

“Did the OT Jews Expect a Divine Messiah?”

Did the Jews, prior to Jesus, expect the Messiah to be divine, i.e. God Himself? Everything I can find seems to indicate that they expected him to be divinely appointed, divinely empowered, with divine authority, with kingly authority and priestly authority but I don't see that necessarily the same as God Himself. Two passages could result in that expectation perhaps: Psalm 110:1 and Isa 7:14.

I was wondering this because of the people's response to Jesus, especially as He started to make clear His divine association with God the Father.

You ask a great question. It does not appear that the Jewish people anticipated a truly divine Messiah. Messiah means “anointed one” – and the Jewish people did see such people as being closely connected with God in some way (e.g. as a representative of God, empowered by His Spirit, etc.).

Over time, the Jewish concept of Messiah evolved to include a royal, prophetic, and priestly function. In the intertestamental period, particularly in the Psalms of Solomon, Messiah is regarded as a warrior-prince who would throw off the yoke of Rome and establish a Jewish kingdom. This is probably why Jesus is sometimes reluctant to identify himself as the Messiah in the Gospels.

However, when one reads the OT Messianic texts (like Ps. 110; etc.) in light of NT teachings, it becomes clear that it is quite possible to understand the OT conception of Messiah as being both human and divine. It may not have been clear to the OT Jewish people, but it does become clear in light of NT revelation. Indeed, I think Jesus makes this very point about Ps. 110 in Matt. 22:41-46.

Hope this helps a bit.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

“What Does It Mean to be Filled With the Spirit?”

I need some clarification! What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? I believe that it happens at the point of salvation, but many times in scripture it talks about people who are “full of the Spirit.” Is this filling a one time deal or something that can happen many times. I know that in Old Testament times the Spirit came and went upon certain people. But in our times (and since Pentecost), how would you explain this. Thanks so much for your time, wisdom, and ministry.

The best explanation I have seen (and which has worked for me experientially for many years) is that being filled with the Spirit means yielding to Him (the Holy Spirit) in full dependence so that we are out of the way and He can do His thing through us and in us. The verb tense in Ephesians 5:18 means “be continually being filled,” so it’s not a one-time event. It’s an ongoing discipline of submission.

I love the analogy of taking a hard, dried-up sponge and plunging it into a sink full of water. The sponge softens and soaks up the water until it is super-saturated. It is “filled with” water, right? But of course, a sponge can’t choose to jump into the sink like we can choose to open ourselves to the filling and empowering of the Holy Spirit. And this choice is

a matter of will, not of emotion; the difference between operating in the flesh (our own power apart from God) and being filled with the Spirit is a simple choice to ask, "Holy Spirit, please fill me" with a submissive, humble heart. It doesn't LOOK any different to someone else and it usually doesn't FEEL any different to us, but it's a real event. It can happen many times throughout the day. (I have shared this concept with my MOPS [Mothers of Preschoolers] group, and suggested they draw a line in the carpet with their shoe or draw an imaginary line across the kitchen floor, and step across the line to signify that they are moving from self-dependence to Christ-dependence and filling. One girl told me, "Sue, you should see my house! There are lines all OVER the place!")

The problem is that we default to the flesh; we keep gravitating toward doing things on our own and either rebelling against God or passively ignoring Him. We wake up "reset" to the flesh every morning. ☐ So we need to be filled again and again and again. Sort of like eating. We need to do it again and again and again! ☐

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"What Do You Say When People Call Christians Hypocrites?"

I was just wondering... when people call Christians hypocrites, what is a good response? Isn't everyone a hypocrite in one way or another? I mean, I TRY not to be one, but like all humans,

I mess up. Thankfully I am a Christian and have God's forgiveness. What is a quick reply that I can give people who accuse me of hypocrisy?

That is a tough accusation, for sure. Too bad it's so often accurate.

I would agree with the person that many Christians are indeed hypocrites, and it saddens God greatly. But you might remark that the church is supposed to be a hospital for sick people, not a museum for perfect people.

Sometimes, the "Christians are hypocrites" charge is nothing but a smokescreen, which is why I would ask if they have any personal experience with it, or if it's just something they've heard and they're using it to keep distance between themselves and Christians. Or, more accurately, between themselves and God.

If someone were to make that comment to me, I would respond with, "Is that something you've just heard, or have you had a personal experience with someone in a church who hurt you?" I'd try to find out the heart of the matter. Sometimes people just need for someone to know and acknowledge that they were hurt by a Christian who brought dishonor to the name of Christ, and they would appreciate a compassionate and regretful response. I have been able to say, "I am so sorry you had to experience that. So is God."

I would also ask, in humility, "Have I done anything to make you see hypocrisy in me that I need to ask forgiveness for?" And then be prepared to LISTEN to the answer!

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Is There Salvation After Death?”

I have a question that I hope you can help me with. I have a friend that believes that salvation can happen after physical death. He says that he believes that Christ is the way to the Father but that can happen after death. Is there any scripture that says that salvation, through believing in Jesus Christ, must happen before physical death?

Thanks for your question. Hebrews 9:27 states that it is appointed to man to die once and then the judgment. This indicates that after death, there is the judgment, and there is no mention of a second chance. In Jesus' parables of the kingdom, judgment follows after death. One example is Luke 16, Lazarus and the rich man. Immediately after they died, Lazarus was taken to Abraham's bosom and the rich man to hell. Even in hell the rich man saw that he was wrong and sorry for his sin but could not change his outcome. I am sure if he had a second chance, he would not have been there. Parables like these indicate there is no second chance. Finally, we are saved by faith. Faith is defined in Hebrews 11:1 as “the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Saving faith is exercised while on earth. When we are face to face with the Lord, we will no longer be exercising any kind of faith; we will see as 1 Corinthians states, “face to face.” So all scripture indicates judgment after death. The burden is on those who say there is a second chance after death. Where are the verses to uphold that view?

Thanks for your question. I hope this helps.

Patrick Zukeran
Probe Ministries

“How Is It Just for God to Put Our Sins on Jesus?”

How is it just for God to put someone's sins on Jesus, making them sinless? I have heard the analogy of a judge fining someone, and then paying the fine on their behalf; but sin is surely really, really bad, and no court would allow a judge to die instead of a criminal who had been given the death sentence.

After talking through the gospel with friends, this seems to be a big sticking point. How can a murderer seemingly get away with what he's done and go to heaven, while Johnny Average gets punished—solely on the basis of whether he accepts Jesus? It is loving on God's part to give everyone the chance of salvation, and it is just for him to punish unrepentant sinners, but how is it *just* for God to forgive a repentant sinner, who though repentant still sins?

I think you might be confusing “just” with “fair.”

Justice is about making sure that someone pays the penalty for a wrongdoing. Fairness is about treating people appropriately and right.

It is *just* for God to insist that someone pay the penalty for sin. It wasn't *fair* for Jesus to pay that penalty Himself, because that's about grace, not justice. Someone has said that justice is getting what we deserve, mercy is not getting what we deserve, and grace is getting what we don't deserve. I find those distinctions very helpful.

It is just for God to forgive a repentant sinner who continues to sin (that would be all of us!) because all of our sins,

those committed before salvation and all those committed after salvation, were all paid for at the cross. Maybe I can help with the “sticking point” with a very simple word picture: we are all standing at the bottom of the waterfall of God’s love and grace. Those who refuse to turn to God in trustful dependence, receiving His forgiveness and salvation, have their cups upside down and therefore can’t receive what God is pouring out on them. Those who have trusted Christ have turned their cups right side up, and can receive what God is offering.

One of the most amazing truths about the gospel is that our sins are transferred to Jesus, who paid for them at the cross, and His righteousness is transferred to us. It is the most absurdly unfair transaction in the history of all creation, but it’s true. Love does things like that.

Hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

Probe Ministries

“Why Did Jesus Have to Go to Hell After He Died?”

At a family picnic, my niece asked a very good question that had us all puzzled.

When reciting the Apostolic Creed, we say “...and suffered under Pontius Pilate...was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again and ascended into heaven.” My niece asked, “Why did Jesus have to go through hell too...what was the point of that? Didn’t Jesus

defy the devil right here on earth ... why did he have to go through hell upon death?"

I am embarrassed to have to write and ask you (and yes, I am even more embarrassed to go to my pastor and look him in the eye and ask him directly...because I feel I "should" know this answer. I guess I was sleeping somewhere along the line...I've been searching in my Bible and Bible commentary, but cannot find a "real" answer.) Thanks for your help!

Great question! There is still a lot of discussion about what that phrase meant to those who inserted it into the Creed, and what it means today.

First, we need to make a distinction between the Apostles' Creed and scripture. Scripture is inspired; the creed, while based on scripture, is not. Secondly, you may be surprised to learn (as was I) that the Apostles' Creed does not date back to the time of the apostles, but was a "work in progress," developing gradually from about A.D. 200 to 750. Before 650, the phrase "descended into hell" only appeared in one version of the creed, in 390, written by a man who understood it to mean simply that Christ was buried—He "descended into the grave." (Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, p. 174)

In defending this part of the creed, these scriptures have been offered:

*Acts 2:31 (KJV) He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that **his soul was not left in hell**, neither his flesh did see corruption.*

The problem is that the Greek word translated in the KJV "hell" is actually "Hades," which means "the place of the dead." The word that definitively refers to hell, "gehenna," isn't used here.

1 Pet 3:18-19 For Christ also died for sins once for all, the

*just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit; in which also He went and **made proclamation to the spirits now in prison...***

The context indicates that the “spirits in prison” may have been disobedient demons from Noah’s time, to whom Jesus went and made proclamation—what, we’re not told. The Greek word for preached means “proclaimed,” not evangelized. This may well indicate that He visited the demons in their holding cells after His death, but that’s not the same thing as experiencing hell after His death.

When we look at what the scripture says about where Jesus went after his death, what we see is:

1. He told the thief on the cross, “Today you will be with me in paradise.” After His death, Jesus knew He would be in heaven and see the repentant and newly converted thief there.
2. Some of His last words on the cross were, “It is finished.” He had already suffered hell—separation from his Father—while hanging on the cross. His work was over and so was the torment of being under the Father’s wrath and alienation.
3. Just before dying, He said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,” indicating that He expected the Father to receive Him when he died.

There is clearly a mystery here, in view of the 1 Peter passage, and I don’t think any of us will figure it out this side of heaven.

So, what I would say to your niece is, “Jesus didn’t have to go to hell, and He didn’t suffer anymore in hell (or any other place) after He died, but it seems that He visited it to make a point to the demons there.”

Hope this helps!

Sue Bohlin

© July 2003 Probe Ministries

“Is Cloning Inherently Evil?”

I have several questions about cloning.

1) I understand the dangers of cloning, which in themselves are enough to warrant banning the practice. But I'm trying to understand if there is there anything inherently evil or anti-biblical about cloning (for reproductive purposes). Is it simply a technology, comparable to in vitro fertilization, that could be used for good or evil, or is there something inherent in it that is against God's will? (Perhaps removing the nucleus of the original egg cell?...I just don't know)

2) I'm wondering about the biblical laws against sexual relations with a close relative (brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, etc. from Leviticus 18). Is it true that children born to parents who are close relatives are more likely to be deformed? And if so, is there a known reason this occurs genetically? And to relate that to cloning, is this possibly why clones are often deformed? I wonder if the deformations are a result of problems with the “process” or if there's a “built-in” reason that cloning will always, on the whole, fall short of sperm-and-egg conception?

3) How long would the cloned human embryo in November 2001 have lived in order to divide to six cells? Is that a matter of seconds, minutes, hours, days? I imagine it's very short but wondered how short.

You ask some good questions. Here are my brief responses.

Is there anything inherently evil or anti-biblical about cloning?

1. The only inherent evil in cloning that I see is the resulting devaluing of the individual, since you have brought this particular person into existence for a reason that is beyond simple reproduction in marriage. This places unrealistic expectations on the clone and tells them their value lies in those expectations and not on their intrinsic value as a human being. Some hold that the process itself is evil since it clearly deviates from the God-ordained union of sperm and egg. But that is also the case with identical twins. The second twin was the result of a budding process delayed from the initial union of sperm and egg, similar to cloning.

Is it true that children born to parents who are close relatives are more likely to be deformed? And if so, is there a known reason this occurs genetically?

2. Children resulting from incestuous relations do have a higher incidence of genetic deformities which is the reason for state laws forbidding them. All of us harbor harmful recessive genes in single copies that are not expressed because they are masked by normal dominant gene copies. Siblings and first cousins will share many of these same recessive genes because the genes came from the same parent or grandparent. But when close relatives have sexual relations and a child results, these shared family recessive genes can be paired in a homozygous condition which allows the recessive harmful gene to be expressed. Such children are not always born with these defects but the chances are much higher than normal.

But this probably has little to do with the problems faced by cloned embryos. Nobody really knows what is going wrong with the cloned embryos but my suspicion is that the process of removing the original nucleus in the egg and the subsequent

placement of the new nucleus in the egg cell disrupts the complex and intricate arrangement of important signal proteins in the egg cytoplasm and membrane. Rearrangement of this critical spatial orientation could put important proteins in the wrong places, meaning early development signals are missed or misplaced. This would have devastating consequences for the embryo. If this is the case, then at least current cloning techniques may never be able to escape the low success rates currently experienced.

How long would the cloned human embryo in November 2001 have lived in order to divide to six cells?

3. The cloned embryo which reached the six cell stage was probably no more than 3-4 days old when it stopped dividing.

Hope this helps.

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Why Did God Create the World Knowing Jesus Would Die?”

I would like to know why God would create the world, when He knew in advance that man would sin and Jesus would have to die. I know that God created the world for a relationship with us, and for His glory. It just seems awfully selfish for Him to create a world in which His own Son would have to suffer and die. Was it God the Son on the cross, or God the Father, too, through the Trinity? I have struggled with this question for so long.

You are correct in your observation that God knew, even prior to creating the world, that man would sin. The Father also planned to send His Son as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. As far as I know, the Bible does not explicitly tell us why God chose to create the world as He did. However, since the Bible does tell us that God is perfectly good and wise, I think we are safe in assuming that God had good and wise reasons for doing things this way. We can only speculate on what those reasons might have been. But ultimately, we have to rest in the morally perfect character of God, trusting in His goodness and wisdom.

However, I believe I would take exception with your statement, "It just seems awfully selfish for Him to create a world in which His own Son would have to suffer and die." Let me make a few observations and comments about this. First, God the Son was also involved in creation (John 1:1-3; etc.). Second, God the Son was a willing participant in the plan of redemption. The Father and Son do not will different things. They are in perfect agreement with one another. Third, I would argue that this is about the most UNselfish thing the Father could possibly do. The Father loves the Son. What could possibly be selfish about His freely giving His own Son as a redemptive sacrifice for the sins of the world? And the Bible is clear about His motive and reason for doing this. It was love (John 3:16).

Finally, it was God the Son incarnate as the Man Jesus who died on the cross. The Father did NOT die on the cross. Many people in our churches today are quite confused on this issue. One often hears prayers in which the person thanks the Father for dying on the cross. This is incorrect. The Son became incarnate and died for our sins, according to the will of His heavenly Father (which He certainly was in agreement with).

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

“If Jehovah Isn’t the Real Name of God, What Is?”

When the Bible was translated, the interpreter translated the name of God as “Jehovah.” My main question is, What was the original name of God? Because I read that his name was translated wrong, and that his real name is YAOHU. Is this true?

Thank you for writing. I will try to explain this to you with the following information:

God is referred to in the Bible by many names, but the primary three are:

Elohim

Translation: “God,” as in Genesis 1:1: “in the beginning God created...”

Yahweh

Translation: “Lord,” as in Psalm 23:1: “The Lord is my Shepherd...”

Adonai

Translation: “Ruler, Master, Lord,” as in Psalm 35:23: “my God (Elohim) and my Lord (Adonai).”

We need to understand the rendering of these three names of God as we find them in our Bibles today, whether in English, Spanish, and all other modern translations. But we must first understand some things about the development of the Hebrew language.

First of all, ancient Hebrew was distinctive, in that there were two traditions which were involved in the handing down of the Hebrew text as we know it today. One was written (Kethiv), and the other was oral, spoken (Qere).

Up until the Tenth Century A.D., all Hebrew written texts in existence and available (for study, worship) had one distinguishing feature: the text consisted of consonants only. In other words, there were no vowels! But since there was also an oral tradition, the Jews who spoke Hebrew knew what the vowels were and just supplied them as they read the text.

Examples in English: McDnlds=McDonalds; prkwy=parkway; frwy=freeway.

Around 906 A.D., a group of Hebrew scholars at Tiberias (on the Sea of Galilee) known as the Massoretes developed a system of little "dots" and "dashes" representing all of the vowel sounds. These were superimposed upon the written Hebrew text at that time. The Massoretes were concerned that the Hebrew language would be lost, as fewer and fewer people knew and spoke it. So these scholars took steps to make sure that all future generations of Jews would be able to speak the language accurately since they would now have a written record of the ancient vowel sounds. All of our modern Hebrew translations are based upon the work of the Massoretes.

Now let's look back at our three names of God.

The term *Elohim* has always meant "God," but is not germane to our discussion of your question.

The issue of *Jehovah* is derived from the other two primary names of God.

The term *Yahweh* is always translated by the word "Lord." But we must understand that every time a Rabbi or any Jew was reading any portion of the Old Testament and came upon this written word "YHWH", he orally said "Adonai," not "Yahweh."

The reason for this is that the Jews considered the written term YHWH so sacred that it should never be spoken or expressed with the lips.

That is the reason why, when they were reading (speaking) and came to "YHWH," they always substituted "Adonai" and spoke it instead. This has been practiced by the Jews back to Jesus' time, and long before.

Now, where does "Jehovah" come from? Well, what were the Massoretes to do when they were adding their vowel-system to the written Hebrew text and they came upon the word, "YHWH?" Since no Jew had ever heard or known the true pronunciation of this most sacred of names for the Hebrew God, they put there the identical vowel-pointings which are rendered for Adonai!

In reality, the Jews were just doing what they had always done: they spoke "Adonai" every time they read "YHWH" in the text.

The vowel sounds in Adonai are "OH" and "AH." Thus, "Yahweh" becomes "YHO VAH" (rendered in English as "Jehovah").

Most scholars have concluded that the term "YHWH" is actually based upon the "to be" verb in Hebrew, "HYH" (HAYAH). The future tense of this verb is YHWH (Yahweh). They refer back to the passage in Exodus where God is actually asked His name. Moses says, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now, they may say to me, 'What is His Name?' What shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM;" and He said, "Thus you shall say to the Sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.'"

I hope this answers your question. You can see from this explanation that the issue was not that someone translated it wrong. It was done with reverent intention. I hope this answers your question adequately.

Jimmy Williams, Founder
Probe Ministries

This e-mail also came in with a similar question:

This message is in reference to using the word "Jehovah" to mean the God of the Bible. I assume you know that it is YHWH with the vowel points for "Adonai" added. This was to remind the Torah reader to say "Adonai" instead of YHWH, which was (and is) considered sacred to the Jews. I do not see how one can use a hybrid of two names for God and still be correct. If someone were to call me "Jasen" with different vowels inserted, I probably would not respond. I understand God is an omniscient, compassionate God that knows our shortcomings and misunderstandings, but if we can do it right, shouldn't we?

Your questions about the relationship of YHWH, Adonai, and Jehovah have to do with the tradition of the Jews and their reverence for the name of Yahweh, which comes from Exodus 3:13 when Moses asked God to tell him what he should say when Pharaoh and the Egyptians inquired as to who had sent him (Moses) on his mission of deliverance. Remember, the Lord told Moses to take his shoes off because he was on "holy ground."

God's answer was, "I AM THAT I AM." Actually, the word YHWH is a form of the "to be" verb in Hebrew, "eyeheyeh." It ties into the idea in the New Testament where Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Before Abraham was (existed), **I AM** (that is, I continually exist)" (John 8:58-59). The Hebrew translation is "underived existence."

Unger's Bible Dictionary says that "this custom which had its origin in reverence, and has almost degenerated into a superstition, was founded upon an erroneous rendering of Lev. 24:16, from which it was inferred that the mere utterance of the name constituted a capital offense. According to Jewish tradition, it was pronounced but once a year by the high priest on the Day of Atonement when he entered the Holy of

Holies; but on this point there is some doubt.” (p. 565).

This reverence carried over into the Jewish thinking about the awe, fear, and reverence to which God was entitled. The Jews scrupulously avoided every mention of it. The true pronunciation of it was known to the Hebrews, but has been entirely lost. They continued to write YHWH in the text, but when pronouncing the text always substituted another name for God, usually Adonai.

You are right in your explanation that the Jews used the vowel pointing of Adonai to YHWH, from which we get the English word, “Jehovah,” hence the form Yehowah and name Yehvh. There is a strong possibility that the name Jehovah was anciently pronounced as Yahweh, like Iabe of the Samaritans. But I must remind you that the entire vowel pointing system did not come into use until the 10th century A.D. This was designed by the Massoretes located at Tiberius on the Sea of Galilee, and their desire was to weld together two traditions of the Old Testament text at that time: the KETHIV (written text) and the QERE (spoken, oral tradition).

Let me explain it this way. Until the tenth century A.D., the written Hebrew text contained only consonants. The reason for this is that those who spoke Hebrew knew what the vowels were. The Pharisees of Jesus’ day knew the Old Testament by heart, from Genesis to Malachi. This had nothing to do with literacy or education. This is the oral tradition. Even today many Muslims can quote the entire Koran by memory. Since the Jews had this oral tradition, they knew the Scriptures and they knew what the vowel sounds were.

Let me give you an example: Read these modified English words: blvd=boulevard; pkwy=parkway; McDnlds=McDonalds, and so on.

What the Massoretes did was to devise a vowel pointing system which was superimposed over the written, consonantal text. The reason for doing this was to bring these two traditions

together and stabilize the text for perpetuity so that the language would not be lost. Amazingly, this same Hebrew is now in operation in Israel. And when you see modern Hebrew written, the vowels are again omitted as in ancient times, because Jews who read and speak Hebrew know what vowels are to be supplied.

My point with all this is that long before the vowel pointings (which seem to be hanging you up) were created, the Jews were *already* referring to YHWH as "Adonai." This goes way back in the Jewish tradition, even before the time of Christ. The Qumran community (Dead Sea Scrolls) also had this practice.

In summary, the action of substituting Adonai for YHWH had little to do with the vowel pointing you mention, and everything to do with an ancient practice of the Jews (in respect or perhaps superstition) not to utter the sound of the "ineffable Tetragrammaton" (YHWH cf. *Websters Dictionary*). The practice is not, in reality, a "hybrid" of the two names, as you suggest, but rather a substitution of the one for the other. Your analysis of the vowel pointing is accurate as a means of reminding/warning the reader not to utter "YHWH" after the 10th century A.D. , but we have no knowledge or of any such indicator provided in the written Hebrew text giving such a warning prior to the Massoretic tradition.

I hope this answers your question.

Sincerely in Christ,

Jimmy Williams, Founder
Probe Ministries

Published June 2003

See Also *Probe Answers Our Email*:

- [“Is It Wrong to Speak of God as Jehovah?”](#)
 - [“Jehovah Is the Only Name of God!”](#)
- [“Why Did the Jews Not Say God’s Name Aloud When He Never Said Not To?”](#)

“How Does Christians’ Singing Hallelujah Differ From Hindu Chanting?”

In discussing chanting with a Hindu, I stumbled when he pointed out that we Christians also repeat God’s name when we sing “Hallelujah, hallelujah...” So are we repeating vainly? Of course not. If we are praising God, he claimed, so are they.

How can I make my point against chanting but still justify our glorification of God singing “Hallelujah”? Also he pointed out that they are praising God like we also praise God in Psalms.

It seems to me that a few points can be made to distinguish what Christians are doing from what Hare Krishnas and other Hindus are doing.

1. “Hallelujah” comes from two Hebrew words meaning “Praise the Lord” (i.e. *Hallelu Yah*). When we say Hallelujah, we are praising the Lord. This seems different from simply repeating the name of a particular god over and over. We are praising the Lord, not simply repeating His Name.

2. Although this may not be true for all of those engaged in repetitive chanting of the name of a god, nevertheless, for many of these people such chanting is intended to focus the

mind and help induce an altered state of consciousness in which one "realizes" that "All is One," "All is God," "I Am God," etc. This, of course, is not what Christians are trying to achieve when they praise the Lord. Thus, the intentions of Christians in praising the Lord are very different from the intentions of some Hindus in repeating the name of a god.

3. Hindus and Christians typically have very different conceptions of "God." Even if we both refer to the Supreme Being as "God," we mean something very different by this term. Hindus are typically pantheists or polytheists; Christians are monotheists. Thus, we have very different ideas or definitions about what (or who) "God" is.

These three differences, at least in my opinion, make it very difficult to equate what Christians are doing when we praise the Lord with what Hindus are doing when they engage in the repetitive chanting of a god's name.

The Lord bless and keep you!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries