

# GCSE Ethics and Society Christianity – Belief in God

## The Trinity-

- Christians believe in the concept of the Trinity. God is one, God is in three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), and each person is fully God.
- In the Bible, all three persons were present at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3: 13-17).
- Christians worship God the Father and Jesus Christ in a formal way or in private, and many believe that the Holy Spirit helps them to worship in the most fulfilling way.

## Creation-

- There are two accounts of how God created the world and humanity in the Book of Genesis, and there is another account in John 1: 1-18.
- Some Christians believe these accounts are literally true, whilst others think they are metaphorical.
- Christians believe that God has made them stewards, with a duty to care for the world and its resources.

## The incarnation-

- Christians believe that God came into the world as Jesus, a man. This is called the incarnation.
- The purpose of the incarnation was to enable human beings to have a relationship with God.

## The last day of Jesus' life-

- Christians believe that Jesus is both God and man. They believe he was crucified, rose from the dead and, after a short time, ascended into heaven.
- Christians claim that all who believe in Jesus can have eternal life.
- Jesus taught people how to pray and how to have a relationship with God through love and worship.

## Salvation-

- Christians believe that Jesus came to save humanity from the consequences of sin; this is called salvation.
- Jesus' death and resurrection brought about atonement- making humanity and God 'at one' again.
- Christians believe that, because of Jesus, they are able to have a relationship with God.

## Christian eschatology-

- Christian belief in the afterlife is very important and is connected to beliefs about Jesus' own death and resurrection and what that means for Christians.
- There are divergent views within Christianity about the nature of heaven and hell, purgatory, and the resurrection of the body.

## The problems of evil-

- Christians believe that God is omnipotent and benevolent.
- There are two types of evil in the world: natural evil and moral evil.
- Some people question whether the existence of evil and suffering shows that God either does not exist or is not all-powerful and all loving.

## Divergent solutions to the problems of evil-

- The problem of evil and suffering challenges the existence of God because if God is all-god and all-powerful, why doesn't he put an end to suffering?
- Christians respond to evil and suffering in different ways, including reading the Bible, praying, and working to relieve suffering.
- Christians might argue that God gave humans free will, and that evil and suffering are the consequences of human action.

## Sources of Wisdom

1. "We believe in one God, the Father ... in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God ... in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life." The Nicene Creed
2. "Through Him all things were made."
3. John 1:3-4
4. "The Virgin will conceive and give birth to a son." Matthew 1:23
5. "Christ died for our sins." Acts 2:23
6. "Salvation is found in no one else." Acts 4:12
7. "Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16
8. "I called upon the Lord and was saved from my enemies." Psalm 18:3

## Key Terminology

1. **Ascension** Going up into heaven
2. **Atheist** Someone who does not believe in the existence of God
3. **Atonement** The action of restoring a relationship, in Christianity, Jesus' death and resurrection restores the relationship between God and human beings.
4. **Baptism** The Christian ceremony that welcomes a person into the Christian community
5. **Benevolence** All good
6. **Big Bang Theory** A scientific theory about the origins of the universe which suggests that the universe is expanding away from a single point, a process which started around 13.7 billion years ago.
7. **Charismatic** A power given by God e.g. Inspired teaching
8. **Conservation** Protecting something from being damaged or destroyed
9. **Creationism** The belief that the world was created in a literal six days and that Genesis is a scientific/ historical account of the beginning of the world
10. **Creed** A statement of firmly held beliefs, for example, the Apostle's Creed of the Nicene Creed
11. **Crucifixion** Being nailed to a cross and left to die
12. **Day of Judgement** God assesses a person's life and actions
13. **Eschatology** An area of Christian theology which is concerned with life after death
14. **Evolution** The process by which different species have developed from earlier species
15. **Free will** Having the freedom to choose what to do
16. **Grace** Undeserved love
17. **Heaven** Place of eternal paradise where Christians believe they will spend their afterlife
18. **Hell** Place of punishment and separation from God
19. **Holy Spirit** The Spirit of God, who gives the power to understand and worship
20. **Humanist** A nonreligious person who looks to reason and empathy in order to live a meaningful life
21. **Immortal soul** A soul that lives on after death of the physical body
22. **Incarnation** To take on flesh, God becomes a human being
23. **Jesus Christ** The Son of God, who came into the world as human being
24. **Natural evil** Suffering caused by natural events, such as earthquakes
25. **Natural Law** A set of moral principles based on the idea that people should choose to do good actions that comply with God's wishes
26. **Omnipotence** All powerful
27. **Prayer** A way of communicating with God
28. **Prophecy** A message from God in which he communicates his will
29. **Purgatory** A place where the souls of the dead are cleansed and prepared for heaven
30. **Repentance** To say sorry for, and turn away from, any wrong doing
31. **Resurrection** Rising from the dead; also the view that after death God recreates a new body in a heavenly place
32. **Salvation** Being saved from sin and the consequences of sin, going to heaven
33. **Sin** Anything that prevents a relationship with God, either because the person does something they shouldn't or neglects to do something they should
34. **Stewardship** Looking after something so it can be passed on to the next generation
35. **Trinity** God as one being, in three persons
36. **Universalism** The belief that because of the love and mercy of God everyone will go to heaven
37. **Vale of soul-making** An environment in which human beings can overcome evil by making good choices
38. **Vision** Seeing or hearing someone or something holy