

Aren't All Religions The Same?
(appropriate for High Schoolers and older)
Michael R. Daily, January 2023

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Where did the religions of the world come from?

II Timothy 2:24-26

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Although they don't realize it, non-Christians are captives of satan and they do his will.

II John 1:7

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

satan has sent out many deceivers, both people and fallen angels, to keep people away from the one true God.

The key tactic that they use is to deny that God came to the Earth in the flesh.

I Timothy 4:1

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons

To move the focus off of Jesus Christ coming to Earth as God in the flesh, fallen angels have created replacement doctrines and built the false religions of the world around them.

We are going to examine the major ones tonight.

Colossians 2:8-9

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. ⁹For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

Don't fall for these deceptions.

God came to Earth in the form of a man named Jesus Christ.

He paid for your sins by shedding His blood on the cross.

This is the only reason anyone can go to heaven.

Acts 4:12

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

I'm going to read some statements to you. I want you to listen to these and tell me what religion they are from. I have blanked out some of the words that would otherwise make it too easy for you.

The _____ is an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us. It binds us together.

Life creates it, makes it grow. Its energy surrounds us and binds us. Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter. You must feel the _____ around you; here, between you, me, the tree, the rock, everywhere.

How am I to know the good side from the bad?

You will know... when you are calm, at peace.....passive. A _____ uses the _____ for knowledge and defense, never for attack.

Concentrate on the moment. Feel, don't think. Trust your instincts. Let go of your conscious self and act on instinct.

Train yourself to let goof everything you fear to lose.

Your eyes can deceive you. Don't trust them. Stretch out with your feelings.

Concentrate. Feel the _____ flow. Be calm. Through the _____, you will see other places, the future, the past, old friends long gone.

When I became one with the _____ I made a great discovery. With my training, you will be able to merge with the _____ at will. Your physical self will fade away, but you will still retain your consciousness. You will become more powerful.

The ability to defy oblivion can be achieved, but only for oneself. It was accomplished by a Shaman of the _____. It is a state acquired through compassion, not greed. . . . to become one with the _____, and still have influence . . . A power greater than all. You will learn to let go of everything. No attachment, no thought of self. No physical self.

He has special powers. He can see things before they happen. That's why he appears to have such quick reflexes

By this time they should have figured out that these statements are dialog from various Star Wars movies.

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The dialog above is from various Star Wars movies but the religion represented by these statements exists today. Does anyone know the name of the religion? Its Taoism.

Taoism

Taoist theology emphasizes naturalness, vitality, peace, wu wei (non-action or “effortless effort”), emptiness, detachment, flexibility, receptiveness, spontaneity, the relativism of human ways of life, ways of speaking and guiding behavior. And balance. Taoism is where the idea of Yin and Yang come from – the idea that opposing forces are constantly seeking to remain in balance with each other.

Taoism is one of a number of religions whose fundamental beliefs are referred to as “Pantheistic Monism”, the third largest belief system in the world!

Pantheistic Monism

“Pantheistic” means “All is God”. “Monism” means “All is One”.

These types of religions believe that God is not a person but is the impersonal combined “life force” within all living things. This is the reason many East Asian religions have a strange reverence for animals – to kill a cow or an insect is to injure “god”.

Romans 1:25 - For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

In Pantheistic Monism God is like “The Force” in Star Wars. Do you worship the Force? No. Its something you use but its not a person who you worship.

An Example of Wu Wei

Let's say I wanted to throw Mr. Johnson (an adult in the audience) across the room. I could try to grab him, pick him up across my shoulders while he is kicking and fighting me and then heave him as far as possible. After much effort on my part, Mr. Johnson would travel about two feet out and then fall to the floor and I would be left huffing and puffing.

But if I use "wu wei" (effortless effort) I just thrust my hands out toward him (like a Jedi) and Mr. Johnson would go FLYING across the room and slam into the wall – that would be so cool! That's wu wei – effortless effort.

What would you do if you went on a mission trip to Asia and you came across a Taoist priest and he used Wu Wei against Mr. Johnson? What would you do?

Would you say, "Wow, the god of this priest is clearly more real and powerful than the God Mr. Daily taught me about in AWANA. I never saw Mr. Daily do Wu Wei. I think I will follow this priest and see if he will teach me how to do that.

Or would you say, "Wow, this guy is deep into demonically powered activity. I need to share the Bridge Illustration with him".

Mark 13:22

for false Christs and false prophets will arise, and will show signs and wonders, in order to lead astray, if possible, the elect.

Let's try some more statements. See if you can figure out what this religion is.

Who's Eywa? The Great Mother. The goddess made up of all living things.

I See you Brother, and thank you. Your spirit goes with Eywa, your body stays behind to become part of the People.

This is a place for prayers to be heard and sometimes answered. We call this utraya mokri -- the Tree of Voices. The voices of our ancestors, who live within Eywa. Wise ancestors who live within Eywa, guide us. Give us a sign.

Her wounds were too great, there was not enough time. She is with Eywa now.

If he takes out the Well of Souls -- it's over. It's their main line to Eywa, to their ancestors -- it'll destroy them.

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This dialog is from the movie "Avatar". But what real religion is it? It is the Pantheistic Monism of Hinduism.

Avatars

Hinduism is a religion of Pantheistic Monism. The word "Avatar" comes from the Hindu word, **Avatāra** (Sanskrit for "descent") and refers to a descent of a deity from heaven to earth, and is translated into English as "appearance" or "manifestation".

Here's the deal. People have a built in need to worship a personal God but if you are a pantheistic monist your god is not a person so there is no one to worship. For example, in Star Wars no one worships "The Force".

For the Hindu, the god, Brahman is an impersonal life force but people make humanoid statues representing a personification of some characteristic of Brahman. These forms are not Brahman but aspects of Brahman revealed in the form of avatars so that people can relate to Brahman, an impersonal life force. There are around 30 avatars of Brahman that are popular although there are many more. People make statues of their favorite avatar. They now have something to worship.

If you don't understand this concept of "avatāra" you would mistakenly conclude that Hinduism is a polytheistic religion (worship of many gods).

Hinduism

Hinduism is the third most popular religion in the world with about 1 billion followers. Hindus believe in one eternal god (Brahman), which is indefinable and is formless, shapeless and genderless. Brahman is the universal energy which is everywhere and in everything.

Hindus believe in the concept of many reincarnations. According to Hinduism the soul goes through a cycle of lives and the next incarnation depends on the previous life.

This cause and effect, known as "Karma", puts people in bondage in this life based on actions they supposedly did in a previous life.

According to Hindu dogma, good actions can cause people to be reborn to experience good results and bad actions can cause people to be reborn again and again to undergo suffering and pain. Because of this belief in Karma, Hindus tend to be fatalistic. Being good in his present life may help them have a better life next time, but will not alter their present situation.

The Hindu caste system is a result of these beliefs. It doesn't matter how smart you are or how hard you work – only what family you were born into. This oppresses people and holds them captive.

Buddhism

Buddhism is similar to Hinduism except that it was started by Prince Siddhartha Gautama in India. He was born around 566 BC. Soon after the wise men predicted that he would become a Buddha (the awakened one). While a teen the prince left the palace and his wife and became a wandering monk, living in poverty and seeking wisdom on how to end suffering.

After a few years of this he decided to sit under a Bodhi tree and meditate until he had the answer to human suffering. After about 7 days of visions and reported battles with demonic beings he concluded that he now understood the cause of suffering and how to remove it.

Buddha's four "noble truths": Suffering is common to all / We are the cause of our suffering / Stop doing what causes suffering / Everyone can be enlightened.

In other words, any suffering that you experience in this life is your own fault!

Like Hindus, Buddhists believe that we are the same as plants, as trees, as the rain that falls. We consist of that which is around us, we are the same as everything. If we destroy something around us, we destroy ourselves. If we cheat another, we cheat ourselves (pantheistic monism).

Buddha modified the Hindu idea of Karma by speeding up the cycle

Instead of waiting for the next reincarnation to experience the results of your current life, Buddha taught that you would also experience those results in this current life.

If something bad happens to you in this life, Buddhist dogma says that it is because you did something bad earlier in life. If something good happens to you in this life it is because you did something good earlier in this life. In other words nothing ever happens to us unless we deserve it. We receive exactly what we earn, whether it is good or bad. We are the way we are now due to the things we have done in the past.

The Problem With Karma

Karma does not solve the problem of evil or sin, it makes it worse! For every sin or evil thing that someone does, a second person must do evil to that person. Then, a third person has to do evil against the second person, who did evil against the first person. This continues without end, forever.

But wait, there's more. As people create new evils then more evils have to be brought against them. Karma, if it was true, would not only perpetuate evil in the world but would cause it to continuously increase!

Karma does not solve the problem of sin – it makes it worse!

Pantheistic Monism Searches for Enlightenment

Pantheistic Monistic religions come in many forms. If you add them all together Pantheistic Monism is one of the largest religious belief systems in the world. In addition to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, Pantheistic Monism also includes religions such as Zen, Native American spiritualism, New Age, and Wicca.

These religions describe life as a journey toward some form of Enlightenment.

Enlightenment - the state of mystical attainment.

Enlightenment is attained when a person feels like they have achieved it. The path to achieving enlightenment is through Mysticism.

Mysticism claims to give the practitioner knowledge, abilities, or powers beyond what is available to the non-practitioner. Usually through some type of ritual (meditation, chanting, etc.).

The Search for Enlightenment is About Experiences

Mysticism: the pursuit of communion with or conscious awareness of an ultimate reality, divinity, or spiritual truth through direct **experience, intuition, instinct or insight**.

Mysticism tends to refer to experiences supporting belief in a cosmic unity, rather than the advocacy of a particular religious doctrine.

Go back and review our Star Wars dialog. Its all about emptying yourself and focusing on experiences, intuition, and instincts. Don't think. Don't use your brain, just use your feelings.

Ephesians 4:14

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

In contrast, Christian beliefs are based on faith in the doctrines of the Bible, not on personal experiences. This is critically important because doctrine protects us from deception. People who seek personal experiences instead of working on understanding doctrine are open to demonic deception (even if you are a Christian).

"You want an experience? I'll give you an experience", says the fallen angel who is out to deceive you.

The Search for Experiences Leads to the Occult

The word "occult" comes from the Latin word "occultus" (clandestine, hidden, secret), referring to "knowledge of the hidden".

The idea of "enlightenment" is to achieve the ability to understand things that others do not – in other words "hidden things" – the occult.

Note that the primary practices of Pantheistic Monistic religions center on techniques (meditation, chanting, etc.) for clearing of the mind in order to be receptive to spiritual revelation or enlightenment with an emphasis on experiences and feelings.

An ideal situation for demonic influence.

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Key Point: *Pantheistic Monism leads to the search for Enlightenment, which leads to Mysticism, which leads to a search for unusual spiritual experiences, which leads to the Occult.*

Monotheistic Deceptions

Another type of demonic deception occurs in monotheism (Belief in a single, personal God). In this type of deception a demon, pretending to be an angel of God provides revelation to someone of a type that denies the unique deity of Christ. Examples of this are Islam and the Mormon religion.

Galatians 1:8

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

II Corinthians 11:14-15

No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Mormonism (Joseph Smith and the “angel” Moroni)

According to Mormon dogma, In September of 1823, 17 year old Joseph Smith was visited by Moroni who claimed to be an angel from God. Moroni appeared on a number of occasions over a four year period to teach Smith about the Book of Mormon. In September of 1827 Moroni directed Smith to the Hill Cumorah where he received the Book of Mormon in the form of gold plates, written in “reformed Egyptian”. It took Smith 3 months to translate the plates into English.

“Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations,” Joseph taught, “and where is our religion? We have none” <http://www.josephsmith.net/josephsmith/v/index.jsp?vgnextoid=c08679179acbff00VgnVCM1000001f5e340aRCRD>

Mormon dogma conflicts with the Bible on multiple foundational points too numerous to mention here. For details please see the web site below provided by Leadership U, a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. <http://www.leaderu.com/offices/michaeldavis/docs/mormonism/salvation-refs.html>

Is Mormonism really Monotheism? No. Its polytheism. Mormons believe in a large number of gods of which they think they will become one someday, if they live a good life.

Islam (Mohammed and the “angel” Gabriel)

Mohammed was meditating in a cave on Mount Hira near Mecca and the “angel” Gabriel appeared to him and, over time, dictated the Koran to him. <http://www.islamicity.com/education/ihame/default.asp?Destination=/education/ihame/1.asp>

Are Christianity and Islam compatible with each other? Let’s see what the Koran has to say.

Yusuf Ali English Translation of the Koran (<http://www.islamicity.com/quransearch/>)

4:157 – That they said (in boast), “We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah.;- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not:- 4:158 – Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise;-

According to Allah Jesus was not crucified. He just disappeared. Allah took Him up.

4:171 - O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not "Trinity" : desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is one Allah. Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son.

Stop saying Trinity. And stop saying that Jesus was God’s Son, Allah doesn’t need a Son. Stop it!

5:116 - And behold! Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah.?" He will say: "Glory to Thee! never could I say what I had no right (to say). Had I said such a thing, thou wouldst indeed have known it. 17:111 - Say: "Praise be to Allah, who begets no son, and has no partner in (His) dominion: Nor (needs) He any to protect Him from humiliation: yea, magnify Him for His greatness and glory!"

According to Allah, Christians are polytheists who believe in three gods (father, son, and Mary). Since this is not true, Allah made a mistake that has been documented in writing in the Koran.

3:85 - If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good). 2:120 - Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion. Say: "The Guidance of Allah, -that is the (only) Guidance." Wert thou to follow their desires after the knowledge which hath reached thee, then wouldst thou find neither Protector nor helper against Allah.

If you become a Jew or a Christian you will become Allah's enemy with no one to help you.

Hadith – the writings or sayings of Mohammed revealed to him in dreams

Hadith 1.24 Allah's Apostle said: "I have been ordered by Allah to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle"

You have no right to worship Jesus Christ.

Hadith 1.25 Allah's Apostle was asked, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and His Apostle Muhammad. The questioner then asked, "What is the next best deed? He replied, "To participate in Jihad (religious fighting) in Allah's Cause."

Instead of Love God and Love Your Neighbor, Believe in Allah and Kill Your Neighbor.

Hadith 19:4294 "Fight against those who disbelieve in Allah. Make a holy war."

Hadith 9:4 "Wherever you find infidels kill them; for whoever kills them shall have reward on the Day of Resurrection."

God gives you rewards in heaven for giving to your church. Allah gives them rewards in heaven for killing you.

Hadith 9:50, 57 "No member of the Muslim community should be put to death for killing an infidel. Whoever changes his Islamic religion, kill him."

John 16:2 - "They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God."

Sameer

You go on a mission trip. While you are there you help build buildings and plant crops. You work with the teens your age who know English and enjoy being around an American. One day you get the idea that God wants you to share the gospel with the teens so you gather them around and share the Bridge Illustration. One young man, Sameer, is interested. After you are finished he comes over to talk with you and ask more questions. He is astonished to learn that God (Jesus) died for him and can't believe God would do that for him.

You tell him, "Sameer, would you like to receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord?" He responds, "I would but I need some time to think about it". You are disappointed but you are glad he is thinking about it so you start praying for him. A few days later you are walking through the village and you see Sameer but he is acting strangely. He is giving away his possessions.

"Sameer, are you OK?" He smiles and says, "Yes, I have become a Christian". "That's wonderful. I'm so glad you did. But why are you giving away your possessions?"

"I was raised a Muslim. You are only an infidel, but I am an apostate. Once my father and brothers find out I am a Christian they will kill me". Two days later Sameer's blood soaked body is found by the side of the road filled with knife wounds. My question to you is, "Will you go back there on another mission trip? If you do, will you share the gospel again?"

Conclusion

Fallen angels have created false doctrines and built the false religions of the world around them (**I Tim 4:1**). Don't fall for these deceptions. God came to Earth in the form of a man named Jesus Christ. He paid for your sins by shedding His blood on the cross. This is the only reason anyone can go to heaven (**Col 2:8-9**).

Acts 4:12 - Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Aren't All Religions The Same?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II John 1:7, I Timothy 4:1*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 2:24-26, Colossians 2:8-9*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 1:25*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 4:14*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 16:1-2*

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PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Corinthians 10:3-5*

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