

Bible Special 06-06-06b

Let's pick up here and finish our look at Buddhism by noting, now that we've seen the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path, that nothing they have as an objective and as a goal, and even as a part of their philosophy, is necessarily evil, satanic, and bad, except that it is a path of self-improvement, a path of betterment, a path of salvation, if you will, because we know that sin and suffering are inextricably linked. Why is there misery and suffering in the world? What does Paul say in Romans chapter 8? The whole creation groans under the curse because of man's fall. By one man sin entered the world, death by sin, death passed upon all men because all have sinned, and our life on this earth is a journey from birth to death, and it's because of sin.

Sin is the cause of suffering. Coveting is certainly a sin, but it's by no means the only one. And you can see the elements of satanic deception in Buddhism because Buddhism says, well, you've just got to get rid of the craving.

I can quit smoking if I get rid of the craving. I can quit drinking if I get rid of the craving. I can stop doing crack or crystal meth or whatever if I get rid of the craving.

I can get off of heroin, I can get off of fatty foods, or I can drop this extra weight, or I can build up my muscles if I can just drop the craving. Cravings are my problem. What does the Bible say the problem is? And Jared made a good call at the end of class, right at the first part of the break.

What is the root problem for us? Is craving the problem? Sin is the problem. Corruption is the problem. Separation from God is the problem.

We as creatures of God, designed and created in His image and after His likeness, cannot function properly separated from God. We trend toward corruption, destruction, disintegration, and death. This is the point for both angelic creation and human creation.

Any thinking, self-aware creatures from God's hand cannot abide and cannot survive and cannot live any kind of productive existence separated from God. It is like taking a vine of wonderful leaves and grapes and wrenching it out from its source where the sap and where the nourishment and where the life comes from. That vine or that branch will inevitably wither and shrivel and die and corrupt.

Man or angel separated from God trends toward corruption. This is the point that God is making. Creatures might say, why can't we just live apart from God? Why can't we just pursue our own idea of ethics? Why can't we establish our own morals? Why can't we pursue our own path? Just leave me alone.

Have you ever talked to unbelievers, people who have no relationship with God, and the subject comes up, something is brought up about God or about Christianity or the Bible or hell or

heaven or whatever, and people say, just get that out of my face. I just want to live my life. I want to do my thing.

Don't bother me with this God stuff. I don't want to hear that there's a God that's going to judge me. You're a bunch of judgmental people.

You've got this angry God. You're threatening me with hell and damnation. Just get that out of my face.

I just want to do what I want to do. Leave me alone and let me do my thing. If there is a God, why doesn't He just get out of my way and let me live my life? Why does He have to have people conform? What's the matter with Him? Is He insecure that people have to worship Him and people have to come to Him? Is He a control freak? He can't just make me and turn me loose and let me do what I want to do? Have you ever heard arguments like this? Well, what's the answer to that question? You can't.

You can't live suspended in midair. We are a branch and we're designed to be plugged into the trunk of the tree. We have to have life and nourishment and relationship from God.

We cannot exist productively. We can't produce righteousness because righteousness is of God. Life is of God.

Where did Adam get his first breath from? God. God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Life comes from God.

You get separated from God, no life, no breath. If you think you can live apart from God, get on the next space shuttle, open the door when you're in orbit and step out. See how long you live.

You can't live disconnected from the source of life and the source of righteousness. It cannot be done. It is against the universal, eternal, supra-universal laws of physics.

You can no more live a productive and righteous life apart from God than you can live in outer space. You know what would happen if you step outside the spaceship without a suit? You instantly atomize. It might as well spray you out of a little perfume bottle because all of the turgor pressure that keeps you underneath however many atmospheres and 29.27 inches of mercury or whatever it is, we're under a lot of pressure.

Have you ever swum down to the very bottom of the pool and you can feel the water closing in? Well, think of the column of air and the surrounding atmosphere and the pounds per square inch that are pushing in on us and our body pushes out with an equal amount of force. This is why some people can tell changes in the weather are coming because when the barometer changes, when the atmospheric pressure changes, some part of their body will start aching or hurting. They've got a bad joint or whatever.

This is a change in pressure. There's a slight difference in the proportion of what the body is

pushing out and what the air is pushing in and you feel it. Some people do.

Well, you step outside in outer space, all of that pressure is going to let loose at once and you're just going to pressure yourself into a fog that will quickly disperse amongst the molecules of the universe. You're not going to be like a mannequin tumbling endlessly in space. You're going to be like a mist dispersing endlessly in space.

Well, that is man apart from God. It can't be done. Angelic history and human history are a demonstration that if you separate angels from God, it's Satan and the demons.

If you separate people from God, it's the unbelieving, depraved, degenerate humanity that we see around us. Wars, famines. Why are there famines in foreign countries? It's not just because there's a drought, it's because there's corrupt governments.

It's because there's people who are taking things to themselves. CARE and UNICEF and other people send resources over there and it gets siphoned away. It gets pilfered and sold off.

Saddam did it in Iraq. The oil for food program, Saddam took the food. This is the reason that when you look at a religion, and Buddhism is sort of our prime example.

We won't go into quite as much depth on some of these others because this is the essential characteristic that distinguishes the religions of the world from Christianity. There is no recognition that without relationship with God, you are nothing, you have nothing, and you can accomplish nothing. Your existence is meaningless, your production is meaningless, and your future is emptiness and meaningless.

Nothing makes any sense apart from God. We're designed and created for relationship with God and without that, it's like a train with no tracks. There's just no point.

It's like an engine and no car to put it in. Why would you have it? Well, Buddhism has these noble goals, eightfold path, it's all wonderful, it's all great. Where is the power? Can you will yourself to be rightly minded, rightly perceiving, rightly acting, rightly speaking, rightly vocationalizing, rightly... can you just make a decision? Well, it's a pretty simple question to answer.

Can you will yourself to be thin? Can you will yourself to be muscular? Can you will yourself to be in shape? We can discipline ourselves and get into a fitness program, can't we? We can discipline ourselves and stick to a diet, right? How long does that last? Let's say you start when you're 12 and you get into a lifting and running program and you eat right, you keep fit, and you do that like Jack LaLanne till you're in your 80s. You ever seen Jack LaLanne? I used to watch him when I was a little boy in California. A little exercise program, he's out there with his leotards doing these.

Now he's like an 89 year old guy and he's still strong and he can still do one-arm push-ups. He's an amazing guy. But you know what? Jack LaLanne is going to die and all of that exercise and all

that fitness is going to corrupt and return to the dust from which it came.

Jack LaLanne can exercise himself as long as he lives. He can live to be 120, but when he dies, he's going to turn back to dust just as much as any other flabby 300-pound person. Because Jack LaLanne cannot will himself out of corruption.

He can't will himself out of this lost and fallen condition. No Buddhist can do it either. And the problem is our compass is off.

We don't have a true reference in our soul. Now, what about Christians? What's the difference? What are the elements of Orthodox Christianity? The person and work of Jesus Christ, lost and hopeless condition of man, truth and reliability of the scriptures. What do the scriptures tell us? The work of Christ has transforming power.

The word of God has transforming power. We can be renewed in our mind. God can do a creative work just like he did with Adam and Eve in the garden through his word.

No Buddhist has the power to change his own mind and to change his cravings. You do because God has given it to us in his word. Be not conformed to this world, Romans 12.1, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Christianity in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the work that he accomplished on the cross for you and me, gave us God's power to change. There was a commercial for one of these non-smoking gum patch, whatever it is. I think it was a patch.

It's like Nicorette or something. There was this girl. She had been on an episode of Star Trek and I recognized her name was Symphony on this Star Trek episode.

She was like a hologram woman, but she was super intelligent. They got all tangled up with her. Well, then she came on the Nicorette commercial.

I said, oh, look, there's the Star Trek woman. And when that commercial first came out, you know what she said? Here's, I'm not sure it was Nicorette, one of those brands. We'll say it was Nicorette.

She said, it has the power to calm and the power to quit. It has the power to cure your cravings, the power to calm and the power to quit. Then all of a sudden, after they showed those commercials for several months, they went away and they weren't there anymore.

And when they came back, she said something different. She said, the power to calm, the power to help you quit. Somebody said, hey, wait a minute.

You're making a guarantee that if I stick this patch on, I will quit. You're saying this gives me the power to quit. And they said, well, oops, no, we can't make that claim because actually it doesn't work for a lot of people.

So we have to say the power to help you quit. The patch doesn't have the power. It can be an aid, but it can't do it for you.

Well, none of these religions have the power to change. Only God's power coming through God's word and God's spirit give you the power to change. Now, this is going to be our plumb line.

I've been working with a plumb line, watching people use a plumb line for a week and a half now. And the great thing about it is it always points toward the center of the earth. So anywhere you carry it on a project, when you tie it up here and you let it hang down here and it quits swinging, that line is perfectly parallel with every other plumb bob line that you've used, right? And you know that your stuff is plumb and square if it matches that line.

Well, this is going to be our plumb line. This is going to be our standard of reference when we look at every other religion. Show me the religion other than Christianity that gives me the power.

Where is the power to change myself, to improve myself, to save myself apart from God, to make myself up and out of the corrupt, temporary, ethereal world in which we live? Buddhism says just follow the eightfold path, but they don't give you any power. How can I stay on that path? Nobody can do it. How about Hinduism? Hindus have this whole mindset and it's very, very old.

This goes back to like the time of Abraham. 2000 BC, Abraham circa 1850 BC or so. Well, there was a group of people called the Aryans.

Ever heard of them? A-R-Y-A-N-S? Like in a World War II context? Blonde hair, blue eyed Aryans, etc. Well, there were some real Aryans and they went into the Indus Valley. This is where India gets its name.

They conquered everybody down there and they brought their religion with them. They chanted a lot. They prayed a lot.

They recited a lot of stuff and the people they conquered said, hey, this is great. These people are powerful. They're wise.

They look good. What are they chanting? What are they praying? What are they reciting? So they started writing it down and it's called the Vedic literature, V-E-D-I-C. And they thought this is the wisdom.

It's the wisdom of the ancients. It's come down from some unknown source and it's just the best stuff that ever was. So they started writing this down and these became known as the Vedic hymns and the Vedic poems and this sort of thing.

Well, it is essentially a lot of deities, a lot of stories. It's sort of like Greek or Roman mythology.

The Aryans thought that death and disaster came from mean gods and blessing and happiness came from good gods, a lot like the Romans and the Greeks.

But this precedes them by a good bit, by 1,500 years and more. So there were people who sort of became experts in these myths and legends and they were called the Brahmins. You've heard of a Brahma bull, B-R-A-H-M-A.

Well, the Brahmins are sort of the priests of the Hindu religion. And they started writing stuff down and they added to this Vedic literature. And they started talking about doing sacrifices and appeasing the gods and this, that and the other.

Well, around 500 B.C., this is close to the time of Daniel, just after the time of Ezekiel, circa 500 B.C., they added a bunch more writings to these Vedic hymns and so on. And one of these hymns tells how four classes of people came into the earth. Some of them came from the head of the creator god, Brahma.

The Brahmins were the followers of the big cheese god, kind of like calling them Zeusians or Jupiterians. You get the big cheese god and all of these people come from him. Well, some of them came from his head.

Some of them came from his arms. Some of them came from his thighs. And some of them came from his feet.

Four different kinds of people. Well, the ones that came from the head, those are the Brahmins. They're the smart ones.

And these others are like warriors. That would be the arms. The ones that came from Brahma's arms, they're the warriors and the fighters.

They're the second greatest. Then the third greatest are the ones that came from his thighs. And these are the Vaisya or the peasants.

And then the ones that came from the feet, well, those are the slaves. They just get walked on. And so, depending on which part of the creator god, Brahma, you come from, that's your caste.

That's your place in life. You're in one of these four categories. You're either a super-duper chip off the old block in terms of the head, or you're a warrior-fighter guy of the arms, or you're one of these two lower classes.

So, the first three, head, arms, and thighs, they get the whole benefit of the Hindu religion. They can access anything. They can learn anything.

They can improve anything. But the Sudras, the people that come from the feet, they're losing out. They're not allowed to hear the Vedas.

Start reading a Veda and you see a Sudra in there, you've got to banish them, get them out of

there. They're the lackeys and the slaves, and they're not good enough to hear the wisdom that's in the Vedas, the Vedic literature. Well, you spiral your way up, much as in Buddhism, you work your way through, and Hindu boys go into this system.

Hindu girls are kind of out of luck. They're not even worth mentioning in terms of in your three upper classes ascending up out of the earth. You've got to go through four stages of life.

You've got to be a student, then you've got to be a head of a house with a wife and children. Then you've got to be a meditating hermit seeking enlightenment, kind of like Gandhi, sitting by the side of the road, waiting for somebody to poke bread in your mouth. And then you've got to be a homeless wanderer who has renounced all things of the world.

You see this similar idea that you've got to get disconnected from the world, push it all away, isolate yourself, and then go up the chimney of this hot air to sort of a nirvana type of thing. Four goals for Hindus. This is about all we're going to need to know about the Hindus.

These are their four goals, just like the four noble truths for Buddhists. Four goals for Hindus, become righteous and virtuous. Is anything wrong with that? Not at all.

To have material goods, at least at the beginning, you've got to kind of pass through that phase. Number three, to enjoy life by indulging yourself in love, pleasure, and appreciation of beauty. And then to have spiritual victory in your life.

And so you pass through this phase where you just grab the gusto, and then you pop out the top. So it's a real appealing religion because you can say, well, you know, I'm down in those lower four, first three phases where I'm trying to get the love and the riches and all of that. And then I'll be the homeless wandering peasant later.

But I haven't finished my first phase yet. Well, this is all very old. It's all BC, 800 to 300 BC, you have the Upanishads and you can attain salvation in a number of different ways.

You can get out into Brahma Natanam, which is kind of achieving oneness with Brahma. You know, you get chipped off of him, you fell out of his head or off his arm or his thigh or his foot. And you're down here, you experience the material world, you get the sensual pleasures, and then you start meditating and becoming a hermit, and then you become a homeless wanderer.

And then you kind of go back and you rejoin with Brahma. So you make this kind of a circle where you pass through the lower parts of sensual pleasure and then go back up to the high spiritual realm. That's Hinduism in a nutshell.

So while you're down here in the lower half of the donut, the lower half of the circle, you're experiencing reality and all of this and you recognize that it's temporary. And only Brahma really has meaning. This is just kind of a, you know, again, it's sort of a Buddhist idea.

What you see in the world of time and space, this is called Maya, M-A-Y-A. And if you do any

reading about Hinduism, you'll run across this concept of Maya. But everything that lives and breathes has a soul and it's called Atman, A-T-M-A-N.

Where are you Atman? Well, I'm in my soul. I'm going through my phase. So Brahma Atman, that's where they're trying to get back to, trying to get back to the soul of Atman.

So you've got to get back up to Brahma, up high, but you've got to run through the bottom edge. So every individual, his little Atman has to come down and go through the world in Maya, but he wants to try to get back up to Paramatman, to get back up to Brahma. Okay.

Well, that's why they believe in reincarnation. That's why they have these ideas of sort of a karma idea. But you've got to release your soul.

Have you ever heard of yoga? You know what they're doing when they're meditating in yoga and then putting their feet in those weird positions and doing the, you know, the crane neck dog or whatever it is they do. They have all those different positions. I don't actually think that's one of them, but they have the Lotus and they have the, I forget what they all are.

Anyway, what they're trying to do is they're trying to do the things that they're supposed to do so that they can raise their Dharma, their status, and they can move up out of being a thigh to being an arm or being a head type of guy. There was a TV show called Dharma and Greg, and the gal's name, Dharma, comes from the Hindu religion. Dharma is your social standing, your social class, and you can improve it by doing the right things as a Hindu, moral, social, and religious duties.

Well, the other way you can do this is by yoga, where you get into one of these positions, control your breathing, think deep thoughts, and just kind of think your way up. You just propel yourself upward in social and spiritual standing. And you've got to get your Atman to lose itself.

It has to disconnect and be open to the spiritual world. Well, what does this do? This opens you up to the spiritual world, it's the dark spiritual world. And again, I would highly recommend to you, if you haven't read it, the book called *Escape into the Light* that was co-authored by Dave Hunt and is the story of one of these Brahmins and his experiences in meditating and his yoga experiences that led him into contact with demons, face-to-face conversational contact with demons through this kind of self-hypnosis.

So, once you lose your Atman and your identity in paramatman, or true reality, then you've gone into moksha. They've got this whole vocabulary. But they have the same Buddhist idea, the world has no value, you've got to get from the spiritual realm.

You just disconnect, you push it all away. Again, where's the power? Where's the power to calm? Where's the power to quit? Where's the power to become better? The best they can offer is, we can try to help you quit. But basically, this is the old shell game, you swap one problem for another.

And there is no power to transform, there is no power to change the human heart. You can get weird, and you can get different, but you can't get better. You watch anybody that says, oh look, I used to drink and smoke and cuss and run around, and now I'm a sterile, puerile individual.

If you look at their life, you will find that it's like a seesaw. You can elevate one side, but then the other side has gone down, and the average of that seesaw hasn't moved a bit. Just as corrupt, just as fallen, just as problem ridden as before, you've just swapped one problem for another.

There is no genuine transformational power. And this is why you have people leaving these religions in droves, when they realize that they're not making any progress, and they look for something else. Well, Gandhi was a Hindu, and he did a lot of political things over in India, but it's just a philosophy, it doesn't have any power.

Christians believe, the Bible teaches, that there is an eternal personal and spiritual God. Hindus, of course, don't believe that. So, what's our first element of Orthodox Christianity? Jesus Christ, his person and work.

Of course, Hindus, Buddhists, all the rest of them don't recognize that. So, whether it is Buddhism, or it's kissing cousin, and an actual ancestor, Hinduism, you'd get no power in it. Any other offshoot of these, and they are abundant, it's like denominations in Christianity.

Matthew pointed out on the break, if you watch the Star Wars trilogy, if you're interested in Star Wars, old Huzits that made those movies, George Lucas is a Buddhist, and you can see his Buddhist philosophy coming out when he talks about the force. You've got the positive side, and the negative side, and use the force. You've got to meditate.

There's a little green guy thinking, and he can raise stuff. What's his name? Yoga? Yoda? Yoda. And all he does is just rearrange the words in his sentence, and I have a saying for Yoda, but I can't repeat it.

It's something along the lines of, break me a freaking give. It's all Hinduism. It's all Buddhism.

It's mysticism. It is elevating the human mind, and saying, my mind has the power to pneumatically raise me above problems, and above sin, and above corruption, and it does not, and it leads nowhere. Well, these are the general categories of religions in the world.

We have one more week, maybe two. Hopefully, I can squeeze it in next week, to talk about within the realm of those who claim to be Christians, who claim to have their religion sourced in the Bible. That's the other handout that you have there.

We're going to talk about the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons, and the Catholics, primarily, and look at the distinctions within what is loosely called Christianity, very loosely. What about the Mormons? Are they saved? What about the Jehovah's Witnesses? Are they saved? What do you say when they come to the door? What's the difference between the Jehovah's Witnesses

and the Mormons mixed up? Are Catholics Christians? How different are they from us? Should we be all friendly and say, go Pope Benedict, or what? Well, this is what we'll look at next time, and this will complete our survey of where we stand as Orthodox Christians versus the alternatives that are presented in the world. But let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for revealing in your Word the truth about yourself and the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ. We see it confirmed in creation. There is the undeniable witness of your Spirit in the heart of each one of us that leads us to the truth, that convicts us of our sin, of your absolute righteousness, and of the necessity for impending judgment.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress the truth of your Word on our hearts, give us discernment and perception to see the insidious tentacles of the satanic deceptions and satanic philosophies wending their way even into the precincts of the Christian church. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.