

Paper 1: Christianity - beliefs and teachings | The nature of God

God

The nature of God

Omnipotent (all-powerful) - "Nothing is impossible with God."

Benevolent (all-loving) - "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son."

Just (fair) - "He will come to judge the living and the dead."

The Trinity

The Father - the creator of the world who acts as a good father to humanity - "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

The Son - God on earth, AKA Jesus - "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

The Holy Spirit - The unseen power of God at work in the world - "Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."

Influence of beliefs

Omnipotent - God has the power to do good, so they should do the same.

Benevolent - Accept suffering as it brings them closer to God, and follow Jesus' teachings because God's benevolence gave him to earth.

Just - Prevent injustice, ill-treatment, prejudice and oppression.

The Trinity - show equality and unity in their relationships with others, worship and pray to all three persons and follow the example set by Jesus.

The problem of evil

The Inconsistent Triad

Only two of these statements can be correct:

- God is omnipotent
- God is benevolent
- Evil exists in the world

We have direct experience of evil and suffering in the world, therefore God cannot be omnipotent, or he cannot be benevolent.

Or God does not exist.

Explanations for co-existence of God and evil

Free Will - humans have the ability to make choices, some of which lead to suffering. If God was to prevent this suffering then we would not have the Free Will to follow him.

Punishment - humans have a natural inclination to do what they are told not to do, which separates us from God and leads to suffering as a punishment.

Test of faith - Suffering allows humans to either become closer to God or to turn away from Him. Those who follow God will be rewarded in heaven.

Creation

Beliefs

Genesis 1:1-3 tells how God created the world in 6 days.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Light | 4. Sun, moon, stars |
| 2. Sky | 5. Fish, birds |
| 3. Seas, land, plants | 6. Animals, humans |

Sources of belief

All 3 persons of the Trinity were present.

The Father - "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

The Son - "In the beginning was the Word... Through Him all things were made."

The Holy Spirit - "... the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters..."

Interpretations

Fundamentalist Christians - everything in the Bible is the word of God, so he created the world from nothing in 6 days. Do not accept scientific view.

Liberal Christians - the Bible is poetry / a metaphor, therefore they believe God played a role in creation but either accept scientific view or believe that it happened as described but not in 6 'earth days'.

Creation	Evil	Genesis	Monotheistic	Trinity	The Word
The act of God bringing the universe into being	The opposite of good, something immoral and wicked	The first book of the Bible; tells the story of creation	A religion that believes there is only one God	The belief that there are three persons (or realities) in the One God	Term used in the Bible to refer to God the Son

Paper 1: Christianity - beliefs and teachings

The life of Jesus

The incarnation

Jesus is believed to be God in human form; he is both fully God and fully human.

As a human Jesus can die, doing so atones for humanity's sins. God is omnipotent so Jesus is able to resurrect and defeat evil.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."

Evidence of Jesus' human nature

Jesus bled during his crucifixion - "But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water."

Jesus lost his temper - "Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves."

Evidence of Jesus' divine nature

Jesus performed many miracles, including calming a storm, feeding the five thousands and healing the sick.

He was conceived through the Holy Spirit - "She was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit."

The crucifixion

Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing lasted for three years. He was arrested, tried and convicted of blasphemy by the Jewish authorities.

He was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor, on a charge of treason.

After carrying the cross through Jerusalem, Jesus was crucified alongside two criminals.

Importance of the crucifixion

The crowd turning against Jesus and demanding his execution shows that Jesus is innocent and fulfils the prophecy that he will die willingly.

When Jesus dies he experiences the same suffering as humanity, and it is his human nature that dies.

The veil in the Temple tears in two, showing Jesus' sacrifice and that the way to God was open to everybody.

Influence of the crucifixion

It was predicted by earlier teachings and as the prophecy was fulfilled, so a Christian will follow the teachings found in the Bible.

Those who are suffering will be able to find strength from Jesus' suffering.

Jesus forgave his guards ("Father forgive them") so Christians can receive forgiveness when they do wrong.

The resurrection and ascension

Three days after Jesus' crucifixion his disciples found his tomb empty. Over the next 40 days he reappeared to them several times, before ascending bodily to heaven.

Importance of the resurrection

It fulfils the prophecy that he will defeat death and be able to defeat evil and shows that Jesus is God incarnate.

By appearing to his followers Jesus is able to show them that he is the Messiah.

Influence of the resurrection

By believing in the resurrection a Christian's soul will go to heaven - "No one comes to the Father except through me." Christians have no need to fear death.

Importance of the ascension

It shows that Jesus is with God, preparing for the Holy Spirit to come and provide guidance.

Influence of the ascension

Christians follow Jesus' final teaching and spread Jesus' message - "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations."

Ascension

When Jesus returned to God the Father in heaven

Blasphemy

A religious offence which includes claiming to be God

Crucifixion

Jesus' execution by the Romans on the cross

Incarnation

Becoming flesh, taking human form

Messiah

The promised leader of the Jewish nation and the saviour of mankind

Resurrection

Rising from the dead

Paper 1: Christianity - beliefs and teachings

The afterlife and salvation

The Afterlife

Key beliefs

Either: The soul is resurrected soon after death and is judged by God

Or: In the future Jesus will return on Judgement Day. All the dead will be raised and judged by Jesus.

Catholics believe the body and soul are resurrected. Anglicans believe only the soul is resurrected.

Beliefs about the afterlife

Heaven - a state of eternal happiness in the presence of God - "There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain."

Hell - a place of eternal suffering or the state of being without God - "Throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Purgatory - A Catholic belief; where souls wait to be cleansed of sins before gaining a place in heaven.

Judgement

The parable of the Sheep and the Goats explains what happens during judgement.

On his right will be those who helped others, who will spend eternity into heaven - "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat"

On his left will be those who did nothing to help others, who will be separated from God for eternity - "For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat."

The Apostle's Creed includes the belief that humans will be judged by Jesus on Judgement Day - "He will come to judge the living and the dead."

Sin and atonement

Original sin

Humans have a built in urge to do bad and disobey God. Many believe the early Christian teaching that the sin originates with Adam and Eve disobeying God and bring evil and suffering into the world.

Jesus' death makes up for all the sin created by repaying the debt sin created - "To serve, and give his life as a ransom for many."

Atonement

Jesus' sacrificial death atoned for the sins of humanity because it removed the effects of sin and allows people to restore their relationship with God.

Believing in Jesus and his sacrifice allows a Christian's soul to go to heaven.

"We have an advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins."

Salvation

Meaning of salvation

Salvation means to be saved from sin and the consequences of it and be granted eternal life with God. Sin has separated humans from God who is holy, and salvation enables humans to get close to God again.

Salvation through good works

Having faith in God and obeying His laws (e.g. 10 commandments and Jesus' teachings)

Many Christians believe that salvation is achieved by good works, as shown in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats (see judgement).

Salvation through grace

Given by God as a gift for those who have faith in Jesus.

Evidence in the Bible of salvation by grace alone - "For it is by Grace you have been saved, through faith... it is the gift of God."

Influence on Christians

Christians will follow the 10 Commandments and Jesus' teachings, especially those about helping those in need.

They will also have faith in Jesus and his resurrection.

Atonement

Restoring the relationship between people and God

Grace

The unconditional love shown to humans by God

Salvation

Setting the soul free from sin

Sin

An action or thought that separates humans from

Soul

The spiritual part of a human

Works

A person's actions or deeds

Paper 1: Christianity - practices

Worship

Worship

Liturgical worship

Formal church service. Led by a priest. Includes hymns, set prayers, rituals such as Holy Communion, a sermon and Bible readings.

Worshippers receive forgiveness from God through the actions of the priest, the service is familiar for visitors and Bible readings follow the Christian calendar and teach history and faith.

Non - liturgical worship

No set order or ritual, with emphasis on the word of God in the Bible. May also involve singing hymns and a sermon alongside Bible readings. Holy Communion is celebrated regularly but not every week.

Style of worship follows that of early Christians and faith is expressed in a variety of ways.

Informal worship

Quakers - collective silent worship with people speaking as they feel God's spirit moving them to offer thoughts, prayers or a Bible reading.

Pentecostalism - led by the Spirit (charismatic), involves dancing, clapping, calling out and speaking in tongues (speaking words that are in a language apparently unknown to the speaker).

Many worshippers find it easier to experience God's Spirit in informal worship. Faith is expressed in a personal way.

Prayer and private worship

Prayer involves communicating with God.

Set prayers

Written prayers that are said regularly and used to give purpose to worship. Includes The Lord's Prayer- "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven."

Give a pattern for how to pray; combines praising God and asking for something. Reminds about key teachings such as forgiveness and that God is the Father of the whole community. Can bring a sense of unity and spiritual purpose.

Informal prayers

Made up by individuals using their own words. Often used in non-liturgical and private worship.

Regular prayer can help build up a discipline which gives them strength to cope in times of trouble. Encourages a routine that allows time for reflection in a busy day. Allows Christians to find peace and a sense of communion with God.

Private worship

Individuals spend time with God either alone or with close friends or family. May involve prayer, meditation and Bible study.

Allows Christians to create a personal connection with God and express their faith in a personal way.

Holy Communion (The Eucharist)

Importance of Holy Communion

Uses bread and wine to celebrate the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection, and recalls the Last Supper of Jesus (Matthew 26:17-30).

Allows Christians to receive God's grace. Gives thanks to God for sending Jesus to save people from sin. Helps strengthen commitment to faith.

Interpretations of Holy Communion

Catholic - Bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Christ, allowing takers to become present at the crucifixion and resurrection. Allows them to be saved from sin.

Anglican - bread and wine are symbols of Jesus' sacrifice and allowing takers to reflect on the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection today.

Celebrating Holy Communion

Catholic Mass - Bread and wine brought to the altar and a thanksgiving prayer is said. Worshippers say the Lord's Prayer, give the sign of peace, then receive communion and a blessing from the priest at the altar.

Anglican: Almost identical to Catholic Mass but sign of peace is given before bread and wine are taken to the altar.

Non-conformist - Retells Jesus' words and actions at the Last Supper. Thanksgiving prayer said over bread and wine. Open table, so anyone who wishes to take communion can. Reminiscent of Jesus' last meal and how early Christians celebrated it.

Charismatic

Worship that is led by the Holy Spirit

Consecration

When a priest blesses bread and wine in order to use it for Holy

Liturgy

Following a set pattern or ritual

Non-conformist

An English Protestant who does not follow the standard practices of the Church of England

Sacrament

Rites and rituals where the believer receives God's love and support

Worship

Praising, honouring or showing devotion to God

Paper 1: Christianity - practices

Celebrations

Baptism

"I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Infant baptism

Formal service welcoming a infant or toddler into the Church. Practiced by Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists.

Holy water is sprinkled on the baby's head and promises made on their behalf by parents and God-parents. Parents are able to thank God for their new baby and celebrate the birth.

In Catholicism infant baptism removes original sin.

Believers baptism

Welcomes someone who has converted to Christianity, or shows that someone is becoming a full member of the Church. Practiced by Baptist and non-conformist churches.

Person is submerged in a pool of holy water after they make promises to make a personal connection with Jesus and stay away from evil.

Symbol of new life with Jesus. Must be a mature decision made by somebody who understands the commitment. Many Christians believe that baptism itself doesn't save a person, but converting to dedicating their life to Jesus will.

Pilgrimage

The physical journey is also a spiritual journey towards God.

On some pilgrimages, such as those to Lourdes and Iona it is the destination that is important. For others, such as walking the Camino de Santiago in Spain, the journey is as important as the destination.

Importance of pilgrimage

The opportunities for prayer, worship and reflection allow Christians to grow closer to God and strengthen their faith, express sorrow for sin and be forgiven and reflect on their lives, particularly when facing a crisis or big decision. Christians can experience a holy place, such as Jerusalem. They can also meet others who share their faith.

Pilgrimage to Lourdes (France)

A vision of Mary was seen in 1858 and the spring is believed to be a miraculous cure for illness and disability. It claims 67 miracles and over 6,000 other cures. It is mainly a site of Catholic pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage to Iona (Scotland)

An island off the west coast. The abbey was founded in 6th century by St Columba. For many it is a place where nature reveals God's infinite power and presence. Pilgrims have time for reflection, attending services, and reading the Bible, as well as enjoying the area's natural beauty.

Festivals

The festival cycle is based on the events of Jesus' life, which reminds Christians that God gave his only Son to save them.

The calendar has two main seasons: Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, which celebrates Jesus' birth, and Lent, Easter and Pentecost, which remembers his crucifixion and resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Christmas

Celebrates the incarnation of Jesus - "Father, you make this holy night radiant with the splendour of Jesus Christ our light."

Lights represent Jesus as the light coming into the world of darkness, readings from the Bible show God's promise of a saviour, and gifts and charity donations remember Jesus as God's gift to the world.

Easter

Easter is the most important Christian festival. It remembers the crucifixion and celebrated the resurrection of Jesus - "He is risen."

Special services are held on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Often there is an Easter vigil that begins in darkness, involves the lighting of the Paschal candle to symbolise the risen Christ, and ends with Holy Communion. Special hymns are sung to remember and give thanks for the resurrection.

Baptism

Ritual through which people become a member of the Church

Festival

A day or period of celebration for religious reasons

Incarnation

Becoming flesh, taking human form

Pilgrimage

A journey by a believer to a holy site as an act of worship and devotion

Resurrection

Rising from the dead

Sacrament

Rites and rituals where the believer receives God's love and support

Paper 1: Christianity - practices

The role of the Church

The Church in the local community

As well as providing a location where Christians from the local community can meet, worship, pray, obtain spiritual guidance, and socialise, churches often fulfil a need in the local community, such as giving space to play groups and youth clubs.

The Church also plays a role in supporting the local community, outside of the church building.

Street Pastors

They help and care for people in practical ways, working closely with councils and the police in their local community. Often seen assisting in busy nightlife areas, giving out water, space blankets and flip-flops, and helping people get a taxi home.

Shows kindness and compassion - "Love your neighbour" and follows the message in the Good Samaritan.

Food banks

Provide food and other essentials to those living in poverty within the community surrounding the church.

Shows kindness and compassion, and follows the example given of how to do good in the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats - "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

Work of the worldwide Church

Responding to persecution

Christians should respond to persecution with forgiveness and love. They should support those who are persecuted, even if they are not Christians. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you... rejoice and be glad, because great is our reward in heaven."

The Barnabus Fund funds projects that help Christians suffering from discrimination and persecution because of their beliefs by providing material and spiritual support.

Responding to poverty

Christians should help those in poverty. Jesus told a rich man to sell everything and give it to the poor. In The Rich Man and Lazarus the rich man goes to hell for refusing to help somebody in poverty.

Christian Aid aims to encourage sustainable development to stop poverty and provide emergency relief around the world. They campaign on issues around global poverty.

Reconciliation

The worldwide Church has a role to restore the relationship between people and God, and with each other - "Go at once and make peace with your brother".

Community of the Cross of Nails - Coventry Cathedral is at the centre of an international network of churches, schools and prisons which work for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Mission

The calling to spread the word of God. Christians follow Jesus' final teaching - "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Church growth

Christianity is growing in Africa, South America and Asia. Estimated that 80,000 people become Christians every day, 34,000 of them are in Africa.

Alpha is educational course that tells people more about the life of Jesus with the intention of helping participants to convert to Christianity.

Christ for all Nations (CfaN) organises large outdoor meetings in Africa. Claims over 74 million people worldwide have made the decision to convert to Christianity after attending a meeting.

Evangelism

Later Day Saints (Mormans) practice street or door to door evangelism with the intention of introducing people to the Church.

Other Christians will preach on busy streets, or hand out leaflets.

Discipleship

Helps new and existing Christians to follow Jesus.

Saddleback Church in California runs courses on following Jesus' teachings, teaches new converts how to pray and study the Bible, and organises small groups for prayer, Bible study and socialising.

Agape

Selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love

Church

The name given to the community of Christians

Evangelism

Spreading the Christian gospel through action or speech

Missionary

A person sent to a foreign country to promote Christianity through

Persecution

Hostility and ill-treatment of a group of people

Reconciliation

Restoring friendly relations after a conflict or falling out