

The Differences And Similarities of Christianity And Buddhism.

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RELS 2305: World Religions

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May 12, 2020

### Abstract

The beliefs for Christianity and Buddhism share similarities in the way that they want everyone to live in peace with one another. However, they have many differences that make them polar opposites in their approach to this philosophy. Buddhism has a more passive approach to its ideas whereas Christianity is more active in its commandments requiring one to lay down their lives for one God.

1. What were their beliefs?
2. What were their rules?
3. How do they compare and contrast?

Buddhism and Christianity have many things that are different and similar. They both act as a place of comfort and peace for both sides and want everyone to love one another, regardless of who they are or where they came from. Despite their similar ideologies, they have many differences in their applications.

### The Differences And Similarities of Christianity And Buddhism.

The book, *World Religions Today* (Sixth Edition) has a chapter fully regarding Christianity. In Christianity, there is only one God, “the God Who made all things and rules over all history” (Esposito, Fasching, Lewis 126). Those who follow this religion also believe in the Trinity, which includes the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the Son who came down to earth and died to take on all the sins of the world so that mankind may be reconciled with God the Father. He rose again after three days, and ascended to heaven after being on earth for forty days. He is going to come back again to judge everyone, living and dead, on the final days.

A core belief of Christianity is sin, a misdeed against God. “Sin has two dimensions: Idolatry and injustice. Idolatry is more than worshiping the image of false deities, it is treating anything that is not God as if it were more important than God. Idolaters shift the focus from God to their own selfish desires, like wealth and power, which leads to injustice.” (Esposito, Fasching, Lewis 126) Injustice is the absence of fair measure and circumstances that favors one person more than the other.

### What Were Their Beliefs?

Christians’ ultimate goal is to draw closer to God in their relationship. They are instructed to “seek first his kingdom” (Matt. 6:33, New International Version) and He will give

them everything they need. While the blessings are not their ultimate reason for following Him, God blesses those He loves because He Himself is the ultimate form of love and goodness.

In Buddhism, to achieve Nirvana, “humanity comprises persons of different kinds who have different forms of karma. According to whether they are ordinary persons, learners, or adapts, each is to be instructed differently. Regardless of an individual's level, to be born as human at all instead of as an animal or divinity is a rare opportunity. A human life is not to be wasted; rather, people should live with purpose with an awareness of the reality of karma and make efforts to get closer to the highest goal, Nirvana.” (Esposito, Fasching, Lewis 348)

#### What Were Their Rules?

In Christianity, there are multiple commandments that Christians are to keep in order to show the love of God. However, the primary ones that many people remember are the Ten Commandments, which God gave to His people after freeing them from slavery in Egypt. They are found in Exodus 20:1-17 (New International Version) and are as follows:

“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it, you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female

servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.

Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Buddhism does not refer to its ideas as rules, but rather as precepts to not be violated. The regular ones are:

"To not destroy life intentionally, (kindness and compassion). Not to steal (generosity/renunciation). Not to have sexual misconduct (seeking joyous satisfaction with one's spouse). Not to lie (loving the truth, seeking it, pursuing, discernment). Not to become intoxicated (mindfulness, contentment, awareness via meditation)."

There were three extra ones added during holy days to observe in households, which were:

"Not to eat (solid) food after noon. Not to view shows, dancing, or singing or wear garlands, perfumes, or jewelry. Not to sleep on high or wide beds."

### How Do They Compare And Contrast?

Both Jesus Christ and the Buddha wanted to change current social-religious rituals that would have no spiritual development. In the chapel, Christ attacked the bankers; Buddha opposed the Brahmins' caste structure and hypocrisy. Both taught to love and respect one another

and not to look out only for one's own selfish desires. They do not believe that material objects provide happiness; that is found is beyond this life. Christians believe in one chance at receiving eternal life through Jesus Christ, while Buddhists believe in multiple attempts at achieving Nirvana without Buddha himself. Meditation is a primary part of Buddhism, while Christianity focuses on prayer to better oneself. Buddhists do not believe in a creator, while God creating the heavens and the earth is the center of the belief. God provides much justice in the Old Testament, while justice is not covered in Buddhism. Both instructed by its own power of love, to conquer their powers of hatred. The Buddhist belief is that hatred cannot overcome hatred, while Jesus says to love your enemies.

Christians and Buddhists have very interesting views about what they believe. Even though these religions are different in one's nature, they are still what helps people get through life and their problems. No matter what religion someone is, I believe that as long as you feel like you are doing the right thing for you and enjoying the most out of life, that is what is most important.

### Bibliography

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