Your notes

GCSE Religious Studies: revision notes

Christianity: beliefs and teachings

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The nature of God

- Christians believe in one God (**monotheism**) who is **omnipotent** (all-powerful), **omniscient** (all-knowing), omnibenevolent (all-loving) and just.
- The **Trinity**: one God in three persons, the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed sets out this belief.
- The problem of evil and suffering challenges belief in a God who is both all-powerful and all-loving.

Creation

- Genesis 1–3 describes God creating the world in six days and resting on the seventh, with humans made 'in the image of God'. John 1 teaches that the Word (Jesus) was involved in creation.
- Some Christians read Genesis literally. Many others read it symbolically and accept the Big Bang and evolution as the way God created.

Jesus and salvation

- The **incarnation**: God became human in Jesus, born to the Virgin Mary. Jesus was crucified, rose from the dead on the third day (the **resurrection**) and later returned to heaven (the ascension).
- Jesus' last days (Luke 22–24): he shared the Last Supper with his disciples, was betrayed by Judas and arrested, was tried before the Jewish council and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, and was crucified. On the third day his tomb was found empty.
- Christians believe humans inherit a tendency to sin (**original sin**) from Adam and Eve's disobedience. **Salvation** comes through God's grace and Jesus' **atonement**: his death restores the relationship between God and humans (John 3:16).

Life after death

- Jesus' **resurrection** shows Christians that there is life after death. God will judge everyone; heaven is eternal life with God, and hell is separation from God. Catholics also believe in purgatory, where souls are cleansed before heaven.
- The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25) teaches that people will be judged on how they treated those in need.

The Study of Christianity: beliefs (Eduqas)

- Eduqas Component 2 (a 1-hour paper). Learn its eight concepts: **omnipotent**, **omnibenevolent**, **Trinity**, Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, sacraments and evangelism.
- God is **omnipotent** (shown in the plagues and the parting of the Red Sea, Exodus 7-11 and 14:21) and **omnibenevolent** (John 3:16). Epicurus and the Book of Job raise the question of why a good God allows suffering.
- Creation: Genesis 1-3 can be read literally or as symbolic stories. John 1:1-5 teaches that God created through the Word (Jesus), and the Spirit was present too, so all three persons of the **Trinity** were involved.
- Jesus: the **Incarnation** (God becoming human, John 1:14), his crucifixion, the **Atonement** (his death repairing the relationship between God and humans, linked to the scapegoat in Leviticus 16), the **Resurrection** and the Ascension (Luke 24:50-53).
- **Salvation**: sin separates people from God. Christians differ on how the Bible is the Word of God: some see it as dictated by God, others as inspired but written by humans in their own time. Grace and the Holy Spirit, given at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-6), help believers; the Spirit is central to Evangelical worship.
- The afterlife: judgement (the sheep and the goats, Matthew 25:31-46), **resurrection** of the body (1 Corinthians 15), and traditional and modern ideas of heaven and hell (a place, or a state of being with or without God).

Key terms

Monotheism	Belief in one God.
Omnipotent	All-powerful.
Omniscient	All-knowing.
Omnibenevolent	All-loving.
Trinity	One God in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Incarnation	God becoming human in Jesus.
Resurrection	Rising from the dead.
Atonement	Restoring the relationship between God and humans through Jesus' death.
Original sin	The tendency to sin, inherited from Adam and Eve.

Your notes

Salvation	Being saved from sin and its consequences.
Evangelism	Spreading the Christian message to convert others. (Eduqas)

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What is the Trinity?
2. What does 'omnipotent' mean?
3. What does 'omnibenevolent' mean?
4. What is the incarnation?
5. What is the resurrection?
6. What is atonement?
7. What is original sin?
8. What is purgatory, for Catholic Christians?

Answers

1. One God in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
2. All-powerful
3. All-loving
4. God becoming human in Jesus
5. Jesus rising from the dead on the third day
6. Restoring the relationship between God and humans through Jesus' death
7. The tendency to sin, inherited from Adam and Eve's disobedience
8. A state where souls are cleansed before heaven

What to do next

Practise 15 questions on this topic

Try 6 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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