

# Comparing Christianity and Other World Religions

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Elements of Faith	Historic Christianity	Roman Catholicism	Judaism	Native American Religions	Hinduism	Buddhism	Islam	Sikhism	Baha'i World Faith	Secular Humanism	New Age Movement
<b>Supreme Being</b>	One personal/supreme God who is Creator & Lord of everything that exists. He eternally exists as Triune God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Gen. 1; Deut. 6:4; Matt. 28:19.	There is only one God. God has revealed Himself as three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. He is Creator and Lord of everything that exists. Gen 1.	One God, who reveals Himself as Person. He is Creator, Deliverer, & Lord of history.	Personal Supreme being & Creator, who is generally beneficent; empowers lesser spiritual beings	Impersonal Ultimate Reality; or "The absolute" Major Triad: Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu.	Southern Buddhism: irrelevant. Northern Buddhism: Buddhahood.	God (Allah) is one. Strict monotheism - "There is no God but Allah."	One God, called Sat Guru ("true name"), who cannot be known by the human mind.	One God who is unknowable except through Manifestations (Messengers).	Secular Humanists are atheists. They do not believe in the existence of a supernatural Supreme Being.	God (Ultimate Reality) is an impersonal power, often spoken of as energy, consciousness, mind, or truth. God is everything; everything is God.
<b>Key Figures in History</b>	Jesus, the Christ, eternally one with the Father and incarnated supernaturally through the Virgin Mary. John 1:1-12; Matt 1:18-25	Jesus, the Christ, eternally one with God and incarnated supernaturally through the perpetual Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; the Popes and ecumenical church councils have also had great historical significance.	Abraham, Moses, David	None	Avatars (deities in various form). Gurus are spiritual teachers.	Siddhartha Gautama (who became Buddha, the Enlightened One) 563-483 B.C.	The Prophet Muhammad (or Mohammed) (A.D. 570-632)	Guru Nanak (A.D. 1469-1539)	Minza Husayn Ali (A.D. 1817-1892), known as Baha'u'llah.	While Secular Humanism has no authoritative key figures in history, there have been several influential Humanists. Examples of influential Humanists are such people as: John Dewey, Bertrand Russell, Joseph Fletcher, Margaret Sanger, and Stephen Jay Gould.	None
<b>Person of Jesus Christ</b>	One divine Person, eternal, with two natures-human & divine. Born on earth as a fully human being. Supreme example of God's character & His love for humanity. Full and final revelation of God and His love. John 1:1-13	One divine Person, eternal - fully human & divine. Supreme example of God's character & His love for humanity, full and final revelation of God and His Love. John 1:1-13.	An important prophet, but not a divine Person. He did good things & taught the Golden Rule	Originally, no reference to Person or work of Jesus Christ.	For some Hindus, Jesus was an Avater or incarnation of God - one among many Avatars; a great spiritual teacher, a guru.	A teacher who may possess Buddhahood or Enlightenment. One among many, not unique.	A major prophet, spirit of Allah (or God), without sin, but not divine; His miracles are signs that He came from God.	Not a divine Person, but a man through whom God worked & revealed Himself.	Son of God, but not divine. One of God's Manifestations, who include Krishna, Buddha, Abraham, Moses, Muhammad, Baha'u'llah.	Secular Humanists view Jesus as just another human teacher. They deny that Jesus is divine.	Jesus was one of many appearances of God throughout the ages, one of many people who were fully aware of their true divinity.
<b>Work of Jesus Christ</b>	Jesus was born, lived, & died in a given time & place as a unique historical event. He lived a sinless life & willingly died on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. He is Messiah (Christ), Lord and Savior. John 1:14-18; 3:16	Jesus was born, lived, & died in a given time & place as a unique historical event. He lived a sinless life & willingly died on the cross as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. He arose from the dead & ascended into heaven. He is the Messiah (Christ), Lord, and Savior, who will one day come again in glory & power. John 1:14-18; 1:16.	Judaism generally considers Jesus to be an itinerant Jewish teacher. His death has no saving effect. He is not the Messiah.	Currently, occasional reference to Jesus as a religious leader who lived a long time ago.	Jesus was a great religious teacher whose teachings can be valuable today.	Jesus was a great religious teacher whose teachings can be valuable today.	Jesus was sent to the children of Israel & faithfully showed the signs of Allah, taught prayer, & brought the gospel (Injil). He did not die on a cross, but Allah took Him into heaven.	Taught humans the Golden Rule; His death was not vicarious.	A great prophet-educator for his age; gave divine teachings.	According to Secular Humanists, the death of Jesus Christ has no impact on anyone living today.	Christ is separate from Jesus, the way-shower. Christ is the perfect God idea - the awareness of divinity within each person.
<b>Sources of Authority</b>	Bible (Old & New Testaments). Unique, revealed, factual, accurate, & inspired Word of God. Sole authority for faith & practice. 2 Tim. 3:16-17.	Catholics accept the Bible (OT, Apocrypha, & NT) as the inspired revelation of God. They also accept church tradition and the magisterium (the teaching authority of the Church) as sources of authority.	Hebrew Bible (tanakh), including Torah, Prophets, & Writings. Basically the Christian Old Testament.	Oral & written tradition, folklore; accumulated wisdom of the tribe.	Vedas, Upanishads, Epics, Puranas, and a host of other sacred writings.	Sutras; Tripitaka (the Three Baskets).	<a href="#">Qur'an (Koran).</a>	Adi Granth (Guru Granth Sahib) considered inspired & authoritative; other sacred writings.	Most Holy Book (Kitab-i-Aqdas).	Humanists reject supernatural beliefs and doctrines. There are no holy writings in Secular Humanism.	There is no objective source of authority. Sacred writings & devotional material from many traditions hae spiritual value.

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<b>Doctrine of Humanity</b>	Humanity is part of creation, but distinct from the rest of creation & from God. Human beings are created in God's image. Every person is a unique, precious being of dignity & worth. Gen. 1:26-28.	Humanity is part of creation, but distinct from the rest of creation & from God. Human beings are created in God's image. Every person is a unique, precious being of dignity & worth. Gen 1:26-28.	Humanity is part of creation, but distinct from the rest of creation 7 from God. Human beings are created in the image of God & are free & self-determining.	Human beings are subordinate to supernatural forces & spirit-beings.	Divine eternal soul part of God or Ultimate Reality. Physical body has little worth.	One lifetime for each person, composed of skanda (parts), but many lives for the parts. Concept of anatta (no self) denies existence of a self beyond mental & physical attributes.	Humans are basically pure, but fallible and need guidance. Created by Allah with ability to follow his will, human beings must give account of their conduct on the day of judgment.	Each person is a soul (& part of Universal soul) who has been reborn in this present life.	The human soul, created by God, is basically good. Men & women of all races are equal & responsible.	Man is a part of nature. Humanity controls its own destiny since there is no God.	Humanity is not distinct from God. Human beings are essentially divine; God is within each person. Everyone has the "Christ spirit"; everyone is potentially good.
<b>The Basic Human Problem</b>	Sin: By their free will, human beings have chosen to sin against God, rejecting His nature, & pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character & revealed law. Gen.3; Rom. 3:23.	Sin: By their free will, human beings have chosen to sin against God, rejecting His nature & pursuing a course of life that is opposed to His essential character & revealed law. Catholics distinguish between venial sins and mortal sins. Gen.3; Rom. 3:23.	Sin: Human rebellion & unfaithfulness to God's character & revealed law.	Human beings act in ways that upset the harmony of nature and/or disrupt well-being of the community.	The human condition is samsara (the flow of reality in which souls are continually dying & being reborn). The present existence is an illusion; people are unaware of their oneness with God.	The human condition is suffering, caused by attachment to things & the craving (desire) accompanying this attachment.	Sin: disobedience of responsible human beings to the law of Allah. Sin is caused by human weakness, forgetfulness, & a spirit of rebellion.	Sin: choosing to live in self-centeredness; sensuous desires preferred to ego-abandoning submission to God.	Sin: lack of knowledge & people's failure to develop their spiritual natures bring disobedience to divine commands taught by Baha'u'llah.	Humanists believe that many of humanity's problems are caused by ignorance, lack of education, and outdated beliefs in the supernatural.	Illusion, ignorance, or lack of perception. People are unaware of their true identity as divine, as one with God. They need to be "enlightened," to find ultimate spiritual knowledge & liberation from the cycle of reincarnation. Their primary need is for holism, to be integrated with the whole.
<b>Solution to the Basic Human Problem</b>	Salvation-release from the guilt & power of sin - is God's gift of grace through Christ's atonement, received through personal faith in Christ. Eph. 2:8-9	Salvation is an infused process of grace gained over one's lifetime through faith plus observance of Church sacraments and rituals.	God grants salvation to people who repent, trust in God, & obey Him according to their understanding.	Well-being of individual & tribe; gained by prayer, pledges, & sacrifice that win attention & help of supernatural forces & departed elders.	goal of life is to gain release (liberation) from the cycle of reincarnation & to pass beyond illusion to become one with the divine (Ultimate Reality) by following the proper yoga (path or discipline).	Goal of life is nirvana to eliminate all desire of attachment, particularly by following the Eight-fold Path.	Allah (The Merciful One) acts in mercy. A person's salvation depends largely upon personal observance of the Pillars of the Faith & submission to Allah.	Attaining liberation (release) from the cycle of life, death, & rebirth through repeating the name of God & following the path of devotion.	People attain present & future blessings through faith in God & Baha'u'llah & by performing good works that advance civilization & contribute to world unity & peace.	Many Humanists believe that the human condition can be improved by using science and its methods of criticism to understand the universe.	People overcome lack of perception by using techniques to change (transform) consciousness. They can attain enlightenment when they step outside ordinary modes of perception into altered states of consciousness that dispel illusory boundaries of individual existence.
<b>Ethics (Value System)</b>	Ultimate values for humanity are based on God's character and His Ten Commandments. Human beings are potentially good, but not inevitably good. They always need God's grace to renew their characters.	Ultimate values for humanity are based on God's character and His "revelation to humanity." Human beings are born under sin and this they always need God's grace to renew their character. Ex. 20; 2 cor. 5:14-21.	Ultimate values for humanity are based on God's character. The Ten Commandments, other laws of the Hebrew Bible, & teachings of the rabbis are moral guidelines for the Jewish community	Based on well-being of the tribe; individuals expected to fulfill their social roles in the tribe & follow the traditions.	Deeds are right if they produce good conditions; deeds are wrong if they produce harm to one's self or to the world in general.	The Eight-fold Path stresses moral virtue, including right action & right vocation. Right conduct includes loving-kindness, selfless giving to others, & efforts to alleviate human <del>burden</del> <sup>burden</sup> .	Allah judges human beings for their actions in submitting to Allah, obeying the Shari'ah (holy law), & advancing the Ummah (people of Islam).	Work, worship, & charity should dominate one's life. Sikhs try to conquer & attain rebirth over anger, pride, desire, greed, & ignorance.	Baha'is value the virtues of love, justice, trustworthiness, honesty, humility, & courtesy. They expect every believer to engage in useful work.	Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no supernatural sanction.	No moral absolutes. Individual self-rule should be the norm as people follow their own intuition. Root causes of evil are selfish living habits.
<b>Life After Death</b>	Eternal communion with God (heaven) or eternal separation from God (hell). Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20-22	Agree with historic Christianity on heaven and hell. However, Catholics also believe in purgatory, a temporary state where those who die in a state of grace are purified of their sins over time.	Range of views: *Reward or punishment in heaven or hell (orthodox) *Vagueness (conservative and reformed/reform) *Denial of afterlife (liberal)	Existence in a life patterned after this world, but free of pain & suffering. Wicked are forgotten or annihilated.	Cycles of reincarnation until union with or re-absorption into Ultimate Reality. The desired ultimate state of existence is moksha ("final release").	Possible attainment of nirvana (negation of suffering), a state of being that is realized through eliminating desire.	Paradise (heaven) for faithful believers & hell (punishment) for nonbelievers & those who commit shirk (apostasy).	Reincarnation (transmigration of souls) until one attains absorption into God & the extinguishing of individuality.	Individual (an immortal soul) retains identity, progresses to presence of God. Heaven: rapid progression to God; Hell: slow progression.	Secular Humanists believe that there is no life after death. They deny that there is a soul or spirit that survives death.	Souls are evolving toward union with God & will eventually find spiritual knowledge & liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

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