



Year 11 AQA GCSE  
Religious Studies A  
2019 – 2020

## Christian Beliefs

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Class Teacher:

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## Christianity 101

- Bible is the sacred text
- It is split into two main parts the Old and the New Testament
- The five of the Old Testament books are contained within the Torah (the Jewish Holy book)
- The New Testament is solely Christian teachings.
- There are two main strands of Christianity
- Roman Catholic (Traditional, normally strict with beliefs, follow the Pope)
- Protestants (protested the Catholic Church, follow Bible, some groups are; Church of England/Anglian, Baptist, Methodist, Salvation Army)
- Christianity is a major influence on the history of the world and still has great influence today.
- It was founded on the belief that 2000 years ago Jesus (the son of God) died and rose from the dead.
- The religion initially grew as early followers were influenced by the teachings of Jesus, which were spread by his disciples and the apostle Paul.
- In the fourth century, it became the religion of the Roman Empire when the Emperor Constantine became a Christian.

## Denominations of Christianity

Different groups within Christianity are called denominations.

The different denominations within Christianity share similar core beliefs but do differ with their practices and some beliefs.

There was one Christian movement until 1054 when the faith split in two; Western Roman Christianity (now the Catholic Church) led by the Pope and Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

These two groups still exist today with the Western Roman Christianity being split in the 16<sup>th</sup> century into Protestants and Catholics.

The Protestant Church was formed during the Reformation. Martin Luther led a movement to protest the Catholic churches being luxurious and making people pay to be 'healed' by God. Henry VIII used this and broke away from the Catholic Church to make England a Protestant country so he could divorce his first wife. He declared himself the head of the Church and created the Church of England.

From the reformation this led to many other denominations branching away from Catholicism, under the new Protestant regime. Some of these groups are listed below;

- Church of England
- Baptist
- Methodist
- Quakers

## Beliefs about the Nature of God

Even though there are three main branches of Christianity they do have some different beliefs but their belief in God is universal. Christianity is a **monotheistic** religion. This means Christians believe that there is only one God, who creates and sustains life. Christians claim to have a relationship with God and communicate with God through prayer.

**"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me." Exodus 20:2**

The 10 commandments were given to Jews, but Christianity has strong roots within Judaism. The first 5 books in the Bible are contained within the Jewish Torah.

Many Christians call God 'He' and the 'Father', but do not assume God's gender to be male. God is without restriction and is seen to have both traditional male characteristics of power and strength, and traditional female characteristics of care, gentleness and love.

God is sometimes pictured in the sky in a human form, but Christians do not believe God has a physical human body. The Bible lists God as being in the following forms;

- Spirit (John 4:24)
- Spirit having no flesh and bones (Luke 24:39)
- Jesus being God's son and is the exact representation of God on earth (Hebrews 1:3)

God has no restrictions caused by physicality but exists as a spiritual being that defies description. Christians consider God to be **holy**, which means something set apart from everything else for a special purpose and worthy of worship.



## The Nature of God

Keyword	Meaning	Influence on Christians

### Quotes about the Nature of God

Omnipotence: "Nothing is impossible with God" Luke 1:37

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Loving: "God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

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"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails" Corinthians 13:4-8.

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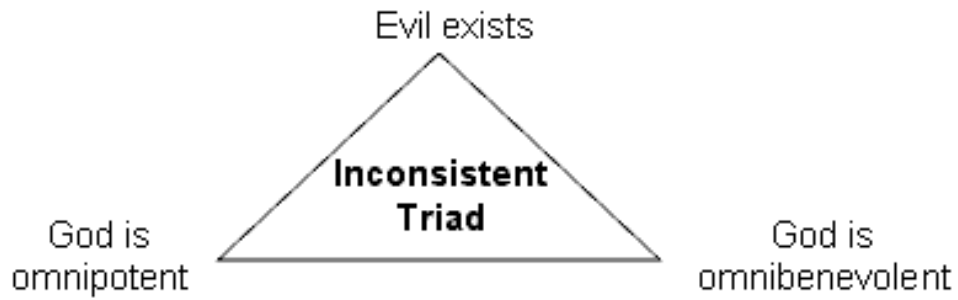
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## The Trinity

1) What is the Trinity?

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2) What are the three parts of the Trinity?

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3) How is God the father explained?

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4) How is God the Son explained?

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5) How is the Holy Spirit explained?

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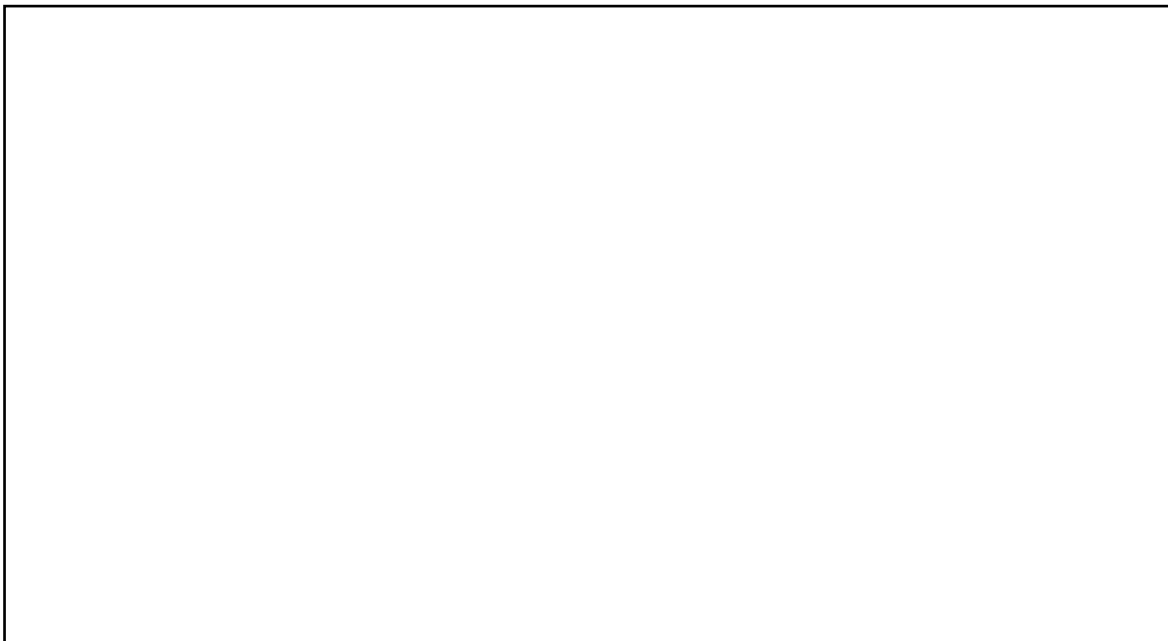
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6) Draw your own version of the Trinity and explain each part



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7) Explain another way to describe the Trinity.

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## Creation

1. Where is the story of creation found in the bible?

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2. What did God create on the first day?

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3. How does God create light in this account?

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4. How long did it take for God to complete his creation?

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5. What does God say after each thing is created?

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6. Describe two different Christian views about the Creation story.

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7. Who referred specifically to the Creation account in the New Testament?

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8. What is the key message in this second account of creation?

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9. What does the "Word" refer to?

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## Jesus

### The Incarnation

1. What do we mean when we say the word "Incarnation"?

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2. How does Luke explain the birth of Jesus?

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3. How does Matthew explain the birth of Jesus?

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“This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 1:18

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### Son of God

1. How does John identify Jesus?

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2. How do Christians refer to Jesus and where does this term come from?

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3. What word does the word ‘Messiah’ come from?

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4. Do Jews believe that Jesus is the Messiah?

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5. Why does Mark 1:11 confirm that Jesus is who he says he is?

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"When Jesus was baptised, a voice from Heaven said, 'You are my Son' Mark 1:11

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"Again, the high priest asked him, 'Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?' I am; said Jesus." Mark 14: 61b-62a [NIV]

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"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." John 1:14

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"You may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 21:31

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### Easter Week

Jesus taught throughout his life, he taught to whoever would listen. He performed miracles to help heal people and to show that he was the Son of God. Many people did not agree with him, and did not want to listen to him, simply because they did not believe he was the Son of God. This did mean that he had many followers but also had many people who were against him.

Before Jesus death, the week leading up to it is one of the most documented parts of his life. Each day held some significance. His disciples/apostles were the 12 closest to Jesus

throughout his life and the ones he tasked with spreading his message to create the religion of Christianity.

### **What happened during Easter Week?**

**Palm Sunday:** Palm Sunday commemorates Christ's triumphant arrival in Jerusalem to the cheers of the crowd. The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!" John 12:12-13. Later in that week many of the people in that cheering crowd would be among those shouting that Jesus should be executed.

**Shrove Tuesday:** Shrove Tuesday is the day before Lent starts: the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. It's a day of penitence, to clean the soul, and a day of celebration as the last chance to feast before Lent begins. Shrove Tuesday is sometimes called Pancake Day after the fried batter recipe traditionally eaten on this day. But there's more to Shrove Tuesday than pigging out on pancakes or taking part in a public pancake race. The pancakes themselves are part of an ancient custom with deeply religious roots.

**Ash Wednesday:** The service draws on the ancient Biblical traditions of covering one's head with ashes, wearing sackcloth, and fasting.

**Maundy Thursday:** Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. Christians remember it as the day of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and established the ceremony known as the Eucharist. The night of Maundy Thursday is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane. The word 'Maundy' comes from the command (mandate) given by Christ at the Last Supper, that we should love one another. In Roman Catholic churches the anthem Mandatum novum do vobis (a new commandment I give to you) would be sung on Maundy Thursday. In many other countries this day is known as Holy Thursday.

**Good Friday:** The most important events in Christianity are the death and later resurrection of Jesus Christ, who Christians believe is the Son of God, and whose life and teachings are the foundation of Christianity. Good Friday is the Friday before Easter. It commemorates the Passion: the execution of Jesus by crucifixion.

**Holy Saturday:** Holy Saturday is the Saturday after Good Friday, which is often, but wrongly, called Easter Saturday.

**Easter Sunday:** Easter Sunday is the culmination of Holy Week. Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the most important Christian festival, and the one celebrated with the greatest joy. The date of Easter changes each year, and several other Christian festivals fix their dates by reference to Easter. Churches are filled with flowers, and there are special hymns and songs. But not all Easter customs are Christian; some, such as the Easter Bunny, are pagan in origin.

**Easter Monday:** Ascension Day celebrates Jesus's ascension to heaven after he was resurrected on Easter Day. Then, when the eleven disciples were at the table. He appeared to them and reproached them because they had not believed those who had seen him after he was raised from the dead.

## The Crucifixion

1. What is the crucifixion?

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2. How does Luke explain what happened at the crucifixion?

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3. How does Mark explain the crucifixion?

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4. What is the difference between the cross and crucifix?

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5. What is the impact of the crucifixion for Christians today?

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6. What happened during the burial of Jesus?

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## The Resurrection

1. What is resurrection?

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2. How do we know that it happened on the Friday?

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3. Why couldn't Jesus' followers anoint Jesus' body?

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4. Which woman do all four of the gospel writers mention?

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5. What does the Gospel of John say about this?

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6. What happened over the next few days and weeks?

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## The Ascension

1. What is the ascension?

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2. Which gospel writers explain what happens during the ascension?

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3. Explain why Jesus' resurrection is important to Christians.

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4. Explain why Jesus' ascension is important to Christians

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"When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. "Luke 24:50-57

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Jesus' Ressurrection

Matthew 28:1-7

Mark 6: 1-8

Luke 24: 1-12

John 20: 1-9





## Heaven and Hell

As the result of judgement for Christians is either that they can experience the presence of God eternally (heaven) or that they are unable to experience the presence of God (hell).

Catholics believe in an intermediate state called purgatory where the souls of some Christians wait to receive their place in heaven. This is where souls are cleansed with the burning fires of hell, to get rid of the sins of people so they can enter heaven to be with God.

Nobody has experienced heaven, hell or purgatory and come back to earth to tell us about it, our knowledge of them is very limited.

### Heaven

Traditional paintings of heaven show it as beyond the clouds and where God sits on a huge throne, surveying the earth with angels flying around. It is seen as a place of peace, joy and freedom from pain and a chance to be with friends and family who are already in heaven. Whether this is a spiritual or physical existence is unclear. In pictures and images, it is often represented as a physical paradise rewarding the good, possibly because this is the easiest way to represent it. However, this does not mean that Christians necessarily believe it is physical and not spiritual.

Among Christians there are opinions about who will be with God eternally. Some Christians believe that only those who believe in Jesus will be with God in heaven. Other Christians think that heaven is reserved for Christians and perhaps followers of other faiths who have lived good, principled lives and pleased God in doing so. Others believe it is for those who call themselves Christians regardless of how they live their life, and that simply the act of being baptised into the faith is almost a guarantee of heaven. All Christians believe that God will forgive sins, and this will enable people to approach God's presence. The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats does seem to indicate that it is a reward for both faith and actions – only one is insufficient.

A more modern and less literal view which many Christians hold is that heaven is a spiritual existence of peace and happiness in the eternal presence of God.

If people are asked to describe what they think heaven will be like, their answers might well relate to what they see as most desirable in their present lives. So, for those living in a land frequently suffering from drought, heaven might well be a well-watered garden with an abundance of trees and flowers. Those who must face extreme heat might think of somewhere with a cooling breeze. Children might imagine heaven as a party with lots of ice cream and chocolate. Christians themselves use earthly images to explain their understanding of heaven, but Christianity teaches that heaven is a state of being, not a physical place. It is being with God outside time and space. In a newspaper Desmond Tutu said of heaven: "It is difficult for us to conceive of an existence that is timeless, where you look at absolute beauty and goodness and you have no words. It is enough just to be there. You know how it is when you are sitting with someone you love, and hours can go by in what seem like moments? Well, in heaven, eternity itself will pass in a flash... heaven is a community."

## **Hell**

Hell is often seen as the opposite of heaven. Christians understand it to be a state of existence without God. It is often depicted in paintings to be a place of eternal suffering, terror, fire and torture ruled by the Devil (Satan). It is pictured as a fiery pit somewhere beneath the earth. This is perhaps a believer's image of what it would be like to be permanently without God.

This leaves the difficult question about whether non-Christians go to hell if heaven is reserved for Christians. This would appear to be very unfair and, as Christians believe God is incapable of being unfair, many believe God is incapable of being unfair, many believe that all those who believe in God and try to follow him will be accepted by God and be welcomed eternally into his presence.

However, there is great debate about whether a loving God would condemn people to eternal torment and pain. If this is not the case, perhaps a more modern interpretation is that hell is an eternal state of mind of being cut off from the possibility of God. This would be what awaits a person who throughout their life did not acknowledge God or follow his teachings.

The Bible depicts hell as a place of unquenchable fire. Again, this is a metaphor, but it led to the most horrific paintings in the Middle Ages. As a way of frightening people into obeying the rules of the Church, some artists painted nightmarish scenes of devils teaching people apart and eating them. Many Christians have rejected those literal views of hell. They teach that hell is eternal separation from God. This separation results from the deliberate rejection of any relationship with Him. So, hell is not what God decides from people. It is not what God wants. It is down to human free choice. Many Christians who believe in hell would agree with this statement: 'God predestines no one to go to hell; for this, a wilful turning away from God... is necessary and persistence in it until the end.' (Catechism of the Catholic Church.

# Sin and Salvation

## Sin

1. What is sin?

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2. How do sinful thoughts lead to sinful actions?

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3. Are all sinful actions against the law? Explain.

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4. Which instructions were given to Adam and Eve?

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5. What did Adam and Eve become aware of?

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6. Who do many interpret the Serpent as?

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7. What kind of things do humans do that displease God?

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8. Who do Christians believe continues to tempt humans to sin?

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9. What do Christians believe God gave them that enables them to make choices in their lives?

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10. Why do Christians believe that having free will does not mean that humans can do whatever they want?

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11. Name two teachings that that give people guidance as to how to use their free will wisely?

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Read through the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes and explain how they could help a Christian to act.

### **The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:1-19**

20 And God spoke all these words:

2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12 "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

13 "You shall not murder.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour."

18 When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance 19 and said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

### **The Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-12**

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them.

He said:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.



7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The Ten Commandments	The Beatitudes

### Salvation

1. What is meant by 'salvation'?

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2. How does John 3:16 sum up what Christians believe?

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3. Why do Christians see Jesus' death as an atonement?

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4. What does atonement mean?

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5. Why is atonement necessary for Christians?

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6. What is reconciliation?

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“And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible under thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.” Mark: 14:36

“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.” Romans 5:10

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our lord.” Romans 6:23

“If anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” John 2:1-2

“For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.” Corinthians 15:21