

Answering A Bible Critic #1

Introduction. There is no doubt about it; Jesus is just as much of a controversial figure today as He was in ancient times. Christians have a duty to share the gospel with unbelievers, and in doing this, we will very likely run into what we might call a “Bible critic,” that is, someone who objects to the gospel. The objections will be reasons or arguments attempting to persuade us that the gospel is false.

A lot of us have encountered these arguments, and it is important for every Christian to know how to respond to them for two reasons. First, so that you can satisfy yourself that your belief is not misplaced because of bad arguments like these. Second, so that you can charitably show others why these arguments fail. By learning how to answer a Bible critic, you can both strengthen your own faith and help someone by removing any “intellectual obstacles” that might be in their way.

With these two reasons in mind, we will examine five of the ten worst objections to biblical faith and how you can respond to them. The other five will be examined in tonight’s lesson.

I. “Christians Are A Bunch Of Hypocrites”

- A. First, it is certainly true that a lot of Christians are hypocrites. Christians are former sinners just like everybody else. But that is not necessarily bad because these former sinners were at least looking for help. So it is actually positive that they are in a worship assembly! Where else could they go to learn how to stop sinning and become a holy person?
 1. Jesus never claimed to have all perfect followers. In fact, one of His own apostles, Judas, was a hypocrite. So yes, there are a lot of bad people who are Christians, but nothing of interest follows from this. Surely it is not fair to judge a religion based on those who do not follow what it teaches.
 2. Jesus preached against hypocrisy (Matthew 6:1-2, 5, 16). In fact, He despised it! So why is it fair to judge Christians based on the behavior of people who do not do what it says? A religion should be judged on what it professes, not on the failings of those who do not live in accord with its teachings.
- B. Second, this objection forgets that there are also a lot of great examples of people who truly live the gospel as Jesus preached. These holy and kind people are the ones who are not hypocritical (James 3:17; 1 Peter 2:1) and are really doing what Jesus taught (Luke 6:27-36). Do you not think it is more fair to judge the gospel based on their example?
- C. Third and most important, however, is that this objection really misses the point. Just because there are bad people in churches does not mean it is false. If Jesus was really the divine Son of God with a true message for all people, then His gospel is true, regardless of whether or not there are bad people who call themselves Christians.
- D. So while we can all agree that some Christians are failures, this says nothing about whether or not Jesus really was the divine being He claimed to be. In other words, one should not conclude that the gospel is false just because there are bad Christians.

II. “God Does Not Care Which Religion You Believe”

- A. First, where did you get this idea? How do you know what God cares about? Has He told you? The only way we know the mind of God is through His revelation of Himself (1 Corinthians 2:11-13).
- B. Second, it is impossible for all religions to be true, since they make contradictory claims. So if one religion is true, then it follows that any other religion which contradicts the true one must be false. God, being all-wise and loving, prefers that you believe truth over error (1 John 4:1, 6).
- C. Third, the God of the Bible certainly cares about which religion you believe. In the Old Testament the Jewish people were constantly warned not to worship the gods of the pagans (Exodus 20:2-3). Moreover, Jesus thinks it matters what religion you believe and said so while He was on Earth (Mark 16:15-16).
 - 1. James 1:27 mentions “pure religion.” Pure religion is more than visiting and keeping oneself unstained from the world, although this is commanded (Galatians 6:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:13). The part of speech that is used here is synecdoche and it simply means that a part is used for the whole.
 - 2. James 1:22 states that we must be doers of the word (cp. 2:18-20). Pure religion demands:
 - a) Fear and respect of God (Deuteronomy 10:12; Ecclesiastes 12:13).
 - b) A love of God (Deuteronomy 10:12; Mark 12:29-30).
 - c) A knowledge of God (Hosea 6:6).
 - d) Humility and true righteousness (Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:20).
 - e) A love for ourselves and for our neighbor (Romans 13:10).
 - f) Obedience to Christ (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matthew 16:16; John 3:5).
 - g) Faithful continuation to the end (Colossians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:7-8).

III. “Christians Always Think They Are Right And Everyone Else Is Wrong”

- A. What is wrong with thinking that you are right? Do not the people who offer this objection think they are right and all Christians are wrong? Does not everyone, whether they are an atheist, Muslim, agnostic or whatever, think they are right and everyone else is wrong? If people did not think they were right about their views, they would not hold them!
- B. Arrogance is wrong (1 Samuel 2:3; Proverbs 8:13; Isaiah 13:11), but the question really is does the believable, reliable Bible present a fixed standard of truth? Christians follow the Bible because they are convinced it is the unalterable truth of God’s demands on His people (Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19).
- C. There is certainly nothing wrong with thinking that you are right when you have good reasons for what you believe. That is all Christians claim about the Bible and their position: the Bible will judge us and it contains “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (John 12:48; 2 Peter 1:3-4).

IV. “Christians Are Always Trying To Evangelize Others”

- A. Christians believe that it is important to help others come to know Christ and follow His teachings, for Christ told us to evangelize (Luke 24:46-49; John 4:34-35; cp. Mark 5:19). Furthermore, Christians believe that getting others to

follow Christ is the most loving and helpful act one can do for another and for this reason, they are compelled to attempt teaching their faith to others (Mark 10:17-21; Jude 22-23).

- B. So, if you do not care what Christians believe, then you cannot consistently condemn them for trying to evangelize others, because that very desire to evangelize comes from what they believe! If the gospel is true, then surely there is nothing wrong with helping others come to know this truth.

V. “Christians Try To Impose Their Views On Others Politically”

- A. To clarify, this is not really a view about religion; rather, you are expressing a political view about participatory government in which the population is allowed to vote and have a voice on how the country should be run.
- B. As for our system here in the United States, which technically is a constitutionally limited representative democratic republic, you have your views and others have theirs and every qualifying person gets their say by virtue of the representatives they elect to office.
 - 1. Christians vote on what they think is best for the country just like everyone else. The system works by majority rule. So Christians are not “imposing” their view on others by lobbying and voting any more than any other group “imposes” their view by lobbying and voting.
 - 2. Everyone gets a voice and the majority voice wins. That is how our political system works. If you do not like that, then you do not have a problem with the Bible, you have a problem with America’s political philosophy.
- C. Christians, as they observe the political landscape, can perceive that the pendulum is swinging against them. Growing tolerance for religions that seek to do them harm, such as Islam, and for sinful activities, such as same-sex marriage, are troubling at best and opposed to the scriptures at worst. When the government seems to be turning against Christians, they can know that God rules in the kingdom of men (Daniel 4:25), have the dedication of Daniel (Daniel 6:10), and be assured that victory belongs to the faithful (Revelation 12:11; 17:14).

Conclusion. I know that you have heard these objections in the past, but as you can see, answering them is not difficult if you know your Bible. Believe that the gospel can rise above these objections and give you a deep, lasting faith.