

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

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
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:

<u>ATHEISM</u>	No	God or gods do not exist	God or gods do not exist	God or gods do not exist	God or gods do not exist	God or gods do not exist	God or gods do not exist	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:

<u>POST-MODERNISM</u> <u>(also Critical Theory, Cultural Marxism...)</u>	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	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:

<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	No
<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	No
<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	No

Religions/worldviews based on MONOTHEISM:

<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 <i>how</i> 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	Yes, Jesus, true God & true Man	Yes, forgiveness & savlation 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 uninvolved 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.