

### Christian Eschatology:

Christians believe in eternal life and the Day of Judgement God will reward the good and punish the bad.

"No-one comes to the father except through me" This shows how important it is to follow the teaching of Jesus.  
Heaven and hell

- Heaven and Hell can be seen as a physical or a spiritual place.
- Heaven is described as paradise and as a union with God (reward).
- Hell is described as a place of torment and a separation from God (punishment).
- They believe that the devil (Satan) tempts people to turn away from God so that their souls suffer in Hell. The Bible describes the devil as a fallen angel who disobeyed God and was thrown out of heaven.
- Catholics believe in **purgatory** where evil people will go to be purified of their sins before the on of the world where they will join everyone in the glory of heaven.

### Sin and salvation

- Christians believe that everyone is born a sinner because they believe in Original Sin.
- This is the belief that Adam and Eve were created by God and told to obey God's rules in the Garden of Eden.
- As a result of this, sin (breaking God's rules) entered the world. God banished Adam and Eve from the garden and they brought punishment on themselves in the form of hard work, pain in labour and worst of all, separation from God.
- Christians believe that everyone will be tempted to sin.
- In Christianity, Jesus has become the last and final sacrifice which pays the price for all sins.
- Christians believe that by believing in him, receiving forgiveness for sins and following his teachings to be 'like Christ' they will be saved and receive eternal life.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only son"

### The Trinity

The Oneness of God: the Trinity

- Most Christians believe that the Trinity explains who God is - God the father, God the son (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit.
- They believe that Jesus IS God and God's son.
- Many believe that Jesus was present at the beginning of Creation as in the Gospel according to John, the Word (spelt with a capital letter) implies this was a person, and since God used words to create each part of the creation, Christians argue that this must be referring to Jesus.
- This description helped Christians in the early years of the Church as there were too many confusing different beliefs about the authority of Jesus as God.

### The ascension

- The ascension shows Christians that Jesus is now with God in heaven.
- It marks the beginning of God sending his Holy Spirit to provide comfort and guidance. The ascension shows that Jesus is fully God and has completed his work.

### The resurrection

- The resurrection shows victory over death - the power of good over evil.
- Jesus' resurrection gives Christians the belief that there is life after death and they too will be resurrected.

### The crucifixion

- God understands human pain and suffering because he has suffered and died.
- This is the sacrifice Jesus made to allow humans (sinners) to be reconciled to God in heaven through belief in him.

## Christian beliefs

### Paper 1: Section 1



### The Creation

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"*

- Some fundamentalist Christians who view the Bible as the 'word of God' take a literal translation and believe that this account accurately describes what happens.
- Some Conservative Christians would also argue that the words used in the Creation Story are misleading, for example, the words used to describe a 'day' could be translated to mean a period of time rather than 24 hours.
- Therefore, this story could be believed alongside the scientific accounts as it could be argued that God had caused the Big Bang which then set in place the events which followed through evolution.
- More liberal Christians believe that the Creation Story is a true account but see it as a simplified story or poetic account which teaches the truth without describing it as an accurate portrayal.

## The Problem of evil and suffering:

Evil and suffering can take two forms:

**Moral suffering:** This is suffering caused by humans misusing their free will

**Natural suffering:** Suffering that is not caused by humans (earthquakes, floods etc.)

How can evil and suffering cause some people to question or reject God?

A loving God would not have designed a world with evil and suffering within it. A powerful God would also be able to stop evil and suffering.

- If God is **omnipotent**, he must be able to remove evil and suffering in the world
- If God is **omniscient** he must know evil and suffering happens
- If God is **omnibenevolent** he must want to remove evil and suffering.
- Since there is evil and suffering in the world this must mean that God does not exist.

## Solutions to the problem of evil and suffering:

**Biblical responses:** The book of Job describes how God punished Job who had never sinned in order to prove that he loved God. Job challenged God but realised that God is so great that humans have no right to challenge him and that God's reason for suffering is beyond human understanding.

### Theoretical responses:

**Free Will:** God created humans in his image with free will which means humans have the ability to sin and cause suffering when they misuse their free will.

**Vale of Soul Making:** God gave people this life (where suffering happens) to make them good enough for heaven

### Practical responses:

Christians will follow the example of Jesus and response to suffering in practical way

- Christians pray for those who are suffering using intercessory prayers
- Christians give practical help e.g. give money to charities such as Christian Aid.

## The last days of Jesus' life:

**Last supper:** The night before he was crucified. Jesus shared a meal with his disciples this is remembered when during Eucharist (where Christians share bread and wine)

**The betrayal and arrest:** Judas betrayed handing him over to the authorities.

**The Trial:** Jesus was tried by the Jewish authorities and found guilty of blasphemy. He was then taken in front of the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate who could not find Jesus guilty of anything and offered to release Jesus or Barabbas. The crowd Barabbas and Jesus was condemned to death by crucifixion.

**The Crucifixion:** Jesus was crucified on a Friday (Good Friday).

**The resurrection:** On Sunday (Easter Sunday) two of Jesus' women followers found his tomb empty. Jesus appeared to two disciples.

**The ascension:** Jesus continued to appear for 40 days then he told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift of the Holy Spirit and then he was taken up into a cloud (he ascended to heaven).

## Important key words:



### **Ascension:**

The return of Christ to heaven

### **Atonement:**

Reconciliation between humans and God

### **Reconciliation:**

bringing together people who are opposed to each other

### **Purgatory:**

A place where Catholic Christians believe soul go to be purified

### **Resurrection:**

Rising from the dead

## Sources of wisdom and authority:

- Genesis 1 says that God saw all that he made and that it was good
- John's gospel says the Word was at the beginning of everything and everything was made through the Word
- John's Gospel says that Jesus was the Word made flesh
- Luke's Gospel says Jesus said to forgive those who crucified him
- John's Gospel says that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only son'
- St Paul says that Salvation can only be found through Jesus
- In the parable of the Sheet and the Goats, Jesus says God will sort the good and the bad and sent the good to heaven and the bad to hell.
- The book of Job says that God's actions cannot be questioned

