

# CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Nature of God  
What Christians believe  
God to be like...



- Monotheists** - the belief in ONE God.
- Atheists** - someone who does not believe in God(s)
- Agnostic** - someone who is unsure about God's existence.
- Theist** - someone who believes in God(s).

**Omnipotent** - all powerful 

**Omnipresent** - all present (everywhere)


**Omnibenevolent** - all loving 

**Omniscient** - all knowing 

**Just** - fair and forgiving 

**Creator Ex Nihilo** - creator out of nothing 

**Eternal** - never ending / never dies

**Transcendent** - outside time & space. 

**The Trinity**  
• There is only one God.  
• Each person of the Trinity is fully God.  
• The persons of the Trinity are not the same.


**Holy Trinity**  
Three 'persons', all of which are God.



**God the Father** - creator of the Earth & everything in it.

**God the Son** - God incarnate (in human form), in the form of Jesus.

**God the Holy Spirit** - once Jesus left the Earth the Holy Spirit guides & influences people today.

 Three separate leaves but really one leaf.

The Problem of Evil & Suffering

"If God is all powerful, loving and just, then why does he allow evil & suffering?"



Can God stop evil & suffering?  
Does he care that humans suffer?  
Has God abandoned humans?

**Natural Evil**  
Natural disasters, droughts, floods - pain & suffering caused by events out of human control.

**Moral Evil**  
Murder, stealing, cheating - pain & suffering caused by human choices.

Christian Responses to explain Evil & Suffering

• Many people are able to do evil things because God gave humans **free will**. It is more loving to allow freedom of choice.



• God is being fair & just in allowing suffering as humans deserve punishment for their sins.



• When people go through hard times, some Christians believe God is testing their faith. Like the story of Job.





## Christian Beliefs about Creation



1 Light & Dark



2 Clouds & Oceans



3 Sun, Moon, & Stars



4 Land, Plants, & Trees



5 Fish & Birds



6 Man & Animals



7 God Rested

**Literal Interpretations** - the story is literally true. God created the world in 7 days (24 hours)

**liberal Interpretations** - the story is metaphorical (holds symbolic truth). God could have created/started the Big Bang.

**Dominion** - control over something  
**Stewardship** - managing resources in a responsible way

**Role of the Spirit in Creation**  
'the spirit of God' hovering over the waters. Suggests the presence of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of creation.

**Role of Jesus in Creation**  
John 1:1-18 - in this extract experts believe 'The Word' is referring to God the Son (Jesus)

## Influences of the Creation Story today...



• Literal readings - hard to trust science. ?



• Metaphorical readings can see science & religion complimenting themselves.

• Literal account emphasises God's power.

• If people see God as creating the world for humans they may feel they can do what they want with it (dominion).

• Other may feel they need to look after it on behalf of God (stewardship)

## Sin

Sin is an action or thought that is against God's will.

- Sinful thoughts can lead to sinful actions.
- All humans sin - no one is perfect.
- Consequences of sin - death & hell unless they are confessed and forgiveness is asked for.

**Original Sin** - human beings are born with an in-built tendency to do wrong.

## Adam & Eve: The Fall

Disobeyed God's instruction not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and became aware of sin.



- As punishment God banished them from the Garden of Eden.
- Humans became mortal.
- This original sin was passed on through generations.

## Literal Interpretations

- The story is 100% true.
- The snake was the devil in disguise.
- It is the devil who tempts people to do wrong.
- This was the beginning of man's fall (separating from God).

## liberal Interpretations

- Teaches Christians the God gave humans free will.
- If sinful actions chosen they will be separated from God & punishment served.
- Good actions are rewarded.
- More a moral teaching.

## Incarnation - becoming flesh, taking human form.

- Gospels of Matthew & Luke - state clearly that Mary did not conceive Jesus sexually.
- Immaculate conception - evidence of Jesus being fully God & fully human.
- Jesus as God in human form made it easier to accept his teachings.

### Jesus' God-like qualities

- Miracles
- Authority to forgive.
- Resurrection - power over death.

### Jesus' human qualities

- Ate, slept & cried when his friend died.
- Suffered pain leading to his death.

## The Life of Jesus



## Crucifixion - when Jesus was put to death on the cross.

- Sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate
- Crucifixion - death by asphyxiation (not being able to breathe).
- Jesus suffered the pain of his crucifixion.



### Importance today...

- Accept Jesus' sacrifice, sin can no longer destroy their lives.
- Suffering is a part of life - God understands what the sufferer goes through.
- Sacrifice remembered through the Eucharist (Holy Communion).



## Resurrection - rising from the dead.

- Jesus was laid to rest in a tomb on Good Friday.
- Early Sunday morning some of Jesus' female followers went to prepare his body for burial but it was not there.
- Two angels are said to have told them Jesus had risen from the dead.

### Importance today...

- Shows Jesus' divinity - overcame death.
- Power of good over evil.
- Reassures Christians God will forgive them if they accept Jesus.

## Ascension - 40 days after resurrection Jesus returned to heaven.

- Jesus told his disciples to carry on his work before he ascended up to heaven.

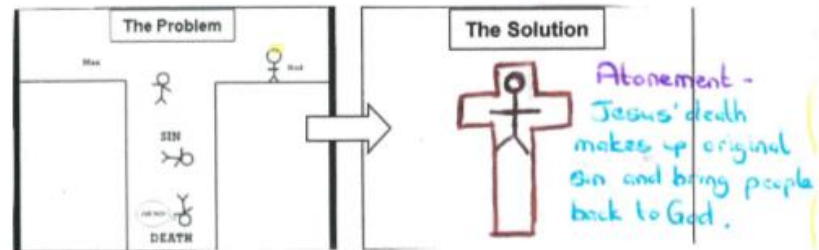
### Importance today...

- Paves the way for the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus watching over Christians from heaven.



## Salvation - to be saved from sin and the consequences of it.

- Sin has separated humans from God, salvation enables humans to get close again.
- Salvation through good works - obeying God's laws.
- Salvation through grace - given by God through faith in Jesus.



Salvation is what Christians believe Jesus brought them.  
Atonement refers to how he did it - dying as a sacrifice.




## The Afterlife - Judgement

**Particular Judgement** - afterlife begins upon death. Souls are judged on their good & bad deeds.

**General Judgement** - a day of judgement when Jesus will return (parousia) and judge the living and the dead.

## The Parable of the Sheep & Goats

- 'Goats'**
- Represent people who have not followed Jesus' examples
  - People who have not obeyed God's laws.
- Sent to hell 






- 'Sheep'**
- Represent people who have accepted Jesus & his teachings.
  - Performed good deeds and helped others.
- Rewarded in heaven 

## Heaven



Eternal life with God with no pain or suffering.

- Some Christians believe it is physical place beyond the clouds. God sits on a throne and angels fly around.
- A chance to be with family and friends again 
- Some Christians believe heaven is more a spiritual existence of peace & happiness 
- Some Christians believe only those who followed Jesus will be with God in heaven. 

## Purgatory

Waiting Room Roman Catholic belief.

The intermediate state where souls are cleansed in order to enter heaven.

- No one can live a sin free life so souls need cleansing before heaven.
- Prayers are said by living for passed souls.

### Influence of these beliefs today.

- Reassure Christians death is not the end.
- Feel grateful that Jesus died for their eternal life.
- Encourage Christians to live a good life.
- Encourage conversion so people can go to heaven.

## Hell



A place of eternal suffering or state of being without God.

- Seen as the opposite of heaven.
- Often shown as a place of eternal suffering, terror, fire and torture ruled by the devil.
- Some Christians believe it is a spiritual existence without God.
- Other Christians see Hell as the complete annihilation of the soul.

