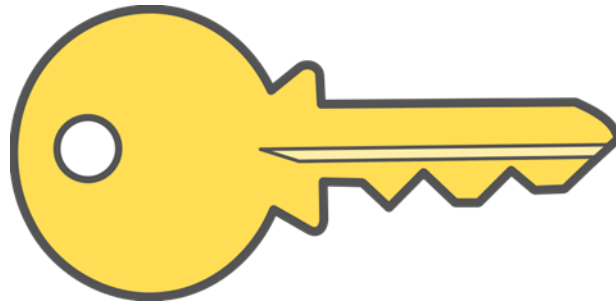


Study of Christianity

Beliefs and teachings



Key concepts

Omnibenevolent – The state of being all-loving and infinitely good – a characteristic often attributed to God.

Omnipotent – The all-powerful, almighty and unlimited nature of God.

Trinity – The three persons of God: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Incarnation – God becoming human in the form of Jesus.

Atonement – The belief that Jesus' death on the cross healed the rift between humans and God.

Resurrection – The belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday, conquering death.

Sacraments – An outward sign of an invisible blessing by God, for example baptism, Eucharist.

Evangelism – Preaching of the gospel to others with the intention to converting others to the Christian faith.

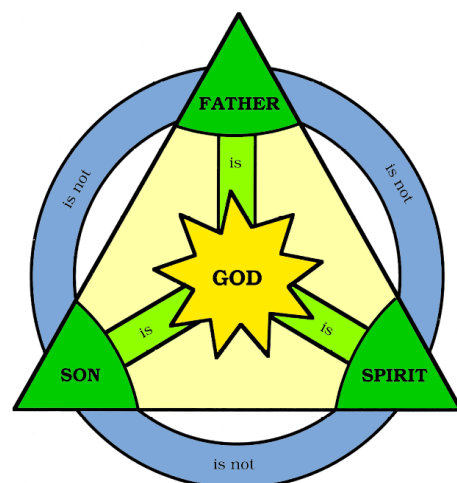
Christianity

Glossary

1. **God:** Ultimate being, creator and sustainer of the world, e.g. Christians believe that God made the world in 6 days or periods of time
2. **Symbolism:** Something that points to or explains something else, e.g. the cross represents how Jesus died and was resurrected for our sins
3. **Revelation:** Something revealed or shown that was previously hidden, e.g. Jesus was God's greatest revelation
4. **Awe:** Completely overwhelmed by a sense of God's presence, e.g. having a religious experience of God by looking at the wonder of nature
5. **Afterlife:** The belief that there is life after death, e.g. Christians believe that their soul joins God in heaven
6. **Creation:** Making something deliberately, for a purpose, e.g. Christians believe that God created the world and everything in it
7. **Dominion:** Being in charge of the world for God. God gave humans the responsibility to look after the world on God's behalf
8. **Environment:** The natural world around us. Christians believe that humans should manage the animals and plants, etc, with respect because God made the world and everything in it.
9. **Soul:** The part of humans that lives on after the body has died. Christians believe that the soul goes to be with God in heaven.
10. **Trinity:** God, Son and Holy Spirit. Three elements of God, yet one God.
11. **Messiah:** Saviour. For Christians, Jesus was the Messiah.
12. **Incarnation:** God made human. For Christians, Jesus was the Son of God in human form
13. **Crucifixion:** The death of Jesus on the cross on Good Friday
14. **Resurrection:** Jesus rising from the dead; an act of God; a miracle
15. **Ascension:** Jesus ascends bodily into Heaven
16. **Salvation:** Being saved from sin through Jesus Christ

Existence of God

- God exists in a different way to humans and the universe. He is transcendent (beyond human understanding)
 - God exists and always has done ("*In the beginning, God created...*")
 - The existence of the universe, the world and its inhabitants are proof of that. For example, if the world shows design, there must be a designer, i.e. God.
 - Religious experience and revelation also point to the reality of God. Miracles, conversions, and visions are all types of religious experience
 - Jesus is the best way to know God - he is God's greatest revelation. Some believe that humans only have a relationship with God because of Jesus
 - God is the creator. He has done and will do things to 'save' humans
 - God is one, but is known through three distinct (separate) persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This is known as the Holy Trinity.
 - God loves like a father and judges. He will reward and punish.
 - He loves the world and all of the people in it so much that He sent his son, Jesus, to teach people about Him and to save them from their sins.
- God is full of mercy and offers forgiveness to all willing to receive it - all who want to reconcile



Suffering and the Problem of Evil

- -Suffering exists in the world
- -Good can come out of suffering
- -Suffering can be endured
- -Religious communities can help those who are suffering through charity work and prayer
- -Suffering has come into the world as a result of:
 - Free will being given to humanity (humans choose to do evil rather than good)
 - the 'original' choice to be selfish (Adam and Eve eating from the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden)

- Human nature is not perfect, we do sometimes make the wrong choices!
- Suffering also results from:
 - 'moral' evil, where people choose to do wrong
 - 'natural' evil: natural events, e.g. earthquakes, lead to suffering
 - a finite world, where there are limits. Sometimes bad has to exist just so that good can exist, e.g. 'up' cannot exist without 'down' and 'right' cannot exist without 'wrong'
- Suffering can:
 - Lead to good things
 - Help to develop a person's character and enable them to show love and compassion
 - Lead to inner strength and ability to overcome suffering and succeed
 - Be a way of participating in the saving work of Jesus, e.g. through charity work (Christian Aid)
 - Those suffering should be helped and supported: this is in keeping with the Gospel tradition



How can those who are suffering be helped?

- If we have any faith at all, then helping those who suffer is a duty and a priority
- Regardless of religious faith, it is important to show compassion towards other human beings and help those who are suffering
- Worshipping communities will help organise furniture and home support for those in need
- Prayer for those who suffer is a great way to offer support and help
- Doing any thing practical to help those suffering is worthwhile, as well as giving to charities and organisations that are geared up to helping those in need, e.g. Christian Aid
- Many religions have charities that help those suffering. The Salvation Army are a Christian denomination who make it their priority to be the 'Good Samaritan' and help those in need
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Word of Life

- The Spirit was involved in creation. "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." (*Genesis 1:1-2*)
- The Spirit of God gave vital life to the vast creation, the term waters, signifies the vast expanse of creation, illustrated by the boundless expanse of the "waters".
- The Spirit, whose omniscience (all present) and omnipotence (all-powerful) maintains life and order in the universe
- We have an *eternal* spirit which will spend an eternity in heaven or hell. Our Creator is also eternal, because we are made in his image we are eternal. We have the ability to choose good from evil because we have freewill like our



Creator.

- Quotes:

- **Job 33:4**

"The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

- **Genesis 1:2**

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

- **Psalms 104:30**

You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the ground.

- **Isaiah 40:12-13**

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counsellor has informed Him?

Incarnation

Messiah means 'anointed one' and is a saviour to a group of people. For Christians, the Messiah was Jesus Christ. Incarnation means 'God made flesh'.

- The coming of the Messiah was foretold in the Old Testament.
- Christians believe the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in the mission, death, and resurrection of Jesus and that he will return to fulfil the rest of Messianic prophecy.
- The majority of historical and mainline Christian theologies consider Jesus to be the Son of God.
- It is at least clear that the other Gospels believe that in Jesus, God is present with his people in a new and decisive way.
- Even as a young boy Jesus was conscious of God's divine call on his life. Jesus knew, even at the age of 12, that he was not like other boys. He was called to his "Father's business," and that must be attended to, even if his parents did not understand.



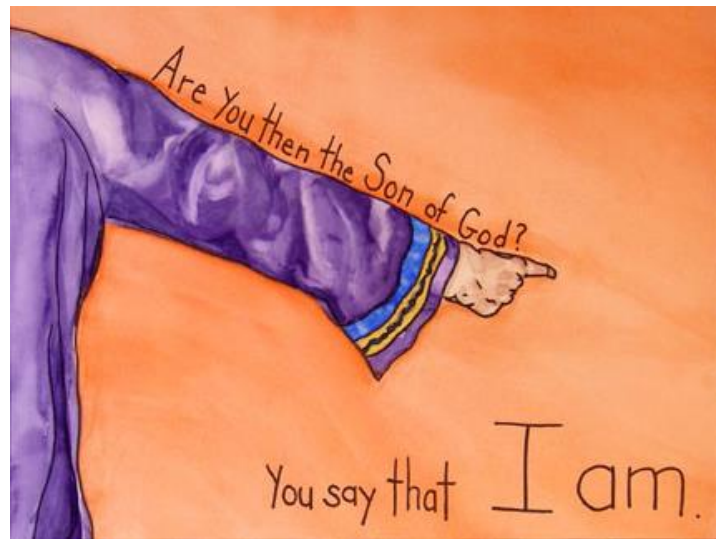
- The Bible says, "The child [Jesus] grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Crucifixion

Jesus Sentenced to Be Crucified

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. **2** The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe³ and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

4 Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." **5** When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"



6 As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

7 The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God."

The Crucifixion of Jesus

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. **17** Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). **18** There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle.

19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. **20** Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. **21** The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews."



²² Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

²⁴ "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it."

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said,

"They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment."^[a]

So this is what the soldiers did.

²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman,^[b] here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.



³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken,"^[c] ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."^[d]

The Burial of Jesus

³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.^[e] ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish

day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Resurrection

Luke 24:1-12

1:On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

2:They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

3:but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4:While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

5:In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

6:He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:

7: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' "

8:Then they remembered his words.

9:When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

10:It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

11:But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.



12:Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

John 20:1-18

1: Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

2:So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

3:So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb.

4:Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

5:He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

6:Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there,

7:as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.

8:Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

9:(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

10:Then the disciples went back to their homes,

11:but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb

12:and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13:They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

14:At this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus.

15:"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16:Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).



17:Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

18:Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Mark 16:1-8

1: When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.

2:Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb

3:and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

4:But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

5:As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

6:"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

7:But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.' "

8:Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Matthew 28:1-10

1:After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2:There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

3:His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

4:The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5:The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.

6:He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

7:Then go quickly and tell his disciples: `He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

8:So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

9:Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him.

10:Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Ascension

Luke 24: ⁴⁴ He [Jesus] said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: **Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me** in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: **The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day**, ⁴⁷ and repentance **for the forgiveness of sins** will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **You are witnesses of these things**. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

The Ascension of Jesus

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ **While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven**. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Acts 1: Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven



1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach 2 until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. 3 **After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.** 4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with [\[a\]](#) water, but in a few days you will be baptized with [\[b\]](#) the Holy Spirit."

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them: "**It is not for you to know the times or dates** the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you**; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

9 After he said this, **he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.**

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**"

Salvation

Salvation is freedom from sin. It is believed to be brought about by belief in the Gospel and by faith in Jesus Christ.

Salvation is important because through Jesus' sacrifice, humans are given the opportunity to be saved from their sin through faith in Christ. Without salvation, sinners are damned to live an eternity without God.



For Christians, the belief in the resurrection of Jesus accepts the promise of salvation and eternal life – to be saved through Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me.

Romans 10:9 That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.

A definition of the Christian doctrine of salvation would be **“The deliverance, by the grace of God, from eternal punishment for sin which is granted to those who accept by faith God's conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus.”** Salvation is available in Jesus alone and is **dependent on God alone for provision**, assurance, and security.

Salvation is deliverance from danger or suffering. To save is to deliver or protect. The word carries the idea of victory, health, or preservation. More often, the word **“salvation” concerns an eternal, spiritual deliverance. Jesus equated being saved with entering the kingdom of God**

What are Christians saved from?

In the Christian doctrine of salvation, Christians are saved from “wrath,” that is, from God's judgment of sin. **Our sin has separated us from God, and the consequence of sin is death. In the Bible, Salvation refers to our deliverance from the consequence of sin and therefore involves the removal of sin.** Only God can remove sin.

How does God save?

In the Christian doctrine of salvation, God has rescued us through Jesus. **Specifically, it was Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection that achieved our salvation. Scripture is clear that salvation is the gracious, undeserved gift of God and is only available through faith in Jesus Christ.**

How do Christians receive Salvation?

Christians are saved by faith. First, Christians must *hear* the gospel—the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection. Then, **Christians must believe—fully trust in Jesus.** This involves repentance, (**a changing of mind about sin and Christ**), and calling on the name of the Lord.

Death and the Afterlife

- Christian beliefs about death and the afterlife:
- Christians believe that there is some sort of life after death, which needs to be prepared for during life
- Life after death is received through faith
- Entry to heaven depends on a person's response to Jesus, and to those in need on earth
- Resurrection is expected, because of the resurrection of Jesus
- There is a hell - the opposite of heaven - a place of separation from God
- RC churches:
 - The souls of very good believers will go directly to heaven
 - Most others will go to purgatory - a place of cleansing and reflection that is between heaven and earth
 - Prayers can be said for those in purgatory to shorten their stay there, and intercessions (saying a prayer on behalf of another person) can be made through indulgences and penance (punishment / confession)

How important is the belief in the afterlife?

Death is certainly a fact of life, but faith in God gives people a confidence that there is an afterlife that is centred and focused on God and His goodness. Christians may have no fear of death as they know that God has prepared an afterlife for them to reward their faithfulness in life.

Others believe that what is most important is what is done on earth.

Throughout our lives, so long as we try to be honest, kind and thoughtful of others, there is no more that we can do.

Another opinion is that after death, there is no afterlife. The only heritage we leave behind is the memories of those who knew us.

