
“Come, Let Us Reason Together” About the Bible
What Is Salvation?
Bible Study Series

“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.” (Isaiah 1:18)

LESSON NINE — Is Salvation By or Through Any Other? (Part 1)

Estimated Reading Time: 20 minutes

In your journey through this series on salvation, you’ve already uncovered some vital truths. You began by asking, “What is salvation?” and discovered that it refers to being saved from sin and its eternal consequences, which is separation from God. You found that every accountable person has sinned and stands in need of this salvation (Romans 3:23), and without it, there is no hope (Romans 6:23).

You also learned why you need salvation. Sin separates you from God, and you cannot bridge that gap by yourself. You then saw that salvation is a gift of God’s mercy and grace, not something you can earn by good deeds (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8–9), but something you must receive in the way He has instructed. It begins with faith, a belief in God and His word, but that faith must be living and active, demonstrated in obedience and good works. James said it plainly: “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26). That’s not works of merit but works of obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ.

Lesson Eight established clearly that salvation is by and through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6). The apostles taught the same message, saying, “Nor is there salvation in any other...” (Acts 4:12). He is the one who died for your sins (Romans 5:8) and was raised from the dead by God, who declared Him to be both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).

But many throughout history have proposed other ways to salvation or enlightenment. They’ve followed the teachings of religious leaders other than Jesus. So, now this question is asked:

Is Salvation and Eternal Life By or Through Any Other?

Are there any other religious figures, teachers, or philosophers, past or present, through whom you can be saved and go to heaven or its spiritual equivalent?

In this lesson, you will examine some of these figures, explore what they taught about salvation and the afterlife, and compare those teachings to what the Bible reveals about heaven and eternal life. You’ll explore what others have said and compare that to what God has revealed in His inspired word.

Part 1 of this Lesson presents information about religious or spiritual leaders who lived in the **B.C.** period of time, which means **"Before Christ,"** commonly referred to now as **B.C.E.**, which stands for **"Before the Common Era."** Part 2 presents information about religious or spiritual leaders who lived in the **A.D.** period, which stands for **"Anno Domini,"** a Latin phrase meaning **"In the Year of the Lord."**

It refers to the years **after the birth of Jesus Christ**. This period of time is now commonly referred to as **CE**, the “**Common Era**”.

List of Religious (Spiritual) Leaders who lived in B.C. In Chronological Order

- 1. Zoroaster (Zarathustra) ~1500 – 1000 B.C.**
 - 2. Laozi (Lao Tzu) 6th or 4th century B.C.**
 - 3. Confucius (Kǒng Fūzǐ) 551 – 479 B.C.**
 - 4. Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama ~563 – 483 B.C.**
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1. Zoroaster, Founder of Zoroastrianism

Long before the rise of Islam, Buddhism, or Christianity, there lived a man whose spiritual vision would lay the foundation for one of the world’s oldest known monotheistic religions. This man was **Zoroaster**, also known as **Zarathustra**, the founder of **Zoroastrianism**. Though his name is not widely recognized today outside scholarly circles, his teachings once shaped powerful empires and deeply influenced later religious thought. But a crucial question remains for those seeking truth: *Do salvation and entry into heaven come through the teachings of Zoroaster?*

Who Was Zoroaster?

The historical figure known as Zoroaster is shrouded in mystery. Scholars generally agree that he lived somewhere between **1500 B.C. and 1000 B.C.**, though some traditions date him later, around **600 B.C.** He was most likely born in **Persia**, in the region that is now **Iran or northeastern Afghanistan**. Zoroaster’s exact birthplace and dates remain uncertain due to the limited and often legendary nature of the surviving sources.

Zoroaster is believed to have been a **priest** in an early form of Iranian polytheism (worship of more than one god), but over time he became disillusioned with the corruption and superstition he observed in the religious practices of his day. In a moment of spiritual awakening, he received a vision from **Ahura Mazda**, the supreme deity, who revealed to him a message of truth, justice, and monotheism.

How Many Followers Does He Have Today?

Once the dominant faith of the **Persian Empire**, Zoroastrianism has dramatically declined over the centuries. Today, it has an estimated **100,000 to 200,000 followers**, primarily concentrated in:

- **Iran**, where the religion originated, though it has faced persecution.
- **India**, particularly among the **Parsis**, descendants of Persian Zoroastrians who fled Islamic conquest.
- Small communities in **North America, Europe, and Central Asia**.

Though small in number, Zoroastrians maintain strong cultural and religious traditions and continue to preserve their ancient heritage.

What Were His Teachings About Salvation and Heaven?

Zoroaster's teachings, recorded in the **Avesta** (the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism), introduced a **dualistic worldview** centered on the cosmic struggle between **Ahura Mazda** (the wise and good creator) and **Angra Mainyu** (also called Ahriman, the destructive spirit of evil). Humanity, Zoroaster taught, has a critical role in this spiritual battle. Each person must choose between truth (*asha*) and falsehood (*druj*), good and evil.

Zoroastrianism emphasizes:

- **Moral responsibility** – Each person is accountable for their choices.
- **Free will** – Humans have the ability to choose between good and evil.
- **Judgment after death** – Upon death, a person's soul is judged at the **Chinvat Bridge** (the "bridge of judgment"). If their good deeds outweigh the bad, they cross safely into *the House of Song* (heaven); if not, they fall into *the House of Lies* (hell).
- **A final renovation** – In the end, the world will be purified by fire, evil will be destroyed, and all souls will be resurrected and judged again in a final reckoning.

Thus, salvation in Zoroastrianism is based on **moral behavior, truthful living, and faith in Ahura Mazda**, with an eventual hope for a restored world free of evil.

Do Salvation and Entry into Heaven Come Through the Teachings of Zoroaster?

Zoroaster's teachings, though emphasizing morality and judgment, **do not provide the way of salvation as revealed in the Bible**. His religion presents a noble ethical system and a vision of cosmic justice, but it is **devoid of the gospel message**. There is no Savior, no atonement for sin, and no relationship with the personal, living God revealed in Scripture.

Key Biblical Teachings:

📖 ***"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"*** (John 14:6)

📖 ***"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*** (Acts 4:12)

📖 ***"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*** (Romans 3:23)

📖 ***"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."*** (1 John 5:11–12)

While Zoroastrianism teaches that righteousness may outweigh wickedness, Scripture teaches that **even you best deeds cannot erase the guilt of sin** (Isaiah 64:6). Humanity's only hope lies in the atoning sacrifice of **Jesus Christ**, who bore the punishment for sin and offers forgiveness and eternal life through faith.

While Zoroaster believed in divine judgment and the eventual triumph of good, he **did not teach about a savior**, nor did he reveal a redemptive plan of. Therefore, **Zoroastrianism does not lead to eternal salvation**.

A Moral Vision, But Not the True Way

Zoroaster was a pioneering religious thinker, and his teachings on good and evil, judgment, and the hope of a renewed world were remarkably ahead of their time. He encouraged personal responsibility, truthfulness, and devotion to the divine. His influence even echoes in later religions and philosophies.

Yet, **Zoroastrianism cannot provide salvation**, because it lacks the essential truth of the gospel, that **Jesus Christ is the Son of God**, the only mediator between God and man. The Bible is clear that **no one comes to the Father except through Him** (John 14:6).

Though Zoroaster sought truth and taught righteousness, **only Jesus offers eternal life**, for He alone died for you sins, rose again, and reigns at the right hand of God.

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

In the end, **truth is not found in ancient wisdom alone**, but in the living Word, **Jesus Christ**, who is the **Way, the Truth, and the Life**.

2. Laozi, Founder of Taoism

Among the great sages of ancient China, few are as enigmatic or revered as **Laozi**, the founder of **Taoism** (also spelled Daoism). Often pictured as a wise old man riding an ox into the mountains, Laozi's legacy is one of poetic insight, mystical thought, and a deep reverence for the natural world. His teachings have guided millions in their pursuit of harmony, peace, and spiritual balance. Yet for those seeking eternal truth, a pressing question remains: *Do salvation and entry into heaven come through the teachings of Laozi?*

Who Was Laozi?

Laozi, whose name means “Old Master,” is a somewhat mysterious figure. He is traditionally believed to have lived in **the 6th century B.C.**, though some historians suggest he may have lived later, around **the 4th century B.C.**. According to legend, he was born in the state of **Chu**, in what is now **Henan Province**, China.

Laozi is said to have worked as an archivist in the imperial court, where he gained deep knowledge of history, ritual, and philosophy. Disheartened by the moral decline and political turmoil of his time, he

eventually left society behind. At the western border of China, he was asked by a gatekeeper to write down his wisdom before departing. In response, he composed a short but profound book called the **Tao Te Ching**, translated as *The Book of the Way and Its Virtue*. This text became the foundational scripture of **Taoism**.

Although the historical details of Laozi's life remain uncertain, his impact on Chinese thought and spirituality is indisputable.

How Many Followers Does He Have Today?

Taoism, as both a philosophy and religion, has tens of millions of followers, though numbers vary depending on how Taoist identity is defined. Estimates suggest:

- Around **12 to 20 million people** identify formally with Taoism as a religion.
- However, **hundreds of millions**, especially in **China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Singapore**, are culturally influenced by Taoist philosophy and practices, often blending it with **Confucianism, Buddhism**, and traditional folk beliefs.

Laozi's Tao Te Ching remains one of the most translated and studied spiritual texts in the world, influencing not only Chinese thought but also modern Western seekers of peace and simplicity.

What Were His Teachings About Salvation and Heaven?

Laozi's teachings center around the concept of the **Tao** (also spelled *Dao*), which means "the Way." The Tao is the **underlying, unchanging force** that flows through all life, nature, and the universe. It is not a personal god, but a mysterious, impersonal principle that governs everything.

The core values of Taoism include:

- **Living in harmony with the Tao** – Letting go of selfish ambition, pride, and conflict.
- **Wu wei** – "Non-action" or effortless action; acting in harmony with the natural flow of life rather than forcing outcomes.
- **Simplicity and humility** – Rejecting excess and embracing the natural order.
- **Compassion, moderation, and balance** – The Taoist ideal is peace with oneself and the world.

When it comes to **salvation and heaven**, the Tao Te Ching does not mention a personal God, sin, judgment, or a heaven and hell. Instead, Taoism focuses on **spiritual alignment, inner peace, and immortality**, which is interpreted more as unity with the Tao rather than conscious life after death.

In some branches of **religious Taoism**, which developed centuries after Laozi, concepts of gods, heaven (*Tian*), and even deified immortals were introduced. These forms of Taoism blended with folk religion and included rituals, alchemy, and ancestor worship. However, these elements were not part of Laozi's original teachings.

Do Salvation and Entry into Heaven Come Through the Teachings of Laozi?

While Laozi's teachings encourage harmony, humility, and spiritual mindfulness, **they do not provide the way to salvation as revealed in the Bible.** Taoism does not recognize:

- The reality of **sin against a holy God,**
- The need for **atonement or redemption,**
- The existence of a personal, loving Creator,
- Or the promise of **eternal life with God** in heaven.

What the Bible Teaches:

📖 ***“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”*** (John 14:6)

📖 ***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*** (Romans 3:23)

📖 ***“The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”*** (1 John 1:7)

📖 ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*** (Ephesians 2:8–9)

📖 ***“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*** (1 John 5:11–12)

According to the Bible, salvation is not achieved by aligning with a mystical force or adapting to the rhythms of nature. It comes through **faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ**, who died for you sins and rose again to offer **eternal life**. While Taoism seeks inner peace and spiritual balance, it **does not address the core problem of sin**, offer reconciliation with God or eternal life.

Laozi pointed his followers toward nature, simplicity, and mystery, but **not to the cross**, the only place where true forgiveness and eternal life are found.

A Path of Harmony, But Not the Way to Eternal Life

Laozi's wisdom has influenced generations with its quiet strength and deep reflection. His call to live humbly, in harmony with the natural world, continues to speak to those weary of chaos and conflict. The **Tao Te Ching** is poetic and powerful, but it is not the gospel.

Though Laozi taught a path of peace and balance, he did not point to the **true and living God**, nor to **Jesus Christ**, who alone can save the soul.

As Jesus Himself said:

“I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved...” (John 10:9)

Therefore, while the teachings of Laozi may bring temporary calm or practical wisdom, **only Christ provides eternal salvation and the promise of heaven.** Harmony with the universe may quiet the

mind, but only the **grace and mercy of God through faith in and obedience to the commandments of Jesus** will save the soul.

3. Confucius

In the vast expanse of world history, few names resonate with as much philosophical weight and cultural influence as Confucius. Born over 2,500 years ago, Confucius shaped not only Chinese civilization but also the moral framework of much of East Asia. His teachings offer guidance on ethics, relationships, and personal conduct. Yet, despite his profound influence, a critical question remains for those seeking eternal answers: *Do salvation and entry into heaven come through the teachings of Confucius?*

Who Was Confucius?

Confucius, known in Chinese as *Kǒng Fūzǐ* (Master Kong), was born in 551 B.C. in the state of Lu, in what is now Shandong Province, China. His birth name was Kong Qiu. Raised in a modest household, he lost his father at a young age, but developed a deep love for learning, particularly in the areas of history, ethics, and ritual.

He lived during the “Spring and Autumn Period” of Chinese history, a time marked by political fragmentation and moral decay. Observing the chaos around him, Confucius dedicated his life to teaching principles of integrity, justice, and harmony in the hope of restoring moral order to society.

How Many Followers Does Confucius Have Today?

Although Confucianism is not a religion in the traditional sense, its influence spans the globe. Today, an estimated **6 to 8 million people** formally identify with Confucianism, while **over a billion people**, particularly in China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam, are shaped by Confucian values embedded in their cultures. Concepts like respect for elders, education, duty, and social harmony trace directly back to Confucian principles.

What Was He Known For?

Confucius was primarily a teacher and philosopher. He never claimed to be a prophet, a miracle worker, or a divine figure. His goal was not to found a religion but to cultivate a society rooted in moral excellence and respectful relationships. He traveled across Chinese states, advising rulers and gathering a group of disciples who would later record his teachings in a book known as *The Analects*.

At the core of his philosophy were virtues like **filial piety (respect for parents and elders)**, **benevolence**, **righteousness**, **self-discipline**, and **propriety**. He emphasized the importance of becoming a *junzi*, or “superior person,” through study, moral refinement, and personal example. His teachings were practical, humanistic, and deeply focused on ethical living in the present world.

What Did He Teach About Salvation and Heaven?

Unlike religious founders who claimed to reveal divine truths about salvation or eternal life, **Confucius did not provide a path to salvation.** He made no definitive claims about life after death or the nature of heaven and hell. His references to *Heaven (Tiān)* describe it not as a personal God or an eternal dwelling place, but as a kind of moral order or guiding principle.

In *The Analects*, Confucius said:

“While you do not know life, how can you know about death?” (Analects 11:12), and,

“We do not yet know how to serve man; how can we know about serving spirits?” (Analects 11:11)


These statements reflect his reluctance to speculate on spiritual matters beyond human experience. His primary concern was with *this life*: how people treat one another, how they govern themselves, and how they cultivate moral virtue.


As such, Confucius’s teachings do not address the central spiritual questions that the Bible does: the problem of sin, the need for redemption, the existence of a holy God, or the promise of eternal life. There is no savior, no cross, and no call to faith in a divine Redeemer.

Do His Teachings Lead to Salvation and Heaven?


While Confucius promoted high moral standards, he did not teach about salvation or heaven. The Bible teaches that salvation and entrance into heaven are not achieved through human goodness or philosophy, but through faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ.

What the Bible Says:

 ***“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”*** (John 14:6)

 ***“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*** (Acts 4:12)

 ***“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*** (Romans 3:23)

 ***“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”*** (Ephesians 2:8–9)

In other words, **morality alone does not save.** No matter how noble or virtuous a person may be, Scripture teaches that **salvation comes only through Jesus Christ**, the Son of God, who died for the sins of the world and rose again to offer eternal life.

A Legacy of Wisdom, But Not Salvation

Confucius was undoubtedly a brilliant moral teacher and one of the greatest thinkers in history. His philosophy encouraged noble behavior, stable societies, and the cultivation of personal virtue. His legacy continues to influence millions to this day.

However, **Confucius did not teach about God nor provide a way to be reconciled with God**, nor did he claim to do so. He did not teach the way to salvation or the hope of heaven. From a biblical perspective, salvation is found *not* in moral teaching or self-cultivation, but in the **grace and mercy of God through faith in and obedience to the commandments of Jesus Christ**. Confucius taught people how to live well, but only **Jesus** offers the gift of eternal life.

4. Buddha - Siddhartha Gautama, Founder of Buddhism

Among the great spiritual teachers of history, Siddhartha Gautama, commonly known as the **Buddha**, stands as a towering figure. Revered by millions as the "Enlightened One," he founded a movement that has influenced thought, ethics, and religious practice across Asia and, increasingly, around the globe. His life story is both profound and compelling, but it also raises a vital question: *Do salvation and entry into heaven come through the teachings of the Buddha?*

Who Was Siddhartha Gautama?

Siddhartha Gautama was born around **563 B.C.** in **Lumbini**, in present-day **Nepal**, near the border of northern India. He was born into a royal family of the **Shakya clan** and was raised in luxury, shielded from the harsh realities of life by his father, who hoped he would become a great king. However, Siddhartha's life would take a different path.

According to tradition, in his late twenties, Siddhartha encountered what are known as the "Four Sights": an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a holy man. These sights awakened him to the realities of **suffering, aging, death**, and the possibility of **spiritual awakening**. Troubled by the impermanence and pain of life, he left behind his royal life, including his wife and child, and became a wandering ascetic in search of truth. An "**ascetic**" is a person who practices strict self-discipline and denies themselves physical comforts or pleasures, often for religious or spiritual reasons.

After years of extreme self-denial and meditation, Siddhartha attained what he called **enlightenment** (or *nirvana*) while meditating under the **Bodhi tree** in Bodh Gaya, India. From that point forward, he was known as the **Buddha**, meaning "the Awakened One." For the rest of his life, he taught others the path he had discovered, a way to escape suffering and attain spiritual peace.

How Many Followers Does He Have Today?

Buddhism has grown into one of the world's major religions. Today, it is estimated that there are **over 500 million Buddhists worldwide**, primarily in countries such as China, Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam. In the West, Buddhism has gained popularity as a philosophy of mindfulness, meditation, and inner peace.

Despite its diversity, all branches of Buddhism trace their roots to the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama and share a focus on escaping suffering and achieving inner peace through personal effort.

What Did the Buddha Teach About Salvation and Heaven?

The Buddha's teachings, known collectively as the **Dharma**, are centered not on worship or divine revelation but on **personal spiritual awakening**. He did not claim to be a god, nor did he promote the idea of a personal Creator God. Rather, he presented a philosophical and psychological path for overcoming suffering and achieving liberation.

At the heart of his message is the **Four Noble Truths**:

1. **Life is suffering** (*dukkha*).
2. **Suffering is caused by desire** (*tanha*).
3. **There is a way to end suffering**.
4. **The way is the Noble Eightfold Path**, which includes right understanding, right action, right speech, right livelihood, and right mindfulness.

The ultimate goal in Buddhism is **nirvana**, a state of liberation from the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*) and suffering. Nirvana is not described as “heaven” in a personal or relational sense, but rather as the cessation of individual consciousness and detachment from all worldly attachments. It is a **state of non-being**, not a place of eternal fellowship with God.

While various schools of Buddhism have developed over time, such as Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, none of them teach salvation in the biblical sense. There is **no concept of sin against a holy God**, no Savior, and no promise of eternal life. Instead, Buddhism offers a **self-directed path of discipline and meditation**, aiming for self-enlightenment and eventual release from the cycle of reincarnation.

Do Salvation and Entry into Heaven Come Through the Teachings of the Buddha?

While the Buddha’s teachings promote self-discipline, compassion, and detachment from materialism, **they do not provide the way to salvation or eternal life**. Buddhism denies the existence of a personal Creator God and rejects the need for divine grace or atonement for sin. It offers a human-centered path of self-effort rather than a God-centered relationship through faith.

What the Bible Says :

☐ **“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”** (John 14:6)

☐ **“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”** (Acts 4:12)

☐ **“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”** (Romans 6:23)

☐ **“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.”** (Hebrews 9:27)

These scriptures make clear that **salvation is not earned through meditation or personal enlightenment**. It is a **gift of God through faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ**. The Bible teaches

that all have sinned (Romans 3:23), and that forgiveness and eternal life come only through Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection.

While Buddhism encourages moral conduct, the Bible teaches that no amount of human righteousness can remove the guilt of sin or open the gates of heaven. Only through the blood of Christ can a person be cleansed and reconciled to God (Ephesians 1:7).

A Life of Insight, But Not Salvation

Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, lived a remarkable life and left a deep spiritual legacy. He observed the human condition with clarity and offered a path aimed at inner peace and the end of suffering. His teachings have impacted millions and brought moral guidance to many societies.

However, **the way of the Buddha is not the way of salvation**. According to Scripture, eternal life is not achieved through enlightenment, detachment, or moral striving, but through **Jesus Christ**, who alone is the Savior of the world. Jesus did not come merely to show a path to peace. He is the way, the truth, and the life.

Thus, while the Buddha's philosophy may offer temporary relief from the burdens of life, **only Christ offers eternal life with God**.

What the Bible Teaches

➔ Jesus Is The Only Way to God

When Jesus spoke to His disciples, He made a claim that excludes every other path. In **John 14:6**, He declared:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

This is not a vague spiritual message. It's exclusive. Jesus did not say He was *one* way among many. He said He was **the way**. That directly refutes the idea in Buddhism that through personal effort, and following the Eightfold Path and accumulating good karma, one can attain a higher state of being or even liberation.

Buddha taught that salvation is a state of **Nirvana**, where desire and self are extinguished. But Jesus says salvation is a **relationship with the Father**, made possible through Him.

➔ There is One Mediator, Not Many Paths

The apostle Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 2:5**:

"For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."

There is no mention here of multiple spiritual leaders or teachers who can bridge the gap between God and mankind. Only **Jesus Christ**, crucified and risen, serves as that bridge. Buddhism, while offering moral and philosophical teachings, does not and cannot deal with the problem of sin, which separates us from God.

→ Salvation Is Not Earned

Another contrast lies in the nature of salvation itself. Buddhism teaches that people must work through many lifetimes, accumulating merit to escape suffering. But the Bible says:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us..."
—**Titus 3:5**

Mankind's salvation doesn't come from human effort or enlightenment. It comes from **God's mercy**, shown at the cross. **Ephesians 2:8–9** adds:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."

→ The Problem Is Sin, Not Just Suffering

Buddhism teaches that suffering arises from attachment and desire. But the Bible teaches that the **root of humanity's trouble is sin**, a moral rebellion against a holy God. **Romans 3:23** tells us:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Mankind doesn't just need to escape suffering. Mankind needs to be **forgiven** and **reconciled to God**. That's not something self-denial or meditation can achieve. It required the **shed blood of Jesus** on the cross.

→ There Is No Reincarnation, Only Judgment

Another key difference is the view of life after death. Buddhism teaches **reincarnation**, a continual cycle of rebirths. But the Bible says:

"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."—**Hebrews 9:27**

People do not return after to another life on earth. People will face God in **judgment**, and their eternal destiny is sealed by whether or not they have obeyed the gospel of Christ.

→ Eternal Life Is in Christ Alone

Jesus promised something that Buddha never could: **resurrection and eternal life**. In **John 11:25–26**, He told Martha:

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."

That's not symbolic or mystical. It's a promise of **bodily resurrection** and **eternal life** in the presence of God. Nirvana, in Buddhism, is a state of **non-existence**, the end of desire, the dissolution of self. But Jesus offers something far greater: **eternal life with a loving Father**.

➔ There is No Other Name

Finally, the apostles boldly proclaimed:

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

No Buddha. No prophet. No priest or philosophy can save us. Only Jesus can save.

Conclusion: Choose the Living Savior

Buddhism may offer discipline, calmness, and morality, but it offers **no Savior**, no **forgiveness of sins**, and no **eternal relationship with the one true God**. The Bible is clear: people are reconciled to God and saved from sin through Jesus Christ and Him alone.

As Paul wrote:

"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself... having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Colossians 1:19–20)

Questions to Confirm Understanding

Estimated time to answer the questions: 5 minutes. With scripture lookup: 15 minutes.

Read and answer the following set of questions about this lesson, and circle your answer: “True | False” or “Yes | No”. Look up the scriptures provided to confirm your answers. Then compare your answers with the Answer Key provided after these questions.

1. **True | False** Confucius taught moral behavior but never claimed to offer eternal life. (John 14:6)
2. **True | False** Buddha focused on enlightenment through self-denial, not salvation through a Savior. (Acts 4:12)
3. **True | False** Muhammad believed in one God but denied that Jesus is the Son of God. (1 John 2:22)
4. **True | False** Buddhism teaches reincarnation, which conflicts with biblical teaching. (Hebrews 9:27)
5. **True | False** Buddhism teaches the elimination of desire rather than forgiveness of sins. (Ephesians 1:7)
6. **True | False** Islam denies that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world. (1 Corinthians 15:3)
7. **True | False** Confucianism offers wisdom for life but no sacrifice for sin. (Hebrews 10:12)
8. **True | False** Muhammad taught salvation through works rather than grace. (Ephesians 2:8–9)

9. **True | False** Eastern religions often teach that truth is relative, unlike the absolute truth in Christ.
10. **True | False** Muhammad taught salvation through works rather than grace.
11. **True | False** Buddhism denies the existence of a personal Creator God. (Genesis 1:1)
12. **True | False** The idea that all religions lead to heaven is contradicted by Jesus' own words. (John 14:6)
13. **True | False** The Bible teaches that God does not share His glory with others. (Isaiah 42:8)
14. **True | False** Jesus said that no one comes to the Father except through Him. (John 14:6)
15. **True | False** There is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)
16. **True | False** Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. (1 Timothy 2:5)
17. **True | False** Salvation is received through obedient response to the gospel by hearing (Romans 10:17), believing (Mark 16:16), repenting (Acts 2:38), confessing Christ (Romans 10:9–10), and being baptized (Acts 22:16). (Romans 6:17–18)
18. **True | False** Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10)

Answer Key

Estimated time to read the answers: 10 minutes. With reflection and contemplation: 30 minutes.

1. Confucius taught moral behavior but never claimed to offer eternal life. — **True**
“Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” — John 14:6
 Confucius offered ethical guidance but did not claim to provide eternal salvation or access to God.
2. Buddha focused on enlightenment through self-denial, not salvation through a Savior. — **True**
“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” — Acts 4:12
 Buddha taught a self-directed path to enlightenment, not salvation through a divine Savior.
3. Muhammad believed in one God but denied that Jesus is the Son of God. — **True**
“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.” — 1 John 2:22
 Islam teaches that Jesus was a prophet but not divine, contradicting New Testament doctrine.
4. Buddaism teaches reincarnation, which conflicts with biblical teaching. — **True**
“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” — Hebrews 9:27
 Scripture teaches a single life followed by judgment, not reincarnation.
5. Buddhism teaches the elimination of desire rather than forgiveness of sins. — **True**
“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches

of His grace.” — Ephesians 1:7

The Bible emphasizes the need for forgiveness through Christ, not personal detachment from desire.

6. Islam denies that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world. — **True**
“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” — 1 Corinthians 15:3
Islam denies the crucifixion, which is central to Christian salvation.
7. Confucianism offers wisdom for life but no sacrifice for sin. — **True**
“But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.” — Hebrews 10:12
Only Jesus offers a once-for-all sacrifice for sin; Confucius did not address sin in this way.
8. Shintoism is based on nature worship, not the worship of the true God. — **True**
“Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator.” — Romans 1:25
Nature worship replaces the Creator with the created, which Scripture condemns.
9. Eastern religions often teach that truth is relative, unlike the absolute truth in Christ. — **True**
“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” — John 17:17
Jesus taught that truth is absolute and found in God's word, not in subjective paths.
10. Muhammad taught salvation through works rather than grace. — **True**
“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” — Ephesians 2:8–9
Islam emphasizes merit-based salvation, unlike the grace-based salvation in Christ.
11. Buddhism denies the existence of a personal Creator God. — **True**
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” — Genesis 1:1
The Bible begins with God as Creator, a belief denied in Buddhist philosophy.
12. The idea that all religions lead to heaven is contradicted by Jesus' own words. — **True**
“No one comes to the Father except through Me.” — John 14:6
Jesus explicitly states that He is the only way to God, refuting pluralistic beliefs.
13. The Bible teaches that God does not share His glory with others. — **True**
“I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another.” — Isaiah 42:8
God alone is to be glorified; He does not share divine honor with others.
14. Jesus said that no one comes to the Father except through Him. — **True**
“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” — John 14:6
Jesus claims exclusivity as the only way to God.
15. There is no other name under heaven by which you must be saved. — **True**
“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” — Acts 4:12
Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.

16. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. — **True**

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” — 1 Timothy 2:5

Jesus alone bridges the gap between humanity and God.

17. Salvation is received through obedient response to the gospel by hearing (Romans 10:17), believing (Mark 16:16), repenting (Acts 2:38), confessing Christ (Romans 10:9–10), and being baptized (Acts 22:16). — **True**

“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.” — Romans 6:17–18

Salvation results from obedient faith following the gospel pattern.

18. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. — **True**

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” — Luke 19:10

Jesus' mission was to rescue the spiritually lost.

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