

S T U D Y G U I D E

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ONLY

TWO

R E L I G I O N S

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Only Two Religions

Peter Jones



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

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Introduction

If you survey the religious landscape of modern culture, you will encounter an astonishingly diverse range of views. But beneath the surface, these seemingly disparate spiritualities share a common worldview, one that is radically opposed to the Christian faith. In this series, join Dr. Peter Jones as he examines the worldview and fundamental religious convictions that drive modern culture. He demonstrates that in the final analysis, there can be only two religions—worship of the Creator or worship of creation. By better understanding the present cultural context, you will be equipped to more clearly articulate the Christian faith and worldview to a world in need of redemption.

Explaining Modern Culture

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

During the 1960s, the United States underwent a paradigm shift in religion. A once-dominant Christian worldview was supplanted by a New Age spirituality that was anything but new. It was, rather, a rearticulation of ancient paganism. This pagan belief system is not limited to certain late-twentieth-century religions; it is the fundamental belief system of all non-Christian religions. One can thus draw a sharp distinction between Christianity, which worships the Creator, and paganism, which worships the creation. In this lecture, Dr. Peter Jones shows that there are only two possible religions. By better understanding other religions that share a common foundation, you will be better equipped to share the gospel with clarity and love.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Romans 1:18–25; Isaiah 44:9–20

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce the idea that modern culture is the battlefield between only two religions
2. To demonstrate how non-Christian religions share a similar ideology
3. To show the uniqueness of the Christian faith and worldview

QUOTATION

In the light of Scripture we learn to understand that religion is a relation in which man stands to God, a relation in which man is conscious of the absolute majesty and infinite power of God and of his own utter insignificance and absolute helplessness. It may be defined as a conscious and voluntary relationship to God, which expresses itself in grateful worship and loving service. The manner of this religious worship and service is not left to the arbitrary will of man, but is determined by God.

—Louis Berkhof

LECTURE OUTLINE

1. There are ultimately only two religions.
 - a. Modern culture is the battleground between these religions.
 - b. By understanding both religions, one can understand modern culture.
2. In the West, one religion dominated before the 1960s, another after the 1960s.
 - a. Before the 1960s
 - i. While not everyone was a Christian, most had a worldview heavily influenced by the biblical tradition.
 - ii. This affected their views on theology, morality, sexuality, marriage, etc.
 - b. During the 1960s
 - i. There was a “cataclysmic change” rather than a normal passing on of traditions from one generation to the next.
 - ii. The beliefs that dominated the West were redefined beyond recognition.
 - c. After the 1960s
 - i. There has been an increasing reassertion of ancient paganism, which was presented as something new.
 - ii. This has led to a departure from traditional views of God, morality, sexuality, marriage, etc.
3. The biblical reason for asserting only two religions
 - a. In Romans 1:25, Paul identifies two kinds of truth.
 - i. One can worship the Creator.
 - ii. One can worship the creation.
 - b. This provides a paradigm to understand the great variety of religions.
4. The essential beliefs of both religions
 - a. Oneism
 - i. It is the same as paganism and Gnosticism.
 - ii. It is the worship of creation, where everything is one, sharing the same substance.
 - iii. It reduces God to a piece of creation, making him the spirit within things.
 - b. Twoism
 - i. It asserts a clear distinction between Creator and creation.
 - ii. The only consistently twoist religion is Christianity.
5. The usefulness of a two-religion analysis of modern culture
 - a. Helps to identify and understand what’s happening in modern culture.
 - b. Helps to see how modern culture has influenced the church.
 - c. It shows that all non-Christian religions share a similar aim to reduce two to one, to destroy the distinction between Creator and creation.
 - i. Progressive spirituality
 1. It is the name for modern spirituality.

2. The goal of thinking is non-dual consciousness.
 3. Non-dual is good, and any duality is bad.
 - ii. Hinduism
 1. It is argued that a Hindu ideology in which all is one is taking over America.
 2. The important Sanskrit word for this is *Advaita*, “not two.”
 - iii. Islam
 1. Sufism (a branch of Islam) argues that Allah is everything and we are everything, too, which is oneism.
 2. Orthodox Islam
 - a. For Allah to be personal he had to create.
 - b. If he had to create, then he’s dependent.
 - c. The Creator’s dependence on creation is oneism.
 - d. It demonstrates the truthfulness and the essential coherence of the Christian faith.
 - i. Only the triune God can be separate from creation.
 - ii. Only the triune God is personal in His very essence.
6. Modern culture will adopt one of the two religions.
 - a. It can reform and embrace the Christian, twoist religion.
 - b. It can further embrace a pagan, oneist religion, and thus redefine Western civilization on the lie that nature is God.
 7. Christians must faithfully respond to the increasing dominance of pagan thought.
 - a. They must identify the ideology at the root of the various modern spiritualities.
 - b. They must articulate the gospel message.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. *Advaita* is a Sanskrit term meaning _____.
 - a. All is one
 - b. All is god
 - c. Not one
 - d. Not two
2. Islam is a religion that exemplifies consistent twoism.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Which of the following terms is synonymous with oneism?
 - a. Paganism
 - b. Atheism
 - c. Pantheism
 - d. Gnosticism

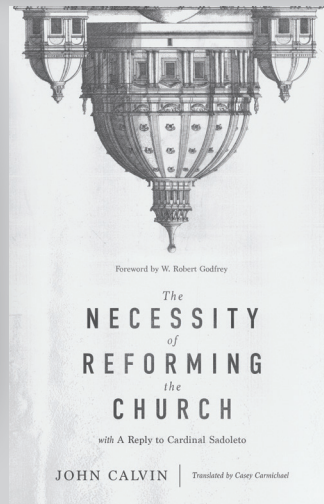
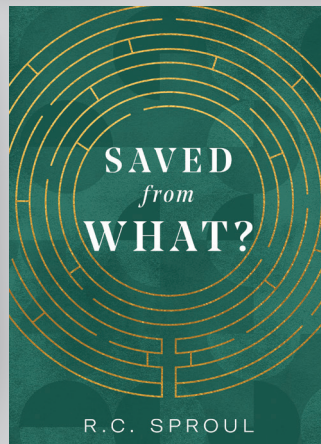
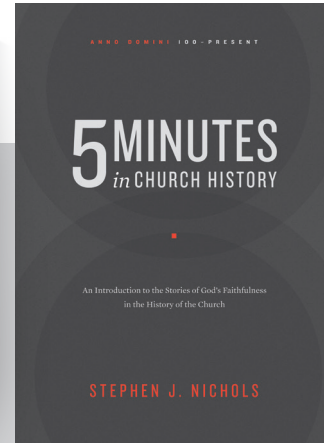
4. The only ultimate choice in religion is whether one will worship the Creator or the creation.
 - a. True
 - b. False

5. The change in Western religion that occurred in the 1960s has been characterized as a _____.
 - a. Gradual shift
 - b. Religious revival
 - c. Reformation
 - d. Cataclysmic transformation

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways that oneism manifests itself in popular television shows, movies, or books?
2. Within your own lifetime, have you seen your culture move further away from a Christian worldview? What are some areas in which you've witnessed this?
3. What are some motivations for Christians to take the time to study other religions?
4. Is the political arena an appropriate place for Christians to try to influence a country with their worldview? Why or why not?

We want to see men and women around the world connect
the deep truths of the Christian faith to everyday life.



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