

The Reason for God *Belief in an Age of Skepticism*

"Hasn't Christianity Been An Instrument of Oppression?"

James 2:1-17 (Pew Bible Page 854)

Secular World View: "Christianity has a long history of oppression, particularly among the poor. Karl Marx was right: Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature... the opiate of the people."

THE GOD OF THE BIBLE CHOOSES THE POOR

"Listen my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the Kingdom he promised those who love him?" James 2:5

1. Fact of Christianity: God **CHAMPIONS** the poor
1 Corinthians 1:20-31
2. Present Day Reality: God is the **CHOICE** of the poor
"O God, you provided for the poor" Psalm 68:10

BUT WHY DO THE POOR CHOOSE GOD...

1. The message of the Bible is **EMPOWERING**
"The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18
2. The message of the Bible gives **HOPE**
"Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you...'" Matthew 21:31
3. The message of the Bible **MAKES SENSE**
"The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position." James 1:9-10
4. They more easily recognize their **NEED FOR HELP**

THOSE BELONGING TO GOD WILL DO THE SAME

"...faith by itself, it not accompanied by action, is dead."
James 2:17

1. You can tell "True Faith" from "just religion" by
 - * **CARING FOR THE POOR** (James 2:1-4)
 - * **MEETNG NEEDS** (James 2:15-17)
 - * **MERCIFUL** (James 2:13)

2. True Followers have real life change in their...
 - * **ATTITUDES:** "we're all sinners saved by grace"
 - * **ACTIONS:** : "I will show you my faith by what I do"

3. The Message can be hindered by the **MESSENGERS**
"He wanted to see Jesus...but could not, because of the crowd" Luke 19:3

HOW WE BECOME MORE LIKE HIM

*"My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ,
don't show favoritism."
James 2:1*

1. Focus on the Lord Jesus Christ as **GLORIOUS**
"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:5-11

2. Embrace the message of **THE CROSS**
Isaiah 53

"When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself"
John 12:32