



Nepal

Lesson 5

Religion in Nepal

Lesson: The Hindu Religion

The Hindu people believe that certain animals like cows and rats are sacred, and they believe that when each creature dies (including humans), they are reincarnated (come alive again) into another creature. Hindus also believe that there are many thousands of different gods and each one represents one area of life on earth. Each person can choose a god or goddess to devote themselves to. For example, Ganesh (see picture) is a god that has the head of an elephant. If you worship him, he is supposed to help you overcome obstacles in your life and bring you success.

There are over 2500 temples in the area of Kathmandu. (The capital city) Each temple is built for individual worship (for one person to go inside and say a prayer or leave a gift for the statue, like flowers or fruit), and Hindu people are encouraged to visit a temple every day for a few minutes. Most Hindu homes also have a statue or a picture of a false god or goddess in a special shrine, where the people who live there can leave a gift, pray, and burn incense each day. Notice on the picture the small rat at the feet of this false god. Hindu people believe that Ganesh rode on a rat, which symbolizes his control over vanity and self-pride, This is why Hindus worship rats and consider it a crime to kill them.

- Do you think that this god is real?
- Do you think that he could help you with your problems?
- Do you think he has power to do something that you cannot do?

The Hindu people believe that there are hundreds (some say millions) of gods and they touch their pictures and statues and talk to them and hope that they can do something for them.

The Hindu religion is like all other religions in the world except Christianity because it teaches followers that they can earn salvation by doing good deeds. But the Bible tells us that we are not saved by what we do or don't do. Christianity is the only religion that reveals a loving God who loved us and sent His only Son to die for our sins and give salvation as a free gift of His grace.

When Jesus was on the earth, He told the people around Him that He was the only way, the only truth, and the only way to eternal life in heaven. (John 14:6) Jesus' followers wrote down His words, and after they saw Him die and come back to life, they wrote what they had seen and we can read what they wrote in our Bibles. Jesus was a true and real man who told us that He was also God. The people who love Jesus and believe in Him as their Savior from sin have the privilege of telling others about how Jesus lived, died, and rose again from the dead to be their Savior.

Some of the people in Nepal have learned about Jesus and discovered the emptiness of the Hindu beliefs. Some missionaries from the Himalayan Church of the Lutheran Confession of Nepal (HCLC-Nepal) have traveled to many places in Nepal and are teaching the Nepali people about Jesus.

In our next lesson, we will learn more about the history and work of the HCLC-Nepal.

