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# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**Acts 17:10-11**  
**Lesson #1**  
**Being a Berean**  
**09/25/2022**

*Acts 17*

“10 And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for **they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so.** 12 Many of them therefore believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.”

1. **Berean Christians are seeker skeptics with receptive hearts and rational minds.** 1

**A robust, healthy faith is:**



- ✓ Intellectually **convincing.**
- ✓ Spiritually **satisfying.**
- ✓ Morally **transforming.**
- ✓ Socially **connecting.**
- ✓ Culturally **inspiring.**

2

*1 Peter 3:15*

“... sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being **ready to make a defense to everyone who asks** you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet **with gentleness and reverence;**”

2. **Berean Christians are expected to be able to defend “the faith” when asked, with sensitivity and respectfulness.** 3

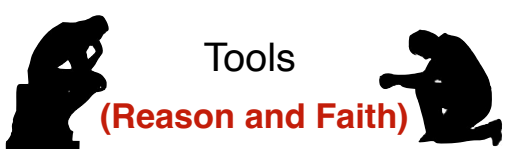
**Welcome to the Berean’s soul.**

**General revelation**  
(the “image of God” in nature and us)

Data

**Special revelation**  
(the Spirit of God in word and church)

**God’s Word, Spirit, and Image work together, leading to a commitment.**



Tools  
**(Reason and Faith)**

4

**Humans seem incurably RELIGIOUS, grounding their lives on faith based presuppositions.**

- This includes but extends beyond formal institutional religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, etc.) to embrace metaphysical materialism, secular humanism, etc.
- Presuppositions are by nature faith based and when not affiliated with formal religion are often subconscious.

**Humans are also incredibly RATIONAL, building on their presuppositions a set of assertions and behaviors that are justified as logical extensions of their beliefs.**

- These assertions and behaviors though rational are often defended without acknowledging the faith (religious) presuppositions on which they are based.

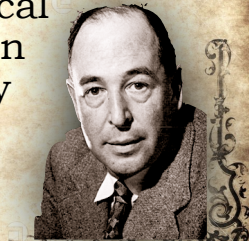
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“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.”



Blaise Pascal

“As an atheist I believed that everything that made my life exciting and worth living was an illusion and that reality (philosophical materialism) was in the end intolerably boring.”

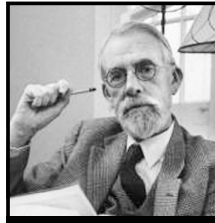


C.S. Lewis



“I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand.”

Anselm of Canterbury

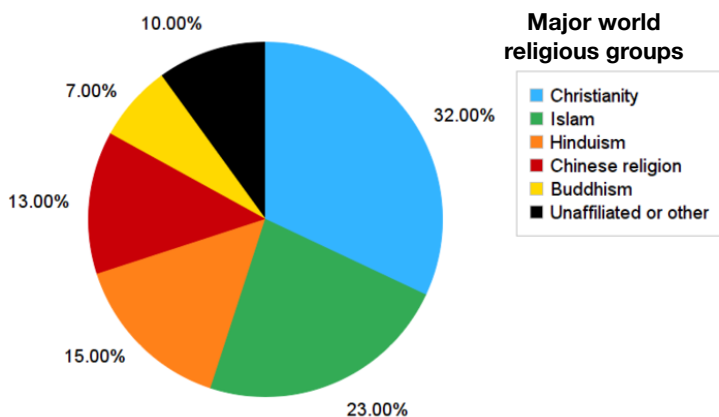


“Every culture has a religion at its core.”

Christopher Dawson  
 (“the greatest English-speaking Catholic historian of the 20th century”)

“Religion is that which occupies the place that belief in God occupies in the life of a believer.”

*U.S. Supreme Court*



90% of the world's population are religious.  
 80% of Americans claim to believe in God.  
 40% claim to be spiritually “born again”.

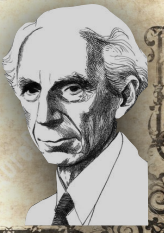
### 1 Corinthians 1

“23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a **stumbling block**, and to Gentiles **foolishness**, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the **power of God and the wisdom of God.**”

3. **Berean Christians realize that only a remnant will have “ears to hear”.**

When asked why he did not believe in the Christian God he replied,  
**“Not enough evidence, not enough evidence.”**

“Whatever knowledge is attainable, must be attained by scientific methods; and what science cannot discover, mankind cannot know.”


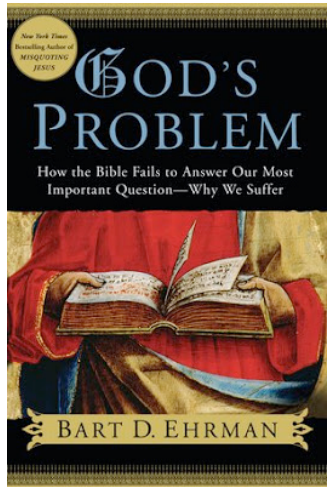


*Bertrand Russell*  
 (philosopher)

12

“Why the Bible Fails to Answer our Most Important Question – Why we Suffer?”

“I just began to lose it. It wasn’t for lack of trying. But I just couldn’t believe there was a God in charge of this mess.”


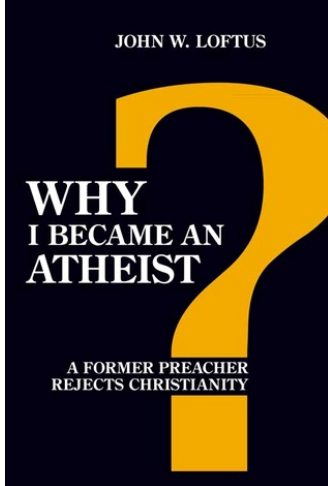



**Bart D. Ehrman**

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“I had too much to live with and not enough to live for.”

“My expectations of faith, prayer, the church, & God were crushed.”

**John W. Loftus**

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*These authors raise serious challenges*

- Their observations are fair & accurate.
- Their reasoning is sound.
- In the end they present a powerful case against orthodox Christianity that cannot be refuted.

***IF** you start with their (faith) presuppositions.*

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*Matthew 6*


“22 **The lamp of the body is the eye;** if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. . . . 24 **No one can serve two masters;** for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

**Our reasoning will be influenced by our presuppositions (foundational worldview).**

**We may reside in two worlds but we cannot be governed by two.**

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“If you want small changes in your life, work on your attitude. But if you want big and primary changes, work on your paradigm.”



Stephen R. Covey

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**Secular Humanism**  
(Life independent of God)

Defining reality and making decisions as though God did not exist or did not matter.

- Total **Temporality**
- Radical **Relativity**
- Absolute **Autonomy**
- Egocentric **Entitlement**
- Metaphysical **Materialism**
- Comprehensive **Contingency**



Faith in mother nature

Understanding the roots of secular humanism.

**The Enlightenment had a dark side**

- **Empirical Reason** - over tradition, religion, and superstition.
- **Philosophical Materialism** - Reality is nothing but space, time, energy, and matter.
- **Individual Freedom** - Question all external authority. Roles & value are based on achievements.



The human spirit is the holy spirit

*2 Corinthians 5:7*

“for we walk by faith, not by sight”

**Wisdom in this life calls on more than our five senses.**

*1 Corinthians 13:12*

“For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known.”

**Full knowledge awaits our union with God.**

**4. Berean Christian’s affirmations are punctuated with:**



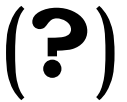
“I AM FULLY CONVINCED.”



“I have some settled beliefs.”



“I have tentative insights.”



“I only have questions.”

*1 Corinthians 13:12*

“For now we see in a **mirror** dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but **then I shall know fully** just as I also have been fully known.”



**Some wrongly understand this as a spiritual sign of growth.**



“I HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.”



“I have some settled beliefs.”



“I have tentative insights.”



“I only have questions.”

**Maturity**

**Immaturity**

**Wisdom and maturity bring clearer priorities and humility.**



“I AM FULLY CONVINCED.”



“I have some settled beliefs.”



“I have tentative insights.”



“I only have questions.”

**Major on majors not minors.**

*1 Corinthians 4:6*

“so that you may learn not to exceed what is written, **so that no one of you will become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.**”



### *Deuteronomy 29:29*

“The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”

#### **5. Berean Christian’s raise questions that they cannot answer.**

**All we need to know for peace in life is revealed in what God HAS revealed.**

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### *You might be a Berean if:*

- ✓ you have a **longing** for peace with God, self, and others
- ✓ you demand a **rationale** for your faith
- ✓ you distinguish between **major** and **minor** issues.
- ✓ you do not believe **everything** you hear
- ✓ you recognize that Scripture is written **FOR** you but not always **TO** you or **ABOUT** you
- ✓ you respect **context**, (historical, literary, cultural, and circumstantial)

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### *Some general rules in dealing with theological difficulties.*

- ✓ There are many **more wrong answers** than right answers.
- ✓ We will always **fail to see some things** clearly in this life.
- ✓ It is wiser to live with a paradox than to remove it with an **erroneous dogma**.
- ✓ Certainty is based on evidence, logic, culture, and **commitment (faith)**.
- ✓ Respect for 1) the **complexity** of an issue and 2) those who **honestly differ**, are gracious virtues.

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### *Class Objectives*

- ✓ Not to insist on my view or have the final word on difficult issues.
- ✓ Help us know how to read the Bible.
- ✓ Help us know God, not just a narrow stereotype of God.
- ✓ Help us talk about God in meaningful and sensitive ways.
- ✓ Help us appreciate and respect sincere people who disagree with us.

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### *Some mistakes we make in trying to resolve difficulties.*

- ✓ **Blindly following** tradition and culture.
- ✓ **Demonizing** all who disagree with us.
- ✓ **Dogmatically** defending our opinions on all points.
- ✓ **Dramatizing** every issue as a “major.”
- ✓ **Demanding** that everything be Black & White.
- ✓ **Expecting** that God will give us special revelation knowledge through prayer.
- ✓ Refusing to be open to change by **personalizing** all convictions.

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### *Theological issues*

- Faith & Works
- Science & Faith
- God’s existence
- Divine fairness
- Volition & Predestination
- The judgment of God
- The authority of Scripture
- Homosexuality

### *Pastoral issues*

- How can I be assured of my salvation?
- How does real change take place?
- What is the normal Christian life?
- How can I know God’s will?
- Who should I listen to?



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# A Berean's look at ...

Next week  
Rom. 1:18-25

The  
existence  
of God

**APTOTEACH**  
A bishop then must be ... apt to teach 1 Timothy 3:2


Monday, April 04, 2016

HOME ABOUT BIBLE INSIGHTS HARD QUESTIONS HOT TOPICS THEOLOGY

Search  
Only search Aptoteach


### Current Lesson

(35) 04/03/2016 - Jn 10:1-21 The Good Shepherd



**Popular**

- CURRENT LESSON
- CUR... SERIES
- CHR... POLITICS
- LEA... RABLES
- HARD QU...
- SERMON ON... UNT
- PSALM 23
- ACTS OF THE APOSTLES
- JONAH
- DANIEL
- GALATIANS

 LISTEN

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