

## Lecture 1—Getting Our Bearings

### What is a religion?

*A religion is a system that appeals to transcendence to answer the core questions of the human experience*

### Primary Elements of Religion

1. A notion of God or gods
2. Authorized teaching
3. An ethic
4. A way of worship
5. Leadership

### Core Questions of the Human Experience

1. Where did the world come from?
2. What is the point of my life?
3. What does it mean to live well?
4. Why shouldn't I do bad things? How do I morally self-regulate?
5. Why is there so much suffering?
6. What happens after I die

### Questions that Distinguish Religions

- What is God like?
- What is the most basic human problem?
- Where is our hope?
- How do we restore relationship with God?

Religion	Core Concern	Insufficient Solution
Buddhism	Escaping the problem of suffering	But the answer is to repudiate the goodness of human existence.
Islam	Awe before divine immensity	But the result is a God who is disconnected from our existence and who we would not want to emulate.
Animism and Hinduism	Finding prosperity and managing life with the help of the gods	But the result is that everything is fundamentally ego-centric and we manage the gods like they are children.
Confucianism & Mormonism	Moral self-regulation	But how do we practically achieve the needed changes?
Catholicism	Dealing with guilt and meriting eternal life	But when will we achieve sufficient righteousness to give us rest?

Classroom Code: 2stxivj

Phone: (587) 594-0759

Email: Jarnold@foundationbaptistcollege.com

## Lecture 2—Creation, Fall, Redemption and Restoration

**1. False religions have deceived mankind since the very beginning** (Gen. 3-4) *“Has God actually said? Is God hiding good from you? Can't you decide for yourself?”*

**2. False Religion Sells: The Case of Balaam** (Num. 22-24; Num. 31:8; 2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 2:14) *Balaam embodies the false prophet: speaks truth but is spiritually corrupt. Do not be surprised when corrupt people sometimes speak the truth (Exodus 34).*

**3. Religions Syncretize. God's people are no exception** (Ex. 32:1-6; The book of Judges) *Israel blends God's worship with pagan practices.*

**4. False Religion Springs up from Within the True** (John 8:39-47) *It is the Pharisees that challenge Jesus.*

**5. False Religion is more alluring than the true** (John 8:45; 2 Tim. 4:2-4; 2 Pet. 2:1-3) *Do not be surprised when false religions flourish. The gospel is a hard truth to accept.*

**6. False Religion Unifies** (Gen. 11:1-9; Rev. 13:1-8; Rev. 17) *From the beginning of the biblical story to the end, nothing draws people together more effectively than organized denial of the gospel.*

### Is there good in religion?

- **Common Grace:** if humans had no notion of the divine, what kind of horrifying place would we live in?
- **General Revelation:** we can observe out that even deceptive religions find their true fulfillment in Christ.
- **Judgment:** People are satisfied enough by their pseudo-worship (Rom 2:14-15; Acts 17:22-23).

**There is an Ultimate Demonic Influence Behind False Religion** (Lev. 17:7; Deut. 4:19; 32:15-17; Psa 106:35-38; 1 Cor. 10:20-21; 1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 9:20; 2 Cor 4:1-6)

### We are Nothing Special

We are tempted to feel particularly embattled against the false religions that surround us and pervade our culture. Remember that every generation has faced the same challenges.