

## Scientology: An Overview

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The Church of Scientology draws from Eastern philosophy, modern psychology, occult practices and science fiction. Founder L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986) defined Scientology as “the Western anglicized continuance of many earlier forms of wisdom” including the Vedas, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, Gnosticism, early Greek civilization and the teachings of Jesus, Nietzsche and Freud. According to Hubbard, “Scientology has accomplished the goal of religion expressed in all Man’s written history, the freeing of the soul by wisdom.”

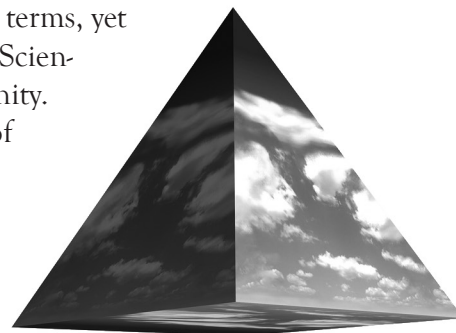
According to the organization’s official Web site (Scientology.org), “The word Scientology literally means ‘the study of truth.’ It comes from the Latin word ‘scio’ meaning ‘knowing in the fullest sense of the word’ and the Greek word ‘logos’ meaning ‘study of.’ Scientology is the study and handling of the spirit in relationship to itself, others and all of life.”

Scientology proclaims certain fundamental truths. Among them: “Man is an immortal, spiritual being. His experience extends well beyond a single lifetime. His capabilities are unlimited, even if not presently realized – and those capabilities can be realized. He is able to not only solve his own problems, accomplish his goals and gain lasting happiness, but also achieve new, higher states of awareness and ability” (Scientology.org).

Scientology does not claim to be a Christian organization, so it doesn’t fit into our definition of a cult (a religious organization whose members claim to be Christians, and who use the Bible and Christian terms, yet who deny the central beliefs of historical Christianity). Still, Scientologists would say their religion is compatible with Christianity. The church has no clear definition of the nature or person of God. Scientology literature rarely refers to a supreme being but occasionally uses the terms “Eighth Dynamic” or “infinity” and vaguely embraces pantheism (God is all; all is God).

### **Purpose**

Scientology seeks to release human potential, free the soul and restore people to their original state as pure, immortal spirits. Within every human being is a *thetan*, an eternal spirit in bondage to matter. Through Scientology, *thetans* may be freed, returning to the glorious spiritual beings they once were.



## Notes:

**Source of authority**

L. Ron Hubbard is the founder of Scientology. A prolific writer, he described his beliefs in more than 5,000 writings, including dozens of books and roughly 3,000 recorded lectures. The organization officially dubs his writings “scripture” and claims they are the only source for solving mankind’s problems. Among his best-known works are *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*; *Dianetics Today*; and *The Church of Scientology*.

**How Scientology works**

Scientology claims that its counseling procedure, called “auditing,” offers the only ultimate solution to mankind’s problems. Auditing locates and solves *engrams*, or past traumatic experiences that inhibit true spiritual enlightenment. Scientology claims it can eventually free the human spirit from its bondage to the material world. Scientology stresses the development of psychic powers, out-of-body experiences and other occult practices.

**Practice and teachings**

Scientology uses “auditing” to unleash human potential. Auditing is an extensive examination of a follower’s present life as well as past lives. Experiences of extreme shock, pain or unconsciousness cause *engrams*, or sensory impressions, to be recorded in the unconscious mind. These mental pictures produce physical and emotional problems today and can be dislodged only through Scientology’s procedures. Scientology teaches that people are three-part beings: *thetan* (spirit), mind (analytical/conscious and reactive/subconscious), and body.

While *engrams* are recorded in the brain, they lay dormant until a similar incident stimulates them once again, causing conditioned behavior that is counterproductive to the person’s well being. For example, if a boy falls off his red bicycle while learning to ride, he may fear all red bikes, or even all things red. In this way, claims Scientology, all people essentially are conditioned machines responding to the reactive/subconscious part of their minds. The church claims that through Dianetics or Scientology therapy we may expose our *engrams* and erase them, thus becoming “clear” and in control of our behavior.

“Dianetics could be said to be what the soul is doing to the body,” says Scientology.org. “It provides answers to the fundamental riddles of the mind with a thoroughly validated method that increases sanity, intelligence, confidence and well-being. It gets rid of the unwanted sensations, unpleasant emotions and psychosomatic ills that block one’s life and happiness.”

Scientology also teaches that through reincarnation people have been accumulating *engrams* for trillions of years. Each time a body dies, for example, the *thetan* must enter another body, but in so doing brings with him trillions of years of accumulated *engrams*. *Thetans*, therefore, are no longer free; they are in bondage to the material



## Comparing Christianity and Scientology

### What the Bible says about God:

There is one true and living God, who exists as three distinct, co-equal, co-eternal persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Deut. 6:4; John 1:1-3, 6:27, 20:28; Acts 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 13:13; 1 Peter 1:2).

### What Scientology says about God:

The Supreme Being is purposely left undefined and does not become particularly relevant in Scientology theory or practice. God is variously referred to as “Nature,” “Infinity,” “the Eighth Dynamic,” “all Theta (life)” and so forth. Usually the individual Scientologist is free to interpret God in whatever way he or she wishes.

### What the Bible says about Jesus:

He is the virgin-born Son of God, conceived by the Holy Spirit (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-23; Luke 1:35). He is the eternal God, the Creator, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and Holy Spirit (John 1:1-14; Col. 1:15-20; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-13). Jesus died for our sins (1 Cor. 15:3), rose physically from the dead (Matt. 12:38-40; Rom. 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:4-8; 1 Peter 1:18-21) and is coming back physically and visibly one day (Matt. 24:29-31; John 14:3; Titus 2:13; Rev. 19:11-14).

### What Scientology says about Jesus:

Jesus was a man who was not particularly enlightened. The Church invented him as the savior of the world. Some Scientologists classify him as an “Operating Thetan,” which means a person aware of his true nature and abilities.

### What the Bible says about salvation:

Christ’s death at Calvary completely paid our sin debt so that salvation comes by grace through faith in Jesus (John 3:16, 5:24; Rom. 4:4-5; 1 Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

### What Scientology says about salvation:

Salvation is the enlightenment of the thetan as to his true nature and abilities.

### What the Bible says about man:

God created man in His image – with a human spirit, personality and will. A person’s life begins at conception and is everlasting, but not eternal; that is, our lives have no end, but they did have a beginning (Gen. 1:26-28; Ps. 139:13-16).

### What Scientology says about man:

In his true nature, man is an eternal spirit being with divine powers (thetan).

### What the Bible says about the Bible:

The Bible is the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God, and is His sole written authority for all people (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

### What Scientology says about the Bible:

The Bible is one of the world’s religious searchings. But as far as Scientology practices are concerned, it is largely irrelevant.

## Comparing Christianity and Scientology

### What the Bible says about sin:

Sin is violation of God's perfect and holy standards. All humans are sinners (Rom. 3:10) and are under the curse of sin – spiritual and physical death (Gen. 2:17, 3:17-19; Rom. 3:23). Only faith in Christ and His work on our behalf frees us from sin and its consequences (John 3:16, 5:24; Eph. 2:8-9).

### What Scientology says about sin:

Sin is merely falsehood or ignorance, and especially that which opposes Scientology. Man's fall was not into spiritual and physical death, but into matter and ignorance.

### What the Bible says about death:

Physical death and spiritual death come upon all people as a consequence of their sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1). A person becomes spiritually alive when he or she is "born again" or "born from above" (John 3:3-6; Eph. 2:1-5). At physical death, our souls and spirits separate from our bodies [which go into the grave to await resurrection and final judgment] and enter an everlasting state of blessedness [for those born again] or torment [for those who die in their sins] (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Cor. 5:8).

### What Scientology says about death:

Death is an inconsequential dropping of the body, which all thetans have experienced trillions of times.

### What the Bible says about heaven and hell:

Hell is a place of everlasting conscious existence, where the unbeliever is forever separated from God (Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 14:9-11, 20:10). As for Heaven, all believers have God's promise of a home in Heaven, will go there instantly upon physical death, and will return with Christ from Heaven to earth one day (Luke 16:19-31; John 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 19:11-16).

### What Scientology says about heaven and hell:

Heaven and hell are Christian myths, or mental implants from previous lives.

## Scripture and Scientology

Ephesians 2:8-9 says "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9. not of works, lest anyone should boast." (NKJV)

Romans 12: 2 says "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (NKJV)

Luke 5:31-32 says Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (NKJV)

1 Timothy 6:9-10

"But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (ESV)

Hebrews 9:27

Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28. so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (NIV)