

## **Feb. 2 Topic: Hinduism**

Homework Feb. 3-8 (for discussion on Feb. 9)

To view lecture online, go to <http://www.tlc.org/tuesday-morning-bible-study/>

### **Day 1: God and the Creation: The same or different?**

1. Read Nehemiah 9:5-6

List the words Nehemiah uses to describe God:

List everything God made, as described in this passage:

2. Read Isaiah 40:28 and Psalm 90:2 Hinduism teaches that the whole material world, the whole universe, including all people and creatures, is actually the same essence as God. God's essence is in everything (a view called *panentheism*). Is this view compatible with what Scripture teaches? Why or why not?

3. Read Psalm 95:1-6

In Hinduism, absolutely anything can be worshipped, even rats or rivers, because in its essence, everything is God. How does this conflict with what is taught in the Bible? Why would God care about what or who we worship?

*Prayer: Acknowledge the Lord as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, your maker. Praise him with this Psalm: "You are from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything". Thank him for your life!*

## **Day 2 Idols**

1. Read Deut. 4:15-19. Why do you think it's such a temptation for human beings to create idols or images to worship? What's the difference between appreciating the beautiful and awe-inspiring creation that God has given us, and worshiping the creation itself?
2. Read Psalm 115:3-8, Isaiah 44:6, I Corinthians 8:4-6. Many Hindus say that all the different gods and goddess reflect different aspects of the one God. They believe the gods and goddesses are actually present in the idols, and by worshipping them they are worshipping the one God. Do you think this more sophisticated understanding of idols would make their use more acceptable to God? Why do you think God cares whether or not idols are involved in our worship?

*Prayer: Acknowledge God as the one true God, maker of heaven and earth. Ask him to help you resist the temptation of idolatry, the temptation to make him more like human beings. Ask him to help you appreciate and worship the mystery of his awesome being.*

## **Day 3: Who am I? What is my problem and what is the solution?**

Hinduism teaches that mankind's biggest problem is ignorance about our true essence—that our true divine essence (Atman) is identical with the essence of the universe (Brahman). People are kept in ignorance by the accumulation of negative karma. Only by getting rid of negative karma and carefully following a spiritual path can one experience this reality, shed all ignorance and be released from further reincarnation.

1. Read Isaiah 40:28, Isaiah 55:8-9, and Romans 11:33-36. In what ways are humans *unlike* God? What differences between God and man do these verses describe.

2. Read Isaiah 53:5-6 and Ephesians 2:1-4. According to these passages, what is our basic problem?

Read Romans 5:8 and 6:23. What is the solution to our problem?

3. Read Revelation 21:1-4. Many Hindus believe that *moksha*, or liberation, occurs when they no longer are reincarnated and their essence (Atman) re-merges with the essence of the universe (Brahman), like a drop of water falling back into the ocean. How does this vision of ultimate salvation differ from what is promised for us in the scriptures? Which idea do you find more desirable, and why?

*Prayer: Thank God for the gift of life given to you in Jesus Christ. Thank him for the glorious future he has planned for you! Ask him to allow that hope to give you joy in your daily life.*

**Day 4 Karma** In Eastern thought, karma is the immutable moral law of cause and effect.

1. What do you think might be appealing about the idea of karma?
2. Read Proverbs 22:8-9 and Galatians 6:8-9. What general principle of life do these verses promote?

3. Read John 9:1-3 and Psalm 73:3-4. Do these verses contradict the previous verses? Why or why not?

4. Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 6:23 (again!). Scripture communicates the gospel of grace, which is fundamentally inconsistent with karma. Grace means we do not get the judgment we deserve, but instead we get love, life and blessings we do *not* deserve. . Does the concept of karma ever creep in to your thoughts about how God feels about you and responds to you?

*Prayer: Thank the Lord that he has lavished grace upon you. Thank him that ultimately you will not get the judgment you deserve, but instead you get the life you don't deserve—because of Jesus. Ask him to help you understand a more biblical view of sowing and reaping in your life.*

## **Day 5 Reincarnation**

Hinduism teaches that people live many hundreds or thousands of lives. They are born into a life dictated by their karma. Lots of negative karma means birth into a lower, more difficult life (or even an animal life). Smaller amounts of negative karma means birth into a better, more advantaged life.

1. Read Hebrews 9:27. According to this verse, how many mortal lives do we get?
2. How could this Hindu belief lead to a judgmental attitude toward people born in poverty, children with birth defects, etc.? How could this belief hinder compassion toward those who are suffering?

*Prayer: Thank God for your life and ask him to help you see it as precious and limited. Ask him to help you spend your days in ways that glorify him and bring blessing to those around you.*

## **Day 6 Caste System**

1. Read Philippians 2:1-8. What was Christ's attitude during his time of earthly ministry? We are called to imitate him. Why is this attitude important?
2. Read James 2:1-9. The caste system is an obvious evil, but the same human tendency that created the caste system lives in all of us. How have you been guilty of looking down on others or putting people in "castes" in your heart?

*Prayer: Confess to the Lord how you have looked down on others. Ask God to help you see all people (including yourself!) as he sees them—people made in his image, who he loves, and for whom he gave his only son.*

