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with Dr. Frank Turek    **PODCAST**

## **World Religions in Seven Sentences with Dr. Doug Groothuis**

(December 6, 2024)

### **FRANK:**

Ladies and gentlemen, how much do you know about world religions? Could you sum up a world religion in a sentence, you know, from 30,000ft? Well, actually, there's a dynamic book, a short book, a very concise book that does this. It's called 'World Religions in Seven Sentences: A Small Introduction to a Vast Topic.' And it's written by my friend, Dr. Doug Groothuis, who has written a lot of great books.

In fact, you might know him if you're watching on the live stream or on the YouTube version of this podcast, his great book, 'Christian Apologetics', which is about 800 pages. For many years, Doug taught at Denver Seminary. He's recently moved on over to the Cornerstone University and Seminary, not far from Grand Rapids, Michigan. He's a Ph.D. as you know. He's written about 20 books.

This book I found very intriguing, 'World Religions in Seven Sentences'. He goes through atheism, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, and Islam in a very concise way. So, it's great to have Dr. Doug Groothuis back. Here he is, ladies and gentlemen, all the way from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Doug, how are you?

### **DOUG:**

Thank you. I don't think I've gotten applause like that before, so good job.

### **FRANK:**

Well, you well deserve it, sir. Not only for your Christian apologetics book, but this new book. Well, it's a few years old, but it's well worth reading now, 'World Religions in Seven Sentences.' Actually, this is a series. I know there's 'Philosophy in Seven Sentences', there's 'The New Testament in Seven Sentences', 'The Old Testament in Seven Sentences'. How did you get tasked to write this book?

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**DOUG:**

Well, I came up with the idea of trying to summarize systems of thought in sentences. I proposed the idea of 'Philosophy in Seven Sentences', and InterVarsity followed up with a number of other ones. And this is my second one in that series, 'World Religion in Seven Sentences.'

So, what I was thinking about back what 2016 was, there are a lot of books that came out about objects, like 'World History in Three Vases' or, you know, 'Art History in Two Paintings', things like that. Those are not actual titles. I thought, well, what do philosophers have to work with? Well, we don't have objects so much. We have ideas.

So, I liked the ring of seven sentences. And I thought of a way of introducing some of the core basic ideas of philosophy in seven sentences. And then I started proposing other books, and eventually they said, well, why don't we come back and do 'World Religion in Seven Sentences?'

And they've done New Testament, Old Testament, church history. I think they got it in the back here, Old Testament, New Testament philosophy, church history, and this new one, 'World Religions in Seven Sentences' that came out in 2023.

**FRANK:**

Now, why should Christians study these other world religions, Doug? What's the point of that for the Christian right?

**DOUG:**

I think two basic reasons. One is that we live in a pluralistic world in the United States. We have for a long time. It's getting more and more pluralistic. So, especially if you live in a metropolitan area, you will probably run into people who are Buddhists, and Hindus, and Muslims, and atheists.

I deal with atheism in the book as well. You might find a few Taoists, although not a lot of people identify as Taoists, but the ideas of Taoism are certainly out there. And of course, Jewish people, I cover that as well.

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And then secondly, I think that it helps us to know what our own worldview is by comparing our worldview to that of atheism and other religions. Francis Schaeffer used to say, contrast is the mother of clarity. And Os Guinness says that as well. I think that makes sense.

And there's also this idea from John Stuart Mill, who of course was not a Christian or an apologist. But he said basically, if you only know your own viewpoint and you don't test it against other viewpoints, you probably don't really possess your own viewpoint with a great deal of intellectual integrity.

So, when I was at Denver Seminary for 31 years, I designed and taught a course called Religious Pluralism. And we looked at the major religions of the world and developed what I called an apologetic theology to address the other world religions. So, you give a strong positive case for Christianity, as I do in my big 'Christian Apologetics' book, which also doubles as a doorstop or a weapon you can throw it at somebody.

And then also you look at the other worldviews, the other religions, and do some worldview critique according to various criteria. So, this is very much a primer. It's not a textbook. If people want a good textbook on non-Christian religions, I highly recommend Win Corduan's book 'Neighboring Faiths', which I used all three editions of it over these 30 years of teaching that's excellent.

If you want to go deeper into comparative religion philosophically, Harold Netland's books are excellent. His most recent one, or one of his most recent ones on that topic would be 'Christianity and Religious Diversity.' So, this is an introduction, but I think it's meaty. I think I'm incapable of insulting anyone's intelligence. So, I think it will be challenging as well as interesting, I hope.

**FRANK:**

Well, contrast is the mother of clarity. Is that the way you put it? I like that. My mentor, Dr. Norman Geisler, always used to say, if you really want to communicate to somebody, put it in a two-column chart. You know, here's what the Christians believe, here's what the Muslims believe. Right?

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That kind of thing. And that is sort of what's done here because you're aligning these world religions up against one another and against Christianity. Why don't we start with atheism? God is dead. That's the sentence that you have summarizing atheism. It comes from of course, Nietzsche. But some might say, Dr. Groothuis, atheism is not a religion. Why are you calling it a religion?

**DOUG:**

Yeah, you know, actually I don't think it is religion, but it is sometimes held with religious zeal in terms of those who are against all religion. The early work of the new atheist, 20 years ago, people like Sam Harris and Richard Dawkins, you might say it was kind of a religious attack on religion.

I agree with Win Corduan that one of the defining or the defining aspect of a worldview that makes it a religion is that there's some sense of the holy or the sacred. And atheism doesn't really have that unless they want to say somehow the universe is sacred, but it's not sacred because of anything transcendent.

So, I don't think that works. So, the reason I included it is that if atheism is true, then all religions are false. Now, there are some religions that don't teach the existence of a God, personal or impersonal, namely original Buddhism. But even in that worldview there's something transcendent or sacred, and that would be nirvana.

So, the idea is to escape the suffering of this world by quenching all craving and attaining nirvana. Nirvana is considered a non-natural or sacred state. So, even though Nietzsche had some respect for Buddhism, he didn't hold to the Buddhist metaphysic. He thought the universe is all that there is. There's no sacred dimension whatsoever.

We have to create our own value. We don't receive value from any transcendent source or transcendent being. And this also gave me a chance to write a little critique against Nietzsche. When I was a young man, 18, 19 years old, I got interested in philosophy in my first year of college and I was quite taken with Nietzsche.

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In fact, I would carry around my portable Nietzsche with me, sort of like a Bible, and read as much of it as I could. Now, by the grace of God, I became a Christian not long after that. But Nietzsche makes a good enemy, and he in fact, knew that. He thought that Christians could even in some way benefit from sparring with him. And Os Guinness agrees with that idea.

So, I've been teaching Nietzsche writing here and there about Nietzsche over the years, and I thought he, in some ways is the quintessential atheist. There have been atheist critiques of religion that are more cogent, but he is the most famous, I think, of all the atheists.

And largely because of this line, God is dead. It's a very arresting, odd sort of line. And of course, what he meant was not that God at once at one time was alive and then succumbed, but rather that God never existed, and people should realize the implications of there being no God.

So, I quote and draw from this parable of the madman, where the madman enters the marketplace and says, where is God? Where is God? And people laugh at him. And then he says, we have killed him. And by killing him, we've also killed any sense of objective value, or transcendence, or meaning. So, I think he understood the implications of atheism very, very well.

**FRANK:**

And there's an absolutely shocking quote from the book 'World Religions in Seven Sentences' regarding atheism. I'm going to ask Dr. Groothuis to unpack when we come back from the break. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist on the American Family Radio Network. Back in two.

Welcome back to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist with me, Frank Turek on the American Family Radio Network. My guest today, Dr. Doug Groothuis' Book, 'World Religions in Seven Sentences' is a small introduction to a vast topic, but it will help you get clarity on these different world religions out there.

And in the chapter on atheism, I was reading earlier today, Doug, you say this. I want you to unpack this because I think this is quite profound. And I think you would agree with Dr. Norman

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Geisler, who said that Nietzsche was the only true atheist in the sense that he admitted all the implications of atheism.

And here is one of the implications, and you state it quite clearly. You say this. While atheism is not a sufficient condition for massive injustice on a revolutionary scale, it is a necessary condition for it and makes it more likely. Unpack that for us.

**DOUG:**

Right. So, there's a lot of injustice that has been done in the world by false religions like Islam. And sadly, even misunderstood Christianity has done a lot of evil. But the reason why atheism unleashes the very worst in human beings on a mass and revolutionary scale is that it completely takes away the fear of God first.

And secondly, it denies that human beings have any intrinsic innate value. And then when you wed that to a revolutionary mentality, a philosophy like Marxism or any version of Marxism, you open up the floodgates for mass murder, state-sponsored executions, relocations. And then I have a quote after the quote that you read from Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who was one of the great prophets against Marxism and atheism.

So, atheists might behave themselves, you know, and they might, they often live off of the borrowed capital of Christianity, or stolen capital. If they really take Nietzsche seriously, and they should, or even someone like Max Stirner, who is another very consistent atheist and an outright nihilist, then there are no taboos.

Nothing is ultimately forbidden. And Nietzsche himself didn't believe in individual rights. He didn't think that humanity had any intrinsic value as a species. You create value. He hoped for a new kind of human he called an *Urbemensch* or a superman or an overman. And that person exploits anything he wants to, dominates any person or any country.

Now, you know, not everyone will have the kind of courage to engage in that kind of enacted nihilism, but some people do. Like Ted Bundy, for example, the serial killer. His worldview is atheistic and nihilistic, and he believed all values were artificially imposed by society. And he said he learned that in college.

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So, he said, I'm doing what a lot of atheists don't have the guts to do. And that is, I am taking my pleasure where I want it. And for him that included raping and killing numerous women. But you know, there's some evidence actually that Ted Bundy converted right before he died, so I hope so. But when he was an atheist nihilist, he put into practice a worldview with no fear of God, no moral absolutes, no intrinsic respect for human beings.

Now, I have no indication that Ted Bundy was a Marxist. But when this becomes a collective movement to eradicate the bourgeois and render them impossible, as Marx put it in the Communist Manifesto, then what do you see? You see, and I point this out in the book, 100 million people killed by their own civil governments in the 20th century under various forms of Marxism, whether that was Marxist Leninism in the USSR, or Maoist Marxism in China, or the version of Marxism in Cambodia with Pol Pot.

I mean, Pol Pot wins the evil game in terms of killing his own population. He may have exterminated 25 to 30% of his own population because they were considered counter revolutionary. And so, they had to be swept out of the way and rendered impossible in terms of numbers.

Mao Tse-Tung takes the cake. He killed, perhaps only God knows, perhaps 60 million of his own people during peacetime because they wouldn't go along with his Maoist Marxist program. So, no sense of individual rights, no sense of democracy of any kind, and no fear of God. It's hideous. Horrible.

**FRANK:**

You point out elsewhere in the book, Doug, that if just one argument for theism is true, of course atheism's false. And of course, one argument for theism is the moral argument. And we know that, say, torturing babies for fun is wrong with more certainty than we know that atheism is true.

So, why is it, do you think, that many people claim to be atheists? And you, by the way, you unpack that a lot more in the 'Christian Apologetics' book. But give us a sense of why do you think people are atheists today, generally?

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**DOUG:**

Well, I think there are a lot of reasons. Of course, I don't think there are any good, and sufficient reasons to be an atheist. So, you've got to look basically at bad philosophical arguments or psychological arguments. I think one argument that comes up a lot would be the problem of evil, that we cannot believe in an all good, all powerful God when there's so much evil in the world.

There are a lot of responses to that, but one very quick response is how do you determine what good, and evil is in a godless, meaningless universe? You can't. So, you're really relying on some absolute value of good and then evil being a defection from that or the opposition of that, but your own atheistic worldview, if all there is space, and time, and matter, and energy, and there's no purpose, there's no transcendence. You can't find a standard of good and evil.

Now, there's much more to say about that, but that's how you do it with negative apologetics. They make an attack, and you say you're presupposing something your own worldview does not allow for in order to attack a worldview that does allow for and give meaning to objective good and evil, and moreover, not just the identification of such, but a response to evil.

God Himself coming to earth to live and die and rise again from the dead, to empower us to be a force for good in the world through being forgiven of sin, being a new creature, and wanting to do good works across the board for the glory of God.

**FRANK:**

Ladies and gentlemen, Christianity is the answer to the problem of evil. If we hadn't sinned, Jesus wouldn't have had to add flesh to His deity, and come to earth, and die for us. But since we did, He came. And there is a solution to the problem of evil.

Doug, in the second chapter of 'World Religions in Seven Sentences', you talk about Judaism, and the sentences, I am who I am. Of course, Exodus 3:14, Moses in the burning bush. Kind of give us a sentence or two or a minute or two, I should say, on Judaism and what you cover in this chapter.

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**DOUG:**

Right. Well, first of all, you know, someone could look at this book and say, well, it's really tendentious because how can you select one sentence for each religion? I grant that. It's like looking through a window. And I think picking that sentence from Judaism is significant. I could have picked the Shema, obviously, but because it's at the metaphysical heart of Judaistic theism.

So, God reveals himself to Moses and Moses says, who are you? What is your name? And God says, I am who I am. And that's a sacred name for the Jews. And that idea of I am who I am is so rich because it means that the ultimate reality, the creator, the sustainer of the universe, the one who liberates his people, is a personal being, is a self-existent, personal, not an impersonal force, principle, consciousness, vibration, substrate.

That's pantheism. And I address pantheism in my chapter on Hinduism. Of course, pantheism is one strain of Hinduism. There are other strains. But I think that idea of God as a personal, liberating, transcendent being is fundamental to the history of the Jews, to the Old Testament. And then of course how the Hebrew Bible relates to the New Testament. And the saying I take for Christianity is where Jesus says famously in John 8:58, before Abraham was I am.

And He's harking back to that, and His audience knows it. And they try to stone Him because of that, because they think He is falsely claiming deity, when in fact He was truly claiming deity and establishing His connection with the Hebrew prophets, and Moses, and giving reason to believe in His identity as the Divine Messiah.

**FRANK:**

So, you cover Judaism in chapter two, and then when we get to chapter three, you're talking about probably something that most Americans know even less about, and that is Hinduism. And in the chapter, you point out that other than Judaism, which is really associated much with Israel, Hinduism is really associated with India.

And you even mentioned in a footnote that as of 2021, anyway, there were that the President of India was trying to make Hinduism the national religion to the point that it was creating trouble for Christians in India. Do you want to comment on that before we get into it?

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**DOUG:**

Yeah. The Prime Minister Modi is a Hindu nationalist. So, people think Christian nationalism is the only kind of nationalism out there. Now, there's actually Hindu nationalism and it's actually a lot more nasty. Maybe we do another show on Christian nationalism. But that has to be unpacked, right? But there is not a lot of religious freedom for non-Hindus in India. It is supposedly a secular civil government that allows for the freedom of religion.

But there's a lot of terrible persecution of Christians in India. And Hinduism is ancient in India. It's associated with India. Most Hindus are in India and most Indians are Hindu. But what I do in this book is I take a very worldview approach. So, I don't address so much ethnic questions or historical questions even, except to look at the history of the religion and try to isolate what its essential metaphysics and soteriology is.

You know, its view of being and then its view of what religious salvation is all about. And in that chapter, you know, having taught Hinduism for many, many years and studying it, I know there are a variety of schools of Hinduism. There's Bhakti Hinduism, which has a personal sense of God. They're even atheistic versions of Hinduism. They're dualistic versions of Hinduism.

But I think the view of Hinduism that has affected the west the most is pantheistic Hinduism, advocated by people like Shankaracharya, the ancient Hindu philosopher. And it comes over to the US in the 60's with people like Maharishi Mahas Yogi, the founder of Transcendental Meditation. And you also have various Hindu gurus like Swami Yogananda and so on.

So, when I did my work on the New Age many, many years ago, my first several books, I started to see that the New Age worldview was very much influenced by pantheistic Hinduism. So, I began to study it at that point. And so, I take this idea of pantheism, thou art that or you are that, as the main idea, that you are one with this universal God.

**FRANK:**

And you had a guru encounter we're going to cover right after the break. You're listening to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. We're back in two minutes. Ladies and gentlemen, what do you know about seven major world religions?

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What do you know about atheism, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity? I hope you know something about that and Islam. Well, this relatively new book by Dr. Doug Groothuis, 'World Religions in Seven Sentences' will help you know about it. We've been talking about atheism and Judaism.

Now we're talking a little bit about Hinduism. Before we get back to Dr. Groothuis, I want to mention that as we come up to the end of the year here, please consider donating to [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org) because everything we do depends on your donations. You know, we just had our eighth college event this past semester.

We go to colleges as you know, and present the evidence that Christianity is true. We take a lot of questions, we live stream everything, so we reach a lot more people off campus than even on. And we don't charge students a dime for any of that. Everything we do, you fund. Also, everything you see online, you fund.

And everything we're doing overseas now, we've created 13 foreign language websites, we've translated over 1700 videos. And I'll have an update for you with Kingdom AI. We're using AI to do this. We're trying to get this stuff out to the masses. So, I'll have an update for you on our progress and our goals for 2025 coming up. But 100% of what you give to CrossExamined, first of all, is tax deductible.

But secondly, 100% goes to ministry, 0% goes to buildings. We're completely virtual. We work out of our homes. We come to you; you don't come to us. So, go to [crossexamined.org](http://crossexamined.org) and click on donate. Thank you for helping us. All right, back to my friend, Dr. Douglas Groothuis.

We were talking about Hinduism, and I was reading in this chapter, Doug, in 'World Religions in Seven Sentences', when you were talking about Hinduism, you actually had a guru encounter when you were a young, young man. What happened there?

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**DOUG:**

Yeah, I did. And I was not enlightened through it. I was, I think about 18. And at that time, that would have been 1975, I was interested in Eastern religions largely through some of the music I was listening to, particularly Carlos Santana and John McLaughlin. They were influenced by a form of Hinduism and a particular guru named Sri Chin Moi.

And Chin Muy came amazingly to Anchorage, Alaska, where I lived at the time. And that's where I was born and raised. And he gave a public event, and I went to it with my short-lived girlfriend at the time, Heidi. And he came out in his flowing robes and uttered all these sayings, at best, aphorisms. I don't remember too many of them. One of them was, doubt is poison.

**FRANK:**

I doubt that. [Laughter]

**DOUG:**

Is that a universal thing? And what is going on? So, he uttered these statements, and he didn't really look at anyone. He's kind of in this strange state, maybe a trance or something. And one of the people there said, we are here to learn something.

We would really like to know what your teaching is. And he said, I have written many books. I have traveled the world. And then he started chanting and his eyes rolled back into his head. And this was spooky to me. I wasn't a Christian at the time. I had some Christian background from my family. I thought, first of all, why didn't he answer the question?

I was philosophical enough at 18 that I knew this was the dodge of all dodges. And it was spooky to me. And after a while, I couldn't even look at him. And my girlfriend at the time said I couldn't take my eyes off him. We broke up shortly after that for metaphysical reasons. But this is telling.

This is telling because pantheism teaches that the ultimate supreme reality is beyond words, and thought, and any rational communication. So, if you are to realize that yourself is one with the universal self, and the statement I took is from the Upanishads, you are that. You are the ultimate reality.

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That's not anything you can argue for because we're finite and limited. And this idea of an impersonal God is not the I am who I am certainly of Scripture, but it's an unlimited, supreme identity. But we are obviously not that because we are limited in our knowledge, in our power. We have physical bodies that get old. We die.

So, how could we possibly be one, be identified with the ultimate? Well, what you have to do to attain this supposedly, is meditate, and chant, and practice yoga, as it was originally intended, to be yoked with Brahman, to be yoked with the divine.

And I was just telling my class at Cornerstone University, I teach an Introduction to Philosophy class, and we're talking about the Hindu, well, basically the general pantheistic worldview yesterday. And I said, I've been studying this and writing about this for almost 50 years.

And Hinduism, or I was generally pantheism. Pantheism has absolutely nothing going for it intellectually. Nothing. And I remember studying this originally after I became a Christian, reading Jim Sire's chapter in his classic, 'The Universe Next Door: Basic Worldview Catalog' on Hinduism.'

It was called pantheistic monism, which is, you know, Hinduism can go into Buddhism and Taoism also, but there's a very important strain of Hinduism that's pantheistic. And also, I was a student for my master's degree of Keith Yandell, who is a powerful analytic philosopher of religion and other topics. And he really grilled us that this idea, it's called ineffability. And Geisler, of course, wrote on this as well.

He wrote on everything, obviously. But this idea that the ultimate reality is beyond words, beyond language, beyond concepts, beyond rationality, it's ineffable. And I want to say, well, if so, then shut up, sit in the corner, and keep meditating, because you have nothing to tell me, and you have no argument that could possibly support an idea that is so illogical and so counterintuitive. So that was my guru encounter before I became a Christian. But I knew something was up even then.

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**FRANK:**

Where did this belief system come from, Doug? Because you say in the front of the book or the front of this chapter, you say, unlike Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, Hinduism does not have a founding figure akin to Jesus, Muhammad, or Buddha. So, where did it come from?

**DOUG:**

Well, that's kind of a vexed academic question. I don't think anyone necessarily knows. You've got various Hindu scriptures like the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and so on, and they're not even consistent among each other. They teach different sorts of things about ultimate reality of the human condition.

Now, they do have things in common, and I mention that in the book. All Hinduism teaches karma, reincarnation, some form of liberation called Nirvana or satori. It has the caste system, so there are elements of all the different teachings that agree. But in terms of the ultimate metaphysics, the ultimate reality, there's disagreements.

There are stages of Hindu teaching over time. I isolated the pantheistic view, or what is sometimes called the non-dualistic view, not because it represents all of Hinduism, but because it has a big influence in the United States and in the West with New Age thinking. And I wrote a lot about that back in the 80's.

**FRANK:**

But Doug, are there any personal gods in Hinduism? And the reason I asked that question is because if karma is true and reincarnation is true, wouldn't you need a personal mind who knows all things to evaluate and of course be a moral standard, him or herself, in order to evaluate people on whether or not they were good or bad and then place them into the next life. You would need a mind to do that, wouldn't you? Do they have that kind of being in Hinduism?

**DOUG:**

Well, you know, if it's pantheistic Hinduism or non-dualism, they don't. There is no absolute mind or will that controls the world. So...

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**FRANK:**

So, how do they explain karma and reincarnation?

**DOUG:**

They can't. They can't. There's no basis for it. I wrote an article some years ago in the Christian Research Journal about that. It's a deep problem. And actually, I think I first got onto the problem from an atheist philosopher named Paul Edwards. He wrote a critique of karma and reincarnation, like about 30 years ago, and he raised this strictly logical problem that if you believe in karma and reincarnation, you need A), an evaluator of moral states, you need a personal being, and second, you need an administrator of karma.

That takes a very powerful, very knowledgeable being to enact all of this. And if your worldview is impersonal, there is no rational agent in charge of the universe, then the conjunction of karma and reincarnation with an impersonal ultimate is a contradiction. It can't work.

**FRANK:**

But do they have personal gods in Hinduism that could supposedly carry this out?

**DOUG:**

There are theistic versions of Hinduism that I think put a God in charge of the system. You've got certainly Krishna is considered an avatar in Hinduism who is worshiped as a personal being, but it's rather murky. So, the version that I'm dealing with, non-dualistic Hinduism, certainly doesn't have recourse to a personal being to evaluate or administer karma and reincarnation.

**FRANK:**

Now, what is the main difference between Hinduism and Buddhism? Because now you have a chapter on Buddhism and life is suffering is the sentence there. If you had to do the contrast we mentioned earlier, how would you contrast Hinduism and Buddhism?

**DOUG:**

Well, the key contrast is metaphysically that Buddhists reject the idea of substance. They reject the idea that there is some ultimate ground of being that we all participate in. So, it rejects the

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non-dualistic version of Hinduism. And then also it denies the canonical status of the Hindu scriptures.

So, Buddha did not respect or recognize the Vedas. And that's one necessary element of being a Hindu. You have to say the Vedas are sacred scriptures. He denied that and he also denied the caste system. And a lot of people don't know this, but karma, reincarnation, and the caste system are all integrated inseparably in Hinduism. So, if the caste system is critiqued, you've got to critique the whole metaphysic of Hinduism.

**FRANK:**

Explain the caste system for our viewers.

**DOUG:**

Yeah, various castes, and this is social status, basically. So, you come to earth with your previous good or bad karma and that determines what level of caste you are. The highest is the Brahmin class or caste. And then there are even people that are considered outside of it entirely, which are called Dalits.

And they're not even considered human beings. In fact, I met an Indian man some years ago, and he was part of the delete group, or Dalit. And he said, my parents taught me I was not a human. Can you believe it?

**FRANK:**

Not a human being. Hold the thought, because we're going to come right back after the break. We're talking to Dr. Doug Groothuis. The book, 'World Religions in Seven Sentences'. This is a very concise treatment, a very valuable treatment of world religions. You should know something about these world religions. So, pick it up. And we're going to be back in just two minutes. Don't go anywhere.

Before I get back to my guest, Douglas Groothuis, you need to check out his website. He also has a podcast called Truth Tribe. Here's how you spell Doug's name, Douglas. And then Groothuis is G, R, O, O, T, H, U, I, S. We'll put it in the show notes as well.

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We'll put his website. But if you go to douglasgroothuis.com, you will find all this. He also teaches. Doug, you were at Denver Seminary for over 30 years. Now you're over at Cornerstone University and Seminary. What do you teach over there, by the way at Cornerstone?

**DOUG:**

Right. I teach philosophy, apologetics, and ethics, pretty much the same general things that I taught at Denver Seminary. What's new is I'm teaching a lot of undergraduates. We had no undergraduates at Denver Seminary. So, that's an interesting challenge. I'm 50 years older than most of them, so it can be challenging to get them excited about philosophy, but I think I'm having some success with that. I enjoy it.

**FRANK:**

Oh, yeah, absolutely. Now, we were talking just before the break about Buddhism, and you were discussing, well, actually, I'm trying to remember where we were now in our discussion. What were we talking about with Buddhism?

**DOUG:**

Well, I mentioned that Buddhism differs from Hinduism, and it rejects the caste system.

**FRANK:**

Yeah.

**DOUG:**

And it rejects the Vedas.

**FRANK:**

You mentioned you had met somebody who was taught that he was not a human. So, go get that story started.

**DOUG:**

You got the various castes in Hinduism. I sometimes forget what they all are. I've got it in the book. But then there's also the belief...

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So, you've got Brahmins are the highest caste. Then you have Kasatras are the warriors. Visayas are the merchant class. The Sudras are the lowest caste and are manual laborers. And then outside the system are the Dalits or the Untouchables.

And I met this man who was taught by his own parents that he was subhuman. And he said when he heard the Gospel, he heard two things he had never thought of, and he immediately became a Christian. One, that you're made in the image and likeness of God, and secondly, that God loves you. He had never heard that. And as soon as he heard it, it clicked, and he knew that Christianity was true, and Hinduism was false.

**FRANK:**

Yeah, ladies and gentlemen, if you think there's a sort of a social class problem in America, you ain't seen nothing yet. Go to India, where people are supposedly born into these different social classes, and they can't get out of them.

Even if they're very low on the list, there's nothing they can do. They were just born that way. And I'm going to say something very politically incorrect. I've been known to say that, but it's echoing something C.S. Lewis said that horrible countries have horrible religions.

Ladies and gentlemen, nothing against folks here who are from India, but would you rather live in America, or would you rather live in India? Let me just ask you that question. And, and why is that, Doug? Why is there such a stark difference in the sort of prosperity we have here in America and the poverty we have in India?

**DOUG:**

Well, a lot of it is traceable to the influence of Hinduism and the caste system. You just have to be honest about that. So, in America, for all of our faults, we have the Declaration of Independence that says that all men are created equal and have been given certain inalienable rights. It's a theistic basis to our civil government, of course, it was not well heeded given the history of slavery and other forms of racism in the United States.

But you've got that essential metaphysical foundation and framework in the Declaration that all men are created equal and have certain inalienable rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of

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happiness. You know, one thing, I don't have this in the book. I think it happened after I finished the manuscript. But you remember Vivek Ramaswamy who ran for President? My friend Doug Geivett said, you've got to write an article on something, Vivek said. And he gave me a link.

You know, Doug, he's a great Christian philosopher and apologist. And I saw this link and Vivek was asked about his religious views and he's a self-admitted Hindu. And that's fine. You can be a Hindu in the United States, but you can't be logically inconsistent without me calling you out.

So, he said, no, I'm a Hindu. I'm a devout Hindu. I did go to a Catholic school. But I believe all people are made in the image and likeness of God because I'm a Hindu. I thought, hold on, buddy. You are a Hindu, and you do not have that teaching in any version of Hinduism. You find that in exactly one religious text, the Bible. Islam does not teach it, at least not in the Quran. It's not essential.

It's actually kind of a dangerous idea in Islam because it puts the human too close to God. That's called shirk, the unforgivable sin. Apparently, some of the Hadith will say it, but it's not in the Quran. It doesn't seem to fit that worldview at all. And Hinduism has the caste system. There's no sense of being made in the image and likeness of God. Now, if you're a non-dualistic Hindu, you think that ultimately you are God, but that's a mistake as well because you're a creature and you're a sinner, you're not divine.

**FRANK:**

Yeah. By the way, ladies and gentlemen, when we say that horrible countries have horrible religions, we're not suggesting that people here in America are any better than the people in India. Exactly the opposite. What we're saying is that the worldview that says that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights makes us all equal, no matter where we live. The problem is, if you believe in a caste system that people aren't created equal, you get the kind of outcome you see in India.

**DOUG:**

Yeah. And through western influence, the caste system has been ameliorated to some extent. But you've got this problem of an ancient religion teaching the caste system and trying to reform that is extremely difficult. And the only way to reform it ultimately would be to drop

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Hinduism. So, you know, we should pray and hope for the evangelism of many, many Hindus. I have, one of my students whose real goal is to bring apologetics to India.

And apparently, I don't know what your experience, Frank is. Apparently, there's not a lot of good apologetics in India available to Indian Christians or to reach into India. And supposedly, atheism has been growing in India. So, we're all sinners. We've all fallen short of the glory of God. We all need the grace of Christ.

But not every religion is equal and not every country is equally good or respectful of human rights. And you know, Jesus said, to whom much is given, much is required. So, we've been given a lot, a lot of freedom and possibilities in the United States, and we need to preserve them and use them to our utmost abilities to get out the Gospel and defend them.

**FRANK:**

Well, that's one of the reasons we're translating our best apologetic material into these languages, because we want people to have access to them over the internet, wherever they are. So, that's one of our projects that we've been working on for over a year now. It's very important.

And that's why, ladies and gentlemen, when you do give to CrossExamined, you're given to the, one of the projects is to translate into all these different languages, including languages spoken in India. Doug, you also have...

We just got a few minutes left. But of course, you have a chapter on Christianity, a chapter on Islam. Why don't we talk just briefly about Islam? And the sentence you have there is, there is one God and Muhammad is his prophet. Give us a couple of minutes on Islam.

**DOUG:**

Right. That's the confession of Islam. And if you say that sincerely, that is enough to make you a Muslim. A Muslim is someone who submits to Allah and is one of the three great historical monotheistic religions, of course, along with Judaism and Christianity. But whereas you can understand Judaism in relation to Christianity, Christianity is a fulfillment of Judaism.

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To put it very simply, you cannot understand Islam as a fulfillment of Christianity because it denies crucial Christian doctrines such as the Trinity, the incarnation, salvation through faith in Christ alone. It has a lot of very complimentary things to say about Jesus. That He was a prophet, that He was sinless, that He worked miracles.

But it denies that He actually died on the cross, which is a subtle fact of history. And of course, it denies that his death was our atoning sacrifice for sin. So, I have to look at this evidentially and say, let's consider the reliability of the New Testament, all the fulfilled prophecy from the Old Testament to the New Testament, singling out Jesus as Messiah.

You have that body of evidence. And I deal with that in some detail in my apologetics book. Now, over 500 years later, you have a man who goes into a cave and claims he's got a new revelation from God that denies the deity of Jesus, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, the Trinity, and the doctrine of salvation taught in the Bible. Why should I believe that?

You know, as Pascal said, I deal with this in my Pascal book, Muhammad is neither prophesied anywhere nor does he give prophecy, whereas Jesus is prophesied and he does give prophecy, which was fulfilled and will finally be fulfilled at the second Coming.

So, I want to say you claim to be a prophet, then show me the credentials of a prophet, and Muhammad fails. He's a false prophet. Now, if I said that publicly in Pakistan, I would be arrested. I might be imprisoned; I might be killed. But we have the freedom in the United States to say that.

**FRANK:**

You know, Doug, I never understood that Muhammad would say in the Quran, I don't do miracles. I just warn people there's one true God. Yet, the Hadith written 150-200 years later, try and attribute miracles to Muhammad. That seems contradictory to me. Am I missing something?

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**DOUG:**

I don't think so. I mean, this is what happens in religions. The original founders work no miracles like Buddha. And then hundreds of years later, you have the attribution of miracles as kind of a posthumous complement to the founder of your religion.

Whereas in Christianity, the miracles are in the earliest records, and they're integrated into the life and teaching of Jesus, such that if you try to take out the miracles, you completely destroy the whole story. But that's not true of Buddhism or Islam. And one of the things that uniquely accredits Jesus as Messiah, and Savior, and Lord, is His miracles.

And most significantly, obviously, the resurrection from the dead that Jesus called the grand miracle. You know, there's one religion based on the resurrection of its divine founder, and it's Christianity. It's not Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam.

**FRANK:**

Well, thanks for doing this book, Doug. Again, the book is called 'World Religions in Seven Sentences.' Also, you need to check out Doug's website. Douglas Groothuis, we'll have that in the show notes. And we're going to have Doug back on because this 'Christian Apologetics' book is a gold mine.

He also has a book on Pascal we can talk about. He has a book on lament, a very personal experience when Doug lost his wife a number of years ago. So, he's a wealth of resources. Check him out also at Cornerstone University. Doug, thanks so much, brother.

**DOUG:**

You're welcome. Appreciate it. Thank you.

**FRANK:**

All right, God bless, folks. See you here next week. Lord willing.

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