

Christianity, Cult's and Religions – A comparative Look at the World we live in.

During this study, we'll look at 8 distinctive areas that separate and define each of 20 different religions or cults that exist in the world today. This is not to be considered an exhaustive study nor is it to be considered inclusive of all the world's religions or cults. But it is only an overview of some of the major influences in the world today. There are many more sub-cultures and "sects" of each of these that we will not have the time to discuss. Therefore let me encourage each of you to determine to investigate and learn for yourselves what those influences are and how they may affect your personal Christian belief system and Christian walk with God.

Christianity:

Founder: Jesus Christ

Date: About 30-33 AD

Location: Palestine (Israel today)

Followers: Called Christians

Key Writings: The Holy Bible – written in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament). *Heb 4:12; 2 Tim 3:16; John 1:1*

Who is God?: One God in three persons (the Trinity) not three gods. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God typically refers to the first person, God the father. The Holy Spirit is without a physical being, and Jesus, the Son, was given a body to live among us. God, the trinity, is personal and is involved in our personal lives. He is eternal, changeless, holy, loving, just, righteous, and perfect. *Romans 1:18-20*

Who is Jesus?: Jesus is God, the second person in the Trinity. As such, we refer to Him as God the Son. He has always been and was not created, just like God the Father. He is fully God and fully man (the two natures joined, not mixed). As the second person of the Trinity, He is co-equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. It is critical of our faith to understand that Jesus became a man by the union of the Virgin Mary and the Holy Spirit. Therefore Jesus is the ONLY way to the Father, salvation, and eternal life in heaven. He lived a sinless life while on the earth. *John 10:30; 17:11;*

Who is the Holy Spirit?: The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is a person, not just a force or energy field. He comforts, grieves, reproves, convicts, guide, teaches, and fills Christians. He is not the Father, nor is He the Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Holy Spirit. *Resist – Acts 7:51; Blaspheme – Matt 12:31-32; Grieve – Eph 4:30; Quench – 1 Thes 5:19; Obey – Acts 5:32; 2 Tim 1:14; Matt 1:18; John 14:26;*

How to be Saved: Salvation is by God's grace, not by an individual's good works. Salvation must be received by faith. People must believe in their hearts that Jesus died for their sin and sins, and physically rose again, which is the assurance of

forgiveness and resurrection of the body. This is God's loving plan to forgive sinful people. *Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:13 Eph 2:8-9; Acts 4:12; Romans 1:16; Titus 2:11*

What happens after Death?: Believers go to be with Jesus. After Death, all people await the final judgment. Both saved and lost people will be resurrected. Those who are saved will live with Jesus in heaven. Those who are lost will suffer the torment of eternal separation from God in Hell. Jesus' bodily resurrection guarantees believers that they too, will be resurrected and receive new immortal bodies. *1 Thes 4:13-14;*

Other facts, beliefs, and practices: Group worship usually is in churches. There are no secret rites. Baptism and the Lord's Supper called Communion, are regularly practiced. Active voluntary missionary efforts are encouraged. Aid to those in need such as the poor, widows, orphans, and less fortunate. Christians believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah promised to Israel in the Old Testament, the Tanakh. Jesus said His followers would be known by their love for one another.