

World Religions and False Cults Introduction

A World Full of Beliefs

Around the world, there are thousands of religious groups. Each of these groups represents their own set of beliefs and practices. In order to better engage our world and our culture, it is helpful to understand the people with whom we come into contact. The chart below gives the number of estimated followers certain faith groups have worldwide:

Religion	Followers	False Cult	Followers
Christianity	2.1 billion	Mormon	14 million
Islam	1.5 billion	Jehovah's Witnesses	7 million
Hinduism	900 million	Unitarian Universalism	800,000
Buddhism	376 million	Scientology	500,000
Judaism	14 million	New Age	N/A

Standing on Solid Ground

I John 4:1 tells us "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world." In our study, we will examine many faith groups. We will look at their history as well as their beliefs. In particular, we will focus on what they believe about God, mankind and salvation.

Let's begin by reviewing the basic teachings of Christianity:

- God: There is one, personal God who is Sovereign over all things, existing in three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). He has revealed Himself through His Word and through the person of Jesus Christ (Ps. 103:19; 135:6; Heb. 1:1-2).
- Mankind: God's special creation, created for His own glory. By choice, mankind sinned against God and was thereby separated from God (Gen. 3:8, 23-24; Rom. 3:23).
- Salvation: Mankind has been offered salvation through the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Through faith in Him mankind is redeemed (Rom: 5:8; 6:23).

Compare these Scriptural truths with the various religious groups we will study. May this equip us to have meaningful conversation with those who need the truth of Christ!

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