

Reason 1: Christ Is Someone to Know and Trust

Our Daily Bread University
This course was developed by
Our Daily Bread University.



People in our day have a lot of reasons for avoiding organized religion. All too often religious faith is a source of hatred and prejudice rather than love and mutual respect.

All too often religion is seen as a source of hypocrisy and self-contradiction.

All too often the prophets of organized religion are seen as doing more harm than good to common values of tolerance and personal freedom.

This is the land of the Bible. The modern State of Israel. Known for its land, its people, and its religion. What is most significant about this land is that it provides a historical and geographical backdrop for three of the world's great religions. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all trace their roots to this land, and to its times. Three religions each with a rich tradition and each inclined to lead its followers into a practice of ritual that falls short of a growing relationship with God.

Jimmy De Young: This is a cave on the Mount of Olives. It's the Gethsemane Grotto, an ancient burial site here in the city of Jerusalem.

Mart De Haan: Many believe that it's the cave where the disciples of Jesus may have run after his betrayal at the first crucifixion. Some believe that this is where the disciples slept as Jesus agonized in prayer in Gethsemane.

Jimmy De Young: In fact, there are some archeologists that believe that this is the site of an ancient olive press here at the time of Jesus Christ. You see, Gethsemane means olive press. Possibly there were even five olive presses right here in this particular cave.

Mart De Haan: If you were to come here today, it would not seem like a cave. You wouldn't see an olive press, but it would seem like you're in a very religious atmosphere. There's a wall mural—disciples. There's Mary. Here's another picture of Jesus and the disciples on the wall, on an altar. Over here a crucifix. You find yourself in a very religious place which is very typical of many sites in the Holy Land.

Jimmy De Young: You know, we are having Bible teaching for those who travel throughout the Holy Land. We encourage them not to worship the site, but to worship the Person, Jesus Christ.

Mart De Haan: It's a wonderful thing when religion can be used to bring us into a personal relationship with God, but always in our religion, we have to realize, and I believe this site is a good reminder. This place was once linked very closely, not merely to the practice of religion, but to men and women who had met a Man who had changed their lives, a Person, Jesus of Nazareth, who became the focus of their faith.

Michael Wilkins: The way that I understand Jesus coming on the scene of the first century was really radical in that He came to offer Himself. There were a lot of other kinds of religious groups in the first century. There were disciples of John the Baptist, disciples of the Pharisees, and they each had their unique religious beliefs. And they were very important to them, and these were very devout, serious people who wanted to pursue what they thought was the truth. And Jesus came to where they were, and He said, Come and follow Me, and what I will do is . . . I will bring you all your hopes and your dreams.

Kerby Anderson: I think Christianity is unique in the sense that it is based upon a Person who fulfilled Old Testament prophecy, who prophesied His own death and resurrection and fulfilled that. And it is based upon that relationship we have with Him.

For the three years preceding Jesus' death and resurrection, people living within the walls of Jerusalem and along the shores of Galilee heard the teacher from Nazareth make an issue not merely of religion, but of a relationship with Himself. For three years of public life, Jesus angered religious leaders and comforted broken hearts by offering to bring to the Father all who trusted Him. By His stories, miracles, and acts of compassion, Jesus offered Himself as a source of forgiveness and life that no religion in the world could provide.