

Christianity and Religions: Monotheistic Religions

	Biblical Christianity	Eastern Orthodoxy	Islam	Judaism	Roman Catholicism
Founder, date, location, and key information	Jesus Christ, AD 30–33, in what is modern-day Israel Christianity is the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.	Paul and the apostles, according to Eastern Orthodox believers, first century AD, southern Europe	Muhammad, 570–632, Arabia Muhammad was the last of Allah’s prophets. Islam is divided into two main groups, Sunni and Shiite.	Judaism grew out of the true Old Testament religion and is a false religion. Today, most rabbinic Jews recognize the Talmud as Scripture. Thus, they do not live out the books of Moses directly, but instead interpret them through the teachings of rabbis. Judaism is split into many different groups.	Peter (Jesus’ disciple), according to Catholics, was the first pope and founder of the Catholic Church.
Key writings	Bible The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.	Bible, Apocrypha	Qur’an (or Koran) Muslims accept the biblical Law, the Psalms, and the Gospels (called the Gospel of Jesus or the Injil) but are told that Christians and Jews have corrupted these books.	Torah, Talmud The Torah is the first five books of the Old Testament, or the Law, which is part of the Tanakh (the Old Testament). The Talmud is an explanation of the Old Testament and is also important. Writings by wise men and teachings of each sect are significant as well.	Bible, Apocrypha
Who is God?	God is one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), also called the Trinity. He is not three gods. God is a spirit (without a physical body), transcendent and immanent, eternal, and holy (set apart from evil). One day God will judge humans based on their works.	There is one God, the Creator, Who is a Trinity.	There is one god, Allah. Muslims believe the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is polytheism, and making anything equal with Allah is the worst sin in Islam.	God is a spirit, but there is no Trinity. Orthodox Jews believe God is knowable (personal), omnipotent, and everlasting.	There is one God, the Creator, Who is a Trinity.
Who is Jesus?	Jesus is and has always been fully God and the second member of the Trinity. He was not created; He is eternal. When He came to earth, He was born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human at the same time. He is sinless. His death and resurrection paid the penalty for man’s sin. Those who believe on Him have eternal life.	Jesus is a member of the Trinity, the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human, and His death on the cross paid the penalty for sin. He was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. One day He will return to judge mankind.	Jesus is not God, just a respected prophet and a teacher from Allah. He was, however, born of a virgin and did not sin. Jesus was crucified. He will return before Judgment Day, possibly to turn Christians to Islam.	Jesus was either a good teacher who was murdered or a false messiah. He is not the Messiah nor the Son of God and did not rise from the dead.	Jesus is a member of the Trinity, the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully human, and His death on the cross paid the penalty for sin. He was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven. One day he will return to judge mankind.
Who is the Holy Spirit?	The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit fills the Christian and guides, teaches, and comforts.	The Holy Spirit is a member of the Trinity. He comes from the Father and is given to believers. The Holy Spirit gives them the love of God in their hearts, spiritual gifts, and empowers them to serve God.	Allah has or is a spirit, but there is no separate person known as the Holy Spirit.	The Holy Spirit is another name for God working in events and people on earth. The Holy Spirit is not a person but merely God in a different form.	The Holy Spirit is God and part of the Trinity. He works actively in the hearts of believers, and His main ministry is to comfort and guide them.

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Salvation	God the Father provided salvation for all people by sending God the Son to earth to live righteously and die in the place of all, who deserve death for their sin. Salvation is received when one repents of sin and trusts the Son for salvation. Those who trust only in what Jesus has done for them are declared righteous before God and receive the Holy Spirit to help them live lives pleasing to God.	Salvation is obtained by being baptized into the Eastern Orthodox Church.	A person must do more good works than bad works to try to get to heaven, but in the end Allah can decide either way.	A person must obey the Law, pray, and repent of sins to be saved.	Christ died for man’s sin. Salvation is received by faith in Him and through baptism. It is kept by doing penance, doing good works, and receiving Communion (the Eucharist).
What happens after death?	At the end, all people will be judged. Those who are declared righteous in Christ will live and sinlessly serve God for all eternity in resurrected bodies. Those who did not turn to Christ for salvation will receive just punishment from God for all eternity in hellfire.	The soul is separated from the body and goes either to Hades (“outer darkness,” not a literal place, but a condition of having rejected God) or to paradise. Eventually, the soul and the body will be reunited and go to either Hades or paradise after the final judgment.	A bodily resurrection will take place. A person will either go to eternal torment or to paradise. Paradise is a garden filled with <i>houris</i> (young women).	A bodily resurrection will take place. Those who have obeyed God will live with Him forever, but those who have not will suffer.	Souls of the faithful go to heaven, or if they are not good enough yet, they go to purgatory to be purified. The souls of bad people go immediately to hell.
How do people know right from wrong?	Right and wrong are revealed through the Bible, God’s Word.	Right and wrong are revealed in the teachings of the church, the Bible, and sacred writings.	Right and wrong are revealed in the Qur’an and the Hadith.	Right and wrong are revealed in the Torah (Law) that God gave to Moses.	Right and wrong are revealed in the teachings of the church, the Bible, and sacred writings.
Truth	God Himself is the foundation of all truth.	Scripture and other sacred writings as interpreted by the Orthodox Church reveal truth.			Scripture and other sacred writings as interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church reveal truth.
Evil	Evil is anything that is not perfect and holy as God is.	Evil is anything that is not perfect and holy as God is.			Evil is anything that is not perfect and holy as God is.
Where do laws come from?	God built His laws into the world He created, and He has, over time, revealed them to man. Laws also come from government, and if they do not conflict with God’s laws, they should be obeyed.	Law is not a major focus in Eastern Orthodoxy, though it would also ground them in God.	Laws come first from Allah. Laws also come from government, and if they do not conflict with the Qur’an, they should be obeyed.	Laws come first from God and were given in the Torah. Laws also come from government, and if they do not conflict with the Torah, they should be obeyed.	God built His laws into the world He created, and He has, over time, revealed them to man.
Can miracles happen?	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

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What is the meaning of human history?	The purpose of history is for God to work out His plan of redemption, specifically the coming of His kingdom.		The purpose of history is to draw attention to Allah.	The meaning of history is to point toward God and His plan.	
How does man get to know God?	Faith in Jesus as Savior is the beginning of knowing God. Prayer and Bible study increase our knowledge of Him.	Man can know God by following the teachings of the Orthodox Church and becoming “closer to” God. Some Orthodox followers believe that man can become God (“deification”).	Submission to Allah is the focus, not knowing Allah.	Scripture is the key to knowing God.	Man knows God through natural revelation and through special revelation mediated through Scripture and the tradition of the Church.
What is a human being?	a creation of God, in His image, for the purpose of having a relationship with Him and worshiping Him	a creation of God, in His image, for the purpose of having a relationship with Him and worshiping Him	a creation of Allah	a creation of God	a creation of God, in His image, for the purpose of having a relationship with Him and worshiping Him
Are humans basically good or evil? How bad is the flaw?	Humans are basically evil. They are so evil that they can never do enough good deeds to make up for their sins, and God must send them to hell as punishment for sin. Faith in Jesus is the only way to avoid eternity in hell.	Humans are born with a weakened will, but they bear no guilt for sin until they freely choose to sin.	There is no doctrine of original sin, so humans are basically good.	There is no doctrine of original sin, so humans are basically good.	Humans are born sinners. They are born guilty, prone to sin, and in need of salvation.
Is it possible to know anything at all?	yes Everything in the Bible is absolutely and completely true. Also, God made humans to rule over the world, so it is possible for them to learn about themselves and God’s creation through observation and reasoning.	yes Eastern Orthodoxy places emphasis on knowledge through revelation from God.	yes Man can know things by recognizing revelation from Allah.	yes Man can know things by recognizing revelation from God.	yes Roman Catholics believe in both general and special revelation.
What is real?	God and all He made	God and all He made	Allah and all he made	God and all He made	God and all He made
Origin of what is real	Everything came from God, the Creator. He created the world ex nihilo (out of nothing). He simply spoke and things were created.	God has always existed; all else came into being by His creative word.	Everything came from Allah, the creator. He created the world ex nihilo.	Everything came from God, the Creator. He created the world ex nihilo.	God has always existed; all else came into being by His creative word.
Other facts, beliefs, or practices	Worship together in churches is emphasized. Usually there are only two symbolic events: baptism and Communion (also known as the Lord’s Supper). Telling others about Jesus/Christianity is strongly emphasized.	Eastern Orthodox followers use icons for worshiping saints and believe that when they take the Eucharist (Communion) that the bread and wine is truly changed into the body and blood of Jesus.	Muslims go to a mosque (like a church) to pray and listen to teachings from the Qur’an. To be a good Muslim, a person must confess that only Allah is the true god, pray five times a day while facing Mecca, travel to Mecca once in his life, fast (eat very little) during the month of Ramadan (around October), and give money. These things are known as the five pillars of Islam.	Jewish people meet in a synagogue (like a church) between Friday evening and Saturday evening, which is their Sabbath. They have many holy days and festivals.	Catholics believe that Mary (Jesus’ mother) was a perpetual virgin and treat her as a saint and believe that when they take the Eucharist (Communion) that the bread and wine is truly changed into the body and blood of Jesus.