

## QUESTION: WOULD YOU COMPARE BUDDHA WITH JESUS CHRIST? (20)

**BUDDHA AND JESUS WERE BOTH MEN.** The first person called Buddha (the enlightened one) was born in northern India around 568 B.C. He was born into the noble class and his family name was Gotama. His mother died while he was young, and he was raised by his aunt. He married his cousin when he was 19 years old. Gotama lived a protected and sheltered life in a walled palace. All he saw was happiness, riches, and good health until he left home at the age of 29. He then began to witness the suffering in others; sickness, poverty, and death. He seriously thought over the problems and meaning of life, seeking wisdom from traveling wise men from the Hindu Religion. When he first left home he had no intention of forsaking his home, but after he saw such suffering, he determined to renounce his home with all its comfort and luxury and seek the answer for the reason men suffer. The ancient tradition says he went back home, took a glimpse at his young son in his sleeping mother's arms, then fled into the darkness.

His meditations on suffering caused him to believe that all suffering was caused by a person's sin in the past. Because he came from Hindu beliefs, he believed that all people had lived in previous lives as people or animals. He believed that the suffering in this life was caused by evil in past lives. If a person would live a disciplined, good life, it would ease his suffering in the next life. The eventual goal for Buddha was this: you should live such a good life that you STOP coming back. You cease to exist, reach a state called NIRVANA and, therefore, cease suffering. Buddha lived the life of an ascetic, that is, he deprived himself of not only riches but also food and drink and other necessary things that help one keep his health. Of course, we will have much to say about the life of Jesus in future articles.

**THE CLAIMS OF BUDDHA AND JESUS.** Buddha never claimed to be "god", and he was not worshiped by others as a god while he was alive. He was a seeker of the truth about suffering and, therefore, a philosopher. Jesus, although human, claimed to be from heaven and claimed to be the only way for other men to reach God. He was worshiped while on the earth and did not refuse this worship. He claimed to be equal with God in heaven and sent by God to earth to be the savior of the world. Jesus claimed to have come down from heaven, therefore, he existed before his birth to Mary. Jesus was not an ascetic. He did not believe that punishing the body made you a better person. He taught that your body was the temple of God. It should be maintained in a healthy way so your spirit could energetically serve God.

**THE WRITINGS ABOUT BUDDHA AND JESUS.** The books written about Buddha were first composed 300 years after his death. Much of what is written in these books is considered myth and superstition since the writers were not eyewitnesses and lived so long after his life. The four books about Jesus in the Bible were written by eyewitnesses and those who knew the eyewitnesses. They were written within 35 years after his death. There were still many eyewitnesses alive so both followers and enemies could react to the truthfulness of what they wrote.

**NO ONE WROTE ABOUT BUDDHA BEFORE HIS BIRTH.** However, there are 39 books written between 1400 and 400 B.C. that tell about the coming of Jesus. These are the books now found in the part of the Bible called the Old Testament. These books have been described in lessons 1-

10. In coming lessons we will give the evidence that comes from these books. Their history and their prophecies all point to the coming of Jesus in the first century A.D. No other man in human history had his life story told before his birth.

## QUESTIONS:

1. When was Buddha born?
2. In what country?
3. At what age did he leave his wife and family to live a life of a philosopher?
4. The main question that Buddha tried to answer was why do people \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Though both Buddha and Jesus were men, which one also claimed to be from heaven?
6. How long after the death of Buddha before books were written recording his life?
7. How long after Christ were the books in the Bible written about him?
8. How many books were written about Buddha before his birth?
9. How many books were written about Jesus before his birth?