

LESSON 26

World Religions

Objective: To learn about other religions of the world so as to be prepared to approach others with the gospel of Christ.

Bible References: Gen. 4:3-5, 25-26, 10:6-10

Memory verses: *Romans 1:19-20 (NKJV)*

Because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Introduction:

What is the 'Great Commission' given by our Lord as recorded in Mark 16:15? We are commanded to preach the gospel to all nations in the world. Do you have the experience of visiting homes alone or with others to share the gospel with them? Have you seen the reaction of people belonging to other religions? Some people may question the idea of salvation through Christ. So, it will be useful to know their religious views to explain the message of salvation to them. The message of salvation through Christ may be hidden in the philosophy of certain religions. You must try to find out about the faith and beliefs of your neighbors. We should never keep any feeling of hatred to others on the basis of their religious beliefs. So, let us study briefly about other religions.

Main religions of India:

Religious beliefs are formed on the basis of hearing, reasoning and experience. In other words, religions are basically conclusions formed by intelligent man in his quest for finding God and pleasing Him to obtain His blessings. Although people who believe in Christ are usually referred to as belonging to Christian religion, Christ did not establish any religion. The word 'religion' is not applicable to the way of Christ. Religions followed in India are Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Parsi and Jewish faiths.

Origin of religions in the world:

The beginning of gentile religions can be traced to ancient Babylon. After the Great Flood, Noah's children began to multiply. Although Noah brought up his children in the fear of God, people began to lose their faith in course of time. They built a city in the plains of Shinar and began building a tower reaching the heavens. As their intention to make a name for themselves and stay together in one place was contrary to His will, God confused their language and scattered them to different places (Gen. 11:1-9). Nimrod, the grandson of Noah was the leader who attempted the building project. Ancient history says that Nimrod founded the city of Babel and Babylonian religion. He was a mighty warrior (Gen. 10:8-10) and emperor of Babylon. He came to be known as incarnation of sun god and his image began to be worshipped. He was later killed by descendants of Them. His wife, Queen Semiramis took control of the kingdom and the religion. Her son Ninus was considered as Nimrod born again. People began worship of all three, Nimrod, Ninus and Semiramis. Excavations have found idols of Semiramis holding baby Ninus. Idol worship spread to various parts of the world. Gods and goddesses sprang up in different names: Semiramis, Ashtoreth, Artemis, Diana, Venus, Sybili, Seerus (all goddesses), Nimrod, Ninus, Baal, Thammus, Dagon, Baccus, Ossirus, Janus and Molek (all gods). The idols known at the time of Jesus on earth in the Roman empire, India and other nations are all variations of these gods and goddesses. Even Israel was attracted by these idols at various times. When Emperor Constantine and his followers embraced Christianity without experiencing real conversion in the beginning of the 4th century, idol worship spread into Christian groups also.

Some religions that came up afterwards have raised their voices against idol worship. But the influence of the Babylonian religion is still quite prevalent. The fall of Babylonian religion is described in Rev. 18. Read Rev. 18:4: "Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues"

Questions:

1. Which are the main religions in India?
2. What is a religion?
3. Where is the origin of the religions of the world?

4. How did the worship of Semiramis holding baby Ninus begin?
5. What are the other names of Semiramis?
6. What are the other names of Nimrod (Ninus)?
7. Quote the verse from Revelation asking people to come out of Babylonian religion.