

THE  
**EZRA** PROJECT®

connecting God's people to God's Word

# Barna Research Group

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*“We cannot really call the faith of American Christians a Bible-base faith...Christians today have accepted and combined so many ideas from other worldviews and religions that they have created their own faith system.”*

# Origins of the “Sacred Writings”

*God’s Word or Man’s?*

# Ephesians 4:1-6

*“Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.”*

## Ephesians 4:14-15

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*“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.”*

# Major Religions Of The World

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<u>World Population</u>	<u>7.7 billion</u>
• Christian	2.3 billion
• Muslim	1.8 billion
• Hindu	1.1 billion
• Buddhist	500 million
• Other	1.0 billion
• Atheist or Non	1.0 billion

# Timeline Of Religious Beliefs

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- Hinduism 1500 BC
- Judaism 1440 BC
- Buddhism 563 BC
- Christianity 30 AD
- Islam 622 AD

# Quest For Truth

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- 1) Where did the “sacred writings” come from?
- 2) Do they claim to be God’s Word?
- 3) How can they be tested?

# Quest For Truth

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**Study the real thing; once the real thing is thoroughly known, counterfeits can be easily spotted.**

# Quest For Truth

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The four main world religions:

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Islam
- Christianity

# Quest For Truth

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The “Sacred Writings” are:

Shruti and the Smriti

Hinduism

Tripitaka

Buddhism

Qur'an

Islam

Bible

Christianity

# Hinduism

*God's Word or Man's?*

# Hindu Nations



# Hindu “Sacred Writings”

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Hindu “sacred writings” are a collection of documents in two general classes:

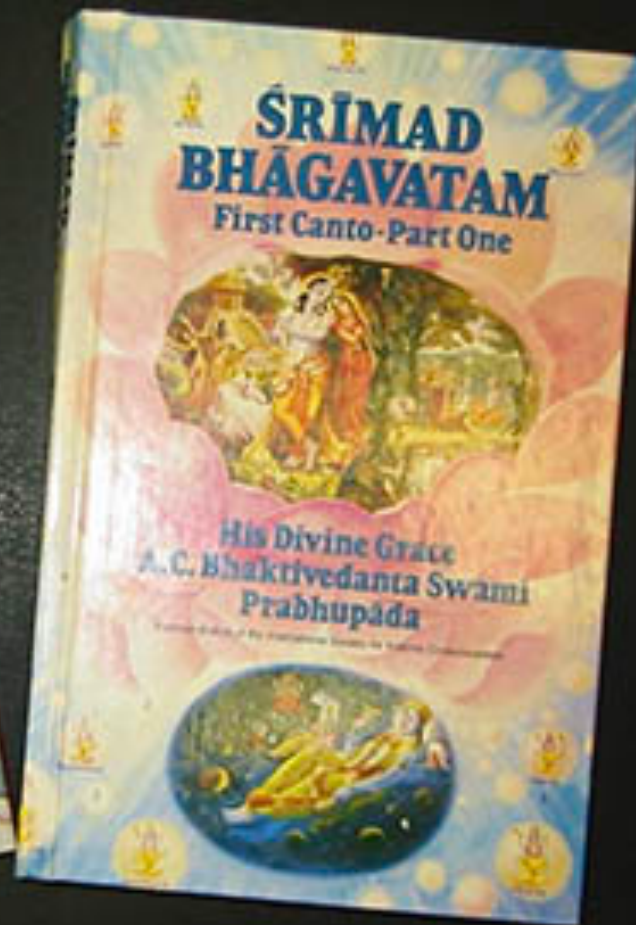
- Shrutī, meaning “what is heard”
- Smriti, meaning “what is remembered”

# Hindu “Sacred Writings”

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Their origin, “cosmic sounds of truth” heard by the ancient seers, or rishis.

Chanted by Hindu priests to empower the gods and keeps the universe in order.



# Hindu “Sacred Writings”

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- Do not form a cohesive whole.
- Collections of ancient hymns, poetry, spells, incantations, ritual, and mysticism.
- A diverse collection of followers to various gods, practices, and rituals.



# Buddhism

*God's Word or Man's?*





THE TEACHING  
OF  
BUDDHA

和英对照佛教聖典



BUKKYO DENDO KYOKAI



# Buddhist “Sacred Writings”

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Buddhist “sacred writings” are divided into three collections used by the three main divisions of Buddhism.

Writings in all three canons trace their roots back to the teachings of Siddhartha Gotama, called Buddha.



# Buddhist “Sacred Writings”

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*“Make of yourself a light. Rely upon yourself: do not depend upon anyone else. Make my teachings your light. Rely upon them: do not depend on any other teaching...If you follow these teachings you will always be happy.”*

# Buddhist “Sacred Writings”

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*“The wise man sees that all created things, formed from care and suffering, disappear again, but the truth will endure. Why should I keep this fleshly body when the noble truth will last? ... You have acted well, Ananda. Make every effort, and soon you too will be free of the great evils of sensuality, selfishness, illusion, and uncertainty.”*



# Buddhist “Sacred Writings”

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A deep and dreamless sleep, where the ego is extinguished; complete loss of self.

As a drop of water is swallowed up in the sea and becomes unidentifiable as a separate drop, Nirvana is the absorption and non-existence of the self in all that is true.

# Islam

*God's Word or Man's?*

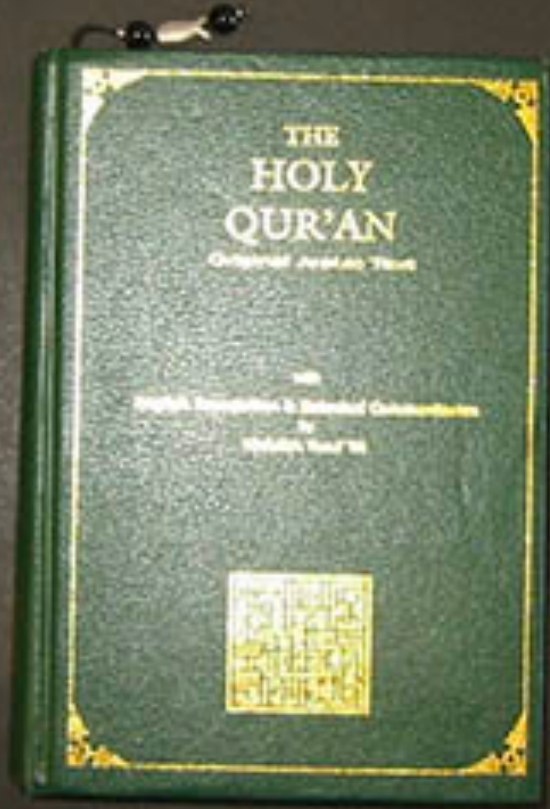




# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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- Qur'an, which means “recitation” or “reading”.
- Muslims believe that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel.
- Only a single version survives today.



# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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*“It is the duty of every Muslim—man, woman, or child—to read the Qur’an and understand it according to his own capacity.”*

**Many Muslims memorize the whole book!**

# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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*“We have sent thee inspiration, as We sent it to Noah, and the Messengers after him; we sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms.” (Surah 4:163)*

# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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*“Christ Jesus the son of Mary, was (no more than) a Messenger of God, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him; so believe in God and His Messengers. Say not “Trinity”: desist: it will be better for you: for God is one God: Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son.”*

**(Surah 4:171)**

# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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*“In blasphemy indeed are those that say that God is Christ the son of Mary.” (Surah 5:17)*

*“Christ the son of Mary was no more than a messenger; many were the messengers that passed away before him.” (Surah 5:75)*

# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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**Muhammad actually mistakes the Christian trinity for Father, Son, and Mary rather than Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**



# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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Two angels, one to record good deeds, and the other to record bad deeds.

In the day of judgment, good deeds outweigh bad deeds=paradise; or bad deeds outweigh good deeds=hell.



# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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*“That they said (in boast), ‘We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of God, --but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not’” (Surah 4:157).*

# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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*“They so blaspheme who say: ‘God is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God.’” (Surah 5:73)*

# Islam “Sacred Writings”

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*“The belief in God begetting a son is not a question of words or of speculative thought. It is a stupendous blasphemy against God. It lowers God to the level of an animal. If combined with the doctrine of vicarious atonement, it amounts to a negation of God’s justice and man’s personal responsibility. It is destructive of all moral and spiritual order, and is condemned in the strongest possible terms”.*

# Christianity

*God's Word or Man's?*

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# Christian Sacred Writings

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**“Bible” came from a translation of the Hebrew reference to the Old Testament canon Ha-Sefarim (the Books), into the Greek, ta biblia, (also meaning the Books).**

# Christian Sacred Writings

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# Old Testament

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The Old Testament written in Hebrew, and some Aramaic.

The Old Testament contains 39 books, divided into three classifications:

- Torah (teaching or law)
- Prophets
- Writings

# Deuteronomy 4:2

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*“You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”*

# Christian Sacred Writings

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# New Testament

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**Two tests for inclusion in the canon:**

- 1) authorship by an Apostle, or under the direct authority of an Apostle**
- 2) the document's clear and irrefutable defense of the Gospel against heresy**

# Revelation 22:18-19

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*“For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”*



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# God's Word or Man's?

# Oral Transmission To Sacred Writings

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No Hindu author, Buddha never wrote anything, Muhammad wrote nothing, nor were writings of Jesus ever found.

Each “sacred writing” was passed down verbally first. Oral transmission was reliable and accepted.

## Oral Transmission To Sacred Writings

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<b>Hindu</b>	<b>1800 years</b>
<b>Buddhism</b>	<b>230 years</b>
<b>Islam</b>	<b>20-30 years</b>
<b>Christianity</b>	<b>30-70 years</b>

# Three Reliable Tests

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- 1) Are the “sacred writings” prophetic?
- 2) Can history verify what was written?
- 3) Do the “sacred writings” contain supernatural knowledge that is later confirmed?

# Prophetic

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*“Who says of Cyrus, He is my shepherd and he shall perform all My pleasure saying to Jerusalem, You shall be built and to the temple, Your foundation shall be laid.” (Isaiah 44:28)*

*“Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah...”. (Ezra 1:2)*



# Historical Verification

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*“...discoveries made at archeological digs in the last 150 years have given mankind new evidence of the absolute historical reliability of the ancient Biblical text.”*

# Historical Verification

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*“As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted a Bible reference.”*



# Historical Verification

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## Gap Between

<u>Author\Book</u>	<u>Originals &amp; Copies</u>	<u># of Copies</u>
Plato	1,300 yrs.	7
Caesar\Galic Wars	1,000 yrs.	10
New Testament	fragment of book 50 yrs. books of NT 100 yrs. complete NT 225 yrs.	5,366



# Supernatural Knowledge

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*“Then for the unclean person (one who touched a dead person or animal) they shall take...flowing water... and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening.” (Numbers 19:17,19)*

# Supernatural Knowledge

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**Supernatural miracles marked the ministry of Jesus.**

**Muhammad refused to perform similar miracles when challenged**



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# God's Word or Man's?

# Conclusions

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The Hindu and Buddhist “sacred writings” contain poetry and inspirational material, not systematic guides to religious practice.

These writings are inspirational and mystical in nature, stating claims that cannot be verified or denied.

# Conclusions

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**Christian and Muslim “sacred writings”  
state systematic doctrines applicable to  
every area of life.**

**But, they contradict each other!**

# Conclusions

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*“Christ Jesus the son of Mary, was (no more than) a Messenger of God, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him; so believe in God and His Messengers. Say not “Trinity”: desist: it will be better for you: for God is one God: Glory be to Him: (far exalted is He) above having a son.” (Surah 4:171)*

# Conclusions

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*“They do blaspheme who say: God is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except one God.” (Surah 5:73)*

# Conclusions

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*“And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, “You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:10-11)*

# Conclusions

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*“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying,  
“All authority has been given to Me in heaven  
and on earth. Go therefore and make  
disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in  
the name of the Father and of the Son and of  
the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:18-19)*

# Sacred Writings?

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- The Bible named as a holy book by 84%
- Qur 'an deemed a holy book by 4%
- Teachings of Buddha and Bhagavad Gita by less than one half of one percent

# Ephesians 4:14-15

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*“As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ.”*

# John 12:47-48

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*“And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”*

# Origins of the “Sacred Writings”

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