

PART I: ONE-GOD RELIGIONS

Chapter One: Christianity: *All About Jesus*

The Word of God

The word of God, the Bible, describes itself and its work in many ways:

Psalm 119:105 God's word is a lamp for our feet and a light to our path.

Psalm 119:130 God's word can be understood by everyone.

Psalm 119:162 God's word is a great treasure

Isaiah 55:11 God's word will not return to Him empty, but will do what God desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it.

Jeremiah 23:29 God's word is like fire, and like a hammer that can break a rock into pieces.

John 6:33 God's word is spirit and life.

Acts 7:38 God's word is living

Ephesians 6:17 God's word is part of the believer's armor: the sword of the Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16 God's word is inspired by God and useful to teach us what is true, to make us realize what is wrong with our lives, to straighten us out and teach us to do what is right. God's word prepares us the way to do every good thing God wants us to do.

2 Peter 1:21 God's word came as a result of the Holy Spirit moving the prophets to speak from God.

Hebrews 4:12 God's word is living and enduring; through it people are born again.

Revelation 1:16 God's word is a double-edged sword, coming from His mouth.

Who is Christ?

Colossians 1:15-20 lists seven characteristics of Jesus Christ:

1. The visible image of the invisible God (1:15)
2. Existed before God made anything (1:15)
3. He is the one through whom God created everything (1:16)
4. He is the head of the body, the church (1:18)
5. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead (1:18)
6. All God's fullness lives in Him (1:19)
7. Through Christ, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things (1:20)

Because of who Christ is:

- We ought to worship Him with praise and thanks
- We ought to learn about Him for He is God
- We ought to obey Him for He is the ultimate authority
- We ought to love Him for what he has done for us

Why Believe in the Resurrection?

In the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul makes it clear that the resurrection of Jesus Christ really happened. In fact, he goes even farther and says that if Christ were not raised from the dead, then “we have hope in Christ only for this life [and] we are the most miserable people in the world” (15:19).

“But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead,” Paul continues. “He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again” (15:20).

Throughout 1 Corinthians 15, Paul backs up his claim by giving several reasons why we can believe in the resurrection of Christ:

- The Resurrection is the central theme of the gospel message (2-4)
- The Resurrection is a fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament (3-4)
- The Resurrection was attested to by many eyewitnesses (5-8)
- If there is no such thing as resurrection, then Christ could not have been raised (13,16)
- If Christians will not one day be resurrected, their faith is useless (14,17)
- If there is no Resurrection, then the apostles were all liars (15)
- The resurrection of Christ is a factual, historical event (20)

Paul also gives us some clues as to what the resurrection of all believers is all about:

- The resurrection of all believers is a factual event to occur when Christ returns (23)
- Resurrection includes a resurrection of physical bodies, not just spirits (35-49)
- Resurrected bodies will live for eternity, never to die again (50; 53-56)
- Because of the promised resurrection, nothing done for Christ is done in vain (58)

Twenty-five significant events in church history

Year	Event
70	Titus destroys Jerusalem
196	Tertullian begins to write Christian books
312	The conversion of Constantine
325	The Council of Nicea
387	The conversion of Augustine
590	Gregory I becomes Pope

1054	The East-West schism
1095	Pope Urban II launches the first Crusade
1150	Universities of Paris and Oxford founded
1380	Wycliffe oversees the translation of the Bible into English
1456	Johann Gutenberg produces the first printed Bible
1512	Michelangelo completes the Sistine Chapel ceiling
1536	John Calvin publishes <i>The Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>
1646	The Westminster Confession of Faith
1678	John Bunyon's <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i> is published
1685	Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frederic Handel are born
1735	Great Awakening begins under Jonathan Edwards
1854	Hudson Taylor arrives in China
1855	Dwight Moody is converted
1906	Azusa Street Revival launches Pentecostalism
1921	First Christian radio broadcast
1945	Dietrich Bonhoeffer executed by the Nazis
1949	Billy Graham's Los Angeles Crusade
1963	Martin Luther King, Jr. leads march on Washington

Chapter Two: Judaism: A Chosen People, Place, and Purpose

Views of Judaism in three key areas*

Salvation and the Afterlife

- Eternal existence in the hereafter determined by moral behavior and attitudes.
- God offers even the most evil of people the possibility of repentance.
- The idea of individual salvation and heavenly existence is not prominent.
- The notion of an afterlife is not a feature of the Old Testament.
- Jews still hope for the coming of the Messiah, who will hand out eternal judgment and reward to all.
- The main concern of Jew on earth is living a moral life; final judgments are left to God.

Morals

- The concept of *Torah*, often translated “law,” is “to point the way” or “give direction.”
- In this way it refers more to a total pattern of behavior than individual acts.
- At the same time, Jews have persistently tried to develop rules of behavior to cover each situation encountered in their various cultures.
- Consequently, legalism has been a constant feature of Judaism.
- Much of Jewish morality is related primarily to the good of the community, and the Jewish prophets were the first strong advocates of social justice in the ancient world.
- Marriage and children are highly valued in Judaism; singleness is frowned upon, even for religious leaders.

Worship

- Ritual and ceremony are very important within Judaism.
- Therefore Jews have a full calendar of daily, weekly, and yearly celebrations.
- The primary purpose of these rituals and celebrations is to make life holy, and to share one’s life with God.
- A major part of Jewish celebrations is to remember sacred history.
- Stories (not all of which are found in the sacred writings) relating God’s deliverance of Israel are constantly told.

**From The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error 2*

The Sabbath and the High Holy Days

There is one thing that Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative Jews all agree on: the Sabbath and the holy days must be observed.

The Sabbath

For Jews, the Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday night and continues until sundown on Saturday. In devout Jewish homes, as the sun is setting on Friday, the woman of the house, with her family around her, lights the traditional candles and gives the age-old blessing:

Blessed art Thou, O lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by Thy laws and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.

The father then blesses the wine, everyone has a sip, and then he slices the Sabbath loaf of challah bread.

After dinner on the Sabbath, Conservative and Reform families go to the synagogue. The main Orthodox service is on Saturday morning, and they and most Conservatives attend another service in the afternoon.

The High Holy Days

The High Holy Days of Judaism are:

- *Rosh Hashanah*, which is the Jewish New Year (celebrated in September or October)
- *Yom Kippur*, the Jewish Day of Atonement, which comes 10 days later.
- *Passover*, which usually comes around the time Christians celebrate Easter.

Chapter Three: Islam: *It’s All About Allah*

Some Facts About Islam*

- About 20 percent of the world's population is composed of Muslims.
- It is second largest religion.
- In the last 50 years, Islam has grown about 500 percent.
- Over 65 nations in the world are Islamic
- There are now more Muslims in the United States than Episcopalians or Methodists.
- Soon there will be more Muslims in the United States than Jews, and within the next decade there will be more Muslims than Presbyterians.
- Muslims have built more than 1,000 mosques in the United States. Eighty percent of these have been constructed in the last 15 years.
- Muslims have a great desire for their religion to be the mainstream religion in America, thereby influencing American life and culture.

What Muslims believe about the Qur'an*

- The Qur'an is a miracle because no error, alteration, or variation has touched it since it was written.
- The Qur'an's beauty, eloquence, and perfection are proof that the author is God—especially since Muhammad was an “unlettered prophet.”
- The fact that the Qur'an shows “remarkable affinity” with modern science shows that it is divine.

**From Islam: What You Need to Know by Ron Rhodes*

PART II: BLENDED BELIEFS

Chapter Four: Mormonism: *The One True Church?*

What the Mormon Church teaches about attaining Godhood

- “God himself was one as we are now, and is an exalted man....I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form...like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man....He was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 305).
- “Here then is eternal life....to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all gods have done before you....To inherit the same power, the same glory, and the same exaltation, until you arrive at the station of God” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, vol. 6, p. 306).
- “We also have to forsake the sin and never repeat it, no even in our minds....In order to *remain* forgiven, we must never commit the sin again” (*Uniform System for Teaching Families*, pp. 35-36).

Joseph Smith and Jesus Christ*

Mormon apostle Orson Hyde taught that after Jesus Christ grew to manhood, he took at least three wives: Mary, Martha, and Mary Magdalene. Through these wives, the Mormon Jesus supposedly fathered a number of children before he was crucified. Mormon founder Joseph Smith is supposedly one of his descendants.

Joseph Smith is honored by Mormons as a prophet greater than all men—even Jesus Christ. The Mormons teach that everyone must stand at the final judgment before Joseph Smith, the Mormon Jesus, and Elohim (God).

Mormons claim that Joseph Smith did more for us than any other man, including Christ, died as a martyr, and shed his blood for us, so that we, too, may become gods.

**From Mormonism: What You Need to Know by Ed Decker*

Advice on witnessing to a Mormon*

- A compassion for lost souls is the best witness.
- Your ultimate purpose should not be to prove Mormons wrong but to point to the need to receive the “real Jesus” as Savior and Lord.
- It is important to know what Mormons believe, especially about the person of Jesus Christ.
- The language barrier can be a major problem in witnessing to Mormons because they use Christian terminology with very different meaning.
- Therefore an understanding of basic Mormon doctrine is essential for communication.
- The most important thing to remember is that Christians are called to “plant” and “water” for the glory of God, but it is God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:7).

**From How to Witness to a Mormon by Jerry and Dianna Benson*

Chapter Five: Jehovah’s Witnesses: A View From the Watchtower

Jehovah’s Witnesses beliefs about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit

GOD

- God’s personal name is Jehovah
- Only Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting
- Jesus Christ is not one God with the Father
- The Holy Spirit is God’s Active Force, not a person
- Satan is the originator of the Trinity doctrine

JESUS

- He was the first person that Jehovah God brought forth
- Michael the archangel is the only begotten Son of God, now Jesus Christ
- Jesus was not raised in the flesh, but with a spiritual body

THE HOLY SPIRIT

- The Holy Spirit is the invisible active force of Almighty God which moves his servants to do his will.

Two Classes of People

The Anointed Class

- Jehovah's Witnesses believe only 144,000 Jehovah's Witnesses will go to heaven
- These "few" are a "little flock" when compared with earth's total population
- The "little flock" of true believers allegedly began with the 12 apostles and other Christians of the first century and was completely filled by the year 1935 (according to a revelation Rutherford received). Less than 5,000 of these "anointed" believers are still alive today.

The Great Multitude

- Since the required number of 144,000 members of the anointed class bound for heaven has already been filled, all other Jehovah's Witnesses are looking forward to an earthly destiny.
- These other people make up what Revelation 7:9 calls the "great multitude"
- These are followers of Jesus Christ, but they are not in the "New Covenant sheepfold"
- Members of the great multitude hope to survive the approaching Great Tribulation and Armageddon and then enjoy perfect human life on earth under the rule of Christ

Chapter Six: The Mind Sciences: A New Way of Thinking

Bible Answers to the teachings of Christian Science

Christian Science says: The Bible must be interpreted through the "higher and final revelation" of Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.

The Bible says: The Scriptures are divinely inspired by God (Deut. 4:2; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

Christian Science says: Healings using Christian Science methods "prove" that Christian Science is authentic.

The Bible says: False prophets can perform miracles and lead people away from God (Exodus 7:11-12, 22; Matt. 7:22-23).

Christian Science says: The doctrine of the Trinity (one God in three Persons) is polytheistic. Furthermore, Jesus cannot be God and the Son of God at the same time.

The Bible says: Jesus is God, and there is no contradiction between saying that Jesus is God and the Son of God, because of the doctrine of the Trinity (John 1:1-2; 5:19; 8:58; 14:6-9; 2 Peter 2:1).

Christian Science says: "God is the principle of man; and the principle of man remaining perfect, its idea or reflection—man—remains perfect.

The Bible says: Men and women are created by God in His image, but they are different from God and far from perfect (Gen. 1:26-27; 2:7; Romans 3:9-23; 5:12-21).

Christian Science says: When Jesus shed His blood for humanity, it had no effect. In fact, Jesus didn't even die.

The Bible says: The central truth of the gospel is the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matt. 27:50-60; Romans 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Christian Science says: "The sinner makes his own hell by doing evil, and the saint his own heaven by doing good."

The Bible says: Sin leads to death and separation from God. We are in need of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus for us. There is a real hell and a real heaven, as taught by Jesus (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Matt. 8:12; John 14:1-3).

Christian Science says: The Holy Spirit is not the third person of the Trinity, because God is impersonal.

The Bible says: The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and Christ to be with believers as the presence of God in their lives (John 14:15-18, 26-27; 15:26; 16:7-14).

Christian Science says: Prayer is meaningless and ineffective.

The Bible says: Prayer is effective and powerful (1 Chronicles 16:11; Matt. 7:7; Luke 18:1; John 16:24; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17; James 5:16b).

Reincarnation Vs. Resurrection

What the Unity School of Christianity teaches about Reincarnation

"We believe that the dissolution of spirit, soul, and body, caused by death, is annulled by rebirth of the same spirit and soul in another body here on earth. We believe the repeated incarnations of man to be a merciful provision of our loving Father to the end that all may have opportunity to attain immortality through regeneration, as did Jesus" (*Unity's statement of Faith*, Art. 22).

"Reincarnation replaces the old belief in condemnation and damnation by the faith of the everlasting mercy and forgiveness of God. Neither does our heavenly Father condemn or punish His children" (*Reincarnation*, p. 3).

What the Bible says about Resurrection

"And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, so also Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins again. This time he will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for him" (Hebrews 9:27-28).

"Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.... For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in our bodies" (2 Cor. 5:8,10).

Jesus: A mere man or God incarnate?

What the Church of Religious Science says about Jesus

"Jesus never thought of himself as different from others" (*S/M*, 361).

"Mental Science does not deny the divinity of Jesus; but it does affirm the divinity of all people. It does not deny that Jesus was the Son of God; but it affirms that all men are the sons of God" (S/M, 161-62).

"JESUS—the name of a man. Distinguished from the Christ....Christ is not limited to any person, nor does He appear in only one age" (S/H, 603,363).

What Jesus said about Himself

"You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not. That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am who I say I am, you will die in your sins" (John 8:23-24).

"I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Then he asked them, "Who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you" (Matt. 16:15-17).