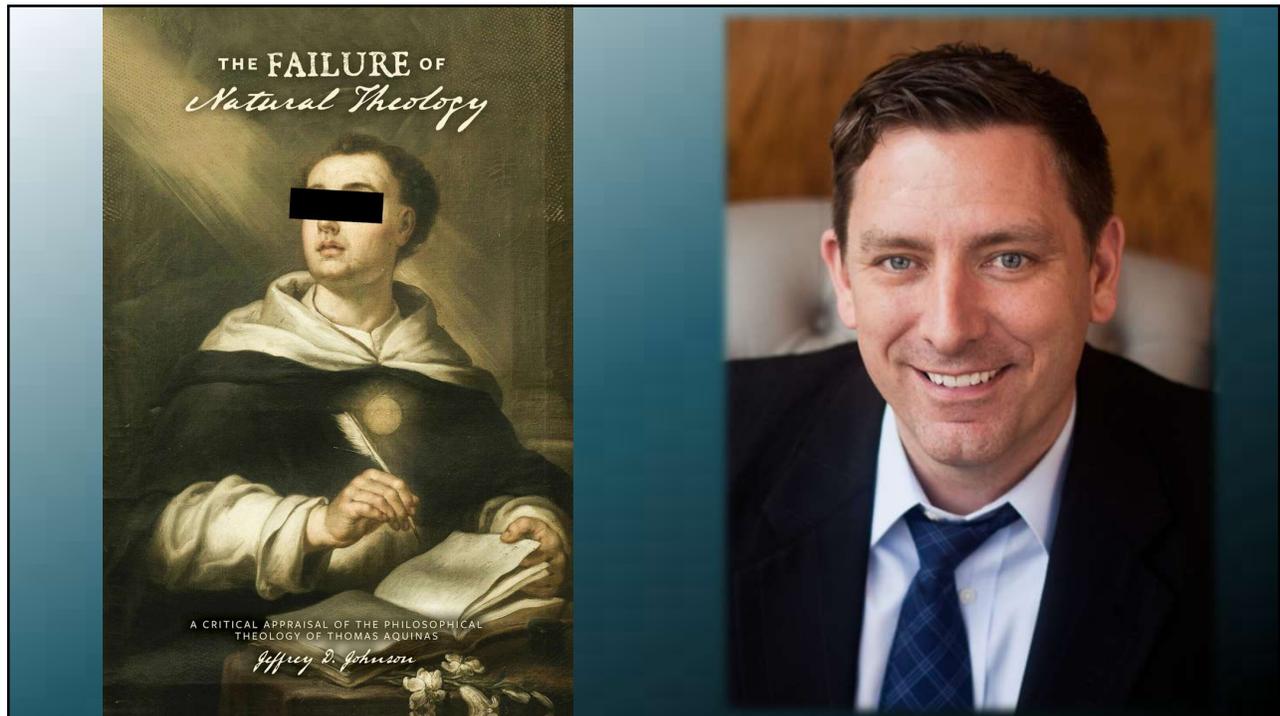
This celebration has continued in both Catholicism and Protestantism until today.

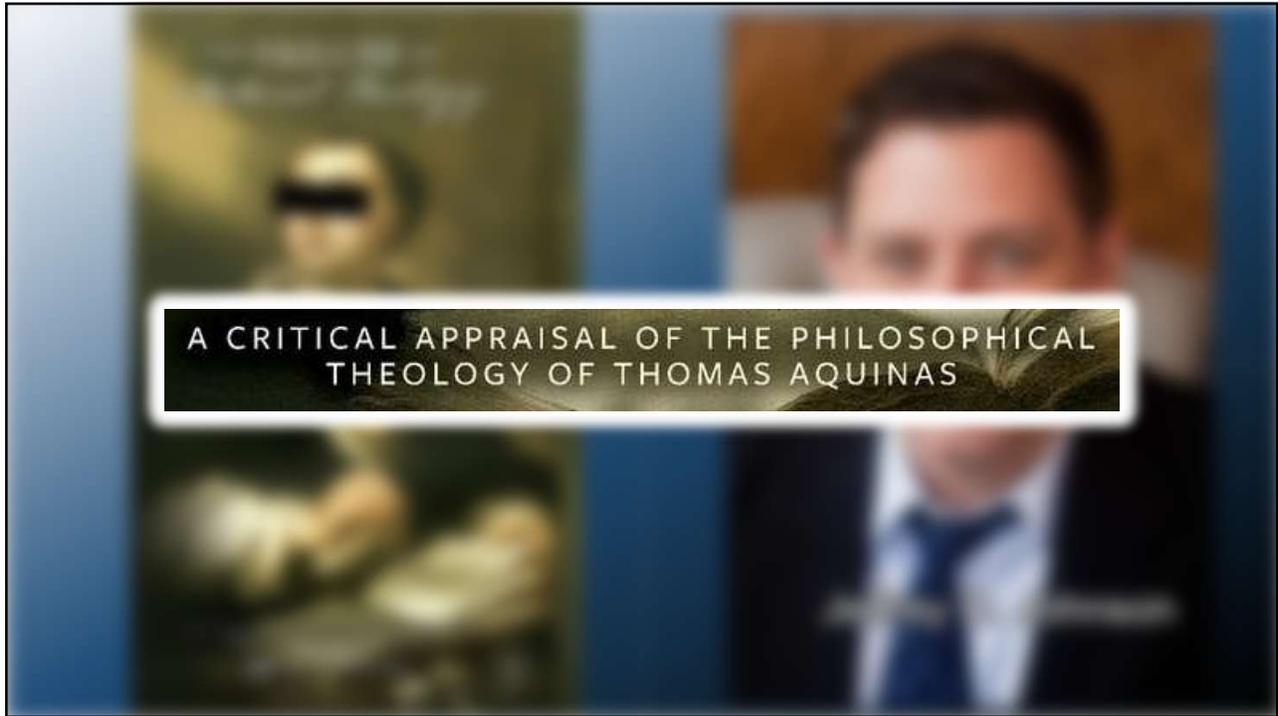


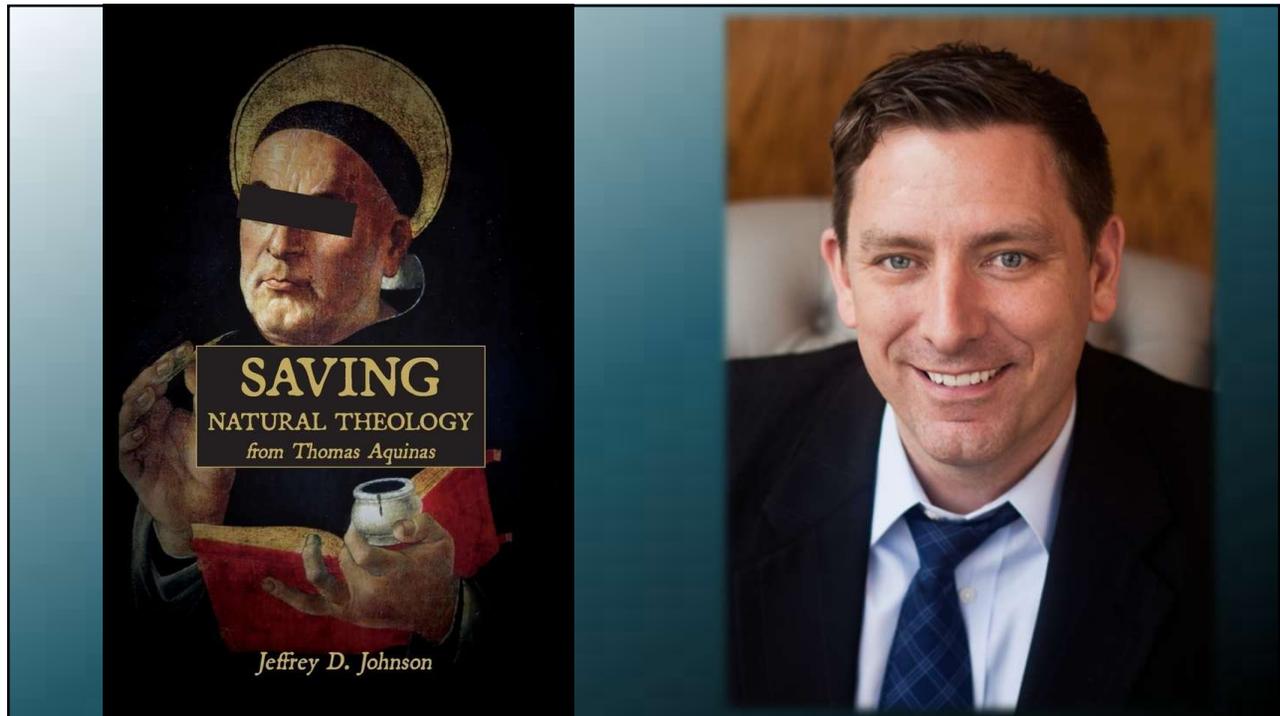


However, it is coming under increasingly stark criticism in certain contemporary evangelical circles.

This criticism is especially directed at the thinking of Thomas Aquinas.







WHY NATURAL THEOLOGY FAILS (PART 2)

Natural Theology FAILS? The Challenge of Knowing God Part 1 | Guest: Dr. Jeffrey Johnson

46:55

THINK INSTITUTE

Joel Settecase Khaldoun Sweis Jeffrey Johnson

Jeffrey D. Johnson

Live from GBTS with Jeff Johnson and Owen Strachan

GBTS

Evangelical Philosophical Society

Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel

Nov. 15-17, 2022

"Saving Natural Theology from Jeffrey Johnson"

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D.

Tues. Nov. 15, 2022 @ 4:30 PM
Evangelical Philosophical Society B2
Tower Building - Mezzanine Level Gold

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*Christian
Apologetics
Journal*
Vol. 17 | Spring 2023

VOLUME 17 / Spring 2023

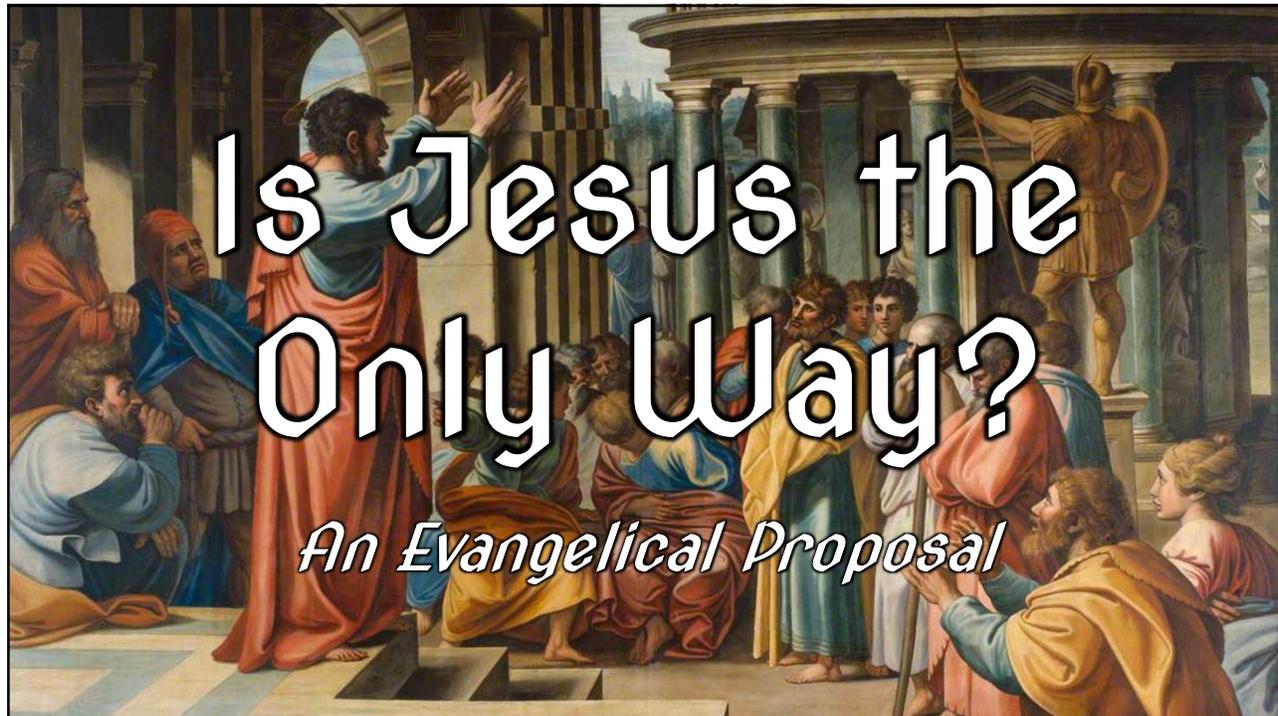
SES | **CHRISTIAN**
Apologetics Journal

Providing a forum for scholarly articles contributing to the defense
of the historic Christian Faith

In this Issue

- A Critique of N. T. Wright's Critical Realism
- An Analysis of Soren Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling
- Saving Natural Theology from Jeffrey Johnson
- God is a Precondition for Objective Knowledge
- An Augustinian Defense of an Eternal Hell
- Craig G. Bartholomew "Theology, Philosophy, and Biblical Interpretation" A Review Article
- Book Reviews

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Is Jesus the Only Way?

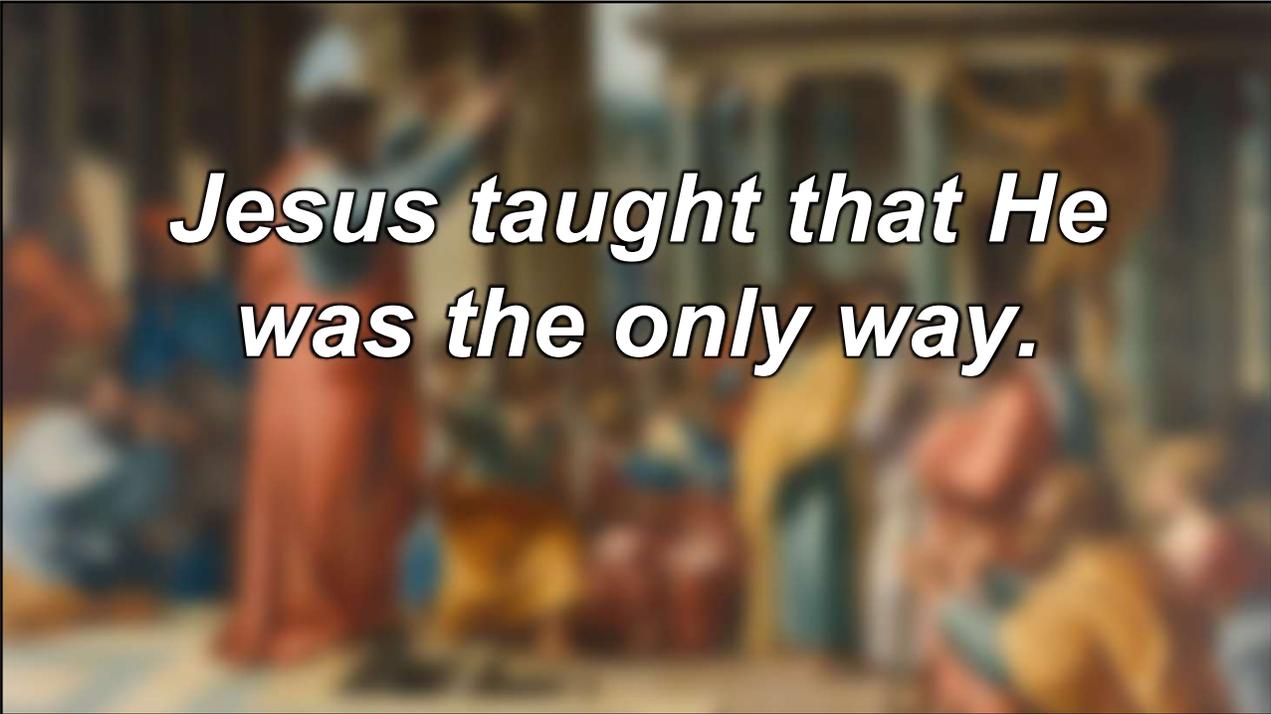
An Evangelical Proposal

∞ Exclusivism ∞

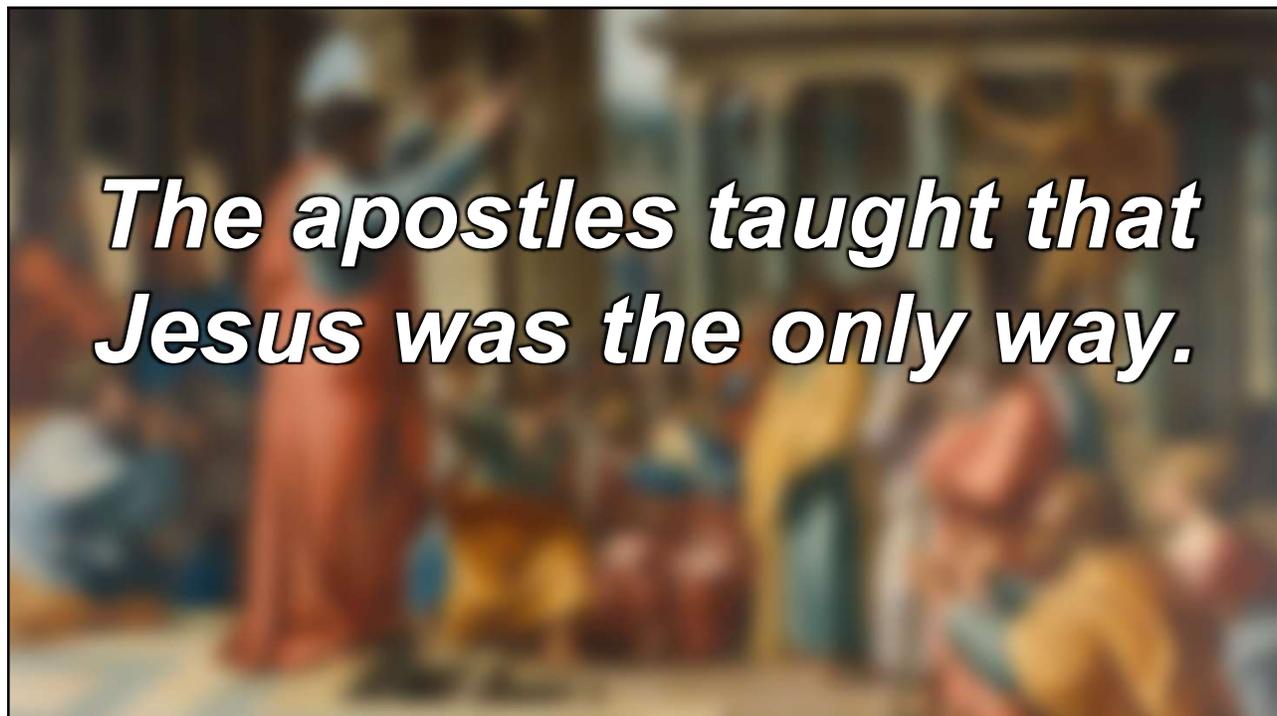
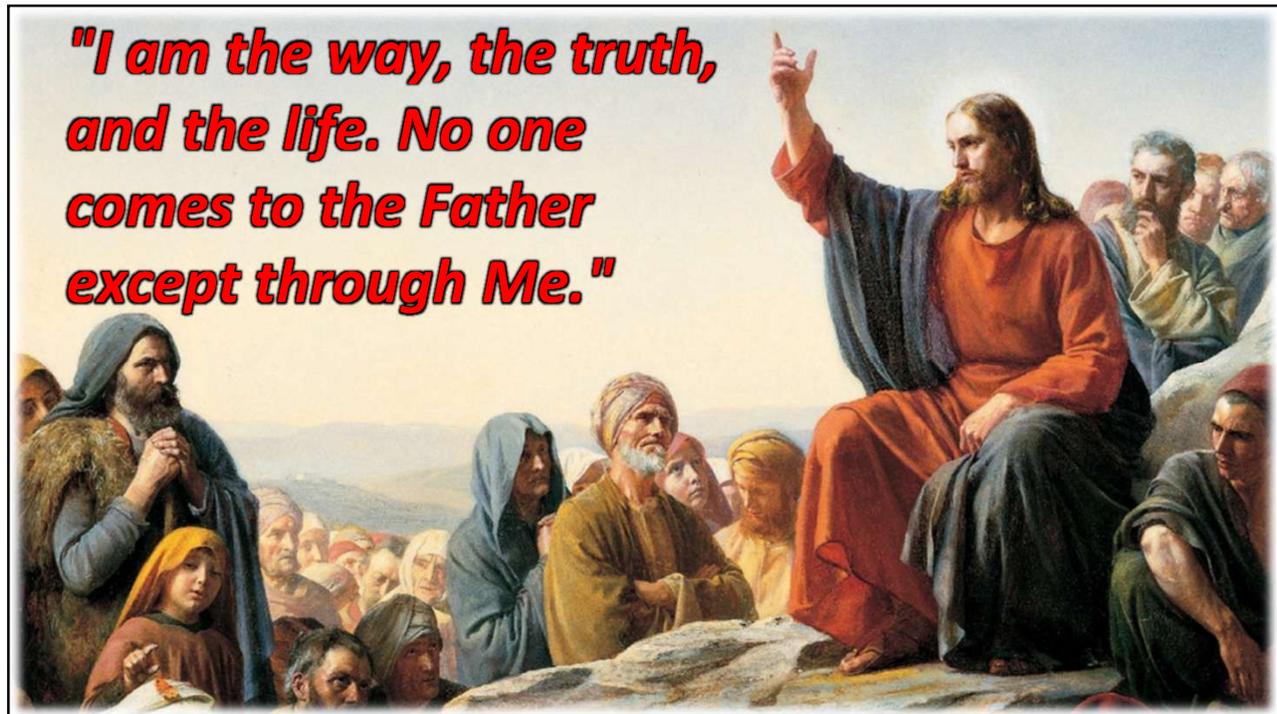
Also called Particularism, Exclusivism says that Christ saves only those who consciously believe the gospel that are mentally capable. Thus, all those who die without hearing the gospel (and thus without believing the gospel) are condemned.

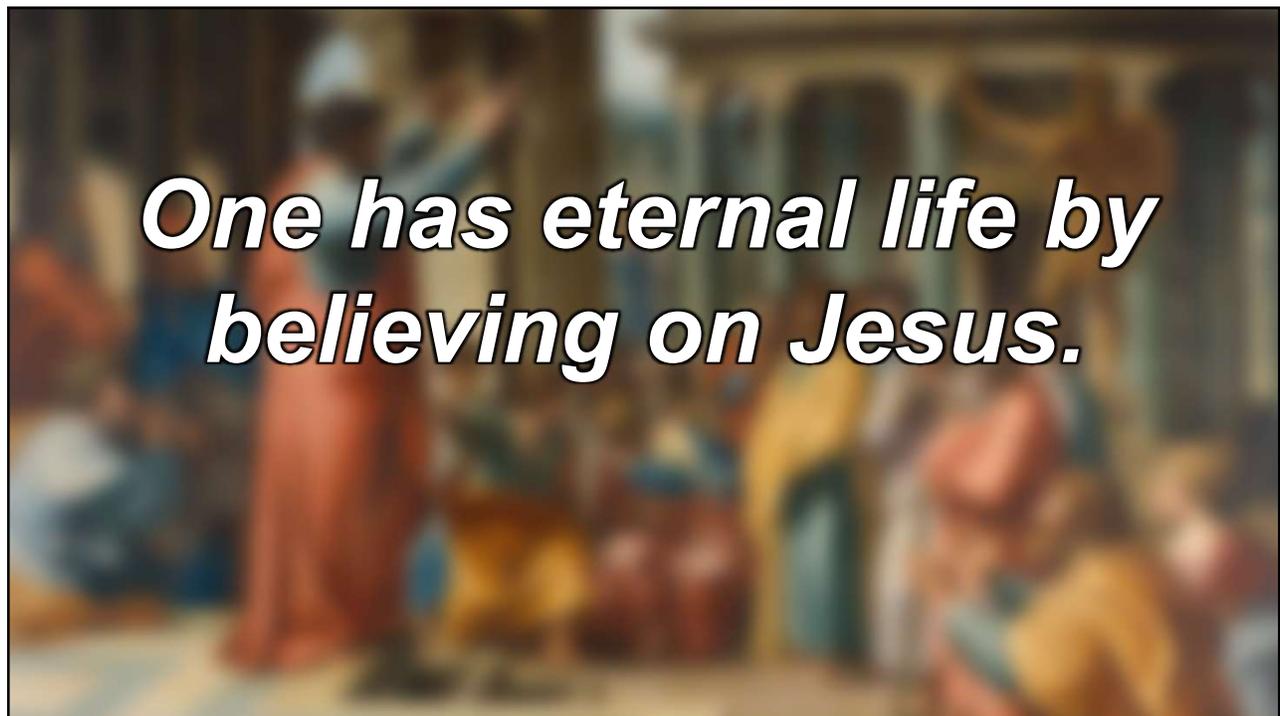
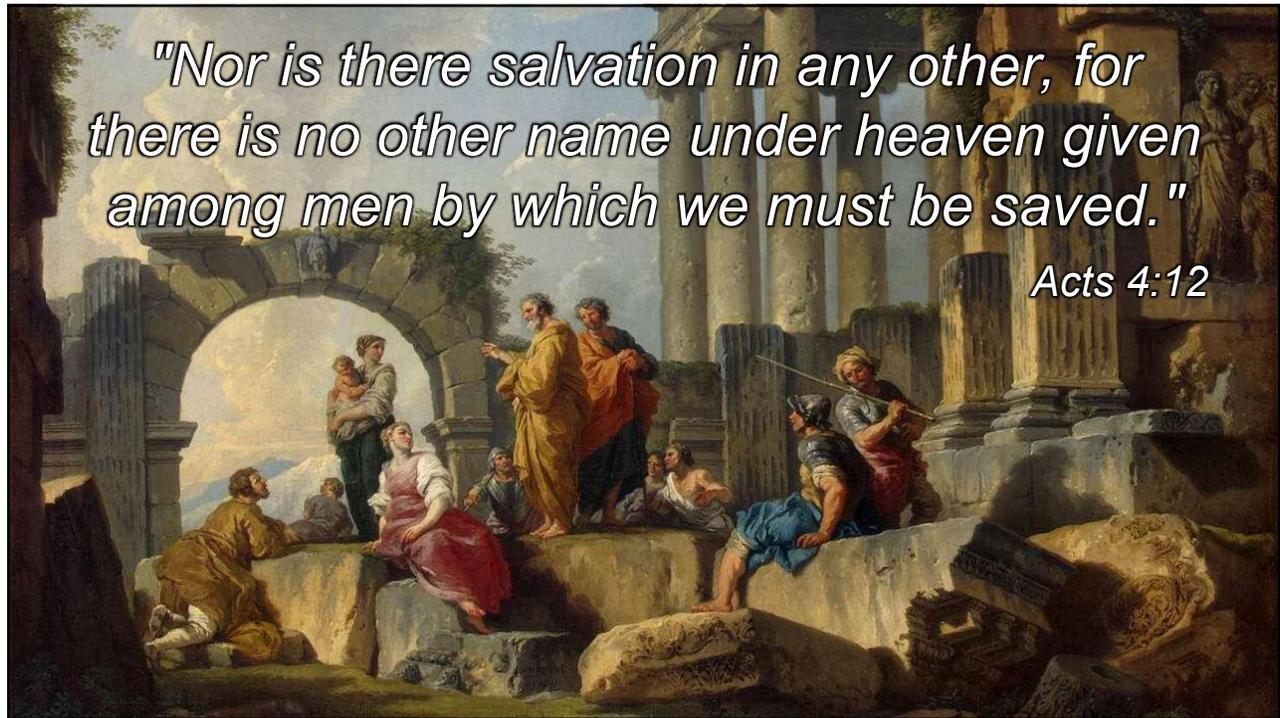


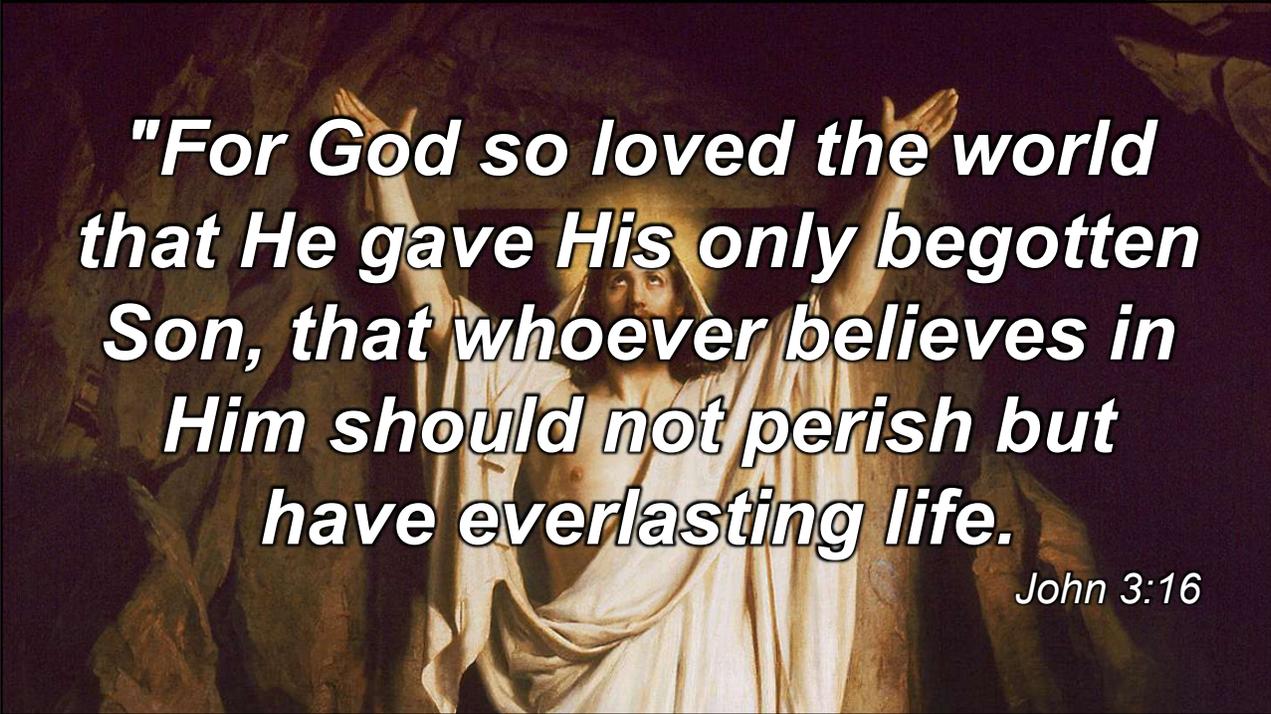
***The Case for
Exclusivism***



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

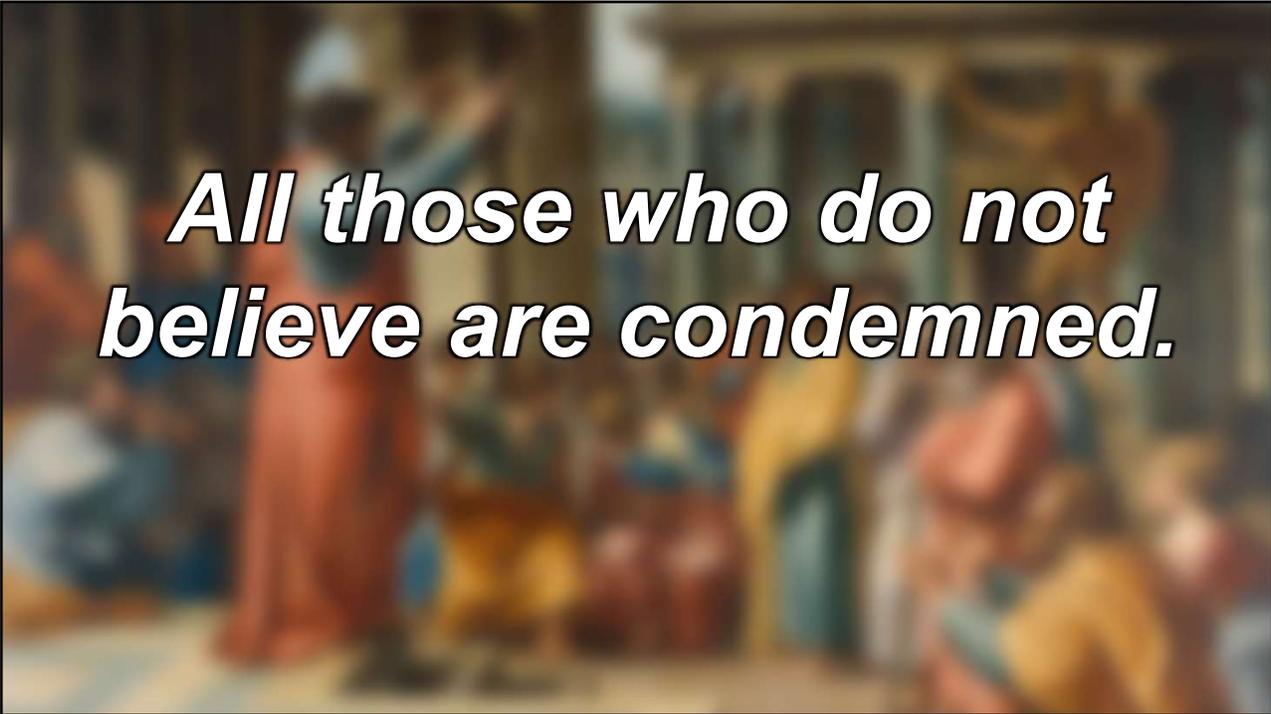




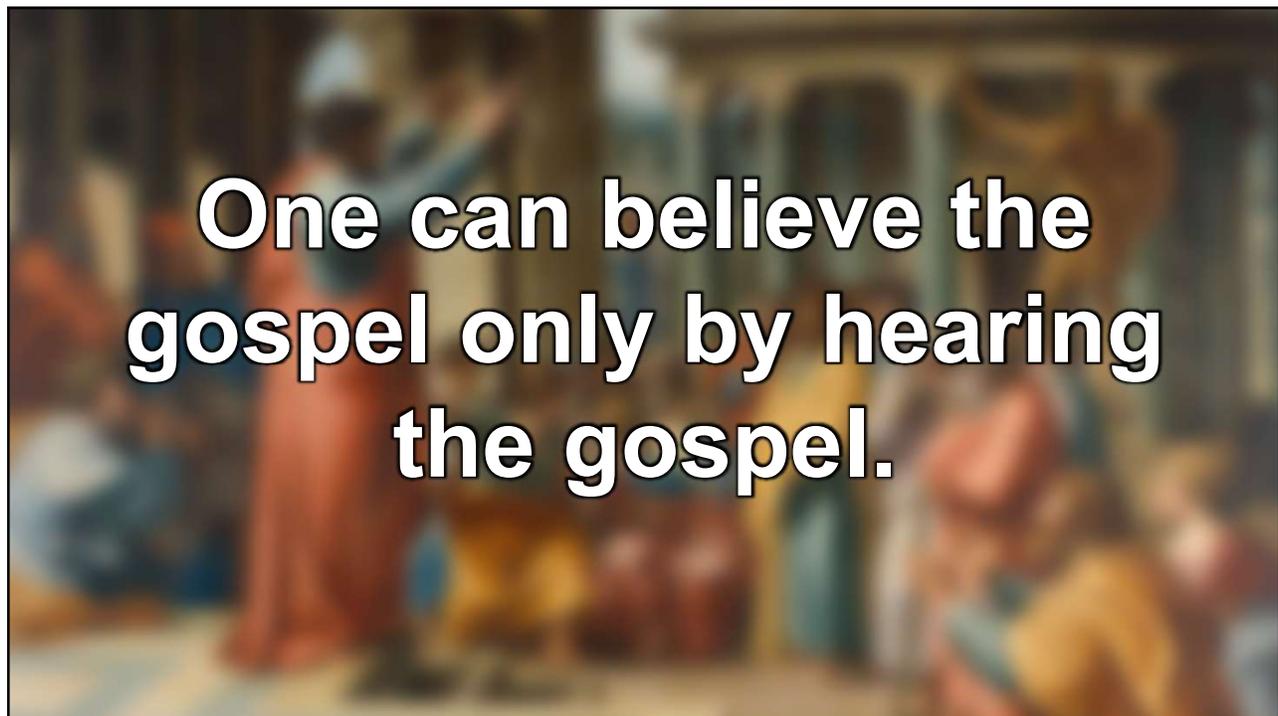
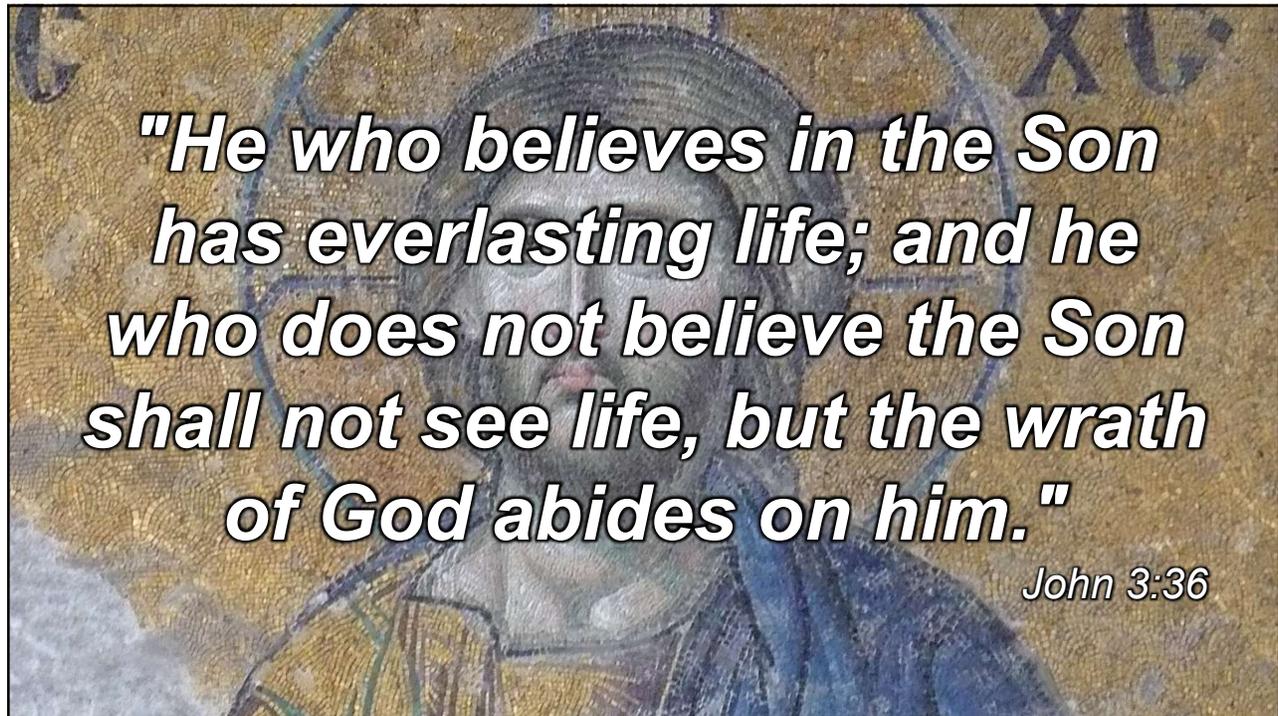


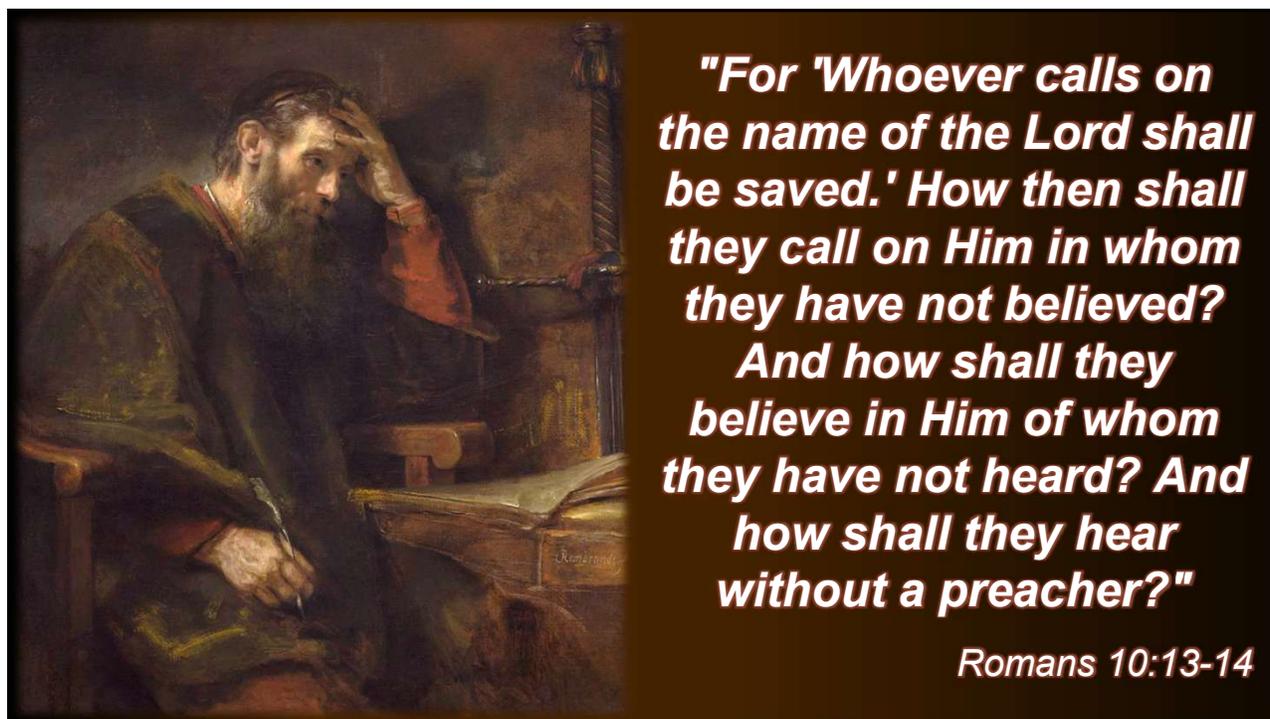
***"For God so loved the world
that He gave His only begotten
Son, that whoever believes in
Him should not perish but
have everlasting life.***

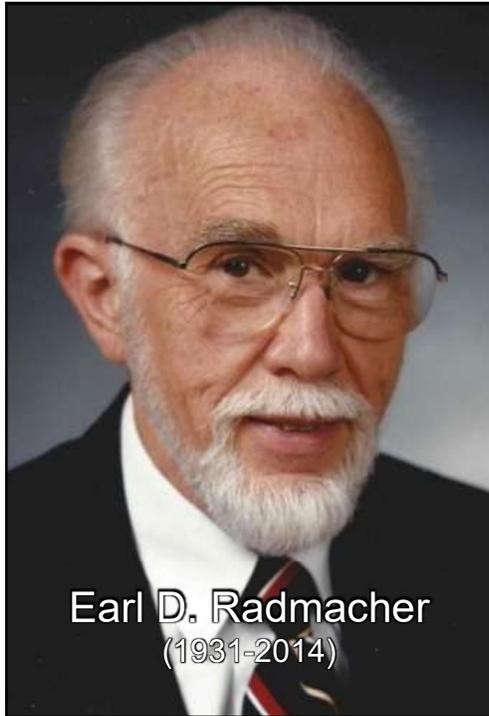
John 3:16



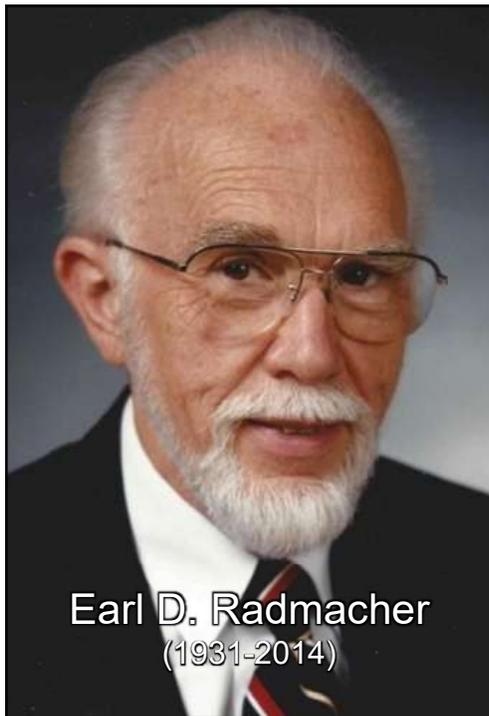
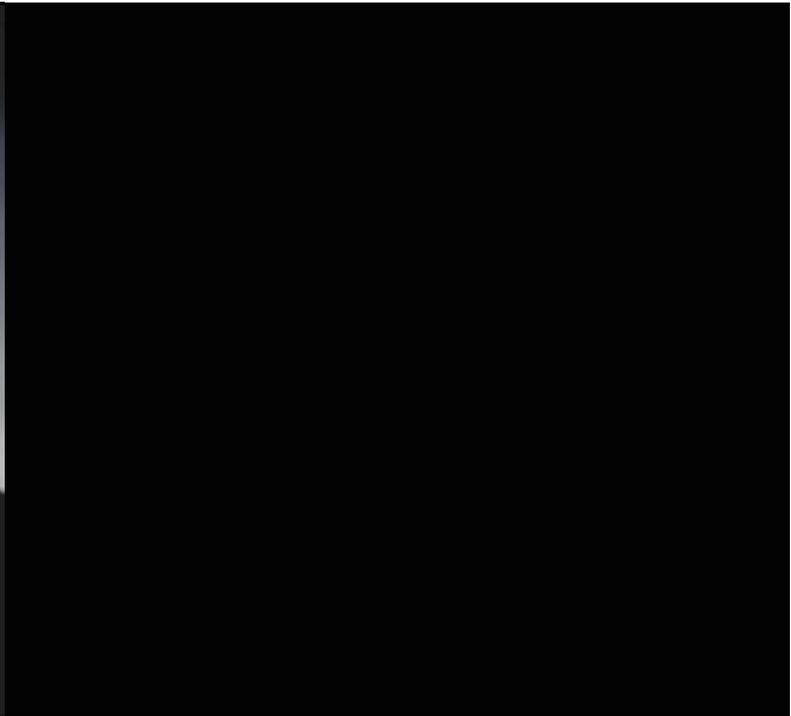
***All those who do not
believe are condemned.***



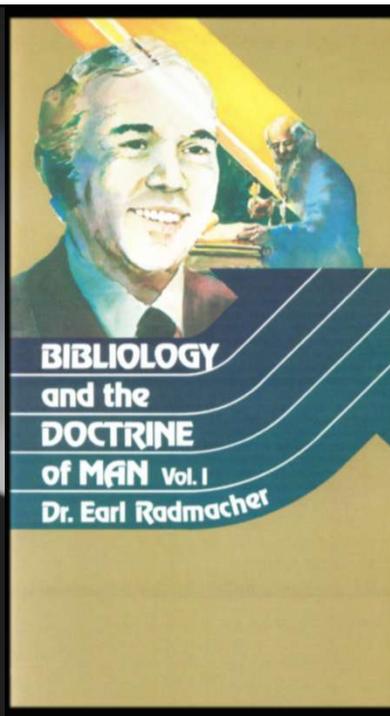


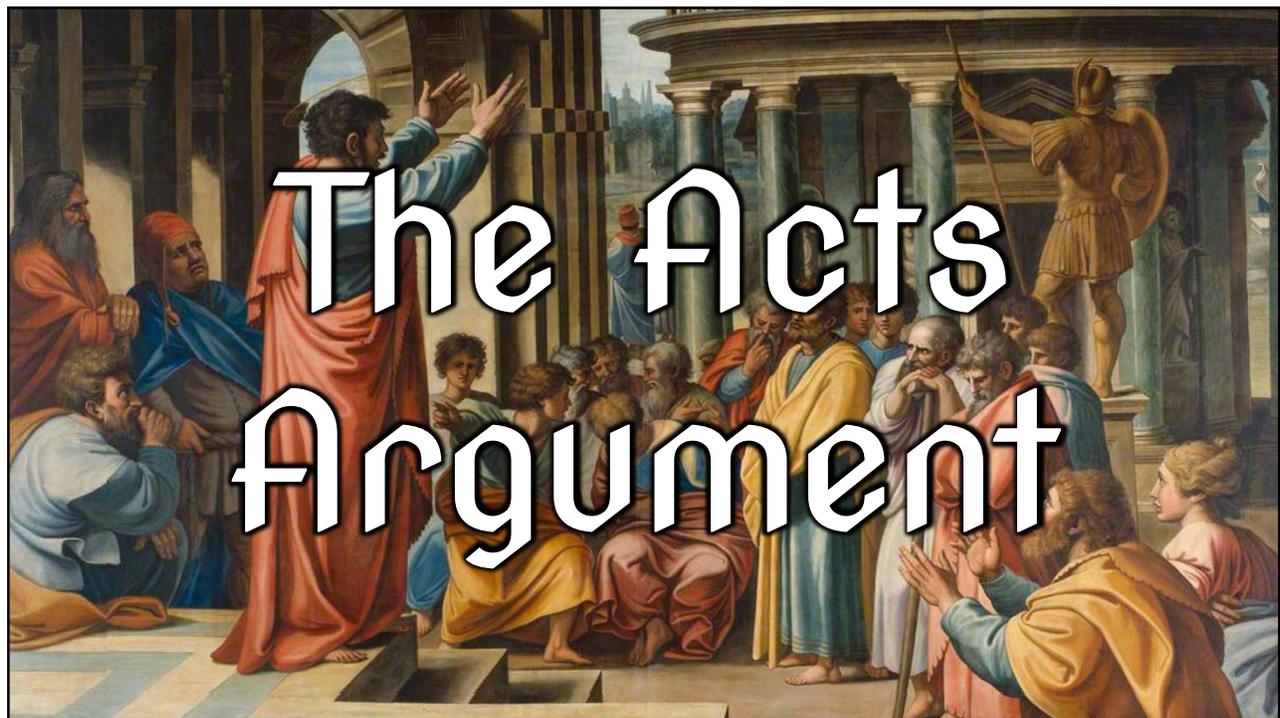
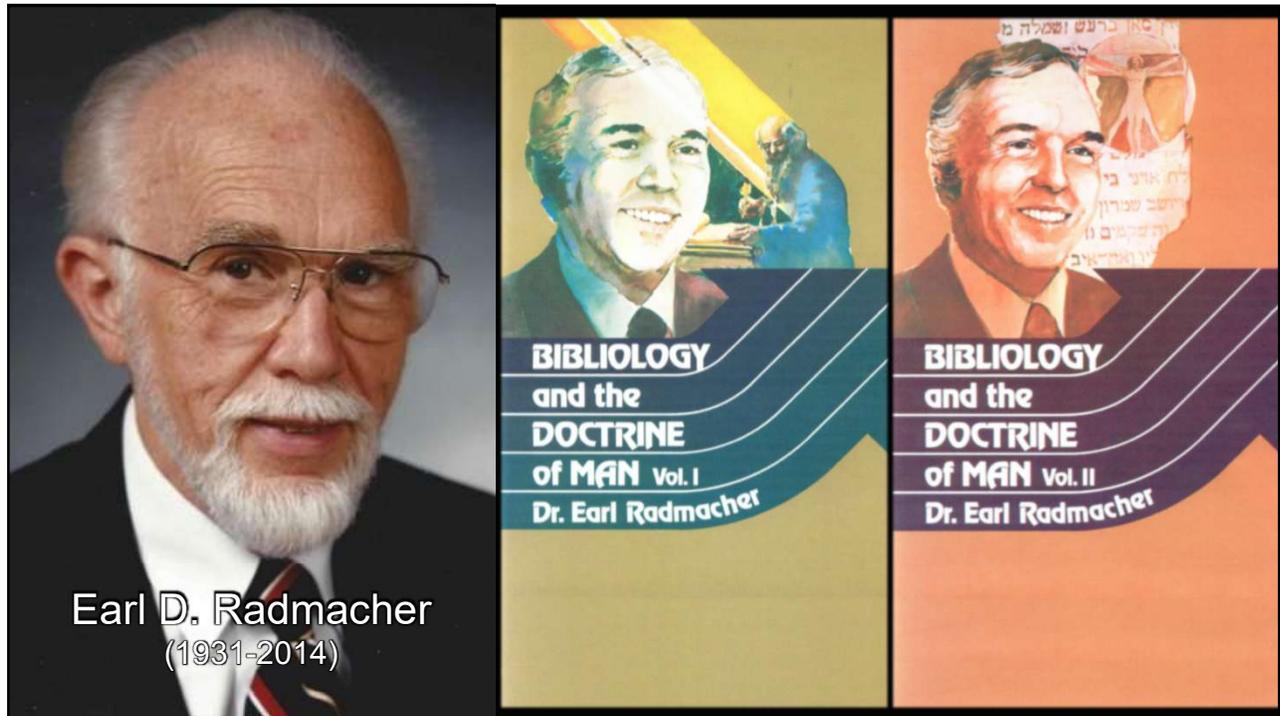


Earl D. Radmacher
(1931-2014)



Earl D. Radmacher
(1931-2014)



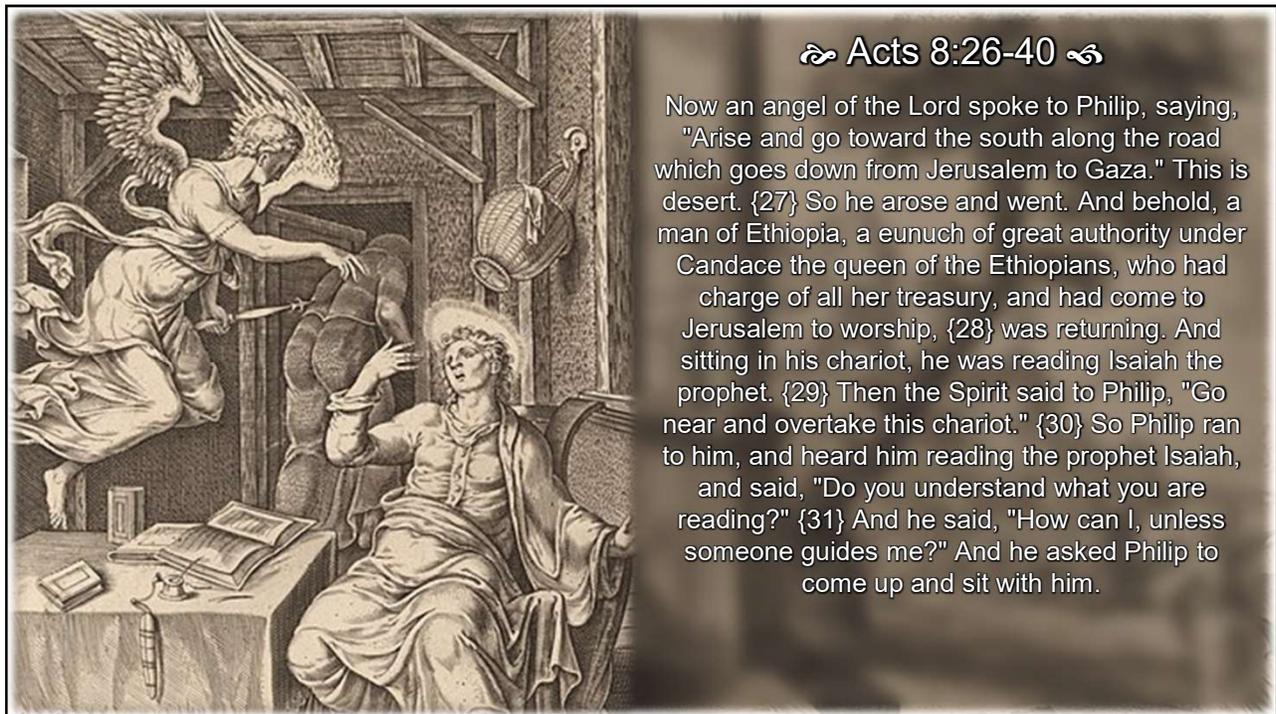


∞ The Acts Argument ∞

- ❖ *Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8:26-40*
a descendent of Ham
- ❖ *Saul, Acts 9:1-18*
a descendent of Shem
- ❖ *Cornelius, Acts 10*
a descendent of Japheth

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- ❖ *Saul, Acts 9:1-18*
a descendent of **Shem**
- ❖ *Cornelius, Acts 10*
a descendent of **Japheth**





Act 8:26-40

{32} The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO THE SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE OPENED NOT HIS MOUTH. {33} IN HIS HUMILIATION HIS JUSTICE WAS TAKEN AWAY, AND WHO WILL DECLARE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS TAKEN FROM THE EARTH." {34} So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" {35} Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. {36} Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"



Act 8:26-40

{37} Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." {38} So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. {39} Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. {40} But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

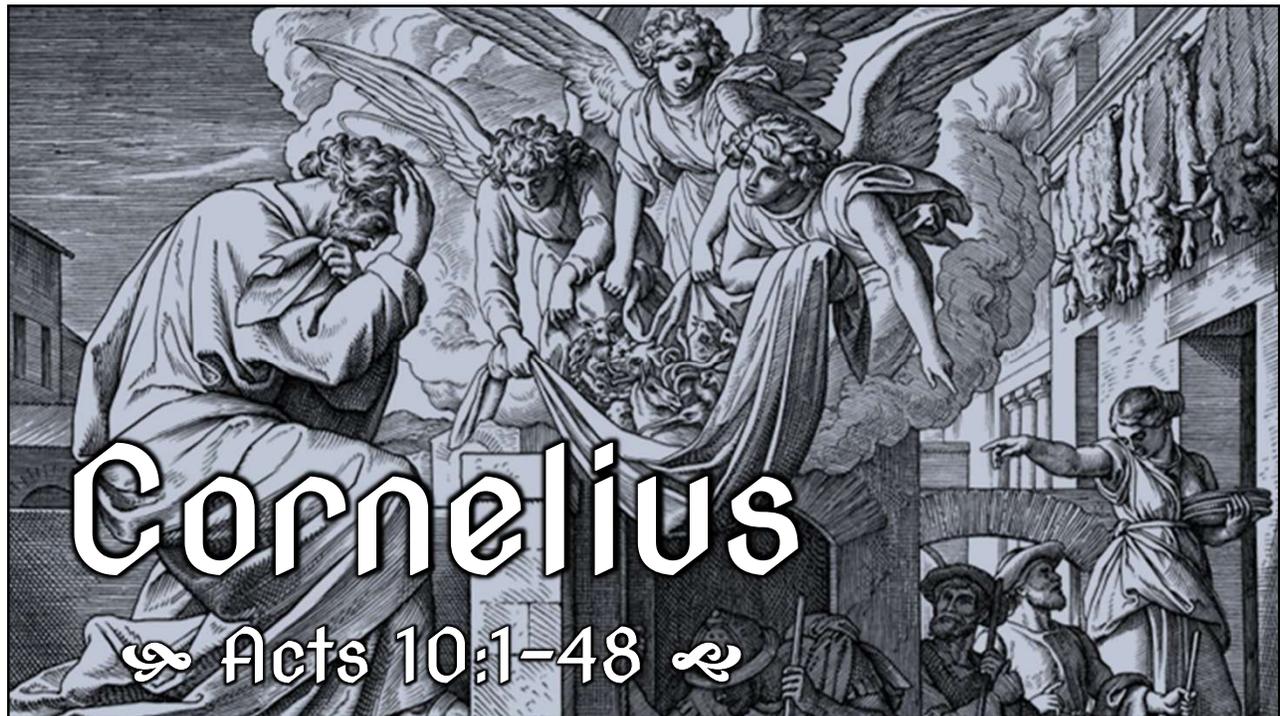


Acts 9:1-18

Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest {2} and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. {3} As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. {4} Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" {5} And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads." {6} So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." {7} And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. {8} Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. {9} And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Acts 9:1-18

{10} Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." {11} So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. {12} And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight." {13} Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. {14} And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name." {15} But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. {16} For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake." {17} And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." {18} Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.



Acts 10:1-48

{1} There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, {2} a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. {3} About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!" {4} And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. {5} Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. {6} He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." {7} And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. {8} So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa. {9} The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. {10} Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance

Acts 10:1-48

{11} and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. {12} In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. {13} And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." {14} But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." {15} And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." {16} This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again. {17} Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. {18} And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. {19} While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. {20} Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them." {21} Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

Acts 10:1-48

{22} And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." {23} Then he invited them in and lodged them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him. {24} And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. {25} As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. {26} But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." {27} And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. {28} Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. {29} Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?" {30} So Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

Acts 10:1-48

{31} and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. {32} Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' {33} So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God." {34} Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. {35} But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. {36} The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— {37} that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: {38} how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. {39} And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. {40} Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly,

 Acts 10:1-48 

{41} not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. {42} And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. {43} To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins." {44} While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. {45} And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. {46} For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, {47} "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" {48} And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

 The Position Simply Stated 

***Anyone who responds in faith to
God's revelation of Himself in
creation will hear the Gospel and will
believe the Gospel.***

***God the Father has revealed
Himself **TO** all people
throughout all time and places
without exception through the
things He has made.***

(Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1 & 2; Acts 14:17)

***Whoever **responds in faith** to
God's revelation of Himself
through creation, God will get
the Gospel message to him and
he will believe.***

Whoever **responds in faith** to God's revelation of Himself through creation, God will get the Gospel message to him and he will believe.

- ❖ Responding in faith does not mean merely believing that God exists.
- ❖ Nor does it mean having a "zeal for God."



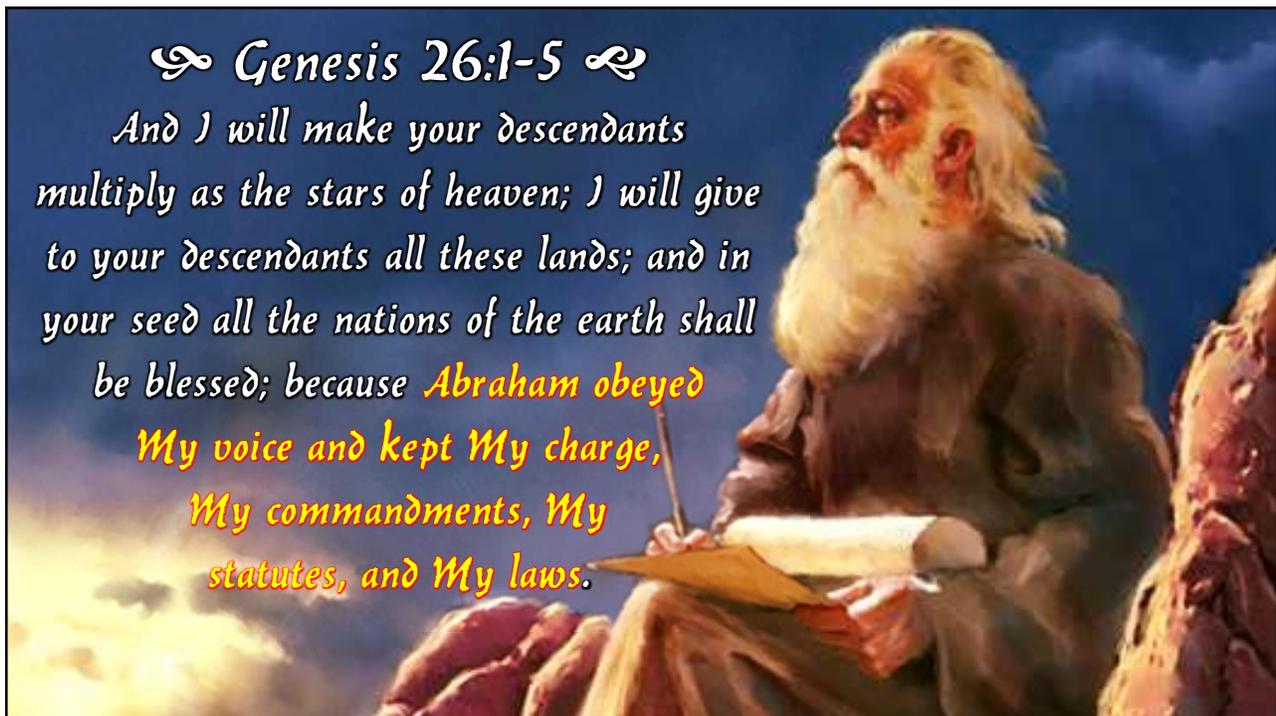
✧ Romans 10:1-5 ✧

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. {2} For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. {3} For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. {4} For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."



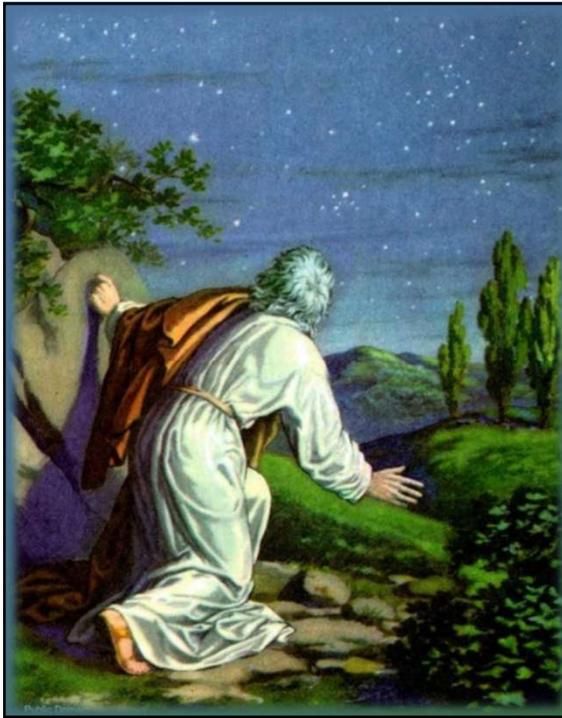
✧ **Romans 9:30-32** ✧

"What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; {31} but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. {32} Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone."



✧ **Genesis 26:1-5** ✧

*And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because **Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.***

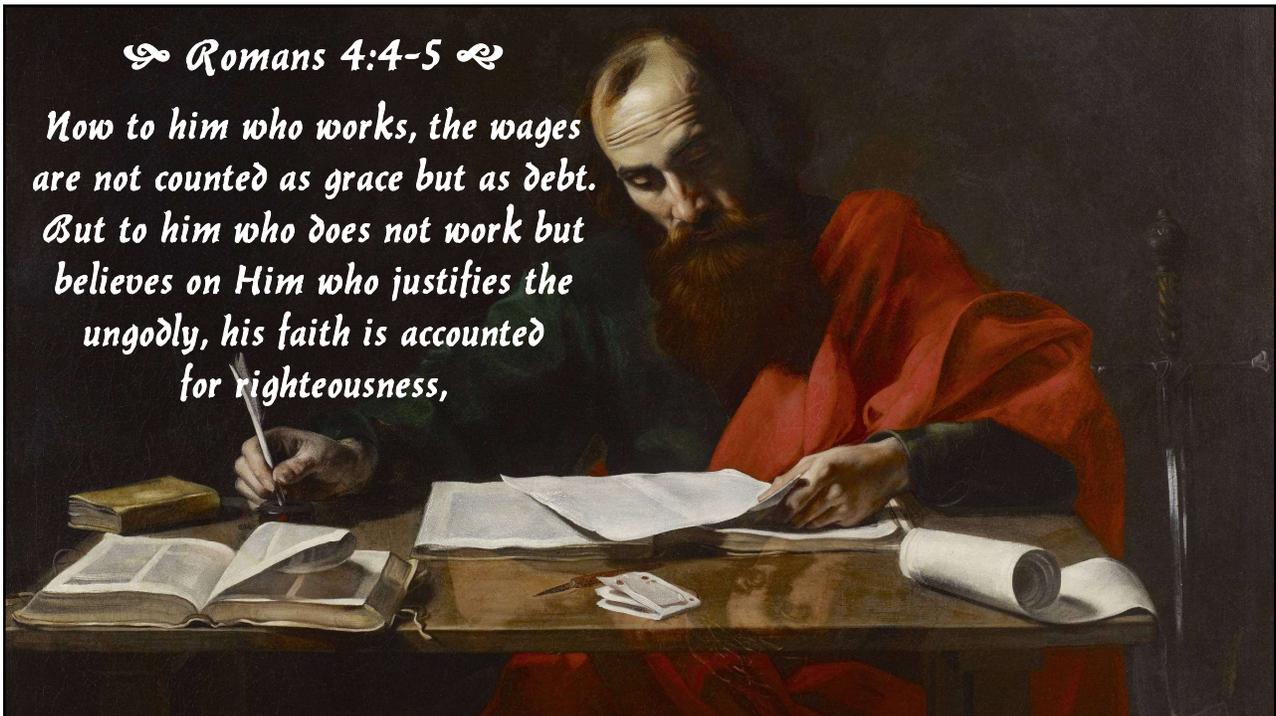


✧ Genesis 15:5-6 ✧

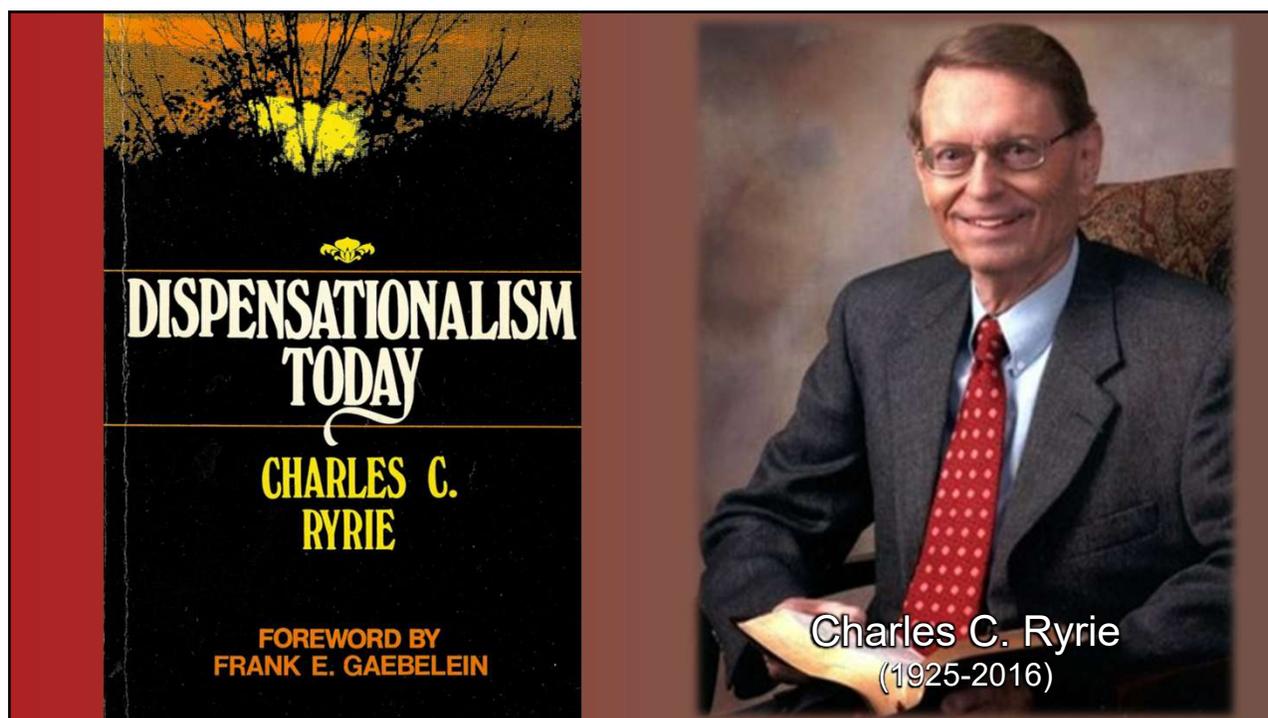
"Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

✧ Romans 4:4-5 ✧

Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

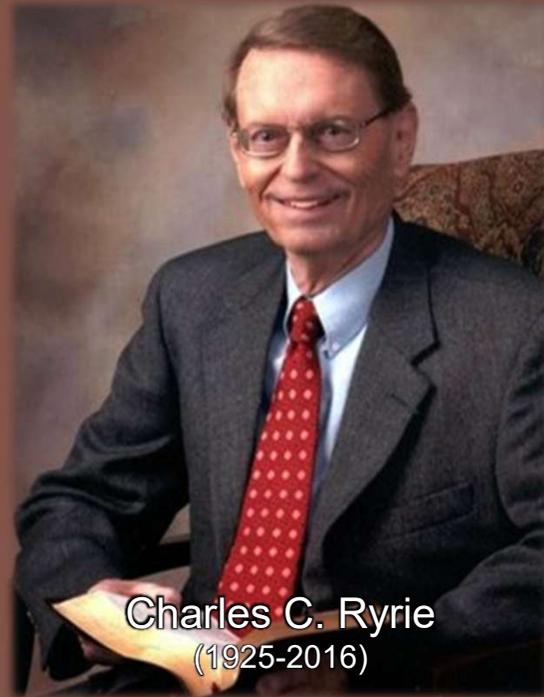


*Whoever responds in faith to
God's revelation of Himself
through creation, **God will get
the Gospel message to him and
he will believe.***



"The *basis* of salvation in every age is the death of Christ; the *requirement* for salvation in every age is faith; the *object* of faith in every age is God; the *content* of faith changes in the various dispensations."

[Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*
(Chicago: Moody, 1965), 123]



Charles C. Ryrie
(1925-2016)

It should be noted that this model does not say WHY some respond to General Revelation and some do not.

Thus, this model is compatible with Calvinism, Molinism, Arminianism, and Thomism.

General Revelation	Special Revelation
<i>Given through creation (known through simple apprehension of the sensible world)</i>	<i>Given through Prophets and Apostles (read by their writings, a.k.a., the Scriptures)</i>
<i>Reveals God's existence and attributes</i>	<i>Reveals God's gospel and will</i>
<i>Given TO all people</i>	<i>Given FOR all people</i>
<i>All people have it</i>	<i>Not all people have it</i>
<i>Some accept, some reject</i>	<i>Some accept, some reject</i>
<i>Sufficient to condemn if rejected</i>	<i>Sufficient to save if accepted</i>
<i>Acceptance is necessary but not sufficient for eternal life</i>	<i>Acceptance is necessary and sufficient for eternal life</i>

