



World Religions - Buddhism

Disclaimer

- Jesus is the only way to heaven
- this study is to help us better understand others and how to share Jesus love with them

Buddhism is not completely clearly defined

- this is why it is really appealing today, especially zen buddhism
- this leads some people to combine it with other religions
- *Buddhism tries to find everything in one's self, Christians find everything in Jesus

Founding

- 6th century BC in Nepal
- Siddhartha Gautama
- son of a ruler
- journeyed but could not find inner peace
- meditated under a bodhi tree
- slept in the lotus position and awoke with great clarity
- others saw he had spiritual depth and authority and began to call him Buddha, "enlightened one"

View of God

- Buddha is not god
- no absolute concept of God, God is not important

Worship of Buddha

- don't technically worship Buddha
- bring offerings of incense, money, and flowers to Buddha statues
- show respect and earn Buddha's favor

Goal of Buddhism

- self-discovery and awareness
- digger deeper into self to find peace
- escape suffering and reality
- if you are a good enough Buddhist you reach nirvana (more a state of being than a lace)

"Way of the Middle"

- not extreme self-denial or self -indulgence
- Four Noble Truths
 - 1) Life is all about suffering
 - 2) The cause of suffering is greed
 - 3) There is a way to overcome our greed
 - 4) There is an 8 step process that leads to liberation from life and suffering

What's different from Christianity?

- we believe there is a tangible reality and objective truth outside ourselves
- God created a material world and it was a good thing

- Buddhism seeks to look inward and escape the world
- Christianity seeks to look outward and impact the world for Jesus

Philippians 2:1-9

ver 1-2

- to follow Jesus is about unity not about everyone finding their individual truth
- Jesus unites us with God and each other
- we have a common purpose and mission greater than just our own peace

ver 3-4

- Paul says to think more of others than yourself
- Seek others benefit not just yourself
- look outward

ver 5-11

- Jesus, though he was God, embraced both humanity and suffering
- Our "example God" didn't try to escape the material world and suffering
- He embraced the material world because that's where we are
- He embraced suffering because he knew it was a great act of love and hope

- The example of Jesus is not to withdraw into self away from the world.
- Jesus calls us to be a part of something bigger and more meaningful.
- The only hope of Buddhism is to escape suffering by entering into nothingness
- The hope of Jesus is that he will use suffering to do great things in our lives and the lives of others

Small Group Questions

- 1) Why would someone be drawn to Buddhism?
- 2) What is the buddhist hope through suffering? What is the Christian's hope through suffering?
- 3) How has God used suffering in your life to do something good for you or others around you?

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