

Christian Beliefs: Mid Unit – notes to help with revision

Key Terms:

ATHEISM – belief there is no God

THEISM – belief in a God

AGNOSTISM –unsure of God's existence

Nature of God.

Monotheism – belief in ONE God.

Trinity – God is One but has three aspects to him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Incarnation – Christian belief that God came to earth in human form.

Transcendent – God is not limited by time and space.

Immanent – God is active in the world.

OMNIPOTENT: This means that God is seen as ALL-POWERFUL (CHEAT: Remember the P in the middle of the word)

OMNISCIENT: This means that God is all knowing (CHEAT: Think Scientists think they KNOW everything!)

OMNIBENEVOLENT: This means that God is all-Loving (CHEAT: LOOK love is spelt backwards)

The Trinity

Christian's believe in ONE God who is able to do anything. They believe that God made the world but is also involved in it. Their understanding of God has come from their Holy Book - 'The Bible'. The Christian understanding of God is complicated because they see God as a Father figure, in the person of Jesus and acting in the world in a form that cannot be seen. The way that Christians understand God is best explained by the concept of 'The Trinity'. There is one God but 3 persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Father – creator and provider. God the father created the whole world and us. He sustains everything and rules over the world. The father will judge humans on judgement day. God cares for us like a father. "We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth..." Nicene Creed

Son – Jesus the saviour was born to the Virgin Mary and taught people using parables. He also performed miracles. He died on the cross to bring the forgiveness of sins and rose again on the third day. This is called the resurrection. Christians believe that he is the redeemer and saviour and that God came to Earth as Jesus. Christians believe God came to earth to show people how to live a better life and to save them through mending the broken relationship between humans and God. Jesus did this by dying on the cross and being raised back to life. They believe he will come back on Judgement Day to judge the living and the dead. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us....." (The word means JESUS) John 1:14

Holy Spirit – helper and guide. This is the part of God that works in the world today. He is involved in bringing miracles to earth today and can help and guide as well as bring comfort to believers. He is invisible and brings new life into people. Christians believe that Jesus left to go back to heaven he left the Holy Spirit which is an invisible presence to guide and help them. The Holy Spirit cannot be seen but is felt by Christians. Christians believe it is what guides them. "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things. And He will help you remember everything that I have told you." John 14:26

Creation – God the Father

The story of creation is found in the book of Genesis.

Fundamentalist Christians believe that you need to read the story literally and that it happened in a week. These Christians are known as creationists.

Some Liberal Christians would say that it was over a longer time frame. They look at the word 'iom' which means 'stream of events' but has been translated from Hebrew to mean 'day'. They say that God created the world in 6 periods of time and rested on the seventh but this could have been millions or billions of years.

Other Liberal Christians believe that it is a myth – a story with a special meaning. It tells us that God created the world, that it was good, that we are made in the image of God (humans) and that we have a duty to care for the earth because God made it.

A Liberal Christian can believe in Big-bang and evolution as well as creation. They think creation – religion – explain why we are here and big-bang as well as evolution - science – explains how we got here. They think religion and science are compatible – in other words they work together.

A Fundamentalist Christian will believe that science is wrong and that the Bible is God's word so it is right.

Day 1- There was nothing then God created light and named the light day and the darkness night.

Day 2 – God created the sky

Day 3 – God made the sea and land and also made plants and trees.

Day 4 – God made the sun, moon and stars to separate night from day and mark off the seasons.

Day 5 – God made sea creatures and birds.

Day 6 - God made every living thing on the land – animals domestic and wild and then humans in his image.

Day 7 – Day of Rest

The Incarnation – Jesus the son

Birth of Jesus – around 6-4 BC around this time was a census and Mary and Joseph had to go to Bethlehem from Nazareth to be registered. Whilst there Mary gave birth to Jesus in a cave where animals were kept.

Baptism – baptised in the river Jordan by John. The Bible said when he was a voice from heaven said 'This is my Son, whom I love'.

Temptation in the wilderness – Jesus after his baptism spent 40 days and nights in the wilderness where he was tested by the devil.

Jesus choose the disciples - he choose 12 followers

Miracles – Jesus performed many miracles – including healings such as healing people from leprosy

Parables – Jesus taught people through parables which are stories with a deeper meaning. One parable is the story of the Good Samaritan

Last Supper – Jesus had a last meal during the Passover with his disciples – He shared bread and wine with them and predicted his death.

Arrested – Jesus was praying when he was arrested.

Trial – he was put on trial and then sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate.

Crucified – Jesus was crucified on the cross around 30-33 CE on a hill called Golgotha outside Jerusalem. His crucifixion is mentioned by Roman Historian Tacitus and Josephus a Jewish historian

The Resurrection – Christians believe that Jesus rose from the dead 3 days after his death. The body was missing from the tomb and the stone was rolled away.

The Ascension – Christians believe that Jesus returned to heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to guide his followers. Christians believe that Jesus is alive today.

The Holy Spirit

Christians believe that God sent his Holy Spirit at Pentecost to guide and help believers. The disciples were gathered together in a room when the Holy Spirit came. The Bible says that flames appeared on the disciples' heads but no one was burnt – there was the sound of wind and that they could all suddenly speak in different languages. They could also heal people in the name of Jesus.

Christians believe that God can still heal and speak to them today through the Holy Spirit. They believe that miracles can still happen and will pray for miracles. They do believe that God doesn't always perform a miracle when a person asks and they don't understand why he heals some people and not others.

Charismatic worship involves the gifts of the Holy Spirit – people speak in tongues (new languages), dance, clap and sing.

The Bible

Fundamentalist Christian – A Christian who thinks the Bible is literally true. They believe that the Bible is the word of God and that it is word for word true.

Liberal Christian – A Christian who thinks that the words of the Bible need to be interpreted and that we need to look at the type of writing it is and the historical context to help us find the true meaning of the words.

The different sections of the Bible

- There are 66 books in the Bible.
- In the Old Testament there are books of law, history, poetry and wisdom and books about the Prophets.
There are 39 books
- The first 4 books in the New Testament are called the Gospels. The word Gospel means 'Good news'.
- There are lots of letters in the New Testament as well. There are 27 books in the New Testament

A Bible reference is made up of three parts. E.g. Luke 6:11. Luke is the book. The 6 is the chapter and 11 is the verse. Reading the Bible and following the teachings in the Bible such as the 10 Commandments or Jesus' teaching to 'love one another' will **impact** a Christian's life. It may change the way they behave – for example they might regularly give money to a charity, they might volunteer to make meals and give them out to homeless people in their home town, they might fundraise for a charity like CAFOD who help the poor and needy or they may even devote their whole life to serving others like Mother Teresa did.