



How Do We Know Christianity is the One True Religion?

Apologetics Conference

Smithville, OH

Nov 9, 2024

I'm glad you asked!

- ▶ We want to welcome new questions as they arise.
- ▶ We want our homes and churches to be safe places to ask questions and share our doubts.

Goals & Ground Rules

- ▶ Give good answers for Christians
- ▶ Give good answers for non-believers
 - ▶ 1 Peter 3:15, *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an **answer** to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with **meekness and fear***
 - ▶ Ephesians 4:15 *But speaking the **truth in love**, ...*
- ▶ Case for Christianity is **powerful** and **compelling!**
 - ▶ However, don't exaggerate, overstate, or oversimplify
- ▶ High-level review - can't go deep into details/nuances
 - ▶ See recommended resources for further inquiry - *All recommended sources should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.*
- ▶ Starting Point (Presupposition) - **The Bible is God's Word**

“Know” vs. “Prove”

- ▶ We didn't ask *"How do we **PROVE** Christianity is true?"*
- ▶ **We don't put God on trial**
- ▶ God and the Bible is our **Ultimate Authority**
- ▶ Jesus' temptation in the desert (Matthew 4:7)
- ▶ The reasons and evidences that **CONFIRM** the Bible are overwhelming.
- ▶ We can **KNOW** that Christianity is true, and we **CHOOSE** to believe the Bible and put our faith in Jesus.

Two Ways to Approach This Question

How Do We Know Christianity is the One True Religion?

- ▶ Use **Negative Arguments** (eliminate all other options)
 - ▶ Show that all other religions or worldviews are false, and therefore only Christianity can be true
 - ▶ Do an internal critique - non-Christian worldviews disqualify themselves
- ▶ Use **Positive Arguments** (give evidential reasons)
 - ▶ Show that Christianity is true, and it has exclusive claims, and therefore all other religions are false
 - ▶ John 14:6 - Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
 - ▶ Acts 4:12 - Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved
- ▶ Let's have a "**Worldview Contest**" to examine the alternatives to Christianity.

Negative Arguments

Worldview Contest

- ▶ “Contest” Rules - Test worldviews using the **AIP methodology**.
- ▶ A True Worldview ...
- ▶ Can't be **Arbitrary** (must have reasons for a belief)
 - ▶ *“No one can simply assert a claim that has no reason behind it and expect others to accept this claim.”*
- ▶ Can't be **Inconsistent** (can't contradict itself)
 - ▶ *“In logical reasoning, no one is allowed to be inconsistent -- to have contrary views.”*
- ▶ Must allow for **Preconditions of Intelligibility** (morality, logic, uniformity)
 - ▶ *“A rational worldview must be able to provide justification for those things necessary for logical reasoning.”*
- ▶ A worldview that fails any of these tests **disqualifies** itself and should be **rejected**

First Contest - Theism (god) vs. Atheism (no god)

▶ **Inconsistency Test**

- ▶ Morality - Atheists usually have some moral code.
 - ▶ Don't lie or steal. Why not?
 - ▶ Atheists don't live consistent with their worldview
 - ▶ Atheists have to "borrow" morality from Christianity
- ▶ **Result: Theism moves ahead in the contest because Atheism fails the AIP test**

For more details about the AIP method, see [*Nuclear Strength Apologetics*](#) and [*The Ultimate Proof of Creation*](#) from Answers in Genesis

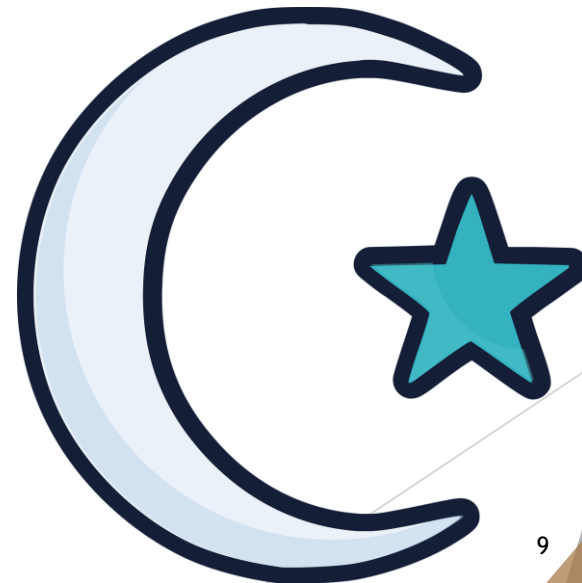
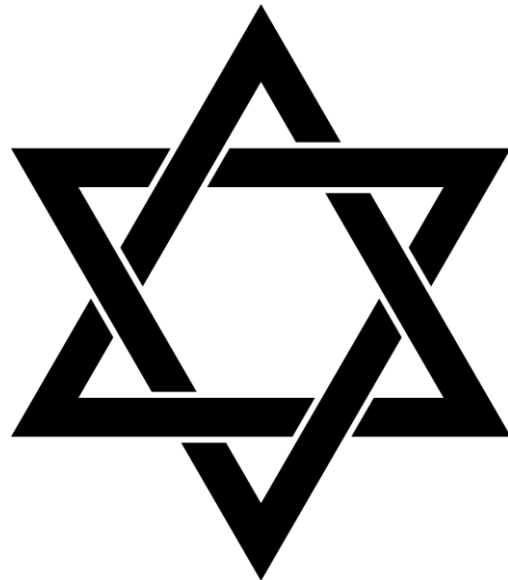
Second Contest - **Monotheism** (one god) vs. **Polytheism** (many gods)

▶ **Inconsistency Test**

- ▶ Use Hinduism for this example
 - ▶ Hindus say this world is an illusion, but they must live like this world is real.
 - ▶ They reject logic, but then they may inadvertently use logic to try to convince you of their worldview.
- ▶ **Result: Monotheism** moves ahead because **Polytheism** fails the **AIP** test

Third Contest - Which monotheistic religion is true? (Christianity vs. Judaism vs. Islam)

- ▶ All three religions share portions of the same scriptures (the Bible)
- ▶ They don't necessarily worship the same God



Third Contest - Which monotheistic religion is true? (Christianity vs. Islam)

▶ **Inconsistency Test**

- ▶ "The Koran acknowledges the words of Moses, David, and Jesus to be the words of prophets sent by Allah"
- ▶ But the words of Jesus, Moses, and David contradict the Koran.

▶ **Result: Christianity moves ahead because Islam fails the AIP test**

Third Contest - Which monotheistic religion is true? (Christianity vs. Judaism)

▶ Inconsistency Test

- ▶ Old Testament (OT) feels like an unfinished story
 - ▶ The whole Bible points to a Saviour - Jesus
 - ▶ More than 50 specific OT messianic prophecies fulfilled by Jesus (Example - Isaiah 53)
- ▶ Jewish leaders were so opposed to Jesus, they become illogical
 - ▶ Empty tomb explanation (“disciples stole the body”) is irrational and self-contradictory
- ▶ Result: **Christianity** moves ahead because **Judaism** fails the **AIP** test

Worldview Contest - Christianity wins

- ▶ In our simple contest, all other religions have been disqualified.
- ▶ Impossibility of the Contrary
 - ▶ *“We show the truth of the Christian worldview by showing that the alternative is self-defeating.”*
- ▶ Now, let’s review the **Positive Arguments** for Christianity



Positive Arguments for Christianity - Ground Rules

- ▶ Many of the positive arguments & evidences will be about the Bible; it is the foundation of Christianity.
- ▶ John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
- ▶ **God = Jesus = Bible**
- ▶ **Bible ≈ Christianity**
- ▶ Remember **Know** vs. **Prove**
 - ▶ Use evidence to **confirm** the Bible is true, not “**prove**” it.

How **DO** we know Christianity is true?

- ▶ Three Ways to Answer *(among many others)*
 1. By Evaluating Worldviews
 2. By Reading the Bible
 3. By Examining the Evidence

1 - Evaluating Worldviews

How does Christianity handle the **AIP** Test?

- ▶ **Arbitrary** Test (reasons for belief)
 - ▶ Christianity is based on the Bible which has been tested and confirmed.
 - ▶ Many good reasons to believe the Bible
- ▶ **Inconsistency** Test (contradictions)
 - ▶ One consistent story - pointing to Jesus
 - ▶ Apparent Contradictions vs. Actual Contradictions
- ▶ **Preconditions of Intelligibility** Test (morality, logic, uniformity)
 - ▶ God can't lie (Titus 1:2); can't deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13)
 - ▶ God promises relative consistency in nature (Genesis 8:22 & Jeremiah 33:20-25)
 - ▶ Logic, morality, uniformity/consistency are characteristics of God
- ▶ **Result: Christianity passes the AIP test**

2 - Reading the Bible

- ▶ Romans 10:17 - *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*
- ▶ The Bible is Self-Authenticating (*it proves itself*)
 - ▶ “The Bible bears evidence within itself of its own divine origins”
 - ▶ "The Bible has divine characteristics, or marks in it that show it to be a divine book.”
- ▶ Marks of authenticity in the Bible
 - ▶ Beauty and Excellency of the Scripture
 - ▶ Unity and Harmony of the Scripture
 - ▶ Power and Efficacy of the Scripture (it changes people's lives)

3 - Examining the Evidence

▶ Three Tests for Ancient Historical Documents

1. Bibliographical Test
2. Internal Evidence Test
3. External Evidence Test

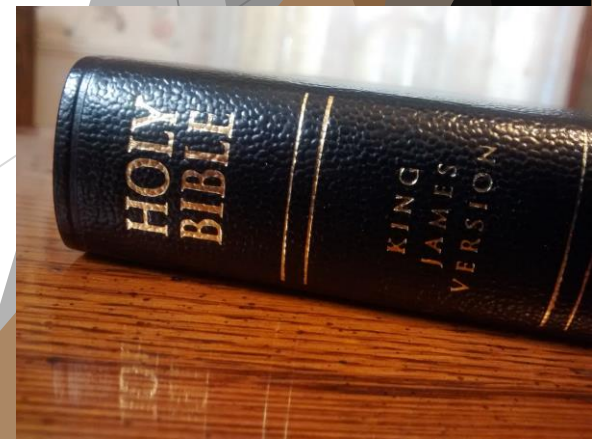
3 - Examining the Evidence

1. Bibliographical Test

- ▶ How many copies are there?
- ▶ How close in time are they to the original?
- ▶ Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars (53 BC)
 - ▶ ~250 copies
 - ▶ ~900 years after original
- ▶ Bible - New Testament (~60 AD)
 - ▶ ~26,000 copies
 - ▶ ~50 years after original
- ▶ *"The manuscript evidence for the New Testament is overwhelming when compared to the evidence for other ancient works."*



Caesar
The Gallic War
A new translation by Carolyn Hammond
OXFORD WORLD'S CLASSICS



3- Examining the Evidence

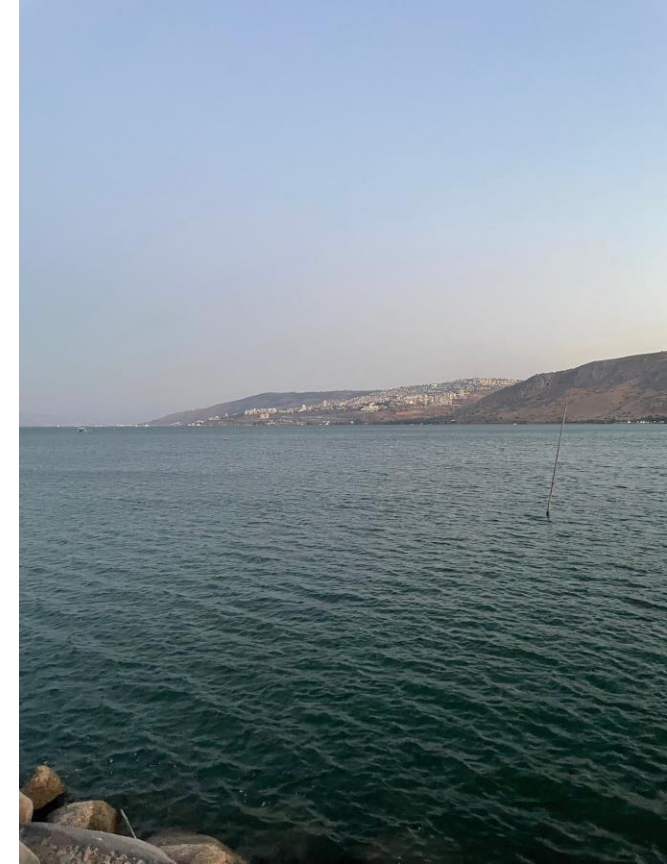
2. Internal Evidence Test

- ▶ Is the document internally consistent?
 - ▶ The Bible doesn't contradict itself or have any known factual errors.
- ▶ Consistency (non-contradiction), properly understood, is a compelling strength of Christianity.

3 - Examining the Evidence

3. External Evidence Test

- ▶ Does the document agree with other external sources and known facts?
 - ▶ Geography - Sea of Galilee
 - ▶ Church Father's writings
 - ▶ Jewish & Romans writings
- ▶ The Bible **passes** all three of the ancient historical document tests with flying colors.
- ▶ **There is no comparison**, in terms of evidence, between the Bible and any other ancient document.



Conclusion - *How do we know Christianity is the One True Religion?*

1. **Worldviews:** All other worldviews fail the **AIP** test. Christianity is the only worldview that passes the **AIP** test.
 2. **Bible:** The Bible shows evidence in itself that it is from God. It changes people's lives in positive, objective ways.
 3. **Evidence:** The cumulative evidence that **confirms** the Bible is overwhelming; it is beyond a reasonable doubt.
 - ▶ A torrent of evidence ...
- ▶ Christianity is not a blind faith.
 - ▶ It's a **reasonable faith in Jesus** that is supported by evidence.
 - ▶ We can **choose** to put our faith in Jesus.
 - ▶ We can say with conviction, "We can **KNOW** that Christianity is the one true religion."

Appendix - Resources

- ▶ *All recommended sources should be read with discernment. Suggested readings do not necessarily mean endorsement of all views presented.*
- ▶ Conferences - [Apostolic Christian ETR website](#) (previous apologetics conferences)
- ▶ Book - [Cold Case Christianity](#) - J Warner Wallace
- ▶ Book - [More Than a Carpenter](#) - Josh McDowell
- ▶ Video - [Can We Trust the New Testament Manuscripts?](#) - Tim Chaffey
- ▶ Book - [Demolishing Supposed Bible Contradictions](#)
- ▶ Audio - [How Do We Know the Bible is God's Word?](#) - Michael J. Kruger
- ▶ Video - [Nuclear Strength Apologetics](#) - Jason Lisle
- ▶ Book - [The Ultimate Proof of Creation](#) - Jason Lisle
- ▶ Book - [The Case for Christ](#) - Lee Strobel
- ▶ eBook - [The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Draw Closer to God](#) - Gary Habermas
- ▶ Museum - [University of Chicago](#) (ancient artifacts from Bible times)
- ▶ Video - [Why you can believe the Bible](#) - Voddie Baucham
- ▶ Book - [World Religions and Cults](#) - Hodge & Patterson