***The False Doctrine of Karma

RV87-02***

Worship in the throne room is our subject in Revelation 4:6-11. In John 8, we have an occasion recorded when Jesus was teaching in the temple area. Upon that occasion, the Lord Jesus Christ claimed to be the light of the world. He claimed to be the one who had come to enlighten mankind concerning eternal life. So, John 8 proceeds to lay out in detail, and specifically, the claims of Jesus Christ to be the light of the world and the one who has come to fulfill the messianic promises.

**The Claims of Jesus Christ**

The Pharisees, who stood by, rejected the claim of Jesus Christ that He was the promised Messiah Savior sent to Israel by God. So, in John 8:13, we read, "The Pharisees, therefore said unto Him, 'You bear witness of Yourself. Your witness is not true.'" They challenged the claims of Jesus Christ to be the light of the world and the Savior.

The teachings of Jesus Christ clearly contradicted the religious beliefs of the Pharisees. They sincerely believed that Jesus was wrong. But Jesus clearly declared that anyone who rejected Him would not possess eternal life, and they would not go to heaven. In John 8:24, we read, "I said, therefore, unto you that you shall die in your sins, for if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins." Here was a fantastic confrontation. A group of people were saying, "You're wrong,' and Jesus was saying, "I'm right. If you don't believe Me, you will end up forever in the lake of fire. There will be no hope of eternal life for you if you do not receive Me on My claims, and the evidence for My claims of being the Savior of mankind."

The Pharisees were ready to contradict all of this. There was a great deal, obviously, riding on this matter in terms of the Pharisees and what they believed. Some of the people who heard Jesus did believe His words, and were born again spiritually. John 8:30 says, "As He spoke these words, many believed on Him." To those who did believe, Jesus promised great spiritual freedom if they obeyed His teachings. John 8:31 says, "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on Him, 'If you continue in My word, then you are you My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The Pharisees were arrogantly confident that they knew the Bible. They had read it; they had studied it; and, they had a lot of religious experience. Furthermore, they were associated with elite groups of Judaism – of those who were considered authorities in the law. They knew the Bible, and they knew that Jesus Christ was wrong. There was no question in their mind. They refused to believe Him. Furthermore, they were so confident that they were the servants of truth that they were ready to take the life of Jesus Christ to silence Him.

In John 8:40, we read that Jesus said to these Pharisees, "But now you seek to kill Me; a man that told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This Abraham did not do." The Pharisees rejected the truth of Bible doctrine which Jesus taught, because they were guided by Satan, and not by God. The Lord infuriated them by pointing out this fact to them. In John 8:43, Jesus says, "Why do you not understand My speech? Even because you cannot hear My word." In other words, He was saying: "You cannot understand spiritual things:" "You are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father, you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks is a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. Because I tell you the truth, you believe Me not."

Then verse 47 says, "He that is of God, hear God's words. You, therefore, hear them not because you are not of God."

Well, the Pharisees here, in John 8, lost the golden opportunity to preserve their souls from the lake of fire. They lost their opportunity to escape the agony of hell forever because they thought that they had God's truth. They were confident they had it, but in fact, they did not. They did know a lot about the Old Testament Bible and its teachings. They refused, however, to consider what Jesus taught in terms of those Old Testament Scriptures, because they were certain that He was wrong. If they were indeed wise men, they would have said, "Now, we will consider what You say. We will consider it in terms of what Scripture teaches, and we will make a decision whether you are right or wrong." They made the foolish assumption that they could not be deceived by Satan.

**Noah**

The people of Noah's day did identically the same thing with the truth of God which was proclaimed to them by Noah, because while Noah was building the ark, he was also preaching to the people. No one listened to the real truth that Noah was preaching. No one had the good sense among them, any more than there had been among the Pharisees, to say, "Well, let's just put this in reserve. We think He's wrong. We don't think that this is true. But let's just set it aside for the moment, and listen further, and get a little better perspective, and get a little better picture, and see if things come into focus a little more. These people, in Noah's day, refused to reserve judgment, and they refused to hear Him out carefully to make sure.

All of this is because Satan makes people arrogant in their pride over their religious beliefs, particularly those that they've been reared in and have held for a long time. So, they reject a messenger of truth, and are open to a messenger of deceit. They will not listen to a messenger of truth any more than they would listen to the Lord Jesus. But they will listen to a messenger of deceit as they will listen to Satan, because he is their father. The people of Noah's day all lost their souls in the torment of hell forever, even though they heard God's truth. But they said it wasn't so.

Today, people are making the same terrible mistake of rejecting God's real truth, which would give them the freedom (the real freedom) that Jesus Christ promised forever; the freedom unto eternal life and unto rewards in heaven; the freedom to enjoy their Christianity; and, the freedom to enter into the grace of God now. Instead, people are enslaved to Satan's deceit and evil because they forget that only the truth of Bible doctrine, as Jesus indicated, would set them free. The arrogance of the sin nature smugly dismisses the very sources of information that proclaim God's real truth. And they listen to those who are shoveling out Satan's lies.

**Oral Roberts**

I read an interesting book that somebody gave me recently written by a man named Jerry Sholes. The title of it is Give Me That Prime-Time Religion. You would find it an informative and interesting book. Jerry Sholes was a TV writer and eventually associate producer over a 3-and-a-half year period for Oral Roberts and his TV programs. This book exposes the methods and the enormous wealth that Oral Roberts has used to secure that wealth via the deliberate method of a carnival con man. Oral Roberts is able to discover some desperate need that people have, and a desire that they have. Even though Mr. Roberts cannot fulfill that need, he gets up there and promises and pretends that he can fulfill it, providing that you will share with him as a partner in his ministry with your financial support. Oral Roberts is playing upon the misguided hopes and false beliefs of the charismatics who listen to him. People are fleeced by the millions in small $5 and $10 donations which are sent in, in return for the promise of a miracle from God through Oral Roberts. There was a time when you could buy a piece of cloth that had Oral's hand print on it for you to put on the aching portion of your body to be restored to health.

Out of a week's programing, 20,000 people will respond. 90% of those 20,000 people will send in an offering. Those offerings will run in a week from $60,000 to $90,000. Enormous sums of money are given by little people in small amounts, in the desperate hope that if they become part of Oral Roberts' ministry, their personal needs (very often physical needs) will be met. This is a fascinating book because it gives you the inside story of the con man's technique, and of the fact that he cannot heal people, and he does not heal. His son is now trying to take his place, and I recently heard that he has acquired the healing ability because he has claimed to have healed a woman's toe recently. So, as Jerry Sholes says, you have to start from the bottom up, so he seems to be on his way.

Yet, Oral Roberts fleeces millions of people, like in Jesus' day, and attacks anybody who attempts to point out the truth to them. In fact, Jerry Sholes points out that, on one occasion, Oral said that they needed more money for his City of Faith, and he was going to have to "find some thicker wool to fleece," using his very words as the technique that is used. They reject those who would say, "Wait a minute. You are being conned. You're being deceived."

Jerry Sholes was brutally beaten up on a Tulsa parking lot after this book was published. He was not robbed, but beaten up to the point where he required cosmetic facial surgery (plastic surgery). Oral Roberts makes fraudulent claims of communications from God and powers to heal. Oral Roberts says, "God has spoken to me 21 times." Yet, when somebody seeks to warn and say, "Be careful," his very life is put in danger.

I tuned in to Oral this morning to see what he was up to, and the program was slick, and it was all there. The carny man was really at his best. He had his son come out, and he sang a song that says, "You're going over, not under." That was the main theme line. Oral came on and said, "You know what? That's the very title of my sermon: 'I'm going over, not under.'" His son says, "Well, it's amazing. I'm glad the Lord brought it to us. Yes, he does communicate." And I thought, "Boy, you really have to have contempt for people to get up and say things like that, and think that they're not going to say, 'Who do you think you're kidding?'"

So the carny man then had this sermon about Jesus saying, "Let's go over to the other side." And the storm came, and He didn't say, "Go under. You're going over – not under." So he had that little play on words. But before he was through, he was saying, "And I know that you're going to go over, not under. I know you have needs. You had that blood need, and right now I'm praying for your blood – that your blood is going to course through your veins. It's going to go there strong and pure and wipe out all that corruption and all those things that have been hurting you. And I feel it. I feel it right now. I feel that blood moving through you and cleansing."

Then he says, "And I'm going to pray for your liver. I'm going to pray for that hip that hurts. I'm going to pray for that arm that hurts. He went through the anatomy, and finally said, I'm going to pray for your head," and I said, "That's a good thing to pray for, for them. I'll tell you for sure. That's where they need healing if any place." And I got fascinated. I ended up watching the whole program. I couldn't tear myself away, and I found myself writing down the address where to send in my offering at the end. I mean, this is a slick operation.

And yet, it's satanic to the core. It's a con operation. And Oral even slipped up on the program and said, "I know how you feel with your ills. I suffer from allergies." I said, 'What? You can heal others and suffer from allergies?" He realized what he had said. He said, "Well, I shouldn't say I suffer from allergies." I'm sure he was talking to me. It was weird. He said, "I shouldn't say that, but this is the flesh, and it is not real." And I said, "That's Eastern mysticism. That's Hinduism. That's that everything we see is illusion. It's not real. It's Maya." That's another doctrine. And I thought, "Isn't it interesting that when Satan speaks, out of his mouth (through his agents) always comes the doctrines of Eastern mysticism, and not of Christianity.

It is this same Oral Roberts, in order to do a better job of fleecing thicker wool because he was in such desperate straits to finance his City of Faith, whom I heard say, "If I don't complete this city, God has told me I'm going to lose my soul." What gross blasphemy! And how many poor, pathetic people with physical and other needs listen to a statement like that and believe that they could lose their eternal salvation once provided through their faith in Christ. It was in order to raise the funds to build this city (this great healing center), and all the other things that are attached to it, that he discovered his latest vision some months ago when he saw a 900-foot Jesus standing on the campus of Oral Roberts University, and who told him that it would be easy for him to provide this money. He said, "Jesus said, 'Look, I can hold this whole university,' and He lifted it up in His hands." And Oral said, "Yes, Lord, You can hold the whole place up, can't you?" And he used this again to fleece people with the idea of: "God is in this. This is what I should do. Send money to build this memorial to this man."

Yet, how confusing it is for the average Joe Christian when someone of the stature of Billy Graham is willing to come and act as dedicatory speaker at the dedication and opening of Oral Roberts University. The very fact that it was called Oral Roberts University should have been a clue to Billy Graham to steer clear. You have to have monumental, enormous arrogance to fleece little simple people of millions of dollars in small amounts to build an edifice that you call after yourself. Why not call it Grace University, or as charismatics like, Hallelujah University, or Praise God for His Gifts University – whatever you want. But when you name it after yourself, you really have to be a little thick in the head not to recognize that that has told you something very vital and enormously important about that individual, and you better start backpedaling in a hurry. It's an institution of white magic, and they played a little of that part of it this morning. They cut off to a little scene up in the hospital to show how the institution of white magic was working to get people healed.

My point is that what you cannot accept when God's word is taught should be wisely put on hold. I'm amazed how people come up to me vibrating sometimes because they've heard something taught. It is very often something that I know very well to be the truth. But they just haven't caught up to be able to know it. Instead of having the good sense to put it on hold, and put it on the back burner, and say, "Well, I'm going to let that continue for a while until I get a little more information perspective to be able to determine whether that is true or not true," they immediately take the Pharisaic position of rejecting it. What you can't accept when God's Word is taught should be put on hold, and accept what you can believe immediately.

**Eastern Mysticism**

The counterfeit doctrines of Eastern mysticism are amazing to a lot of people. Some people are finding it hard to believe that these things that we've been going through are indeed condemned by the Word of God. We have seen that, in these doctrines, God is not a person, but an impersonal force found in all life forms and material things. We have seen that the doctrines of demons teach that man is evolving upward where he eventually will become a god. We've seen that these doctrines of Eastern mysticism teach that man has no inherent old sin nature. So, there's no problem with God. These doctrines teach that religious beliefs are not based on the external authority of the Bible, but on the subjective authority of one's feelings. These doctrines include the fact that what one experiences is more important as a guide to spiritual truth than one's knowledge of Bible doctrine.

**Karma and Reincarnation**

We come now to what is perhaps the core of the doctrines of Eastern mysticism – these things that the Bible refers to as the doctrines of demons. Two of these doctrines are widely believed by Americans. Even if they don't exactly accept them, they believe that they are possibly true. These are the dual doctrines of karma and reincarnation. These lie at the heart of Eastern mysticism's system of salvation. If you understand these two doctrines, you will know what Satan has brought as the prime counterfeit for biblical justification by faith.

The law of karma is the law of cause and effect. It's the law of the universe that one reaps in one's life what he has sown in a previous lifespan. At physical death, a human soul is said to pass into a higher or lower life form as per the good or evil that one has sown in his lifetime. He may go into an animal or into a human form. At each new incarnation, a person is born with all his good and bad deeds accumulated up to that point – all of his good and bad karma. Bad karma effects are removed with good works and meditation in the following life. This is a process of spiritual evolution. So, all of one's life is explained in terms of one's own previous conduct in the past. All of the problems are being personally dealt with. What you are experiencing is the result of past karma. This, again, is an idea which is commonly believed by Americans, and it is subtly being taught in a variety of ways that have an impact upon us.

I discovered, as I thought about this, that the message of karma was in The Sound of Music. Remember the scene one evening when the captain has just told the baroness that he does not love her, and he must break their engagement. The captain then seeks out Maria in the gazebo (the little summerhouse) out in the garden. He astounds Maria by telling her that the baroness is packing to return to Vienna, and that he loves Maria, who is nothing but a governess. Maria, played by Julie Andrews, says, "Oh, can this be happening to me?" And the music comes up, and Maria begins to sing a little karma. Here are the words. You may remember the tune:

"Perhaps I had a wicked childhood.
Perhaps I had a miserable youth.
But somewhere in my miserable past,
There must have been a moment of truth.

"For here you are, standing there loving me,
Whether or not you should.
So, somewhere in my youth or childhood,
I must have done something good.

"Nothing comes from nothing.
Nothing ever could.
So, somewhere in my youth or childhood,
I must have done something good."

The karmic message is very clear here that her present past life (the very life that she is now in) is the life that has influenced what she is experiencing at that moment. Observe the likelihood, she says, that her past childhood and youth were wicked and miserable, meaning that she is not deserving, therefore, of the captain's affections – this great and important man. Perhaps I had a wicked childhood. Perhaps I had a miserable youth. But she says something has changed what she really should deserve. She observes that, in spite of early evils, there must have also been a moment of conduct compatible with truth, with the result that the captain loves her. But somewhere in my wicked past, there must have been a moment of truth. Somewhere there must have been a response to what is true. Her deserving good karma has him loving her, consequently, whether he should or not in terms of other factors. Here you are standing there loving me, whether or not you should. So, she concludes that our present good fortune and joy is to be attributed to the fact that, in her past, she must have done something good.

Maria further observes that nothing comes from nothing, so there must be a cause for her present bliss. And that cause, she indicates, is in her past karma. She reiterates that something causes the captain to love her, and that something was that she must have done something good enough in her past to merit such affection. It is very subtle. It is terrific melody. It is a beautiful scene out there in the gazebo, and the lights are low in the evening time. It's a very moving scene, but here's a message that's being rammed into your consciousness – that you receive on the basis of what you do.

There are certain implications of the doctrine of karma that should be observed. It assumes that all punishment for evil will be finite. All punishment will be limited. You can pay so much, and you can make the payment in full eventually. It is implied that there is no evil against God, against His Holiness, which demands a payment of infinite duration and intensity, which in fact no one can make. That's the subtle implication. Satan wants you to believe that for sure – that all punishment for your evil is a punishment within your capacity to pay. It is limited – limited responsibility. Satan's theme is limited liability relative to payment for sin.

The experiences in the present life result from karma built up in previous lives, and that previous life must also have resulted from karma acquired in a yet earlier life, and so endlessly on back. That raises the question: where did the first bad karma come from that required you to make restitution? It had to come from the impersonal deity of which we all are part. The Hindus call that Brahman. Star Wars calls that "the force." That first karma had to come from that universal, impersonal deity of which we all are a part. So, bad karma is logically built into the very essence of the universe, and it's inescapable. No matter where you come from, and no matter where you start, evil karma is there because the universe itself is evil.

**Forgiveness**

So, it is impossible to work out one's bad karma and arrive at Nirvana – that absorption into nothingness, where you have full godhood. It's impossible to escape the effects of karma, and it's impossible to work it out. For this reason, there is, in Eastern mysticism, no such thing as forgiveness for sin. There is no end to bad karma – only utter hopelessness. And if you talk to people who believe the doctrines of Eastern mysticism, forgiveness is something they never think about.

**Previous Lives**

Furthermore, another implication of karma doctrine is that whatever economic, social, or physical conditions a person is born into is due to his previous lifestyle. All suffering in these areas is due to evil actions related to these in a previous life. All good fortune of birth is also due to good actions in a previous life in these particular areas. So, karma enables a person to move on up, or on down, and its effects are inevitable. Whatever your situation is, you deserve it. The further implication is that you're going to have to suffer what you have brought upon yourself.

This has another implication. Belief in the doctrine of karma produces a callousness toward alleviating human suffering, because it would keep the person from paying for his evil in his previous life, and get a better incarnation next time. If you see some poor beggar starving to death on the streets of India, you don't help him. The reason he is suffering is because he deserves it from a previous life of what he has done. Maybe he was a rich man who refused to help somebody before who was in need of food. He must be able to work out that evil by suffering that himself. But if you go up and feed him and help him, then you've messed it all up, and he's got to come back in another life and do it all over again. You've kept him from being able to move on up.

That is why there has been such mercilessness in countries that follow Hinduism and the doctrines of Eastern mysticism. It is only when Christianity came in that these things were changed. It was the Christian missionaries that said, "Human misery and suffering should rightly be alleviated."

**The Caste System**

This idea of moving up to a better status in life next time is the doctrine which was used by the people who conquered the early people of India. The people who conquered, were called Aryans. Centuries ago, the Aryans conquered the native Indians; they took over the country; and, they created the caste system to control the natives. They told the natives that they should be satisfied to remain in their various castes. There are about four basic castes, going from the lowest level (the untouchables, even below the caste system), up to the highest, which are the Brahman, those who are ready to move on to godhood. They were told that if people would be satisfied to stay in their place, then when they died and came back in another body, they would be in a higher caste. The Indians believe, to this day, that if they accept their lot in life, and they build up good karma, they can progress upward in future lives to higher caste, and ultimately to godhood. The highest caste of the Hindus are the Brahmans, because they possess purity of Aryan blood by previous incarnations. The Hindus are taught that if they will take their karma, their blood will be purified until they come to the point where they have pure Aryan blood in them.

**Hitler**

It was from this doctrine of Hinduism that Hitler got his idea of the purity of the Aryan race, which he associated with the German people. Hinduism had an enormous effect on Hitler, and Hitler was a believer in karma and in reincarnation. The swastika, which was the symbol of Nazi Germany, was taken by Hitler directly from Hindu temples, where they are decorations as sacred occult symbols. Because Hitler believed in karma, he justified (and had no qualms of conscience about) murdering Jews, because he said that Jews were in this terrible place of suffering because of their past karma. They deserved to be killed. He was doing them a favor because after he killed them, they would have gone through such suffering, and they would have paid for so much evil, that when they are reincarnated, they will come back in a better life. So, Hitler saw the sufferings which he imposed upon the Jews as a favor to them. It was helping them to expiate their bad karma for a better life in the next incarnation. Hitler was not just coming out of nowhere, and you can see the seriousness of this beastly doctrine of karma that so many Americans are willing to accept and to attach their lives to.

Of course, the people who promote this, if they're going to talk to the West, have to talk to us in terms of the Bible. So, they love to point to a few verses (and I'll just touch on a couple of them) in order to prove this – that the Bible teaches the concept of karma. Galatians 6:7 is one that you probably have already thought of. It says, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." What you sow, you reap. The first part of verse 7 indicates that it is dealing with the fact that a person is accountable to a personal holy God. That's what it means when it says, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked." You're not going to kid God. You're not going to deceive Him. He is holy; He is personal; and, you will deal with him.

Verse 6 tells us what a person reaps: "For he that sows to his flesh shall, of the flesh, reap corruption." Corruption means that you will reap eternal death in the lake of fire: "But he that sows to the spirit shall, of the spirit, reap life everlasting." "Life everlasting" mean heaven. So, Galatians 6:7-8, by any normal interpretation, clearly does not teach that one reaps a higher or lower station in a subsequent life as the result of his karma – as the result of what he has sown. The Bible makes it very clear that the only thing you sow is unbelief in Jesus Christ, which once and for all, results in an eternal destiny to the lake of fire. The thing is over. It is to die once, and the consequences impose. It does not imply that you are now, in this life, experiencing what you have sown in a previous life. That is a distortion of what the apostle Paul was saying.

Another favorite verse is in John 9:2. You probably thought of this one too: "And His disciples asked him saying, 'Master, who did sin? This man, or his parents, that he was born blind.'" Here's a man who has congenital blindness – born blind. They want to know: what is this a punishment for? His sin, or his parents' sin? In John 9:3, Jesus says that it is not because of a previous sin: "Jesus answered, 'Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Jesus says that the blind man's condition did not stem from bad karma. It stemmed from the fact that he was born in such a way so that the glory of God could be demonstrated through him.

The Bible teaches that the wages of sin is eternal death, not a purgatory in the form of another chance to do better in another life. Romans 6:23 makes this very clear: "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The salvation which is offered in the Bible, and the merciless hopelessness of karmic law, are in complete opposition to one another.

What the Bible promises is, in fact, something totally different than the fact that you're going to come back to suffer again in another life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new." What the Bible promises is the fact that you are totally free from all previous moral guilt. You have nothing more to face in a future life. What is promised is a fresh start in life, and a certainty of entering heaven with ultimate personal sanctification.

The bad karma of man, which has separated us from God, and brought us into spiritual death, was carried by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, and removed forever. That is all the karma we have ever had to deal with. In 1 Peter 2:24 says of Jesus Christ: "Who His Ownself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes you were healed."

The point is that no amount of self-improvement will enable one to be born again spiritually and enter eternal life in heaven. No amount of working over your past bad conduct is going to make any difference. Isaiah 64:6 says that: "All those righteous acts are filthy rags in God's sight." Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "You're going to be saved by grace, apart from your works."

The problem that the Eastern mystics face with this whole concept of karma is stated in Romans 10:2-3: "For I bear them witness," Paul says, "that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." That's what the Eastern mystics have – a zeal for God, not according to knowledge: "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness (absolute righteousness – unattainable to a human being on his own), and going about to establish their own righteousness (relative righteousness, which is the only kind a human being can produce), have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Notice that Paul says, "The problem with Satan's religious systems and his followers is that they have an inadequate understanding of the holiness of God – being ignorant of God's righteousness. So, they proceed to think that they can produce God's righteousness by self-perfection, and they establish their own righteousness, which they think is equal to God's standards. They refuse, in fact, to submit themselves to God's authority." He says, "Not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God."

Eastern mysticism encourages hope in the very thing that the Bible condemns: self-exaltation, which is the basic sin of man.

**Asceticism**

The evil of the law of karma is shown by one other thing. 1 Timothy 4:3 says that the law of karma leads to asceticism. Asceticism is self-denial to pay for your evil actions and your evil thoughts in order to gain God's favor. Paul says, "Now the spirits speak expressly that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons; speaking lies and hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry; and, commanding to abstain from foods which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by them who believe and know the truth."

**They Believe that Matter is Inherently Evil**

Two kinds of asceticism are practiced by the believers in the doctrine of karma. One: matter is viewed by these people as being inherently evil – that only the mind has anything good. So, because the body is matter, it is inherently evil, and it is to be denied and punished to build up good karma. So, abstinence is practiced, Paul says, from marriage and from marital sex, because that involves the physical body.

This demonic deception is clearly refuted by the apostle Paul in Colossians 2:18, which reads, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in voluntary humility, and worshiping of angels, and intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." That is the arrogance of making this kind of a declaration concerning the human body. Then in Colossians 2:20-23, Paul says, "Wherefore, if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances? Do not touch; do not taste; do not handle; which are all that perish with the using (legalisms) after the commandments and doctrines of men. These things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh." Paul says, "Neglecting the body; punishing the body; and, abusing your physical body because you think that it's evil, and it should be punished, doesn't mean anything." But that's where you come to if you believe in karma. You believe that the body is that source of evil, and it should be, consequently, treated accordingly.

**They Forbid the Eating of Meat**

There's another factor of asceticism that's expressed in Eastern mysticism, and that is the forbidding of the eating of meat. A vegetarian diet is viewed as good karma, and all good Hindus are horrified at anybody who would eat meat. That is because if you eat meat, you run a good chance of eating your mother-in-law who has recently passed away, who may have been reincarnated in that particular piece of beef (or whatever form you think your mother would come back as) that you are eating. They think they are going to avoid eating someone who was reborn into that particular life form. That's bad karma, because what you have done is keep that person from being able to fulfill his karma. You've cut him short because you've killed him and eaten him. The Hindus just wipe out this concept, and they say, "We don't eat any meat because it's interfering with somebody's karma.

However, of course, 1 Timothy 4:3-4, again, refute this: "Commanding to abstain from foods which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by them who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good. Nothing is to be refused if it is to be received with thanksgiving;" that is, nothing that is not bad for you to eat in the first place.

In the West, this idea of vegetarianism is promoted for health reasons rather than for spiritual reasons, but it comes from the same basic idea. Whatever one may say concerning the validity of being a healthful procedure in the West, you can't come along and talk to people from Western civilization, and say, "You shouldn't eat meat because you might be eating one of your friends." It has to be approached in a different way, and that asceticism is interjected on this basis.

That is the first pillar of Satan's basic system of eternal life. Surveys have been taken of what Americans think about the law of karma and its associated law of reincarnation (which we'll look at in the next session). They have indicated that up to 60% of your fellow citizens believe that the concepts of karma and reincarnation are possibly true; and, many of them, without any question at all that they are true. That is what is in the mind of the person that you're going to come up to and speak to concerning Jesus Christ. This is Satan's subtle system, even with believers.

How many times have you heard Christians who say, "I am suffering this terrible thing in my life because of what I did so many years ago – that terrible evil." You ask them, "Have you confessed that evil?" They say, "Oh, yes, I've confessed it, but God is punishing me now for it." Do you know what you're saying? You're saying that you believe in the law of karma. You're saying that you don't believe that when the Bible says, "When God forgives sin, it is forgotten sin, and it is removed from any effect." And you are saying that you don't believe that 1 John 1:9 is true – that, "If you confess you're known sins, they will be forgiven." If they are forgiven, they have no further functioning upon your life, even if it's something that you have done that has long-range consequences. Those long-range consequences, in themselves, are not particularly pleasant. But those consequences are suddenly transformed from discipline to blessing. When the confession is made, even if consequences must continue in the nature of the evil (in the nature of the sin), that consequence now becomes a blessing to your personal spiritual development. It does not continue as discipline.

So, don't be so foolish to get your eyes off the power of the Spirit of God within you by thinking that something is taking place in your life that is the result of some past bad karma that you have been guilty of. Get your eyes upon the Word of God, and your ears sensitive to the message of the Word of God, and your spiritual life sensitive to the guiding of the Holy Spirit to lead you to a correction of the evil in your life, and to remove the consequences that you're suffering. God forgets sin when He forgives. He's not the way you and I are: "Oh, yeah, that was a terrible thing you did to me. It was at evil, and, yeah, I'll forgive you, but, I'll never forget it." We think we can say that, and be justified – that we forgive, but we're always going to remember it. The minute you say, "I remember it," you have not forgiven. The minute you bring up somebody's past ill treatment against you, you have demonstrated an unforgiving spirit. That, my friend, is really bad karma.

I would give that serious thought because God says that He comes down hard on the person who does not forgive, and that forgiveness is not dependent upon whether the person confesses to you and admits to you that they have mistreated you, or even asked for your forgiveness. It is a grace that you extend to them because you're such a terrible character yourself that you need that grace just as much as the person that you have mistreated. This doctrine of karma is a vicious doctrine. Intellectual, sophisticated people believe it sincerely, and build their lives upon it, and it takes them straight into the lake of fire.

Next time, we will look at the accompanying doctrine that goes with it, to complete Satan's plan of salvation, which millions of human beings today believe – the doctrine of reincarnation.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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