

Biblical Christianity vs. New Age/Spiritistic Theology and Philosophy—A Contrast

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GOD

- 1. Biblical Christianity**—AN infinite-personal Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 15:2; 2 Cor. 13:14).
New Age Theology & Philosophy—AN infinite – impersonal force. God may be considered a universal law, an impersonal principle, universal consciousness, or energy, etc.
- 2. Biblical Christianity**—ONLY one true God exists (Jn. 17:3).
New Age Theology & Philosophy—MANY gods exist.
- 3. Biblical Christianity**—GOD is Creator (Gen. 1:1).
New Age Theology & Philosophy—GOD is the creation.
- 4. Biblical Christianity**—RELIGIOUS dualism (God as creator of the universe, material and spiritual) (Gen. 1:1; Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16-17).
New Age Theology & Philosophy—MONISM/pantheism (God as the essence and/or emanator of all existence).
- 5. Biblical Christianity**—GOD is holy and righteous (Ps. 11:3; 145:17).
New Age Theology & Philosophy—GOD is amoral and/or evil in his ultimate nature.
- 6. Biblical Christianity**—GOD is transcendent over creation and immanent within creation by his omnipresence.
New Age Theology & Philosophy—GOD is immanent, not transcendent.

MAN

- 1. Biblical Christianity**—MAN was created in God's image (Gen. 1:27), and as such is a finite creation who will never become God. (Isa. 43:10; Ezek. 28:1-2, 9)
New Age Theology & Philosophy—MAN in his true nature is fully one essence with God.
- 2. Biblical Christianity**—MAN is composed of spirit, mind and body (1 Thess. 5:23).
New Age Theology & Philosophy—INWARDLY in his true nature man is divine spirit only.
- 3. Biblical Christianity**—MAN was created innocent but is now morally fallen and evil in his true nature (Gen. 1:26-31; Rom. 3:23; 5:10-12).
New Age Theology & Philosophy—MAN is morally innocent or perfect and divine in his true nature.

4. **Biblical Christianity**—MAN was created innocent but is now morally fallen and evil in his true nature (Gen. 1:26-31; Rom. 3:23; 5:10-12).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—ALL men experience thousands to trillions of reincarnations of the soul into new bodies; some hold this begins with the initial process of organic evolution and extends into higher spiritual levels of being; heaven and hell are spiritually good or evil states of consciousness.

SIN

1. **Biblical Christianity**—A WILLFUL violation of God's moral law and character (1 Jn. 5:17).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—IGNORANCE of one's personal divinity and the consequences flowing from this.

2. **Biblical Christianity**—THE basic problem of mankind originates in his alienation from God produced through his morally fallen nature and rebellion against God (Isa. 59:2).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—THE major problem of mankind originates from his ignorance of his divinity and corresponding lack of use of his divine potential.

JESUS CHRIST

1. **Biblical Christianity**—THE only incarnation of God, (Jn. 3:16, 18) undiminished deity and full humanity in one person, the unique God-man (cf., Col. 2:9; Phil 2:5-9). Jesus was born the Christ (Lk. 2:11) and to deny that Jesus was born the Christ is to be "anti-christ" (1 Jn. 4:2-3).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—JESUS is often seen as one of many avatars or cyclical manifestations of the impersonal God or the gods, (just as in Hinduism Krishna incarnates Vishnu). The New Age also offers an endless number of gurus, enlightened masters, spirit guides, etc., all of whom claim to impart enlightenment but whose teachings, in the end, are contradictory and destructive to human welfare. Most New Age teachings and channeled revelations view all people as the literal sons of God. Thus, Jesus is only an example of a man who realized his divine nature and became enlightened; therefore through proper use of knowledge (*gnosis*) the man Jesus *became* the Christ (i.e., enlightened).

2. **Biblical Christianity**—JESUS rose from the dead on the third day, conquering death itself (1 Cor. 15:3-7) and is Lord of all and Savior of all who are His children. Jesus alone is the way to God (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Tim. 2:5-6).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—JESUS did not resurrect from the dead but reincarnated as a higher spiritual entity and therefore did not conquer death, since in his new manifestation he would logically die again. (Some hold he has now finished reincarnating and has merged into the impersonal Godhead; therefore the *person* of Jesus Christ is now obliterated.)

SALVATION

1. **Biblical Christianity**—MEN are saved from their sins only by personal faith or trust in Jesus Christ. Christ's death on the cross was a propitiatory atonement, i.e., it satisfied God's wrath against sin so that God could freely forgive those who trust His son (1 Jn. 2:2; Jn.

3:16). In other words, salvation is from moral guilt by grace through faith leading to victory over sin and death (Ephesians 2:8-9).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—SALVATION involves enlightenment, i.e., release from one's ignorance in thinking one is a limited creature and/or individual personality rather than one in nature with the impersonal God. Enlightenment occurs through occult practice and human works such as yoga, meditation, altered states of consciousness, etc. The stress is upon a change of consciousness, not faith and in obedience to Christ. Transformation and enlightenment are produced by a large number of techniques that can be applied to either mind-body and/or spirit— visualization, hypnosis, channeling, etc. No forgiveness from God is needed because sin is only ignorance, not a moral violation of God's law. Salvation is earned, not a free gift. Man will finally perfect himself; the atoning death and resurrection of Christ are irrelevant and unnecessary because no sin ever existed to be forgiven.

DEATH

1. Biblical Christianity—THERE is only one life prior to divine judgment (Heb. 9:27); physical death involves the separation of the spirit from the body; spiritual death involves the eternal separation of the spirit from God. Death is an abnormal and temporary condition of existence and was conquered by Jesus Christ on the cross (1 Cor. 15:53-57). Death is therefore no longer an enemy for the redeemed (1 Cor. 15:26).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—DEATH is an "illusion" and carries no final consequences. Although individuals may be subject to karmic repercussions in the next life, inevitably, all men (even if they have regressed into the animal, insect or microbial stage) will eventually reincarnate back into union with the impersonal, absolute God. Therefore, New Age philosophy teaches universalism, that all entities will finally be "saved." (See next section for a critique of reincarnation.)

FAITH

1. Biblical Christianity—FAITH is personal trust in God—in His mercy, wisdom, power and love; the goal of faith is to glorify God through one's trust in Him and is objectively realized in history (Heb. 11:3, passim).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—FAITH is power or knowledge/trust in the divine potential of human consciousness; the goal is to see man glorified and deified but this perception is primarily experienced in the subjective realm. Faith is trust in what one's divine mind can produce in the world, e.g., in the sense of creating personal reality and ushering in the New Age millennium.

2. Biblical Christianity—BASED on God's will and power, faith can lead to genuine supernatural miracles which are good by definition and glorify God (Heb. Ch. 11).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—FAITH, i.e., mental affirmation, visualization, occult knowledge, etc., can produce "miracles" (psychic powers) done at man's command through allegedly divine power but which are ultimately achieved through demonic power and associated with evil, glorifying the devil.

HISTORY

1. **Biblical Christianity**—LINEAR, providential, and real.

New Age Theology & Philosophy—CYCLICAL e.g., in Hinduism periodic, eternally recurring manifestations of Brahman; a result of its *maya/lila*, arbitrary, and unreal, i.e., a dream or illusion of the Absolute.

FINAL GOAL OF HISTORY AND CREATION

1. **Biblical Christianity**—THE rule of Jesus Christ over the earth and in eternity; eternal heaven for the redeemed in Christ (personal immortality) (Rev. Chs. 21-22).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—THE arrival of the New Age millennium, ultimate absorption into the impersonal Godhood (personal extinction).

2. **Biblical Christianity**—PERSONAL faith in Christ (involving regeneration, 2 Cor. 5:17-18) will result in some degree of transformation of society. However, a dramatically improved world will not arrive until Christ returns physically and rules during the millennium. A perfect universe will not exist until the eternal state arrives at the end of the millennium.

New Age Theology & Philosophy—BASED on a utopian view of the divine potential and powers of man, there will be a dramatic “leap in consciousness,” a fundamental *spiritual* evolution of mankind. This will be identified by mass conversions to New Age thinking, growing personal enlightenment and a religious, social and political unity that will transcend the individual, personal and nation-state differences which have created our current problems. Some hold this transformation will be gradual although many believe it will constitute a sudden massive shift in consciousness that will occur in a relatively short period of time, e.g., a few decades.

3. **Biblical Christianity**—IN the end, the problems of human suffering, pain and evil are permanently solved through Christ’s redemption (Rev. Chs. 21-22).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—BECAUSE history is cyclical and continues forever, the problem of evil and suffering are *never* resolved. There is no final forgiveness of sin, only an eternal balancing and re-manifestation of karma.

NATURE OF THE CREATION

1. **Biblical Christianity**—REAL, fallen, to be eternally redeemed in a new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1). Rational thought, doctrine, language, etc., are rooted in God and reality since they reflect the nature of God. Jesus Himself is described as “the Word made flesh” (Jn. 1:1-14, cf., Matt. 22:37; Rom. 3:2; 12:2; 14:5; Acts 17:11; Titus 2:1).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—AN illusion or dream of the Absolute (e.g., Brahman), periodically destroyed (reabsorbed back into the Absolute) and subsequently exuded from the Absolute as illusion (*maya*). Rational thought, language, doctrine, written revelation, etc., are inadequate and finally meaningless since they too are part of the illusion or *maya*. In fact, they are a positive barrier to the experience of spiritual enlightenment which is why they must be “transcended” or eliminated.

BASIS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE (EPISTEMOLOGY)

1. **Biblical Christianity**—DIVINE revelation in the Bible (2 Tim. 3:16).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—SOLIPSISTIC; internal, subjective, relative.

ETHICS

1. **Biblical Christianity**—ABSOLUTE; based on God's nature and Word (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—RELATIVE and amoral; based on human autonomy, situation ethics and occult revelations from the spirit world.

VIEW OF RELIGION

1. **Biblical Christianity**—ONLY one religion is fully true—biblical Christianity (This is a religious exclusivism, *not* religious bigotry or intolerance, since ideas are either true or false—not broad or narrow—Jn. 14:6, Acts 4:12).

New Age Theology & Philosophy—THE core teachings of all religions are the same and refer to the same God leading to the same end point (final absorption into the Absolute, Brahman, the One or the Void). (This is a religious eclecticism and syncretism that ends in pantheism.)