

# New Age—What Is It?

The New Age is upon us—or so we hear from New Age enthusiasts. A growing number of activists are heralding the end of one age and the beginning of another—an age of personal and global transformation—but what, exactly, is this New Age movement? Maybe you have heard people use words such as “enlightenment,” “cosmic-consciousness,” and “the god within,” and been puzzled and concerned about them. Probably you’ve heard mention of a “new world order” and a quickened “evolutionary pace.” How do all of these fit together? How do these terms relate to the New Age movement? More importantly, how does the New Age movement differ from Christianity?

It has been estimated that fifty million Americans are New Age enthusiasts and sympathizers. Subtle New Age thinking has permeated our society, including many church circles, so it is important for Christians to be aware of the nature of this movement. In this lesson, we will explore the main beliefs on which the New Age movement is founded, and we will prove, from a Biblical basis, what a vast spiritual chasm exists between this movement and the doctrines of the Bible.

**1** ● New Age proponents tell us that mankind is ready to move away from outdated Christian beliefs into an age of enlightenment. They say that the world’s philosophical, religious, and political structures will be overhauled as part

of a great transformation of consciousness and culture. They teach that a new spirituality is emerging, that it will permeate our entire planet, and will result in global peace and prosperity. One of the reasons the movement has attracted such a wide following in America is that it focuses on issues of supposed survival and the betterment of humanity. While the arms race, world hunger, ecological concerns, and political upheavals make the headlines, New Age proponents forecast an era of peace, harmony, and truth.

The Bible also teaches the coming of a time of peace, but it greatly differs from the New Age theory in describing its arrival and results on earth. Read Revelation 20:1-10 and Isaiah 35:1-10, and briefly outline the conditions that will exist during Christ's Millennial Reign.

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**2.** A part of New Age teaching is the belief that “all is one.” This is called “monism.” In essence, it means that humanity, nature, and God are one. The universe is presented as a sort of seamless garment, and any apparent dualism or separation between elements is not real. New Age followers teach that everything in existence is of the same essence, and that everything is God. There are not many selves, but one Self. They attribute the current world problems to a “nonholistic” view of the universe. In contrast, summarize the Christian view of God’s creation—humanity and nature—based on the Biblical account in Genesis 1, Psalm 8:1-4, and Hebrews 11:3.

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**3.** New Age proponents also teach that “all is God.” This is called “pantheism.” They say that whatever is, is God and that there is nothing that is not God. God is not thought of as a personal Being but as an impersonal energy, force, or essence that is in everything, including man. Thus, God becomes more of an “it” than a “He.” The Bible affirms that all is not God—that, in fact, God as Creator stands distinct and far above His creation. Look up the following verses and summarize what each teaches regarding the nature of our God: Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:26; Exodus 3:14,15; Ecclesiastes 5:2; Colossians 1:15-17; 1 Timothy 1:17.

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**4.** A natural progression from the New Age belief, that all is God, is the teaching that we are all gods. New Age followers believe that each of us are in different stages of development in terms of our human potential but that we are all gods in embryo. Their goal is to see this “god within” awakened in each person. They teach that all knowledge, power, and truth are in every human being, and they encourage mankind to recognize, honor, and even worship self as God. This teaching stands in stark contrast to the Bible. Using the following Scriptures, summarize the Christian’s view of man: Job 7:17; Psalms 51:5; 103:15; Romans 3:23.

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**5.** If all is one, and all is God, why do we see such chaos and turmoil in the world today? The New Agers' answer to that question is that all of mankind has not reached the stage of enlightenment. They say that the three ideas (all is one, all is God, and we are God) must be not only recognized by the mind, but also awakened at the core of each person's being. Such awakenings, they believe, may come either spontaneously or as the result of meditation, yoga, drugs, biofeedback, visualization, hypnosis, or other techniques. In pursuit of such an awakening, many New Agers are being drawn into the use of "spirit guides" which, supposedly, give direction in the decisions and choices of life. This awareness—whether termed cosmic consciousness, self-realization, enlightenment, God consciousness, or something else—is proclaimed as vital for the resurrection of individuals, and of civilization, and as necessary for spiritual power and well-being. How does this teaching conflict with the Christian view of salvation? See John 3:3; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:8-10; Hebrews 9:24-28; and 1 John 1:9.

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**6.** A belief in reincarnation is at the heart of the New Age religion. New Agers teach that the soul progresses or regresses from one life to the next, according to its own "karma" (good or evil deeds). Death is simply a step in an evolutionary process. The followers of this philosophy believe that after death we will reappear as another person or thing, in an ongoing effort to reach our highest self, or godhood. The life we are living today, they say, is neither our first nor our last. The lessons we learn here will go with us into our next life. We will not have to repeat them, but

will progress in the next life toward greater perfection by learning new lessons. Contrast this belief with the Biblical position on death and on life after death, using Ecclesiastes 12:7; John 11:25; Hebrews 9:27,28; and Revelation 22:12-14.

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**7.** There is no question about the fact that New Age thinking has penetrated our culture. It has found a foothold in schools, business training programs, the arts and entertainment media, and even church doctrine. Its teachings have an appeal based on the human hunger for spiritual experiences and for meaning in life. The New Age thinking promises answers to those deep needs, predicts order where there is chaos, and claims to give to individuals the power to control their own lives. However, Christians need to recognize that New Age and Christian viewpoints are diametrically opposed. Thus, it is vital to take steps to guard against that thinking. We can become aware of New Age doctrines, activities, and goals—as we have done in this lesson—but what are some of the steps Christians must take to avoid the deception of this New Age thinking? See 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:15; and 1 John 4:1-3.

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## **Key Texts**

Genesis 1; Exodus 3:14,15; Job 7:17; Psalms 8:1-4; 51:5; 103:15; Ecclesiastes 5:2; 12:7; Isaiah 35:1-10; John 3:3; 11:25; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:23; 5:8-10; Colossians 1:15-17; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 9:24-28; 11:3; 1 John 1:9; 4:1-3; Revelation 20:1-10; 22:12-14

## **Other Scriptures Used in This Study**

Isaiah 14:13-15; Ezekiel 28:1,2; Zechariah 8:1-8,20-23; Acts 12:21-23; Ephesians 1:11; Revelation 19:14,20,21; 20:1-3

## **Suggested Verse for Memorization**

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. — 1 John 4:1