World Religions Compared

Each faith is described in its own terms and compared with traditional Bible-believing Christianity. Figures are rounded estimates.

FAITH	GOD	JESUS CHRIST	SACRED TEXTS	FOUNDER AND DATE	WHERE IT BEGAN AND IS FOLLOWED	HEAVEN AND HELL	HOW A PERSON GETS THERE
OUR STARTING POINT							
1 **Christianity** About 2.3 billion Christians of all traditions	One God eternally in three Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.	The eternal Son of God, fully God and fully man; born of a virgin, died for our sins, rose bodily, and will return.	The Bible: 66 books, inspired by God and without error.	Jesus Christ. The church began at Pentecost, c. A.D. 30.	Began in Jerusalem. Followed worldwide, most in the Americas, Europe and Africa.	Yes. Heaven is eternal life with God; hell is everlasting punishment apart from Him.	By God's grace, through faith in Jesus Christ alone, not by our own works.
WORLD RELIGIONS							
2 **Judaism** About 15 million Jews	One God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (not a Trinity).	A Jewish teacher, but not the Messiah and not the Son of God.	The Hebrew Bible (Tanakh: the same books as our Old Testament) and the Talmud.	God's covenant with Abraham (c. 2000 B.C.) and the Law given through Moses at Sinai (c. 1446 B.C.).	Began in the land of Israel. Today most Jews live in Israel and the United States.	The focus is on this life. Traditional teaching: resurrection and the World to Come.	Faithfulness to God's covenant: keeping His commandments, repentance, prayer and good deeds, trusting His mercy.
3 **Islam** About 2 billion Muslims	Allah, the one God, who is absolutely one (no Trinity, no Son).	Isa, a great prophet and the Messiah, born of a virgin; not the Son of God and not crucified.	The Qur'an, with the Hadith (sayings of Muhammad).	Muhammad (c. A.D. 570–632); first revelation reported in A.D. 610.	Began in Mecca, Arabia. Followed in the Middle East, North Africa and South and Southeast Asia.	Yes: Paradise and Hell, after the Day of Judgment.	Faith in Allah and His prophets, the Five Pillars and good deeds, hoping in Allah's mercy on Judgment Day.
4 **Hinduism** About 1.2 billion Hindus	Brahman, the ultimate reality, worshiped through many gods such as Vishnu, Shiva and Devi.	Many Hindus honor Jesus as a holy teacher or a god among many, not as the only Savior.	The Vedas and Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.	No single founder; developed over centuries from c. 1500 B.C.	Began in northern India. About 94% of Hindus live in India; also Nepal.	Rebirth (reincarnation); heavens and hells are temporary stops between lives.	Release from rebirth (moksha) through knowledge, devotion, or good works, over many lifetimes.
5 **Buddhism** About 320 million Buddhists	No creator God. Gods may exist, but they are not the focus and cannot save.	Respected by some as a wise and compassionate teacher; not the Savior.	The Tripitaka (Pali Canon) and, in East Asia, the Mahayana sutras.	Siddhartha Gautama, "the Buddha" (traditionally c. 563–483 B.C.).	Began in northeast India. Followed in China, Thailand, Japan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and much of East Asia.	Rebirth; heavens and hells are temporary realms. The goal is nirvana, the end of suffering.	Following the Buddha's teaching (the Eightfold Path) to end craving and reach nirvana.
6 **Sikhism** About 25–30 million Sikhs	One God (Waheguru), the formless Creator, who is beyond birth and death.	Not part of Sikh teaching; respected by some as a holy man.	The Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh scripture, honored as the living Guru.	Guru Nanak (1469–1539), beginning c. A.D. 1499, followed by nine more Gurus.	Began in the Punjab (northwest India). Most Sikhs live in Punjab; also the UK, Canada and the U.S.	Rebirth by karma; the goal is release and union with God.	By God's grace, remembering God's name, living honestly and serving others.

Numbers match the maps on page 3 and on the web page, where each faith has its own section with Scripture.

Scripture quoted from the King James Version

World Religions Compared (continued)

Each faith is described in its own terms and compared with traditional Bible-believing Christianity. Figures are rounded estimates.

FAITH	GOD	JESUS CHRIST	SACRED TEXTS	FOUNDER AND DATE	WHERE IT BEGAN AND IS FOLLOWED	HEAVEN AND HELL	HOW A PERSON GETS THERE
OTHER CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS							
7 **Roman Catholic** About 1.4 billion Catholics	One God in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	The eternal Son of God, fully God and fully man, who died for sin and rose bodily.	The Bible with 73 books (including the Apocrypha), plus Sacred Tradition as taught by the Church.	Catholics trace their church to Jesus and the apostle Peter. Rome and the East separated in A.D. 1054.	Centered in Rome (Vatican City). Followed in Latin America, Europe, Africa, the Philippines and the U.S.	Yes: heaven and hell, with purgatory as a cleansing before heaven.	By God's grace, received through faith, baptism and the sacraments, and dying in a state of grace.
8 **Eastern Orthodox** About 220 million Orthodox Christians	One God in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	The eternal Son of God, fully God and fully man, who died for sin and rose bodily.	The Bible (Old Testament from the Greek Septuagint, with added books), read within Holy Tradition.	Traces itself to the apostles. Separated from Rome in A.D. 1054.	Centered in Constantinople (Istanbul). Followed in Russia, Ukraine, Greece, Romania, Serbia and Eastern Europe.	Yes: heaven and hell (no formal purgatory).	By grace, through faith, baptism, the sacraments and a lifelong walk toward union with God (theosis).
MOVEMENTS FROM 1800S AMERICA							
9 **Seventh-day Adventist** About 22 million baptized members	One God in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	The eternal Son of God, fully God and fully man; since 1844 ministering in the heavenly sanctuary.	The Bible, with the writings of Ellen G. White as "a continuing and authoritative source of truth."	Ellen G. White, James White and Joseph Bates; organized 1863 (roots in 1844).	Began in New England and Michigan. Today most members live in Africa, Latin America and Asia.	Heaven, then the new earth. No everlasting hell: the dead sleep until the resurrection, and the lost are destroyed.	By grace through faith in Christ, shown by obedience to God's law, including the seventh-day Sabbath.
10 **Latter-day Saints (Mormons)** About 17.5 million members (church figure)	Heavenly Father, an exalted being with a glorified body; the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate beings.	The firstborn spirit Son of Heavenly Father, the Savior; separate from the Father; He visited the Americas.	The Bible (KJV), the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.	Joseph Smith (1805–1844); church organized April 6, 1830.	Began in Fayette, New York; headquarters Salt Lake City, Utah. Most members now live outside the U.S.	Nearly all reach one of three kingdoms of glory; the highest is the celestial kingdom. Outer darkness for very few.	Faith in Christ, repentance, baptism by Latter-day Saint authority, temple ordinances and enduring to the end.
11 **Jehovah's Witnesses** Nearly 9 million active members	Jehovah alone is Almighty God (no Trinity). The holy spirit is God's active force, not a person.	God's first creation, the archangel Michael before His birth; Savior and King, but not Almighty God.	The Bible in their own New World Translation, explained by Watch Tower publications.	Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916), from the 1870s; named Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931.	Began near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; headquarters Warwick, New York. Active in over 200 lands.	144,000 go to heaven; a "great crowd" will live forever on a paradise earth. No hellfire: the wicked cease to exist.	Faith in Jesus' ransom, baptism as a Witness, obeying Jehovah, and loyalty to His organization.
12 **Christian Science** A small membership; the church does not publish figures	God is divine Mind, Spirit, Life, Truth and Love; the only reality. Matter, sin, sickness and death are not real.	The human man who showed "the Christ," the divine idea; the Son of God but not God, and His death did not pay for sin.	The Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" (1875).	Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910); church founded in 1879.	Began in Boston, Massachusetts. Mostly in the U.S., with branch churches elsewhere.	Heaven and hell are states of thought, not places.	By understanding that God is All and that sin, sickness and death are unreal.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." **John 14:6 (KJV)**

Scripture quoted from the King James Version

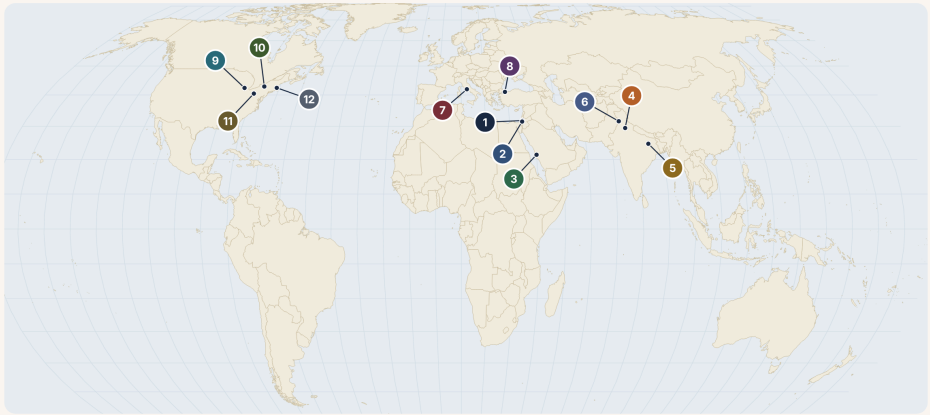
Where They Began, Where They Are Followed

Each faith is described in its own terms and compared with traditional Bible-believing Christianity. Figures are rounded estimates.

WORLD RELIGIONS COMPARED

Where the World's Religions Began

The birthplace of each faith on this page, numbered as in the summary table



KEY TO THE NUMBERS

1. **Christianity** — Jerusalem · c. A.D. 30
2. **Judaism** — Land of Israel · c. 2000 B.C.
3. **Islam** — Mecca · A.D. 610
4. **Hinduism** — Northern India · c. 1500 B.C.
5. **Buddhism** — Bodh Gaya, India · c. 500s B.C.
6. **Sikhism** — Punjab · c. A.D. 1499
7. **Roman Catholic** — Rome
8. **Eastern Orthodox** — Constantinople
9. **Seventh-day Adventist** — Battle Creek, Mich. · 1863
10. **Latter-day Saints** — Fayette, N.Y. · 1830
11. **Jehovah's Witnesses** — Pittsburgh, Pa. · 1870s
12. **Christian Science** — Boston, Mass. · 1879

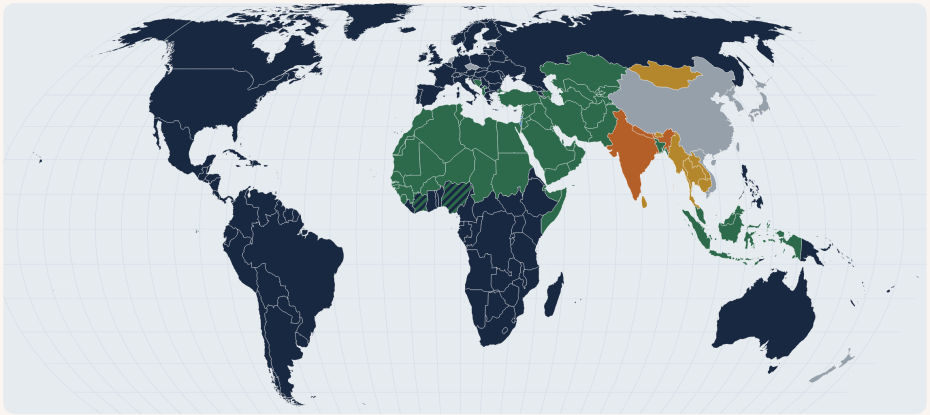
BibleStudyForAll.com · World Religions Compared

Rome and Constantinople mark the historic centers of the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

WORLD RELIGIONS COMPARED

Where Each Religion Is Followed Today

The largest religious group in each country



LARGEST RELIGIOUS GROUP IN EACH COUNTRY

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Judaism
- No religion or folk religion
- About evenly Christian and Muslim

Approximate, based on Pew Research Center estimates for 2020. Each country shows only its largest group; most countries are home to people of many faiths.

BibleStudyForAll.com · World Religions Compared

Map data: Natural Earth (public domain)

c. 2000 B.C.
Abraham
God calls Abraham and makes His covenant with him (Genesis 12:1–3).

c. 1500 B.C.
Hindu Vedas
The oldest Hindu scriptures begin to take shape in northern India.

c. 1446 B.C.
The Law at Sinai
God gives the Law through Moses (Exodus 20:1–3).

c. 500s B.C.
The Buddha
Siddhartha Gautama teaches in northeast India.

c. A.D. 30
The Church Begins
The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1–4).

A.D. 610
Islam
Muhammad reports his first revelation near Mecca.

A.D. 1054
East and West Divide
The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches separate.

c. A.D. 1499
Sikhism
Guru Nanak begins his teaching in the Punjab.

A.D. 1517
The Reformation
Martin Luther posts his 95 Theses; Protestant churches follow.

A.D. 1830
Latter-day Saints
Joseph Smith organizes his church in New York.

A.D. 1863
Adventists
The Seventh-day Adventist Church is organized in Michigan.

A.D. 1879
Witnesses and Christian Science
Russell's Watch Tower magazine begins; Mrs. Eddy's church is founded in Boston.

Scripture quoted from the King James Version