

How Christianity Is Set Apart from Other Religions & Worldviews (definitions on back)

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O |
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| BOTH CREATED & UNCREATED REALMS EXIST | God or gods CREATOR OF UNIVERSE | God or gods ALMIGHTY | God or gods INFINITE | God or gods ETERNAL | God or gods HOLY & JUST | God or gods PERSONAL | God or gods MORAL LAW GIVER | HUMANS TOTALLY SINFUL | God or gods ALL-MERCIFUL | GROUNDED IN EVENTS OF HISTORY | LEADER/SAVIOR/MESSIAH TRUE GOD | SAVIOR PROVIDES FINISHED WORK | PROVIDES DIVINE PERSONAL HELPER | PROVIDES SOUND & ABUNDANT EVIDENCE |

Religions/worldviews based on NATURALISM:

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| <u>ATHEISM</u> | No | God or gods do not exist | No such thing as sin | God or gods do not exist | Rejects events claimed to be supernatural, miraculous | No | No work necessary | Does not exist | No; rejects evidence for supernatural & miraculous |
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Religions/worldviews based on CONSTRUCTIVISM:

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| <u>POST-MODERNISM</u> (also Critical Theory, Cultural Marxism...) | Many or even all things in both realms socially constructed | The idea of a Creator is a social construction | This and all attributes are social constructions | This and all attributes are social constructions | These and all attributes are social constructions | This and all attributes are social constructions | A moral law is a social construction | Sin and sinfulness are social constructions | This and all attributes are social constructions | All events merely reveal power struggles | Beliefs in messiah socially constructed | Saving work socially constructed | Such a helper socially constructed | Evidence merely human interpretation & construction |
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Religions/worldviews based on SPIRITUALISM:

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| <u>PANTHEISM</u> | No distinction; one and the same; or blended | No distinction between a creator & all else; all is god | No | No | Maybe | No | No; god or gods very impersonal | No | No basis for sin. OR: Man can choose good or evil | No distinction between mercy and cruelty | No, grounded in mysticism | No | No; reincarnation is the answer | Each person is or can be his own divine helper |
| <u>POLYTHEISM</u> | Perhaps | No, gods themselves are created | No; gods often weak | No; gods confined to universe | No; gods die | No; gods are often sinful & unjust | Yes | No; laws given can be contradictory | Man can choose to be good or evil | No; can be very cruel | No, grounded in myth or the occult | No | Hope is in weak gods or man | gods may try to help but are weak |
| <u>GNOSTICISM</u> | Yes | The biblical God is, but he is a lesser god | Yes, but not the God of the Bible | Yes, but not the God of the Bible | Yes, but not the God of the Bible | No. Holy and Just redefined | Highly impersonal | The biblical God is, but he is a lesser god | No. Sin is redefined | No; can be very cruel | No, grounded in secret or inner knowledge | No | No | No |

Religions/worldviews based on MONOTHEISM:

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| <u>DEISM</u> | Yes or no, it depends... | Yes | Yes | Yes or no, it depends... | Yes | Unknown | No | Maybe | Man can choose to be good or evil | No, distant & uncaring | No, grounded in Naturalism; denies miracles | No | Man must provide sufficient work | No | No, rejects evidence for miraculous |
| <u>ISLAM</u> | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Mostly impersonal | Yes | Man can choose to be good or evil | Only partly merciful | Rejects many O.T. and most N.T. events | No | Man must provide sufficient work | No such helper is recognized | No; relies on limited & faulty evidence |
| <u>TRADITIONAL JUDAISM</u> | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes, but they don't recognize His primary visit | Yes | Yes, but they remain blind to it | Yes, but they miss how God is all-merciful | Yes, but they reject N.T. events | Yes, but they reject Him | Yes, but they reject His work | Yes, but rejected | Yes, but they reject clear & obvious NT evidence |
| <u>CHRISTIANITY</u> | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes: three persons; Son became one of us | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes, Jesus, true God & true Man | Yes, forgiveness & salvation on the cross | Yes, Holy Spirit, true God | Yes | |

RELIGIOUS & WORLDVIEW TERMS DETERMINING BELIEFS ABOUT GOD OR GODS

Naturalism = *All that exists is nature, or matter, or the physical* -- there is no supernatural, spiritual, or anything beyond the physical universe. OR: *Living as if there is nothing above and beyond nature, matter, and the physical universe*, including no divine Creator and no real objective truth. Also known as Materialism. Expressions:

Atheism = *There is no god*. This is the common belief among Darwinian evolutionists and those who believe there is no supernatural, no miraculous -- there is nothing beyond the universe (there is only nature or matter).

Constructivism = *All beliefs, teachings, confessions, facts, lifestyles are socially or humanly constructed*, including beliefs about God, gods, truth claims, worship, ethics, divine estates, identities, etc. Expressions:

Postmodernism = *God or gods are mere social or human constructions* (as well as all religious beliefs, truths, ethical standards, identities, meanings of words, etc.) *in order that one group (an oppressor) has power over other groups (the oppressed)*. Embedded in much of culture today. **Cultural Marxism, Critical Theory, Social Justice Theory, Wokeism**, etc. are branches of this where *power* is emphasized even more (a Postmodernism on steroids).

Spiritualism = *All that exists is only or primarily spiritual, beyond the physical senses*, but a spiritualism usually limited to the physical universe, denying or ignoring the uncreated realms and the infinite (that is, like Naturalism it assumes everything is contained within the closed box of the universe). It includes everything from polytheism to pantheism to paganism. Expressions:

Pantheism = *Everything is god or a part of god*: man, animal, earth, plants, water, etc. (taught in **Hinduism, Buddhism, New Age, Native American**, and **occult** religions).

Polytheism = *Many gods*, found within **Norse** (becoming more popular today), **Greek, Roman, Egyptian, Canaanite, Hindu, Native American**, and **occult** religions. Appears to be the default religion throughout history. **Paganism** can be associated with either **Pantheism** or **Polytheism**.

Gnosticism = *The spirit is good and matter and body are evil* (or neutral at best). *One can find fulfillment by ignoring or denying the body and by listening to a secret or inner knowledge*. This was the basis for an early **Christian heresy** that denied that Christ came or died in the flesh. It also explains the **LGBTQ** ideology today, especially transgenderism.

Monotheism = *Only one god*. **Deism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism**, and **Christianity** are the main monotheistic religions. However, they still contradict each other in obvious ways. Expressions:

Deism = *Only one god*, but mostly *unknowable and unininvolved in human affairs*. The religious version of **Naturalism**. This is the default or common god of many monotheists. It is likely your neighbor's god if he believes there is only one god but he rejects or is ignorant of Christianity.

RELIGIOUS TERMS DEFINING DIVINE ATTRIBUTES OR ACTIVITIES

Almighty = Can do all things, except those things that are contrary to His nature as God (for example, He cannot make Himself less than God).

Infinite = He is beyond and separate from the created world and universe; He is not limited to space or time.

Eternal = He has no beginning and no end and is therefore not created.

Holy = Without sin or fault, perfect. **Just** = A fair and impartial judge who will administer to all people well-deserved & appropriate rewards and punishments based on their personal holiness.

Personal = He Himself is personal within Himself (one God in *three persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit*). He is personally & intimately involved with creation, especially man: He created man in His image; the Son became man, lived among us, rose, ascended, will return as man, & He forever remains true man and God; and the Holy Spirit communicates and personally comes to us now in word and sacrament.

Moral Law Giver = The almighty, infinite, just, & personal God has given to all men an unchanging, objective, absolute ethical standard that reflects His holiness and which men are to keep in order to be holy and blessed on earth and forever in heaven.

All-Merciful = Not merely *merciful*, but *all-merciful*. Christianity claims this is the Triune God's primary attribute that defines Him. And it is His ultimate attitude and activity toward man which explains the person and work of Jesus. Some religions have a god or gods said to be merciful *at times*, others have a god or gods *incapable of* mercy, and all religions, with one exception, *provide no activity, event, or guarantee* of a god who is *all-merciful*. The exception is Christianity which has God Himself on the cross.