



FRONTLINE ACADEMY

*"Equipped to Share: A Biblical & Apologetics Approach to
Online Evangelism"*

Session Six



World Religions Overview

Relevance For Us

- We really are Global
- over 50% of conversations in 2024 were international
- With such diversity we are faced with many different world religions and worldviews
- I was at first uncomfortable with this topic, but it really strengthened my faith in Jesus

How do false religions begin?

- We are made in the image of God
- We are sinners spiritually separated from God
- Deceptive hearts and minds
- Spiritual warfare

We are going to look at:

- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Buddhism

Helpful Reminders:

- Enormous diversity of thought
- Idiosyncrasies (often allowed)
- Textbook vs. Real life scenarios
- Dr. Winfried Corduan, from the Christian perspective, trying to delve into how religions are actually practiced
- Dr. David Hesselgrave, missionary and missiologist

Modern Judaism

- Very often has nothing to do with the Old Testament
- Not overly concerned with heaven
- Focus on relationships and this life now
- Unconcerned with animal sacrifices and sees its current practices as sufficient
- Focus on law over belief
- Overall, a cultural and ethnic heritage

Modern Judaism cont. (1)

- 70AD radically changes Judaism, pharisees remain leading to rabbinic Judaism
- Hasidism (Israel Ben Eliezer) – about ‘experiencing God’ but became an orthodox movement
- Reform Judaism – fit into modern European culture, not looking for a messiah, the people are the messiah
- Conservative Judaism – middle road between orthodox and reform

Modern Judaism cont. (2)

- Orthodox – strict law abidance, rooted from rabbinic Judaism of 1st century. All forms of Judaism are a variation of this
- Secular – culture and religion divided, can be atheist but keep the holidays
- Overall, Christians can divide between religion and culture in a way Jews will not.
- Personal reflection; it is very “convenient” they abandon the OT, they don’t need sacrifices, they don’t need a messiah

Hinduism

- Various phases of monotheism, henotheism, polytheism, Animism.
- Name is given by westerners and means, religion of India
- Regard the Vedas, **accept the caste system**, respect the veneration of various deities, spirits and cows
- Even though Vedas respected don't have to be accepted as true or practice what they say.

Hinduism cont. (1)

- The way of works, ritual and legalistic by professional priesthood.
- the way of knowledge, ascetic and mythical
- the way of devotion, devotion to one's specific god (contrast to Christianity)
- Vedas start with one (G)od? And then add as time goes on...

Hinduism cont. (2)

- Reincarnation not in the Vedas, uncertain origins
- To live is to suffer, **looking for release**
(again very different to Christian thought)

Islam

- "Straight Path" least complicated
- Based on Muhammad's life and teachings
- Religion and political system that functions within "umma" (community)
- No distinction between religion and culture
- Qur'an means recitation. It is said Muhammad recited what the angel Gabriel told him

Islam cont. (1)

- Three main points: 1) There is only one god 2) Human beings are obligated to submit to god's will 3) there will be a day of judgment where people are assessed on whether they have obeyed god
- Muhammed had 12 wives his youngest was 5 y/o. There was Controversy surrounding this even in his own time

Islam cont. (2)

- Sunnis (the majority) Shiites (the minority)
different successors to Muhammad
- Muhammad didn't write anything down, his followers recorded
His utterances
- Uthman the third Caliph, noticing too many differences in the
Collected texts gathered all texts in circulation and destroyed
many

Islam cont. (3)

- There are serious textual issues Islam will not admit to (compare to the last class on the Bible)
- The qur'an is shorter than the four Gospels alone and is formed of 114 chapters
- Islam is primarily about practice not belief
- Allah is just the Arabic word for God. It is a misconception that "allah" is a moon god

Islam cont. (4)

- Muhammad misunderstood the Trinity. 5:116 states the Trinity is "the Father, Jesus the Son and Mary the Mother."
- Five pillars: 1) **Confession** (Muhammad prophet of God)
2) **Prayer** (5 times a day) 3) **Fasting** 4) **Almsgiving**
5) **Pilgrimage**
- Focus on God's transcendence not immanence
- Women are inferior to men Sura 4:34

Buddhism

- Spread by deliberate "missionary" activity, adapts and changes to whatever culture it is in
- Buddhism in each country is so different, it becomes difficult to identify a basic core (Christianity extremely different!)
- Founded by Gautama Buddha/ Siddhartha Gautama
- Siddhartha Gautama is "not important," rather his teachings are. He is just one of a long line of teachers

Buddhism cont. (1)

- 6th century BC northeast India, Siddhartha Gautama forsakes Brahminic religion
- The information about Siddhartha Gautama is respectfully unreliable, wide diversity in the legends and accounts
- Overwhelmed with the "futility of life", he left his wife and son and became a wandering monk
- Self is merely a "perception" it does not exist...

Buddhism cont. (2)

- Detachment, "extinction" is the goal
- "Four noble truths":
 - 1) To live is to suffer
 - 2) Suffering is caused by attachment
 - 3) To eliminate suffering one must eliminate attachment
 - 4) One can eliminate attachment by following the noble eight-fold path

Buddhism cont. (3)

- Eight-fold path:

- 1) The right view
- 2) The right intention
- 3) The right speech
- 4) The right action
- 5) The right livelihood (**be a monk**)
- 6) The right effort
- 7) The right mindfulness
- 8) The right focus