

Christianity in View

Comparison Table

A table showing the differences and similarities between Christianity, Islam and Judaism.



Comparison

Topic	Christianity	Islam	Judaism
Origin of the Name	From the Greek: <i>christos</i> , 'Anointed' - referring to Jesus Christ.	Derived from an Arabic word for 'submission'. Also related to the Arabic word <i>salaam</i> , 'peace'.	From the Hebrew: <i>Yehudim</i> , 'Judah'.
Founder	Jesus Christ (c. 4 B.C. - 30 A.D.)	Mohammed (570 - 632 A.D.) ¹	Abraham (First Patriarch, born c. 1800 B.C.)
Divisions	Three main groups: Orthodox , Protestant and Roman Catholic .	Two main groups: Sunni and Shia (The division occurred due to a dispute as to the legitimate successor of the prophet Mohammed). There is also a mystical/ascetic movement in Islam known as Sufi.	Several divisions, including Hasidic, Conservative and Reform Judaism. Ethnic groupings include Ashkenazi (The majority) and Sephardi Jews.
Followers (2009 Estimates)²	2,200 Million (2.2 Billion)	1,500 Million (1.5 Billion)	14 Million
Nature of God	One God, who exists in three distinct persons (The Trinity): Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).	One God (Arabic: <i>Allah</i>), who is not a trinity. The Islamic view of God is called strict Monotheism (Quran 112:1).	One God (known in English as 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah') - "...Hear Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one." (Deuteronomy 6:4).
Holy Book(s)	The Bible (from the Greek: <i>Biblos</i> , 'books'), given by God to man. The Bible writers were inspired by God in their writings. Thus Christians refer to the Bible as the <i>Word of God</i> (2 Timothy 3:16).	The Quran or Koran (Arabic: 'recitation'), revealed to the prophet Mohammed over a period of about 20 years. The Quran is the final revelation given by Allah to mankind.	The Hebrew Tanakh, similar to the Christian Old Testament, comprised of the Torah (Hebrew: 'Law'), Nevi'im ('Prophets') and Ketuvim ('Writings').
Jesus Christ	The second person of the Trinity and born of the Virgin Mary. "...true God from true God" (Nicene Creed)	Isa (Jesus) was a prophet, sent by Allah and born of the Virgin Mary, but not divine (Quran 5:17).	An ordinary Jew, not the <i>Messiah</i> nor a divine person.
Jesus Christ, The Mission of	To reconcile Man to God, through his death as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind.	To proclaim the <i>Injil</i> , or gospel. This gospel has been corrupted over time by human additions and alterations.	As Judaism rejects the idea of Jesus as <i>Messiah</i> , his mission is of no relevance.
Jesus Christ, The Death of	"...For our sake he was crucified...he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again...he	Jesus was not crucified (Quran 4:157), but was raised to Heaven by Allah (4:158).	Jesus was crucified for his claim to be divine.

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Holy Spirit	ascended into heaven..." (Nicene Creed) The third person of the Trinity, truly divine: "...with the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified." (Nicene Creed)	Identical with the Angel Gabriel, who appeared to the Prophet Mohammed giving him the Quranic text.	Not a distinct person, but a divine power which for example, was given to the Prophets.
Other Traditions	The writings of the early church fathers and ecumenical councils, including the Creeds.	The Hadith, a collection of traditions/sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. The Hadith functions as a supplement to the Quran, giving guidance to Muslims for daily living.	The Talmud, an oral tradition explaining and interpreting the Tanakh. It includes the Mishnah - a code of Jewish law.
Examples of Rituals	The Sacraments, including Baptism and Holy Communion(Eucharist). In Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, five more are added, viz: Confirmation (Chrismation), Marriage, Penance, Holy Orders and Anointing of the sick. Prayer is also an important part of the faith.	Five important rituals (known as the pillars of Islam): 1. <i>Shahadah</i> - A profession of faith. 2. <i>Salat</i> - Prayer five times daily. 3. <i>Zakat</i> - alms giving. 4. <i>Sawm</i> - Fasting during the Holy month of <i>Ramadan</i> . 5. <i>Hajj</i> - Pilgrimage to the Holy city of Mecca.	Rituals include the Circumcision of newly born Jewish males, <i>Barmitzvah</i> - a ceremony marking the 'coming of age' of Jewish Boys and observation of the Sabbath (<i>Shabat</i>). As in the other faiths, prayer is important. The Jewish prayer book is called the <i>siddur</i> .
Sin	We inherit a sinful nature through our common ancestor Adam, who rebelled against God. Jesus Christ atoned for our sins through his death on the Cross (Romans 5:12-17).	There is no concept of original sin, nor vicarious atonement. All Humans are born sinless, but human weakness leads to sin.	Judaism rejects the doctrine of <i>original</i> sin. Atonement for sins committed is made through seeking forgiveness from God in prayer and repentance. In addition, the day of atonement (<i>Yom Kippur</i>) is set aside specially for this purpose.
Salvation	By grace through faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9). ³	Achieved through good works, thus personal righteousness must outweigh personal sin (Quran 23:101-103).	Through good works, prayers and the grace of God. There is no parallel to the Christian view of substitutionary atonement.
Hell	A place of everlasting punishment for the unrighteous (Matthew 25:46). There is no crossover between Heaven and Hell.	A place of torment and fire (Quran 25:65, 104:6-7). In Islam, Hell is known as <i>Jahannam</i> . <i>Jahannam</i> has several levels and a person may not necessarily spend eternity there.	Traditionally, there is the concept of Gehinnom or Gehenna - those who die in sin may suffer temporary punishment, but certain sins merit eternal punishment. However, Judaism's ideas of the afterlife have varied widely among different groups and in different time periods. For the most part, Judaism does not emphasize the afterlife.
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NOTES:

¹ Muslims regard Mohammed more as the restorer of the true monotheistic faith, rather than the founder of a new religion.

² Figures taken from [The World Almanac and Book of Facts](#).

³ Salvation in Christianity is discussed in more detail on the [Comparison between Orthodoxy, Protestantism & Roman Catholicism](#) page.
