

## The encounter with Christianity

The Sami religion with gods, goddesses, rulers and other spiritual beings was part of life. They had no greater interest in Christianity, they did not need the new religion. Their own religion was in harmony with life and nature.

They had no problem understanding the Christian God. He was one among many other gods and corresponded to the Sami god Värálda álmaj. The Christian Trinity was simply understood as three different gods. An eternal life was also not difficult to accept, but the resurrection of the body on the last day was not in harmony with the Sami religion. The body rotted in the earth while the soul was given a new body in another existence. Baptism was first and foremost a naming ritual and not a means of grace. The Lord's Supper - could it have recalled the communal meal held in connection with sacrifices to the gods?

There were different ways of relating to Christianity. There were those who actively resisted the priests. There were others who tried to live with both religions at the same time. In the church they performed the Christian rites and in the hut or out in the fields they worshiped the Sami gods. There were of course also those who saw the Christian faith as something better than the old one and who chose it.