

What is the difference between a cult and the church?

Religious cults often claim to be the exclusive path to truth and salvation[1]. This exclusivist mentality is a common characteristic, with cult members believing they have discovered unique truths unknown to others[2]. Cults frequently maintain that they are the only true people of God on earth, rejecting the concept of a universal church that spans across nations[3]. This claim of exclusivity is often used as a means to bind converts, convincing them that the cult is their only route to salvation[2]. Additionally, cults tend to deny salvation by grace through faith, instead emphasizing the necessity of works and obedience to their specific rules for achieving salvation[3][4]. This approach contrasts sharply with historical, biblical Christianity[3].

[1] Hindson, E. E. (2008). Cults, Characteristics Of. In *The popular encyclopedia of apologetics: surveying the evidence for the truth of christianity* (p. 158). Harvest House Publishers.

[2] LaHaye, T., & Hindson, E. (2023). *Seduction of the Heart: How to Guard Your Heart From Evil*. Thomas Nelson.

[3] McNaughton, I. S. (2021). *The Resurrection: Its Message and Meaning* (p. 180). DayOne.

[4] Rhodes, R. (2005). *Find it quick handbook on cults and new religions: where did they come from? what do they believe?* (p. 12). Harvest House Publishers.