

**COMPARISON OF RELIGIONS**  
**BASIC INFORMATION**

	<b>CHRISTIANITY</b>	<b>JUDAISM</b>	<b>ISLAM</b>
<b>Date of Origin</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> century of the Common Era	About 3000 BCE	Early 600s CE
<b>Place of Origin</b>	Jerusalem	Ur of the Chaldees (Mesopotamia)	Mecca, Saudi Arabia
<b>Founders</b>	<i>Jesus Christ</i> --- the son of God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Abraham</i> --- Believed in one God; began the covenant with God;</li> <li>• <i>Moses</i>--- received The Ten Commandments from God</li> </ul>	The Prophet, <i>Muhammad</i>
<b>Worldwide Population</b>	Almost 2 billion	About 13½ million	About 1 billion; found in 56 countries; only about 20% are Arab
<b>Place of Worship</b>	Church or Cathedral	Temple or Synagogue	Mosque
<b>Clergy</b>	Minister, Pastor, Priest, Preacher, Reverend	Rabbi	Imam --- leads the community prayers
<b>Other Religious Leaders</b>		<i>Cantor</i> --- people who sing prayers solo and lead the congregation in singing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Muezzin</i> --- calls people to prayer</li> <li>• <i>Khatib</i> --- preaches the Friday sermon</li> </ul>
<b>Scriptures</b>	<p><i>The Old Testament</i> --- teaches about law, history, and poetry</p> <p><i>The New Testament</i> consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The four Gospels, which cover the life and teachings of Jesus</li> <li>• <i>The Acts of the Apostles</i> relate events that took place during the 20 years after the Resurrection and describe the journeys of Paul</li> <li>• <i>Epistles</i>, or letters written by early leaders of the church;</li> <li>• <i>Revelation</i> describes a vision of the end of time.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Tanach</i> consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Torah</i> --- the five books of Moses (the Laws) in which God provides teachings about himself, his purposes, and how he wishes his people to obey him in every part of their lives.</li> <li>• The Prophets (<i>The Nvi'im</i>) --- contains historical events, religious teachings, and prophecies of the future;</li> <li>• The Writings (<i>The K'twim</i>) --- contains poetry, history and discussions about why bad things happen to people, faith, reward, and punishment</li> </ul>	<p><i>Qur'an (Koran)</i> ---</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel, over a period of 22 years;</li> <li>• The last in a series of revelations sent to the world by God;</li> <li>• Believed to reflect and correct earlier revelations in the Torah and New Testament;</li> <li>• It expresses God's will for all humankind and provides rules to govern both the life of the individual and the community;</li> <li>• Only the original Arabic is used in worship</li> </ul>

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<b>Other Important Writings</b>	Patristic Writings --- a branch of theological study of the most prominent writings of the Church Fathers from the end of the Apostolic period until the beginning of the Medieval Period	<i>Midrash, Mishnah, and Talmud</i> help people interpret the <i>Tanach</i>	<i>Sunnah</i> and <i>Hadith</i> (traditions)--- sayings and events in the life of Muhammad; a source of guidance in areas in which none is provided in the Qur'an
<b>Holy Places</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holy Land --- birthplace of Jesus;</li> <li>• Rome --- the seat of the Pope</li> <li>• Agia Sophia in Constantinople (Istanbul) --- home of the ecumenical patriarch of the Orthodox Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel --- "The Promised Land";</li> <li>• The Western Wall in Jerusalem --- the remains of the last Jewish Temple destroyed in 70 CE.</li> </ul>	Mecca --- the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad
<b>Major Denominations</b>	Catholic Protestant Orthodox	Orthodox Conservative Reform	Sunni (people of the tradition) Shi'ite (party of Ali) Sufi (mystics)
<b>Symbols</b>	<b>Cross</b> --- Jesus was crucified on the cross; his death and resurrection brought salvation to the people.	<b>Star of David</b> --- the top triangle points up to God, the bottom triangle points down to the creation, and the interlacing creates an unbreakable bond <b>Menorah</b> --- a seven-branched candlestick which stood in the Temple of Jerusalem in ancient times; the central branch represents the Sabbath A <b>Mezuzah</b> is often placed on the entryway to a Jewish home to remind everyone to keep God's laws.	<b>Crescent and Star</b> --- The crescent represents the lunar calendar; the Qur'an speaks of stars as one of Allah's signs

**COMPARISON OF ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS**  
**KEY TEACHINGS**

	<b>CHRISTIANITY</b>	<b>JUDAISM</b>	<b>ISLAM</b>
<b>Beliefs About God</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is a spiritual being without a physical body</li> <li>• God is the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe</li> <li>• God is personal and involved with people</li> <li>• God is eternal, changeless, holy, loving, and perfect</li> </ul> <p><b>The Holy Trinity consists of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God, the Father, who made Heaven and Earth</li> <li>• Jesus Christ, the son of God, who came to Earth and is the Messiah</li> <li>• The Holy Spirit, the Enlightener and Comforter who guides and strengthens the people of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is a spiritual being</li> <li>• God is the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe</li> <li>• There is one and only God, with whom each individual has direct personal experience, and to whom prayers may be addressed</li> <li>• God knows the thoughts and deeds of men</li> <li>• God will reward the good and punish the wicked</li> <li>• God is eternal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allah is One and absolutely unique</li> <li>• Allah is the creator, sustainer, and ruler of the universe</li> <li>• Allah cannot be known</li> <li>• Allah is perfect</li> <li>• Human qualities like fatherhood cannot be attributed to Allah</li> <li>• Allah is merciful and compassionate</li> </ul>
<b>Prophets/Messiah</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prophecies in the Old Testament refer to the coming of Christ</li> <li>• Jesus came to Earth to teach people the right way to live, and that through his death and resurrection they can go to heaven</li> <li>• When Jesus died, he took on the sins of everyone so that people could be forgiven by God and live with God forever</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prophets were chosen by God to remind the people of God's love and of the necessity of their obedience to their covenant with God:</li> <li>• Moses was the greatest of the prophets;</li> <li>• Prophets foretold a Messiah who would be descended from the family of King David and would bring world peace, without suffering and disease</li> <li>• Concept of a Messiah is not central to every Jew's beliefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God sent various prophets to earth to bring his message to mankind (prophets of the Old Testament);</li> <li>• Believe that Jesus was a prophet, not the Son of God;</li> <li>• Muhammad received the full, complete, and final revelation of God and is honored as his final prophet</li> </ul>
<b>Creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to Genesis, God created the Universe in six days and rested on the seventh</li> <li>• Some take this literally; others combine it with scientific explanations</li> <li>• The created universe displays the glory, power, and wisdom of God</li> <li>• Mankind was created in the image and likeness of God</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to Genesis, God created the Universe in six days and rested on the seventh</li> <li>• Some take this literally; others combine it with scientific explanations</li> <li>• The universe was created as an act of love and was intended as a place where God's creatures could flourish in their relationship with him.</li> <li>• Mankind was created in God's image</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the Qur'an, a day in Genesis is equal to 50,000 years;</li> <li>• Do not believe in a seventh day when God rested</li> <li>• Humans are <u>not</u> made in the image of God, but were created to be His representatives on Earth</li> <li>• Allah made the first human beings from the dust of the earth and breathed life into them</li> </ul>

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<b>Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for forgiveness for their sins, believe in Jesus, and follow him</li> <li>• Abide by “The Golden Rule</li> <li>• Be humble by being courteously respectful of others;</li> <li>• Lead a moral life which involves restraint from evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, and arrogance</li> <li>• Forgive others and refrain from self-righteousness</li> <li>• Practice what they preach</li> <li>• Teach others about Jesus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obey the Ten Commandments</li> <li>• Obey the 613 commandments in the Torah</li> <li>• Promote learning, engage in religious worship, and perform good deeds without expectation of reward</li> </ul>	<p>The chief qualities a Muslim should display include truthfulness, sincerity, unselfishness, humility, patience, forgiveness, honesty, goodness and kindness to others, consideration and respect for others, courage, moderation, and cheerfulness</p>
<b>Core Beliefs</b>	<p>Believe that Jesus, in dying and rising from the dead, overcame human sin and made world redemption a reality, allowing whoever believes in him and follows his way to enter the kingdom of Heaven</p> <p><b>Primary teachings include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The incarnation of Jesus Christ</li> <li>• Christ’s ministry of healing, comforting, and teaching</li> <li>• The death of Jesus on the cross to save believers from their sins</li> <li>• Christ’s resurrection from the dead</li> <li>• Christ’s ascension back to the Father to be an intermediary for the people</li> <li>• Christ’s Second Coming for His people at the end of the age</li> <li>• Judgment for the living and the dead</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizes appropriate actions rather than official doctrines</li> <li>• Emphasizes relationships between God and people</li> <li>• Teaches that God established a <i>Covenant</i> with the Jewish people that they would be the chosen people if they kept God’s laws</li> </ul>	<p>Islam means “peace” or “submission to the will of God”; a Muslim is “one who submits to God (Allah)”</p> <p><b>Five Pillars of Faith:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Declaration of Faith:</i> stating, “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of God”</li> <li>• <i>Prayer (Salat)</i> : praying 5 times a day wherever one may be</li> <li>• <i>Fasting (Sawm):</i> fasting from dawn to sunset during the month of Ramadan; intended to stimulate religious reflection on human frailty and dependence on God</li> <li>• <i>Welfare tax (Zakat):</i> giving 2.5% of one’s wealth and assets to support less fortunate members of society</li> <li>• <i>Pilgrimage (Hajj)</i> : going to Mecca at least once in one’s lifetime</li> </ul>
<b>Sin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are sinners in need of redemption</li> <li>• People are morally responsible for their thoughts, words, and deeds</li> <li>• God forgives the sins of anyone who repents and wishes to lead a new life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assumes that people have the ability to follow the law of God</li> <li>• People have the freewill to make choices in their lives and each is responsible for the consequences of those choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mankind is basically good, not sinful by nature</li> <li>• After reaching puberty, people who knowingly commit sins are held responsible for their actions in this life and the hereafter;</li> <li>• Forgiveness of sin is granted by repentance, but no atonement is necessary for salvation</li> </ul>

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<b>Salvation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus' death on the cross and His resurrection redeems the sins of humans</li> <li>• Salvation is found by placing one's faith and hope in the love of the Lord and believing in Jesus</li> <li>• God's grace leads mankind to salvation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on how the person lived during life on earth</li> <li>• Repentance, prayer, obedience to the Law, maintaining Jewish identity, and improvement of self and society can help to atone for sin</li> <li>• Most modern Judaism does not focus on this issue, but concentrates on community and doing good works.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize the ongoing human struggle (<i> Jihad </i>) to do what is right and just</li> <li>• Must repent by returning to the straight path of God</li> <li>• One should always live with the fear of Allah and Judgment Day</li> <li>• Allah can bestow or withhold mercy as he sees fit.</li> </ul>
<b>Afterlife</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the Book of Revelation, there will be a Day of Judgment following the Second Coming of Jesus</li> <li>• After death, all people await the final judgment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sacred texts have little to say about the afterlife</li> <li>• Judaism is primarily focused on fulfilling God's will on earth rather than on the afterlife</li> <li>• Should do good for its own sake, not as an incentive to go to heaven</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The angel Israel is responsible for separating the soul from the body at the time of death</li> <li>• Do not go straight to heaven or hell after death; soul waits in <i> barzakh </i> until Judgment Day when Allah determines whether one goes to Paradise or to the fire</li> <li>• One's reckoning with Allah is based on the choices and actions during life</li> <li>• Good deeds count ten times more than bad deeds</li> <li>• There is no forgiveness of sins</li> </ul>
<b>Heaven and Hell</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Believers will live with Jesus in Heaven, a place offering supreme happiness and union with God</li> <li>• Sinners will suffer torment of eternal separation from God (hell);</li> <li>• Purgatory (Catholics) is an in between place; a place of cleansing and purification; after a period of time the spirit will go to Heaven</li> <li>• Orthodox Church teaches that a person may experience greater and greater degrees of union with God even after death</li> </ul>	<p>Most modern Jewish thinkers have shied away from this topic, preferring to focus on life on earth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Righteous are granted admission to Paradise, where they will enjoy spiritual and physical pleasures forever</li> <li>• Wicked are condemned to Hell to suffer spiritual and physical torment for eternity</li> <li>• Warriors who die fighting in the cause of God are ushered immediately to God's presence</li> <li>• "Enemies of Islam" are sentenced immediately to Hell upon death</li> <li>• Righteous Jews, Christians, and Muslims can all go to Paradise</li> </ul>
<b>Beliefs about Icons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians often have icons or statues to help them focus their prayers;</li> <li>• Icons are scripture in image rather than the written word</li> </ul>	<p>God should not be represented by any physical object or artifact.</p>	<p>It is disrespectful to draw pictures or show images of Allah or Muhammad.</p>