

Christianity and Islam: Comparison of Beliefs

	<u>Christianity</u>	<u>Islam</u>
Concept of deity:	Most believe in the Trinity; three persons in one Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	God (Allah) is one and indivisible. They believe in a strict monotheism. " <i>Allah</i> " means God in Arabic.
Status of Yeshua of Nazareth (Jesus Christ):	Generally considered the Son of God, worshiped as God; part of the Trinity.	Very highly respected as the second-last prophet.
Birth of Yeshua:	Conservatives: virgin conception. Liberals: conventional birth.	Virgin conception.
Death of Yeshua:	Executed by Roman Army circa 30 <u>CE</u> .	Was not killed, crucified, or suffered death. Muslims believe that he ascended alive into heaven. ²
Yeshua's location	Ascended into Heaven	Ascended into Heaven
Identity of "another helper" or "comforter" * (paraclete)	Holy Spirit	Muhammad
Second coming of Jesus	Conservatives: expect in near future. Liberals: varied.	Anticipate the second coming in the future.
Status of Adam:	Disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden.	Free from all major sins and faults. Some regard him as a prophet.
Main holy book:	Bible ⁶	Qur'an ⁷
Original languages:	Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek.	Arabic.
Status of the holy book:	Conservatives: the inerrant Word of God. Liberals: a historical spiritual document.	God's word and final revelation, dictated by angel Gabriel.
Additional guidance:	Writings of the leaders of the early Church. For <u>Roman Catholics</u> : church tradition.	The Hadith -- sayings of Muhammad (pbuh).
Ethic of reciprocity (Golden rule):	<i>"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."</i> Matthew 7:12	<i>"Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."</i> Fourth Hadith of an-Nawawi ¹³
A baby's status at birth	Various views. One is that a baby is born with a sin nature, separated from God. God needs to grant grace so that he may be saved.	All babies are born in a pure state of submission to Allah. However, as they mature they are often taught other beliefs by their parents and their culture.
Life after death:	Either <u>Heaven or Hell</u> . Catholics believe in <u>Purgatory</u> as a third state.	Heaven or Hell.
Basis of determining destination after death:	There is no consensus in Christianity. <u>Different faith groups hold Various diverse beliefs</u> : trusting Jesus as Lord and Savior, good works, church sacraments, baptism, avoiding certain actions.	Once they reach puberty, his/her account of deeds is opened in Paradise. To attain paradise, at death, their good deeds (helping others, testifying to the truth of God, leading a virtuous life) must outweigh their evil deeds.
Confessing sins:	Roman Catholic: to God or Jesus, either directly or through a priest; Others: to God or Jesus	To Allah
Probably the most misunderstood term:	<i>Immaculate Conception</i> : Roman Catholics believe that the conception of the Virgin Mary, circa 20 <u>BCE</u> , was without sin. Many incorrectly relate it to Yeshua's' conception.	<i>Jihad</i> : internal, personal struggle towards the attainment of a noble goal. Many incorrectly equate it to " <i>holy war</i> ."

Meaning of the name:	Believer in Christ (a Greek word meaning Messiah).	Submission to the will of God.
Name of a believer:	Christian.	Muslim.
Date of founding:	circa 30 <u>CE</u> . ₁	622 CE. ₂
Name of founder(s):	Yeshua of Nazareth (aka Jesus Christ, (pbuh) ₃ & Paul.	Most religious historians credit Muhammad (pbuh) as the founder. ₃ However, Muslims generally regard Islam as dating back to the time of creation
% of world's population as followers:	33%.	20%.
<u>Worldwide growth rate in numbers of members</u>	2.3%/year.	2.9%/yr.
Growth rate: % of world's population:	About 0.0%. Numbers have been steady for decades.	Increase of about 0.6%/yr.
Estimated year when Islam will become the most popular world religion:	2023 CE (if above numbers are valid) to beyond 2200 CE (as estimated by some religious futurists)	
% of U.S. population as followers:	<u>2001 ARIS study</u> estimates 76%, declining about 0.8% a year.	<u>2001 ARIS study</u> estimates 0.5%; some Muslim groups estimate 6 million (2%).
Internal divisions:	Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Protestant, and others.	Shi'ite, Sunni, Sufi. Sufi is a mystical tradition.

PRACTICES

Current interpretation of the Holy Book:	Ranges from statements of the Pope in Roman Catholicism to resolutions at conventions among Protestants.	Learned scholars in various countries. There is no single spokesperson or authoritative group.
Name of worship center:	Church, cathedral.	Mosque.
Main worship:	Sunday; Saturday for some.	Friday.
Church and state:	Largely considered separate. Most Christian countries are democracies	Integrated. Most Muslim countries are dictatorships with restricted human rights.
Law	Generally restricted to legal matters.	Covers both moral and legal matters.
Legislation	Prerogative of the people	Prerogative of God

Use of statues:	Common in some denominations	Absolutely forbidden. Considered a very serious form of idolatry.
Main <u>holy days</u> :	Most Christians celebrate at least Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and associated holy days.	Ashura; Mawlid; lunar month of Ramadan; Eid al-Fitr; Eid al-Adha.
Status of women:	Variable. Conservatives & liberals differ greatly.	Strongly affected by cultural traditions. Severely oppressed in some countries.
Marriages forbidden:	Inter-faith marriages, in the Eastern Orthodox church. Marriages between conservative Christians and others, within conservative Christianity.	A Muslim woman may not be married (or remained married) to a non-Muslim man.
Racism:	Promoted by the <u>LDS church</u> until 1978. Still supported by <u>Christian Identity</u> , KKK, and other Christian fringe groups. Officially rejected by almost all other denominations, but remains widespread.	Officially rejected by all Islamic movements. 5
Reaction to apostasy (leaving the faith due to religious conversion):	Prior to 1792, the end of the " <u>burning times</u> ," execution was possible.	Traditionally, death to the apostate. Rarely practiced in the 21 st century.
Historical treatment of Jewish people (Prior to World War 1):	Prolonged and widespread <u>anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism, oppression, and mass murder</u> .	Additional taxation, but otherwise general tolerance.
Recent treatment of Jewish people:	Lessening of anti-Semitism from historical levels, and gradual support of Israel, particularly since World War II.	Massive opposition and physical attacks since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the occupation of Palestine.
Relations with state of Israel since 1948	Widespread support for Israel among religious conservatives. Criticism among liberals. Abandonment of historical anti-semitism.	Widespread rejection of Israel. Discrimination, suicide bombing, etc. practiced.
Basis of <u>calendar</u> :	Gregorian solar calendar. 1 CE occurred about four to seven years after birth of Jesus.	Islamic lunar calendar. 1 AH occurred in 622 CE, the <i>year of the Hegira</i> when Muhammad traveled from Mecca to Medina.
Most misunderstood practice:	The sacrifice of the Mass, a Roman Catholic ritual. Some Native Americans and others interpreted it as a form of ritual cannibalism.	<u>Female genital mutilation</u> . This is often considered a religious requirement of Islam. Actually it is cultural tradition common in some countries of Northern Africa. It is unknown in many Muslim countries.

Notes:

1. The Christian church is normally considered to have begun at Pentecost, 50 days after Christians believe that Jesus was executed. Unfortunately, the year of his death is unknown.
2. Most religious historians view Islam as having been founded in 622 CE. However, many if not most of the followers of Islam believe that:
 - Islam existed before Muhammad (pbuh) was born.
 - The origins of Islam date back to the creation of the world.
3. Muslims traditionally acknowledge respect for Muhammad, Jesus and other prophets (peace be upon them) by adding this phrase or an abbreviation "(pbuh)" after their names.

4. Greg H. Parsons, Executive Director, "U.S. Center for World Mission," Pasadena, CA; quoted in Zondervan News Service, 1997-FEB-21.
5. One exception is the *Nation of Islam* which promotes a black supremacist ideology. For example, leader Louis Farrakhan stated that "*White people are potential humans...they haven't evolved yet.*" (Philadelphia Inquirer, 2000-MAR-18). However, most Muslims do not consider the *Nation of Islam* to be part of Islam, because of its unique beliefs about God, humanity and the rest of the universe.
6. The books included in the Bible differ among Christian faith groups. The Roman Catholic Church includes the Apocrypha; most other Christian denominations do not. Members of the approximately 100 faith groups in the LDS Restorationist movement, including *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (the Mormons) add other holy books, including the Book of Mormon. Christian Scientists consider Mary Baker Eddy's book "*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*" to be a major resource.
7. Muslims generally believe that the Qur'an is the literal word of God, as dictated to Muhammad over an interval of 23 years. It is the only book that is considered free of tahrif (error). There are four additional books:
 - The Suhuf-i-Ibrahim (Scrolls of Abraham/Ibrahim) which have been lost.
 - The Tawrat (the Pentateuch from the Hebrew Scriptures) which many Muslims believe were altered by ancient Hebrews.
 - The Zabur which many Muslims believe are the Psalms from the Hebrew Scriptures.
 - The Injil (the Gospels; the words of Jesus). Muslims believe that this consists of the entire Christian Scriptures (New Testament), or perhaps only the four canonical Gospels. They also have been distorted and corrupted over time. Other Muslims believe that the Injil is not a book, but a group of teachings.

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