

Lesson 3: Man and the Supernatural (Religion)

A. Example Issues:

1. If God is totally spiritual, while man is totally physical, how can God be knowable by man?
2. Isn't religion an optional activity, not for (and not to be forced upon) everyone?
3. Aren't all religions (with different beliefs and practices) equally valid attempts to find God?
 - a. All religious activities practiced in sincere worship/devotion are equally valid.
 - b. The religious experience is private, personally determined, and subjective, and is therefore difficult to communicate or transfer to another.
4. Doesn't God exist [in] nature and [in] all of us?
5. Don't we know that God (or god-thoughts) are products of human desires and imagination?
6. Shouldn't all people, including in "Christian" Religions just work to benefit mankind?
7. Doesn't the Church need to evolve to meet the needs and desires of each age and culture?

B. The Christian's World View

1. Who is created in whose image? (Gen 1:26,27)
2. What is the relationship of man to the rest of the created universe?
 - a. Gen 1:28
 - b. Ps 8:4-8
3. Which part of man is more permanent (real)? (I Cor 15:50-53)
4. What may be known of God by observing nature? (Rom 1:18-21; Ps 19:1)
 - a. What responsibility does this knowledge place on man?
 - b. What emotions should it evoke? (Ps 139:14; Ps 8:4)
 - c. What activities ought it produce? (Ps 95:1-7)
 - d. What difficulties are there in worshiping or attempting to please God (Rom 11:33-35)?
5. What interaction does God have in the world of men?
 - a. II Pet 2:3-9
 - b. II Pet 3:3-7
6. Has God acted in a way to help mankind know Him?
 - a. Heb 1:1-3
 - b. Jn 1:14
 - c. I Cor 2:9-16
7. What appears to be the goal of true religion, that is, the seeking to know God?
 - a. II Pet 1:3,4 (note the objective, transferable basis)
 - b. Jn 1:12
 - c. Who is to be [re]made in whose image? (I Pet 1:23)
8. Has God typically guided the forms of worship to Him?
 - a. Ex 25:40 (and see Heb 8:5)
 - b. I Chron 28:11,12,19
 - c. Heb 9:24
9. Are there false religions, doctrines, and practices? What makes them false?
 - a. Lev 10:1-3
 - b. II Pet 2:1-2
 - c. II Tim 3:5
 - d. I Tim 4:1-3
 - e. Col 2:16-18; 20-22
10. Does Christianity exclude other religions?
 - a. Jn 8:24
 - b. Jn 14:6
 - c. Acts 4:12; 10:34-43; 17:23,29-31

C. Applications

1. Is religion really an optional activity? Explain? How should a Christian view the non-Christian religious world (see, for example, Matt 4:15,16 and Isaiah 9:1,2, 6-9)?
2. Is it consistent with Bible teaching that a religious group (even associated with “Christianity”) should be self-defining, and self-governing with an ever-evolving set of beliefs (see for example II Thes 3:6,14,15)?
3. Are there some goals that should have precedence (such as changing the spiritual side of man) in religious belief and practice? Are these the goals of most religious groups?
4. For Questions 2 & 3 above, what support should be given to religious groups who appear to be in error in these ways? For example: what potential benefit can be derived from work and/or products that come from groups whose beliefs are similar in some ways and different in others? (e.g. Promise Keepers or Campus Christian groups.) Is there a potential for fellowship in these works? Are there dangers? (What are they?) What guidelines and/or limits might there be?
5. How would you respond to these statements:
 - a. “I’m looking for a church that’s open to all kinds of beliefs & worship forms: where people can follow their own conscience to be better people, and strive together to make the world a better place.”
 - b. “My pastor explained that the Bible is one of the many ways man has sought to make sense of a frightening, uncertain world. Those who choose to follow it can achieve a measure of peace in its teaching, but there are other, equally valid paths.”

Lesson List

Lesson 3

Man and the Supernatural

1. God is Totally Spirit, but Interacts with the Physical World (Creation, Providence, Miracles, Revelation...).
2. Man has a Spiritual Component which is Responsive to God, & Leads to Religious Aspirations & Activities.
3. God Revealed Himself to Us, especially in the Incarnation of Christ.
4. God Revealed to Man what is Acceptable Behavior, Including Instructions for Our Worship to Him.
5. Christianity is Exclusive. (Other Religions & Religious Activities are not Acceptable to God.)

God (Spiritual)

Creation Miracles Judgment
Providence Revelation

Spirit of Man (Physical)

Lesson Logic

Christian World View - mmbjr

God

Single,
Revealed
Will

Religion 1 Religion 2 Religion 3

Man Man Man