

**WHO DO THEY SAY THAT HE IS?**  
**#5: Who Do the Hindus Say That He Is?**  
**July 22-24, 2006**

<sup>9</sup>We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. <sup>10</sup>Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. <sup>11</sup>And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

*1 John 5:9-12 TNIV*

Introduction: Examining what other religious groups profess about Jesus Christ can help us understand better what we believe about him. Hindus believe that they are almost hopelessly trapped in an endless cycle of despair from which they hope to be delivered someday. We know that we have hope through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

- I. The Basics of Hinduism
  - A. Hinduism has no known founder, consistent creedal expression, or accepted source of authority.
  - B. The word "Hindu" derives from the religion's ties to the Indus River region of modern Pakistan.
  - C. Hinduism can be historically traced to a convergence of an ancient Dravidian polytheistic fertility religion and a conquering Aryan Vedic polytheism.
  - D. Modern Hinduism is largely pantheistic, envisioning "God" as everything and everything as part of "God."
  - E. Though there is no single canon of scripture held sacred by Hindus, proponents of the faith look to the *Vedic* literature composed between 2000 and 700 BC for guidance, along with writings from about 500 BC that established *Varna*, a rigid Hindu caste system.
  - F. Hindu religion and culture is strictly separated into four "castes," each with many subcastes and social ranks, along with an undercaste of "untouchables."
  - G. The impersonal "God" of Hinduism is *Brahma*, or "Ultimate Reality," and all else is considered illusory. (the ruling caste of Hindu culture is called "Brahmin")
  - H. Although Hinduism is no "one thing," all forms subscribe to two central beliefs:
    1. Reincarnation, or the belief that the *atman* (a person's uncreated and eternal soul) is repeatedly recycled into the world in different forms, and
    2. *Karma* ("action") or continual merit and demerit

attaching to a person's soul according to how the possessor lives his or her life.

- I. The goal of Hinduism is the attainment of *moksha*, or liberation from the reincarnation cycle (*samsara*) and union with the eternal Brahma.
  - J. There are said to be three paths to *moksha*: (1) *dharma*, or works; (2) *inana*, or knowledge, and *bhakti*, or passionate devotion.
  - K. Most choose the path of devotion as primary, worshiping one or several of over 330 million gods, goddesses, or demigods, most often *Vishnu* or *Shiva*.
- II. Who Do They Say that Jesus Is?
    - A. According to most Hindu thinkers, Jesus was one avatar, or mortal incarnation, of some god, usually *Vishnu* (according to Hindus, there have been many).
    - B. Many prominent Hindus, like Mohandas K. Gandhi, have regarded Jesus as a great moral teacher.
    - C. Hinduism does not confess the existence of a personal God, or even an ultimate Creator, so it would be impossible for there to be a personal incarnation of God.
    - D. Most Hindu teachers regard the notion of Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection as abhorrent.
  - III. Who Do We Say That He Is?
    - A. Oddly enough, we agree with Hindus that Jesus was the incarnation of God.
    - B. But Christians profess that Jesus is the only incarnation of Creator God in human history (John 1:14, etc.).
    - C. We believe that life is not hopeless, but that the one life we have to live finds its only hope in Jesus Christ, his death, and his resurrection, which saves us from judgement.
    - D. We believe that there are not multiple ways to salvation, but only one:

[Jesus said,] "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me." *John 14:6*
    - E. We believe that sin is real, not an illusion, and that we are eternally delivered from separation with God by Jesus.

Conclusion: Hindus like to say that their God is bigger than Creator God, but "Brahma" and all of its iterations are really quite small. We believe that there is one, true, living God who loves us and provides the only way necessary for salvation. We rest in "the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13)