

What Do They Believe?

A brief look at the beliefs of some of the largest religions in our world today.

God

Christianity

One God in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Atheism/
Agnosticism

God either does not exist or we don't know if He exists.

Buddhism

Denies the existence of a personal God.

Islam

There is only one God named Allah. Does not acknowledge the Trinity. Sura 5:73 in the Qur'an: "They do blaspheme who say God is one of three...for there is no Allah except one Allah."

Hinduism

There are over 330 million gods.

Judaism

There is only one God. Does not acknowledge the Trinity.

Confucianism

Denies the existence of a personal God.

Taoism

Denies the existence of a personal God. Believes only in an impersonal creative force behind the universe.

Holy Book

Christianity

The 66 books of the Holy Bible are the authoritative works of Christianity.

Atheism/
Agnosticism

No holy writings.

Buddhism

The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

Islam

The Qur'an is considered the Muslim holy book. Parts of the Hadith and other holy writings are also studied as religious literature. The Bible is considered a good book, but corrupted.

Hinduism

The Vedas, the *Upanishads*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavad Gita* are considered their holy writings. The *Bhagavad Gita* is considered the most popular and sacred book.

Judaism

The 39 books of the Old Testament are considered revelation from God, especially the Torah (first five books). The New Testament is rejected.

Confucianism

The Five Classics and the Four Books.

Taoism

The Tao Te King, a short 5,500 word document, serves as the Taoist holy book.

Sin

Christianity

All people have sinned and every person is born with original sin (except Jesus).

Atheism/
Agnosticism

Views vary, though most would agree that people sin or do wrong acts.

Buddhism

There is no concept of personal sin against a holy God.

Islam

All people have sinned. However, Islam does not believe in original sin (human born with a sinful nature).

Hinduism

There is no concept of personal sin against a holy God.

Judaism

All people have sinned. However, many Jews do not believe in the concept of original sin (human born with a sinful nature).

Confucianism

Humans are basically good rather than sinful.

Taoism

Provides no clear distinction between right and wrong. Inaction is emphasized rather than moral absolutes.

Jesus Christ

Christianity

God's perfect son, holy, divine (second person of the Trinity), resurrected, yet also fully human, God's Messiah (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) and the Son of Man (Daniel 7:13-14).

Atheism/
Agnosticism

No consistent view other than that He is not God nor God's Son. He is usually considered a legend or common man.

Buddhism

A wise sage (perhaps enlightened), whose teachings were distorted by Christian myths.

Islam

A good man but not God. Those who believe Jesus is God are considered unbelievers.

Hinduism

Jesus is not seen as the Messiah, God's Son, or that He physically resurrected. He was simply a man who realized His divine nature.

Judaism

Views vary, though all would claim that Jesus is not the Son of God or the Messiah sent by God. Some view Him as a good teacher, others as a heretical teacher or even a legend.

Confucianism

Does not speak definitively regarding Jesus, though disregards the supernatural and would reject the physical resurrection of Jesus.

Taoism

Does not speak definitively regarding Jesus. Taoist beliefs do not provide a need for a Savior as Jesus, nor does it believe that there is any one way to God.

Salvation

Christianity

Obtained only by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not by human effort. (Hebrews 7:23-25; Acts 2:36)

Atheism/
Agnosticism

Salvation does not exist because God does not exist.

Buddhism

Through following the right steps, a person may eventually escape the endless series of reincarnations and achieve nirvana.

Islam

Completely based on human effort, especially the practice of the five pillars.
Sura 11:114: "For those things that are good remove those that are evil."
One exception is that those who die as martyrs in war will receive eternal paradise (Sura 3:157).

Hinduism

Moksha (freedom from infinite being and selfhood and final self-realization of the truth), is the goal of existence, not salvation.

Judaism

Judaism admits the existence of sin and the necessity for atonement, but has not developed a system of salvation teaching as found in Christianity. Atonement is accomplished by sacrifices, penitence, good deeds and a little of God's grace.

Confucianism

Salvation is a human process dependent upon one's own efforts.

Taoism

Salvation is a human process dependent upon one's own efforts.

Afterlife

Christianity

All people will enter heaven or hell at death based on whether they have salvation in Jesus Christ. The Bible does not support the view that God rewards people who have done good deeds in life with heaven. A holy God requires a perfect sacrifice for our sins which only Christ provides.

Atheism/ Agnosticism

Unknown, though many believe a person's soul or spirit ceases to exist upon physical death.

Buddhism

Repeated reincarnation until a person reaches nirvana.

Islam

The person whose balances are heavy with good deeds will go to heaven (called Paradise), while the person whose scales are light will go to hell. Heaven is described in much different terms in the Qur'an than in the Bible.

Hinduism

Repeated reincarnation until a person is reabsorbed into Brahman.

Judaism

God will reward the good and punish the wicked. Judaism usually lacks the developed views of heaven and hell taught in Christianity.

Confucianism

There is no definitive teaching regarding the afterlife. The emphasis is on proper living during this life.

Taoism

There is no definitive teaching regarding the afterlife, though heaven is mentioned in its writings.