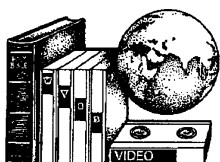


# World Video Bible School®

Established 1986



## WORLD RELIGIONS

*This set of notes is designed to be used by non-credit students of World Video Bible School® and correspondent students enrolled in the Video Bible Institute (VBI). VBI students should pay particular attention to the syllabus. Students not taking the course for credit may bypass the syllabus and use the notes as they see fit for their spiritual enrichment.*



World Video Bible School® / Video Bible Institute  
130 Lantana Lane  
Maxwell, Texas 78656-4231

512+398-5211 (voice)  
512+398-9493 (fax)  
[biblestudy@wvbs.org](mailto:biblestudy@wvbs.org)  
<http://www.wvbs.org>

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## **SYLLABUS**

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION.**

- A. Instructor: Rod Rutherford.
- B. This course consists of 20 lessons on 7 DVDs.
- C. Each class is approximately 38 minutes long.

### **II. DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE.**

- A. This is a survey of the living religions of the world.
- B. A contrast is made of the teachings of these religions with the Bible to equip students to preach and teach the Gospel to them.
- C. This study should strengthen the student's faith in Christianity.
- D. After finishing this course, students should be better able to converse with and teach Hindus, Moslems, Jews, Buddhists, etc.
- E. Students should gain a heightened appreciation for Christian liberty.

### **III. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.**

- A. Required.
  - 1. Bible (ASV, KJV or NKJV).
  - 2. 20 video lessons.
  - 3. Textbook: *Survey Of World Religions* by Rod Rutherford.

### **IV. REQUIREMENTS.**

- A. View all 20 video lessons in their entirety.
- B. Read the class notes in their entirety.
- C. Complete all memory work (explained below).
- D. Submit a term paper (explained below).

- E. Take seven written tests.
- F. Have a combined grade average of at least 70.

## V. MEMORY WORK.

- A. Memory verses must be written (or typed) from memory then mailed to VBI for grading. Verses must come from the ASV, KJV or NKJV according to what you indicated on your original VBI application.
- B. All verses must be written out or typed at one sitting. You may study more and start over if you make a mistake, but you must still start again from the beginning and write all the verses in one sitting.
- C. For *World Religions* the following verses must be memorized:
 

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Deuteronomy 6:4 | Romans 1:16     |
| Mark 16:15,16   | Ephesians 4:4-6 |
| John 8:24       | Ephesians 5:23  |
| John 14:6       | 1 Timothy 2:5   |
| Acts 4:12       |                 |
- D. Memory work is due when you mail VBI your last written test.
- E. Hint: A good method of memorizing is to write the verses on flash cards that can be easily reviewed throughout the course.

## VI. TESTS.

- A. There are seven written tests.
  - The first exam covers lessons 1-4.
  - The second exam covers lessons 5,6.
  - The third exam covers lessons 7-10.
  - The fourth exam covers lessons 11,12.
  - The fifth exam covers lessons 13-15.
  - The sixth exam covers lessons 16,17.
  - The seventh exam covers lessons 18-20.
- B. When you begin the fourth lesson contact us and request the first test (we may go ahead and send you all the tests at once, in which case you should take them one at a time according to your own schedule).
- C. When you receive a test you have permission to look at it and study it prior to taking it.

- D. However, when you actually take the test you must do so completely from memory with no help from notes, Bible, textbook or tapes.

## **VII. TERM PAPER.**

- A. Choose one of the religions studied in this class and write a paper on it. Include a discussion of how the religion began, what its major teachings are, how popular it is today and how to refute it with the Bible.
- B. The paper should be a minimum of five pages, typed and double spaced. If handwritten the paper should be a minimum of seven pages, single spaced.
- C. The paper is due when you mail VBI your final test and memory work.

## **VIII. GRADING.**

- A. Memory work, term paper and tests will be graded separately.
- B. Final grade is based on an average of all assigned work.
- C. A minimum final average grade of 70 is required to pass the course.
- D. You may request that a grade be explained or reconsidered, but in any case VBI will have the final say.

## **IX. CREDIT.**

- A. Credit will be issued, including a certificate, only after all work has been successfully completed (with a final grade of 70 or above), tapes have been returned (if rented) and all invoices for this particular course have been paid in full.
- B. We appreciate your use of World Video Bible School study materials and pray they are a blessing on your journey to eternity.





## **LESSON ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. It has been well observed that man is incurably religious.
  - a. Archaeologists, anthropologists and historians have never found a society which did not practice some form of religion.
  - b. Some societies are more secular than others, such as Russia was under Communism, but the hunger for the Word of God was never destroyed.
2. Religion separates man from the animal world.
  - a. Only man is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; John 4:24; Luke 24: 39).
  - b. Animals do not believe in God, pray or thank God for blessings.
  - c. Contrary to the teaching of some Eastern religions, man is a separate life form from animals and the two can never mix (Genesis 1:24, 25).
  - d. Animals do not have souls, do not need the Gospel preached to them and perish forever at death.
3. Since religion deals with the nature of man, his place in the universe and his ultimate destiny, there is no more vital study than that of the religions of man.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. WHAT IS RELIGION ?**

- A. Funk and Wagnall's Dictionary defines religion as "the beliefs, attitudes, emotions, behavior, etc. constituting man's relation with the powers and principles of the universe, esp. with a deity or deities."
- B. McDowell and Stewart define religion as "that aspect of one's experience in which he attempts to live harmoniously with the power or powers he believes are controlling the world (Understanding Non-Christian Religions, p. 10).
- C. The English word "religion" comes from the Latin "religio," from the root "lig" which means to bind; thus religion is the binding of man to God or "gods" or to a set of beliefs held to be sacred.

- D. It is impossible to give a simple, comprehensive definition of religion because religious beliefs and practices vary so widely.

## **II. WHY DO WE NEED TO STUDY WORLD RELIGIONS?**

- A. There was a time when Christians had no need to know about Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism, but that has changed!
  - 1. Modern transportation has “shrunk the globe.”
  - 2. Modern communication brings the world into our living rooms with television.
  - 3. A Christian is much more likely to come into contact with Moslems or Hindus, etc. than ever before.
- B. World religions have become much more militant and aggressive and are now seeking to convert “Christians” to their faith.
  - 1. At one time all of North Africa and the Middle East were regarded as “Christian,” but now they are almost entirely Moslem; it could happen again in other places!
  - 2. We must be able to “give a reason for our hope” and also to “contend earnestly for the faith” (1 Peter 3:15; Jude 3).
- C. We must be prepared to preach the Gospel to Hindus, Buddhists, Moslems, etc. for they are lost (Mark 16:15, 16).
  - 1. If we understand what they believe, we can be more effective in teaching them.
  - 2. Just as we have studied denominational doctrines for this reason, we also need to study world religions.
- D. We need to study world religions in order to understand our world and what is happening in it.
  - 1. Many of the happenings in the news are motivated by religion.
  - 2. One cannot understand what is happening in the Middle East if he is unaware of the teachings of Islam which motivate the leaders.

### III. ARE ALL RELIGIONS THE SAME ?

A. Uninformed people commonly say, "All religions are simply different paths leading to the same destination - God."

1. A Methodist missionary to the Middle East told an acquaintance of mine that his work was to run a bookstore where the sacred books of all religions were sold; he simply helped each man "find God" according to his own religion.
2. An ignorant member of the Lord's church was showing a film he had made of a missionary journey to the East; he remarked at one picture of a Hindu temple, "Hinduism isn't really very different from Christianity."

B. There is but one true way to God, salvation and everlasting life!

1. There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19).
2. There is only one Savior who is the only Way to the Father (John 8:24; 14:6; Acts 4:11,12; Ephesians 1:3).
3. There is only one Gospel {doctrine, faith, system of beliefs}, (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Galatians 1:6-9; Jude 3).
4. There is only one body {church}, (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4-6; 5:23).
5. There is but one plan of salvation:
  - a. One must hear the Gospel (Romans 10:17).
  - b. One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24).
  - c. One must repent of all his past sins (Luke 13:3).
  - d. One must confess Christ before men (Romans 10:10).
  - e. One must be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:26,27).

## CONCLUSION:

1. We have learned that:
  - a. All societies of man have practiced some form of religion.
  - b. Religion separates man from the animal world.
  - c. Religion, by definition, is “a set of sacred beliefs and practices by which one attempts to live harmoniously with his concept of deity and the life to come.”
  - d. We need to study world religions because:
    - (1) The world has become much smaller.
    - (2) World religions are now seeking to convert us.
    - (3) We must preach the Gospel to their adherents.
    - (4) We cannot understand fully what is happening in the world without a knowledge of the religions which influence events.
  - e. Not all world religions are the same because Jesus Christ is the only way to God and eternal life!
2. Our basic approach will be to study each religion in the following way:
  - a. History.
  - b. Major teachings.
  - c. Worship.
  - d. Sacred books.
  - e. Contrast with Christianity.
3. Our next lesson will begin a study of Islam:
  - a. It is easiest for us to understand for it has borrowed heavily from both Judaism and Christianity.
  - b. The Western world is more directly affected by Islam than any other of the major world religions.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many societies have anthropologists found which have no religion at all?
2. How does religion separate man from the animals?
3. Why is the study of religion such a vital study?
4. Give a brief definition of religion.
5. What is the Latin root from which the word “religion” comes?
6. What does this Latin root mean?
7. Give four reasons for studying world religions.
8. Prove that all religions are not the same.
9. How many ways to God are there?
10. How many Saviors are there?
11. How many churches are there (according to God)?
12. How many plans of salvation are there?
13. Give the plan of salvation and quote a scripture for each step.
14. Which major world religion is easiest for those with a Christian background to understand? Why?
15. Had all the Russians completely ceased to believe in God under Communism?
16. Are animals ever said to be made in the image of God?
17. Does the Great Commission apply to animals?
18. Which geographical areas were once “Christian” but are now predominately under the influence of Islam?
19. Why is it helpful to understand the major world religions in order to understand what is happening in the world today?
20. Which major world religion borrowed heavily from both Judaism and Christianity?



## LESSON TWO: ISLAM: SURRENDER TO ALLAH (1)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. We will begin our survey of world religions with Islam.
  - a. Islam is the closest in concepts to Judaism and Christianity of any major world religion and therefore is easier for Western minds to grasp.
  - b. It is the greatest rival of Christianity world wide; it is growing rapidly in the United States, Britain and Western Europe.
  - c. With the fall of the old Soviet Union, the threat of Communism has waned; however, the future threat to Western democracies may come from radical Moslem nations.
2. "Islam" is the name of the religion.
  - a. It means "surrender" and conveys to the Moslem an active surrender to a belief in one God called "Allah" and Mohammed, Allah's prophet.
  - b. Followers of Islam are called "Moslems" or "Muslims" which means "those who submit."
  - c. "Mohammedan" is not used by Moslems and is as offensive to them as being called a "Campbellite" is to a member of the Lord's church.
3. Andrew Connally, longtime missionary in East Africa where Islam is strong, spoke of the challenge of Islam to Christianity.

"Islam is a force to be reckoned with both politically and religiously in our world today. Unless Islam is stopped, millions will turn to her and her error. She is militant, aggressive, and evil. She cannot be ignored; she will not go away. She is strong and becoming stronger every day. We, as Christians, must meet every error known. Islam is worthy of our best efforts. We must learn her doctrines and meet her advocates. The Bible has the answer and we must stand for the truth and oppose this great error!" ("The Doctrines and Militancy of Islam" in Some Modern Cults, Sects, Movements and World Religions, p. 247).
4. According to the US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, Islam is now America's fastest growing religion (Oct. 8, 1990).
  - a. It is growing at the rate of 400 % per year in the USA.

- b. World wide, Islam has about one billion adherents; it is adding 25 million members a year, mostly by biological growth in Africa and Asia.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. HISTORY OF ISLAM

- A. Mohammed, the founder of Islam, was born in Mecca in Arabia about 570 A.D.
  - 1. Mecca was the site of a sacred shrine called “the Ka’aba” which was believed by the Arabs to have been built by Abraham.
  - 2. This shrine contained a black stone (probably a meteorite) which is still regarded as an holy object by Moslems today.
  - 3. The Ka’aba was also a center of idol worship.
  - 4. Mohammed’s father died before he was born; his mother died when he was six; he was raised by an uncle.
  - 5. As a boy he was subject to fits; he was probably an epileptic.
- B. When Mohammed was twenty-five he was employed by a wealthy widow named Khadijah who proposed marriage to him.
  - 1. Even though she was fifteen years older than he, he accepted.
  - 2. He now had the leisure to pursue his interest in religion.
  - 3. He spent the month of Ramadan each year in a cave in meditation.
  - 4. He became disgusted with idolatry and believed in only one God.
  - 5. He may have learned this from his contact with Christians and Jews while a camel driver.
- C. His first “vision” came to him at the age of forty while he was meditating in a cave.
  - 1. He declared that Gabriel appeared to him, gave him a writing and commanded him to read.
  - 2. Mohammed was illiterate and protested, but the command was repeated so he read.



3. These visions continued, he claimed, for the rest of his life.
    - a. He would go into a trance and speak in verse.
    - b. One of these “revelations” was as follows:
 

“Recite in the name of the Lord who created  
Man from blood coagulated;  
Recite: The Lord is wondrous kind  
Who by the pen has taught mankind  
Things they knew not, being blind.”
  4. In one of his visions Mohammed claimed he was taken at night on his horse to Jerusalem.
    - a. From the temple mount both he and the horse were transported to Paradise.
    - b. He tied his horse to a stone and climbed stairs to the first Heaven where he met Adam and saw the stars hanging on silver chains.
    - c. The second Heaven, where he met Noah, was made of pure gold.
    - d. In the third Heaven he met Abraham who was so large that the distance between his eyes was a journey of 70,000 days.
    - e. In the fourth Heaven he met Joseph and in the fifth, Moses; in the sixth he met John the Baptist.
    - f. He met Jesus in the seventh Heaven and was taken within two bowshots of the throne of God.
    - g. God told Mohammed that he was the greatest man on earth.
- D. Mohammed’s first converts were Khadijah, other family members and some of the poorer members of Mecca society.
1. Because of their opposition to idolatry Mohammed and his followers were persecuted.
  2. He was forced to flee from Mecca to Yathrib (later named “Medina” meaning “city of the prophet”).

3. Mohammed's flight, which took place on July 16, 622, is called the "Hejira" and marks the beginning of the Moslem calendar.
- E. The Jews in Medina at first welcomed him, but later turned against Mohammed.
1. He had them killed and no longer had his followers pray toward Jerusalem.
  2. He gathered an army, conquered surrounding tribes and forced them to accept his religion at sword point.
  3. By the time of his death in 632 all of Arabia was under Mohammed's control and ruled by the teachings of Islam.
  4. Within a century of his death Moslems had conquered all of the Middle East and North Africa; eventually they also conquered Spain, Turkey, India and part of China.
  5. Charles Martel, at the Battle of Tours in 732, defeated them and prevented their conquering all of Europe.

## II. MAJOR DIVISIONS OF ISLAM

- A. Following Mohammed's death there was a great struggle for control of the new religion.
1. Mohammed's friend and early convert, Abu Bakr, was at first chosen as leader, but was murdered after two years.
  2. Islam split into three major divisions, each of which subdivided into smaller sects.
- B. The Sunnis took their name from "sunni" which refers to the practice of Mohammed.
1. When situations arise for which there is no precedent in the Koran, Sunnis look to Mohammed's example for enlightenment.
  2. More Moslems belong to the Sunni division than any other.
  3. Generally the Sunnis are not so radical as other Moslems.
- C. The Shiites take their name from an Arabic word meaning "party" or "faction."

1. Ali, who married Mohammed's only surviving daughter, Fatima, was the first leader of the Shiites; he and his two sons were murdered by other Moslems.
  2. The Shiites are the most radical and militant of all Moslems; the fundamentalists who are behind much of the terrorism in the Middle East are usually of this division.
    - a. The Shiites control Iran.
    - b. The late Ayatollah Khomeini was their leader.
    - c. They claim they are the only true followers of Mohammed.
- D. The Sufis are the mystics of Islam.
1. They oppose the rigid interpretation of the Koran.
  2. They seek a personal experience with Allah.
  3. The "Whirling Dervishes" are of this sect.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Islam presents the only serious competition to Christianity of any of the major world religions today.
2. Islam is growing rapidly on every continent, but especially in Africa and Asia.
3. Christians must be prepared to preach the Gospel to them and to defend the truth of the Gospel when opposed by them (Jude 3).
4. In the next two lessons we shall look at the main teachings of Islam and contrast them with the inspired Word of God, the Holy Bible.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is Islam easier for Western minds to understand than any other major world religion?
2. What is the greatest rival of Christianity world wide?
3. What does "Islam" mean?

4. What does “Moslem” mean?
5. What is the fastest growing religion in America? What percent per year?
6. Where was Mohammed born? When?
7. What was the name of the shrine in Mecca? Who was believed to have built it? What does it contain?
8. Whom did Mohammed marry?
9. According to Mohammed, which messenger of God appeared to him?
10. Describe Mohammed’s alleged visit to Heaven?
11. What is the Hejira? When did it take place?
12. When did Mohammed die?
13. Who prevented the Moslems from conquering Europe? When and where?
14. How many parties did Islam divide into following Mohammed’s death?
15. Which of these divisions is the majority today?
16. What do the Sunnis believe?
17. What do the Shiites believe?
18. What do the Sufis believe?
19. Which one of the three branches of Islam is the most militant and radical?
20. Which one of the branches of Islam controls Iran today?
21. Who was Mohammed’s only surviving daughter?
22. Who was Fatima’s husband? What happened to him and his two sons?
23. What does “Medina mean? What was the former name of this city?
24. Why did Mohammed change the practice of his followers praying toward Jerusalem?

## **LESSON THREE: ISLAM: SURRENDER TO ALLAH (2)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. We have learned in our previous lessons the following facts:
  - a. Islam was founded by Mohammed who was born in Arabia in 570 and died in 632.
  - b. The flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina, called “The Hejira,” in 622 marks the official beginning of Islam.
  - c. Islam borrowed heavily from both Judaism and Christianity.
  - d. The chief creed of Islam is, “There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet.”
  - e. Mohammed’s supposed visions and revelations were written in a book called the “Koran” (or Qu’ran).
  - f. There are three major divisions in Islam:
    - (1) The Sunnis are the majority; they are more tolerant generally.
    - (2) The Shiites are the radical extremists.
    - (3) The Sufis are the mystics.
2. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the United States and is growing rapidly around the world.
3. Islam is the only major world religion which poses a serious threat to Christianity.
4. In this lesson we shall study the major doctrines and duties of Islam.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- I. **THE CENTRAL DOCTRINES OF ISLAM ARE CALLED “THE FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH.”**
  - A. “There is only one true God whose name is Allah.”
    1. Allah is believed to be omniscient and omnipresent.

2. He is not a personal God, but is far removed from mortal man; he is never thought of as "Father" (Matthew 6:9,22; 10:28-30).
  3. He is the source of both good and evil and controls everything that happens.
  4. He will judge the world at the Last Day.
- B. "Angels are supernatural beings who are inferior to God, but superior to man."
1. They are messengers of Allah.
  2. They were created out of light.
  3. Gabriel appeared to Mohammed in his visions.
  4. The devil, "Al Shaytan," is a fallen angel.
  5. There is also an inferior level of supernatural beings called "Jinn" or "Genii."
    - a. They can influence man directly.
    - b. They may be either good or evil.
    - c. They are created out of fire, but can take the form of humans, and even marry and have children.
    - d. Solomon sealed many of these in brass bottles where they await to be set free when someone opens the bottles.
- C. "There are four inspired books of Scripture which God has revealed to man."
1. The Law of Moses.
  2. The Psalms of David.
  3. The Gospel of Jesus Christ.
  4. The Koran.
    - a. Whenever the first three disagree with the Koran, the Moslem believes they have been corrupted.

- b. The Koran supersedes all other revelations and is Allah's final word to mankind.
- D. "Allah has spoken to man through many prophets."
  - 1. Shiites claim that God has sent at least 124,000 prophets; some say 144,000.
  - 2. Twenty-eight prophets are mentioned by name in the Koran; twenty-two of these are from the Old Testament; three are from the New Testament.
  - 3. Even Alexander the Great is considered by Moslems to be a prophet of Allah.
  - 4. According to Islam the six greatest prophets are:
    - a. Adam.
    - b. Noah.
    - c. Abraham.
    - d. Moses.
    - e. Jesus.
    - f. Mohammed, the last and greatest.
- E. "There will be a resurrection of the dead and a judgment at the end of the world."
  - 1. Allah will judge men according to their works which have been carefully recorded by angels.
  - 2. If one's good works outweigh his bad works, he will go to Paradise, but if the bad outweigh the good, he will go to Hell.
  - 3. Paradise is a physical place of sensual pleasures where each man will have a harem of beautiful women who will bear children for him.
  - 4. Hell is a place of fire and everlasting torture.

**II. THE CENTRAL DUTIES OF ISLAM ARE CALLED “THE FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH.”**

- A. The creed, “There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet” must be confessed in order to become and remain a Moslem.
- B. “Prayer five times a day is the duty of the faithful.”
  - 1. Prayers are from the Koran and are recited by rote in Arabic.
  - 2. The faithful are called to pray by the cry of the muezzin who calls from the minaret of the mosque.
  - 3. The faithful prostrate themselves toward Mecca; they originally prayed facing Jerusalem until Mohammed fell out with the Jews.
- C. “Almsgiving is required.”
  - 1. Moslems are required to give one fortieth of their income to Allah.
  - 2. They may give additional free will offerings if they choose.
  - 3. Recipients of such benevolence feel no gratitude to the giver; they believe they are blessing him by giving him an opportunity to fulfill his responsibility.
- D. “Fasting is a duty of all Moslems.”
  - 1. Ramadan, the month Mohammed reserved for his meditation, is an important month in the Moslem calendar.
  - 2. During Ramadan no food or drink is to be consumed between daylight and darkness.
  - 3. This fast is designed to develop discipline and devotion to God.
  - 4. However, the nights of Ramadan are usually given to feasting.
- E. “A pilgrimage to Mecca is the duty of every Moslem once in his lifetime.”
  - 1. If one is too old or too ill to go, he may send another in his place.
  - 2. The pilgrim runs around the Ka’aba seven times, drinks from the well, Zimzam, and performs other running exercises and acts of devotion.



- F. A sixth religious duty often associated with the “Five Pillars” is “Jihad” or “Holy War.”
1. Whenever needed to extend or defend the faith, Moslem men are required to go to war.
  2. If one dies in a Holy War he is guaranteed eternal life in Paradise.
  3. The late Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran wanted a Holy War with all Moslems united against the democracies of the West.
    - a. Several years ago the Pope was shot by a Moslem who believed in Jihad.
    - b. The fifty-two Americans held captive by the Iranians were victims of Khomeini’s view of Jihad.

### **III. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER LAWS AND TRADITIONS OF ISLAM.**

- A. Moslem law governs both religion and the civil state - theocracy.
1. The law deals with everything in life “from the prohibition of crime to the use of the toothpick.”
  2. Some Moslem nations such as Turkey and Egypt have declared themselves secular states and practice a “separation of church and state.”
- B. The Moslem view of women and marriage downgrades women.
1. After Khadijah, Mohammed’s first wife died, he married twelve others, including a seven year old girl.
  2. The Koran allows a Moslem man to have four wives if he can support them.
  3. Husbands are allowed to divorce their wives, but wives are not permitted to divorce their husbands.
  4. Moslem men, Islam teaches, will have many wives in Paradise who will bear children for them in eternity.
  5. Men are also allowed to take concubines who serve them for a fixed number of years.

6. Marriage is required of ALL Moslems.

C. Various other Moslem beliefs are:

1. No pork can be eaten; all meat must be properly bled.
2. Drinking alcohol and gambling are strictly forbidden.
3. Strict Moslems will neither lend nor borrow money on interest.
4. Friday is the Moslem day of worship.
5. Islam has no priesthood or sacraments.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Islamic law is simplified in "The Five Articles of Faith."
  - a. There is one true God whose name is Allah.
  - b. Angels are messengers of God.
  - c. The Koran is the only uncorrupted word of God.
  - d. Allah has spoken to man through the prophets, the last and greatest of whom is Mohammed.
  - e. There will be a resurrection and judgment at the Last Day.
2. Islamic duty is simplified under "The Five Pillars of Faith."
  - a. The creed, "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet," must be confessed by all the faithful.
  - b. Prayers must be offered five times daily facing Mecca.
  - c. Almsgiving is essential.
  - d. Fasting is a duty, especially during Ramadan.
  - e. A pilgrimage must be made to Mecca.
3. In our next lesson we shall contrast Islam and Christianity.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the summary of basic Moslem doctrines called?
2. Describe the Moslem concept of God.
3. What is the difference between angels and the genii?
4. Who is believed to have sealed genii in brass bottles?
5. What are the four inspired Scriptures accepted by Moslems?
6. What do Moslems believe about the Bible?
7. How many prophets has God sent, according to the Shiites?
8. Name the six greatest Moslem prophets.
9. Who is believed by Moslems to be the last and greatest of all the prophets?
10. What is the fifth article of Moslem faith?
11. What is the summary of basic Moslem duties called?
12. What must one confess in order to become a Moslem?
13. How many times a day are Moslems required to pray?
14. How do recipients of Moslem benevolence feel toward their benefactors?
15. What is the Moslem month of fasting called?
16. What is every Moslem required to do at least once in his lifetime?
17. What is "Jihad?"
18. How many wives may a Moslem man legally have?
19. What restrictions are placed upon Moslems in regard to food and drink?
20. Which day of the week is the Moslem day of worship?



## **LESSON FOUR: ISLAM: SURRENDER TO ALLAH (3)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. In our previous lessons we have learned some basic facts about Islam.
  - a. Islam was founded by Mohammed in Arabia in 622.
  - b. The Koran is their holy book.
  - c. Their creed is, "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet."
  - d. There are three major divisions: (1) Sunnis (2) Shiites (3) Sufis.
  - e. Moslem doctrines can be summarized under "The Five Articles of Faith."
  - f. Moslem duties can be summarized under "The Five Pillars of Faith."
2. In this lesson we shall contrast Christianity and Islam:
  - a. Allah versus Jehovah.
  - b. The Koran versus the Bible.
  - c. Mohammed versus Jesus.
3. Islam and Christianity contradict each other in many places; since truth is never contradictory, both cannot be right!

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. ALLAH VERSUS JEHOVAH**

- A. While Moslems believe in only one God, their concept of God is very different from Bible teaching.
  1. Allah is often pictured as "a magnificent, opulent, irresistible, world-potentate - an Arab sheik glorified and magnified to cosmic proportions" (Andrew Connally, "The Doctrines and Militancy of Islam" in Some Modern Cults, Sects and World Religions, pp. 255, 256).
  2. Moslems never think of God as "Father " (cf. Matthew 6:9).
  3. Moslems do not love God, but they fear Him and think of Him as a judge (Romans 11:22).

4. There is no grace in Islam; salvation is wholly by works (cf. Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 2:11,12).
- B. Moslems believe God is arbitrary and the cause of both good and evil.
1. They believe in fate or predestination which they call "Kismet."
  2. Whatever happens is accepted with a shrug of the shoulders and the statement, "It is Allah's will!"
  3. The Koran teaches that Allah misguides people on purpose: "Allah leads astray whom he pleases and guides whom he pleases and no one knows the host of the Lord save himself. And every man's destiny have we fastened upon his neck."
  4. As a result of belief in Kismet, Moslems have little incentive to improve themselves or their lot in life for, according to their belief, they cannot change things anyway.
- C. Moslems completely misunderstand the Godhead (Trinity).
1. They accuse Christians of believing in three gods.
  2. They have the erroneous idea that the Godhead consists of God the Father, Jesus the Son and the virgin Mary.
  3. The Bible teaches that there is one God (Theos = the divine nature), but Three Persons who possess it, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Genesis 1:1,2,26; 3:22; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19; John 1:1-3,14; 8:24; 10:30; 20:28; Acts 5:3,4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Philippians 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:8; James 2:19).

## II. THE KORAN VERSUS THE BIBLE

- A. "Koran" or "Qu'ran" means "the thing read."
1. The Koran is to the Moslem what the Bible is to the Christian.
  2. The Koran is about two thirds the size of the New Testament.
  3. It is divided into 114 chapters called "suras."
  4. Part of the Koran was written in Mohammed's lifetime; the rest had been committed to memory by his disciples.

5. When many of those who had the Koran in memory were killed in battle following Mohammed's death, it was decided to put it all in writing.
  6. Additional sayings of Mohammed not found in the Koran are called "The Hadith" which means "tradition."
  7. The Law of Moses, Psalms of David and Gospel of Christ are accepted as revelations of God, but Moslems believe they have been corrupted, especially where they disagree with the Koran.
  8. It is believed that translating a book corrupts it; therefore, Moslems believe the only pure Koran is in the original Arabic.
- B. To convert a Moslem one needs to be aware of the evidences of the inspiration of the Bible contained in the Bible itself.
1. Prophecy and fulfillment.
  2. Unity and harmony.
  3. Pre-scientific foreknowledge.
  4. Indestructibility.
  5. Objectivity.
- C. A knowledge of how the text has been carefully preserved and transmitted to us today is also very helpful.

### **III. MOHAMMED VERSUS JESUS**

- A. Islam is a graceless religion with no provision made for an atonement for man's sins (2 Corinthians 5:21).
1. Only Christianity presents a Savior who satisfies both the justice and the mercy of God (John 3:16; Romans 3:26).
  2. Only Christianity has a God who has lived as a man among men and, therefore, can fully sympathize with man (Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 John 2:1,2).
- B. Moslems reject the idea that God could have a son.

1. The Koran says that Jesus was born of Mary, but denies He is the only begotten Son of God (Sura 3:45-47).
  2. According to Islam, Mary conceived by an angel (See: The Meaning of the Glorious Koran: An explanatory translation by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, p. 222, 223).
- C. Since it is claimed that both Christ and Mohammed are the accredited and final messengers of God to man, both cannot be right:
1. The Koran presents Mohammed as the last and greatest of the prophets, but the Bible presents Jesus as the Prophet who was to come to whom all should give heed (Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Acts 3:18-26).
  2. Mohammed admitted he was a sinner, but Jesus was sinless (John 8:46; 1 Peter 2:22).
    - a. The Koran speaks of Mohammed confessing his sins.
    - b. Not even the enemies of Jesus could prove sin in Him (John 8:46; Matthew 27:24).
  3. Jesus claimed equality with God the Father, but Mohammed admitted he was only a man (John 5:17,18; 8:58,59; 10:30; 14:8, 9).
  4. Jesus as Deity accepted the worship of men, but Mohammed declined such, for he admitted he was only a man (Matthew 4:10; 8:2; 9:18; John 9:35-38; 20:27,28; Acts 10:25,26; Revelation 19:10).
  5. Moslems teach that man can only come to God through acceptance of Mohammed as his prophet, but Jesus is the only way to God (John 8:24; 14:6; Acts 4:11,12; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Timothy 2:5).
  6. Moslems say Mohammed is God's last spokesman to man, but the Bible says that Jesus is (Hebrews 1:1-3).
  7. Moslems deny that Jesus was crucified:
    - a. The Koran says: "They slew him not, nor crucified him, but it appeared so to them. . . "(Sura 4:157).
    - b. Moslems believe that Judas was crucified instead.



8. Moslems believe that Jesus will one day return to earth, marry, have children, propagate Islam throughout the world, be killed and raised again, but the Bible teaches that Christ will no more come in the flesh and that His second coming will be to raise the dead, judge the world and destroy the earth (2 Corinthians 5:16; 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Peter 3:1-14).
9. Mohammed died and remains dead, but Jesus died, arose from the dead and is alive forevermore (1 Corinthians 15:1-10; Revelation 1:18).
  - a. A Christian and a Moslem were debating the merits of their respective religions.
  - b. The Moslem pointed to the tomb of Mohammed and said: "You Christians do not have anything like this."
  - c. The Christian replied, "That is right. You have a dead founder, but we have a living Savior!"

#### CONCLUSION:

1. The God of the Bible is merciful, providing a sacrifice for man's sins, but the God of the Moslems administers strict justice.
2. The Bible presents God as a loving Father who is personally interested in every person on earth, but the Koran presents a God far removed from man.
3. Christians have a kind, understanding Savior who has conquered death, but Moslems have only a weak and sinful man, long dead, as their prophet and founder.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many gods do Moslems believe in?
2. Compare the Moslem view of God with the Bible teaching about God.
3. Explain the Moslem concept of "Kismet."
4. How do Moslems misunderstand the concept of the Godhead (Trinity)?
5. What is the Hadith?
6. Do Moslems believe any part of the Bible came from God?

7. How do Moslems explain the disagreements between the Bible and the Koran?
8. Does Islam have a Savior who made atonement for the sins of mankind?
9. What is the Moslem view of the virgin birth of Jesus?
10. Did Mohammed admit to having sin? Did Jesus?
11. Did Mohammed accept worship from men? Did Jesus?
12. What is the Moslem view of the crucifixion of Christ?
13. What do Moslems believe about the second coming of Christ?
14. What is the cardinal proof that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that Christianity is therefore accredited by Heaven?
15. What does "Koran" mean?
16. How many chapters are there in the Koran? What are they called?
17. What are some of the proofs of the inspiration of the Bible which are found in the Bible itself?
18. Did Mohammed claim to be anything other than a man? Did Jesus?
19. Why do Moslems not try to improve their lot in life?
20. What is the Moslem view of salvation by grace?

## LESSON FIVE: HINDUISM: A FAMILY OF RELIGIONS (1)

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Hinduism is unique among the major religions of the world.
2. Hinduism is difficult to define because of its great complexity:
  - a. Ira Rice, veteran missionary to the Far East, wrote: "To those of us brought up in the churches of Christ in the United States, where we always have been taught to worship the one true and living God, who is Lord of heaven and earth and the Creator of all things, the concepts of Hinduism are strange almost beyond comprehension. There being an estimated thirty-three million deities that the various types of Hindus worship as gods, at first instance there seems to be no way to come to any orderly understanding of what appears just a religious hodge-podge" ("The Threat of Hinduism to the Spread of the Gospel of Christ," in Some Modern Cults, Sects, Movements, and World Religions, p. 260).
  - b. Rice goes on to say: "Surely Hinduism must be the extreme limit to the religious lengths to which mankind will go, when 'suffered...to walk in their own ways,' as mentioned by the apostle Paul to those at Lystra, in Acts 14:16." (Ibid.)
3. Hinduism is actually not one religion, but a whole family of religions:
  - a. A Hindu can be a pantheist (believe God is in everything).
  - b. He can be a polytheist (believe in many gods).
  - c. He can be a monotheist (believe in only one god).
  - d. He can be an atheist (not believe in any god).
4. Hinduism is still growing and changing.
5. Since Hinduism is so hard to pin down, we shall study the main principles and practices which are generally held by a majority of Hindus.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. HINDUISM HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA.

- A. It does not have a founder or founders such as Christianity and Islam, but is an outgrowth of centuries of culture and history.
- B. The original inhabitants of India were a dark skinned people called "Dasas" or "Dravidians."
  - 1. They were peaceful farmers and cattle herders.
  - 2. They believed in the law of karma and the doctrine of reincarnation.
  - 3. They worshiped a number of gods including a mother earth goddess, a sacred bull. and a fertility god.
  - 4. These became the basic ideas out of which Hinduism took root.
- C. From about the time of Abraham (1900 B.C.) to the time of Moses (1450 B.C.), India was invaded by light skinned people from Central Europe.
  - 1. These are known as the "Indo-Aryans."
  - 2. They were related to the ancient Greeks, Latins, Celts, Germans and Slavs.
  - 3. Their language, Sanskrit, is much like ancient Greek.
  - 4. They were good warriors who possessed horses and chariots.
  - 5. They were nomads who kept flocks and herds.
  - 6. They were divided among many different tribes, which were ruled by rajahs.
  - 7. The Indo-Aryans gradually conquered India and made the native Dravidians their servants.
- D. The Indo-Aryans worshiped various gods of nature:
  - 1. Dyaus Pitar was the "father of the sky" - equivalent to Zeus among the Greeks.
  - 2. Prithivi Matar was a mother earth goddess.

3. Mitra was a sun god.
  4. Indra was the god of the storms, equivalent to Thor among the Germans.
  5. Rudra was the god of the mountains who lived in the Himalayas.
  6. Agni was the god of fire.
  7. Varuna was the name of the god who maintained order in the universe.
- E. The religious ideas of the native people of India merged with the beliefs of the invaders to form the beginning of Hinduism.

## **II. HINDUISM FORMED THE SOCIAL SYSTEM OF INDIA WHICH HAS KEPT IT IN POVERTY AND IGNORANCE FOR CENTURIES.**

- A. The Indo-Aryans ruled the native inhabitants of India.
1. They formed a caste system.
  2. The natives were kept in subjection by their religion.
- B. Hindus believe that the first man, called “Manu,” originated four types of people.
1. From his head came the “Brahmins” who were the priests and holy caste.
  2. From his hands sprang the “Kshatriyas” who were the caste of rulers and warriors.
  3. From Manu’s thighs came the third ranked caste who were called “Vaisyas”; they were the merchants and craftsmen.
  4. Everyone else came from Manu’s feet and formed the lowest caste called “Sudras”; they were the servants and laborers.
  5. Eventually out of these four castes grew thousands of sub-castes and outcasts.
- C. The caste system has dominated India for three thousand years.

1. One is not supposed to marry out of his caste or associate with those of other castes.
2. Though the system is outlawed by India's present constitution, it is still held to by many.

### **III. HINDUISM HAS MANY SACRED WRITINGS.**

- A. Among the oldest are the "Vedas."
  1. "Veda" means "wisdom" or "knowledge."
  2. The Vedas are hymns and prayers which were written between 1500 and 1000 B.C.
  3. They are composed in Sanskrit.
- B. The "Upanishads" are mystical and philosophical writings composed between 800 and 600 B.C.
- C. The "Ramayana" is an epic poem by a warrior king named Rama who was said to be one of the incarnations of the god, Vishnu.
- D. The "Mahabharata" is the longest epic poem in the world.
  1. It contains 100,000 verses.
  2. It was composed between 400 B.C. and 400 A.D.
  3. A part of it is called "The Bhagavad Gita" or "Song of the Blessed Lord."
    - a. It is the best known and loved of all Hindu Scripture.
    - b. It is a discussion between Krishna, a god become man, and a warrior named Arjuna.
- E. The "Puras" are a collection of myths and legends which are used to teach moral behavior.

### **IV. HINDUISM HAS MILLIONS OF GODS.**

- A. A Hindu may choose which gods he wishes to worship.
- B. Some of the major Hindu gods are:

1. Brahman is more of a philosophical concept than a person; he is the supreme reality, the essence of the universe, the force which is in everything and is everything.
2. A story in the Bhagavad Gita illustrates the idea of Brahmin:  
  

“A father said to his son, ‘Place this salt in water and come to me tomorrow morning.’ The boy did as he was commanded. In the morning, his father said: ‘Bring me the salt you put in water last night.’ The boy looked into the water, but could not find the salt for it had dissolved. His father said, ‘Taste the water from this side. How is it?’ ‘It is salt.’ ‘Taste it from the middle. How is it?’ ‘It is salt.’ ‘Taste it from that side. How is it?’ ‘It is salt.’ The father then said: ‘Look for the salt and come again to me.’ The son did so, saying: ‘I cannot see the salt. I see only water.’ His father then said: ‘In the same way, O my son, you cannot see Brahman, but in truth, he is there. An invisible and subtle essence is the spirit of the whole universe. That is Truth. You are That.’”
3. Brahma, the creator, Shiva, the destroyer and Vishnu, the preserver are the Trimutri who make up Brahman.
4. Ganesa, the god of wisdom, is pictured with a man’s body and an elephant’s head.
5. Indra is the god of rain and thunder.
6. Krishna, the eighth incarnation of Vishnu, is one of the most popular of all the Hindu gods.
7. Lakshma, the concubine of Krishna, is the goddess of wealth and beauty.
8. The wife of Shiva, the mother goddess, is worshiped variously as Durga, Shakti or Kali.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Hinduism is not one, but actually a family of religions.
2. It originated in the merging of the religions of the native tribes of India with the Indo-Aryan invaders.
3. It has grown and evolved through the centuries and is still growing and changing today.

4. In our next lesson we shall see the basic beliefs and practices of Hinduism today.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is a pantheist?
2. What is a polytheist?
3. What is a monotheist?
4. What is an atheist?
5. Would Hindus be classified as pantheistic, polytheistic, monotheistic or atheistic?
6. Who is the founder of Hinduism?
7. What were the original inhabitants of India called?
8. When did the Indo-Aryans invade India?
9. From where did they come?
10. What was their language?
11. Who was the first man, according to Hinduism?
12. Name the four original castes. How did they come into being?
13. What are the priests and holy men called?
14. What are the rulers and warriors called?
15. What are the merchants and craftsmen called?
16. What are the servants and laborers called?
17. What are the oldest Hindu scriptures called?
18. What is the longest poem in the world?
19. Which poem is the best known and loved of all Hindu scriptures?
20. Explain Brahman.



## **LESSON SIX: HINDUISM: A FAMILY OF RELIGIONS (2)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Hinduism is a family of religions which evolved in India over many centuries.
2. About 85% of India's nearly one billion people are Hindus.
3. Hinduism is growing in the United States and other Western nations.
  - a. The "Beatles," a vocal group in the 1960's, popularized Hinduism in the West.
  - b. The "New Age Movement" is largely built on Hindu religious and philosophical concepts.
  - c. There are more than 250,000 Hindus in the United States today.
  - d. There are half a dozen Hindu societies in the United States working to convert Americans to their religion.
4. Hinduism is extremely difficult to define because it is so complex and constantly changing.
5. In our last lesson we learned:
  - a. There are millions of Hindu gods.
  - b. Brahman is the supreme god who is the ultimate reality.
  - c. The caste system is the foundation of Hindu society.
6. In this lesson we shall look at the Hindu idea of salvation and contrast it with the teaching of Christianity.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THE HINDU IDEA OF HEAVEN IS CALLED "MOKSHA."**

- A. It is not a place of happiness and reward for the faithful, but a state of oblivion or non-existence.
- B. The whole idea of Hindu salvation is to reach the point where one's soul (atman) merges with Brahman, the great soul of the universe, into nothingness.

## **II. HINDU SALVATION IS FOUNDED UPON THE CONCEPT OF REINCARNATION.**

- A. The doctrine of reincarnation (or transmigration of the soul) is the belief that when one dies, his soul will be born into another form in another life.
  - 1. The Wheel of Rebirth to which all living beings are bound is called “Samsara.”
  - 2. The Law of Karma determines the form or state of life that one will have in the next life.
  - 3. “Karma” means “action” and refers to one’s deeds and their consequences.
  - 4. If one’s good deeds outweigh his bad, he will be born in the next life in a higher form or station.
  - 5. If one’s bad deeds outweigh his good, he will be born into a lower form or station.
- B. Every living being is bound to Samsara until finally his good karma is enough to release him.
  - 1. One may be born endlessly as animals or insects or humans.
  - 2. One’s karma goes with him from one existence to the next.

## **III. THERE ARE THREE WAYS BY WHICH SALVATION CAN BE ATTAINED.**

- A. The Way of Works (karma marga) is the path to salvation by carrying out religious duties.
  - 1. Since it is the oldest of the three ways and the easiest to understand, it is followed by the majority of Hindus.
  - 2. It is simply a mindless, mechanical carrying out of rites, ceremonies and duties.
  - 3. Some of these rites are:
    - a. Sacrificing to the gods and one’s ancestors.
    - b. Revering the rising sun.

- c. Keeping the sacred hearth fire lit.
  - d. Performing the expected functions at important events in life such as birth, death and harvest.
- 4. Some other duties enjoined in The Code of Manu and the Brah-  
mans are:
  - a. Studying the sacred scriptures.
  - b. Extending hospitality.
  - c. Loyalty to one's caste.
  - d. Observing certain dietary rules.
- B. The Way of Knowledge is based upon the idea that all human misery is  
caused by ignorance.
  - 1. The greatest ignorance is to think of oneself as an individual, a  
separate self, not a part of the Brahman.
  - 2. Individuals are said to be like a wave which momentarily rises from  
the sea and goes back into the sea.
  - 3. The Code of Manu outlines the steps by which one attains the  
certain knowledge that he has become one with Brahman.
    - a. From the age of eight until twenty-five years, he is a student  
under a guru.
    - b. Then he marries and raises a family.
    - c. After his family is grown and he is old, he becomes a hermit  
living off the land, and indifferent to earthly things.
    - d. The final state is when one no longer needs to sacrifice or  
read the sacred writings and goes into a trance where his  
soul is absorbed into Brahman.
    - e. A method of exercise and meditation called "yoga" during  
which one repeats OM (peace; the wholeness of Brahman)  
over and over is deemed valuable in achieving oneness with  
the divine.

- C. The Way of Devotion (Bhakti Marga) involves a passionate commitment to a Hindu god or goddess.
  - 1. The deity is worshiped by meditation and sacrifice.
  - 2. The idol is bathed, decorated and adored every day.
  - 3. This is the approach to salvation found in the Bhagavad Gita.

#### **IV. THERE ARE COUNTLESS OTHER FORMS OF WORSHIP AND WAYS TO SALVATION IN HINDUISM.**

- A. Cows have been worshiped from the earliest times of Hinduism.
  - 1. Mahatma Gandhi called cow protection “the central fact of Hinduism....”
  - 2. Every part of a cow is believed to be sacred: “Every part of its body is inhabited by some deity or other....All its excreta are hallowed... the water it ejects ought to be preserved as the best of all holy waters - a sin destroying liquid which sanctifies everything it touches while nothing purifies like cow dung.” (quoted by John B. Noss and David S. Noss in Man’s Religions, p. 208).
  - 3. In times past those guilty of killing cows in India have been executed.
  - 4. In some parts of India when a man is dying, he will grasp the tail of a cow believing it will assure him a safe passage into the next life.
- B. The Ganges is a sacred river; bathing in its waters washes one’s sins away.

#### **V. THERE ARE GREAT CONTRASTS BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM.**

- A. The supreme being of Hinduism is the impersonal principle called Brahman who pervades the universe; but the God of the Bible is a living Person who created the universe, loves man as a Father and seeks man’s good, though man does not deserve it (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 10:28-30; 1 John 3:16; 4:10).
- B. The Hindu idea of man is that he is a manifestation of the impersonal Brahman and has no individuality or self-worth, but the Bible teaches that

God made man in His own image (Genesis 1:27) with the ability to know right from wrong (Joshua 24:14-16) and demonstrated His love for every man by sending His Son to die for man's sins (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8).

- C. In Hinduism sin is only thought of as ignorance; in the Bible sin is a transgression of God's Law which is a reflection of His holy character and thus is an affront to God Himself; it separates man from God and, if unatoned for, will cause man to be lost eternally (1 John 3:4; Psalms 51:4; Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1,2).
- D. Salvation in Hinduism is a merging of one's consciousness with the divine and losing one's self; according to the Bible, salvation is the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, freely given, which gives the promise of eternal life in Heaven with God (John 3:16; 14:1-3).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. A Christian, recently returned from a missionary journey to India, showed a film of a Hindu temple with dozens of idols in it and remarked, "Hinduism is really not all that different from Christianity."
2. Hinduism is **VERY** different from Christianity!!!!
3. Hindus are lost and can find salvation only by obedience to the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the living God (John 14:6; Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 1:22,23).

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What percentage of the people of India are Hindus?
2. Who made Hinduism popular in the West in the 1960's?
3. Which present day religious movement is based on Hindu concepts?
4. What is the Hindu idea of salvation called?
5. Explain the doctrine of reincarnation.
6. What is the Hindu name for the soul?
7. What is the wheel of rebirth called?
8. Explain the law of karma.

9. What are the three ways by which salvation can be attained in Hinduism?
10. Explain the Way of Works.
11. Explain the Way of Knowledge.
12. What is yoga?
13. Explain the Way of Devotion.
14. What is the difference between the Hindu idea of the Supreme Being and the teaching of the Bible about God?
15. Contrast the Hindu concept of man with what the Bible teaches about it.
16. Contrast the Hindu idea of sin with the Biblical view of sin.
17. What is the difference between the Hindu concept of salvation and the Biblical view?
18. According to Mahatma Gandhi, what is the central fact of Hinduism?
19. What practice is believed in some parts of India to insure a safe passage into the next life?
20. What word is repeated over and over in yoga? What does it mean?

## **LESSON SEVEN: BUDDHISM: THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT (1)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Buddhism is the largest and most influential religion in Asia.
  - a. It grew out of Hinduism.
  - b. It originated in India, but has very few adherents in India today.
2. Buddhism is one of only three religions that are truly world-wide; the other two are Christianity and Islam.
3. Like Hinduism, Buddhism may be thought of as a family of religions since there are so many branches and varieties of it.
4. Buddhism is growing rapidly around the world.
  - a. There are hundreds of thousands of Buddhists in America who are here as immigrants, students or for business purposes.
  - b. The Zen Institute of America, founded in New York in 1930, has been responsible for the spread of Buddhist philosophy throughout the country.
  - c. D. T. Suzuki (1870 - 1966) and his American wife, Beatrice Lane, have written dozens of books to spread Buddhism in the United States.
  - d. A form of Japanese Buddhism called "Nichiren Shoshu" opened a branch in the United States in 1960; by 1973 it had grown to 250,000 members and continues to multiply.
5. It is imperative that Christians understand Buddhism in order to teach Buddhists the Gospel more effectively and to be able to refute the errors of this false religion.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. BUDDHISM BEGAN IN INDIA IN THE SIXTH CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST.**

- A. The founder of Buddhism was Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince.
  1. Gautama was born about 560 B.C. at Lumbini in what is now Nepal near the northern border of India.

2. All we know of him is mixed with legend and myth so it is impossible to be certain of the facts of his life.
- B. According to tradition Gautama's father was a "rajah" or king.
1. A prophecy was supposedly made at Gautama's birth that he would become the ruler of all India if he remained at home, but should he become a monk, he would become a savior of mankind.
  2. Tradition says that Gautama's father surrounded him with wealth and beauty so that he would not leave the palace grounds.
  3. He married in his teenage years and became the father of a son.
- C. When he was about thirty, he desired to see more of the world than just the palace grounds.
1. His father attempted to have the lame, blind, sick, old and poor removed from the route Gautama would travel.
  2. All grounds were also beautified, but the effort to make all pleasant to his eyes was not completely successful.
  3. "Four passing sights" as they were later called changed Gautama's life forever.
    - a. He first saw an old man and learned that old age would eventually come to all.
    - b. Next he saw a sick man and learned for the first time of sickness and pain.
    - c. After that he came to a funeral procession and learned that death must come to all.
    - d. The fourth sight was of a monk who looked so serene and peaceful that Gautama determined to become a monk.
  4. That night, known as "The Great Renunciation," Gautama left his wealth and family and set out to find enlightenment as a monk.
- D. Gautama sought enlightenment by means of Hinduism.
1. For six years he gave himself to fasting and meditation.



2. He undertook such rigorous asceticism that his body became only skin and bones and he was near death.
  3. John Noss said: "He lived for periods on all sorts of nauseous foods, dressing in chafing and irritating garments, stood for days in one posture, or having squatted, moved asquat. He sat on a couch of thorns, lay in a cemetery on charred bones among rotting bodies, let dirt and filth accumulate on his body till it dropped off of itself, and even ate his own excrement in the extremity of self-discipline" (Man's Religions, p. 109).
  4. Finally, Gautama sat at the foot of a Bodhi (knowledge or wisdom) tree in a grove near Budhgarya in Northern India.
    - a. While in deep meditation, he finally attained "enlightenment."
    - b. From henceforth he was known as "the Buddha" which means "the enlightened one."
    - c. Buddha died at the age of eighty; some traditions say he died of dysentery; others say he was poisoned by a jealous disciple.
- E. Buddhism grew very rapidly because Hinduism had become very weak at this time and people were seeking something better.
1. For about 200 years, the spread of Buddhism was confined mainly to India.
  2. After that, as a result of missionary work, it spread to Burma, China, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tibet.
  3. Its influence even reached as far west as Syria, Egypt and Greece.

## **II. BUDDHISM IS BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF HINDUISM.**

- A. Buddhism shares many of the fundamental principles of Hinduism.
1. The Law of Karma, which says that one's deeds, good and bad, follows him into the next life is also a part of Buddhism.
  2. Reincarnation, which teaches that one must be born again and again until finally he is released from the cycle, is also accepted by Buddhists.

3. "Nirvana" is the ultimate goal to be attained.
  - a. Nirvana has been variously described as renunciation, release, lack of clinging and non-existence.
  - b. When one attains Nirvana he is no longer subject to the cycle of rebirth, and at death his spirit merges with the great soul of the universe into "nothingness."
- B. There are major differences also with Hinduism.
  1. Buddha believed in the existence of gods and demons, but thought that they were subject to death and re-birth just as humans are.
  2. He did not teach prayer or belief in a single Supreme Being.
  3. Many Buddhists today are atheists.
  4. Some Buddhists revere Buddha and pay homage to his image as to a god.

### **III. THE BASIC TEACHING OF BUDDHA IS KNOWN AS "THE MIDDLE WAY."**

- A. Following his enlightenment under the Bo tree, Buddha began to teach his particular way to attain Nirvana.
  1. In a sermon at Benares, he said: "These two extremes, monks, are not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two? That conjoined with the passions and luxury, which is vulgar, common, ignoble and useless; and that conjoined with self-torture, which is painful, ignoble and useless. Avoiding these two extremes, the Blessed One has gained the enlightenment of the Middle Path, which produces insight and knowledge and leads to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana" (McDowell and Stewart, Understanding Non-Christian Religions, pp. 49, 50).
  2. In other words, Buddha was saying that torturing one's body on the one hand or giving oneself to fleshly indulgence on the other are both extremes to be avoided; the way to Nirvana is in between.
- B. Another fundamental teaching of Buddha is called "The Four Noble Truths."

1. Existence entails suffering: “Birth is painful, and death is painful; disease and old age are painful. Not having what we desire is painful, and having what we desire is also painful.”
2. Suffering is caused by desire for the pleasures of the senses.
3. Desire must be suppressed so that no craving for sensual satisfaction remains.
4. The way to achieve the suppression of desire is to follow the “Eightfold Path.”
  - a. Right Views: accept the Four Noble Truths.
  - b. Right Intentions: renounce all worldly pleasure and harm no living thing.
  - c. Right Speech: do not lie, slander or engage in idle talk.
  - d. Right Behavior: do not kill any living creature, steal or commit sexual sins.
  - e. Right Occupation: earn your living in a way that harms no one or any living thing.
  - f. Right Effort: strive to be good and to do good.
  - g. Right Contemplation: be alert, thoughtful, free of desire and sorrow.
  - h. Right Meditation: when you have mastered the first seven steps of the Eightfold Path, give yourself over to meditation.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Buddhism seeks to win the world to its philosophy; therefore, it is a threat to true Christianity.
2. Buddhism has its roots in Hinduism, but has many unique features of its own.
3. In our next lesson we shall compare Buddhism and Christianity.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the largest and most influential religion in Asia?
2. Out of which major religion did Buddhism arise?
3. In which nation did Buddhism begin?
4. Name the three major world religions which are universal.
5. Why is it important that Christians know something about Buddhism?
6. Who is the founder of Buddhism?
7. When did Siddhartha Gautama live?
8. What was his station in life?
9. What was the prophecy which supposedly was made at his birth?
10. What were the “four passing sights?”
11. What is the “Great Renunciation?”
12. How did Gautama seek enlightenment through Hinduism?
13. What does “Buddha” mean?
14. Where did Gautama attain enlightenment?
15. What are some basic doctrines which Buddhism has in common with Hinduism?
16. What is Nirvana?
17. What is the “Middle Path?”
18. What are the “Four Noble Truths?”
19. Is Buddhism evangelistic?
20. Are there many Buddhists in India today?

## **LESSON EIGHT: BUDDHISM: THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT (2)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Buddhism originated in India in the sixth century before Christ.
2. Its founder was Siddhartha Gautama who was born about 560 B.C.
3. Buddhism grew out of Hinduism, but has some major differences with it.
4. Gautama became the Buddha or “Enlightened One” when he attained Nirvana as a result of meditation under the Bo tree.
5. The goal of Buddhism is to achieve Nirvana at which time one conquers desire and is released from the cycle of re-births.
6. Buddha taught that the way to Nirvana is the “Middle Path” between rigid asceticism on the one hand and sensual indulgence on the other.
7. In this lesson we shall notice three things:
  - a. The growth and divisions of Buddhism.
  - b. The sacred scriptures of Buddhism.
  - c. The great contrast between Buddhism and Christianity.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THE GROWTH AND DIVISIONS OF BUDDHISM.**

- A. The greatest early growth of Buddhism was in India.
  1. This early Buddhism is called Theravada Buddhism.
  2. By the third century B.C. Theravada Buddhism had split into several different factions.
  3. Because of the Islamic invasion of India in the thirteenth century Buddhism largely died in the nation of its birth.
- B. The other major type of Buddhism is called Mahayana Buddhism.
  1. Mahayana Buddhism developed mainly in China and Japan.

2. Those who hold to this form believe there are those known as “bodhisattvas” who postpone attaining Nirvana in order to help others attain it.
  3. Bodhisattvas can become “Buddhas” (enlightened ones) just as Gautama did.
- C. Zen Buddhism is a form of Mahayana Buddhism that has become very popular in Western nations in recent years.
1. Zen developed about a thousand years after the death of Buddha.
  2. It has no writings it regards as sacred scripture.
  3. Adherents of Zen say their beliefs do not need to be explained, but are directly transmitted from one mind to another.
  4. Great emphasis is placed upon meditation, with enlightenment as the goal.
  5. A statement of Buddha frequently repeated by advocates of Zen is: “Look within; you are the Buddha.”

## **II. THE SACRED SCRIPTURES OF BUDDHISM.**

- A. Theravada Buddhism has three groups of scriptures.
1. Together they are referred to as “Tripitaka” which means “Three Baskets.”
  2. The Tripitaka is about eleven times the size of the Bible.
  3. It includes the sayings of Buddha, lectures on discipline and philosophy.
- B. Mahayana Buddhism has no fixed canon of scripture.
1. They have more than 5,000 volumes and the number continues to grow.
  2. Some sects choose one portion to follow; some another.

### III. **BUDDHISM COMPARED TO CHRISTIANITY.**

- A. Buddhism and Christianity are so different that they can hardly be compared.
- B. Buddhism essentially is atheistic although some Buddhist sects revere Buddha and worship him as a god.
  - 1. The Bible teaches that God is eternal, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent (Psalm 90:2; Malachi 3:6; Psalm 139:7-12; 1 John 3:20; Matthew 19:26).
  - 2. God is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-27; Acts 17:2-29).
  - 3. God loves man and is personally concerned about him (John 3:16; 1 John 4:10; Matthew 10:29-31).
- C. Buddhism has no concept of sin and therefore sees no need of a Savior from sin.
  - 1. The Bible teaches that sin is a transgression of God's law, alienates from God and results in eternal condemnation (1 John 3:4; Isaiah 59: 1,2; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8).
  - 2. The Bible teaches that Christ died for our sins, but Buddhism requires one to achieve Nirvana by works of his own devising (John 3:16; Isaiah 53:4-6; 1 Peter 1:18,19; Titus 3:4,5).
- D. Buddhism believes that man is essentially worthless and will eventually cease to exist.
  - 1. The Bible teaches that man is made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27; John 4:24; Luke 24:39).
  - 2. Man is made up of body, soul and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
  - 3. Man will live eternally either in Heaven or Hell (Matthew 25:46).
- E. Buddhism teaches that the human body is a miserable hindrance.
  - 1. The Bible teaches that it is a creation of God (Genesis 2:7, 21,22).
  - 2. The Bible teaches that the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which will be raised and changed into a new spiritual body to inhabit eternity (1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 15:51-54).

- F. Buddhism teaches reincarnation which means that an individual may be born and die many times before he finally attains to Nirvana.
1. Buddha is said to have lived 530 lives: 42 times as a god; 85 times as a king; 24 times as a prince; 22 times as a scholar; twice as a thief; once as a slave and gambler; many times as a lion; once each as a horse, eagle, bull, snake and frog.
  2. The Bible teaches there is but one life and one death on this earth (Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 14:13).
- G. Gautama Buddha presented no evidence that he told the truth or that he was anything other than an ordinary man.
1. Jesus Christ's life was the most extraordinary life ever lived.
  2. He fulfilled more than 300 prophecies made hundreds of years before He was born (Acts 3:24).
  3. His miracles proved that He was the Son of God (John 20:30, 31; 3: 1,2; 14:11).
  4. His resurrection from the dead proved beyond all doubt that He is indeed "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-20).
- H. The goal of Buddhism is to attain Nirvana (ceasing to exist as a separate entity), but the goal of the Christian is everlasting life in Heaven (John 3:16; 1 John 2:25; 5:11,12).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Buddha died at the age of eighty; Jesus died at thirty-three, but was raised from the dead after three days, ascended back to Heaven, and is coming again one day to raise the dead, judge all men, and destroy the earth (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 1:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; 2 Peter 3:1-14).
2. Buddhism teaches that life is a drudgery to be endured; Christianity gives real meaning and purpose, both to life and to death (Romans 8:37; John 10:10).
3. Only in obedience to Jesus Christ can one find forgiveness of sins and the hope of everlasting life (Hebrews 5:8,9; John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32,33; Mark 16:16).



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Where and when did Buddhism begin?
2. Who founded Buddhism?
3. When was he born?
4. What does the word "Buddha" mean?
5. What is the goal of Buddhism?
6. How may Nirvana be achieved?
7. What type of Buddhism was found in India in the early days of this religion?
8. What caused Buddhism to die out in India?
9. What is the major branch of Buddhism called which developed in Japan and China?
10. What is a "bodhisattva"?
11. What is the most popular form of Buddhism in the West?
12. How do Zen Buddhists attempt to reach Nirvana?
13. What statement of Buddha well summarizes the Zen viewpoint?
14. What are the scriptures of Theravada Buddhism called?
15. How many volumes of scriptures does Mahayana Buddhism have?
16. Contrast the teaching of Buddhism on sin with what the Bible teaches.
17. Contrast the teachings of Buddhism on God with what the Bible says.
18. Contrast the Buddhist view of man with the Bible view of man.
19. Contrast the Buddhist view of the human body with Bible teaching on the body.
20. Prove that reincarnation is contrary to Bible teaching.
21. Contrast Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha.



## **LESSON NINE: SHINTOISM: JAPANESE JINGOISM**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. By definition “jingoism” is the boasting of one's patriotism as a result of his belief that his country and culture are superior to all others.
2. Shintoism, the national religion of Japan, is not a clearly defined system of theology and morality, but a reverence for the nation of Japan, its history, traditions and people.
3. John B. Noss says: “It is a love of the country as a whole, and of each part of it, existing less in abstract idea than in an aesthetic love of things and places” (Man's Religions, p. 302).
  - a. It is a belief that Japan alone is a special creation of the gods and is therefore superior to all other nations.
  - b. Until 1945 the Japanese believed their land could never be conquered.
  - c. Because of this emotional and spiritual belief concerning their land, the Japanese people will gladly die for Japan if called upon to do so.
4. “Shinto” comes from a Chinese word which means “the way of the higher spirits or gods.”
5. The Japanese speak of the “kami” which has reference to gods or beings possessing sacred, spiritual power.
6. One cannot understand Japan and its present status in the world without an understanding of the spiritual and patriotic faith of its people which has made it a world power.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. SHINTOISM IS ONE OF THE OLDEST RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD.**

- A. It has its roots in the religions of the Korean, Mongolian and Malayan people who mingled thousands of years ago to form the Japanese people.
  1. The ideas of Confucius were imported from China and mixed with Japanese myth.
  2. Later Buddhism came to Japan from Korea and China and greatly influenced Japanese religion.

- B. Shintoism teaches that the Japanese islands are a special creation of the gods.
1. The first two deities, Izanagi and his wife, Izanami, descended from Heaven to form Japan from the sea.
  2. A descendant of Izanagi, Amaterasu, the sun goddess, took a special interest in Japan.
  3. She sent her grandson, Ninigi, to rule Japan.
  4. Ninigi's descendants are the emperors of Japan and thus the Japanese emperor is divine, having descended from Amaterasu.
  5. The rest of the Japanese people are descended from the kami or lower gods; therefore they too are of divine origin.
  6. Amaterasu is the chief deity of Japan.
  7. Her shrine at Ise' is regarded as the most hallowed spot in Japan.
- C. Shintoism was also somewhat influenced by Catholicism which was brought to Japan in the 1500's by Jesuit missionaries.
1. Some Shintoists believe that Jesus studied theology in Japan in His early twenties; thus, Japan was His spiritual homeland.
  2. They do not believe that He was crucified, but that one of His younger brothers was mistakenly crucified in His place.
  3. They teach that Jesus returned to Japan, married, reared a family, and died at the ripe old age of 106.
  4. A village named "Shingo" claims itself to be the hometown of Jesus.
  5. Villagers claim His grave was found there in 1935, but they did not reveal it to the rest of the world until 1962.
  6. Some Shintoists also claim that Moses is buried at Hakui in Southern Japan.
- D. Because Shintoism teaches that Japan is a special creation of the gods and that all Japanese are descendants of the gods, the Japanese believe

that they are superior in courage, intelligence and honesty to the people of all other nations.

## **II. SHINTOISM HAS A GREAT VARIETY OF SECTS AND DIVERSITY OF BELIEF.**

- A. Shintoism claims to have no inspired scriptures, but two books are considered sacred.
  - 1. “Kojiki,” the “record of ancient matters.” is the oldest existing writing in Japan.
    - a. It was compiled about 712 A.D.
    - b. It is made up of myths and legends mixed with the history of the emperors.
  - 2. “Nihongi,” the “chronicles of Japan,” was written around 720 A.D.; it is a history of Japan up to 700 A.D.
- B. Shinto worship is carried on at numerous shrines found all over Japan.
  - 1. The shrine to Amaterasu at Ise, which is 200 miles southwest of Tokyo, is the most important.
  - 2. There are more than 100,000 public shrines called “jinja” (god houses) scattered over Japan.
  - 3. Many Japanese homes also have a shrine in them.
    - a. On a special shelf will be placed wood or paper tablets with the names of ancestors and gods inscribed on them.
    - b. Symbols of Amaterasu or other deities will also be on the sacred shelf.
    - c. Good luck charms, objects pertaining to family history, etc. will be placed on the shelf as well.
    - d. Worship is conducted daily with offerings of food and prayers being given by family members to the gods and ancestors on the shelf.
- C. Until 1945 Shintoism was the state religion of Japan.

1. Although other religions were allowed, all school children were required to pay homage to the emperor daily.
  2. When Japan was defeated by the Allied Forces in 1945 at the end of World War II, the Emperor was forced to go on the national radio and admit that he was not a god.
  3. General Douglas MacArthur, the military governor of Japan following the war, issued a call for 10,000 missionaries.
- D. In 1973 only 25% of the Japanese people professed any religious belief at all.

### **III. THERE ARE MANY GREAT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SHINTOISM AND CHRISTIANITY.**

- A. The Bible teaches there is but one God Who is the Creator of all, but Shintoism has a multitude of gods (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4,5; Acts 17:24-29).
- B. The Bible teaches that God is no respecter of persons, but Shintoism is a Japanese centered faith (Genesis 18:25; Jeremiah 32:27; Acts 10:34,35; Romans 2:6,11).
- C. Shintoism believes that the Japanese people are of divine origin; therefore they do not need a Savior.
  1. The Bible teaches that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
  2. Sin separates man from God, both temporally and eternally (Isaiah 59:1,2; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8).
  3. Jesus Christ made atonement for our sins on the cross (Romans 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- D. Shintoism is essentially a religion only for the Japanese people, but Christianity is for all men (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Colossians 1:23).

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The Shinto religion formed the rationale for Japanese expansion in World War II and did much to promote and prolong the war.

2. Adherents of Shintoism are lost and must have the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ just like all other people in the world (Romans 1:16).

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is “jingoism?”
2. How is Shintoism an expression of Japanese jingoism?
3. What does “Shinto” mean?
4. What are “kami?”
5. Which other world religions were intermingled with Japanese mythology to form Shintoism?
6. According to Shintoism who created Japan?
7. Who is the deity who is especially interested in Japan?
8. According to Shintoism from whom are the Japanese emperors descended?
9. What is regarded as the most sacred spot in Japan?
10. What do some Shintoists believe about the connection of Jesus with Japan?
11. Why do the Japanese believe they are superior in courage, intelligence and honesty to all other nations?
12. What are the two books called which are regarded by Shintoists as sacred?
13. What are “jinja?”
14. When did Shintoism cease to be the state religion of Japan?
15. What was the Japanese emperor forced to admit on national radio at the end of World War II?
16. Who called for 10,000 missionaries to come to Japan?
17. Contrast the Shintoist idea of deity with the teaching of the Bible.
18. What is the Shintoist view of sin and the need for a Savior?





## **LESSON TEN: CONFUCIANISM: OPTIMISTIC HUMANISM**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Confucianism has been described as a “religion of optimistic humanism.”
2. Confucianism is not a religion in the sense of man worshiping a god or gods, but is mainly an ethical system dealing with getting along with one’s fellow man.
3. Although the emphasis in Confucianism is on the earthly, it gradually took on the form of a religion.
  - a. The ancient Chinese practice of ancestor worship became a part of it.
  - b. Confucius himself was deified by later generations of his followers.
4. Confucianism has affected the moral, political and social life of China for more than two thousand years.
  - a. Even Communism has not been able completely to eradicate Confucian thought in China.
  - b. Many Chinese hold to Communism publicly, but practice Confucianism privately.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. CONFUCIANISM BEGAN FIVE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE CHRIST.**

- A. Confucius and Gautama Buddha were contemporaries.
  1. Confucius was born as Chiu King about 550 B.C.
  2. His family was poor, but possibly of aristocratic descent.
  3. He was the youngest of eleven children; his father died shortly before his birth.
  4. Chiu King’s mother managed to give him a good education.
  5. He secured a good job as a tax collector.
  6. He married at the age of twenty, became the father of a son and a daughter, but his marriage ended in divorce.

7. Chiu King then became a teacher and soon earned fame for his wisdom and ability.
  8. His disciples called him “King Fu-tzu” or “Kung, the Master”; this came into English through Latin as “Confucius.”
- B. Chinese civilization was at a very low ebb in Confucius’ day.
1. Civil war and political rivalry were the order of the day.
  2. War lords offered bounties for the heads of their enemies.
  3. Whole cities, even whole regions were wiped out; women and children were not spared.
  4. Government was corrupt from the highest to the lowest levels.
  5. Social decay and near anarchy prevailed everywhere.
- C. Confucius believed that the solution to this chaos was to return to the kinder, gentler ways of their ancestors.
1. He was basically a humanist, believing that man was essentially good, and just needed to be called back to his better instincts.
  2. He sought to reform society by reforming government and education according to his principles of behavior.
- D. Confucius’ reforms were not very successful during his lifetime.
1. Confucius became fifty years old and was given the opportunity to put his reforms into effect.
  2. His administration was characterized by honesty and efficiency, but his enemies caused him to “lose face” and thereby forced him to resign. At the age of fifty-five he began wandering over China with his disciples seeking a place where he could put his reforms into effect; he was unsuccessful in this although he was often received well by government officials.
  4. He retired to his home province after ten years of wandering and spent his remaining years putting his teachings in writing.
  5. He probably died about 479 B.C.

- E. Mencius, who was born about two hundred years after the death of Confucius, became his greatest disciple.
1. He was more responsible than any other for Confucius' teaching becoming the accepted standard of behavior in China for the next two thousand years.
  2. Mencius was a respected teacher and scholar.
  3. He held various government posts, but was also unsuccessful in reforming government according to Confucius' principles.
  4. He also spent many years wandering over China in an attempt to teach rulers how to reform the government.
  5. Mencius' last years were spent in teaching and writing; as a result, the teachings of Confucius were perpetuated for future generations.
  6. He died in 289 B.C. at the age of eighty-one.

## II. **CONFUCIUS' TEACHINGS WERE DESIGNED TO PRODUCE "THE SUPERIOR MAN."**

- A. Confucius himself was a model of that which he sought to produce.
1. He was a student of ancient history, a lover of poetry and a gifted classical musician.
  2. He was always a kind, considerate, courteous and gracious gentleman.
- B. Confucius' teachings are found in several books which have been attributed to him, but were probably written, or at least edited, by his disciples.
1. The Analects contain sayings of Confucius and his disciples.
  2. The Great Learning deals with the education and training of a gentleman.
  3. The Doctrine of the Mean deals with how human nature fits into the order of the universe.
  4. The Book of Mencius was written by Mencius about 300 B.C.

- a. It is a collection of the thoughts of Confucius.
  - b. It stresses the basic goodness of human nature.
- C. Confucius also wrote commentaries on ancient Chinese writings which he collected and edited; these are known as "The Five Classics."
- D. Let us notice some specific basic teachings of Confucius:
  - 1. Filial Piety: Confucius taught that an orderly society was based on the stability of the home, but the home was based on respect of children for their parents.
    - a. He was credited with saying: "The services of love and reverence to parents when alive, and those of sorrow and grief when dead, these completely discharge the fundamental duty of living men."
    - b. Throughout Chinese history loyalty to the family has been the highest consideration.
  - 2. The Golden Rule: Confucius taught the principle of reciprocity: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do unto others."
    - a. This is the Golden Rule stated negatively.
    - b. Unlike Jesus, however, Confucius applied this only to friends, not enemies.

### III. IS CONFUCIANISM A RELIGION?

- A. Originally Confucius did not set out to establish a new religion.
  - 1. He held to the common religious views of the Chinese people of his day.
  - 2. He sought only to establish principles of human conduct by which society and government would be improved.
  - 3. Later disciples mixed Confucius' philosophy with Chinese religion and superstitions.
- B. Gradually Confucius was elevated to the status of a god by his disciples.

1. In 195 B.C. the Emperor of China offered animal sacrifices at the tomb of Confucius.
  2. By 57 A.D. regular sacrifices to Confucius were being carried out by imperial decree.
  3. By the middle of the sixth century temples had been built in the capital city of every province in China for the worship of Confucius.
  4. In 1906 an official imperial decree raised Confucius to the rank of the highest gods, recognizing what had been the long held belief of the Chinese people.
- C. A major part of Confucianism is ancestor worship which is based on Confucius' concept of filial piety.
1. Ancestor worship was already common in Confucius' day.
  2. The spirits of one's ancestors were believed to be dependent in the next life upon the offerings of their descendants in this life.
  3. If the offerings are not made, the spirits of the ancestors may cause disasters and misfortunes to come to their offspring on earth.
  4. The Chinese still celebrate a "Festival of the Hungry Ghosts" during which they place food and drink in front of their homes to appease the spirits of ancestors whose descendants may have neglected to provide offerings to them.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Confucius taught that man is basically good and needs only to return to his basic nature, but the Bible teaches that all accountable beings have sinned, are lost and can be saved only by the blood of Jesus Christ (Romans 3:23; Ezekiel 18:20; 1 Peter 1:18,19; 2:24; John 14:6; Ephesians 1:3).
2. Chinese Communists consider Confucius' teachings to be reactionary, yet they published a new edition of his Analects several years ago.
3. Perhaps Confucian thought may be deeply enough imbedded in Chinese culture that it will in time modify hard-line Chinese Communism.

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How has Confucianism been described?
2. With what other famed religious leader was Confucius contemporary?
3. What was Confucius' actual name?
4. What does "Confucius" mean? How did this name originate?
5. When was Confucius born?
6. What was the condition of Chinese society in his day?
7. What was Confucius' answer to the chaos in society?
8. How successful was Confucius in getting governments to accept his reform ideas?
9. When did Confucius die?
10. Who was Confucius' greatest disciple?
11. What was Confucius like personally?
12. What are the names of four books by Confucius and his disciples which contain his teachings?
13. What are Confucius' commentaries on ancient Chinese classics called?
14. What is "filial piety?"
15. What is the principle of reciprocity as stated by Confucius?
16. What is the difference between the principle of reciprocity and the Golden Rule as stated by Jesus?
17. Did Confucius regard himself as the founder of a new religion?
18. Did either Confucius or his early disciples regard him as a god?
19. Explain the practice of ancestor worship.
20. What was Confucius' belief about the nature of man? How does this conflict with what the Bible teaches?

## **LESSON ELEVEN: JUDAISM: THE FORERUNNER OF CHRISTIANITY (1)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Of all the major world religions Judaism is closest to Christianity.
2. Old Testament Judaism was a God-given religion from which Christianity grew and of which Christianity is the culmination and fulfillment.
3. The Apostle Paul wrote of the unique blessings God gave to the Jews, His covenant people until Christ came:
  - a. “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1, 2).
  - b. “Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen” (Romans 9:4,5).
4. To study the origin and history of Judaism, we must begin with the Old Testament.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### **I. JUDAISM BEGAN WITH ABRAHAM.**

- A. God’s plan to redeem man from his sins involved the sending of the Savior (Genesis 3:15).
  1. The Messianic line can be traced from Seth to Shem to Abraham.
  2. The call of Abraham is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3: “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”
- B. Abram’s (“exalted father”) name was changed to Abraham (“father of a multitude” or “father of nations”) and he and his wife were given a son in their old age (Genesis 17:5; 21:1-5; Romans 4:17-21).

1. Isaac became the father of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25).
2. Jacob became the father of twelve sons from whom the nation of Israel came (Genesis 29-35).

## **II. GOD GAVE ISRAEL A LAW AND A LAND.**

- A. The children of Israel went to Egypt during a time of famine (Genesis 37-50).
  1. There “arose a pharaoh who knew not Joseph” and the Israelites were made slaves (Exodus 1, 2).
  2. God delivered Israel out of Egypt by the hand of Moses (Exodus 3-14).
  3. God gave Israel the Law (including the Ten Commandments) at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19-40).
- B. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness because of their unbelief, God gave Israel the land of Canaan as a homeland (Numbers 13, 14; the book of Joshua).
  1. God has fulfilled His land promise to Israel: “And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein.... And there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass” (Joshua 21:43,45; cf. also 2 Samuel 8:3; 1 Kings 4:21; 2 Chronicles 9:26).
  2. God foretold that He would take away the land if they were disobedient (Deuteronomy 28; esp. verses 63,64; Ezekiel 21:25-27).
- C. The whole history of Israel in the land was one of faithfulness followed by apostasy, punishment, then repentance and restoration until A.D. 70 when God’s final wrath on Israel was carried out.
  1. God ruled through the judges from Othniel to Samuel.
  2. The people were given their request for a king though it was not God’s will (1 Samuel 8; Hosea 13:11).
  3. Israel was united for 120 years under three kings: Saul, David and Solomon.



4. At Solomon's death Israel divided into two nations (1 Kings 12:1-20).
    - a. The northern tribes rebelled and were known as "Israel."
    - b. The southern kingdom was called "Judah."
  5. Israel went into captivity in Assyria in 721 B.C.
  6. Judah went into captivity in Babylon in 606 B.C. and remained for seventy years until 536 B.C.
    - a. Solomon's temple was destroyed when Jerusalem was taken in 586 B.C.
    - b. The synagogue as a place of worship and learning came into being during the time of the Babylonian captivity.
- D. The Old Testament Scriptures were completed with the writing of Malachi's prophecy.
1. They were gathered into one volume by Ezra, the inspired Jewish scribe, according to a very ancient and probably reliable Jewish tradition (Ezra 7:10).
  2. The Old Testament was translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt in the third century before Christ.

### **III. THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS WAS A FORMATIVE TIME FOR MODERN DAY JUDAISM.**

- A. As a result of the conquests of Alexander the Great, Greek language, learning and culture had been spread from Greece eastward to India.
1. The rulers of Egypt after Alexander's death, the Ptolemies, ruled Judah (301 B.C. to 198 B.C.).
  2. Aramaic and Greek replaced Hebrew as the common language of Palestine.
  3. The kings of Syria, the Seleucids, took Palestine from Egypt in 198 B.C. and ruled it until 164 B.C.
- B. Antiochus Epiphanes IV attempted to force Greek ways upon the Jews.

1. He erected an altar to Zeus in the temple.
  2. He sacrificed a pig on the altar.
  3. In 167 B.C. a Jewish priest named Mattathias who lived in the village of Modin, refused to participate in a pagan sacrifice; he slew Antiochus' official and he and his five sons led a revolt.
  4. After Mattathias died, his son, Judas Maccabeus ("the hammer") continued the insurrection against the Syrians.
  5. Syria was defeated and Judah remained independent until the Roman general, Pompey, who was called in to settle a dispute among Jewish leaders, decided to stay and enforce Roman rule.
- C. During this period several sects arose among the Jews:
1. The Sadducees controlled the priesthood and the government.
    - a. They were greatly influenced by Greek culture.
    - b. They refused to believe in any part of the Old Testament except the books of Moses.
    - c. They rejected belief in spirits, angels and the resurrection (Matthew 22:23-33; Acts 23:8).
  2. The Pharisees accepted all of the Old Testament.
    - a. They were opposed to all efforts to "Hellenize" Judaism.
    - b. They placed great emphasis upon the oral traditions and the interpretations of the Scriptures by the learned rabbis and scribes (Matthew 15:1-20; 23:1-33).

#### **IV. ROME RULED ISRAEL FROM 63 B.C. UNTIL THE END OF THE EMPIRE.**

- A. Rome's relationship with the Jews was strained and stormy.
1. Herod, a puppet of Rome, ruled Judea when Jesus was born (Matthew 1,2; Luke 2).
  2. Pilate, a Roman procurator, governed Judea when Jesus was crucified (Matthew 27:1-25; Luke 3:1).

- B. The Jews revolted against Rome in A.D. 66.
1. The sect of the Herodians began as a protest movement when Caesar deposed Herod's son, Archelaus; they wanted self-rule for Judea.
  2. The Zealots favored rebellion against Rome because they equated service to Rome with rebellion against God.
  3. Vespasian began the siege of Jerusalem in 67; when he was called to Rome to become emperor, his son, Titus, completed the siege in A.D. 70.
  4. The fortress of Masada fell in 73 and the rebellion was over.
  5. Many Jews fled to other countries but some remained in Palestine where they established a center of learning in Jamnia.
  6. Several unsuccessful attempts to gain independence were made by the Jews; the last was the Bar Cochba Rebellion in 132-135.
- C. The Jews did not return to Israel in any significant number until the Balfour Declaration of 1917.
1. Following World War II many Jews sought a homeland where they would never be subject to such a tragedy as the Holocaust in which six million Jews were murdered by the Nazis under Adolf Hitler of Germany.
  2. A war was fought between the Jewish settlers and the Arabs who had lived in Palestine for many hundreds of years.
  3. The United Nations allowed the partition of Palestine in 1947 to make a home for the Jews.
  4. In 1948 modern Israel was officially established as a nation and recognized by the United Nations.
  5. Israel today is NOT the chosen nation of the Old Testament.
    - a. Not all Jews are in Israel.
    - b. Since the temple records were destroyed in A.D. 70 no one can prove that he is a Jew.

- c. God's plan and purpose for Israel were fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3).
- d. Christians are the seed of Abraham and God's chosen people today (Galatians 3:26-29; 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Old Testament Judaism is the foundation of Christianity.
2. Judaism of today is a far cry from that which we read about in the Old Testament.
3. Neither the land of Israel nor the religion of Judaism has any place in God's scheme of redemption today!
4. Jews must be saved just like Gentiles, by obedience to the Gospel, one by one (Romans 11:26).
5. In our next lesson we shall notice the following:
  - a. The divisions in modern Judaism.
  - b. Jewish Scriptures and authoritative writings.
  - c. Jewish holidays and customs.
  - d. Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Judaism.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Which one of the major world religions is closest in thought to Christianity?
2. What special privileges did Israel enjoy in Old Testament times?
3. Where is the proper place to begin a study of Judaism?
4. Why was it necessary that God have a chosen nation in Old Testament times?
5. With whom does the nation of Israel really begin?
6. What does "Abram" mean? What does "Abraham" mean? What is the significance of God's changing Abram's name to Abraham?
7. Where did God give the Law to Israel?

8. Did God ever fulfill His land promise to Israel? Give Scriptures.
9. How is the whole history of Israel characterized?
10. Who were the first and last of the judges of Israel?
11. Was it God's desire that Israel have a king? Give Scriptures.
12. Who were the three kings of United Kingdom? How long did the United Kingdom last?
13. What were the two nations called which came out of the division?
14. When was the Northern Kingdom taken into captivity? By whom?
15. When was the Southern Kingdom taken into captivity? By whom?
16. What happened to Solomon's temple?
17. Which institution came into being during the Babylonian captivity?
18. According to Jewish tradition, who was the inspired man who gathered the books of the Old Testament into one?
19. Who ruled Judah after the death of Alexander the Great?
20. What did Antiochus Epiphanes IV do to destroy the religion of the Jews?
21. Who led a revolt against the Seleucid rulers?
22. When did Rome begin to rule Judah?
23. What did the Pharisees believe?
24. What did the Sadducees believe?
25. Who was Rome's puppet king who ruled Judea when Jesus was born?
26. When was Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans? Under whose leadership?



## **LESSON TWELVE: JUDAISM: THE FORERUNNER OF CHRISTIANITY (2)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. In our last lesson we learned that Old Testament Judaism was the source from which New Testament Christianity grew.
2. God made a nation from the seed of Abraham and gave them a land and a law for the purpose of bringing His Son into the world through this nation.
3. Israel has forfeited her right to the land because of her rebellion against God.
4. Israel has fulfilled her purpose in God's plan and is no longer a chosen nation.
5. Jews today, just like Gentiles, stand on the same footing before God and must obey the same Gospel to be saved (Acts 10:34,35; Romans 1:16,17).
6. In this lesson we shall look at the following:
  - a. The divisions in modern Judaism.
  - b. Jewish Scriptures and authoritative writings.
  - c. Jewish holidays and customs.
  - d. Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Judaism.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THERE ARE THREE MAJOR DIVISIONS IN MODERN JUDAISM.**

- A. The Orthodox Jews believe in the inspiration of the Old Testament and look for the coming of the Messiah.
  1. They are divided into many sects because of minor differences, but are united on holding to the major traditional beliefs of Judaism.
  2. They observe the dietary and ceremonial laws of Judaism as much as possible.
  3. They believe they have a God-given claim on the land of Palestine today.
  4. They place great emphasis upon the Torah (the Law), but also accept the inspiration of all the Old Testament.

5. They also place great emphasis on the Talmud.
  6. They steadfastly reject Jesus and consider Him an imposter and a false Messiah.
- B. The Reform Jews are the radical left wing of Judaism.
1. The founder of the Reform Movement was Abraham Geiger who lived from 1810 to 1874.
    - a. Geiger rejected the Old Testament as an inspired revelation for, he said, it could not be tested by the laws of science.
    - b. He also rejected the idea that Palestine was the home of the Jews because the Jews, he said, are citizens of whatever land they happen to be born in.
    - c. Geiger rejected the whole idea of a Messiah to come.
    - d. Geiger basically believed that the Jews had a genius for teaching ethics; therefore, their contribution to the world lay in this area.
  2. There is very little consensus concerning doctrine among Reform Jews except they all reject inspiration and Messianic hopes.
- C. Conservative Judaism is the middle ground between the Orthodox and Reform Judaism.
1. Conservative Jews believe that Jews are citizens of the land of their birth and reject the idea of a God-given homeland in Palestine.
  2. They believe the mission of Judaism is to be a religious influence in the modern world..."The mission of the Jew is to witness to God all over the world" (Noss; Man's Religions, p. 409).
  3. They do not follow the strict traditions of the Orthodox Jews, but do believe in one God and in His revelation in the Old Testament.

## II. JEWS ACCEPT SEVERAL BOOKS AS AUTHORITATIVE.

- A. The Torah is the heart of historic Judaism.



1. Orthodox and Conservative Jews also accept the rest of the Old Testament as Divinely given.
  2. Judaism has been called “the religion of the Book” and Jews have been known as “the people of the Book” because of the steadfast adherence to the Old Testament.
- B. The Jews have a great body of religious literature known as “the Talmud” which is composed of several extensive literary works.
1. The “Mishnah” is oral law, the opinions of the learned rabbis on the interpretation of Scripture.
  2. The “Gemarah” is a commentary on the Mishnah.
  3. The “Midrash” is a commentary on the Old Testament, especially the Torah.

### **III. JEWS HAVE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS.**

- A. The sabbath is the weekly keeping of the seventh day as a time of rest and worship (Exodus 20:8-11).
- B. The Passover is kept in the spring of the year to commemorate the deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Exodus 12).
- C. Pentecost, also called Shabuot (Sha-voo-oth), celebrates the beginning of harvest (Exodus 23).
1. It was one of three major Jewish festivals of ancient times.
  2. It is also known as “the feast of weeks” and occurs seven weeks after Passover.
- D. Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year which is celebrated in September or October.
- E. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day in the Hebrew calendar (Leviticus 16).
1. This day is traditionally spent in fasting and prayer.
  2. It is a time of self-examination and repentance.

- F. Sukkoth is the Old Testament feast of “booths” or “tabernacles” (Leviticus 23:33-44).
  - 1. It commemorates Israel’s sojourn in the wilderness when they dwelt in tents.
  - 2. In ancient times the Jews slept in tents during this feast; today they usually take only their meals in tents.
- G. Hanukkah is an eight-day feast held in mid-winter.
  - 1. It commemorates the victory over Antiochus Epiphanes IV and the cleansing of the temple in the second century before Christ.
  - 2. The Menorah, the eight branched candlestick in the temple, had only enough oil in it for one night, but continued to burn for eight consecutive nights after the temple was cleansed.
  - 3. Since Hanukkah is close in time to the Christmas season some Christmas traditions, such as the giving of gifts, have been incorporated into it.
- H. The Feast Of Purim commemorates the victory of the Jews over their enemies in the time of Esther (Esther 9:17-28).

#### **IV. JUDAISM HAS BEEN FULFILLED IN JESUS CHRIST.**

- A. Paul wrote: “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth” (Romans 10:4).
  - 1. The Law was taken away when Christ died on the cross (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:13-16).
  - 2. Today all true believers, whether Jew or Gentile, are all one in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28).
  - 3. The New Covenant (Testament) has come to replace the Old as a law for God’s people (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13).
- B. All Orthodox and most Conservative Jews still await the coming of the Messiah.
  - 1. At least thirty-four different individuals have come since the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 claiming to be the Messiah.

2. They ignore the Old Testament prophecies which were all clearly fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44; Acts 3:21-24).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Judaism is a major force in the world today for it is both a religion and the foundation of the modern nation of Israel.
2. America's support of the modern nation of Israel is not only encouraged by the large Jewish population in America, but also by the premillennial doctrine that the physical nation of Israel is still a vital part of God's eternal plan.
  - a. Christ, premillennialists teach, will one day return to Jerusalem and rule the world from David's throne.
  - b. All Jews in the world will be miraculously converted and returned to Palestine.
  - c. The Bible knows nothing of such speculation!

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How will Jews find salvation today?
2. What are the three major divisions of Judaism?
3. How do Orthodox Jews regard the Old Testament?
4. How do they view Jesus?
5. Who founded the Reform Movement in Judaism?
6. How does Reform Judaism differ from Orthodox Judaism?
7. How does Conservative Judaism differ from Orthodox and Reform Judaism?
8. What is the Torah?
9. What is the Mishnah?
10. What is the Gemarah?
11. What is the Midrash?

12. What is the Talmud?

## LESSON THIRTEEN: ANIMISM: PRIMITIVE PAGANISM

### INTRODUCTION:

1. What is animism?
  - a. Animism comes from the Latin word “anima” which means “breath of life,” “soul,” or “spirit.”
  - b. Animism is the belief that all objects, both animate and inanimate, have spirits.
  - c. Trees, rocks, rivers, lakes, wild animals and men all have spirits; the spirits may be good or evil.
  - d. All that happens is controlled by spirits of one kind or another, e.g., sickness is not caused by germs, but by offended, angry spirits.
2. The basis of animism is fear.
  - a. When something goes wrong, the animist does not ask, “What is the cause?,” but “Who is the cause?,” “Which spirit is responsible?”
  - b. At birth, marriage, planting and harvest spirits must be honored.
3. There is especially a fear of the spirits of the dead.
  - a. If a man was believed to possess great power while he was alive, it will be even greater after death.
  - b. If one died in an accident and his body was not recovered, he might try to take a living body.
  - c. If a woman died childless, she might kidnap the soul of a child.
  - d. If a man died unmarried, he might try to capture a wife from the land of the living.
4. Animism is very widespread in the “developing nations” or “Third World” countries of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands.
  - a. It is also common among the Indian tribes of North and South America.

- b. Many of us retain animistic views from the superstitious past, e.g., fear of black cats, walking under ladders, which cause bad luck, or a rabbit's foot, four leaf clover, or horseshoe to bring good luck.
- 5. Animism is a clear example of what happens to man when he gives up an understanding of God to follow his own fantasies (Acts 14:15,16; Romans 1:18-32).

## DISCUSSION:

### I. THE ANIMIST VIEW OF GOD.

- A. Many, perhaps most, animists believe in the existence of a Supreme Being.
  - 1. He is regarded as the Creator of the world and everything in it.
  - 2. He is not a personal God who is interested generally in the affairs of man even though He is aware of them.
  - 3. He is not generally approached directly but, if called upon, it is through the spirits of ancestors as mediators.
- B. Among the Nyanja-speaking tribes of Zambia and Malawi, this high God is called "Mulungu" which means "the Living One Who puts things together right."
  - 1. Among the Bemba people of Zambia and Zaire He is called "Lesa" which means "The Nourisher."
  - 2. Apollo Ngwira, an African Christian wrote: "The grammar of the people forbids the use of 'plural gods.' When ever it is used, it may mean 'not living.' Moreover the grammar confirms the 'idea of God' as One, the Great One, who is the Living One. That is the African idea of God" (The African Idea of God-Central Africa, private paper, n.d.).

### II. THE ANIMIST VIEW OF ANCESTOR SPIRITS.

- A. Animists generally worship the spirits of their ancestors.
  - 1. They believe the soul of man survives death.
  - 2. The spirits of the ancestors in the spirit world need food, beer, weapons, tools, even wives and slaves for their well being.

3. These must be supplied by relatives on the earth.
  4. The deceased may be buried with personal items including food and drink.
  5. In times past chiefs often had their favorite wives and servants slain at their death so they could continue to serve them in the next life.
- B. If ancestor spirits are neglected or displeased, they may cause famine, sickness or other types of misfortunes to come to their descendants on earth.
1. A student of mine at Mapepi Bible School was told by family elders that the reason his newborn baby was sick and cried was that he had failed to name the child after a deceased family member.
  2. A Christian in the Copperbelt of Zambia was told by his mother-in-law that his child was sick because an evil or angry spirit was in his house.
- C. When a person dies special care is taken to see that his spirit is laid to rest.
1. Among some tribes it is believed that a widow must have sexual relations with her late husband's oldest brother to insure that the spirit of the deceased does not have relations with his widow and she conceive a monster of some kind.
  2. Some tribes raise a heap of stones over the grave of a newly buried person lest his body "walk."
  3. Among some animistic tribes corpses are carried out feet-first so that they will be pointed away from the village where they died.
  4. Sometimes thorns are scattered around the grave and on the path leading back to the village to prevent the dead from returning.

### **III. OTHER ANIMISTIC IDEAS**

- A. In some animistic societies ancestors are represented in the form of totems.
1. A totem may be an animal, bird, plant or insect.

2. Members of a clan believe they are related or mystically united to their totem.
  3. The totem may not be killed or eaten except on special, ceremonial occasions.
- B. Many animistic tribes believe in a power called “mana.”
1. Mana is believed to be a force which is inherent in persons or things.
  2. Spirits, alive or dead, have mana and can confer it to living persons or objects.
  3. If a river floods its banks and destroys a village, it is said to be caused by mana.
  4. Mana can be either good or bad, destructive or helpful.
  5. The animist seeks to gain mana in order to use it for his own benefit.
- C. Animists also believe in fetishes.
1. A fetish is a material object which is believed to be occupied by a spirit and therefore has special power.
  2. Fetishes may be worn on a string around the neck or wrist to protect the wearer from evil spirits.
  3. The wearing of crosses and the carrying of good luck charms and St. Christopher’s medals are examples of fetishism among Roman Catholics and others in Western society.
- D. The concept of taboo (forbidden) is a large part of animism.
1. Both objects and actions can be taboo because harm will come to those who violate the taboo.
  2. In Central Africa there are many taboos associated with child birth.
    - a. Before a child is born the expectant mother must not stand in the doorway.
    - b. When she eats it is taboo to eat all the food given to her.



- c. After the child is born she must not cook or handle salt for one month.
  - d. At one month both the mother and her baby must have their hair cut (A. A. Ngwira, "Chivuwa in the Village," private paper, n.d.).
- E. The shaman (witch doctor or medicine man) has great influence in animistic societies.
  - 1. He is believed to be possessed of a strong spirit which can be used for either good or bad.
  - 2. He is an authority on magic.
  - 3. He can even go into the spirit world and communicate with the spirits of men long dead.
  - 4. He is supposed to have the power to drive spirits out of a person or to send an evil spirit upon a person.
  - 5. He is consulted for healing when someone is sick; his "healing" may consist in a combination of herbal medicines, magic spells, incantations and psychology.
    - a. A missionary in Tanzania employed an African whom he had taught the Gospel.
    - b. The African was told the witch doctor had put a curse on him and he was going to die.
    - c. The missionary knew he would simply go off and die because he believed it so strongly that he would bring it about.
    - d. The missionary reminded the "bewitched" man that he owed him money, and as a Christian he must not die and leave an unpaid debt.
    - e. The African went back to work to pay off his debt and soon forgot that he was "bewitched."
  - 6. The shaman may be consulted when someone dies to see who is responsible for the death.

- a. A piece of clothing or some other article from the deceased will be brought to him.
- b. He will “throw the bones” to see who the guilty party is.
- c. I attended a funeral of a policeman in Zambia who was killed in a traffic accident; at the grave side, his elderly father angrily threatened that the one who had “bewitched” his son would be found out and punished.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Animistic societies usually do not advance or prosper; because they believe everything is caused by spirits, they reject true science which is based upon the laws of nature created by God.
2. The whole existence of an animist is characterized by fear.
3. Animists are often very receptive to the Gospel of Christ because it delivers them from such fears and gives them hope.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is animism?
2. What is the basis of animism?
3. Do animists believe in a Supreme Being Who created all things?
4. What does “Mulungu” mean?
5. What does “Lesa” mean?
6. Explain the practice of ancestor worship.
7. What do animists attribute sickness to?
8. How do some animists prevent a dead body from walking.
9. What is a totem?
10. What is mana?

## LESSON FOURTEEN: TAOISM: THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

### INTRODUCTION:

1. In order to understand Taoism, one must understand some basic concepts of ancient Chinese philosophical and religious beliefs.
2. Ancient Chinese, long before the time of Confucius, believed that every natural object was composed of two opposites, but supplementary, life forces called “the yin” and “the yang.”
  - a. The yang is masculine, active, dry, bright and positive.
  - b. The yin is feminine, fertile, dark, cold, wet and negative.
  - c. The sun was yang, the soil was yin; together they produce bountiful harvests for man.
3. The emperors of ancient China not only had the responsibility of governing, but they also acted as representatives of Heaven and performed priestly acts for the people.
4. Since ancient China’s economy was dependent upon farming, each locality had various gods of the soil.
  - a. Each village had a mound of earth called “she” which symbolized the fertility of the soil.
  - b. Dancing, singing and various ceremonies were performed around the “she” at planting and harvest.
5. About the time of Moses (1500 B.C.), a god by the name of “Shang Ti” began to be worshiped.
  - a. He was the “Ruler on High,” an ancestral figure who lived in the upper reaches of the sky.
  - b. He was consulted in time of drought and war.
6. Heaven was known as “Tien,” the abode of the great spirits.
7. Ancient Chinese also worshiped many gods - gods of the hills, streams and mountains - some good and some bad.

8. Noss says: "Perhaps, no people have gone to such lengths to keep the good spirits on their side as the Chinese, because no people have been more afraid of demons" (Man's Religions, p. 240).
9. Chinese emphasis on family was expressed from the earliest times in ancestor worship.
  - a. Spirits of the departed had the power to bless their descendants on earth.
  - b. The ancestor spirits were dependent upon the gifts and sacrifices of their living descendants.
10. Taoism grew out of this religious background and eventually incorporated many of these ideas into its system.

## DISCUSSION:

### I. TAOISM WAS FOUNDED BY A LEGENDARY FIGURE NAMED LAO-TZU.

- A. Many scholars question if Lao-Tzu lived at all.
  1. He was probably born about 600 B.C.
  2. One legend says Lao-Tzu was never young, but was born old with white hair and wrinkled skin.
  3. His name is unknown; he was simply called Lao-Tzu which means "the old philosopher."
- B. Legend says that Lao-Tzu held a high position in the government of his home state of Chu.
  1. He became disillusioned with politics and the ceremonies of government.
  2. He decided that men were meant to live simply with as little government as possible.
  3. He resigned his job and returned home, but was so pestered by those who wanted to be his disciples that he decided to leave China and retire beyond its western borders.
  4. When he attempted to cross the border the guard would not let him pass until he had written down his philosophy.

5. Three days later Lao-Tzu returned with a small book called "The Tao Te King."
  6. He left the book, rode off into the sunset on a water buffalo, and was never seen again.
- C. About three centuries later a disciple of Lao-Tzu, named Chuang-Tzu, wrote thirty-three books expounding upon his teachings.
1. In 212 B.C. Taoism was established by the emperor as the official religion of China.
  2. By 156 B.C., the emperor performed sacrifices to Lao-Tzu on behalf of the people.
  3. About 650 A.D. Lao-Tzu's writings were required studies in government schools.
  4. The Boxer Rebellion in 1900, in China, began with a group of young Taoists.
    - a. They wanted to rid China of all foreign influence.
    - b. They believed their bodies were immune to foreigner's bullets for Lao-Tzu had said: "When coming among soldiers, one need not fear arms and weapons."

## II. THE ORIGINAL TEACHINGS OF TAOISM WERE MORE PHILOSOPHICAL THAN RELIGIOUS.

- A. "Tao" literally means "path" or "way."
1. It is hard to define Tao for it is said that "the Tao that can be expressed in words is not the Tao."
  2. The idea of the Tao is based on the natural flow or rhythm of things.
    - a. The seasons follow one another naturally.
    - b. The periods of man's life also follow one another naturally.
    - c. The basic idea is: "Why fight it? Just go with the flow."

3. When one becomes attuned to the harmony of things, he will have a balance of yin and yang and will become one with all things.
- B. Some of the teachings of Taoism help us understand the concept of Tao better.
1. "Leave all things to take their natural course and do not interfere."
  2. "The ideal man has no ambitions or ego or desire for fame or power or prominence."
  3. "If one does not meddle with others, human relations will fall as the Tao brings them to pass, naturally and simply. There will be a spontaneous birth of true love, real kindness, simplicity and contentment in the lives and relationship of men." (Noss, Man's Religions, p. 250).
- C. Eventually Taoists began to claim that he who mastered the Tao possessed a passive magical power which made him immune to attack from wild beasts or violent men and even the ravages of age and death.
1. One gets his life in harmony with the Tao through the practice of "Wu Wei" which literally means "inaction."
  2. If one avoids stress caused by participation in the affairs of the world and stays in the background, his odds for survival are much greater.

### **III. LATER TAOISM ADDED RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF ANCIENT CHINA AND BUDDHISM TO FORM RELIGIOUS TAOISM.**

- A. Religious Taoism has priests, temples and sacred books.
1. Various gods of ancient China are worshiped.
  2. Taoism developed an idea of Paradise as being a place of contented delight in the "Three Isles of the Blessed" supposed to be located in the Eastern Sea between China and Japan.
  3. A place of punishment, more like Purgatory than Hell, was also added to Taoist doctrine.
- B. Some of the particular gods worshiped by Taoists were:

1. The “Eight Immortals” who lived in the “Three Isles of the Dead” had once been mortals, but through Taoism had become immortal.
2. The “God of the Stove” lived in the chimney corner of the kitchen of each Chinese family and observed their actions.
  - a. Naughty children were cautioned that their deeds would be seen by him.
  - b. Once a year food and drink, paper money and other things were burned in the chimney as an offering to “the god of the stove.”
  - c. He ascended up to Heaven on the smoke of the offerings and reported to the highest deities on the behavior of the family.

#### **IV. TAOISM SURVIVES TO THIS VERY DAY.**

- A. It may have largely died out in China as a result of Communist rule and influence.
- B. Taoism thrives in Taiwan and among Chinese people in Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore.
- C. Many of the principles of Taoism were adopted by the ‘hippie’ drug culture generation of the 1960's and 1970's in the United States.
  1. The “tune out, drop out” philosophy came from Taoism.
  2. Principles of Taoism such as the yin and the yang are also a major part of the New Age Movement which threatens to engulf the West.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Taoists need the Gospel of Jesus Christ to give them the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
2. Taoists seek the way, but Jesus is the only way to God and eternal life in Heaven (John 14:6)!

#### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the yin and the yang? Describe the characteristics of each.

2. What two-fold responsibilities did ancient Chinese emperors have?
3. Who was the god who began to be worshiped about the time of Moses?
4. What did the Chinese call Heaven? What does it mean?
5. What did Noss say about the Chinese attitude toward demons?
6. How did the Chinese emphasis on the family become a part of their religion?
7. Who was the legendary founder of Taoism? What does his name mean?
8. When was Lao-Tzu born?
9. Why did Lao-Tzu resign his position in the government?
10. Why did he decide to leave China?
11. What was Lao-Tzu required to do before he was allowed to cross China's western border?
12. What is the name of Lao-Tzu's book?
13. Who wrote thirty-three books expounding Lao-Tzu's teaching?
14. When was Taoism established as a legal religion of China?
15. What effect did Taoism have on the Boxer Rebellion of 1900?
16. What does "Tao" literally mean?
17. What is the basic idea of Taoism?
18. What is "Wu Wei?"
19. What is the Taoist idea of Paradise?
20. What is the Taoist idea of Hell?
21. Who are the "Eight Immortals?"
22. What function does the "god of the stove" play in Chinese family life?
23. Where does Taoism survive today?



## **LESSON FIFTEEN: ZOROASTRIANISM: ETHICAL DUALISM**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Zoroastrianism is a dying religion today, but five hundred years before Christ, it was the major religion of the Persian Empire which covered the territory from Ethiopia to India.
  - a. Cyrus the Great, Darius I and Xerxes, great Persian kings, were Zoroastrians.
  - b. Today there are only about 100,000 Zoroastrians left, mainly in India, Pakistan and Iran.
  - c. In India they are known as "Parsees"; they are among the richest and best educated people of that land.
2. Zoroastrianism is of special interest because originally it taught belief in one God, a day of judgment, a Heaven and Hell.
3. It also taught belief in a Devil or Evil Being.
4. Some liberal scholars believe that during the Babylonian Captivity the Jews "borrowed" Zoroastrian ideas, such as that of the Devil, and made them a part of the Old Testament.
  - a. This is based upon the unproven modernistic assumption that the Pentateuch and many other parts of the Old Testament had not yet been written.
  - b. The truth of the matter is that the Zoroastrians may have borrowed many of their ideas from the Old Testament!

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. THE HISTORY OF ZOROASTRIANISM.**

- A. The founder of this religion was probably born about 650-600 B.C.
  1. Most of what we know about Zoroaster comes from sources long after his time.
  2. Legend and myth are hard to separate from historical fact.

3. His Persian name was "Zarathustra"; the Greeks made it into "Zoroaster."
- B. Zoroaster grew up in a pagan environment where many gods were worshiped.
1. He was the son of a camel driver, but was given a good education including medical training.
  2. He was known for his kindness and compassion.
  3. He was deeply interested in religion and searched for the answer to life's great questions.
  4. Zoroaster could not find the answers he sought in the pagan religions around him, so he left home at twenty to search.
- C. After ten years of searching Zoroaster claimed he had a revelation from the true God.
1. An angel ten times the height of a man appeared to him and summoned him to Heaven.
  2. He was brought into the presence of the one true God, the Supreme Being who created the world.
  3. God identified Himself as "Ahura Mazda" which means "Wise Lord."
  4. He instructed Zoroaster in the true religion and sent him back to the earth to preach it.
- D. Zoroaster preached for several years with little success.
1. He eventually converted an Aryan prince named Vishtaspa.
  2. With Vishtaspa's support the new religion began to grow and became a world religion.
- E. Zoroaster was killed by an enemy while officiating at the fire altar when in his seventies.

## **II. THE DOCTRINES OF ZOROASTRIANISM.**

- A. Originally Zoroastrianism was much closer to the Bible than many other religions.

1. This was probably because of the influence that the Old Testament and the Jews had on Zoroaster.
  2. Many years later Zoroastrianism had degenerated into a polytheistic, fire worshiping religion.
- B. The basic idea of the original faith was that there is one Supreme God called "Ahura Mazda."
1. He is infinite in wisdom and goodness.
  2. He created the world and all in it.
  3. He judges man on the basis of his deeds.
- C. A second major idea of the original faith was an opposing evil being called Angra Mainyu.
1. Angra Mainyu was just the opposite of Ahura Mazda in every way.
  2. He sought to lead man astray and destroy him.
  3. Angra Mainyu was equal in power with Ahura Mazda.
  4. He was also said to be eternal.
- D. Early Zoroastrianism believed that a judgment took place after man's death.
1. Man had to cross a bridge built between two high mountain peaks.
  2. If he was righteous he could easily cross over to Paradise on the opposite side.
  3. If he was wicked he would fall into the fires of Hell far below.
  4. Hundreds of years later, when Zoroastrianism became polytheistic, many details were changed to accommodate the evolved belief in many gods.

### **III. THE SACRED WRITINGS OF ZOROASTRIANISM.**

- A. Originally there was a large body of Zoroastrian literature but most of it perished through the centuries.

- B. Zoroastrians today have the “Zend Avesta.”
  - 1. The Avesta is a sacred book, part of which goes back to the time of Zoroaster.
  - 2. The Zend is an ancient commentary on the Avesta.
- C. There are three parts to the Avesta:
  - 1. The Yasna which contains a group of hymns called “the Gathas,” probably written by Zoroaster himself.
  - 2. The Yashts were written much later and contain hymns to various deities.
  - 3. The last section is called the Vendidad; it was written later still and contains laws against demons, etc.
- D. Hundreds of years after Zoroaster’s death the faith he had established to emphasize monotheism had been perverted into polytheism.
  - 1. Many of the ancient pagan gods were added, but Ahura Mazda was still considered the Supreme God.
  - 2. Fire, as a symbol of Ahura Mazda, played a large part in worship.
  - 3. Ahura Mazda and Angra Mainyu were said to be twins who sprang from a “unitary world principle called Zurvan (boundless Time or Space or was it Space–Time),” [Noss, Man’s Religions, p. 343].
  - 4. Ahura Mazda came to be called “Ohrmazd” and Angra Mainyu “Ahriman, the Devil.”

#### IV. CHRISTIANITY AND ZOROASTRIANISM.

- A. Although Christianity and early Zoroastrianism have some similarities, there are many differences.
  - 1. The God of the Bible is all powerful, but Ahura Mazda is only equal in strength to Angra Mainyu.
  - 2. Christianity has one true God, but Zoroastrianism is dualism - two gods of equal power.

3. There is no answer to the problem of sin in Zoroastrianism, but Christianity has a sin offering and Savior in the Person of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- B. Modernists teach that the idea of Satan was taken from Angra Mainyu of the Zoroastrians.
1. Satan is not co-equal or co-eternal with God, the Father.
  2. The Jews believed in Satan from the very beginning of time (Genesis 3:1-15; Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7).
- C. Modernists teach that the idea of judgment, Heaven and Hell were learned from the Zoroastrians.
1. The Old Testament teaching is not as fully revealed as the New.
  2. God as Judge is clearly taught throughout the Old Testament (Genesis 18:25; Psalms 1:5; 9:7,8; Isaiah 33:22).
  3. Heaven is set forth in the Old Testament as the dwelling place of God (Deuteronomy 10:14; 1 Kings 8:27; Psalm 73:25).
  4. Hell is also taught in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 32:22; Job 11: 8; Psalm 9:17; Proverbs 7:27).
  5. Competent, conservative Bible scholarship dates the writing of the Pentateuch, Job, 1 Kings, Isaiah, Psalms and Proverbs all long before Zoroaster was even born.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Zoroastrianism in its original form has about as much in common with Christianity and Judaism as Islam does.
2. The similarity can be explained upon two grounds.
  - a. In the Patriarchal Age all men knew God following the Flood; perhaps not all of that was lost.
  - b. The Jews in their captivities and other associations with other nations influenced many with the idea of the one God who created all things.
3. Zoroastrians today must have the Gospel preached to them if they will be saved (Romans 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How many Zoroastrians are left today?
2. Where are they mainly located?
3. What are Zoroastrians called in India?
4. Prove that Judaism did not borrow from Zoroastrianism.
5. When and where did Zoroaster live?
6. What is the Persian form of his name?
7. Relate Zoroaster's supposed visit to Heaven.
8. What does "Ahura Mazda" mean?
9. Who was the prince who was converted by Zoroaster?
10. How did Zoroaster die?
11. Who is the opposite of Ahura Mazda?
12. Describe the Zoroastrian idea of judgement.
13. How was later Zoroastrianism corrupted?
14. What is the sacred book of Zoroastrianism called?
15. What is the commentary on the Avesta called?
16. Which section of the Avesta was probably written by Zoroaster himself?
17. What is another name for Ahura Mazda?
18. What is another name for Angra Mainyu?
19. Did the Old Testament teach there is a Devil?
20. Does the Old Testament have anything to say about Heaven or Hell?

## LESSON SIXTEEN: JAINISM: EXTREME ASCETICISM

### INTRODUCTION:

1. According to Webster's Dictionary, asceticism is "the religious doctrine that one can reach a higher spiritual state by rigorous self-discipline and self-denial."
2. Many religions of the world have had movements within them which sought greater holiness or even salvation by abusing the body.
  - a. Certain monastic orders in the Roman Catholic Church have emphasized asceticism.
  - b. Jainism is probably the most extreme ascetic religion the world has known!
3. Noss says of Jainism: "When we turn to see what Jainism has to offer, our Occidental (Western-RR) minds are apt to receive an initial shock. To anyone bred in the prevailing and hedonistic (pleasure seeking-RR) attitudes of the West, Jainism may seem at first glance an adjustment to life as rigorously world-denying as any the history of religion affords" (Man's Religions, p. 94.).
4. Jainism is one of three major religions which grew out of Hinduism; the other two are Buddhism and Sikhism.
5. Jainism and Buddhism began about the same time, but in different parts of India.
6. There are many similarities between the life of Siddhartha Gautama who became "The Buddha" and Mahavira who founded Jainism.

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. THE HISTORY OF JAINISM.

- A. Jainism was founded by an Indian prince named Nataputta Vardhamana.
  1. His later followers called him "Mahavira," which means "Hero" or "Great One."
  2. He was probably born in 599 B.C. and died in 527 B.C., but scholars are not certain of the dates.
  3. Mahavira was reared in the lavish, opulent surroundings of an ancient Indian palace.

4. He married and became the father of a daughter.
  5. When his parents died Mahavira asked permission of his older brother, who had become king, to become a monk.
  6. His brother requested that he wait one year; perhaps he wanted Mahavira to reconsider.
  7. Mahavira used the year to give away his numerous possessions.
  8. One year later, at the age of thirty, he entered a Hindu monastery.
- B. Mahavira sought to find Nirvana (release from the cycle of rebirth) by following monastic ways.
1. He took a vow which said: "I shall neglect my body and abandon the care of it; I shall with equanimity bear, undergo, and suffer all calamities arising from divine powers, men, or animals."
  2. After several months in the monastery Mahavira decided to go off on his own.
  3. At first he traveled with another monk but Mahavira considered him too worldly so parted company with him.
  4. For the next twelve years Mahavira wandered throughout the land; he wore no clothing, summer or winter, and begged for his food.
  5. He was often beaten, attacked by dogs and insulted, but he took no notice of these things.
  6. Mahavira never stayed more than one night in a village for fear that he might become attached to people or to the place.
- C. Mahavira practiced "ahimsa," the policy of non-injury to living things.
1. He carried a small, soft broom and carefully swept in front of him lest he destroy a living creature by stepping on it.
  2. He carried a cloth to strain water before drinking it lest he drink a worm or insect or something else living.
  3. He would not eat any food except that which was left over from another's meal lest some living thing be killed for his food.



- D. After twelve years of such extreme asceticism Mahavira at last attained Nirvana.
1. He became 'Jina' ("the conqueror").
  2. His followers became known as 'Jains' ("disciples of the conqueror").
  3. Mahavira now began preaching and made 14,000 converts before his death.
  4. At the age of seventy-two Mahavira died as a result of planned, voluntary, self-starvation–suicide.

## **II. THE DOCTRINES OF JAINISM.**

- A. Jains share many concepts with the Hindus, but often give them a different meaning.
1. They believe that one's karma is literally deposited on his soul.
  2. If he has bad karma it will weigh his soul down and prevent it from rising higher in the cycle of rebirths.
  3. If he has good karma his soul becomes lighter and rises more rapidly.
- B. Jains believe that souls are classified according to the number of senses they have.
1. Gods, humans, animals and creatures of Hell have five senses.
  2. Larger insects such as bees, flies and butterflies make up the next highest group with four senses.
  3. The third classification is made up of beings with two senses–worms, shell fish, leeches and minute creatures.
  4. The fourth group includes trees, plants, seeds, molds, fire, wind and water which have only the sense of touch.
- C. The eternal state of souls is reached when they become pure and are liberated completely from all matter.

1. In their liberated state, souls still retain their individuality and consciousness unlike Hinduism which teaches that they “merge into the Great Soul of the Universe” into oblivion.
2. One of their scriptures says: “The liberated is not long nor small... neither heavy nor light; he is without body, without resurrection, without contact over matter; he is not feminine, nor masculine, nor neuter; he perceives, he knows, but there is no analogy (whereby to know the nature of the liberated soul.)” (quoted from Man's Religions, p.99).

D. Jains are essentially atheistic.

1. They deny there is a Supreme Being.
2. They teach there are higher beings than man who might be thought of as gods; however, these beings are subject to the law of rebirth just as man is.
3. Jains do not pray because prayer to these higher beings is worthless.
4. Each man must attain Nirvana by his own deeds of asceticism; no one else can help him do it.

E. Mahavira summed up his basic teachings in the “Five Great Vows” which Jainist monks must take:

1. Never knowingly take the life of any creature.
2. Never lie or swear falsely.
3. Never steal or take what is not given.
4. Never engage in sensual pleasure including sexual relations.
5. Never become attached to anyone, anything or any place.

### III. THE LATER HISTORY OF JAINISM.

A. Since some wanted to follow Jainism but could not take the vows of asceticism, twelve similar, but easier vows, were available to them.

1. They had to renounce being farmers, butchers, brewers or fishermen lest they destroy life.

2. As a result of this Jainists have been bankers and merchants and are among the wealthiest class in India today.
- B. Mahavira gave a secondary place to women; they could gain Nirvana only by hoping to be born as a man in a future life.
- C. Mahavira's followers divided into two groups.
1. The conservatives held strictly to his policy of wearing no clothes; they were strongest in the warmer regions of India.
  2. The liberals departed from Mahavira's practice by permitting clothing; they were most numerous in the colder regions of India.
- D. Jainism teaches that the universe is eternal.
1. They believe the golden age is in the past.
  2. We are now in the fifth and next to last 21,000 year period of decline.
  3. When the sixth 21,000 year period is past, men will gradually begin to improve and eventually a new golden age will come.
- E. Jainists are known for their logic, but their logic is illogical!
1. Every question may be answered with a "yes" or "no."
  2. Since no one possesses perfect knowledge, no one can be certain about anything.
- F. "Ahimsa" is a major part of Jainism.
1. It is thought of as "reverence for life."
  2. Albert Schweitzer, the famous German theologian, philosopher and medical missionary, believed in ahimsa.
    - a. When asked once to define his faith, he replied that it was simply "reverence for life."
    - b. Schweitzer refused to allow flies to be killed or screens to be put up in his hospital.

- c. New Agers, animal rights activists, have adopted this Jainist concept of Ahimsa.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Jainism was once a rival to Hinduism but now it has only a few million members.
2. Jainism is contrary to the Bible in many ways:
  - a. It forbids the eating of animals, but God put them here for man's use (Genesis 1:28-30; 9:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-5).
  - b. Jainists abuse the body, but the Bible calls such "will worship" (Colossians 2:16-23).
  - c. Jainists have no real concept of sin, but the Bible teaches that accountable beings have sinned and are separated from God by their sins (1 John 3:4; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Isaiah 59:1,2).
  - d. Jainists attempt to earn their salvation by devising works of human righteousness, but Christians are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ through their obedient faith (Titus 2:11,12; Hebrews 5:8,9; Ephesians 2:8-10; Acts 10:34,35).
3. In order for them to receive true salvation, Jainists must obey the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is asceticism?
2. What is the most extreme ascetic religion the world has ever known?
3. Name the three major religions which grew out of Hinduism.
4. Who founded Jainism?
5. What does "Mahavira" mean?
6. When was Mahavira born and when did he die?
7. What was Mahavira's station in life before he became a monk?
8. How old was Mahavira when he attained Nirvana?

9. What is “ahimsa?”
10. What does “Jina” mean?
11. What does “Jain” mean?
12. How did Mahavira die? How old was he?
13. What is the Jainist view of karma?
14. What is the Jainist view of the soul?
15. Do Jainists believe in a Supreme Being?
16. Do Jainists believe in prayer?
17. What are the “Five Great Vows?”
18. What occupations are forbidden to Jainists? Why?
19. How could women attain Nirvana, according to Mahavira?
20. What was the major issue which divided Jainists into liberals and conservatives?
21. What is the Jainist view of the universe?
22. How did Albert Schweitzer put ahimsa into practice?



## **LESSON SEVENTEEN: SIKHISM: A SYNCRETIC FAITH**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Sikhism is the youngest major religion in the world, having begun as late as the fifteenth century A.D.
2. It is also one of the smallest religions; its adherents are found mostly in the Punjab area of India and Pakistan.
3. A "sikh" is a disciple; Sikhism is a religion whose adherents are disciples of Nanak.
4. Sikhism is a religious syncretism.
5. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, syncretism is "the combination or reconciliation of differing beliefs or practices in religion, philosophy, etc., or an attempt to effect such compromise."
6. Sikhism is a merger of some of the major teachings of Hinduism with the Moslem concept of one God.

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. NANAK, THE FOUNDER OF SIKHISM WAS BORN IN 1469 A.D.**

- A. His home was a village named Talwandi.
  1. It is about thirty miles from Lahore in present day Pakistan.
  2. His parents were poor, but respected members of the community.
- B. Moslems had invaded India in the eighth century.
  1. By the eleventh century they controlled all of Northwest India.
  2. By the time of Nanak's birth Moslem influence was strong throughout India.
  3. Islam and Hinduism existed side by side but there were often tensions between them.
- C. Nanak's parents were Hindus but his home area was governed by Moslems who were of a more tolerant nature.

1. Nanak was an intelligent young man but failed at farming and store-keeping, both jobs arranged by his parents.
  2. His main interest was religion.
    - a. He spent so much time in meditation and discussion that he neglected his work.
    - b. It might be said of him that “he was so heavenly minded that he was no earthly good!”
  3. Finally, through a relative’s influence, he secured a government job and was more successful.
  4. He married and became the father of two children.
- D. At the age of thirty-three Nanak claimed to have had an experience which changed his life.
1. One day Nanak disappeared into the forest.
  2. When he returned three days later he reported that he had been taken into the presence of the one true God.
  3. God had given him a cup of nectar to drink and assured him that He was with him.
  4. God charged Nanak with the mission of making His true name known.
  5. Then Nanak made a proclamation that was revolutionary. “There is no Hindu or Moslem.”
- E. Nanak and his friend, Mardana, a minstrel, began to travel throughout Northwest India preaching this new faith.
1. They taught there was only one God (a Moslem concept) who was simply to be known as “The True Name” (“Sat Nam”).
  2. The two missionaries had great success in the Punjab where they made many disciples (Sikhs).
- F. At the age of sixty-nine Nanak knew that his death was near.



1. Followers from a Moslem background gathered at his left side and disciples from a Hindu background at his right.
2. Both groups asked for the privilege of conducting his funeral.
3. According to legend, he told them to place flowers at his side; the group whose flowers were fresh in the morning would have the privilege of disposing of his body.
4. The legend says that the following morning the flowers on both sides were in bloom, but his body had disappeared.
5. Thus, even in death, according to the tale, Nanak reconciled Hindus and Moslems.

## **II. THE DOCTRINES OF SIKHISM ARE A COMBINATION OF HINDU AND MOSLEM BELIEFS.**

- A. The fundamental doctrine of Sikhism is that there is one Supreme Being who is to be known by "The True Name."
  1. He may be known by other names, however, and reveal Himself in different ways.
  2. He is the all powerful creator and destroyer.
  3. He had ordained that man is the highest of God's creatures and other creatures were made to serve him - this opened the door for Sikhs to eat meat.
- B. Nanak retained the Hindu teachings of karma and reincarnation.
  1. He taught that salvation was not going in to Paradise after a judgment as Moslems taught, but by being released from the cycle of rebirths and being absorbed into "God" (nirvana).
  2. He rejected the rituals, pilgrimages and idolatry of Hinduism.
  3. Unlike Hinduism, Nanak taught that religion should improve the living standards of people in this world.
- C. Nanak taught a very high ethical and moral code.
  1. "The good man and the good Sikh is pure in motive and act, prefers the virtuous, seeks brotherhood high and low without regard to

caste ...loves his wife and renounces all other women, avoids quarrelsome topics, is not arrogant, does not trample on others, and forsakes evil company..." ( Noss, Man's Religions, p. 225).

2. Nanak's new religion was a religion of reconciliation and peace, but later circumstances forced it to become one of the world's most militant faiths.

### **III. EVENTS FOLLOWING NANAK'S DEATH CHANGED THE NATURE OF SIKHISM.**

- A. Nanak was followed by a succession of nine gurus who led the new faith.
  1. Guru Amar Das followed Nanak's pacifist philosophy.
  2. He taught: "If anyone ill-treats you, bear it three times. God Himself will fight for you the fourth time."
- B. Congregations of Sikhs met for worship and to decide community problems.
  1. They practiced democracy under the Guru's leadership.
  2. Castes were not recognized and, as a result, many outcasts and members of lower castes became Sikhs.
  3. They built hostels which provided free food and accommodation for travelers.
- C. Moslems became hostile toward Sikhs when they saw their rapid increase in number.
  1. Sikhs were subjected to sporadic persecution.
  2. Their gurus were often imprisoned and tortured.
  3. As a result Sikhs began to arm themselves and train armies for protection.
- D. Guru Arjan (1581-1606) was one of the most capable Sikh leaders.
  1. He built an artificial lake called "Amritsar."
  2. On an island in the lake he had a beautiful golden temple erected.

3. He also compiled the “Granth,” the sacred scriptures of Sikhism.
- E. Another guru, Govind Rai, became known as Govind Singh (“Govind, the Lion”).
1. He trained warriors and conquered most of the Punjab.
  2. When he was assassinated he was followed by one more guru – then the line of gurus ceased.

#### **IV. THE MODERN HISTORY OF SIKHISM HAS NOT BEEN HAPPY.**

- A. The British conquered the Punjab in 1849.
1. They admired the ability and trustworthiness of the Sikhs.
  2. They made them the police force for India and other Asian colonies.
- B. When the British gave India her independence in 1947, the Punjab was divided between India and Pakistan.
1. Two and one half million Sikhs were forced to leave their properties in Pakistan to move to India.
  2. Economically they have not recovered from this move.
  3. All of their holy places including the birthplace of Nanak and the golden temple at Amritsar are in Pakistan.
- C. Sikhs have slowly gained political power in India, but at times suffer discrimination from the Hindu majority.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Sikhs believe in one God, but need to be pointed to the God of the Bible Who created all things (Deuteronomy 4:35,39; 1 Kings 8:60; Isaiah 45:5-12).
2. Sikhs have a high moral standard, but cannot be saved without the blood of Jesus Christ (John 1:29; 1 Peter 1:18,19).
3. It is Jesus Christ Who alone points the Way to the True God and eternal life!

## **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is the youngest, major religion in the world?
2. In which century did Sikhism begin?
3. Where are most Sikhs found?
4. What does “sikh” mean?
5. What is the meaning of “syncretism” according to the dictionary?
6. How is Sikhism a syncretic faith?
7. Which two religions are merged in Sikhism?
8. Who was the founder of Sikhism?
9. When and where was Nanak born?
10. In which religion was Nanak reared?
11. Describe Nanak’s religious experience when he was thirty-three.
12. By what name did God tell Nanak He wished to be known?
13. Who was Nanak’s fellow preacher in spreading the new faith?
14. How old was Nanak when he died?
15. Describe the legend of how he reconciled Hindus and Moslems even in his death.
16. What is the fundamental doctrine of Sikhism?
17. What is the Sikh idea of salvation?
18. How many gurus led Sikhism before this position was discontinued?
19. Why did Sikhs change from a peaceful people to a militant people?
20. Where is the golden temple located?
21. What is the sacred book of the Sikhs? Who compiled it?

## **LESSON EIGHTEEN: THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT: THE RISE OF PAGANISM IN THE WEST (1)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, syncretism is "the combination or reconciliation of differing beliefs or practices in religion, philosophy, etc., or the attempt to effect such a compromise."
2. The New Age Movement is a classic example of syncreticism.
3. It is a bizarre blending of such diverse and contradictory concepts as:
  - a. Astrology.
  - b. Ecology.
  - c. Evolution.
  - d. Feminism.
  - e. Hinduism.
  - f. Holistic healing.
  - g. Mysticism.
  - h. Necromancy (spiritualism).
  - i. Pantheism (God is in everything).
  - j. Satanism.
  - k. Self-esteem Movement.
  - l. Taoism.
  - m. Visualization.
  - n. Unidentified flying objects (aliens from outer space).
  - o. Witchcraft.
  - p. Yoga.

4. The aim of the New Age Movement is to change the world view of all people in order to usher in the “Age of Aquarius,” a supposed time of happiness, harmony and “right thinking” all over the world.

## DISCUSSION:

### **I. THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT IS A GREAT THREAT TO TRUE CHRISTIANITY!**

- A. It has been estimated that more than sixty million people world wide hold to some form of New Age belief.
- B. More than three thousand publishers of New Age and Occult books do in excess of a billion dollars of business annually.
  1. Walden, Doubleday, Crown and other major North American bookstores feature large New Age sections.
  2. The U.S.A. also has more than twenty-five hundred bookstores solely devoted to New Age books and publications.
  3. TIME and other leading magazines have featured lead stories on the New Age Movement.
- C. The New Age Movement is not just another cult!
  1. It is a radically new way of thinking.
  2. Its design is to bring about radical changes in the world.

### **II. VARIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL MOVEMENTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE RISE OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT.**

- A. Emerson, Thoreau ,and Whitman, literary figures of the last century, propagated the Transcendental Movement (a search for reality based on spiritual intuition).
- B. The “beatniks” of the 1950's based their philosophy on Zen Buddhism.
- C. The Anti-establishment, Anti-war Movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's with its drug culture, illicit and perverted sex, and emphasis on astrology and Eastern religions, is the immediate spiritual parent of the New Age Movement.
- D. The self-centered, think positive, “Self-esteem Movement” is a major contributor to New Age thinking.

- E. Other diverse movements including feminism, environmentalism, animal rights activism and the occult have all helped form New Age philosophy and are incorporated into it.
- F. Theological liberalism (modernism) has caused multitudes to reject the inspiration of the Bible, its world view and standard of morality and thereby have opened the door for people to be led astray by New Age thought.

### **III. THERE ARE FIVE BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS UPON WHICH THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT IS BUILT.**

- A. "Everything in existence is one essential reality."
  - 1. This is called "monism."
  - 2. It is a Hindu concept.
- B. "God is all and in all."
  - 1. Everything which exists is God's essence.
  - 2. This is pantheism which is also a Hindu concept.
  - 3. The idea of "the Force" in the "Star Wars" movies is based on this.
- C. "Man is divine"; if God is all and all is God, then man is God.
- D. "Man must develop 'cosmic consciousness.'"
- E. Ecumenicism: one religion is as good as another.

### **IV. THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT DRAWS HEAVILY FROM HINDUISM.**

- A. The law of karma is the view that whatever one does, good or bad, will return to him in exact proportion in another life.

1. Bad karma (from bad deeds) must be paid off by good karma (good deeds).
  2. Since most people cannot do enough to “balance the books” in just one lifetime, they must be reborn again and again until they get it right.
  3. When one’s karma is finally balanced his soul reaches its oneness with the original, universal Soul of the universe.
  4. The soul is then freed from the endless cycle of rebirths.
  5. This is called “nirvana,” a concept from Buddhism and Hinduism.
- B. Reincarnation is based upon the view that every soul is immortal and has existed in different life forms from the very beginning.
1. Some New Agers believe there was an original creation of souls by the Force.
  2. Others believe that souls have always existed.
  3. Belief in reincarnation is taking America and other Western nations by storm.
    - a. A Gallup Poll revealed that 30 % of Americans under the age of 30 believe in reincarnation.
    - b. Walter Martin in his 1989 book, The New Age Cult, tells of a poll which showed that 58 % of Americans either believed in reincarnation or would not say it could not happen.
  4. Some New Agers speculate that Jesus studied in India under a guru and learned of reincarnation, but it was removed from His teachings by later church authorities.
  5. The Bible refutes reincarnation.
    - a. One’s soul comes from God and returns to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1; Hebrews 12:9).
    - b. There is no second chance after death (Hebrews 9:27).
    - c. The account of the Rich Man and Lazarus teaches that one’s destiny is sealed at death (Luke 6:19-31).



## **V. THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT DENIES THE EXISTENCE OF A PERSONAL GOD.**

### **A. New Agers think of God as “the Force.”**

1. This descriptive term comes from Stuart Wilde, a New Age lecturer and writer.
2. George Lucas, a New Ager, made it popular in his movies, “Star Wars” and its sequels.
3. Wilde wrote: “The Force is an energy that experiences evolution. It is massive, exhilarating, magnanimous beyond description - perhaps you might want to call it God.”
4. Reda Lucy, a New Age writer of children’s books, says: “God is everything, everywhere. This means that you too are God.”
5. Shirley MacLaine teaches that “the Self is the ultimate reality.”
6. Guru Swami Muktananda suggested: “Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own being. God dwells in you as you.”

### **B. The Bible teaching about God is as far removed from the New Age teaching as the East is from the West.**

1. God is not to be confused with His creation or His creatures (Numbers 23:19; Genesis 1:26, 27; Acts 17:29).
2. God is not an impersonal “Force” but a Divine Person Who loves man and takes a fatherly interest in him (John 3:16; Matthew 6:8,9; 10:29,30).

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. The New Age Movement is a syncretic religion which is taking the whole world by storm.
2. It is so diverse that it can appeal to almost anyone.
3. Humanism does not answer the deep need man has for a religious faith, a belief in something or someone outside himself, but the New Age Movement fills that need.

4. New Age thinking has already made great inroads into the thinking of the Western world by means of subtle brainwashing in the media and in the public schools.

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What is syncretism?
2. What are some of the contradictory concepts making up the New Age Movement?
3. What is the aim of the New Age Movement?
4. What is the Age of Aquarius?
5. How many people world wide hold to some form of New Age teaching?
6. Is the New Age Movement just another cult?
7. Name some of the philosophical movements which have contributed to the New Age Movement.
8. How has theological liberalism contributed to the New Age Movement?
9. What is the immediate spiritual parent of the New Age Movement?
10. Name the five philosophical assumptions underlying the New Age Movement.
11. What is monism?
12. What is pantheism?
13. How can one develop “cosmic consciousness?”
14. From which ancient Indian religion does the New Age Movement draw heavily?
15. What is the law of karma?
16. What is reincarnation?
17. What is nirvana?
18. Refute reincarnation from the Bible.

## **LESSON NINETEEN: THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT: THE RISE OF PAGANISM IN THE WEST (2)**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. The New Age Movement presents a critical challenge to true Christianity today!
2. It is a diverse movement of many different philosophies, theories and religions merged into a new world view.
3. Its aim is to usher in the new Age of Aquarius by changing the way that we view the world.
4. It is in reality a return to paganism!!
5. Christians must fully inform themselves about the evil, insidious doctrines of the New Age Movement and confront it with “the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:17).

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. NEW AGERS ARE GUILTY OF BLATANT BLASPHEMY IN THEIR TEACHING CONCERNING CHRIST!**

- A. “Jesus,” they say, “was just an ordinary Jew who won his ‘Christship’ by a life of good works and self-sacrifice.”
  1. He built upon the pattern of the Buddha.
  2. The “Cosmic Christ” came upon Jesus just as it had come upon Buddha and Krishna and others.
  3. Each one of us has the potential to become “Christ” too.
  4. The divinity, miracles, atoning death, bodily resurrection and ascension of the Lord are all denied by New Agers.
- B. What does the Bible say about Jesus Christ?
  1. He is One of the Three Persons in the Godhead; He became man in order to die for the sins of man (John 1:1-3,14; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:13-19; Hebrews 1:8; 2:14,15).
  2. He died in our place to atone for our sins (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:18,19; 2:24).

3. He was buried and arose from the dead the third day, as many witnesses testified (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Romans 1:4).
4. He ascended back to Heaven and is now seated on the right hand of God, the Father (Acts 1:9-11; 2:29-36).
5. One day Christ is coming again to raise the dead, destroy the earth and judge the world (1 Corinthians 15:20-26; John 5:28, 29; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11; Acts 17:30,31; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Peter 3).
6. Salvation is possible **ONLY** through Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4: 11,12)!

## **II. NEW AGERS REJECT THE BIBLICAL TEACHING OF HEAVEN AND HELL.**

- A. They say that Heaven and Hell are “merely states of the mind.”
  1. Man creates his own Heaven or his own Hell, according to them.
  2. They teach that “Judgment day, if there is one, will be a time of healing to restore right mindedness.”
- B. What does the Bible say?
  1. Judgment will take place at the Last Day (John 5:28,29; Acts 17:30, 31; 24:25; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27).
  2. Hell is a place of eternal punishment, not just a mere state of mind (Matthew 10:28; 25:41,46).
  3. Heaven is a real place where the righteous are rewarded eternally (Matthew 6:19-21; 25:46; John 14:1-3; 1 Peter 1:3-5).

## **III. THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER PROMINENT NEW AGE TEACHINGS WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO CHRISTIANITY!**

- A. Holistic (or wholistic) healing is a New Age theory which says a patient’s psychological and mental health must be involved in treating his body.
  1. Some holistic treatments are:
    - a. Acupuncture.
    - b. Creative visualization.

- c. Meditation.
  - d. Yoga.
  - e. Hypnosis.
  - f. Massage.
- 2. New Agers have borrowed from Hinduism the theory that there are seven “energy centers” in the body which are called “chakras” (a Hindi word).
  - a. They control the various aspects of one’s well being.
  - b. The seventh chakra is supposed to be located in the top of the head; through it, one finally reaches integration with God.
  - c. Each chakra in the body is symbolized by a color of the rainbow; the rainbow has come to symbolize the New Age Movement in the same way that a descending dove symbolizes the Charismatic Movement.
- B. The New Age Movement holds the Taoist view that everything is composed of two opposing forces called the “yin” and the “yang.”
  - 1. The yin is female, negative, evil, darkness, death, winter and passive.
  - 2. The yang is male, positive, good, light, life, summer and active.
  - 3. These forces must be kept in balance.
- C. Yoga exercise is one of the chief means by which New Age thinking has been subtly spread.
  - 1. Yoga is supposed to help one get in touch with himself which is getting in touch with God since New Agers believe that each person is “divine.”
  - 2. A mantra (usually “Om”) is chanted over and over to lead to closer consciousness with “God.”
- D. New Agers believe that crystals have special powers to provide access to “inner dimensions of the mind.”

1. Crystals are supposed to heal, make telepathy possible, purify water, perk up potted plants and even increase gas mileage in one's car.
  2. George Harlow, Curator of Gems and Minerals at the American Museum of Natural History, said: "All of this baloney (about crystals-RR) only proves that we have failed miserably in the teaching of science. There is simply no evidence that there is any measurable effect from crystal to human, or any kind of healing" (Brad Bromling, A Christian Confronts the New Age, pp. 3,4).
- E. Satanism is a part of the New Age Movement also.
1. David Spangler, New Age writer, says that "Lucifer (Satan) is the New Age Master and the occult is the foundation of the New Age."
  2. Spangler also wrote: "Christ is the same force as Lucifer" (Texe Marrs, Ravaged by the New Age, p. 216).
- F. New Agers also worship the earth which they portray as a female goddess.
1. This appeals to the environmentalist and feminist concerns of so many New Agers.
  2. TIME magazine carried an article on May 6, 1991 entitled "When God Was A Woman" dealing with Earth Day observances.
    - a. New Agers prayed to the earth as a "mother goddess."
    - b. A group called "Goddess Gospel Singers" performed in Boston.
    - c. There are more than 100,000 people in the USA, mostly women, who worship "Mother Earth" as Gaia, an ancient pagan goddess.
  3. Various pagan rituals from African, American Indian and Middle Eastern religions are also used to worship the earth (read Romans 1:22-25).
- G. Astrology, the ancient pagan belief that the position of the stars at one's birth influences his destiny, is a major New Age emphasis.
1. Horoscopes are avidly followed.

2. Astrologers predicted that the Age of Aquarius was to begin on March 21, A.D. 2000.

#### **IV. NEW AGERS ARE USING THE MEDIA, POLITICS and EDUCATION TO SPREAD THEIR SOUL DESTROYING PROPAGANDA!**

- A. Many politicians, environmentalists, feminists and animal rights activists are often also New Agers.
- B. Using teaching, counseling and administrative jobs in public education is one of the most effective ways New Agers have to spread their poisonous propaganda.
  1. New Age spokesperson, Marilyn Ferguson, reported that more New Agers are involved in education than in any other field of endeavor.
  2. Their educational philosophy is called “transpersonal education.”
  3. Teachers use earth worship, visualization and communication with the spirits of people long dead to teach.
- C. The media and show business are major means of brainwashing the public which are used effectively by New Agers.
  1. Shirley MacLaine, Merv Griffin, Linda Evans, John Denver, Philicia Rashad, Tina Turner, Willie Nelson, Sigourney Weaver and Michael Jackson are some of the popular show business celebrities who are, or were, avowed New Agers.
  2. The late Gene Roddenberry, creator of the “Star Trek” series, was a New Ager.
  3. Children’s cartoons, especially some of the ones with bizarre super-heroes, are a major way of capturing the minds of the young for the New Age.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. The New Age Movement is the single biggest outside threat to Christianity today!
2. It is pure, plain paganism propagated by popular personalities and politicians.
3. It is a conglomeration of confusing and contradictory concepts.

4. The New Age Movement accepts no objective standard, does not believe in absolute truth or a universal standard of morality.
5. It already has a great hold on the minds of many in the under thirty generation; it may be too late to reach many of them with the truth!
6. Jesus Christ and His holy Book, the Bible, provide the only answer to the New Age Movement.
7. May God help us to teach its holy precepts without ceasing!!

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. How does the New Age Movement propose to achieve its aim?
2. What is the New Age view of Jesus Christ? Contrast this with what the Bible says.
3. What is the New Age teaching on Heaven, Hell and the Judgement? Contrast this with what the Bible says.
4. What is holistic healing? What are some of the things involved in it?
5. What are chakras? What is used to symbolize them?
6. Explain the yin and yang. Where did they originate?
7. What is yoga? What is a mantra?
8. What do New Agers believe that crystals can do? Is there any scientific evidence that the claims made for crystals are true?
9. Do New Agers worship Satan?
10. Do New Agers worship the earth?



## **LESSON TWENTY: JESUS CHRIST: THE ONLY WAY!**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. When I was a boy I used to hear older Christians discuss the question: “Will those who have never heard the Gospel be lost?”
  - a. The consensus would always be, “God is a just and merciful God so He would not send anyone to Hell who has not heard the Gospel through no fault of his own.”
  - b. I was puzzled by this for I reasoned, “God has commanded us to teach the Gospel to the whole world (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; 2 Timothy 2:2); to be saved, I must obey God. Therefore I must take the Gospel to others. But, suppose there is a group who have never heard, but are saved, according to the brethren, since it is no fault of theirs. Now if I obey God and take the Gospel to them and they reject it, haven’t I caused them to be lost? Would it not be better to leave the heathen in their ignorance so they could be saved? But if I did that, I would have to disobey God’s command to take the Gospel to them. Then I would be lost because I had not obeyed God!”
  - c. Any conclusion which causes such confusion and contradiction cannot be right!
2. The whole world is lost without Jesus Christ (John 3:16; 1 John 5:19 A.S.V.).
3. Since Christianity is a taught religion, the only way that anyone can be saved is by hearing the Gospel of Christ (John 6:44,45; Romans 10:13-17; Hebrews 8:10,11).

### **DISCUSSION:**

#### **I. ALL MEN ARE LOST IN SIN!**

- A. Sin is a “transgression of God’s law” (1 John 3:4).
  1. God has created man with the ability to decide between right and wrong (Joshua 24:15).
  2. When man chooses to disobey, he sins (Genesis 2:16,17; 3:1-7).
- B. Sin separates from God—now and in eternity (Isaiah 59:1-2; Genesis 3:22-24; Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8).

- C. Each person is responsible for his own sins (Ezekiel 18:20).
- D. Sin is universal (Romans 3:10-23).
- E. The man who has never heard the Gospel is not lost because he has not heard; he is lost because he is a sinner!

## **II. JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY TO SALVATION!**

- A. In Christ, the mercy and the justice of God are reconciled.
  - 1. God is just; therefore the penalty for sin must be carried out.
  - 2. God is merciful; He wants to forgive man and not punish him as he deserves.
  - 3. Jesus Christ is the answer to God's dilemma: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26).
- B. Christ died as the offering for the sins of the whole world (John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 1:18,19; 1 John 2:2).
  - 1. If we reject Him and His law, there is no hope (Hebrews 10:26-29).
  - 2. There will be no more offering for sin (Hebrews 9:27,28).
- C. Jesus clearly claimed He was the only Way to God:
  - 1. "I said therefore that ye shall die in your sins, for, if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).
  - 2. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6).
- D. The apostles also claimed that Jesus is the only way to Heaven.
  - 1. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:11,12).

2. "And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11,12).

### **III. JESUS CHRIST IS OUR ADVOCATE, HIGH PRIEST AND MEDIATOR.**

- A. An advocate is one who pleads the cause of another; Jesus pleads our cause with the Father when we sin (1 John 2:1,2).
- B. A high priest is one who offers sacrifices to God on behalf of others (Hebrews 4:14-16).
  1. All Christians are priests under Christ (1 Peter 2:9).
  2. Christians offer up spiritual sacrifices (Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15).
  3. Our worship and prayers to God are acceptable if offered through Jesus Christ.
- C. A mediator is one who brings two alienated parties together.
  1. Man has separated himself from God by his sins.
  2. Christ atoned for sin on the cross to bring man back to God (2 Corinthians 5:21).
  3. There is no one else who can reunite sinful man with the sinless God (1 Timothy 2:5).

### **IV. JESUS CHRIST WILL BE OUR JUDGE!**

- A. Many refuse to obey Christ in this life; they will meet Him again in judgment.
- B. All will be in the judgment (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).
- C. Christ will judge us at the Last Day (John 12:48; Acts 17:30,31).
- D. We will be judged by our deeds (Matthew 25:1-46; 7:21-23; Romans 2:5-10).

### **V. JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.**

- A. The resurrection is the heart of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-3).

1. Because Christ arose, we will be raised (1 Corinthians 15:12-20).
  2. The resurrection proves that Christ was all He claimed to be (Romans 1:4).
- B. The resurrection is the basis of our hope.
1. It answers the age old question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" (Job 14:14).
  2. Jesus is "the Resurrection" because He makes it possible (John 11: 25).

**VI. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SOURCE OF ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS (EPHESIANS 1:3).**

- A. If all spiritual blessings are in Christ, then no spiritual blessings are to be found in anyone else!
1. Not in Buddha.
  2. Not in Mohammed.
  3. Not in oneself.
- B. If all spiritual blessings are in Christ, and one is not in Christ, then he cannot have any spiritual blessings!
- C. One must get into Christ where all spiritual blessings are:
1. There is but one way (Galatians 3:26,27).
  2. To be in Christ is to be in His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22,23; 4:4; 5:23).

**CONCLUSION:**

1. If one person can be saved outside of Christ, then:
  - a. All could be saved outside of Christ for God is no respecter of persons (Romans 2:11).
  - b. If all could be saved outside of Christ, then Christ died in vain for men could be saved without His atoning death.

2. If one can be saved outside of Christ, he can be saved:
  - a. In his sins for only Christ takes away sins.
  - b. Without going to God, for Christ is the only way to God.
  - c. Without a mediator, advocate or high priest, for only Christ fills these roles.
  - d. Without being raised, for Christ is the resurrection and the life.
  - e. Without any spiritual blessings, for all spiritual blessings are in Christ.
3. If one can be saved outside of Christ, then God is a liar for He has told us that those who do not obey Christ are lost (Mark 16:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  - a. It is impossible for God to lie (Romans 3:4; Titus 2:4).
  - b. God will not go contrary to His Word; we will be judged by the Word!
4. If one can be saved outside of Christ, he can be saved without:
  - a. The blood (Romans 5:9).
  - b. The church (Acts 20:28).
  - c. The Gospel (Romans 1:16).
  - d. Faith (John 8:24).
  - e. Repentance (Luke 13:3).
  - f. Confession (Matthew 10:32).
  - g. Baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:21).
5. Why is one lost who has not heard?
  - a. He is lost because he is in sin, not because he has not heard.
  - b. Hearing the Gospel is the only hope of being saved that he has.
  - c. A man in the water is drowning because he is in the water, not because I have not thrown him a rope, but the only way he can be saved is by my throwing him a rope.

6. The question that Christians need to discuss is not: "What will happen to the heathen who have not heard?"
  - a. God has made that answer clear in His Word.
  - b. The question Christians should be concerned about is: "What will happen to us who have heard, but have failed to take the Gospel to those who have not?"
7. H. A. Dixon (longtime president of Freed-Hardeman College) said: "We will never take the Gospel to the whole world until we realize: (1) The world is lost without the Gospel: (2) We are lost if we refuse to take the Gospel to them."

### **REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What kind of a religion is Christianity?
2. What is sin?
3. How many have sinned?
4. What is the result of sin?
5. How can God be both just and merciful?
6. What claim did Jesus make about Himself?
7. What claim did the apostles make about Jesus Christ?
8. What is an advocate?
9. What does a high priest do?
10. What does a mediator do?
11. Who will be our judge at the Last Day?
12. What is the heart of the gospel?
13. What is the basis of our hope?
14. Where are all spiritual blessings found?

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