

## BUDDHISM AND THE BIBLE

Many people believe all religions came from God even though they teach different and contradictory doctrines. If all religions came from God, they reason that we should simply choose the best of them and leave the others alone. In fact, if all religions came from God, then we should not criticize any of them. However, the Bible says that God is not *“the author of confusion”* (1 Corinthians 14:33). Since all the world religions are different from one another and contradict one another, it is not possible that they all came from God.

Of course there is some good in most religions. If a religion were entirely bad, most people would not be interested in following it. However, it takes only a little false doctrine to destroy one’s soul. Among the many religions which claim to be the guide for people in this life is Buddhism. Buddhism fits Paul’s description of those who *“changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man....who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator”* (Romans 1:23-25). As with many of the other religions of Asia, Buddhism is idol worship. There are many passages in the Bible which condemn the folly and sinfulness of idol worship (Please read Psalm 115:4-8; 135:15-17; Isaiah 40:18-20; Acts 19:24-28; 1 Corinthians 12:2).

Buddhism is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (563? - 483?). He was born in India into a wealthy and noble family. Gautama’s birthplace is now a part of the nation of Nepal. Gautama married at the age of sixteen. His son was born when he was twenty-nine. After the birth of his son, he began searching for “enlightenment.” He practiced asceticism (denying one’s body its basic needs). When he did not find enlightenment this way, he then turned to meditation. Through this means, Gautama claimed he found enlightenment. Later, he began to teach his beliefs to others.

Buddhism was born in India which is the home of Hinduism. Since Gautama came from a Hindu background, he included many Hindu beliefs and practices in his religion. There are many similarities between Hinduism and Buddhism for this reason. Two of the main ideas shared by both religions are (1) reincarnation {the belief that one’s soul passes through many states of existence} and (2) karma {the idea that how one lives in this present life will determine how he will be reborn and how he will live in the next life}.

**If the Bible is true (and it is), then anything which contradicts the Bible must be false.** We can prove the Bible is true. It is the greatest Book which has ever been written. The Bible is from God and is inspired by Him (1 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 3:16,17). In the Bible we learn of Jesus Christ who is the only way to God (John 14:6). We will be judged by the words of Jesus at the last day (John 12:48). There are only two choices one has in life. He may choose the narrow way or the broad way (Matthew 7:13,14). If one wants to go to Heaven when he dies, he must obey the will of God which is found in the Bible (Matthew 7:21-23).

**Buddhism contradicts many of the truths of the Bible. The Bible teaches there is a God and only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6; 1 Corinthians 8:6). Buddhism’s teaching about God is contradictory and unclear. In Buddhism it is possible to believe in many gods or no gods at all.**

**The Bible claims to be God’s Word.** Therefore, it is our guide in life for it reveals all spiritual truth (Psalm 119:105; John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:3). Buddhism claims the

teachings of Gautama, along with one's own feelings, are the guide in this life (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23).

The Bible proclaims Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of the living God (Romans 1:4; John 20:30,31). The Bible also tells us that Jesus arose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Buddhism denies the claims of the Bible. Buddhists teach that Jesus did not arise from the dead. Therefore, Buddhists deny that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Both Buddhism and Christianity cannot be true. One must be right and the other wrong! Both cannot be true!

The Bible reveals God's plan to save mankind through His church (Ephesians 3:8-11; Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Ephesians 1:22,23; 5:23). Buddhists deny this is the path of salvation. According to Siddhartha, a person must follow "the eight fold path" to Nirvana. Since this is contradictory to the Bible, we know it is not right!

The Bible teaches that each one of us has a soul. Our souls are eternal. They will be judged by the Word of God at the last day (Matthew 10:28; 1 Corinthians 15:45; Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10). Buddhism, however, teaches that one's soul is involved in a constant wheel of rebirth. It continues until one reaches "Nirvana." The Bible teaches that once we die, we await the Judgment (Hebrews 9:27).

The only hope for this world is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:12; John 14:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9). May God help each one of us to use every opportunity we have to teach the Gospel of Christ to those who practice Buddhism and give Buddhists the opportunity to turn to the true God and find eternal life in His Son, Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 1:16).