



Course Companion for GCSE Eduqas (Short Course)

Component 2: Study of Christianity

H Rich

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been designed to support the learning and teaching of Eduqas GCSE Religious Studies Short Course, Component 2. Christianity 'Beliefs and Teachings' are covered, and questions and activities are included to test students' knowledge and ability, and to help them engage with the topics.

Remember!

Always check the exam board's website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

The information is comprehensive, and images help to illustrate concepts. Keywords and Bible quotes are included to help students to understand the material and to further their grasp of the subjects. Key Concepts are covered in dedicated boxes. A brief introduction to the course and answering exam questions is provided for students at the start, and answers and a mark scheme are included at the end.

This course companion can be used in full as an alternative or complement to a textbook, as a class text or for independent learning or revision. Alternatively, teachers might use a section for a specific classroom activity or homework.

This specification covers a particularly broad range, in terms of time periods covered and different aspects of a Christian's faith and Christianity's impact on their lives. This should both inform students and develop their thinking, enabling them to approach issues from different points of view.

We have sought a balance between explaining relevant concepts in sufficient detail without oversimplification, while not going beyond GCSE level and becoming too complicated. Throughout we have tried to present all views in a neutral and informative way.

Hopefully this resource will encourage students in their learning and help to prepare them for their exams. It should take the pressure away from teachers by providing the bulk of the content which they want to teach to their class.

H Rich, April 2018

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* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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Introduction to the course and how to answer

This course aims to cover many aspects of Christianity and to assess your understanding. Be aware that Christianity is one of many different beliefs and traditions in Great Britain, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. There are also many non-religious people, including atheists/humanists. Christianity is currently the largest religion in Great Britain, but its influence on culture is significant.

The range of material covers several subject areas surrounding what Christians believe, what Christians may take part in, and how the Church as a whole operates. There will be questions on various aspects of Christianity to Christians; the influence of beliefs and teachings on society; and different points of view from within Christianity. These are reinforced with references to the Bible and scripture.

This course companion is designed to equip you with the information you need to answer questions. Not all the questions and answers are in exam-style, but those which are should be answered in particular ways.

The exam board will ask you to give quick facts and statements, as well as asking you to 'explain' and 'discuss' beliefs, opinions and practices. When answering all questions it is important to try to use technical terms where possible, and to write well, using both a style that is easy to follow and correct spelling and grammar. More or less writing will be required, depending on the number of marks. Try to spend as little time as possible on the shorter questions to allow yourself more time for the longer ones.

You will get a 2-mark, 5-mark, 8-mark and 15-mark question in the exam. Six extra marks are given for spelling, punctuation and grammar on the first of the 15-mark questions.

Hopefully, this resource will be interesting and informative, and help you to achieve good results.

For the **2-mark question**, you need to give two examples or facts or give the meaning of something. Make sure to make two points for two marks, but do not go into excessive detail.

The **5-mark question** asks you to describe or explain some element of Christianity, such as a belief, teaching or practice, or the importance/significance of something. You must give five points/developments/examples, so that you have covered enough material. You should refer to how Christianity can influence people, and reference sources of wisdom and authority, such as the Bible (unless the question is about Christianity in Britain).

The **8-mark question** asks you to explain the importance of something (similar to one of the 5-mark questions). Here, you must include more material to achieve more marks. As with the 5-mark question, you must refer to how Christianity can influence people, and reference sources of wisdom and authority, such as the Bible (unless the question is about Christianity in Britain). You need to make sure that you cover the concepts which you are dealing with, and do not just state them.

The **15-mark question** is the longest. You will need to discuss a statement. This means giving reasons **for** and **against** the statement (so agreeing with it, and also suggesting an alternative point of view). Make sure you have good reasons for all the points you make and link them together to reach a conclusion, picking the most convincing side of the argument (based on the arguments you think this is the case). You should refer to how Christianity can influence people. You need to reference sources of wisdom and authority, such as the Bible or church teaching, in your answer (unless the question is about Christianity in Britain).

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Beliefs and Teachings

A key part of any religion is its beliefs and teachings. These are particularly important within Christianity, especially mainstream branches, compared to many other world religions (such as Islam, Judaism and Buddhism) which can be seen to be more practice-focused.

Teachings can come from interpretations of the **Bible**, **Old Testament** and **New Testament**; from the Church, often expressed in **Credo**s; and from **theologians** and

philosophers who have sought to answer difficult questions about religion. Different Church **denominations**, have different beliefs, depending on how on which teachings they accept.

The exam may ask you to explain various things and what it means for one being powerful – the

Keywords:

- ♦ **Bible** – the Christian Scriptures, made up of the Old and New Testaments
- ♦ **creed** – a statement of belief
- ♦ **denomination** – a particular branch within a religion, e.g. Catholicism, Anglicanism
- ♦ **New Testament** – section of the Bible concerning the life of Jesus and his early church
- ♦ **Old Testament** – section of the Bible concerning the time before the birth of Jesus
- ♦ **theologian** – someone who studies religion and God

Christianity in Britain

Christianity (including all **denominations**) is the majority religion of Great Britain and Wales. It is a Church of England country, with the Queen (the head of state) as the Supreme Governor. Church buildings are a very common sight, and churches and church groups are common in communities. Church leaders speak on political matters and appear on the news.

However, the place of religion in society is changing. Far fewer people identify as Christian. Some argue that there are so many people in Britain of non-Christian religions and that they should not be able to have too strong an influence in public life, such as in education.

Keywords:

- ♦ **atheist** – someone who does not believe in God or gods
- ♦ **census** – a way of counting a population and collecting statistics about them
- ♦ **humanist** – someone who tries to live a good life without religion
- ♦ **saints** – Christians who have died, especially those recognised by the Church as good people, living close to God and doing his work
- ♦ **secular** – non-religious

Christianity in the British Population

In both 2001 and 2011 there were **censuses** taken of the population in England and Wales. In these, people had the option of telling the government their religion.

Here are the results of the data on religion from the 2011 census:

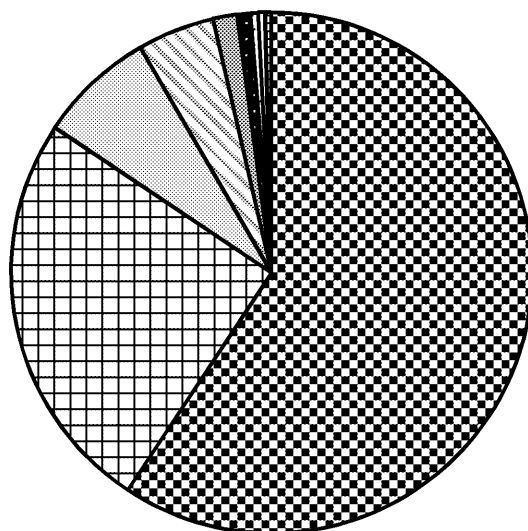
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Christianity – 59.3%, No religion – 25.1%, Unknown (the question on religion was not asked of those aged 16 and under) – 4.8%, Hinduism – 1.5%, Sikhism – 0.8%, Judaism – 0.5%, Buddhism – 0.4%, Jainism and Paganism) – 0.4%.¹

Religion – 2011 Census – England and Wales



■ Christianity ■ No Religion ■ Unknown ■ Islam ■ Hinduism ■ Sikhism ■ Judaism

So, in 2011, about 60% of the population was Christian, 25% was not religious, and 15% was a very small percentage of other religions (though this is still a large number of people (about 7%) did not answer, so it is worth bearing in mind that the absolute numbers of people in all of these groups.

The main points of difference compared to the 2001 census were that many fewer people were Christian and far more people identified as non-religious. Also, numbers of people identifying with other religions were higher. In 2001, there had been 71.7% of the population identifying as Christian, 14.8% claiming no religion (a drop of 12.4% and a growth of 10.3% respectively).

There may be a link between growing numbers of non-religious people, and declining numbers of Christians. It is possible that some people who had previously identified as Christian have become non-religious. It is also likely that in the 10-year gap between the two censuses many of the children/grandchildren/great-grandchildren did not all identify as Christian. This is obvious, but the same data could be interpreted as meaning that non-religious people have more children than Christians in 10 years and that children kept the same religious identity as their parents – however, this is less likely!) However, it is possible that actual numbers of Christians have decreased as drastically as the percentages suggest, but that as the population has grown, the percentage has been diluted, for example by migration of non-religious people to Britain.

Growing numbers of people of other religions could be due to people of those religions having higher numbers of children compared to Christians and non-religious people. Also, people of other religions may have moved to Britain at higher rates than Christians. Some people may have **converted** from no religion / Christianity to other religions.

¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religioninenglandandwales>

An interesting point to note was that the census did not find religion evenly spread up about 5% of the complete population, several areas had over 20% Muslim percentage. The census found that many religious groups had concentrated in certain areas.

It is worth noting that while the census classed non-religious people together, not all non-religious people have the same beliefs. Those who do not believe in God or gods are known as **atheists**. Within atheism, many, but not all, are **humanists** – they believe in promoting ethical behaviour and the dignity of humans, but base their philosophy on reason, and not religion.

Taking Further Action
Find out how high levels of non-religious people are in your area.
[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/culturalidentity/religion/articles/non-religiouspeopleinbritain/2011/2012](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peopleandpopulation/culturalidentity/religion/articles/non-religiouspeopleinbritain/2011/2011-2012)

Key points:

- ! While numbers of Christians in Britain are decreasing, in 2011 over half identified as Christian, so it is still the majority religion and has many followers.
- ! Britain is becoming more diverse, with higher numbers of other religions (the most diverse area.)

UK Laws, Festivals and Traditions

Many UK laws, festivals and traditions are rooted in Christian tradition.

Many laws, such as laws against theft and murder, have a basis in the Bible (and Jewish) religion and values.

You shall not murder... You shall not steal. (Exodus 20:13, 15)

Many people respect these laws, and see them as universal – principles like many non-Christian religions, and non-religious world views.

However, there are many UK laws which have a basis in Christian tradition which some Christians disagree with. For example, until relatively recently (1967) homosexual marriage has only been legal in the UK (apart from Northern Ireland). Those who supported homosexuality or homosexual marriage being illegal included Christians, views against homosexuality. Christianity has also been used in the past, and inferior rights for women – though many Christians will claim that these are interpretations of Christianity, and that Christianity promotes fairness. Limited euthanasia have also been influenced by Christian views that life is precious and should not be destroyed.

However, many laws which are based on Christian teaching (e.g. banning homosexuality) have changed, and Britain's laws are becoming less religious as Britons themselves become more secular.

In the UK, Christian festivals are often celebrated (to some extent) by many people, sometimes by people of other religions.

Christmas and Easter are the two largest Christian celebrations, and many people celebrate these whether they are Christian or not. At Christmas, people decorate their homes, there are special events and occasions for socialising; people give presents.

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time with family and friends. Many people have an Advent Calendar – often give chocolate eggs, and many people ‘give something up’ for **Lent**.

Of the eight bank holidays in the UK, four are connected to these festivals – Christmas Day and Boxing Day. However, while Good Friday and Christmas observance for Christians, Easter Monday and Boxing Day are not necessarily celebration – though 26th December is also St Stephen’s Day, and Boxing Day charitable giving of ‘boxes’ of gifts and/or leftovers at Christmas time.

Many festivals and traditions within British culture which are not as obviously connected to Christianity do have a basis in or link to it. ‘Pancake Day’, for example, is a tradition in Britain – many people will observe the day by eating pancakes, in some form, at some point during the day. This does not seem particularly Christian, but it is a Christian tradition. Shrove Tuesday, as it is otherwise known, is the day before the start of Lent (which falls on a Tuesday in February or March) when Christians traditionally used up foods such as eggs and butter (for example, by making pancakes) before beginning their fast (not eating certain luxury foods) in Lent.



Many other festivals have links to Christianity. Valentine’s Day started out as a Church remembers this **saint** on 14th February. Mother’s Day started out as a religious festival. Nowadays, most churches celebrate Mothering Sunday as a celebration of (not a **secular** Mother’s Day). However, the original meaning of Mothering Sunday was for children to visit their mother churches – if they had moved away they would return to **worship** at the church where they grew up. Even Guy Fawkes Day / Bonfire Night / Firework Night, which is not a religious festival, is effectively a celebration that a Catholic did not manage to blow up the Protestant king, celebrating the continued Protestant monarchy! Even Halloween has Christian links – it falls on All Hallows’ Evening – the day before All Saints’ Day. So many festivals and traditions which do not seem Christian are actually Christian, or Christian-influenced!

It is not only religious festivals which have influenced British tradition. For example, the tradition of not eating meat on Fridays stems from the Catholic tradition to not eat meat on Fridays (and many businesses do not open on Sundays, and British shops traditionally close on Sundays, reflecting that it is the Christian holy day (UK law actually places religious observance on Sundays)). Christianity also influences education – many schools are Christian schools and many schools have Christian worship during assembly and regular church services. Many people disagree about the influence Christianity has in schools.

Quick Questions

1. What is the meaning of census?
2. Give **two** religions practised in Britain other than Christianity.
3. Describe how Christianity has influenced Britain.

The Nature of God

The Nature of God and the Problem of Evil and Suffering

Keywords:

- ♦ **Book of Job** – a book in the Bible about one man's suffering
- ♦ **creation** – the account of how the world and universe were made
- ♦ **evil** – tends to refer to moral badness and choosing to do the 'wrong' thing
- ♦ **faith** – here, belief in God and trust in him
- ♦ **free will** – the ability to choose what to do
- ♦ **just** – fair, right and good
- ♦ **malevolent** – nasty, willing evil on others
- ♦ **miracle** – in Christianity, something which appears to be done by God and seen as supernatural
- ♦ **moral suffering** – suffering caused by a human being's wilful action, like murder
- ♦ **natural suffering** – suffering caused by events in the world, like a tsunami, or a natural disaster
- ♦ **omnibenevolent** – all-loving and kind
- ♦ **omnipotent** – all-powerful
- ♦ **prayer** – communication with God
- ♦ **salvation** – being saved, having been saved; in Christianity, Jesus brought his people salvation
- ♦ **sin** – something that separates people from God, going against God's will
- ♦ **suffering** – experiencing pain

The Nature of God

Omnipotent

Christians believe that God is powerful. Many believe that he is all-powerful, particularly shown in his **creation** of the world, and the **salvation** of human beings. An all-powerful God can, theoretically, do anything. Many Christians feel that God is so powerful that he cannot imagine how much power it must have taken to create the universe. God's creation in nature. Most believe that this power is physical and spiritual. God's power over the world, and can also give people inner strength and help them to overcome difficulties. The Bible demonstrates God's power; it teaches that he sent plagues on Egypt (Exodus 7–11); helped his people to win in battle (in several books of the Old Testament); raised Jesus from the dead (in the Gospels); and showed his power in many other ways. Those Christians who believe that they experienced God's power first-hand, and those who feel that they have experienced God's power.

It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, whose understanding stretched out the heavens. (Jeremiah 10:12)

'But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26 NRSV)

For the exam you specifically need to know about the plagues of Egypt and how God helped his people by parting the Red Sea. Exodus 7–11 tells of how God sent Moses to Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go free – they were slaves in Egypt. Through Moses, God performs signs to show the Egyptians his power – turning a staff into a snake; turning water into blood; sending plagues of frogs, gnats, flies; sending disease and boils; sending locusts; sending darkness (during the day); and killing all the firstborn.

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Then, after Pharaoh lets the Jewish people go, he decides to change his mind and chase after them. He then causes the water to return and drown the Egyptians, drowning and cutting off the escape route of the Jewish people.



Artist's impression of Moses parting the Red Sea.

Moses and Aaron did just as the Lord commanded them. In the sight of Pharaoh and of his officials, Moses and Aaron struck the water in the river with their staffs, and the river was turned into blood. (Exodus 7:20)

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, turning the sea into dry land; and the Egyptians fled before it. (Exodus 14:2)

Omnibenevolent

Christians believe that God is loving, or benevolent, and many believe that God is **omnibenevolent** – that his love is without limits. God's love is referred to in the **Old Testament** as God who guides and cares for the Jewish people, and helps them in their struggles.

But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in mercy. (Psalm 86:15 NRSV)

God's love is emphasised further in the **New Testament** – Christians believe that God sent his only Son, Jesus, to die for humanity – it was an act of love for God the Father to give up the Son, Jesus, to give up his life. Christians believe that this allowed humanity to have a chance at a full relationship with God and eternal life. They feel that this is the ultimate expression of love – to die for others.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.' (John 3:16)

'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.' (John 15:13)

Christians believe that whatever they do, God will not stop loving them.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37–39 NRSV)



The Christian love is referred to as 'agape', a Greek word which in English is 'unconditional love'. Christians believe that God loves them, and that he will forgive them, regardless of what they do, and that he will continue to love them, regardless of what they do, sending them to heaven.

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The Problem of Evil and Suffering

The problem of **evil** and **suffering** is one issue which has faced Christians and posed as a question:

'If God is **omnipotent**, and **omnibenevolent**, then why does he allow evil and suffering?

The Greek philosopher Epicurus may have been the first person to express the idea that a God who was both omnipotent and omnibenevolent would want, and hence suffering). If he is omnipotent, then he could stop evil and suffering. This implies that someone who loves someone else does not want any harm to come to them. If a loving God exists, he should not want humans to come to harm.

Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.
Is he able, but not willing? Then he is **malevolent**.
Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?
Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God? (Attributed to Epicurus)

Interestingly, early uses of Epicurus' argument concluded that 'God' (or gods) did not care about humans – he/they had chosen not to be involved in human affairs to avoid suffering. However, this is not a satisfactory explanation for Christians. They have to accept that:

- ♦ Can God stop evil and suffering?
- ♦ Does God care that humans suffer?
- ♦ Or is there some other explanation that allows there to be an omnipotent God, while there is evil and suffering in the world?

The problem may cause believers to doubt their faith or question the existence of God.

- ♦ If God *is* omnipotent and omnibenevolent, it does not make sense for him to allow suffering, or allow the innocent to suffer when the wicked often succeed.
- ♦ If God *is not* omnipotent and omnibenevolent, this seems to undermine the basis of Christianity based on belief in a loving God, and holds that God was powerful enough to create but not defeat death.

Some believers wonder why they should trust in a God who allows bad things to happen, so they question their faith and whether they should keep believing. Some say that if he does not care about humanity then he is not worth worshipping. Some say that Christianity, because its portrayal of God is (in their opinion) not accurate, is not a Christian faith.

Some believers question whether they should believe in the existence of God. If God *would be* omnipotent and omnibenevolent, but clearly *is not* – so he cannot be God.

Nature and Examples of Natural Suffering and Moral Suffering

Natural suffering is suffering (pain) caused by natural events, such as natural disasters or disease. Examples include pain caused by tsunamis, volcanoes, earthquakes, HIV/AIDS and cancer.

Moral suffering is suffering (pain) caused by something a human being chooses to do, such as killing someone else. Some would say that moral suffering is more significant than natural suffering.



Volcanoes can cause natural suffering.

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say that moral suffering is a result of evil. Examples of moral suffering include murder, theft, and exploitation of others.

The importance of separating these two types of suffering is important for understanding evil and suffering.

Solutions Offered to the Problem of Evil and Suffering and an Omnipotent God

- ♦ Most Christians would not deny that God is loving but *some Christians* believe God is **omnipotent**. Maybe there are limits to his power, for example maybe he cannot enter the human world to stop evil and suffering. Some believe that he chooses not to act because there are things which are not possible, however powerful you are. It is not possible for an all-powerful being to create something so heavy that it could destroy itself. It is not possible for a being more intelligent than themselves. These are paradoxes and there is no satisfactory solution. This could theoretically go for the world too – it is not possible for God to create a planet which supported life which did not have bacteria and viruses and which did not have earthquakes and volcanoes which cause destruction.
 - Most Christians do not accept that this is the case.
- ♦ Many Christians believe that *people are able to do evil things because of free will*. Some Christians argue that it is more loving to allow people to make their own choices than if humans would merely be puppets, and that would not really be living. If there is no free choice, the consequence is that some people will make bad choices which cause suffering. It shows that people are genuinely good if they choose not to do evil – if they were forced to do right, would they really be good?
 - This does not automatically solve the problem of natural suffering.

Pause for thought:

You can see whether you accept the free will solution by asking yourself: if you were offered the ability to plug into a miraculous machine and experience a virtual life which was happy. But none of your 'friends' in the machine would be real and none of the people you would be real either. Or, you could remain in real life, with struggles and hardships, but you would be able to make choices, work hard for your own goals, and trust your friends. Many people feel that the virtual life is not worth it and they are convinced they would not want to live a 'fake' life. (This scenario is based on a thought experiment called the 'Machine', created by the philosopher Robert Nozick.)

- ♦ *God is being just in allowing evil and suffering, as humans deserve punishment for their sins*. Humans are already lucky that Jesus died to bring them eternal life.
 - However, the innocent do seem to suffer, sometimes more than evildoers. It does not seem just.

'You rebuke the insolent, accursed ones, who wander from your commandments; you punish them with your servant, O Lord, according to your word.' (Psalm 119:21)

- ♦ Another reason for evil and suffering explored in the **Book of Job** is that suffering is a test. The Book of Job is viewed by many Christians as a poetical exploration of the problem of evil, and it tells the story of a man called Job who had many good things and was very rich. The devil challenges God, saying that Job only serves God because he is rich. God allows the devil to cause bad things to happen to Job to see if Job will still serve God. Job was a good person, but he had never been tested; the real test was whether he would still serve God after bad things had happened to him.

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The Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him, blameless and upright, who fears God and turns away from evil.' Then Satan answered the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a fence around him and his family, and all his possessions on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased. Now stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.' So the Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against his person.' Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. (Job 1:8-12 NRSV)

- ◆ The Book of Job also explores the idea that evil and suffering are a *test of faith*. It is possible that without obstacles in a Christian's life they would not see any reason to doubt God's existence. The Book of Job shows that Job had a much better understanding of God after his trials. They made him think and really consider his relationship with God. Through his suffering Job never lost faith in God, but he could have – having a relationship with God after experiencing suffering shows that faith is more genuine.

There is a difference between having high faith and vice versa. If there is less faith, there is less need for God. If there is more faith, there is more need for God. (Job 1:8-12 NRSV)

(Some Christians feel that they should **pray** to God to reduce evil and suffering. They believe that prayer has resulted in God stepping in to end or reduce a particular instance of evil. Prayer teaches Christians to ask God to protect them from evil, and without prayer, evil would not be possible – allowing evil encourages such prayer, and also concern for evil affects them.)

'And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil of the day.' (Matthew 6:13 NRSV)

- ◆ Some Christians say that God should not be doubted, and that *the problem is beyond our understanding*. The Book of Job indicates that God's reasons are beyond our understanding, and that they should not question God.
 - However, many people argue that there must be better ways of testing faith. They argue that there is much unnecessary suffering which does not help people to grow in their faith. Therefore, 'not being able to understand God' is not a satisfactory reason for suffering.

[God to Job] 'Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? You were not there, you have no understanding.' (Job 38:4 NRSV)

Then Job answered the Lord: 'I know that you can do all things, and that nothing is too difficult for you. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have heard, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. 'Hear, and I will respond to you, and you declare to me.' I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now I see you face to face. Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' (Job 42:1-6 NRSV)

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Some people are not able to accept that God is right to allow evil and suffering; or that God is not omnipotent and for them the solutions are not successful. They may lose faith, or never believe in God.

For others, these solutions do solve the problem of evil and suffering and are successful – maybe there are reasons for evil/suffering, God cannot do everything, and/or free will with evil is preferable to no freedom.

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concepts **omnipotent** and **omnibenevolent**?



Quick Questions

4. State **two** examples of solutions to the problem of evil.
5. State **two** reasons God is thought to be omnipotent.
6. Explain Christian beliefs about the nature of God.

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The Oneness of God and the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The **Trinity** is a concept within Christianity which refers to the belief that there is one God, one being and *three* persons at the same time. The three persons are God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. However, there is unity within God – there are not three separate gods. This can be rather confusing, and it has caused much controversy and debate within Christianity. Not all Christians believe in the Trinity, but most do.

Keywords:

- ◆ **Ascension** – when Jesus was raised up into heaven after his resurrection
- ◆ **baptism** – here, immersion in water to symbolise spiritual cleansing
- ◆ **disciples** – followers, here of Jesus, often referring to his closest twelve male followers
- ◆ **divine** – godly, above humanity
- ◆ **doctrine** – set teaching or belief
- ◆ **gospel** – means ‘good news’; the four books at the start of the New Testament
- ◆ **idolatry** – worshipping something other than God, which is forbidden in Christianity
- ◆ **ministry** – here, Jesus’ work of teaching and healing
- ◆ **Pentecost** – when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples after Jesus’ ascension
- ◆ **prophets** – people who speak to God and/or can predict the future
- ◆ **resurrection** – coming back to life after dying; Christians believe Jesus was resurrected
- ◆ **Ten Commandments** – ten important rules given to the prophet Moses by God
- ◆ **Transfiguration** – when Jesus was transformed, and began to shine, in front of his disciples on Mount Tabor, from heaven, and Moses and Elijah appeared
- ◆ **Trinity** – the concept that God is one being, but three persons

The Trinity as Expressed in the Nicene Creed

Because Christians in the early Church were not sure exactly how to describe the **Trinity**, there were different opinions. One priest called Arius, for example, did not think that Jesus was God. However, a bishop called Athanasius argued that he was. Different people and groups had varying ideas. The Emperor Constantine was fed up with the disputes and called a Church council (a meeting of Christian figures of authority) in 325 CE to decide the matter – this was the first Council of Nicaea (named after the place where it was held). The Council was not completed until the first Council of Constantinople in 381 CE, but by then it was agreed that there was one substance, one being, but that he contained three different Persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all of the same status. This was supported by teaching in the Bible which suggested that Jesus was God.

Important

The persons of God are usually referred to as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christians may believe that God is not gendered, but the gender attributed to him by the Bible was male. Genesis 1:27 says that humans were created in God’s image, male and female. Christianity views God as a human-like figure – but not limited by human characteristics.

‘The Father and I are one.’ (John 10:30 NRSV)

The Creed mainly contains what Christians believe about the three Persons of the Trinity, statements about Jesus’ life, and other Christian beliefs about the Church and the world.

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² <http://anglicansonline.org/basics/nicene.html>

About God (and his nature), the Nicene Creed states that:

- ◆ God is one.
- ◆ God the Father made the world and everything else.
- ◆ Jesus is also God, and everything was created by him / with his help, as well as by the Father.
- ◆ Jesus came to Earth as a human, born of the Holy Spirit and his mother Mary, in order to save humanity.
- ◆ Jesus died, rose, and **ascended** to heaven.
- ◆ Jesus will come at the end of time to judge humanity (those alive and the dead).
- ◆ The Holy Spirit gives life and has influenced **prophets**.

St. Augustine, a fourth-century theologian and fifth-century bishop, was one of the middle of the church and wrote the Nicene Creed. His teachings were very influential in the development of Christian doctrine.

The Emperor Charlemagne, alive in the eighth and ninth centuries, made an addition to the Nicene Creed, based on **theology** from St Augustine. Previously, the Creed had claimed that the Holy Spirit 'proceeds from the Father', but this was changed to 'the Father and the Son'. The Orthodox Church disagreed with this alteration, because they saw no reason for it, and this is one of the reasons for their split from the Catholic Church.

Some Christians think different Persons of the Trinity have different importance, e.g. that the Father is more important than the Spirit. Others see no reason for this belief and view them all equally.

The Creed says different things about the different Persons of the Trinity, but teaches that they are one God. The Creed shows that the Trinity has been an important aspect of Christian belief for a long time. Significance of the Trinity and the way the Trinity is expressed in the Nicene Creed includes:

- ◆ Christians believe that God wanted to save them, and that his plan has been in place for a long time (indicated by the belief that Jesus has existed since creation and that the Holy Spirit has spoken through prophets (Jesus)).
- ◆ Christians see the different Persons of God in different ways – they are

The Oneness of God

As stated above, Christians believe in one God, not three gods. So God's nature is significant for a number of reasons:

- ◆ The God of the Jewish people in the **Old Testament** is one God. Christians are worshipping the same God, not a different God.

'Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.' (Deuteronomy 6:4)

- ◆ Christians are expected to worship only one God, and worship of anything other than God is considered **idolatry** (worshipping a false god) and this is forbidden in the **Ten Commandments**.

'You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them...' (Exodus 20:4–5 NRSV)

- ◆ If Jesus (God the Son) is the same being as God the Father, then all Christians should follow him and should be followed.

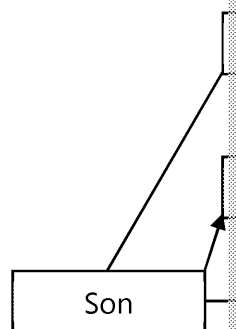
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Each of the Persons Individually

There is biblical support for different persons of God the **Trinity**.

- ♦ Genesis, the first book of the Bible, refers to both 'God' and 'the spirit of God' (Genesis 1:1–2 NRSV). (Some versions use the phrase 'a wind from God', but this 'wind' is thought to be the Holy Spirit (NRSV).)
- ♦ In the **New Testament** Jesus addresses the creator God, who was worshipped by the Jews, as 'Father' (e.g. Matthew 5:16 NRSV).
- ♦ Jesus was referred to in the **Gospels** as the 'Son of God' (e.g. Mark 1:1 NRSV) and when early Christians worshipped him as God they distinguished him in this way.
- ♦ At **Pentecost**, the early **disciples** received the Holy Spirit, sent by Jesus who descended on them like flames (Acts 2). The Holy Spirit is thought to be God.



The Father

As shown in the Nicene **Creed**, God the Father is believed to be the creator who sent Jesus (the Son) to save humanity. He is significant because he decided to save it – without him Christians believe they would not be here, and would not have been created. The Father is seen as powerful, and the God who was in contact with the Jews in the **Old Testament**.

'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was dark, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God (Or: while the spirit of God) moved over the face of the waters.' (Genesis 1:1–2 NRSV)

The Son

As shown in the Nicene Creed, Jesus is believed to be the Son of God (and God) who is believed to have existed before **creation**, and to have come to Earth to save humanity. For Christians, because they believe that it is through him that they have been created, they have a relationship with God, and go to heaven after death.

References to Jesus as the Son of God:

- ♦ At Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan, he received the Holy Spirit from God, and God was heard saying,

'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.' (Matthew 3:17 NRSV)

- ♦ At the **Transfiguration**, Jesus was changed, and 'his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white'; again God was heard saying,

'This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!' (Matthew 17:5 NRSV)

- ♦ Others also referred to him as the Son of God in the New Testament:

'Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."' (Matthew 16:16 NRSV)

'God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.' (1 Corinthians 1:9 NRSV)

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The Spirit

The Holy Spirit is often seen to be the Person of God who communicates with people in the everyday – he has spoken through **prophets**, and, as promised by Jesus, was sent to the disciples after Jesus' death (this event is known and celebrated as Pentecost) so that God would be present with humanity. Some Christians say that he lives in their hearts. He is significant to Christians as he is the Person of God who they can continually experience.

'Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each, filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit directed them.' (Acts 2:3–4 NRSV)

All the Persons Individually – Together

One good example in the Bible where all the different Persons of God are present (see Matthew 3:13–17). Jesus begins his **ministry** by being baptised, and God's approval of Jesus as the Holy Spirit descends to be with Jesus.

'And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the Spirit of God descended upon him like a dove and alighting on him said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."' (Matthew 3:16–17)

Jesus as the Way to God

Jesus taught that he was the way to God in John 14:6–11. Many Christians believe that God is reached through Jesus, because he is God. Many also believe that it is easier to reach God because of the Person of Jesus – they can relate to God's human form, and

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life... If you know me, you know the Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'... 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak are not my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works that I do.' (John 14:6–7, 9–11 NRSV)

Some Christians also believe that Christianity is the only way to have a relationship with God. Others believe that all people can know God. Christians may be the only ones who can go to heaven – because Jesus taught that only those who believe in him can go to the Father. However, others feel that Jesus was teaching that the only way to know God was through him, but that people may also know God in other ways.

'... No one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6)

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Influence Today

- ♦ Most Christians believe in the **Trinity**.
- ♦ Some Churches use **creeds**, such as the Nicene Creed, which express their beliefs about the Trinity, in worship.
- ♦ Christians celebrate Trinity Sunday, the birth of Jesus at Christmas, his death and **resurrection** at Easter, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at **Pentecost**.
- ♦ Christians **pray** to Jesus as well as God the Father, and may pray to God the Father 'in Jesus' name'.
- ♦ Blessings can be, and **baptisms** are, given 'in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.
- ♦ Christians may feel that they experience the Holy Spirit acting in their lives. Christians put particular importance on the role of the Spirit.

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concept of **Trinity**?

Quick Questions

7. What is meant by the Trinity in Christianity?
8. Give **two** Christian beliefs about the Trinity.
9. Explain Christian teaching about the Trinity.

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Different Christian Beliefs about Creation

Christianity, like many religions and world views, has a **creation** story to explain the world; the creation of the universe and humanity. Christians believe that God entrusted it to humans. There are several different interpretations of the creation story, but all believe the same thing about it.

Keywords:

- ♦ **dominion** – control over something
- ♦ **the Fall** – the doctrine that humans lost God's grace when they disobeyed him
- ♦ **fundamentalist** – in Christianity, someone who holds that certain beliefs are based on the Bible is true, including literal belief in events such as Jesus' miracles
- ♦ **grace** – what God grants to humans, which saves them
- ♦ **literal** – something exact and factual (**non-literal** is the opposite of this, not based on facts)
- ♦ **metaphorical** – something which is symbolic
- ♦ **original sin** – sin all humans inherit because of the Fall
- ♦ **personal sin** – sins committed by an individual
- ♦ **reason** – a rational capacity for understanding and making decisions
- ♦ **saviour** – someone who saves; Jesus came to save Christians from sin
- ♦ **Spirit** – the third person of the Christian Trinity: God
- ♦ **stewardship** – the responsibility given to humans by God to look after and manage the world and its resources in a responsible way
- ♦ **symbolic** – something which represents something else
- ♦ **Word of God** – Jesus; through which God's power is expressed, and his teaching

Synopsis of Biblical Accounts of Creation, Including the Role of the Word

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, gives two different accounts of **creation**.

Genesis 1 and the start of Genesis 2:

Before the creation of the world, there was nothing. But God's **Spirit** moved, and God spoke, and things began to come into being. God was present at creation and played an important part. Over a period of six days, God created the world: light; water and the sky; land and plants; the sun, moon and stars; fish and birds; and finally, humans in God's image. God gives the world to humans to look after, is pleased with the world on the seventh day.

Why do Christians believe in the Word of God? See John 1:1-14.

'In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was dark and empty, and the deep was covered by darkness, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.' (Genesis 1:1-2 NRSV)

'Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.' (Genesis 1:3 NRSV)

Genesis 2:

This differs to Genesis 1. There is more detail, and some things even happen before the creation of the world. In this account, God created humans before animals. Furthermore, the creation of woman is described as she is created after the animals, out of one of man's ribs. Man is commanded to look after the garden of Eden and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:

The serpent tempts the woman to eat the forbidden fruit. She protests that she is not to eat, and shares it with the man. They lose some sense of innocence, which leads to the Fall.

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that they are naked and hiding from God. God discovers that they have eaten the fruit and casts them out of the Garden of Eden.

Note: Christianity shares the creation account given in Genesis with Judaism, and everything in the same way as Christians.

John 1: 1–18: (Note: The 'Word' here refers to God the Son, including before creation. God's **Word** is with God at creation, and God creates through him. It then becomes recognised, but grants humans God's **grace**. This passage supports Christianity by showing that Jesus was embodied in the person of Jesus – that God the Son pre-existed Jesus and was God. It claims that the Word, Jesus, was present at creation, so existed before creation. The Word is important in creation at different levels – he helped to create the physical world and the new beginning for humans who want a relationship with God. Jesus is described as the light because he brought God's teaching (his word) to Earth – this is significant because if the Word came from God, then it should be followed.

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word became flesh and began to live among us. He was full of grace and truth. All things came into being through him, and without him nothing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.'
(John 1:1–3, 14 NRSV)

The accounts mention God (the Father), Jesus and the Holy Spirit, emphasising the concept of the **Trinity** in the Bible.

For the exam you specifically need to know about John 1:1–5 (see the first part of the quote above). So the main points are:

- ◆ The Word of God is God.
- ◆ The Word was present before creation.
- ◆ The Word played a part in creation.
- ◆ The Word brings life (humans were created, Jesus brings spiritual life, and eternal life for believers).
- ◆ The Word is more powerful than evil (light overcoming darkness).

John 1:1–18 is often seen to be a New Testament creation narrative, which has been written to reinforce Jesus' ultimate importance, and to update Christian belief in the **Trinity**. Some Christians do not hold it to be an original part of the Bible, but added at a later date.

Nature and Role of Human Beings

Christians believe that humans are special because they are created in the image of God. Their nature is sacred. There are different interpretations of this, including that many people believe life is sacred and should not be destroyed because it would be wrong to destroy the image of God. Christians also feel that humans being the image of God means that humans should be loved, which God possesses.

'So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.' (Genesis 1:27 NRSV)

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Human beings are also, by nature, mortal.

'... until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust and will return.' (Genesis 3:19 NRSV)

Humans also appear to be free – in Genesis 3 man and woman rebel against God because that they have **free will**. Some believe that using this free will to disobey God led them to become **fallen** – this will be explained further in the next section.

The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; only we shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall we die.' ... when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:2–3, 6 NRSV)

Creation is important for many Christians because they believe that God gave them the right to rule it, or have **dominion** over it.

'God blessed them, and God said to them, "... subdue [the Earth]; and have dominion over the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth. I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and you shall have it for food; and every animal that is upon the earth, and every bird that flies in the air, and every creature that moves upon the earth, and every creature that is upon the earth, shall be for food to you, as for the beasts of the earth and for the birds of the air.'" (Genesis 1:28–29 NRSV)

Some Christians believe this means that the world is theirs, to exploit for their own benefit, whatever they want, and control animals.

However, many Christians believe that dominion also comes with great responsibility. God has made them **stewards** of his creation; people who manage it and protect it. This creation reminds them that the world is God's and they should care for it.

'Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.' (1 Corinthians 4:1 NRSV)

In Genesis 1:28, God also commands humanity to reproduce. Many Christians, including Catholics, Anglicans, and other Protestant denominations such as Methodists, believe this is important, but do not believe that all couples need to have children, let alone large families. It is seen as more of a command to the human race in general, or as a gift – God is blessing the human race on Earth. However, the Catholic Church places great emphasis on this verse. They believe that all couples should try to have children (if they are physically able to conceive) and be open to the possibility of new life, so that people are not stopping themselves from having children. God wants this for them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.' (Genesis 1:28 NRSV)

Different Interpretations of Biblical Accounts

Different Christians interpret the **creation** story in different ways. These views are often grouped by **denomination**, e.g. different Catholics may have different views, and different Protestants may have different views.

- ♦ Some believe that it is **literally** true; that God did create the world in six days (including one rest day), and that there were two original people called Adam and Eve. Those who believe the Bible literally are often called **fundamentalists** (the term is often used to describe those who believe the Bible is the literal word of God).

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to describe Christians who believe that certain beliefs, e.g. that the Bible is necessary, for Christianity).

- Some believe that the creation story is **metaphorical**; that God may have started the process of evolution, and that the Bible is not accurate. Note: this does *not* mean that they see the Bible as untrue or **symbolic** truth. This is a **non-literal** interpretation.

A literal interpretation may make it hard for Christians to trust scientific findings. Christians feel special, as humans are, on this interpretation, uniquely created in God's image, not evolved from a common ancestor with monkeys. Believing a literal interpretation also places emphasis on God's power – if he was able to create everything in the beginning, interpretations are more of a modern phenomenon (developing within the last century, becoming popular around 100 years ago), rather than an older view displaced by a newer one.

A more metaphorical (non-literal) interpretation will not conflict with Christian interpretations of the world, and may help in reconciling their religious and scientific beliefs. Christians believe that God created everything, but through scientific methods.

One interpretation of creation leads to the **doctrine** of the **Fall**; largely associated with St. Augustine. This expresses that it was through humans taking and eating the forbidden fruit that they fell from God's **grace** (see Genesis 3). Humans cannot redeem themselves from this, and need **saving**.

The doctrine of the Fall has varied impact. Augustine felt that fallenness and **sin** from the disobedience of Adam and Eve were passed on through sex – this is called **original sin**. If Christians subscribe to this idea they may view sex negatively, and women may be seen as inferior to men because Eve tempted Adam. Some Christians feel a greater need for a saviour, Jesus, because they are so lost.

Christians who do not agree with St. Augustine are less likely to see sex or women negatively. For example, many see women as equal to men because Genesis 1:27 says that both men and women were created in the image of God. While such Christians feel they need God to save them, they may be more positive about the human condition – St. Thomas Aquinas thought humans still had their **reason** as a moral compass. Some Christians only believe in **personal sin**; disobedience committed individually, so do not feel the added weight of original sin. Some Christians view the creation story positively; if humans were once so close to God, it may be possible to draw closer to him again if Christians try to follow God's commandments and avoid sin.

St. Aquinas
theologian
thirteenth century
ethical
arguments

The doctrine of the Fall is emphasised in the Catholic Church and older branches of Christianity such as Calvinism and Lutheranism, and is less accepted in many modern Protestant churches.

Quick Questions

- What is the meaning of stewardship?
- What is the meaning of dominion?
- Explain what Christians believe about creation.

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Jesus Christ

Beliefs and Teachings about Jesus' Incarnation

Most Christians have come to believe that Jesus is God, and so during his time on earth he was **incarnate**; or God in the flesh.

Keywords:

- ♦ **Incarnation** – in Christianity, the belief that Jesus was God in the flesh
- ♦ **Jewish law** – what the Jews followed in order to please God. Many Christians believe that Jesus fulfilled the law by dying and rising, so that Christians do not have to follow it anymore

Nature of the Person of Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God

The exact nature of Jesus as both God and human has been debated within Christianity.

- ♦ Some early Christians claimed that Jesus was completely God and merely appeared to be human.
- ♦ Some Christians have claimed that Jesus was a **divine** being, but not on the same level as God.
- ♦ Some Christians have believed, and still believe today, that Jesus was fully human, but had a special relationship with God. All humans can be referred to as God's children, so 'Son of God' does not necessarily indicate divine status, but rather that Jesus was a special human chosen by God with a special relationship with him.
- ♦ Mainstream Christianity teaches that Jesus was fully human and fully God – the **incarnate** Son of God. Most Christians feel that Jesus' human nature and divine nature were both present all of, or most of, the time. Jesus suffered, he felt pain as any other human, but he had the power of God. As a human, Jesus was not completely aware of God's plan all of the time. He is considered to be one member of the **Trinity**, as much God as God the Father.

Importance of the Person of Jesus as the Incarnation and of the Incarnation

Jesus being the **Incarnation** is important to Christians for a number of reasons.

- ♦ This shows God cared about Christians enough to become a human and die for them.
- ♦ This shows that Jesus had God's authority and taught his will, and so Christians can believe and practice for certain.
- ♦ This shows that God has power – to become human, raise the dead, and establishes that God has the power to grant life after death, meaning forward to the afterlife.
- ♦ It helps Christians to have a personal relationship with God, because they can have a relationship with them. Some Christians feel that by following Jesus' teaching they can come closer to God, and having an incarnated God helps them.
- ♦ Belief in the Incarnation has led many Christians to see Jesus as a full God, meaning that they no longer need to follow this for their **sins** to be forgiven. This frees them from condemnation. (Jesus, as God incarnate, has the authority to give the law from God.)
- ♦ Belief in Jesus being God incarnate (or the only incarnation of God) is a core belief. Islam views Jesus as a **prophet**, and some Hindus believe that Jesus was an avatar (or of one particular god) among many. Therefore, belief in the Incarnation is a core belief from people of other religions and is one of their core beliefs.

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Biblical Basis for the Teaching of the Incarnation and Jesus as the Son of God

The word '**incarnation**' originates in Latin; as such, it does not occur in the Bible (it is written in Greek). The belief in the Incarnation is not universally held, and it is not one of the **Gospel** writers and other writers of the **New Testament** did not believe in. However, the New Testament can still be used to provide evidence for the Incarnation.

References to Jesus as God Incarnate:

- John 1:1–18 claims that Jesus has existed as God since before **creation**, and that the **incarnation** of God. (Verse 14 is particularly important, and is underlined in the original text.)

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory full of grace and truth.... Jesus Christ...' (John 1:1, 14, 17)

- 1 Timothy 3:16 claims that God was revealed as a human [as Jesus].

'Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He (Or: God) was vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in, taken up in glory.' (1 Timothy 3:16 NRSV)

Luke 1:26–38 foretells the birth of Jesus. Many Christians believe that the infant Jesus, Mary, Jesus' human mother, being impregnated by the Holy Spirit – so Jesus has no human parents.

The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. The child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.' (Luke 1:30–35)

References to Jesus' God-like Qualities / Divine Nature:

- Jesus healed many people, including the Centurion's servant, a leper, and those with haemorrhages, a blind man, and he raised Lazarus from the dead (Luke 9 and 11).
- Jesus performed other **miracles**, such as making five loaves and two fish feed a crowd on water, and calming a storm (Matthew 14, Mark 4).
- Jesus claimed the authority to forgive **sins** and cast out demons, typically which he backed up with his healing abilities (Mark 2 and 5, Matthew 9).
- Even though he was killed, he was **resurrected**, confirming his power over death (Mark 14–16, Luke 22–24, John 18–21).

References to Jesus' Humanity:

The Bible also references Jesus' human nature – he is reported to:

- have eaten (e.g. Mark 3);
- have felt tired (e.g. John 4) and slept (e.g. Mark 4);
- have cried when his friend died (John 11:35);
- have suffered leading up to his death (e.g. Luke 23);
- and
- he died a painful death on the cross (e.g. Matthew 27).

Disciples
believing
reflected
practices
does not

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Christians do not believe that Jesus being the **incarnation** of God made him God. Christians also use Jesus' humanity to explain times in the Gospels where he had human knowledge – if he were only God and not human, then this might not make sense.

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concept of **incarnation**?

Quick Questions

13. What do Christians mean by incarnation?
14. State **two** human characteristics of Jesus.
15. Explain why the incarnation is important to Christians.

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Beliefs and Teachings about the Crucifixion, Salvation

The belief that Jesus died and was raised from the dead is of central importance. The events surrounding Jesus' death are often referred to as his '**Passion**', because of the suffering. Jesus' Passion is remembered especially during Lent, but it is crucial to the whole religion.

Keywords:

- ◆ **atonement** – making up for something; in Christianity, Jesus achieving salvation by paying a price
- ◆ **covenant** – a promise between people and God, usually involving promises and sacrifices
- ◆ **Crucifixion** – when Jesus was put to death on a cross
- ◆ **Eucharist** – sacrament which involves sharing bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus
- ◆ **Last Supper** – Jesus' final celebration of the Jewish Passover with his disciples
- ◆ **Lent** – the period of preparation before Easter. Christians remember Jesus' sacrifice by fasting and prayer
- ◆ **Passion** – referring to the events surrounding the suffering and death of Jesus
- ◆ **Passover** – an important Jewish festival celebrating God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt
- ◆ **predestination** – the idea that God has chosen who will be saved in advance
- ◆ **sacrament** – a particularly important worship practice which has even higher status in some religions, such as the Catholic and Orthodox Churches
- ◆ **Temple** – the Jewish holy building in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, which was destroyed in 70 AD

Synopsis of Biblical Accounts of the Crucifixion

The **Gospel** accounts do not *all* agree on *all* the details of Jesus' **Passion** and **resurrection** – some events occur in some Gospels and not others. (The Gospels are the four books in the New Testament which deal with the life of Jesus.)

Before the Crucifixion:

Jesus eats a last meal (the **Last Supper**) with his **disciples**, where he shares bread and wine, telling them that these are his body and blood given for them, and that they should share bread and wine in remembrance of him. After the meal, Jesus is betrayed by his disciple Judas. Jesus is tried in front of the Jewish authorities; the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate; and in Luke's account by King Herod. The Jewish authorities convince Pilate to kill Jesus.

Crucifixion: (Matthew 27:28–50 which is needed for the exam, unless otherwise specified)

Jesus is beaten and mocked by soldiers before being led to be crucified. They carry his cross, and mock him as the King of the Jews. In Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's accounts, a traveller called Simon of Cyrene carry Jesus' cross to the **Crucifixion**; in John's account, Jesus is offered some type of wine, but refuses it.

Jesus is crucified between two other criminals, and the soldiers gamble for Jesus' clothes. The cross detailing his crime states that he is the King of the Jews. Jesus is mocked by the Jewish authorities, and also by the criminals/passers-by. In Luke's account, two criminals are crucified either side of him on other crosses – when one of them asks Jesus to remember him that he will be with him, that day, in heaven.

And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; and then they stood watching him down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, 'Jesus, the King of the Jews.' (Matthew 27:35–37 NRSV)

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Different accounts convey different words of Jesus from the cross. For example, in some accounts Jesus quotes Psalm 22, asking why God has forsaken him, and in others he commends his spirit to God before dying.

The sky goes dark from about midday until 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when Jesus dies. Jesus cries out and dies.

Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. (Matthew 27:46)

(After Matthew 27:50) When Jesus dies, the curtain in the **Temple** is ripped in two. In some accounts, the Roman centurion, upon witnessing Jesus' death, states that he must have been God's son (Matthew and Mark), or that he must have been innocent (Luke).

Jesus' death is witnessed by some of the women who followed him. In John's Gospel soldiers pierce Jesus' side with a spear to check that he is dead.

Jesus' body is given to one of his followers, Joseph of Arimathea, to bury. Jesus is left on the crosses, as it was the day of preparation for the Passover.

Significance of the Crucifixion and Relevance Today

Christians believe that the purpose of Jesus' life was so that he could teach about sacrifice to save humans from their **sin**. Christians believe that Jesus' life and death fulfilled the **covenant**, a promise between God and humankind. Jesus replaced the old covenant so that Christians no longer needed to follow this, but could instead be saved by faith.

Different aspects of Jesus' crucifixion also have particular significance for Christians, as they relate to the person of Jesus and for their life and worship.

Aspect of Jesus' crucifixion	Significance
Jesus died at the time of the Passover festival	For Christians, Jesus became the Passover lamb. The Jews mark the Passover to remember when they had marked their doors with blood so that they were saved from the plague of death in Egypt, and from the Egyptians. Now, for Christians, Jesus was the lamb.
Jesus' death, predicted at the Last Supper	Many Christian denominations remember Jesus' sacrifice through the sacrament of the Eucharist ; sharing bread and wine as a reminder of Jesus giving his life to save them from their sins. Christians believe in Jesus because of his sacrifice.
Fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy	Many Christians believe that various aspects of Jesus' life and death correspond to Old Testament prophecy . Some believe that the 'suffering servant' mentioned in Isaiah 53. Some believe that some of the details of Jesus' life (such as his clothing and Jesus being mocked) correspond with prophecy (among other things). If Jesus fulfilled prophecy, this suggests that the plan to redeem humankind had been part of God's plan for a long time. Some do not believe these prophecies were fulfilled, and do not believe in Jesus (or prophecies in the first place.)

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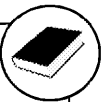
Aspect of Jesus' crucifixion	Significance
	The Temple curtain separated the Holy of Holies (the part of the Temple where God was supposed to dwell) from the rest of the Temple. The tearing of the curtain was seen to symbolise that Jesus' death had removed the barrier between people and God. Christians today believe that anyone can come to God and have a relationship with him through Jesus. Christians believe that this applies to gentiles (non-Jews) as well as Jews – that Jesus' death removed the barrier between God and all of humanity.

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he view within Christianity that Christians have been saved by Jesus, through his **ion**, from **sin** and its consequences (death). This means Christians do not have to iment, and can have a new start, having **faith** that God loves and cares for them.

at doing wrong (sin) separates them from God, and condemns them to punishment usus died instead – he paid the price which they should have paid, and now they can with God, a clean slate. Also, when they die, this will be temporary, and they will live en. So salvation is important because it offers Christians these remarkable incels their debt of sin – God forgives them.

es of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.'
(Romans 6:23 NRSV)



Different ideas about salvation:

at there is salvation because Jesus died and rose again. However, there are different ideas about who can receive salvation, and how.

ne Christians, such as St Augustine, hold is that salvation is granted by God through **grace** **predestined** who to save; chosen them at the beginning of time. Because humans have io right to salvation, and God has not chosen to save everyone. This can seem harsh, but it do not have to worry about being perfect, because God does not save because of what the individual has done.

by some Christians is that humans have **free will** to choose to come to God or not, and to has done for them, and that salvation is down to the individual choosing to accept God's / Jesus' teachings / do good works. This seems positive because no one is automatically from salvation, but it puts pressure on Christians to believe and/or live good lives.

How to remember this?

Some people liken the first view of salvation, through predestination (being chosen by God), to a cat. Cats pick their young up by the neck to carry them.

Some people liken the second view of salvation, where the human must reach out to God, to a monkey. Baby monkeys must grab onto their mothers to be carried.



The Role of Jesus in Salvation:

Jesus' role in salvation is that he brought humans salvation – without him, there was no chance at a relationship with God. In John 3:10–21, Jesus explains to a man that he has come from heaven, so that those who believe in him can have eternal life. He says that those who believe will be saved, but those who do not believe will not.

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but may have eternal life.' (John 3:16 NRSV)

Jesus explained (**symbolically**) to his **disciples** at the **Last Supper** that his death was the (promise) between God and humans which saved humanity from sin.

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins...' (Matthew 26:26–28 NRSV)

Christians, from the beginning of Christianity, have taught that salvation comes through Jesus. Jesus' disciple Peter proclaimed this in Acts 4:8–12 – that everyone must be saved through Jesus.

'There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.' (Acts 4:12 NRSV)

Some people wonder why Jesus had to die to end this separation between God and humans. Why couldn't he just click his fingers and make everything ok if he wanted to? One Christian answer is that God is both **just** and merciful. Wrong had been done, so a just God *has* to punish. However, he is merciful and wants to forgive. The solution: he accepts the punishment for them. He can forgive humanity. This is like paying a debt for a friend – the debt must be paid, but he pays it instead of them.

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concept of **salvation**?

Atonement:

Atonement refers to *how* Jesus achieved salvation, and how he redeemed humans for (or atoned for) their sins, so saved them from the consequences.

Atonement is a significant concept because it explains how it was possible for God to pay humans' debt himself and heal the rift between God and humans. If God was not atoning for humans' sins, he could not have brought them salvation.

Different ideas about atonement:

There are different ideas about how Jesus managed to atone for sin and save humans. Some think he could pay the price to redeem humans because he was human, but he was able to pay more than humans could because he was **divine**. Some think Jesus achieved atonement through sacrifice. Some think a sacrifice necessary for sin – death (this view is used throughout because it is a popular view). Some think the sacrifice defeated the devil, so that he could no longer control sinners. Some think atonement is not fully explainable.

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[Jesus, speaking about himself:] 'For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.' (Mark 10:45 NRSV)

Some Christians believe that not only did Jesus pay the price for humanity's sin, but he also took on the sin, as a burden – humans' sins were transferred to Jesus, and he died for them and resurrection. This also provides one explanation for why God the Father was not with Jesus before his death – he could not be in union with Jesus when Jesus carried the burden of sin from God, God must be free from all sin).

And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani? (that is, God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46 NRSV – a quote)

This has some biblical basis – in the **Old Testament** a priest could transfer sins to an animal, and then free the animal outside the area where the Jews were living. If the animal were no longer bound by their sin. (The transferral of sins could be interpreted as a metaphor for Jesus taking on the sins of humanity).

When he has finished atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the live goat. Then Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess its iniquities of the people of Israel, and all their transgressions, all their sins, putting them on the goat, and sending it away into the wilderness by means of someone designated to bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region; and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:20–22 NRSV)

Then in the book of the **prophet** Isaiah, Christians often interpret Isaiah's prediction that the Messiah will do something similar – he will bear the people's burden (though they do not realize it at the time, they are hurting him badly, killing him – see Isaiah 53:3–9).

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed... and by his wounds we are healed... and the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53:4–6 NRSV)

The link between salvation and atonement: Salvation is *what* Christians believe Jesus did to save humanity. Atonement refers to *how* Christians believe he did it – the process of making amends for sin.

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concept of **atonement**?

Quick Questions

16. What is the passion of Jesus?
17. What is the meaning of salvation for Christians?
18. What do Christians mean by atonement?

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Beliefs and Teachings about the Resurrection and Ascension

Keywords:

- ♦ **Great Commission** – when the risen Jesus told his disciples to go and preach the Gospel to all nations
- ♦ **Sabbath** – the Jewish holy day

Synopsis of Biblical Accounts of the Resurrection and Ascension

Resurrection:

Jesus died on the Friday, and the **Sabbath** (Saturday) the next day was kept. Consequently, the women who followed Jesus could not go to prepare his body for burial on the morning. The **resurrection** story varies greatly between the different Gospels. The four versions (in the order they appear in the Bible).

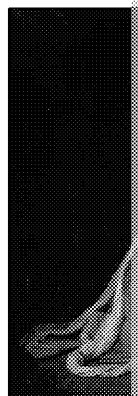
- ♦ In Matthew's Gospel, an angel appears to the women and tells them that Jesus has risen. Then Jesus appears to his **disciples** when the women have told them to go.
- ♦ In Mark's Gospel, a man (often presumed to be an angel, especially as he is wearing a white robe, which could symbolise holiness) is sitting in the open tomb and tells the women that Jesus has been raised. In the longer ending of this Gospel, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and then to his disciples.
- ♦ In Luke's Gospel, the women find an open and empty tomb. Two men (often presumed to be angels – they wear 'dazzling clothes' (NRSV) which make them seem other-worldly) appear to the women and tell them that Jesus has risen. The women are scared and tell the disciples.

Mary Magdalene was one of Jesus' closest followers, and probably the first to see the risen Jesus, and probably the first to tell the disciples, because of the Gospels. She was cured of a demon-possessed condition, which explains her devotion to Jesus, who is referred to as a 'friend and saviour' in the Bible.

The disciples do not want to believe them, though Peter goes to investigate. Jesus appears to two of his followers on a journey, though they do not realise it is him until he breaks bread down to eat. He also appears to Simon Peter and his other disciples, proving to them that he is alive and teaching them. He tells them to wait in Jerusalem [for the Holy Spirit] and to preach the good news about him.

'While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Do not be afraid. Jesus has risen from the dead. He is not here, but has risen."' (Luke 24:4-7)

- ♦ In John's Gospel, Mary Magdalene finds the empty tomb and alerts some of the disciples, she sees two angels sitting in the tomb, and then she sees Jesus. Then Jesus appears to the disciples without the disciple Thomas, and then again when Thomas is present. Thomas is often called 'doubting Thomas' because he would not believe that Jesus had risen until he saw for himself. Jesus also appears to his disciples again when they are fishing.



Christ's Appearance to the Disciples after the Resurrection

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Jesus' resurrection is also reported in the New Testament letters, such as 1 Cor 15:3-8, which implies that many Christians believed that they had seen the risen Jesus, and passed on the message to them:

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised to life again in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time... (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

Ascension:

The **ascension** is not specifically mentioned in Matthew's Gospel or John's Gospel. Matthew's Gospel ends with Jesus telling his disciples to go out and teach about him and make more disciples, as well as implying that he is leaving them physically. This is known as the **Great Commission**, and is dealt with more in the section on *The Place of Mission, Evangelism and Church Growth*. The Great Commission is also given in Mark's Gospel. John's Gospel ends with a conversation between Jesus and Peter and a testimony from the Gospel writer.

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus blesses his disciples and ascends to heaven, and the ascension is described in Acts 1:6-11 (see also Luke 24:46-53). Mark's Gospel mentions that Jesus was taken up into heaven and seated at the right hand of God (Mark 16:7-8).

While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven and he sat down at the right hand of God.

Significance of the Resurrection and Ascension and Relevance Today

Different aspects of Jesus' **resurrection** and **ascension** also have particular significance for Christians today, helping them to understand the person of Jesus and for their life and worship.

Aspect of Jesus' resurrection and ascension	Significance
Destroying the Temple and rebuilding in three days	When Jesus had spoken about destroying the Temple and rebuilding it in three days, this in his trial in front of the Jewish Council in some Gospels was assumed he meant the Temple in Jerusalem where the Temple was destroyed. At his death it was interpreted that he meant himself; that God would raise him from the dead. Especially when the Jewish Temple was destroyed, less than 40 years after Jesus' death, Christians saw Jesus as replacing the physical Temple. They worship God through Jesus, not through animal sacrifice. Jesus' resurrection was the final sacrifice.
Jesus rising from the dead	Christians believe that Jesus overcame sin and death through his resurrection, salvation . The religion of Christianity has continued to grow because of the resurrection , and which Christians celebrate at Easter. Jesus' resurrection shows that God can, and will, resurrect people after death.
Jesus' resurrection and ascension	These show Jesus' divinity and remind Christians of his power. They could overcome death and rise to heaven. As Jesus ascended to heaven, he is believed to be alive – able to help and watch over Christians.

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Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even false witnesses about God, for we have said we were serving him when in fact we were deceiving him. And if God is false, why should we tell the truth? But since we tell the truth, let us come back to our senses. Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even false witnesses about God, for we have said we were serving him when in fact we were deceiving him. And if God is false, why should we tell the truth? But since we tell the truth, let us come back to our senses.
(1 Corinthians 15:12–14 NRSV)

Catholics tend to emphasise the importance of the **crucifixion** when Jesus died for humanity's sin. Protestants tend to emphasise the resurrection when Jesus overcame death.

Pause for thought

What do you think would have happened if Jesus' disciples did *not* believe in the resurrection of the dead? Would Christianity have been different?

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concept of **resurrection**?

Quick Questions

19. What does the resurrection of Jesus refer to?
20. What is the meaning of ascension?

Now Try This...

21. Explain why the resurrection is important for Christians.

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Salvation

Beliefs and Teachings about Law, Sin, Grace and the S

Keywords:

- ♦ **Evangelical** – a type of Protestant, often concerned with being spiritually re
- ♦ **inspiration** – an indirect communication from God to humans that they be
- ♦ **ordained** – someone who is a member of the clergy, such as a priest or a vic has authority to perform services and administer sacraments (one becomes ceremony)
- ♦ **revelation** – experiencing God in a way in which he is seen or heard, or kno

Law

Before Jesus, Jews aimed to achieve **salvation** through following God's **law** (the Jewish law), but many Christians believe that this was not a permanent solution, and Jesus' sacrifice replaced this (most Jews still follow the Jewish law). Instead of following a written law, they should instead follow the spiritual law of love, perfectly expressed in Jesus.

'This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, laws in their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and
(Hebrews 8:10 NRSV)

Because of Jesus, Christians today can feel free from **sin**, and also free from This is not to say that they can do anything they want, but that they do not to purify themselves, and that if they do something wrong and repent, they believe God will forgive them. This means Christians do not have to fear death, or punishment, and can have a new start, having faith that God loves and cares for them.

However, while Christians do not follow all of the rules in the **Old Testament**, they still believe that they should follow the principles of God's law – just because Jesus died for humanity's sins does not mean that Christians can do anything they like. However, St Paul makes it clear that Christians cannot be saved by following the law, only by following Jesus

St Paul was once persecuted Christian, but after his conversion experienced a vision of Jesus and heard Jesus' voice. He was healed of his blindness and became an important figure in the early Christian gospel. He wrote the letters to the Romans and Galatians.

... yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith
(Galatians 2:16 NRSV)

Word of God: Differing Ways of Interpreting Biblical Writings – Inspiration

While Christians do not necessarily follow all the rules in the Bible, the bible the Bible contains books from the Jewish scriptures (these became the Christian Bible). Christians still feel that these are important – the whole Bible is seen as the Word of God. Christians view the New Testament as more important than the Old Testament, as it contains the uniquely Christian revelation of Jesus, and details the salvation of humanity.

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Different Christians have different views on the authority of the Bible – some believe everything it tells them and follow it completely, and others take a less strict approach. This often correlates with how they interpret it, and who they think it was written by.

As with the account of **creation**, some Christians believe that the entire Bible is the word of God and some believe that parts are **metaphorical/symbolic**. Those who feel that the word of God will be more likely to see it as authoritative, as they will feel that it comes directly and exactly from God, and so cannot be wrong – some believe that it was **revealed** to the authors of the Bible by God. Christians who believe that everything is literally true are called **fundamentalists**. They will feel that it has full authority for all Christians.

Those that feel that parts of the Bible are symbolic will not necessarily see it as an authority on things – for example, some will not feel that it is an authority on exactly how the world works, as they believe in the Big Bang and evolution.

Some Christians believe that the Bible was **inspired** by God; that God communicated with the authors, who wrote and edited it, but not every word was given directly by God. People who believe this may feel that the Bible teaches spiritual truths, and that all of it is literally *or* symbolically true.

This is supported by 2 Timothy 3:16 (part of the New Testament) which teaches that all scripture is inspired by God. Therefore, it is very important for guidance and teaching. Some Christians disagree and may not believe that 2 Timothy 3:16 was inspired by God.

'All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.' (2 Timothy 3:16 NRSV)

The Catholic Church also teaches that all scripture is inspired by God. It says that the Holy Spirit inspired the authors, and so is what God wanted written. It is written, however, by humans, so humans must work to understand the meaning of what is written in the Bible. The Bible can be interpreted in many different ways.

Some Christians believe that the Bible was written by humans about God. They believe it was influenced by God, but that much is human opinion and belief. They are uncertain if the historical details are accurate, so may not take the Bible to be an authority on everything. Some of the Bible's key teachings, and many believe that there is some accuracy to biblical history. Some certain books of the Bible, such as the Gospels, have more authority, and those written by one Christian to another, do not have authority for Christians today. Some use it for guidance and teaching, but may not follow it to the letter, and some will accept what is important and what they mean.

There are direct implications of these understandings for Christians today. Those who believe in the literal word of God, or are more likely to disagree with scientific or historical facts that contradict the Bible, are more likely to take a hard line on specific Biblical teachings. They may be firmly against homosexuality because of verses such as Leviticus 18:22, or the **ordination** of women because of verses such as 1 Corinthians 14:34.

There are also implications for how coherent Christians' beliefs seem, based on how they understand the Bible. An understanding that the Bible is not all completely factually accurate (not literal), or that not all

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teachings need to be followed, can be problematic if Christians are seen to to believe. This may indicate that they do not have strong foundations for that something should be believed or practised because it is in the Bible which did not accept.

However, it could also be seen to be easier to defend a non-literal understanding of scientific accounts appear to contradict the Bible, or where different parts of the Bible contradict each other (e.g. there are teachings that men and women are equal which seem to contradict teachings that women should not speak in church or that matter to God then Christians should not discriminate due to gender).

The Bible in Relation to Other Sources of Authority

Different Christians attribute different amounts of authority to the Bible in their lives. Generally speaking, the most authority is attributed by traditional Christianity. Protestantism began as a movement which was trying to reform the Catholic Church. Protestants disagreed with many things which the Catholic Church was doing, including the Pope's authority given the ultimate authority – more authority than the Bible. Early Protestants believed that people should be returned to the Bible, as the word of God – the Bible should be in a simple language which people spoke (it had previously been in Latin), and people should read themselves and use it to help them to live Christian lives.

Catholics do regard the Bible as containing authority, but the priesthood and ultimately the Pope have the ultimate authority – the Pope is seen as God's representative on Earth. The Catholic Church emphasises the authority of the Church (the leadership of priests and Pope), not because it does not think that the Bible has authority, but because it feels that the Church knows how to interpret the Bible, and so ordinary people should listen to the Church, rather than accidentally misinterpreting the Bible themselves.

Pentecostals, and Charismatic Christians, more modern branches of Protestantism, see the Holy Spirit as more authoritative than the Bible. They feel that God can influence them individually, and such influence should be given greater authority than a book. Again, they do not feel that the Bible has no authority, but feel that God speaking to them directly in the present carries more authority than God's word recorded hundreds of years ago.

Sin

The term '**sin**' often refers to acting against God's will, but can also refer to the relationship with God due to humans not matching up to God's perfection – therefore, it can be seen as forming a barrier between God and humans. The consequences of sin are that if people act against God, they will be punished by dying and going to hell. In *Creation*, there are two types of sin within Christianity – **original sin** and **personal sin** (all Christians believe in original sin). Christians believe that if they confess their sins to God, then he will do, and they will not go to hell, but will receive eternal life.

Jesus can be seen as a second Adam, who came to remedy the **Fall** and/or the broken relationship with God despite sin. Regardless of whether humans inherit sin, all will sometimes, and so they need saving – through Jesus.

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Jesus gave many teachings on sin, recorded in the **New Testament**. He taught sinners, to rescue people from the consequences of sin. He told many people they were forgiven and preached that God would forgive the sins of those who repent and seek his authority to forgive sins.

'For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.' (Matthew 9:13)
*'When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."
 "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."* (John 20:23 NRSV)

Jesus also taught that sin was severe – it should be avoided at all costs.

'And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.' (Matthew 5:30)

Further, Jesus corrected a misconception about sin which was common at the time – that it was necessarily the result of sin – God may not punish sin on Earth, and good for people to have a sign of sinlessness or God's favour.

'His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" He answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's glory might be revealed in him."' (John 9:2–3 NRSV)

Grace and the Spirit

Christians believe that **grace** is a spiritual gift which God can give to people in order to save them. For example, Christians believe that sending Jesus to save humans was an extension of God's grace.

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
 (John 1:16 NRSV)



The Holy Spirit, the third Person of God in the **Trinity**, is also believed to be able to send his grace; by sending Christians the Holy Spirit to help them in their lives. Christians feel that they can also receive God's grace through his teaching in the **sacraments**; for example, reliving Jesus' sacrifice in the **Eucharist**, or accepting forgiveness through **baptism**.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.
 (Romans 8:2 NRSV)

Christian belief in grace is important – Christians feel that without God's grace, they would not have been saved as God would not have sent Jesus.

... they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.
 (Romans 3:24 NRSV)

Christians also believe that they are saved through God's grace, not through what they themselves have done.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8–9)

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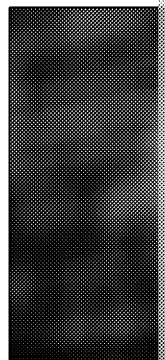


Christians believe that the Holy Spirit descended at **Pentecost** – that God sent the **Trinity** to help Christians. Jesus' first disciples received the Spirit dramatically in the building where they were, and they experienced tongues 'of fire' appearing. They began to be able to speak in other languages so that they could preach the Gospel (Acts 2). Indeed, many Christians today who feel the presence of the Holy Spirit, warmth, and also a passion for God – they feel 'on fire'.

Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.
(Acts 2:3–4 NRSV)

Role of the Holy Spirit in Evangelical Worship

For many **evangelical** Christians, the Holy Spirit plays a prominent role in worship. Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians especially (who are often evangelical) hope to be inspired during worship by the Holy Spirit. This can take different forms – Christians may feel moved directly by the Holy Spirit to preach on a particular subject to others, or to pray in a particular way. They may also expect to feel moved emotionally by the Spirit during worship. This is more difficult to explain, as this is subjective. Broadly, Christians may experience feelings of joy and elation, as well as feelings of reassurance – that God loves them, that 'everything will be alright' and that they are living his will by following his teachings. One sign that Christians feel moved this way, or want to be, is raising one (or both) hands in the air during singing. Such inspirations and feelings can strengthen a Christian's faith and convince them that they are on the right path.



The Holy Spirit

In some evangelical worship the Holy Spirit may be even more prominent. Some Christians believe that they practise gifts of the Spirit – they **prophesy**, or talk in tongues (which some can interpret). Some Christians claim to work **miracles** through the Spirit – they are able to heal others (of mental and/or physical ailments) through the Spirit – they lay hands upon the person who desires healing (often on their head or shoulders). While such 'gifts of the Spirit' are practised in other **denominations**, they are especially common in evangelical communities. Speaking in tongues is especially associated with evangelism. Christians will be healed (quickly) of serious physical conditions through the Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.
(1 Corinthians 12:4, 7–10 NRSV)

Quick Questions

22. State **two** types of sin Christians may believe in.
23. Describe Christian teaching about law.
24. Explain Christian beliefs about the Holy Spirit.

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The Afterlife

Eschatological Beliefs

Christians believe in an afterlife – that there will be another life after death. This is an important belief within Christianity.

Keywords:

- ♦ **conversion** – when someone starts to follow a religion after having followed another or had no religion
- ♦ **eschatology** – anything to do with the end of things, such as the end of life or the world, has a religious context.
- ♦ **heaven** – a place people go after death, where God is
- ♦ **hell** – a place people go after death away from God
- ♦ **immortality of the soul** – where a spiritual part of a person continues forever
- ♦ **judgment** – when people will be rewarded or punished for their lives
- ♦ **parables** – stories with an inner meaning, for the purpose of teaching
- ♦ **purgatory** – a place Catholics believe people may go after death to do penance
- ♦ **resurrection of the body** – the physical raising of a person who is dead

Because Christians believe Jesus died so that they could have eternal life, many Christians believe in an afterlife. Those who feel that they are living lives pleasing to God may not fear death because they believe it is not the end. The teachings about life after death are important because they influence how Christians live.

'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live. Those who do not believe in me will die. I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' (John 11:25–26)

Because some Christians believe that they should focus on the afterlife, belief in an afterlife is important in influencing them to isolate themselves from normal life – many Christians have felt that they should try to avoid human desires, to focus on worshipping God.

Christians tend to associate the afterlife with a specific place (whether this is heaven or hell). Teachings which support this include John 14:2–7:

'In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have come to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the Father.' (John 14:2–4 NRSV)

Some Christians interpret...

'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6 NRSV)

... to mean that only Christians will go to **heaven** – such as the belief that only those who are Christians will go to heaven. Christians, therefore, feel that they must believe and practice Christianity in order to go to heaven when they die. This often leads to Christians trying to **convert** others to Christianity so that they too can experience heaven. This belief is important because it influences Christians' views of non-Christians and also their actions – without such a belief they might not be as concerned with converting others.

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However, other Christians interpret John 14:6 as meaning that no one can experience God except through Christianity, but that people can experience God in other ways. This belief is important, as those who hold it will feel that people of other religions ultimately want the same things.

Resurrection and Life after Death (resurrection of the Body and Immortality of the Soul)

Not all Christians agree on how life after death works. Some believe that God will raise humans' physical bodies at the end of time. Others believe that a spiritual part of a person, their soul, lives on after death and goes straight to

heaven/hell/purgatory (see the section on these below).

Some Christians believe in both; that the soul will enter the afterlife immediately after death, but that there will be a bodily **resurrection** for everyone at **judgment** at the end of time, where souls and bodies are reunited. In other words, people will enter a spiritual realm after death based on their actions during their life, and many will go to purgatory to **atone** for sins (see more on this below). At the end of time, God will judge everyone on their actions during life *and* after death, and people will then enter either heaven or hell for the rest of eternity (people who had previously been in purgatory have the chance to enter heaven).



Picture 1

Therefore, there are varied beliefs about the nature of resurrection: some believe in immediate resurrection at death; some believe that it is delayed until the end of time; some believe that people will be resurrected while some believe that it will not be, and that in heaven there will be new bodies, completely different to earthly bodies. However, all Christians agree that this is available to them because Jesus has saved them and God has the power to raise the dead.

Different Bible passages support different ideas about resurrection.

Some Christians believe in **resurrection of the body** because Jesus was raised from the dead in some sort of bodily form, and he raised others from the dead physically; for example, Lazarus (John 11) and the three people who were raised from the dead by Jesus. Also, Jesus taught that the dead will be raised from their graves at a coming time.

'Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will come out...' (John 5:28–29 NRSV)

Many Christians believe that when their body is resurrected, it will be different from the current body. Some believe that the resurrected body will be in some sense spiritual. In 1 Corinthians 15:42–55 St Paul discusses this, claiming that the current body is corruptible and will be raised, but with spiritual bodies.

'It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body sown, it will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on immortality.' (1 Corinthians 15:44, 52)

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However, other Christians believe in **immortality of the soul** because Jesus (6:47; 17:2), not life which ends and then starts again at some point in the future. He told the thieves on the cross that he would be in heaven that day, which implies that he would wait to be resurrected at the end of time. (With reference to the previous question, some Christians believe that Christians will get improved spiritual bodies in heaven immediately after death.)

[to the thief on the cross] 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'

The Catholic Church teaches that both will happen, because the Bible teaches both. Catholics do not want to deny any teachings of Jesus.

Resurrection is important because:

- ◆ Christians believe that there will be life after death.
 - This can comfort them because they know death will not be the end.
 - This can encourage them to live good lives because they know God will reward them.
- ◆ The existence of resurrection illuminates the character of God.
 - God is powerful enough to overcome death (demonstrated by Jesus being brought back to life in the Bible).
 - God is loving and forgiving – he wants humans to enjoy heaven with him.

Judgment

Judgment is the event at the end of time and/or when each individual person is judged based on what they believed, and whether they lived a good or bad life. Judgment results in people being sent to heaven, hell or purgatory (see the next question). (**Note:** If Christians, such as Catholics, believe in **immortality of the soul** and that people are judged twice – when they die *and* at the end of time.)

Judgment is important because it decides the eternal fate of a person – who will be saved and who will be condemned.

Jesus taught that after death people would be judged depending on how they lived their lives. He told **parables**, or stories with moral lessons, to explain what **judgment** and the end of time would be like. Three of these are the parable of the sheep and the goats, the parable of the ten bridesmaids, and the parable of the rich fool.



The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats Matthew 25:31–46 (NRSV)

Jesus will come back at the end of time and separate the good people (sheep) from the bad people (goats). He will grant the good people the 'kingdom' and 'eternal life' because they fed him, watered him, welcomed him, clothed him, and cared for him when he was sick. The sheep will ask when they did these things. Jesus will tell them that when they did these things for anyone, it was as if they did it for him.

He will then tell the goats that they did not care for others in need. They will be condemned to 'eternal punishment'.

'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my body, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40 NRSV)

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The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

Matthew 25:1–12

Ten bridesmaids were waiting for the bridegroom, but he was delayed, so they ran out of oil. Five had brought extra oil for their lamps. When the bridegroom (representing Jesus) came, the five with extra oil had run out. They had to go to buy some more. When they got back to the wedding (heaven), everyone else had gone in, but the doors were locked and they were not ready for the kingdom of heaven to come at any time.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19–31

Jesus tells a story about a rich man who lived in luxury, while a poor man, Lazarus, lived in horrible conditions. When the two die, the poor man goes to heaven and the rich man goes to hell. The rich man is denied relief from his torment, and knows that his family will also receive the same punishment. The story is that it is necessary to help others while you are alive, or you will be punished. It is those who have nothing who will be rewarded, and those who have much who will be punished.

It was not just Jesus who taught that people would be judged at the end of time. Early Christians believed in judgment and continued to teach about judgment.

Taking it further

Read more about the end of time: the Parable of the Talents – where Jesus says that those who will be judged favourably and those who will be judged unfavourably.

'For all of us must appear before the judgement seat of Christ, so that each may receive what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.' (2 Corinthians 5:10)

The teachings of judgment in the New Testament encourage Christians to live a 'good' life (for example, taking care of the hungry and the sick, such as in the parable of the goats, Matthew 25), in order not to 'go to **hell**'. So the teachings are also to help Christians to make decisions, knowing that they will be judged for their actions. The teachings about life after death as not reassuring, but scary – important because they will happen if they are not good.

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concept of **Judgement**?

Traditional and Contemporary Beliefs about Heaven, Hell (and Purgatory)

Most Christians believe in **heaven**, which is a place where people will be with God. From the passages about **judgment** and the end of time, Jesus says he will send his **disciples** in heaven (John 14:2–4). Those writing in the New Testament also wrote about life after death, as expressed in 1 Corinthians 5:1–10.

'For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' (2 Corinthians 5:1)

Christians believe that heaven is a desirable place to be; some believe that it is beyond human standards, e.g. there will be great banquets (Jesus compared heaven to a banquet in Matthew 22). Some believe that in heaven humans will spend their time constantly praising God.

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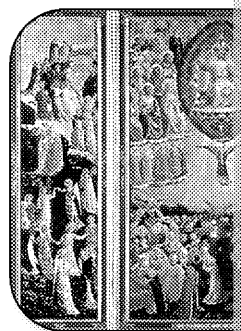
'... they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple. He who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'
(Revelation: 7:15–17 NRSV)

Traditionally there is an emphasis on God residing in heaven on a throne, so in contemporary thinking, this may be seen as more symbolic. However, some Christians believe in heaven as a place where people can interact, and celebrate, as well as others focus on it as a state where they will have a special spiritual bond with God.

Most Christians also believe in **hell**, somewhere outside of heaven and away from God. About judgment Jesus does not make hell sound very nice. It is compared to

'[being thrown out into the darkness], where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
(Matthew 25:30 NRSV)

Hell has been portrayed in many different ways. In medieval times, 'doom' paintings, portraying final judgment, were common on the walls of churches, to remind Christians that they wanted to go to heaven and not be condemned to the terrors of hell. In Luke 16, in the **parable** of the rich man and Lazarus, hell is described as a place of fiery torment.



However, many Christians today do not believe that hell is a place of physical torture (which was believed in medieval times). They believe in the absence of God, or even that those who go to 'hell' stop existing altogether.

Some Christians believe in a place called **purgatory**, where Christians can go to atone for their sins before being allowed to enter heaven. Belief in purgatory is taught by Catholics who **pray** for those they believe to be in purgatory, in the hope of helping them. However, many other churches, such as the Church of England, teach that belief in purgatory as they feel that there is no firm scriptural basis.

Belief in heaven, hell and purgatory is significant, as it encourages Christians to live good lives. These beliefs are also significant because they create boundaries between different beliefs about purgatory held by the Church of England and Catholics.

Important!

At the end of this section, do you understand the key concept of **resurrection**?

Quick Questions

25. Give **two** examples of places which Christians may believe people enter after death.
26. Give **two** examples of parables about eschatological beliefs.

Now Try This...

27. 'Immediately after death, people go to heaven, hell, or purgatory.'
Discuss this statement.

Argue for *and* against this statement. You must refer to Christian teaching which follows from your argument.

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Summary for Beliefs and Tea

- ♦ The Christian God is believed to be **omnipotent** (all-powerful) and **omniscient**. The problem of **evil** and **suffering** exists because it is hard to explain why, if God is all-powerful, he allows evil and suffering to exist. The Greek philosopher Epicurus is the first to raise this problem. Believers may question their **faith**, if they feel that God allows evil and suffering. However, there is teaching in the Bible which explains evil and suffering, including the **Book of Job**.
- ♦ Many Christians believe in one God, in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the **Trinity**.
- ♦ Christians believe that God **created** the world. Accounts of this are found in Genesis and John. Christians may take from accounts of creation that they are special, made in God's image, and that they should look after creation and reproduce. Some of these accounts are to be interpreted **literally**, while others think they should be interpreted **metaphorically**. Some Christians believe in the **Fall**.
- ♦ Many Christians believe that Jesus was the **incarnation** of God: God in human form. In Incarnation, Christians may feel that they know what God wants through Jesus. They are saved through his sacrifice.
- ♦ Christians believe that Jesus was **crucified**, and that this **atoned** for human sin and brought **salvation**. Christians have different views on whether God only extends salvation to those who believe, or whether it is available to all who seek it and Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the world.
- ♦ Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead. After being witnessed to, he gave them instructions, he **ascended** to heaven. Christians believe that his resurrection allowed them to have a relationship with God, and to inherit eternal life.
- ♦ Christians believe that they are saved by Jesus, rather than by following rules. Christians still feel that the Bible has authority. Some Christians believe that the Bible is the **Word of God** and has been **revealed** by God. Others feel that it has been inspired. Christians believe that parts of the Bible are **symbolic**. Many Protestants see the Bible as the ultimate source of authority on God. However, Catholics feel that the Church has authority, and Pentecostals feel that the Holy Spirit is the most authoritative. Christians believe in **sin** – acting against God's will / a separation from God that needs to be saved. Christians believe that salvation is an extension of God's grace. In worship, the Holy Spirit plays an important role, in inspiring and helping people.
- ♦ Christians have various understandings concerning the afterlife. Jesus was **judged** after death and that they should be prepared for God's Kingdom. Most Christians believe in **heaven** and **hell** and some believe in **purgatory**, a place to do penance before heaven. Some Christians believe that God will **resurrect** people's physical bodies at the end of time, and some believe that the **soul** lives on immediately after death and is **immortal**; some believe in both. Some Christians believe that only Christians will go to heaven, because Jesus is the only way to God, but not all do.

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Answers

Mark Schemes for 5-mark, 8-mark and 15-mark questions

5-markers

1 mark for a weak answer with limited understanding. Limited use of technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

2–3 marks for a good answer, showing knowledge and understanding of beliefs, and good use of technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

4–5 marks for an excellent answer showing good knowledge and understanding of beliefs, and their influence. Technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority used accurately and to good effect.

8-markers

1–2 marks for a weak answer with little knowledge and understanding shown. Little show of technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

3–4 marks for a good answer, showing knowledge and understanding of beliefs, and some use of technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

5–6 marks for a very good answer showing good knowledge and understanding of beliefs, and their influence. Technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority generally used well and to good effect.

7–8 marks for an excellent answer showing really good knowledge and understanding of beliefs, and their influence. Technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority used accurately and to good effect.

15-markers

1–3 marks for a weak answer with little knowledge and little or no judgment. No different viewpoints shown. Little or no technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

4–6 marks for a limited answer with some knowledge, different viewpoints and some understanding of technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

7–9 marks for a good answer with good knowledge, different viewpoints and understanding of some technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

10–12 marks for a very good answer with accurate knowledge, different viewpoints and strong good judgment. Detailed use of technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

13–15 marks for a complete answer with detailed knowledge, full use of different viewpoints and strong influence. Very good judgment. Strong use of technical terms and sources of wisdom and authority.

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Beliefs and Teachings

Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A census is a way of counting a population. ♦ It is also a way of collecting statistics about them, for example religious beliefs. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Islam ♦ Judaism ♦ Hinduism ♦ Buddhism ♦ Sikhism <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christianity has influenced Britain by introducing Christian festivals such as Easter. ♦ This has also affected bank holidays – people get time off at these celebrations. ♦ Some originally Christian days such as St Valentine's Day have become modern celebrations. ♦ Because the Christian holy day is Sunday, many people do not work on Sunday or open shorter hours. ♦ British laws are also influenced by Christianity – sins such as murder and theft. <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 5)</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ It is more loving for God to allow humans free will than to control them, and to commit evil. ♦ God is not omnipotent and cannot stop evil and suffering. ♦ Evil and suffering are just punishment for humans. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christians believe that God created the world. ♦ The Bible teaches that God is powerful. ♦ Christians believe that God works miracles. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christians believe that God is loving (omnibenevolent). This means they feel that God loves about them and wants what is best for them. They believe this because they have seen his love shown through history, recorded in the Bible, such as by sending Jesus to die for them. <i>'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.'</i> (John 3:16–17 NRSV) ♦ Many Christians believe that God is omnipotent (all-powerful). This is because they see the power of God in the world and humanity and they feel that he has performed miracles. The Bible teaches of God's power. <i>Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded. In the sight of Pharaoh and his officials he lifted up the staff and struck the water in the river, and all the water in the river was turned into blood. (Exodus 7:20 NRSV)</i> <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 5)</p>
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Trinity means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ God is three persons. ○ God is one being. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Catholics believe that God the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. ♦ Christians believe that God is one being but three persons. ♦ Many Christians believe that God the Son helped God with creation and became the person of Jesus. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christians believe that their God is one God, the God of the Jewish people, three persons – the Father, Son and Spirit. <i>'Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.'</i> (Deuteronomy 6:4 NRSV) <i>'And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the one with whom I am well pleased."</i> (Matthew 3:16–17 NRSV) ♦ Christians believe that God the Father made the world and spoke to the Jews (recorded in the Old Testament). ♦ They believe that the Son came to Earth as Jesus, and was fully human as well as God. (This is affirmed in the Nicene Creed.) They, therefore, believe that Jesus came from God. <i>'The Father and I are one.'</i> (John 10:30 NRSV) ♦ The Spirit of God is believed to have been present at creation and to have come upon Christians at Pentecost, so that God is always with them. <i>'Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.'</i> (Acts 2:3–4 NRSV) ♦ Christians believe that all the persons of God are important, as they have different roles, and helped Christians in different ways. ♦ Christians express their beliefs in the Trinity through worship, baptising people in the name of all three members of the Trinity, and celebrating the arrival of Jesus at Christmas and the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 5)</p>
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Stewardship means looking after and protecting something. ♦ Christians believe that stewardship involves humanity caring for the world. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Dominion means having control over something. ♦ Christians believe that God has given them dominion over the Earth. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ A Christian may believe that the Bible and its account of the creation of the world is true and happened exactly as the Bible says. They may believe that the world was created by God, that God created Adam and Eve as the first people; and that God spoke and created life. <i>'Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.'</i> (Genesis 1:3 NRSV) ♦ A Christian may believe that the biblical account of creation is metaphorical, that it is symbolic and not literally true. They may believe that God created the world through the Big Bang and humans through evolution, and that Genesis is a story of faith, not factual. ♦ Some Christians believe that the Fall took place after creation, and humans were separated from God. ♦ Christians believe that all three persons of the Trinity were present at creation. ♦ Christians believe that humans were created in the image of God. <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 5)</p>
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Incarnation means in the flesh. ♦ Christians believe that Jesus on Earth was the incarnation of God – he was God in human form. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jesus ate ♦ Jesus cried ♦ Jesus got tired ♦ Jesus felt pain ♦ Jesus died <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Many Christians believe that Jesus was the incarnation of God: God in the flesh. This means that God loved them enough to come to Earth and live with them. Many denominations teach belief in the incarnation, and it is also supported by the Bible: <i>'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word became flesh and lived among us... Jesus Christ...'</i> (John 1:1, 14) ♦ Because Christians believe that Jesus was God, this means that his teachings are authoritative. ♦ Because Christians believe that Jesus was human, they feel that he understands them and can relate to them. ♦ Belief in the incarnation is important to Christians, because it shows God's love and ability to make himself a human. <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 5)</p>
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The passion of Jesus refers to his suffering and death. ♦ It includes events such as his arrest, trials and death, and does not include his resurrection. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Salvation is being saved from something; for Christians this is sin. ♦ Salvation means that Christians do not have to fear death or punishment, as they have a right relationship with God. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Atonement means making up for something – in Christianity, the sin of humankind. ♦ Many Christians feel that they received atonement by Jesus dying as a sacrifice for their sins. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The resurrection of Jesus refers to Jesus rising from the dead. ♦ Early Christians believed they experienced Jesus risen from the dead, and some even touched him. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Ascension means going up. ♦ For Christians it describes Jesus being taken up to heaven, after his resurrection. <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The resurrection is important for Christians because they believe that through resurrection, sin and death have been conquered, and Christians have been given new life. <i>For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time... (1 Corinthians 15:3–6 NRSV)</i> ♦ Jesus' resurrection brings Christians hope for their own resurrection, because they believe that if God can raise Jesus, then God can raise them. <i>Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain and your faith has been in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:12–14 NRSV)</i> ♦ The resurrection is important for Christians because they believe that through it, they can have a relationship with God. ♦ The resurrection is important for Christians because some believe that this is the law in the Old Testament. This means that anyone can have a relationship with God, including gentiles (non-Jews). ♦ The resurrection is important for Christians because it encourages them to live good lives so that they can know the message of the risen Jesus. ♦ The resurrection is important to Christians because they believe that Jesus is watching over them. <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 8)</p>
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Original Sin ♦ Personal Sin <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christianity teaches that God's law is revealed in the Bible. ♦ Christians believe that they should follow God's law, e.g. the Ten Commandments. ♦ Christianity teaches that Christians do not receive salvation through following the law, but through having faith in Jesus. <i>For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of death. (Romans 8:2 NRSV)</i> ♦ Therefore, Christians believe that they do not need to keep the whole of the law, but rather focus on Jesus' law of love. <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 5)</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christians believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, who came at Pentecost. <p><i>Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. (Acts 2:3–4 NRSV)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Christians believe that through sending the Holy Spirit, God also sent his gift allowing them to be saved. ♦ Christians believe that the Holy Spirit helps them in their lives. ♦ For many evangelical Christians, the Holy Spirit plays a prominent role in what they believe that the Holy Spirit gives them inspiration, and may give them gifts to others, or speaking in tongues. <p><i>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:4, 7–10 NRSV)</i></p> <p>Accept any relevant points and reference to scripture (maximum 5)</p>
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Heaven ♦ Hell ♦ Purgatory <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The parable of the sheep and the goats ♦ The parable of the ten bridesmaids ♦ The parable of the rich man and Lazarus <p>Accept any relevant point, 1 mark per point (maximum 2)</p>

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Question Number	Answer / Mark Scheme	
27	<p>Points and Justification for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Jesus tells the thief on the cross next to him that he will be in paradise with him today – this implies that he will be in heaven immediately after death. <i>[to the thief on the cross] 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' (Luke 23:43 NRSV)</i> ♦ Jesus told his followers that they would inherit eternal life, not life that stops and starts again, so Christians must live on in heaven or purgatory after death. ♦ Churches such as the Catholic Church teach that this is the case – that people will go to one of these realms. 	<p>Points and Justification against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Many verses in the Bible speak of the resurrection of the dead at the end of time, e.g. saying that the graves will rise. Therefore, people will go immediately to the afterlife. <i>'Do not be astonished at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out.' (John 5:28–29 NRSV)</i> ♦ Many Christians believe in an end of time – it does not allow people to enter heaven or purgatory until they have been judged. <i>'It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body... flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God... For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality.'</i> (1 Corinthians 15:50, 52–53 NRSV) ♦ Many Protestant Christians do not believe in purgatory, just in heaven. Purgatory is not talked about in the Bible.
Accept any relevant point or justification.		

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