

Year 10 GCSE RS Knowledge Organiser: Beliefs and teachings (Christianity)

1. Nature of God

- **benevolent** – loving, kind and good
- **omniscient** – all-knowing
- **omnipotent** – all-powerful
- **monotheistic** – only one God
- **judge** – God will judge all humans when they die
- **eternal** – ever-lasting
- **transcendent** - God exists beyond time and space and is above all created things
- **immanent** – God is involved in the world and human lives
- **personal** – individuals can have a relationship with God
- **forgiving** – when humans say sorry, God forgives them

Key texts from the Bible that help Christians form the above beliefs about God

- The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15) – This is the prayer Jesus taught his disciples to say, and Christians say in church. *“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*
- The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) (only learn 1-4)
 1. *You shall have no other gods before me*
 2. *You shall not make for yourself an idol*
 3. *You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God*
 4. *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy*
- The Parable of the Lost (prodigal) Son (Luke 15:11-32) – Story told by Jesus of a man who had two sons. One asked for his inheritance early, so he could leave home and the other son stayed and worked for his father. The prodigal son wastes all his money and returns home, and his father throws a party. The father represents God and the love he has for all people, including those who fail. The other brother was furious with his father.
- John 3:16 Key passage Christians use to show the idea of Jesus dying on the cross so that humans could be forgiven and go to heaven. *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His ^{only} begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”*
- Matthew 25:31-46 **Sheep and Goats** – at the end of time, God will judge everyone as a sheep or a goat. The sheep are those who showed love to their fellow humans in need by feeding and clothing them. The goats are those who showed no care for others. *“For I (God) was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited me in, I was naked and you clothed me...”*

2. God as Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)

- This belief is held by almost all Christians. It is how they explain how God could become a human being in the form of Jesus, and also how his power is felt in the world today through the Holy Spirit. Don't confuse this as three separate gods.

Key texts from the Bible that mention the Trinity

- Matthew 5:48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Jesus talking to his disciples)
- John 14:16-17 "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever" (Jesus talking about what will happen after he leaves earth)
- Phillipians 2:5-8 "... Being found in appearance as a man, He (Jesus) humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Paul writing to one of the first groups of Christians)
- The Apostles' Creed AND The Nicene Creed (325 AD) – many Christians recite one of the creeds each week in church – it outlines the key parts of the Christian faith.

3. Biblical accounts of Creation

A contentious issue in the last 150 years is the question of how did we get here. The Bible begins with a creation story, in Genesis 1-3. This is a long passage, talks about 6 days of creation by God, finishing with Adam and Eve. There is a lot of debate about how to interpret the creation story – **literal vs. symbolic**. Most Christians tend to take it as a story and not literally, but all Christians believe God is behind it all. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light... Then God said, 'Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky... God blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over... every living creature..."*

John 1 This is a key New Testament passage, attempting to fit Jesus into the creation picture, too "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ...and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us..."

4. The problem of evil and suffering and a loving and righteous God

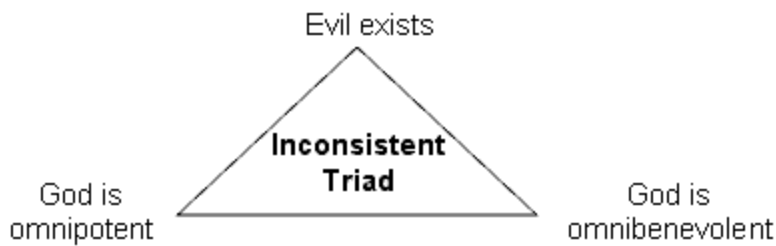
One of the most difficult philosophical problems for Christians is why does God allow suffering to exist. Either he is not good, or he is not powerful enough to stop it. Christian thinkers have tried hard to come up with arguments that defend God in the light of so much suffering in the world.

1. Irenaeus argued that God allows evil and suffering to exist. The world is a 'vale of soul-making', meaning suffering is how we learn and develop into stronger and better people

2. Augustine argued that evil happens when people misuse their **free will** – it is the *absence of goodness*

3. Genesis 3 – God tells Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit from one particular tree. They eat it anyway. They become embarrassed at their nakedness. This is seen as symbolic of their

loss of innocence through disobeying God. God banished them both from the Garden of Eden, and explains life for all humans will be tougher as a result of their actions.



- **natural evil** – not caused by humans (e.g. earthquakes)
- **moral evil** – suffering caused by humans (e.g. Hitler)
- **the Fall** – the idea that mankind chose to do wrong and this is how evil entered a perfect creation (see Genesis 3 – Adam and Eve)
- **original sin** – because of the actions of Adam and Eve, humans are no longer innocent in the eyes of God
- **free will** – the idea that people are free to make decide how they act
- **theodicy** – a way of explaining why evil and suffering exist

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5. Jesus Christ

- **Messiah** – anointed one (Kings were anointed with oil, to show they had been chosen by God – Christians are saying Jesus was a King)
- **Son of God** – Jesus was God incarnate (meaning in human form)
- **Lord (Adonai in Greek) and Saviour** – Jesus is believed to be able to save humanity from sin
- **agape** – Christian love

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) Key set of teachings given by Jesus. "Blessed are the peacemakers"

The 2 Great Commandments (Matthew 22:36-39) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he (Jesus) said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

Other key teachings of Jesus include: The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25–37 • *Go the extra mile.* (Matthew 5:41) Healing stories show the agape love Jesus had for people.

6. The concept of salvation

- **salvation** – restoring the broken relationship between God and mankind
- **atonement** – the death of Jesus makes amends for the sin of humans
- **law** – was how people knew how God wanted them to behave (e.g. 10 Commandments)
- **sin** – going against what God wants
- **grace** – God’s love for humans is what saves them from their sin (not how good they have been)
- **ransom** – Christians believe the sacrifice of Jesus by dying on the cross was like him paying (the ransom to God) for the sins of the world

- Romans 3:23 Paul: *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*
- Romans 6:23 Paul: *“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*
- Ephesians 2:8-9 Paul: *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

7. Incarnation, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension

- **the incarnation** – God in human form
- **crucifixion** – execution method of being nailed to a wooden cross and left to die
- **the Resurrection** – Christians believe Jesus did not stay dead, but came back to life three days later
- **the Ascension** – 40 days after the resurrection, the Book of Acts records that Jesus rose up to heaven in view of a crowd of his disciples

- Mark 15:21-41 The Crucifixion *When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land...“MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”*
- Matthew 28:1-10 The Resurrection *“He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said.”*
- Acts 1:1-9 The Ascension *And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.*

8. Eschatological beliefs and teachings

- **eschatology** – beliefs about the end of time
- **soul** – Christians believe as well as a physical body, humans have a spirit, or soul, which is immortal
- **immortal** – will not die
- **resurrection** – the belief that the souls of human beings will come back to life
- **hell / sheol** – not mentioned much in the Bible, but a place of departed spirits. The idea of hell has often been used by Christians to frighten people into behaving.
- **heaven** – opposite of hell, this is thought of as an eternal place with God
- **Parousia** – the belief that Jesus will come back to earth (second coming)

Judgement Day (Matthew 25:31-46) *“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.”*

Heaven (John 14:1-3) Jesus - *“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.”*