

Answering TikTok Question Part 1: Why Should I Believe Christianity?

Acts 17:16-34

Today we're going to answer the question: *what are the reasons that I should believe Christianity?*

There are many reasons people reject the faith (the problem of evil, hell, hypocrisy, church hurt, science, Bible 'contradictions', Bible violence/slavery, exclusivity of Christianity, etc.), but this message will address some reasons to believe, especially in a world that is so skeptical of Christianity.

In our passage, Paul addresses a non-believing city and gives two simple reasons. But it's also important to note, not just **WHY** he says to believe but **HOW** he addresses this pagan culture.

Athens, Greece was known as the birthplace of philosophy. It was a city of ideas, debates, and intellectual curiosity. Archeology confirms there were many statues, altars and temples everywhere.

I. Paul's Method in Answering Athens

1. He starts with observation, not accusation
2. He affirms their search, even though it's misguided.
3. He speaks their language.
4. Paul builds a bridge, not a wall.
5. He presents truth unashamedly without condemnation.

II. Paul's Message in Answering Athens

1. **Paul Reveals God:** Paul doesn't begin with Moses and Law (as if he was speaking to Jews), he begins with God in creation. Having an understanding of God, who he is
 - a. God is the Creator of All
 - b. God is the Sustainer and Ruler of All People
 - c. God is the Judge of All People
2. **Paul Reveals the Resurrection of Jesus:** How do we know Jesus is the way? God raised Jesus from the dead. It's the ultimate proof that Jesus is Lord.
 - a. Paul Preached the good news of the resurrection v. 18
 - b. Jesus is the man whom God has appointed to judge the world v. 31a
 - c. God proved this by raising him from the dead v. 31b
3. **The People's Response:** People responded differently to Paul's message
 - a. Some Sneered
 - b. Others wanted to know more
 - c. Some believed

III. The 'Gospel Difference' in Christianity

Beyond Paul's foundational teaching of God and Jesus, I believe that the Gospel presents compelling reasons for Christianity (much different than other religions).

1. The Gospel is Good News
2. The Gospel Meets Human Needs
3. The Gospel is Based on Relationship
4. The Gospel Gives Identity and Transformation
5. The Gospel Gives a Hopeful Perspective

Conclusion: The answer about 'why Christianity' ultimately comes down to Christ. The resurrection is the anchor to our faith. Details can be debated, but a person's ultimate decision comes down to, 'what am I going to do with Christ?'

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Paul is speaking in the city of Athens, Greece, a center of philosophy, information, and religious beliefs/superstitions. In his sermon he argues 2 main points of Christianity: God and Jesus.

PART 1: SCRIPTURE DISCOVERY

1. Read aloud what Paul says about God in Acts 17:24-27.

- What do these verses say about the greatness of God and the ‘universality’ of God over mankind.
- What does God ultimately want from all humanity (v. 27)?

2. Read aloud what Paul says in Acts 17:30.

- According to this verse, what is it that Paul says God commands from all humanity?

3. Read aloud what Paul says in Acts 17:31.

- In speaking of judgement who does it say that God appointed to judge the world?
- What proof does God give for this person?
- What was Paul preaching according to Acts 17:18?

PART 2: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the introduction to the message, we looked at various reasons why people don’t believe Christianity. Can you name some of them?

- Have you known people (or you yourself) who rejected Christianity for these or other reasons?
- Do you think someone has to have ‘all the answers’ before they come to Christ? Why or why not?
- What do you think is the most important thing(s) people need to know to come to Christ?
- How would you respond to someone who has rejected Christianity?

2. What are your thoughts on *HOW* Paul engaged the pagan culture of Athens?

- Did he condemn them, or engage their curiosity in a peaceful way? (If needed, reread Acts 17:22-23).
- In your opinion, how good, or not good, of a job has modern Christianity don’t in engaging and meeting our contemporary culture where they are?
- What can the church overall do better in reaching the lost?
- How can 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 speak to how important it is to relate to the lost?

3. In what ways does the message of the good news of God’s grace differentiate from other religions?

- Why do you think many people have been turned off to a legalistic version of Christianity?
- Do you think Paul was more interested in the people of Athens following religious rules or coming to know Jesus?
- One of our points is that the Gospel gives us a hopeful perspective. In what ways have you experienced this hope in your life?

4. Take time to pray for the lost (if you know of someone personally, you can mention them), that they would know the truth about God, Jesus and the Gospel, and would come to faith.