

Answering False Religions and Cults

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Common Traits of False Religions And Cults

1. Distortion of God and His character.
2. Distortion of the human condition.
3. Distortion of the person and work of Christ.
4. Distortion of the appropriation of Christ's work.

Christian Gospel
Imputed Righteousness



Every Other Religion or Cult
Inherent Righteousness

Islam	Catholicism
	Buddhism
Hinduism	Emerging Church
Jehovah Witnesses	Mormonism
	Christian Science

Islam

Brief History

- 570 A.D. Muhammad born in Mecca. Father: Abdallah dies before he is born and Muhammad is raised by uncle Abu Talib. He becomes a camel driver in caravans to Syria.
- 595- Muhammad marries Khadijah who is a wealthy widow 15 years his senior.
- 610- During Ramadan (June/July) claims to have a revelation from the angel Gabriel. Muhammad believes he is called to be a "warner" (prophet) to the Arab people.
- 619- Khadijah dies. Muhammad takes many wives including 8 year old Aisha. Begins preaching one god – Allah (moon god).
- 622- Hijra- fight to Yathrib (Medina –city of the prophet) with 150 followers. This is the start of Islam as Muhammad raises several armies to fight the Meccans.
- 622-628 Raids over 59 caravans for booty and executes 700 Jews and takes goods. Fights several wars. Declares 10 year truce in 628 called the Hudaibiyyah.

Islam

Brief History continued:

- 630 Muhammed breaks truce and attacks Mecca with 10,000 men forcing all to accept Islam and destroys idols of Ka'aba. All of Arabia submits to Islam.
- 632 Muhammed dies after pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca. (62 yrs)

Influences on Muhammad's Theology:

- His tribe (Quraysh) were custodians of Ka'aba with 360 gods. Allah was the chief moon god. Hence- the crescent moon.
- Ebionite friend: Waraqa ibn Naufal
- Jesus is a great prophet (born of a virgin and did miracles) but not God.
- Jesus was not crucified or resurrected.
- Legalists who taught the apostle Paul corrupted the N.T.

Islamic Theology

Sources:

1. Quran = the very words of Allah (114 suras)
2. Hadith = the teachings of Muhammad
3. Sunnah = the actions of Muhammad

God: Completely transcendent, *ahad* – no partner, *ahid* – one

- Allah alone (formerly Nanna-sin, chief of the 360 gods of the Ka'aba)
- (Before Muhammad's time)- Allah had relations with Sun god and had three daughters: Al-Lat, Al-Uzza, and Manat (Sura 53:19-20)
- Sura 53:23 "These (other gods) are but names which you and your fathers have invented. Allah has vested no authority in them."
- Reply: Those who invented the pantheon also invented Allah!
- Deuteronomy 4:19 "And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon, and the stars – all the heavenly array- do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping."

Islamic Theology

God:

- Merciful (in name only)

Sura 3:31 "If you do love God, follow me, and God will love you and forgive you your sins. For God is oft-forgiving, most merciful."

Reply: Allah is also capricious and there is no way to determine if someone is justified as in Christianity.

Five basic Doctrines:

1. There is one and only one God.
2. There have been many prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.
3. God created angels (jinn), some are good and some are evil.
4. The Quran is God's full and final revelation.
5. A final day of judgment is coming, followed by heaven for Muslims and hell for the lost.

Islamic Doctrine

Six Pillars

1. Shahada – “There is no god by Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.”
2. Salat - “Ritual Prayer” Quran calls for 3 times a day but custom law mandates 5 times a day: sunrise, noon, afternoon, sunset, and night. (Must face the Ka’aba in Mecca, must be pure- bath if possible).
3. Zakat – (Almsgiving) 21/2 percent annually to help poor, and the needy.
4. Fasting during Ramadan June/July allegedly when the Quran came down.
5. The Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.
6. Jihad – holy war against infidels for their faith.

Sura 9:14 “Kill the infidels, God will torment and shame them.”

Sura 48:29 “Muhammad is Allah’s prophet. Those who follow him are ruthless to the infidels but merciful to one another.”

Major Doctrinal Differences

Salvation

- By Works: Sura 23:104-5 “In the day of judgment, they whose balances shall be heavy with good works, shall be happy; but they, whose balances shall be light, are those who shall lose their souls, and shall remain in hell forever.”

Jesus

- Merely a prophet: Sura 61:6
- Not the Son of God: Sura 4:171-72 “Jesus, son of Mary, was no more than God’s apostle and his word which He cast to Mary; a spirit from him. So believe in God and his apostles and do not say ‘Three.’ God is but one God. God forbid that he should have a son.”
- Not crucified or raised: Sura 4:157-158 (Jews to Mary) “We have put to death the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of God. They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did...they knew nothing about him that was not pure conjecture; they did not slay him for certain...”

Witnessing To Muslims

Establish Authority

- The Bible is God’s word, not the Quran!

Errors In The Quran:

1. Allah confuses Saul’s army fighting the Philistines with Gideon’s 300 men who fought the Midianites (Sura 2:149).
2. Allah is confused and has the Samaritans making the golden calf for the Israelites when Moses is with the LORD on Sinai (Sura 20:85). The Samaritans did not exist for another 700 years!
3. Allah is confused and places Haman by the side of Pharaoh rather than Persian King Ahasuerus. The Egyptian Pharaoh tries to build the tower to heaven even though the Tower of Babel was built centuries earlier in Sumer, Mesopotamia (Sura 28:38).
4. Allah is confused over Christian Trinity- Father, Son, and Mary (Sura 5:116)!

Witnessing To Muslims

Errors In The Quran:
5. Allah is confused as to whether he created the world in 6 or in 8 days (Sura 10:3; 25:59; 41:9-12).
6. Allah is confused as to whether he drowned Pharaoh and his army (Sura 17:103), or saved Pharaoh after he repented (Sura 10:88-92).
7. Allah has Hagar and Ishmael travel not to the Sinai from Canaan, but into an unbelievable 1,000 mile trip through the "Empty Quarter" of the Arabian desert to Mecca!
Use Old Testament First
1. Islam follows Ebionite heresy of claiming Paul corrupted the N.T.
2. Need for atonement Gen 3:15; Lev 17:11; Isa 53 etc.
3. Deficiency of good works Isa 64:6; Hab 2:4.
4. Messianic prophecy Gen 12:7; 15:5; 17:15; 25:23; 49:10; Num 24:17; 2nd Sam 7:14; Mic 5:2; Ps 2; 22; 41:9; 110:1 etc.

Witnessing To Muslims

Preach Christ Crucified And Resurrected
1. Muslims claim Jesus was not crucified (Sura 4:157-158) This cannot be reconciled with the Bible (written by eyewitness) or Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Josephus etc.
2. Jesus was raised from the dead (see previous lecture)
Jesus Claimed To Be God
1. Muslims are in a dilemma. They claim Jesus to be a prophet, but not God. This option is not available to them. He is either a false prophet because He claimed to be God and is not, or He is a true prophet who is, in fact, God. John 5:18; 7:29; 8:56-58; 10:33; 19:7.
Defend The Trinity
1. There is no contradiction in having one God in three persons (Remember the law of non-contradiction).
Love and Pray

Eastern Religions
Hinduism/Buddhism

Panthicism: God is the world.
General Revelation: 2nd Law of Thermodynamics says the world is not eternal.
1. If God is the world, then nothing is eternal.
2. God is the world.
3. Therefore, nothing is eternal.

1. If nothing is eternal, then nothing can exist.
2. Nothing is eternal.
3. Therefore, nothing can exist

Panthicism is irrational because to affirm it is to deny existence!

Hinduism: The Mother Of All False Religions

➤ "It has been said on many occasions and by numerous authors and thinkers that all of the religions of the world may be reduced to one – Hinduism. The chief enemy of this proposition is its largest competitor, CHRISTIANITY, but nevertheless, philosophically and foundationally, the essence of Hinduism is that all of reality is one... Such was the outlook of ...Greek philosopher Parmenides, who lay the groundwork for Platonism. Such was the outlook of Hegel and Shelling" (*Dictionary Of Cults, Sects, Religions, And The Occult*, 116).

➤ History of Hinduism 4 periods- (much change over time)

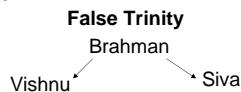
- 3000- 1500 B.C. Pre-Vedic era characterized by animism
- 1500-700 B.C. Aryans (from the steppes of Russia and Central Asia) bring Vedism – a fire cult that brought cremation/reincarnation. Polytheism and caste system started. (Rigveda written – 1,028 hymns).

Hinduism: The Mother Of All False Religions

History of Hinduism

- 700- 200 B.C. Upanishad "sit at the feet of" era. The "this world" superhuman deities were transformed into "other world" deities. Asceticism, reincarnation, and the guru/disciple relationship come about during this period. Gurus are those that have reached *moksha* which is liberation from wandering. (Buddha lived during this period (563- 483 B.C.)
- 200 B.C.- 100 A.D. Brahma period. The god Brahma rises to a place of hegemony over the lesser gods. In contradiction, lord Krishna (one of 10 incarnations of Vishnu) and Siva become equally important gods.

All gods are impersonal, immanent manifestations of Brahman!



Hindu Texts

Four Vedas (Veda = knowledge)

1. 1500-600 B.C. Samhitas ← Came first/ three appendixes
2. 1000-600 B.C. Brahmanas detailed sacrificial formula
3. 1000-600 B.C. Aranyakas "Forest Texts"- retreat to meditate
4. 600-300 B.C. Upanishads Dialogues between gurus and students

Polytheism

Pantheism

Composition of Samhita:

- 1500 B.C. Rigveda: 1028 hymns- Ten chapters for rituals and sacrifices. There are praises to many deities.
- 1000 B.C. Samaveda: Very redundant – much like Rigveda.
- 800 B.C. Yajurveda: Mixes hymns for sacrifice with explanations.
- 600 B.C. Atharavaveda: Contain verbal formulae to control and manipulate the spirit world. (Spells, incantations for health, protection, success etc.)

Hindu Beliefs

Brahman:

1. Cosmic sacred power making sacrifices effectual.
2. In the Upanishads- The ultimate reality behind all things identical with *atman*.
3. Those endowed with sacred power who served as priests and conservers of Vedic truth. These are of the highest caste among Hindus – Bhramin.

Atman: The soul of a person or universe.

Samsara: Wandering. **Reincarnation** is taught in the Upanishads but not in the Rigveda.

Moksha: The liberation from samsara wandering. This is accomplished by realizing and achieving knowledge that allows a person to understand that Brahman=Atman

Ultimate Reality = Soul

Karma: Good or bad actions causing one to be reincarnated in different levels of creatures. Note: Must be purged for Moksha to occur.

Hindu/Buddhist Salvation

- Salvation: "The ultimate goal of Hinduism and Buddhism is to liberate ourselves from this "physical personal existence" and become One with the "Impersonal All." (Carlson and Decker, *Fast Facts on False Teaching*, 92).
- Suffering: People suffer because they have not liberated themselves from their personal world. The physical world is just and illusion, called **maya**.
- This enlightenment is called:

Buddhism- Nirvana

Hinduism- Moksha, Samadhi, or Kaivalya

Zen- Satori

Western World- Cosmic Consciousness, One with Self

- Sin: There is no such thing. It too, is an illusion!

Hindu Salvation

- Means of Enlightenment:

1. Path of knowledge = makes one realize Brahman= Atman
2. Path of good works = works off karma
3. Path of Yoga = allows one to transcend the world of illusion.

Yoga: 8 steps

- Hatha Yoga- The first five steps prepare body for transcendence into Moksha (Nirvana). Comprised of isometrics and breathing exercises.
- Raja Yoga- The last three steps where a person silences the mind by repeating mantras, achieves oneness with god (yet still with a sense of personal existence) and then diffusion into the impersonal universe (god).

"This osmosis is often described in Eastern philosophy as a 'drop of water merging into the ocean'" (Carlson and Decker, 95).

Buddha and Salvation

- Siddhartha Gautama Buddha 563-483 B.C.
- Was a Hindu from birth and was an atheist.
- 1. Theravada Buddhists: Only monks can reach nirvana. (Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, Laos, and Cambodia)
- 2. Mahayana Buddhists: Nirvana is open to all. (Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam)
- **Four Noble Truths:**
 1. Life is suffering
 2. Suffering is caused by desire
 3. Cessation of desire eliminates suffering
 4. The stopping of desire comes by following "The Middle Way" between the extremes of sensuousness and ascetism.
- **Middle Way** 1. right view 2. right resolve 3. right speech 4. right action 5. right livelihood 6. right effort 7. right concentration 8. right ecstasy.

Witnessing To Buddhists and Hindus

Show Irrationality of Pantheism: See slide 12

Show Irrationality of Everything being and Illusion:

1. If we doubt that everything exists we are doing something.
2. Nothing cannot do something!
3. We must exist to even doubt, therefore Hinduism is irrational!

Demonstrate Evil Exists:

1. Even Buddhists and Hindus have a sense of right and wrong.
2. Demonstrate that agreed to law presupposes a personal Lawgiver (Romans 2:15).
3. The Bible says all have done wicked (Romans 3:23). That includes them!

Prove Divinity of Bible Through Prophecy:

1. Predictive prophecy proves to all people that God exists and wrote the Bible.

Preach a Personal God Who Sent His Son!

Pray and Love
