

CULTS

Lesson 4

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?
2. Where was it founded and when?
3. What is the core fundamental belief of Buddhism?
4. What is their position on the Bible, God and Theology?
5. What does the word "Buddha" mean?
6. What are their "Three Trainings or Practices"?
7. What is the "Eight Fold Path"?
8. Why follow the "Eight Fold Path"?

9. What are the five precepts?

10. What is our Christian response to Reincarnation?

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

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

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,

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