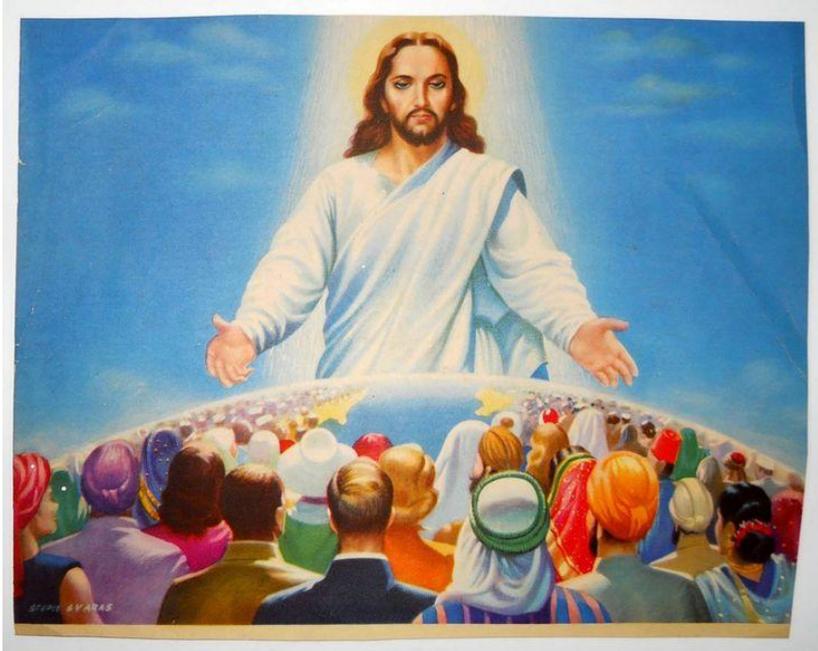


WHY HINDUS AND BUDDHISTS SHOULD FOLLOW THE



LORD

Jesus Christ

GETTING PEOPLE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT THEY BELIEVE

As I have been sharing the gospel over many years with Indian and Asian people, I have found that Hindus and Buddhists can never have a true assurance of salvation. They might say that they do, but deep in their hearts they know they can't. This is because Hinduism and Buddhism believe in reincarnation; that is, after you die you could come back as an animal or an insect or another person. You could come back as a cat or a dog or a chicken. If you are going to come back as a chicken, you cannot know if you will ever have a place in paradise.

Jesus Christ offers something quite different; not reincarnation but what Jesus Himself experienced in rising from the dead, not as a different being, but as the same being. We call it resurrection. The Bible teaches us that every person has only one life, and after death is the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). For all eternity you are you, one person, and you have to make sure of your salvation in this one lifetime. You have to make sure that you are ready now to enter paradise. Are you sure of what will happen to your spirit after you die?

One reason why many Hindus are vegetarians must be because they don't want to eat their grandmother or their uncle or aunty. If you believe in reincarnation, that is what your religion teaches you; but if reincarnation is not true, then you need not have any fear in regard to what you eat. Jesus is the way straight to Heaven; you don't have to come back as a pig or a frog. Resurrection is not compatible with reincarnation. The Christian belief of resurrection is infinitely better than the unproven theory of reincarnation. I call it unproven for the following reason:

When I was in Myanmar, I was staying in a hotel where the hotel owner was a very nice and friendly man. He was a Buddhist, and I tried on a number of occasions to share the gospel with him. He listened politely but seemed to be content with his own religion. To get him to think more carefully about whether he was following the right path, I asked him if he believed in reincarnation, to which he said, "Yes." There is a slight difference between Hindu and Buddhist thinking on this

topic, but it is also very similar. I therefore sought to show him why reincarnation cannot be true.

At that point of time (2002), there were about 6.2 billion people in the world. At the time of writing this (2017), there are about 7.5 billion, and by the time you are reading this there will be even more. In 1987, there were 5 billion people. In 1975, there were 4 billion. In 1960, there were 3 billion. In 1927, there were 2 billion people; and in 1804, there were only 1 billion. In the year 1000, there were only about 400 million people. At the time of Christ, it is estimated that there were about 200 million people. In 500 BC, there were only 100 million people; and in 1000 BC there were only 50 million people. The population keeps dwindling until all the way back to Adam and Eve, when there were only two people on earth.

Reincarnation claims that we have all had thousands of lives, changing from one person or one species to another. But when only Adam and Eve were here, or the first pair of each animal species, there was no possibility for everyone to have all been there at once.

At the moment, there are almost 30 million sheep in New Zealand. At our peak, there were more than 70 million sheep. That was in 1982, when there were 22 sheep for every human being. Yet 250 years ago, there were zero sheep in New Zealand. A species enlarges due to reproduction and is reduced by a lack of reproduction, or when the death rate is higher than the birth rate. These kinds of facts prove that reincarnation is not true.

All creatures stem from their first original pair, so we can't have all had thousands of lives. Reincarnation is not in line with the history of this world and it goes against scientifically reliable data. As I was sharing these kinds of things with the Buddhist hotel owner, it was as if his eyes were suddenly opened and he could understand it. He even laughed when he realized that reincarnation cannot be true.

To begin with, the population of the human race and every other species was only small, which proves that reincarnation is false—yet this false teaching is a foundation of Hinduism and Buddhism. When they realize that the foundation of their religion is false, they begin to see why they need to change their religion. They need to find the one true God, the Creator.

This brings them face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ, for all things were created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16). We do not find our true purpose in life until we are united with Christ.

Who are You Praying to and What are You Worshipping?

On my way to India for the first time I had a three-day stopover in Thailand. It was three days of nonstop evangelism. At a Buddhist temple, an older man started talking to me, so I asked him, "Who is Buddha?" He talked about the life of that man, so I asked him, "How can this man hear you when you pray?" He didn't know; all he could say was that he had been taught this from when he was a small boy.

I asked him to look at the sky and the trees around us, and then I asked, "How did this world get here? Who made the world?" He said that he didn't know, so I was then able to talk to him about God. At the end of this conversation, I asked if I could pray for him and he was willing, so I prayed that God would touch him. I felt the presence of the Lord during the prayer, but as soon as I finished, he was in a hurry to leave. God is at work in people's lives, but it is still up to each person to believe.

When I arrived in India, people told me, "It doesn't matter which path you follow because many paths lead to God." But I told them, "There is only one path that leads to God. There are many paths that lead to destruction. Be careful which path you are on." The path to hell is an easy path because you can follow anything you want. The path to Heaven is a straight and narrow path because God is holy and you must turn away from your sins.

When I arrived in Kolkata, I saw people worshipping an idol of a serpent. I also saw children washing it and cleaning it tenderly. Why have they been taught to worship this idol? The Bible says the serpent is the deceiver of humankind. He is the embodiment of the devil, for the devil is called the great dragon and the ancient serpent (Revelation 12:9). We should not worship anything that symbolizes the devil. The curse of death entered

this world because Eve listened to the serpent's lie and ate the forbidden fruit.

One time when I was in South India, I was with a doctor who had his own car and driver. Before we reached a small town, I saw many Indian women in a long line marching out of town carrying garlands of flowers. I asked, "What are these ladies doing?" I was told that their god has appeared. Someone had moved a log of wood and under that log they saw a snake. This was reported back in the town and out came all the women to worship the snake. That snake was probably poisonous, and if one of those ladies was bitten by her god, she would die. Hindus must realize that the snake is poisonous because it symbolizes the devil and should not be worshipped.

Lessons Learned in Nepal

From India, I began missions work in Nepal and was often based in Kathmandu with Zoell Bhujel and his family. He had been a Hindu before becoming a Christian, and he shared with me some of the arguments he would use when sharing the gospel with Hindus and Buddhists: Many times when we go to the Hindus and share the gospel with them they say, "Christianity is a new religion. Hinduism is the oldest religion in the world." At that time I ask them, "Who were the first people of the world?" and everybody knows Adam and Eve. I ask them, "Is Adam and Eve mentioned in your religious book," and they say, "No." I say to them, "They are mentioned in our book, the Bible."

Another fact I ask them: "If Hinduism is the oldest religion of the world, from where did your religion start?" They say from the mountain Kailash, because Shiva came out from that place. I then respond, "If your religion came out of the mountain Kailash, who created that mountain?" They don't know, so I show them from the Bible that God created the heavens and the earth and therefore He created the mountains. I then say, "Maybe your god came from the mountain but my God created the mountain, so which is the oldest religion? Who should we follow? The one who came from the mountain or the One who created the mountain?"

I went to an old temple and king's palace in Nepal and met a priest and a yogi there. I asked them this question, "What would be the criteria for God to be God?" They didn't say anything and at last they said, "Tell us." I told them, "Is it not love?" They said, "Yes, yes, it is love." Then I asked them, "Which Hindu god loves you? Kali wants blood. Krishna came to the world to destroy the sinner. Jesus is the only God who has come to save the sinner, so who should you follow? The one who comes to destroy you or the One who loves you? You have to decide."

Many Hindu people want to compare Krishna with Jesus, but they are 100 percent different. Krishna took many wives and had many girlfriends. He is known for looking at the naked woman's body. There is one saying in Nepali which means, "If Krishna does it, it's a miracle, but if we do the same, its rape." How can that kind of person be a god?

In Nepal there was a man who was in the jungle and many wild animals were there. He was sitting in one place beside a tree and supposedly he did not eat for about seven months. He was just sitting like wood or stone, and many Indian and Nepali people went to visit him to offer money and other gifts. When I used to pass that way, all the people used to talk about him, so I asked them, "It is interesting that he is doing that, but of what benefit is it to you? He is sitting there for a long time and even if he sits in one place for seven years, what is the benefit for you? He is doing it for himself. He is doing nothing for you."

The man doing that was claiming he was like Buddha. After seven months, he disappeared from that place. One reporter found him and was told by that man, "After six years I am coming back to Nepal with peace." But recently some people saw him with some goats and sheep in the jungle and he made a place under the ground. No matter what strange thing he does; if they bury him alive or whatever they do, what is the real benefit for other people? He is just doing it for himself and he gets a lot of money for that.

Whatever Buddha did, he did for himself and he doesn't give anyone salvation—but Jesus died for others and He gives us eternal salvation. To the Buddhist people I say, "In these days if anybody leaves their wife and children and runs away from home, what will you call him? You'll say he's not taking

responsibility for his family, so you will call him a very bad person. But that's what Buddha did. To search for peace, he left his wife and son to meditate in the jungle."

While I was staying with Zoell and his family, there was a woman who, at about 4:30 every morning, would ring a bell outside my window and worship the tree that had grown in the compound. My friend said to her, "Why are you worshipping this tree?" She said, "This is a special tree. God gave this tree." We know that God created the trees, so my friend said to her, "Why don't you worship the God who created all the trees instead of the tree?"

In front of that tree she had put some stones and she would also worship the stones. My friend said to her, "Why do you worship that stone?" She said, "This is a special stone. We went down to the river and we brought a special stone out of the river." Well, of course, God had actually created all the stones in that river, so my friend asked her, "Why don't you worship the God who created all the stones rather than worshipping that stone?" Her only response was to say that her ancestors had done this and that is why she was doing it.

We need to understand that worshipping anything other than our true Creator promotes false gods; you are making something into your god which is not God. No one is to follow the practices of their ancestors blindly. God has given us a mind to think and to discern true worship from what is false.

Saving Westerners from Spiritual Darkness

An Australian who was then living in Hong Kong came to my room while I was in Nepal. She was a white woman of British descent, but she was dressed like an Indian sadhu, Hindu ascetic. She had orange clothes, beads around her neck, and a big tilaka or tikka on her forehead. She claimed to have once been a Christian and regularly attended her church, but now she was living with many Indian sadhus and had come to Nepal to renew her India visa. She was around 40 years of age.

Why did this Christian woman suddenly become a Hindu? I found out that she had gone through a painful divorce and she

said to me, “Jesus never helped me.” There was much pain and hurt in her heart because of that broken relationship, but most likely her relationship with God was broken a lot earlier than that. Because her relationship with God was broken, she didn’t really know how to go to Him for help. God had not abandoned her. She had abandoned God because of a man. The fullness of God’s love never changes, so why didn’t this lady find the love of God?

The woman was quite wealthy, but having money brought no satisfaction to her heart. She was making good money in Hong Kong, but still had no peace, so she embarked on a spiritual journey through India. She mentioned to me the different Hindu gurus she was following, so I said to her, “I have found that Jesus Christ is greater than all the Hindu gurus.” She replied, “Jesus is a guru. Jesus is a teacher.”

I said, “Jesus has far greater wisdom and power than all other teachers, but if you want to go the Indian way I suggest you look at the life of Sadhu Sundar Singh, because he was a sadhu who found Jesus. He used to debate with Hindu sadhus and Buddhist lamas to show them that there is more wisdom in following Jesus Christ than in following these other paths.”

She replied, “I believe in Buddha.”

I said to her, “Buddha was like a spiritual atheist. He did not know how this world came about. We have to find the true Creator God.”

She said, “I am trying to find God by looking into myself.” She had been doing various kinds of yoga practices.

I had to say, “We are not gods. We are God’s creation.”

Yet she kept saying, “Everything is illusion. Everything is illusion.”

I was thinking, When you walked in the door, that was not an illusion. You are a real person. It’s stupid to say that everything is an illusion. We have to acknowledge the reality of what we do and that we are accountable for our actions. Our life on this earth is not an illusion.

She was saying that everything is God and she twisted words by saying we are all one with God; but the truth is, we are not all one with God. Due to sin, the human race was separated from God. She said, “There is no such thing as sin.” Therefore, she was unwilling to say that she needed a Saviour.

When I spoke about Jesus dying on the cross for her sins and the necessity of Christ's holy blood, she got up and left my room. Actually, the presence of God was among us and I knew I was speaking by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, but she couldn't handle it.

I followed her outside and tried to warn her that in this world there is light and darkness. There is good and there is evil. She said, "That is only your thinking."

She was claiming that good and evil are one, so I said to her, "If you want to follow the true light, you have to be careful, otherwise your light could actually be darkness. When God first created this world there was darkness and God said, 'Let there be light,' and this speaks of how we need the light of Jesus Christ."

This lady then said to me, "I was brought up with people trying to tell me what to do." People use this as an excuse for not obeying God. They want to do their own thing and that is why they don't walk in truth, no matter how religious they become. Yes, she had been brought up in a Christian family, but had she truly followed Christ? It is a tragedy when we lose these kinds of people and sometimes the church is at fault. Her church may have been weak in prayer or had a type of preaching that was ineffective because it didn't address the issues that were causing people to be deceived. When people are not finding the right answers to their questions, they can end up going more and more into the darkness.

As this lady was leaving, she said some kind of Hindu mantra and then she said, "The god in me says hello to the god in you."

So I repeated to her, "We are not gods. We are the creation of God." And with that she left.

Discerning Truth from Error

I was talking to a Hindu woman in Fiji about the difference between myth and reality. A myth is a made-up story. I then asked this woman if Ganesh was a myth or a true person. She said that he was a true person. (Ganesh is the idol of a boy with an elephant's head.) There are a number of different

traditions regarding Ganesh, but this seems to be the most common one:

The goddess Parvati created a boy and assigned him the task of guarding the entrance to her bathroom. When Shiva, her husband returned, he was surprised to find that he was being denied access to his wife. In rage Shiva cut off the boy's head. Parvati broke down in utter grief. To soothe her, Shiva sent out his servants to fetch the head of any sleeping being that was facing the north. The company found a sleeping elephant and brought back its severed head, which was then attached to the body of the boy. The elephant's head amazingly turned out to be a perfect fit. Shiva restored its life and made him the leader of his troops.

Again I asked the woman if Ganesh was a true person or whether this story is what we call a myth. She still claimed that he was a real person, so I asked her if she had ever seen a boy with an elephant's head. She said, "No," so I asked her where can I find this kind of person if he does truly exist? She said, "Probably in India." I said to her, "I have been to India many times, but I have never seen a creature that has a boy's body and an elephant's head." She was still unwilling to admit that she was following a myth because that would be admitting that she is following an untrue story, made up by people.

One day I was talking to a Hindu girl and said to her, "This side symbolizes God, but this other side symbolizes all the things that God has made. Which side are you worshipping: are you worshipping God or are you worshipping the things that He has made?"

She said, "I am worshipping both." Instead of admitting an error of belief, Hindus say that they believe everything, but claiming to believe everything doesn't mean that a person knows God or has a true friendship with Him. One problem is that people can be outwardly religious, but inwardly far away from God.

About a two-minute walk from the house where I was staying in Nepal, there was a shed and some men making noise, "Bang, bang, bang; bang, bang, bang!" What were they doing? They were making their gods. Why were they making idols? For money. They were going to sell them and make a

good profit. Manmade gods are false gods. They are a money-making business, and people buy them because they are deceived into thinking that the idols can help them in their prayers. It is deception. Idols of stone, metal, or wood can't listen to you. We need to pray to the One who created the whole universe—not to some thing put together by human hands.

All kinds of different creatures were formed by our Creator, and He alone should be acknowledged as God. God made the cow, the monkey, and elephant. God made the snake. God made the tiger and the rat. God made the peacock. All of these creatures are not God and they are not to be worshipped. People started worshipping created things rather than worshipping their Creator because they had fallen away from the true light of salvation (Romans 1:22-23).

Much of India is given over to worshipping the cow. It is claimed by some that they don't really worship or pray to cows; but in reality, the cow is worshipped by many Hindus. I was told that this happened because they were farmers. They used to get milk from the cow and they used to make their houses with the cow dung or use it as a burning material. They began to worship the cow because of this simple provision, and some Hindus even developed the ritual of each day drinking cow urine. Worshipping calf idols is one of the sins forbidden in the Bible (1 Kings 12:28-30, 2 Chronicles 13:8,20).

When Moses was walking with God and performing incredible miracles, he went up the mountain to meet with God face to face. There he received the Ten Commandments, which included the commands not to have other gods and not to make idols (Exodus 20:1-6). But when the people turned away from the true God, what did they do? They made a golden idol of a calf and they claimed that this cow was their god who brought them out of Egypt. What happened when Moses came down the mountain? The golden calf was melted down, ground to powder and mixed with water, and then the people had to drink it (Exodus 32:20).

Let's remember that God created the stars, the sun, and moon. The Bible talks about another false form of worship where people started to worship the sun (Deuteronomy 17:2-5; Ezekiel 8:16-18). When I was in South India, I saw a man who

looked completely demon possessed. He was looking up at the sky, just staring at the sun. If you stare at the sun for long enough you go blind. It was like a spirit of sun worship was making him go mad.

Many people follow the stars through horoscopes and fortune telling, which is also of the devil. Often they read their daily horoscope in the newspaper or by going to a fortune teller. Following the stars is a false hope and a counterfeit to what it means to really follow God. God warns that those who do this kind of fortune telling cannot save themselves (Isaiah 47:12-15). While in India, I would also tell people that the caste system was of the devil. Adam and Eve were created by God in His image, and all races have equally descended from them (Genesis 1:26-27). The caste system was used by the Brahmins to control and dominate other people.

I was distributing tracts with another believer around the Buddhist and Hindu temple areas of Nepal, and we were also conducting some open-air preaching. We were being well received by the people, when I met an older Buddhist woman from my home country of New Zealand. Her curiosity was caught when she saw me handing out tracts, because many children had gathered around me. She came over to find out what I was doing. After sharing a quick message about Jesus to her, she said to me, "Fundamentalist Christians are very dangerous." There was a sad look on her face, and as she started to walk away, I replied to her, "Buddha was an atheist. Following Buddha is very, very dangerous."

While in Nepal I went to a place called Butwal, and from there I visited Lumbini, which was the birthplace of Buddha. All I saw were dead works and ignorance of how God should truly be worshipped. I gave a copy of my testimony to the main Buddhist monk who looked at it for a little while, then refused to read it. But a woman, a tourist guide for that temple, was very happy to receive the tract and wanted to know more about Jesus. The main monk asked me, "Where is Jesus? Where is Jesus?" and walked off before I could answer him. But I know that Jesus is with me all the time.

Challenging People with the Truth

When I returned to India, I had good opportunities to share in-depth messages with strong Hindus. One man who arranged a program for me was married to a very strong Hindu woman. For over an hour this woman and her mother listened to me speak about the errors of their beliefs. I explained the error behind reincarnation, the falsehood of making an idol instead of worshipping the living God, and the different evil attributes of some Hindu deities. The husband then insisted that his wife should convert to Christianity.

The man who had been organizing my program in Andhra Pradesh was a Brahmin who had come to the Lord in 1992. While staying with his family, I shared Jesus with his daughter-in-law, for she was still a strong believer in reincarnation and a worshipper of many idols. She listened very intently, for I spoke very carefully and yet bluntly to show her that what she had followed all her life was based on a lie. When what is false is exposed, a person can then see the truth.

India is one of the best places in the world to pray for people. Even those who are anti-Christian often like it if you pray for them. I estimated that during one of my trips to Andhra Pradesh, which was for six weeks, I prayed for about three thousand people. I then returned to Kolkata.

Toward the end of the long train journey, I met a young man who was from a strict Hindu background. We arrived at Kolkata at 10 PM, but he wanted to take me straight to his house to meet his family. They were the pure vegetarians, and he was saying that even if he ate an egg his father would disown him. I went to his house to meet his father, who gave me a warm welcome. I tried my best to share the gospel with him and he allowed me to stay there for the night.

While in Kolkata, I said "hello" to a tourist walking by, and he invited me to join him for a lassi (similar to a milkshake). He turned out to be a Hare Krishna from France who was still searching for God. He spent almost an hour asking me questions and listening attentively. Sometimes all we can do is share small truths with people and then uphold them in prayer, trusting God that He will open their blinded eyes and bring them to complete salvation. For the Lord is patient with these people, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

Will You Enter Heaven?

I was taken by a Christian woman to have lunch with a Hindu family. For about an hour and a half I spoke to the mother about the difference between myth and reality, the false concept of multitudes of gods and goddesses, the absurdity of worshipping animals, trees and stones, and logical reasons why reincarnation cannot be true. She was so excited to listen and that is why I was able to go through this with her quite thoroughly.

At the end of the conversation, I found the only thing stopping her from immediately becoming a Christian was a fear of what to say to her family and relatives. I asked her if she was willing to fear God more than fear her family? She was willing, so the Christian lady and I led her in a salvation prayer. It was a long prayer, and I noticed at the end the new believer wiped tears from her eyes.

I was taken to pray for an older Hindu woman who was dying from a kidney problem. I explained to her God's love in sending Jesus as the atonement for our sins. Then I shared with this woman an illustration of how we should pray and why we should ask Jesus to save us. By her own initiative, she cried out to Jesus to save her and to come into her heart. The following week, this lady passed away.

We will be surprised who is in Heaven and who is not, for there will be many unbelievers who find the grace of God while upon their deathbeds; and like the repentant thief, are welcomed into paradise (Luke 23:43).

If you have never given your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, or if you have fallen away from following Him, I suggest that you open your heart to the true love of God and commit your life to Him. You can do this now, for "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). **Pray to Jesus from your heart and He will save you.**

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