

World Religions/Beliefs

Elements of Faith	Jewish	Muslim	New Age	Sikh
Supreme Being	Monotheistic, Personal, Deliverer	Strict monotheism Allah	No personal God All is one (monism) Everything is God (pantheism)	One God, called "true name" (<i>sat Guru</i>)
Key Figure in History	Abraham, Moses	Muhammad	No single person, many gurus, teachers, prophets	Nanek
Teachings on Christ The Person	Most: rabbi, not Messiah Some: Redeemer of Gentiles	A major prophet; not divine but taught humans Golden Rule	A great teacher; a prophet An avatar of the divine	A holy man, but not divine
His Work	Most consider him itinerant Jewish teacher	Did not die on cross but was taken into heaven	Achieved and showed the way to ultimate consciousness	Taught humans Golden Rule; his death not vicarious
Holy Spirit	Another name for God			
Holy Writings	Hebrew Bible (<i>tanach</i>), Torah Prophets, writings	Quran (Koran)	Extremely numerous	Adi Granth. Considered inspired and authoritative; other whole writings respected
Doctrine of Humanity	Created in image of God; free, self-determining	Made by God with ability to follow will of Allah	All are God with a potential to discover the ultimate within	Each person a soul (and part of universal soul) who has been reborn into present life
Doctrine of Sin	Rebellion Unfaithfulness to God	Non-submissiveness to will of Allah	No real concept of sin, only ignoring the God/the ultimate within	Choosing to live in self-centeredness; sensuous desires preferred to ego-abandoning submission to God
Doctrine of Salvation	Repentance Trust in God Obedience	Works of repentance and submission to Allah as shown through five pillars: perfect faith, prayer, almsgiving the fast, pilgrimage	Change your consciousness to discover the ultimate within through yoga, trance channeling, past-life regressions, harnessing psychic energy, etc.	Attaining liberation (release) from cycle of death/rebirth through path of devotion
Meeting Site	Synagogue	Mosque; masjid	Various; retreat centers are popular	Temple (gurdwara)
Life After Death	Range of views: 1. Reward or punishment in heaven or hell 2. Vagueness 3. Afterlife denied	Paradise, Hell	Cycles of reincarnation until union with/reabsorption of soul into the divine	Reincarnation (transmigration of souls) until one attains individuality—extinguishing absorption into God

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Elements of Faith	American Indian Religion	Hindu	Buddhist	Protestant*
Supreme Being	Personal God, creator, generally beneficent; empowers lesser beings	Polytheism; Major Triad: Brahma, Shiva, Vishnu	Southern: irrelevant Northern: Buddhahood	One God, revealed and experienced as Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
Key Figure in History	None	None	Gautama	Jesus, the Christ
Teachings on Christ The Person His Work	No interest in person or work of Christ	Incarnation of God (avatar) One among many; not unique Jesus was a great religious teacher	a teacher who may possess Buddhahood. One among many	One divine person, eternal, with two natures, divine and human. Supreme example of God's love for humankind and His intended pattern of living. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself
Holy Spirit	God's presence and influence, active in world, particularly in nature			Eternal member of Trinity, guide of churches and Christians
Holy Writings	Oral and written tradition, folklore; accumulated wisdom of tribe	Vedas, Upanishads epids, Puranas	Sutras	Bible (Old and New Testaments). Authoritative, unique, inspired word of God. Norm of faith and practice
Doctrine of Humanity	Humans subordinate to supernatural forces and spirit-beings	Divine, eternal soul part of God. Physical body has little worth	All in flux. One lifetime for each person, composed of skandra (parts); but many lives for the parts	Created in God's image. Since Adam's fall, sin is inherent, all relationships are damaged beyond human ability to repair
Doctrine of Sin	Acts that upset harmony of nature and/or disrupt welfare of community (tribe)	Ignorance of oneness with God. Violations of caste (class) rules	Desire that results in suffering	Willful rebellion against God
Doctrine of Salvation	Well-being of individual and tribe; gained by prayer, pledges and sacrifice that win attention and help of supernatural forces/departed elders	Liberation of soul from cycles of reincarnation in physical body through knowledge, works, or love and devotion of chosen deity (yoga)	Perceive truth in four "Noble Truths," follow Eight-Fold Path the middle way. Northern: includes faith in the Buddha	God's gift through Christ's atonement, received by grace through personal faith in Christ
Meeting Site	Human/natural "shrines"	Temple/home altars	Temple/home altars	Church
Life After Death	Existence in life patterned after this world, but free of pain and suffering. Wicked forgotten or annihilated	Cycles of reincarnation until union with/reabsorption of soul into God	Southern: Dissolution at death, no continuing life. Northern: Pure Land	Eternal communion with God (heaven); eternal separation from God (hell)

*Protestant refers to the traditional Reformation churches (Lutheran, Presbyterian, etc.) as well as to Methodists and others from the "Free church" heritage; Baptists, who differ only in polity and emphases, not in basic tenets, are included in this group.

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Elements of Faith	Roman Catholic	Jehovah's Witness	Mormon	Worldwide Church of God
Supreme Being	Same as Protestant	Jehovah, Unitarian view	God the Father an exalted man with physical body	Godhead is "family" not limited to three persons. Only God and Jesus so far.
Key Figure in History	Jesus, the Christ	Charles Taze Russell	Joseph Smith Jr.	Herbert W. Armstrong
Teachings on Christ The Person His Work	Same as Protestant	Stages of Existence: 1. Archangel Michael 2. Jesus, perfect man, became Messiah at baptism; 3. After spiritual resurrection, became Michael again. Christ's ransom sacrifice made salvation possible	Jesus is the spiritual and physical offspring of God by procreation. Jesus' death guarantees immortality to all regardless of faith, but atonement must be completed by works	Eternal, but subordinate to God. A perfect man who became Christ at baptism, Son of God at resurrection His death removes only sins committed before baptism.
Holy Spirit	Same as Protestant	God's impersonal force	Spiritual body in human form. Not omnipresent	Impersonal power from Godhead enabling believers to obey god
Holy Writings	Bible inspired and authoritative; canon includes seven O.T. apocryphal books. Tradition reflects and interprets Scripture	Bible (New World translation of Holy Scriptures) as interpreted by Watch Tower Society	Bible (except errors); <i>Book of Mormon</i> ; <i>Doctrine and Covenants</i> ; <i>Pearl of Great Price</i> . Also revelations of prophets	Bible verbally inspired, but must be interpreted by one of "God's true servants"
Doctrine of Humanity	Persons able to respond to God with love or rejection; unable alone to avoid all sin	Created in God's image; a soul, not immortal; capable of responding to God	Pre-existent spiritual offspring of God, basically good, gods in embryo	Created with evil nature, no immortal soul. Anglo-Saxons chosen people
Doctrine of Sin	Guilt of sin inherited (Mary uniquely excepted); basic sin is pride	Willful rebellion against Jehovah	Disobedience to God's laws. Adam's fall, in God's plan, caused loss of immortality. Each is responsible for own sin	Disobedience. Breaking any of Ten Commandments, especially not keeping Sabbath (Sat. worship)
Doctrine of Salvation	God's gift of grace through Christ's atonement. Received by faith through the sacraments administered by Church	Faith in Jehovah plus works (baptism, moral life, faithfulness in Kingdom Hall activities); those ignorant of Jehovah given chance to believe during millennial period	Exaltation or godhood through obedience to Mormon teachings; repentance, faith, baptism, priesthood, endowments, celestial marriage, faithful tithing. Baptism for dead saves some non-Mormons	Process completed at final resurrection. Baptism and obedience to God's law necessary. Only Jesus born again so far; new birth and immortality at resurrection. Goal: to become divine member of family of God.
Meeting Site	Church	Kingdom Hall	Ward	Church
Life After Death	Purgatory, intermediate state of cleansing before heaven. Heaven/hell same as Protestant	144,000 elect reign with Christ in Kingdom of God (heaven). Other JWs on glorified paradise earth. Annihilation for all who reject Jehovah	One of three kingdoms: 1. Celestial—(renewed earth) where men become gods or angels 2. Terrestrial—planet for righteous non-Mormons 3. Telestial—planet for wicked Second death for Satan and those who commit unpardonable sins	World Tomorrow: New Roman Empire to bring tribulation before millennium of peace on earth when unbelievers have opportunity to believe and obey. Renewed earth, ruled by Old/New Testament believers, becomes Kingdom of God. Annihilation for unbelievers. No hell

World Religions/Beliefs

Elements of Faith	Church of Scientology	Unification Church	Unity	The Way International
Supreme Being	Supreme being affirmed but exact nature determined by each person	One person only. Dual characteristics (positive/negative, male/female)	Impersonal principle universal intelligence and love	Unitarian, Eternal spirit
Key Figure in History	L. Ron Hubbard	Sun Myung Moon	Charles and Myrtle Fillmore	Victor Paul Wierwille
Teachings on Christ The Person His Work	Great teacher who fully realized his personal divinity. One savior among many who teach how to be "clear"	Perfect man who was faithful to God and attained deity; not equal to God. He was to restore relationship between humans and God by marriage. Mission incomplete because crucified before marriage; spiritual, not physical, savior	Jesus was a man inhabited by the Christ-spirit. Jesus was a way-shower whose crucifixion not sacrificial, but released grace (inspiration)	Pre-existence denied, not co-equal with God. Son of God but not God the Son. Perfect man (earthly divinity denied). Ransom death was legal transaction making salvation possible
Holy Spirit			Impersonal idea	Another name for God, not distinct from God
Holy Writings	Selected writings of L. Ron Hubbard	Bible, as interpreted in <i>Divine Principle</i> (Moon's basic teachings)	Bible as interpreted by Fillmores Also revere other inspirational writings	King James Version of Bible as "worked" (studied/explained) by Wierwille
Doctrine of Humanity	Immortal divine soul, basically good in three parts: soul (thetan), mind, body (physical)	Created in image of God (duality: male and female)	All possess the Christ-spirit within	Body, soul and spirit, but not immortal
Doctrine of Sin	Engrams (learned behavior or conflicts from past) prevent individuals from realizing own divinity	Broken relationship with God. Humans related to Satan as result of sexual sin in the Fall.	Failure to realize and live up to one's divine potential	Adam's fall caused loss of human spirit and broken relationship. Little emphasis on individual sins
Doctrine of Salvation	Dianetic counseling (auditing) leads individual to become "clear" of engrams, attain full human potential, become fully aware of personal divinity	Accept Christ for spiritual salvation, Lord of Second Advent for physical salvation. Pay personal indemnity (works) for self, ancestors, world, etc. Unification marriage required for physical salvation	Overcoming lower human impulses, increasing awareness of God within (Unity), living up to one's divine potential	Human spirit lost in Fall regained through faith in Christ. Spiritual maturity, manifested through speaking in tongues, comes through renewed mind. Sinless perfection attainable in this life
Meeting Site	Church or mission	Church	Church (Center)	Twig Fellowship
Life After Death	Reincarnation of soul (thetan) until it attains state of spiritual awareness and liberation from matter, energy, space and time	All humans will become divine in earthly Kingdom of God. Perfect relationship with God restored	"This World" focus. Tendency toward belief in reincarnation. Ultimate union with impersonal God	Soul sleep for all between death and resurrection. Finally, heaven or hell

World Religions/Beliefs

Elements of Faith	Church of Christ, Scientist	Seventh-Day Adventist	Baha'i World Faith	
Supreme Being	Impersonal: Life, Truth, Love, Omnipotence and goodness of God stressed	One personal God; trinitarian (three persons in one)	One God who is unknowable except through manifestations	
Key Figure in History	Mary Baker Eddy	Ellen G. White	Baha'u'llah	
Teachings on Christ The Person	Jesus, separate from Christ, a human being who, more than any other, shows "Christ-ideal"	Divine Son of God, personal savior	Son of God but not divine. One of God's manifestations, which include Krishna, Buddha, Abraham, Moses, Muhammad, Baha'u'llah (Glory of God).	
His Work	Jesus is "Way-shower," Healer	Christ entered heavenly sanctuary in 1844 to judge faithful and to complete work of atonement prior to Second Coming	Jesus is great prophet-educator for his age	
Holy Spirit	Christian Science church	Eternal member of Trinity; Comforter and Guide		
Holy Writings	Bible, as interpreted by Mary Baker Eddy in <i>Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures</i>	Bible White's writings believed inspired auxiliary counsel	Most Holy Book (Kirab-i-Aqdas)	
Doctrine of Humanity	In God's image and likeness, therefore divine. Spirit as opposed to matter, which is unreal	Created in image of God, all have sinned. Each person is a soul, not immortal	Soul created by God, basically good. Men and women of all races equal	
Doctrine of Sin	Illusion of the reality of matter, evil and death	Willful rebellion against God	Lack of knowledge brings disobedience to divine commands	
Doctrine of Salvation	Casting out illusions of reality of matter, sin, evil and death in favor of the "all-reality" of spirit	Faith in Christ. Continued obedience evidenced by baptist, tithing, keeping dietary laws and Ten Commandments, esp. Saturday as Sabbath	Through faith in God and Baha'u'llah and good works toward world unity and peace	
Meeting Site	Church	Church	Spiritual Assembly	
Life After Death	Since there is no death, move onto another plane toward fulfillment in Love, Light, Truth	Soul sleep; faithful resurrected to 1,000 years in heaven (at Second Coming). After final judgment, earth renewed as eternal home of redeemed. Wicked annihilated	Immortal soul; individual retains identity, progresses to presence of God. Heaven: rapid progression to God; Hell: slow progression to God	