

Islam	Christianity
Central Personalities	
<i>Muhammad</i> in the 7th Century AD living in Arabia mostly in Mecca and Medina. He established Islam as both a religion and a political movement. Muslims believe he is the last and greatest of the prophets.	<i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> , a Jewish teacher living much of his life in Palestine in the Middle East about 2000 years ago. He became a wandering preacher and healer. Eventually at the age of about 33 he was killed by the authorities allied with powerful interest groups. Christians believe he is God in the flesh.
The Nature of God	
There is <i>one god, Allah</i> , who is eternal and absolute. He is unknowable to the human mind although his will for mankind is revealed to his prophets, ultimately to Muhammad.	There is <i>one Godhead</i> , in three persons <i>God</i> , the father, son and the Holy Spirit. He is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable and whose qualities comprise wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. His nature is love and he seeks to make himself and his nature known to his Human creation.
The Nature of Man	
Man was created by Allah in Allah's image to act for him in the world. Humans are sinless at birth and, by birth and by nature, are Muslims. It is their upbringing that takes them away from Allah.	Man and Woman were each created in the image of God, with intelligence and free will, to enjoy a relationship of love and fellowship with him. However human sin breaks that relationship and with it human free-will was lost. Only God, as an act of grace, has the capability of restoring both.
Revelation	
Allah has revealed his will for people through his prophets throughout the ages but their teachings have become corrupted. Muhammad in the 7th century AD is the final and greatest prophet.	God has revealed his will for humankind and shown his nature throughout the ages as both righteous judge and loving father in his dealings with people but ultimately in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is no less than God revealed in the flesh with all his divine qualities, including love.

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Scriptures	
<i>The Qur'an</i> , the text of which was, it is claimed, revealed to Muhammad from Allah himself. <i>The Hadith</i> , sometimes referred to as the <i>Sunnah</i> meaning the "trodden way", is the record of the oral traditions relating to the words and deeds of the prophet Muhammad. Both books are authoritative.	<i>The Bible</i> is a collection of 66 books divided into two sections, the Old and the New Testaments. Although it comprises a variety of literary forms, it contains the record of God's dealings with humanity. The Old Testament covers the period before the coming of Jesus while the New Testament covers the period from the coming of Jesus. The Gospels are accounts of the life of Christ.
Fundamental beliefs	
<i>Submission to the will of Allah and the authority of Muhammad.</i> Obedience to the Five Pillars of Islam — <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledging Allah and Mohammad as his prophet, • praying five times daily, • giving to the poor, • fasting in the month of Ramadan and • going on a pilgrimage to Mecca, the birthplace of Islam. 	<i>The obligation to love God wholeheartedly in an eternal relationship and to love our fellow humans as much as we love ourselves.</i> Jesus is the Son of God who demonstrated these obligations during his life. He eventually died as a sacrifice to enable forgiveness for our human failures. Christians believe he rose to life again three days after his death. Christianity is meaningless without the resurrection
Good and Evil	
Most Muslims believe that nothing is good or evil in itself. <i>Good and evil are what Allah requires or forbids respectively.</i>	<i>God created all things good.</i> It is mankind that has found ways to turn things towards evil. The basic standards of belief, ethics and morality, as set by God himself, are found and set for eternity in the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament

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Expiation from Sin	
<i>Allah can forgive a repentant sinner but there is no certainty.</i> Life is a test to prove our worthiness to enjoy eternal life. Only Muslims can enter Heaven.	Sin separates us from God but <i>he forgives us as an act of unconditional love.</i> Through the sacrificial death of his Son, Jesus, he is able to forgive all sin and enter a restored relationship based on repentance, love and gratitude that continues beyond death.
Freewill	
<i>Man has freewill and is expected to use it to make the ultimate choice to submit himself to Allah's will through the teachings of Muhammad.</i> Following this submission Man's only use of freewill is to choose between good and evil. All else is God's will. To rebel against this submission is an act of blasphemy worthy of death.	<i>Man was created with freewill but lost it by sinning,</i> becoming thereby rudderless in the tide of good and evil in the world. When man enters the new restored relationship with God through Jesus Christ, his freewill is restored by God's grace to the extent that he can choose both good and evil.
Women	
Woman was created from Man. <i>Women are inferior to men</i> in morality, value and intelligence. Their rights are based on their need for protection by men. They have equality with men in their accountability to Allah.	<i>Women and men are of equal value</i> in their accountability to God, the reception of divine gifts and in their enjoyment of his grace and forgiveness. Jesus treated women and men with equality and respect.
Blasphemy	
<i>Any action which insults Allah or the prophet Muhammad.</i> This includes questioning Islamic teaching or abandoning Islam.	<i>Anything which takes lightly or insults the name of God or Jesus Christ,</i> his son. Any act which ascribes the work of God to Satanic origins.

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Civil Rights	
<p><i>Civil rights allowed to citizens are limited by Shari'ah, (Islamic law).</i> Women in particular have fewer rights than men. "People of the Book" are offered reduced rights under the status as "dhimmis", people who submit to Islamic law without becoming Muslims. All other non-Muslims have no rights at all.</p>	<p>As all people must ultimately stand before God to account for their own lives, it is recognised that they must have the right to make reasonable personal choices. <i>In general no right should be limited unless it represents a threat to others' rights and duties.</i></p>
The Secular Society	
<p><i>Islam seeks to establish an Islamic society</i> which is based on Shari'ah. There is no concept of a secular society.</p>	<p>The role of the Christian Church is primarily to act in the reconciliation between God and Man. <i>Modern Christianity endorses a tolerant, secular, pluralistic society</i> and recognises that governments exist, whether they realise it or not, under an obligation to God to protect citizens and govern wisely.</p>
Proselytisation	
<p><i>Islam expects to bring the whole world into subjection to Allah.</i> In theory it does not allow forcible conversion to Islam but in fact it is prepared to do this by persuasion, by deception or, in some societies, by force. The concept of Jihad embraces the idea of "warfare" on other religions ultimately leading, it is expected, to the triumph of Islam.</p>	<p><i>Christians are obligated by the direct instructions of Jesus Christ to share their message of salvation and discipleship with the whole world.</i> It is however open to people to reject the message as it is understood that it is the Holy Spirit that draws people to conviction in his own time.</p>

Presbyterian Fellowship



Islam and Christianity Series

Comparisons in a Nutshell.

This brochure has been prepared as an accompanying reference document to the study brochures numbered 1-7 in this series. It provides a brief description of the fundamental differences between Islam and Christianity.

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