

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON OF WORLD RELIGIONS

	JUDAISM	CATHOLICISM	EASTERN ORTHODOXY	PROTESTANTISM	ISLAM	HINDUISM	BUDDHISM	MORMONISM	JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
FOUNDER & ORIGIN	Abraham Canaan ca. 2000 B.C. Received revelation from God to settle in Canaan / descended from Abraham through Isaac; liberated from slavery in Egypt ca. 1275 B.C.	Jesus Christ Jerusalem ca. 33 A.D. Developed from Judaism (fulfillment of) / headquarters moved to Rome with martyrdoms of Apostles Peter and Paul there ca. 64 A.D.	Jesus Christ Jerusalem ca. 33 A.D. Split with Catholicism in Great Schism of 1054 A.D. over political and theological disagreements / established headquarters in Constantinople	Martin Luther Germany 1517 A.D. Split with Catholicism over theological disagreements on grace, works, sacraments, saints, & purgatory / continued to divide into numerous sects	Muhammad Mecca 622 A.D. Claimed to receive vision from Archangel Gabriel / descended from Abraham through Ishmael	No single founder Indus River Valley 3000 B.C. Synthesis of various indigenous religious beliefs and practices in South Asia / name derived from Indus River	Buddha Northern India ca. 500 B.C. Grew out of Hinduism	Joseph Smith New York 1830 A.D. Claimed to receive vision from Angel Moroni / split from mainline Protestantism	Charles Taze Russell Pittsburgh 1870 A.D. Grew out of Bible Study movement / split from mainline Protestantism
VIEW OF GOD	Monotheistic: God of Abraham (<i>YahWeH</i>) / do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah	Monotheistic: God of Abraham (Blessed Trinity) / Jesus is the Son of God, true God and true man	Monotheistic: God of Abraham (Blessed Trinity) / Jesus is the Son of God, true God and true man	Monotheistic: God of Abraham (Blessed Trinity) / Jesus is the Son of God, true God and true man	Monotheistic: God of Abraham / <i>Allah</i> / view Jesus as a prophet, but not the Son of God	Polytheistic: One universal god (Unmanifest Reality), along with various other gods	Polytheistic	Polytheistic: View Father and Son as separate gods, believe men can become gods	Monotheistic: God of Abraham / <i>Jehovah</i> / reject the Trinity & divinity of Jesus
VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE	Created in image and likeness of God with free will, capacity for good and evil	Created in image and likeness of God with free will, capacity for good and evil	Created in image and likeness of God with free will, capacity for good and evil	Created in image and likeness of God with free will, but totally corrupted nature	Created with free will to obey Allah / human beings are servants of Allah, not children	All living creatures possess a soul (<i>atman</i>), indistinct from the supreme spirit (<i>Brahman</i>)	Nature flows from moral actions (<i>karma</i>) in one's past life	Children of God with free will, capacity for good and evil / ability to become gods	Created by God with free will
VIEW OF SUFFERING & PROBLEM OF EVIL	Consequences of sin of Adam and Eve / divine punishment for breaking of the covenant	Consequences of sin of Adam and Eve / God does not cause suffering or evil, but allows it to bring about greater good	Consequences of sin of Adam and Eve / God does not cause suffering or evil, but allows it to bring about greater good	Consequences of sin of Adam and Eve / divine punishment for sin or lack of faith	Divine punishment from Allah for pride	No standard concept of evil / suffering is self-caused (<i>karma</i> from this life or past life)	Normal part of life / nature of suffering determined by how one responds to it	Consequences of sin of Adam and Eve	Consequences of sin of Adam and Eve
SACRED BOOKS & RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY	Torah <i>TaNaKh</i> (Hebrew Scriptures) <i>Talmud</i> (based on oral tradition)	Sacred Scripture (<i>Septuagint</i>), Apostolic Tradition & the Magisterium of the Church	Sacred Scripture (<i>Septuagint</i>), Apostolic Tradition & authority of bishops & councils	Sacred Scripture (<i>Jamnian Canon</i> , seven less OT books), reject Apostolic Tradition & Church authority	<i>Quran</i>	<i>Vedas</i> and <i>Agamas</i>	Different sacred texts depending on sect	Bible & Book of Mormon	New World Translation of the Bible
VIEW OF SALVATION	Nationalistic more than individualistic: awaiting the Messiah to restore Israel and establish new covenant	Individualistic: redeemed by Christ / saved by the grace of God through repentance, Baptism, faith and works	Individualistic: redeemed by Christ / saved by the grace of God through repentance, Baptism, faith and works	Individualistic: redeemed by Christ / saved by the grace of God through faith alone (works irrelevant)	Individualistic: one must live in a way that is pleasing to Allah	Individualistic: Reincarnation / endless cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution	Individualistic: Reincarnation with ultimate goal of reaching state of <i>Nirvana</i>	Individualistic: redeemed by Christ / people lived as spirits with God before birth, return to God after death	Individualistic: redeemed by Christ / 144,000 go to heaven, all others remain on earth / deny existence of hell
CORE BELIEFS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One God • Eventual coming of Messiah • Ten Commandments • Mosaic Law (613 commandments) • Saturday Sabbath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One God (Trinity) • Jesus is the Son of God and Messiah • Ten Commandments • Sunday Sabbath • Seven Sacraments • Veneration of Mary and the Saints • Purgatory (final purification before entering heaven) • Primacy of the Pope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One God (Trinity) • Jesus is the Son of God and Messiah • Ten Commandments • Sunday Sabbath • Seven Sacraments • Veneration of Mary and the Saints • Purgatory (final purification before entering heaven) • Pope one bishop among others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multitude of sects, no clearly defined set of beliefs • One God (Trinity) • Jesus is the Son of God and Messiah • Ten Commandments • Sunday Sabbath • Limited sacraments in some sects • Reject the Saints, and the Pope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many different sects: Sunni and Shi'a • Five Pillars (profession of faith, ritual prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca) • Pray to Allah five times a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clearly defined set of beliefs • Three realms of existence • Three cycles of creation (Reincarnation) • <i>Karma</i>: universal law of cause & effect • <i>Dharma</i>: law of righteous living 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clearly defined set of beliefs • Reincarnation • Seek to end suffering through enlightenment and meditation • Four Noble Truths • Eightfold Path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong apocalyptic expectations • Millennialism: literal thousand-year reign of Christ on earth 	