

CULTS

Lesson 4 w/answers

Buddhism

Last Sunday in my class, we spent a wonderful morning in our lawn chairs on the church grounds reviewing the nine year history of our class, how God brought it into being and what we believe the purpose of our Bible Study group is - growing, equipping, witnessing and discipling. And we agreed that we see that happening within the lives of those who regularly attend our study.

I hope that you to have taken the time to ask God to reveal his purpose for your life and are actively seeking to fulfill that purpose.

This week we'll look at the religion and followers of Buddhism. As I shared with my class last Sunday, it may surprise many of you (except those of you who study with us in Hawaii), that Buddhism is not confined to the Far East, and in fact in places like Hawaii and other areas of the United States it is a major religion. So, this week we'll take a quick look at one of the world's oldest religions – Buddhism.

Get your research tools handy, you might find the Internet extremely helpful this week as has it been in the past, as well as Dr. Martin's book, "The Kingdom of the Cults", and answer the following questions:

1. How many followers of Buddha are there today?
 - a. ANSWER: Over 325 Million.
2. Where was it founded and when?
 - a. ANSWER: In northern India by Siddhartha Gautama in 535 BC.
3. What is the core fundamental belief of Buddhism?
 - a. ANSWER: Reincarnation again and again until one achieves "Nirvana" and is totally free from the physical. Becomes one with the universe.
4. What is their position on the Bible, God and Theology?
 - a. ANSWER: Buddhism is a cosmic religion and transcends the need for a personal God, it avoids dogma and theology. It is based on senses and experiencing all things natural and spiritual.
5. What does the word "Buddha" mean?
 - a. ANSWER: One who has "awakened".
6. What are their "Three Trainings or Practices"?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Virtue, Good Conduct, Morality - all living entities are equal and the "golden rule".
 - b. ANSWER 2: Concentration, meditation, mental development. The development of one's mind.
 - c. ANSWER 3: Discernment, insight wisdom, enlightenment - the real heart of Buddhist Wisdom will emerge if your mind is pure and calm.
7. What is the "Eight Fold Path"?
 - a. ANSWER: It expands on the three items above, the first two paths fit item 1, the next three paths fit item 2 and the last three fit item 3.
8. Why follow the "Eight Fold Path"?
 - a. ANSWER: To end suffering.

9. What are the five precepts?

a. ANSWER: Rules to live by, they are:

- i. Don't kill.
- ii. Don't steal.
- iii. Don't lie.
- iv. Don't misuse sex.
- v. Don't consume alcohol or other drugs.

10. What is our Christian response to Reincarnation?

a. ANSWER: It is appointed unto man to die once, and then the judgment. (Hebrews 9:27)

11. What is the Christian response to the Buddha teaching that one can achieve salvation by following the teachings of and believing in Buddha?

a. ANSWER: Christ is the only way to God, and only through believing in Him can we be saved. We are saved by grace, and that not of ourselves, it is a gift of God.

12. If Buddhism is the fourth largest religion in the world can you name the top three?

a. ANSWER: They are Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism; in that order.

This week we have looked at a religion that offers its followers freedom from suffering and a hope that a lasting peace and freedom can be found through following the teachings and practices of Buddha. You'll see a focus in achieving an inner peace, calmness through meditation, a focus on right living and clear thinking, and a striving to avoid suffering and finding happiness.

It's difficult to believe such goals would be wrong and that following such a religion leads to eternal separation from God, but again this week we see this is another form of man developing his own plan of salvation based on his world and his views and his thoughts, and not on God the Creator of all things.

God clearly tells us that His thoughts are not our thoughts, and that His ways are not our ways. He is our only salvation and He will be our only Judge.

I encourage you to remain faithful in this study and to commit to loving, seeking and witnessing to our lost brothers, sisters, neighbors, friends and co-workers, who have followed after such false teaching, believing these lies for the truth.

May God fill us with a discerning spirit as we continue our study – next we'll look at another of the world religions claiming to have the answer and attracting millions of followers – next week we'll take a quick look at the Hinduism.

In Christ,

Wes