

## How to Identify the Counterfeit

We read in the New Testament that God's goal in salvation is the transformation of all believers into the image of His Son Jesus. But the problem for young believers in modern times is how to distinguish this biblical doctrine with the many counterfeits that have swept into Western Society over the last few decades. Probably the most obvious of these is Hindu practices.

Scholars say the roots of Hinduism go back as far as 3,000 B.C., when Dravidians invaded India and established themselves in the Indus River Valley.

Their civilization was conquered about 1,500 B.C. by other invaders from Asia Minor and Iran, who added their own religions to the polytheism and naturism practiced there at the time.

The invader's language was *Veda*, but this eventually changed to *Sanskrit*, which became the sacred language in which their religious literature was eventually written, after many centuries of oral tradition.

The earliest Hindu scriptures are known as the *Vedas*, a collection of mantras, prayers, rituals and incantations, still practiced today. After that, other treatises were preserved to writing. These are known as the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is now considered Hinduism's most sacred book.

Over the centuries, the Hindu faith has also incorporated an incredible mixture of philosophical and religious ideas, accommodating millions of gods! However, most Hindus believe in an overall absolute reality known as *Brahman*, a universal spirit of which everything is believed to be a part.

According to Hindu teaching, the part of the human being that is *brahman* is the soul, known as the *Atman*. The essence and ultimate goal of the Hindu religion is the merging of the human soul to the infinite, the merging of *atman* and *brahman*.

And how is that accomplished? Through one of the core doctrines that has persisted in most sects of Hinduism known as *Karma*. This is the moral law that decides the kind of rebirth, or reincarnation, a person will have in the future.

Fundamental to this process is *dharma*, the concept of what is the correct standard in everyday behaviour. Hindu believers aim to live as close as possible to the *dharma*, in the belief they will eventually break out of the cycle of *samsara*, the continuous cycle of birth and reincarnation.

Another requirement to reach this Nirvana state includes concentration on Brahman, a life of solitary meditation under the guidance of a guru or teacher, which also encompasses the discipline of yoga.

To sum up, the goal of Hinduism is unity with the universal spirit, which is achieved by reaching moral perfection through many reincarnations, meditations, and other disciplines, under the guidance of a Hindu guru.

As can be easily seen from our analysis, the line between the end goal of this Cult and Biblical Christianity is very thin. So how can we distinguish between the two? Jesus gives us the answer:

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon," the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her children.

(Matthew 11:18-20)

In other words, you can distinguish true Image Bearers of Christ from impostors posing as the real thing by the way they react to Godly Correction!