

Jesus Christ and Salvation

Christians believe that Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, is the Son of God.

God Became *Human* at the *Incarnation*

- 1) The incarnation was the act by which God became a human being as Jesus Christ. John's Gospel describes Jesus as the Word of God, made human.
- 2) An angel told a woman called Mary in Nazareth that she would have a son — and that "the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35 NIV).
- 3) This belief is stated in the Nicene Creed: "he... was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man".
- 4) Christians don't believe that Jesus was 'half God and half man' — he was fully both. The Bible describes how God "appeared in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16 NIV).
- 5) Jesus is referred to as 'Christ' or 'Messiah' — the 'Anointed One of God'.
- 6) Christians see Jesus's time on Earth as God's way of showing how much he loves the world. They study the Gospels to find out about Jesus's life, and to see how they should live their own.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14 NIV

After being baptised by John the Baptist, Jesus began teaching. He had many followers, including 12 chosen disciples. Some of his key teachings are in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) — he taught how the poor and meek are highly valued by God, and how peacemakers are blessed. He also taught the importance of kindness, such as in the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). He performed miracles such as healing the sick, showing that he was the Son of God and demonstrating God's love.

Jesus was *Crucified* and *Resurrected*

The Last Supper, Jesus's Arrest and Trial

- 1) Shortly before his death, Jesus and his disciples ate their Passover meal in Jerusalem. It was their final meal together and became known as the Last Supper.
- 2) At the meal, Jesus gave the disciples bread saying "this is my body" and wine saying "this is my blood" (Mark 14:22-24 NIV). Luke's Gospel tells us he said "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19 NIV). These words are important to many Christians today who remember Jesus with bread and wine through the Eucharist (see p.9).
- 3) At the Last Supper, Jesus also washed his disciples' feet, which teaches Christians about how important it is to serve others.
- 4) Next, Jesus went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he was arrested after Judas betrayed him. The authorities felt threatened by Jesus — earlier that week, crowds had called him the 'King of Israel'.
- 5) He was put on trial before the Jewish high priest and found guilty of blasphemy. Then Jesus was tried before the Roman governor, Pilate — he offered to release Jesus, but the crowd said "Crucify him!" (Mark 15:13 NIV). He was flogged, before being sent to die.

Crucifixion

- 1) Jesus was crucified at a place called Golgotha, next to two robbers. A sign was fixed to Jesus's cross that read 'The King of the Jews', to record the charge against him. Passers-by threw insults at Jesus, saying that he could save others, but couldn't save himself.
- 2) In his suffering, Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34 NIV). This shows that Jesus understands how people can feel abandoned in their suffering.
- 3) Christians also believe the crucifixion helped to repair the relationship between God and mankind — the atonement (see next page).

Resurrection

- 1) After the crucifixion, Jesus's body was put in a tomb. But he was resurrected (brought back to life), and his tomb was found empty.
- 2) Jesus talked to two women and told them "Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me" (Matthew 28:10 NIV).
- 3) The resurrection is important to Christians as it shows them that there is life after death — death becomes less frightening.
- 4) It shows them just how powerful God is. This power that raised Jesus from the dead gives people the strength to live Christian lives.
- 5) Christians also see the resurrection as further proof that Jesus is the Son of God as he was "...appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead..." (Romans 1:4 NIV). This strengthens people's faith.

"...Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!" Luke 24:5-6 NIV

Roman Catholics refer to the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension of Jesus as 'The Paschal Mystery'.

