

# Scriptures and rituals of christianity and hinduism

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



Hinduism and Christianity can both be similar and very different religions depending on what viewpoint they are examined from. C. S. Lewis was converted from atheism and while doing so he sought out knowledge about different religions. He narrowed his choices to Hinduism or Christianity.

“ Religions are like soups, he said. Some, like consommé, are thin and clear (Unitarianism, Confucianism, modern Judaism); others, like minestrone, are thick and dark (paganism, “ mystery religions”). Only Hinduism and Christianity are both “ thin” (philosophical) and “ thick” (sacramental and mysterious)” (Kreeft). The example of C. S. Lewis’ journey for religion points out some of the clear differences between Christianity and Hinduism while still highlighting the striking similarities. Both Christianity and Hinduism value scripture, are philosophical, sacramental and mysterious, and practice sacred rituals. Yet, both religions can also pose very different practices and beliefs as well.

Christianity bases it’s teachings on the lessons derived from its holy scripture. In the belief of Christianity, both the Old and New Testament are used as sacred scripture. In the Christian faith, the word of God comes from a single source known as the Holy Bible. The Holy Bible teaches that “ God has a strict code of morals and basic life for humans to follow”( N., Matthew). The Holy Bible recounts teachings from prophets and disciples and outlines the basic way to live righteously.

Christianity also teaches that Christ is the only way to God. John 14: 6: “ Jesus answered, ‘ I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” Christianity also teaches a version of righteous living. Christians follow the basic outline of the Ten

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Commandments. The Ten Commandments are laws or rules that were given directly from God to Moses on stone tablets when he was instructed to climb Mount Sinai. Moses was then instructed to deliver the message from God to his people as new commandments to follow.

The first commandment that Moses was given was to love no other gods before God, establishing that Christianity is a monotheistic religion. Just like Christianity, Hinduism practices beliefs that are taught from sacred scripture. Just like Christians, Hindus follow a strict code of morals issued from God. The most striking difference is that unlike Christians who read from one holy book, Hindus rely on many sources as sacred scripture. They practice teachings and “rely upon their faith [derived] from “Vedas, Puranas, Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Manu Smirti” (N., Matthew).

A big difference between Christianity and Hinduism is that Hindus are taught to be more open-minded and embrace Christianity as a valid religion. Hindus advocate tolerance and teach that all religions are different but not necessarily wrong. Hindus believe that different religions are simply different paths leading to the same ending point of God.

“Hinduism is not exclusive and accepts all religions as valid” (“Comparison Christianity and Hinduism.”). Although Christians are more closed-minded and refuse to see that Hinduism embraces some of the same teachings, scriptural evidence proves otherwise. Some examples are seen in the Rig Veda when a supreme leader who shall govern and protect all is discussed.

Approximately a thousand years before Jesus Christ was even born, the Rig Veda predicted who would appear as the Supreme Leader, Governor, Savior, and who was Holy without sin. Another example of the likeness between Hindu and Christian scriptures and doctrine is seen in the Ithareya Upanishad. After God created all of earth and its inhabitants, he promised a savior. " I created the worlds. Now to provide for and to save these worlds I have to create a savior."

A Savior is promised to all mankind after God finished creating the earth and all its inhabitants. Hindus are taught to be more open-minded and recognize that other religions are simply different practices that lead to the same eternal salvation. " Both Hinduism and Christianity preach a divine commandment of perfect righteousness and that we are held accountable for our actions" (" Comparison Christianity and Hinduism."). The difference is that Christianity teaches that the penalty for human sin has already been paid for by the atonement of Jesus Christ.

In comparing Christian and Hindu teachings ancient practices seem to appear similar. " In all ancient religions, Hinduism included, we find reparation for sins being done through sacrifices to an enraged God" (" Comparison Christianity and Hinduism.")

A drastic difference in rituals that Christians practice is animal sacrifice. The God of the Holy Bible allows animal sacrifice, at times encourages it and never condemns it. For example, the story of the prophet Elijah and his servant Elisha in I Kings 19: 21 tells of slaughtering oxen and feeding his people. Again, in Kings 1: 19, scripture speaks of sacrificing oxen, cattle and sheep. Animals in western religions, Christianity being the primary example,  
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seem to practice that animals are indispensable and do not have as high a value of life that humans do.

Unlike baptisms that Christians practice, Hindus have different crucial rituals for males. An initiation or Upanayana ceremony happens for some males “ between the ages of six and twelve to mark the transition to awareness and adult religious responsibilities” (“ Religion in India: Hindu Rituals.”). For the ceremony, a priest dons the boy with sacred thread and instructs him to always wear it over his left shoulder. Afterwards, the parents help instruct him in proper pronunciation of the Gayatri Mantra. Much like Christian baptisms, this sacred ceremony is seen as a rebirth. Often men that are wear the sacred threads are referred to as being “ twice-born”.

As well as ceremonies such as the one mentioned and the notion that Hindus are more open minded when it comes to other religions, Hindus also practice and categorize yogas: ways, deeds and paths. Christianity is bhakti yoga (emotional). There is also hatha yoga (physical) jnana yoga (intellectual), karma yoga (practical) and raja yoga (experimenters). (Kreeft). Hindus do not believe there is one way or one single objective truth. Each earthly religion has a purpose and inspires different types of people but all religions lead to the same enlightenment.

Christianity and Hinduism have some scriptural similarities and some differences. They both teach of a higher power that is divine in nature, and have mention of a savior.

The most drastic difference noticed in the sacred scriptures of the two religions is that Christians only acknowledge the Holy Bible (consisting of the

Old and New Testament) as Holy Scripture. The Hindu teachings follow multiple books to include the Bhagavad-Gita, the Mahabharata, Puranas, Ramayana, and Vedas. Rituals that are similar in nature are baptisms of Christians as a new beginning and the sacred ritual that young boys endure as Hindus known as the Upanayana ceremony.

A striking difference is the practice of animal sacrifices. Abrahamic religions at one time practices sacrificing perfect and first born sons to their God. Hindus do not believe in the cruel treatment of animals primarily because Hindus practice the belief of reincarnation and that all spirits are created equal.

Christianity and Hinduism, like most religions, teach that people should be honest in all their deeds, hard working, and show compassion and mercy much like the Almighty would. Mark Twain once said, " In the matters of the spirit we are the paupers, and they the millionaires" referring to the east. With that idea in point, all places in the world can learn from each other's religions and religious practices.

#### Works

#### Cited

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