

- Recap from 2 weeks ago
 - Not all religions are equal, you must make a choice or live with contradiction.
 - Only Christianity claims that God enter the world of His people. (John 1:14)
 - It is not possible to earn heaven
- Today we're going to look at some of our world religions and see where they differ from Christianity. Providing a point of comparison to what Christianity says.
- World Religions claims
 - Zoroastrianism
 - Zoroastrians believe in on god called Ahura Mazda. He created the world and everything in it. There is an evil spirit called Angra Mainyu, who the Zoroastrians believe will be defeated by the forces of good to restore the world to perfection.¹
 - People can choose good or evil in their lives, if good outweighs the bad, they will go to heaven, if not they go to hell. ²
 - Claims of parallels are exaggerated at best and outright fabrications at worst.
 - The oldest manuscript of the Avesta (their scripture) is 14th century AD.
 - This points to a likelihood of Zoroastrianism borrowing from Christianity, rather than the other way around.
 - There is an idea of bodily resurrection in the Avesta, but no claims that Zoroaster was resurrected.³
 - Another parallel was Zoroaster was tempted for the years (rather than Jesus' 40 days) by a demon, rather than the equivalent of Satan. ⁴
 - Hinduism
 - it has no single historical founder, no central revelation, no creed or unified system of belief, no single doctrine of salvation, and no centralized authority. In this sense, it is different from other 'world religions'. Huge diversity and variety of religious movements, systems, beliefs, and practices are all characteristic features of 'Hinduism'. Also, there is no clear division between the 'sacred' and 'profane' – or natural and supernatural: religion and social life are inseparable and intertwined.⁵
 - Karma is a central teaching, which explains that actions in our current life determine the conditions we have in this life and the next rebirth.
 - Central to this concept is the idea that all souls are eternal and is constantly reincarnated in other bodies.⁶

¹ From <https://www.uri.org/kids/world-religions/zoroastrianismoroasteri>

² From <https://www.uri.org/kids/world-religions/zoroastrianismoroasteri>

³ <https://evidenceforchristianity.org/does-zoroastrianism-predate-christianity-and-is-the-idea-that-christianity-borrowed-the-resurrection-of-jesus-from-the-religion-believable/>

⁴ <https://evidenceforchristianity.org/does-zoroastrianism-predate-christianity-and-is-the-idea-that-christianity-borrowed-the-resurrection-of-jesus-from-the-religion-believable/>

⁵ (Introduction to World Religions (p. 293). Fortress Press. Kindle Edition.)

⁶ Mark Juergensmeyer; Wade Clark Roof (2011). *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*. SAGE Publications. [ISBN 978-1-4522-6656-5](https://doi.org/10.1080/14730866.2011.665655).

- There is disagreement for how you get out of this cycle, but that is the ultimate goal.
- Islam
 - Several passages point to a works based salvation (Surah 5:9, Surah 23:102-103)
 - Islam believes that Jesus was a messenger of Allah (God) but does not have deity (Surah 4:171).
- Buddhism
 - In its shortest form Buddha's teaching may be summarized as follows: Birth is sorrow, age is sorrow, sickness is sorrow, death is sorrow, clinging to earthly things is sorrow. Birth and rebirth, the chain of reincarnation, result from the thirst of life together with passion and desire. The only escape from this thirst is to follow the Eightfold Path: Right belief, right resolve, right word, right act, right life, right effort, right thinking, right meditation. The goal of Buddhism is Nirvana.⁷
 - Nirvana is not well defined, in the teachings of Buddha.
 - You achieve Nirvana by multiple cycles of reincarnation.
 - Greg: To follow Buddhism, you follow an impersonal "god" and rely on yourself to reach a state of "Nirvana." The struggle, if we are honest, is that all of lack the will power or capacity to reach any spiritual state.
- Scientology
 - Mankind, according to Hubbard, "is basically good." The basic instinct for all people is survival.²⁸ Man's environmental conditions and painful experiences result in failure. If a man changes his circumstances and eliminates pain, then his condition improves. The two most important factors for man's survival, then, are avoiding pain and gaining pleasure.⁸
 - People who use Dianetics (a practice of Scientology) can rid themselves of reactive memories in their past and present lives to make themselves "clear" and move closer to becoming a godlike being called homo novis.⁹
 - Salvation is achieved by freeing oneself from the endless cycle of reincarnation by becoming clear.
- Analysis
 - Not going to get into the authority of scripture today.
 - Suffice it to say that there are more copies that are more accurate and have a shorter time span from the original to the copy than any other ancient document we have. The accuracy from copy to copy is around

⁷ Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults: The Definitive Work on the Subject* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 2019).

⁸ Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults: The Definitive Work on the Subject* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 2019)

⁹ Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults: The Definitive Work on the Subject* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 2019)

99.5% and are minor changes that do not affect the content of scripture.¹⁰

- All religions lead to heaven or paradise eventually, it doesn't really matter which one you choose.
 - John 14:1-6
“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; I believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going.”³
5 Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” 6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
 - Acts 4:12
And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
 - The Bible tells us that he is the only path to God and there are no other paths to get there.
- Many of the gods are impersonal.
 - Hebrews 4:15
For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.
- All believe that man must work his way to salvation.
 - Romans 3:21-25a
But God has a way to make people right with him without the law, and he has now shown us that way which the law and the prophets told us about. ²² God makes people right with himself through their faith in Jesus Christ. This is true for all who believe in Christ, because all people are the same: ²³ Everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glorious standard, ²⁴ and all need to be made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They need to be made free from sin through Jesus Christ. ²⁵ God sent him to die in our place to take away our sins. We receive forgiveness through faith in the blood of Jesus' death.
- With reincarnation, you don't know if you're successful until you get to the next life and start over.
 - As followers of Christ, we can have confidence in our salvation.
 - 1 John was written for this purpose as outlined in 5:13
I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

¹⁰ Christian Apologetics and Resource Ministry - <https://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>

- I would love to elaborate further on this point, but this is a sermon series in and of itself.