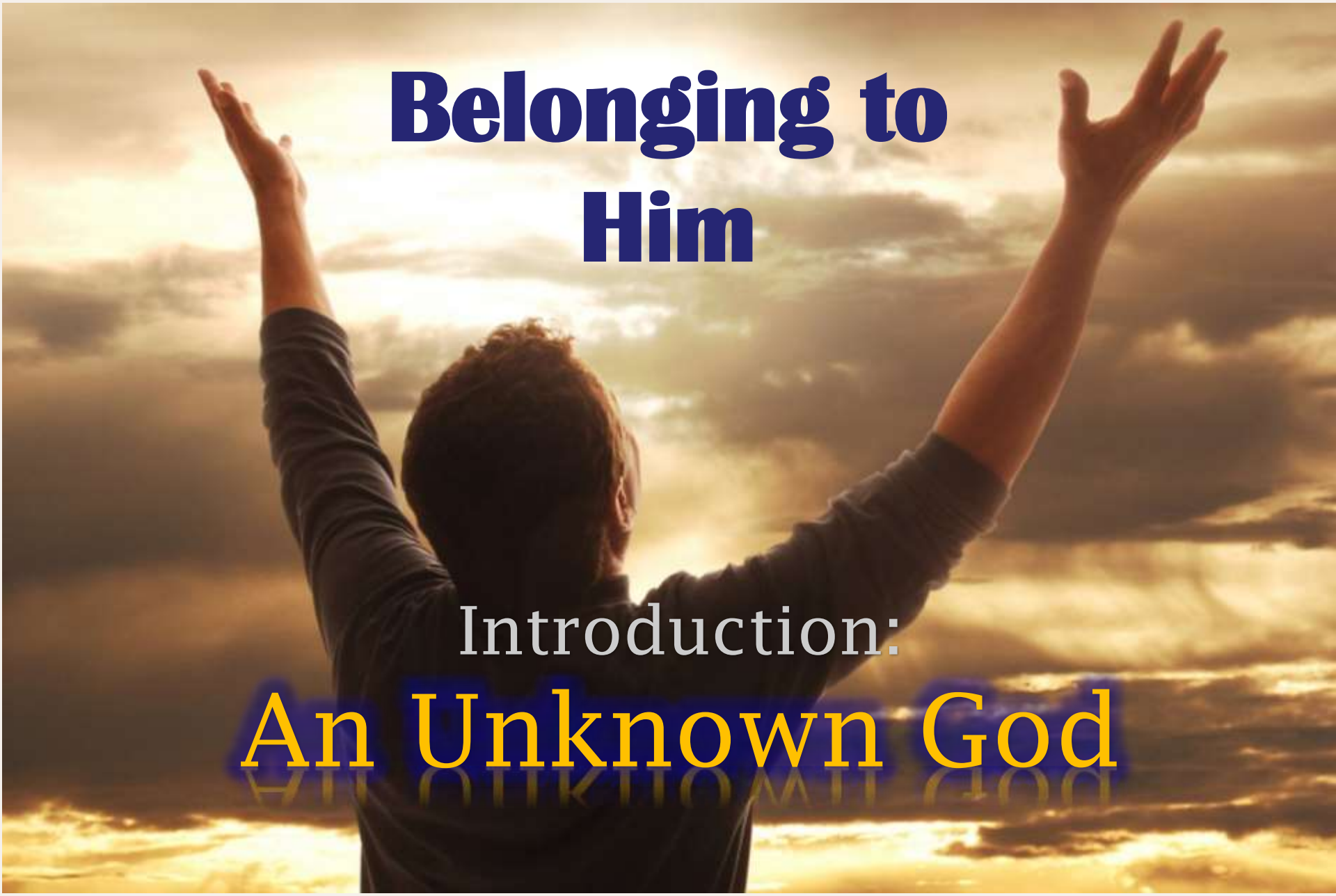
Belonging to Him
Introduction:
An Unknown God

Introduction: An Unknown God

"In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [Greek: Apologia] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect." (1 Peter 3:15)

Introduction: An Unknown God

"Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.

So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there." (Acts 17:16-17)

Introduction: An Unknown God

"Paul…said: 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: <u>To the unknown god</u>.

What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.'" (Acts 17:22-23)

Introduction: An Unknown God

"The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man…" (Acts 17:24-25)

Introduction: An Unknown God

"He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth…that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.

Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being.'"
(Acts 17:26-28)

Introduction: An Unknown God

Relational Apologetics Must Start With Us!

In discovering what obstacles may keep the non-believer from God, we should be diligent to discover what obstacles there may be in our *own* belief system or behaviors.

We must ask ourselves: "In what ways is God still unknown to me?"

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3 WORLDVIEWS

- **Pre-Modern (*creation to around the 1500s*)**
- **Modern (*the 1500s to the 1900s*)**
- **Post-Modern (*the 1900s to our present day*)**

Introduction: An Unknown God

3 WORLDVIEWS

Some qualifications:

- **This is just a very brief overview!**
- **All 3 worldviews still exist today.**
- **Many belief systems can include a mix of all 3 worldviews.**

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PREMODERNISM

A few characteristics:

- **Mysticism & Divine Transcendence**
- **A wide gap between the role of the church (the priest) and the common believer.**

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PREMODERNISM

How does God remain unknown?

- **God is too far above me to be personal or to directly affect my life.**
- **God (or "the gods") may be fickle, selfish and must constantly be appeased.**
- **It's difficult to truly know God through the filters of human (or church) tradition.**

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within premodernism.

- **God can satisfy the premodern search for transcendence and mysticism.**
  - **God *is* far beyond us! The Holy Spirit, the spiritual realm, are things we need to be well-versed in to experience God fully.**

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within premodernism.

- **But, God has also come down to the realm of man to walk with us in personal relationship (the Bible, Jesus, etc.).**
  - **No superstitious appeasement of God is necessary.**
  - **There's no guesswork in how to please God!**

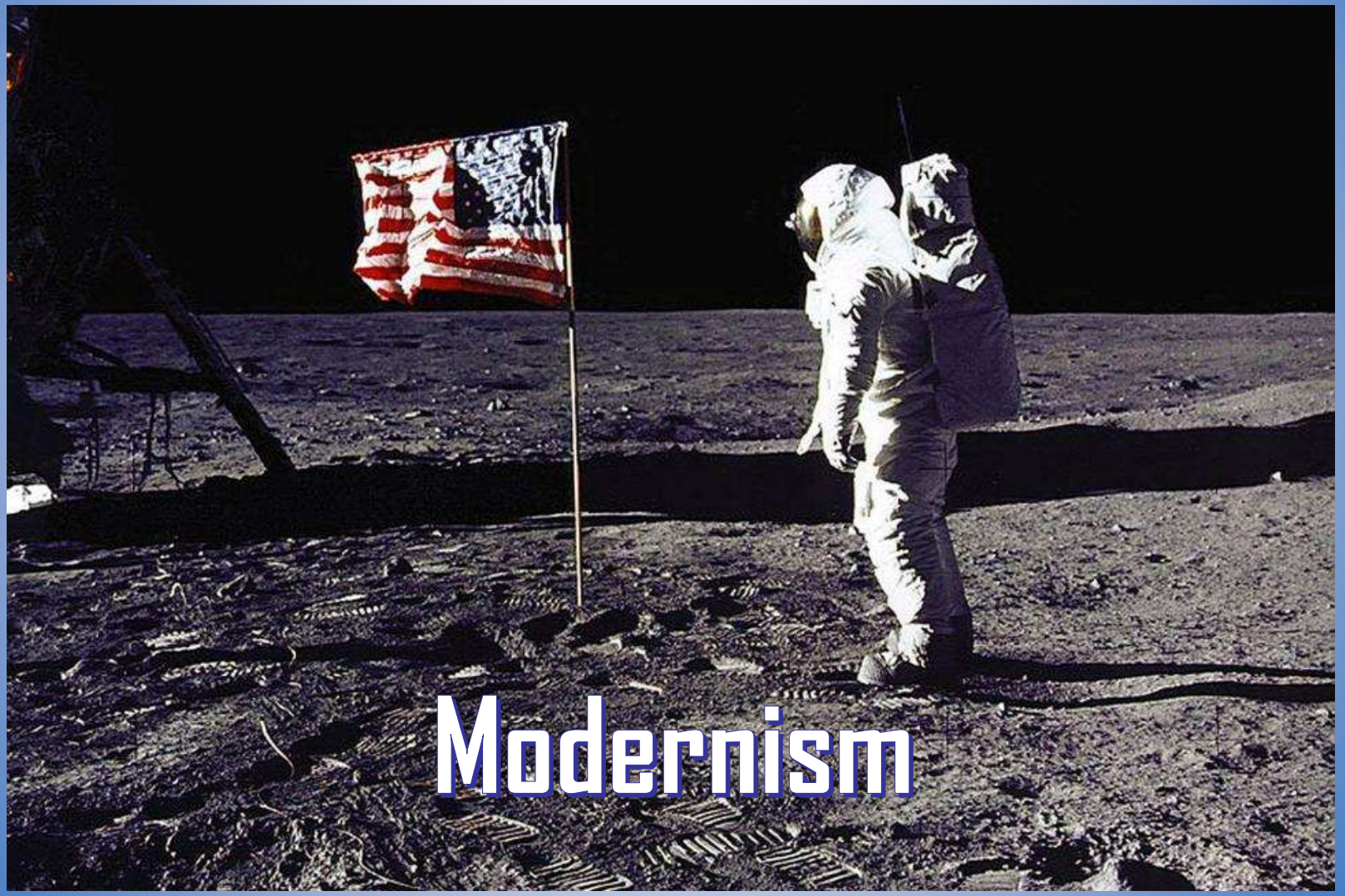
Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within premodernism.

- **But, God has also come down to the realm of man to walk with us in personal relationship (the Bible, Jesus, etc.).**
    - **And, while God absolutely uses the church and priests or pastors to guide his people, we can all access God directly and personally.**

Introduction: An Unknown God



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MODERNISM

A few characteristics:

- **Focused on Logic & Reason**
- **Humanistic/Individualistic**
- **Focused on Progress (Production)**
- **Materialistic (‘stuff’, money, etc.)**

Introduction: An Unknown God

MODERNISM

How does God remain unknown?

- **There is no God. Only mankind & the world.**
- **If there *is* a God, he created the world and left it up to us to improve our lives.**
- **God isn't the ultimate source of wisdom & truth.**
- **It's difficult to truly know God through the filter of money and material things.**

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within modernism.

God can satisfy the modern value placed on material things, science, technology, logic, and on the potential for human progress.

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within modernism.

However, these things must always be surrendered to the conditions of walking with him in personal relationship:

- **We must surrender our minds and our methods to his wisdom and revelation.**

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within modernism.

However, these things must always be surrendered to the conditions of walking with him in personal relationship:

- **We must look to the material things of the world (including ourselves!) to be *transformed* by the grace of God we experience in belonging to him.**

Introduction: An Unknown God

Introduction: An Unknown God

POSTMODERNISM

A few characteristics:

- **Truth is relative & personal (no absolutes)**
- **Hyper-individualism/consumer-focus.**
- **A pluralistic "buffet line" of beliefs.**
- **Attracted to the mystical ("virtual" reality).**

Introduction: An Unknown God

POSTMODERNISM

How does God remain unknown?

- **The God of Scripture is lost to my own interpretations.**
- **I can't experience real life in God's Kingdom if I'm always living in a virtual reality.**
- **I'll never know God through his church if my faith is a consumer preference.**

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within postmodernism.

God can satisfy the postmodern value placed on personal truth and the need for personal assurance.

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within postmodernism.

This is primarily to be seen through the incarnation of Christ.

"[**God**] has given assurance to all by raising [**Christ**] from the dead." (Acts 17:29-31)

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within postmodernism.

This is primarily to be seen through the incarnation of Christ.

- **God left the mystical, inaccessible place of heaven to show up in the most real and personal way imaginable.**

Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within postmodernism.

This is primarily to be seen through the incarnation of Christ.

- **Jesus came not to overpower or to judge—but to save.**

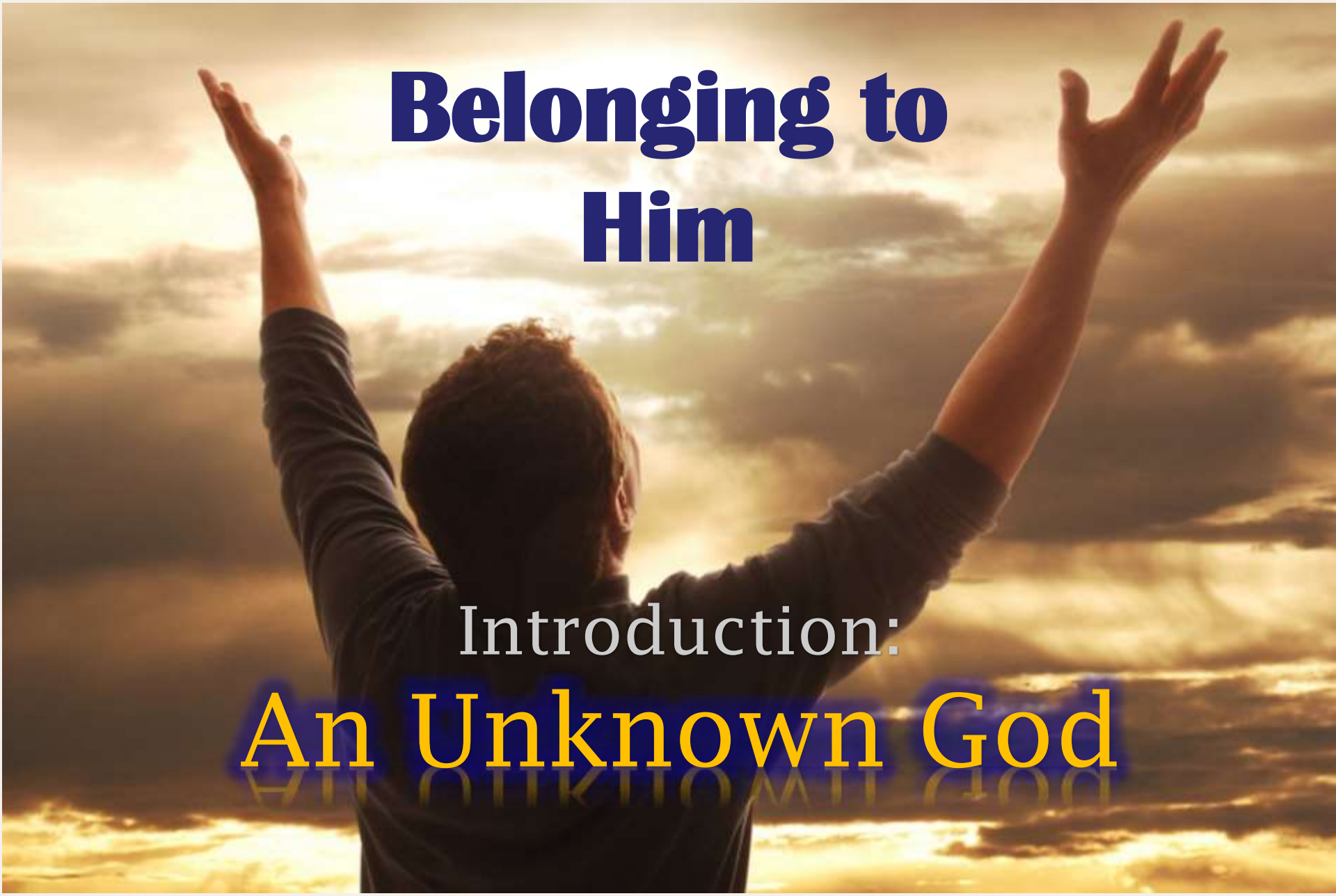
Introduction: An Unknown God

Making God Known

The personal God of Scripture *can* be known within postmodernism.

This is primarily to be seen through the incarnation of Christ.

- **Jesus didn't expect people to believe in the absolute truth of Scripture before they witnessed that *he* was absolutely true.**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