Christian Beliefs Revision

AQA Religious Studies A
BELIEFS ABOUT GOD

God as omnipotent - This means “All-Powerful.” Christians believe God can do anything. Christians see that He can do anything by His creation of the world and universe and through the miracles of Jesus.

**Bible quotes to back this up**
In the New Testament Jesus once calmed a storm that he and his disciples were caught on.
They panicked and Jesus calmly said “Quiet! Be still!” and it stopped. This shows the power he has.

Other examples from the Bible: Noah and the Flood when God flooded the earth and Creation and the Ten Plagues (Old Testament.)

**Omnibenevolent** – It means “All-Loving.” Christians believe God cares for his Creation and because of that he made the world.

In the New Testament Jesus taught about “agape” which is a type of self-giving and self-sacrificial love.

In the New Testament God says at Jesus’ Baptism “For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son.” (John 3:16)

He sent Jesus to die for everyone- this shows his love for the world.

“Love your neighbour.” Mark 12: 31

Prodigal Son- Jesus taught about the Prodigal Son in a parable. The Prodigal Son ignored and disobeyed his Father. He then ran away. His other son was good and did all his Father asked of him. When the Prodigal Son came back, his Father forgave him straight away. His other son was angry at how easy he forgave him but the Father explained he loved his son and would forgive him- Luke 15:11-32

This **parable** from Jesus teaches we should love others unconditionally no matter what.
God as just- this means God is fair.

Bible quotes to back this up

Judgement Day/Afterlife- Some Christians believe Jesus will come back one day to judge people and decide whether they go to Heaven and Hell. Also they believe that when they die they either go to Heaven, Hell or for Catholics, Purgatory (the middle place between Heaven and Hell.)

God gave Moses the 10 Commandments which are rules that Christians are to follow. These are rules which show fairness.

Jesus also taught, “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” (Matthew 7:12)

EVIL AND SUFFERING

Moral evil - caused by the actions of people e.g murder

Natural evil - things that happen naturally e.g. tsunamis
Some Christians believe suffering brings them closer to God. God learns to understand/feel their pain which gives them strength to get through it.

Some Christians believe God can’t be all-powerful as if he was, he would have the power to stop suffering.

Some Christians believe suffering can’t be explained- this is the called the problem of evil. Evil challenges God’s power.

Some Christians believe suffering exists because Adam and Eve chose to ignore God. Some Christians believe suffering is a punishment from God for Adam and Eve’s sin.

Some Christians say humans have free-will (ability to make own decisions/choices) given to them by God so they can choose to do things wrong. God doesn’t commit the evil actions- people do.

Some Christians see suffering as a test of their faith and trust in God.

Some Christians find suffering a problem as it suggests design of the world is flawed because he cannot stop it.

Some Christians see suffering as an education- a way to help Christians understand they need to care for and help others.

Some Christians believe suffering offers balance and allows people to appreciate God and the good times and the bad.
Christians are **monotheists**. This means they only believe in one God. They believe that through the Trinity God’s nature is revealed. The **Trinity** is the belief that God is one God but he has 3 persons linked to him. It is also sometimes called the **Godhead**.

**God the Father**- the creator who made the world and everything in it

**Jesus the Son**- the **Saviour** (man who saves) who died for everyone to be saved and became **incarnate** (born human and God.)

**The Holy Spirit**- the source of strength and inspiration that can be found in everyone. It guides people today.
The Trinity helps Christians to:

- Make sense of God and what he is like and how he could be understood.
- Understand the Bible—who Jesus was, who God was and the difference in between each part of the Trinity.
- Use prayers that explain the Trinity.
- Make the sign of the cross.

Problems with the Trinity:

- Confusing! Makes no sense! 3 persons but one God?!?!?!
- 3 Gods not one!
Christians and the Creation story

God’s creation of the universe happened over 6 days, starting with a day and night and ending with the creation of humans. On the 7th day he rested.

Some Christians believe the story is literal and tells us exactly how the world started. They believe that authors of the Bible were inspired by God. What they wrote contains no mistakes.

However, many Christians think the story is a myth: that is, a fictional story with an important message that has symbols within it to explain its meaning.

The message of God’s creation for Christians is:

• God is the only creator of the world.
• God is all powerful.
• God created a universe that was planned and considered.
• Everything God made was good.
• Humans are given power over the rest of the created world.
• Human beings are created in God’s image.
The importance of beliefs in Genesis 1 for Christians

• Our world was planned.
• It gives them a meaning and purpose in life- God made them.
• Encourages Christians to be positive about life.
• They have potential as humans because they were made in God’s image.
• Humans have a responsibility to treat people equally with love and respect.
• All humans have value because they were made in God’s image.
• Humans have responsibility for the world- this is called **stewardship**.
• Christianity teaches death is not the end.

• Christians believe in **eternal life** happens with God.

• Death is not something to be feared as it is not the end.

• Christians believe good people go to **Heaven** and have eternal life with God.

• Christians believe bad people go to **Hell** and are punished.

• Some Christians do not believe in Hell because they believe its existence would mean that God’s love would not triumph over evil.

• Roman Catholics believe in **Purgatory** and that the dead go there straight after they die if their soul is destined for Heaven. It’s not a physical place but a place to purify the soul to be good enough for Heaven.

• Christians believe in the **resurrection** - that the dead will be restored to life. They believe the body may die but the soul lives on.

• Death of a loved one gives Christians comfort as they know that death is not the end.

• Some Christians will not be cremated because of their belief in a physical resurrection - that Jesus will one day come again and raise them back to life on **Judgement Day**.

• Judgement Day is the belief that Jesus ...”will come again to judge the living and the dead” which is mentioned in the **Nicene Creed**.

• The belief about the resurrection is not scientifically proven and is a belief.
• The word incarnation means to become flesh. Christians believe that God took on human form as Jesus.

• In the New Testament it mentions often that Jesus is the “Son of God.”

• John 1:14 “The Word became flesh and lived among us.”

• Christians believe Jesus is fully God but also fully human because he’s part of God and Mary (a human) gave birth to him.

• The beliefs about Jesus are backed up in the Nicene Creed “conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.”

• Proof of Jesus’ divine qualities can be found in the miracles he performed.

• The beliefs about Jesus are backed up in the Nicene Creed “conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.”
Jesus’ death is known as the Crucifixion because he died on the cross. He was arrested, tried and convicted of blasphemy by the Jewish authorities. However, Romans rule so they handed him over to the Roman governor. He was found guilty and killed.

The crucifixion took place at Golgotha which is called the place of the skull. They mocked him and called him the King of the Jews. They told Jesus to save himself.

According to Mark’s Gospel he said when Jesus died the Temple (Jewish place of worship) and many Christians believe that it represents Jesus’ death breaking the barrier between God and humans. This is when the Roman Centurion said about Jesus being the son of God.

Jesus had to die because he had gone against the Jewish teachings and questioned the Sanhedrin (Jewish leaders) about what they taught. Finally he had to die to save people from their sins. Jesus’ death was a sacrificial death that would atone (make up for) for everyone’s sins.
Salvation means to be saved.

John 3:16 sums up what Christians believe, “For 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.”

Jesus had to die and in the Garden of Gethsemane, even though Jesus pleaded with God as he did not want to die.

On the cross:
• Jesus took on the consequences and penalty of human sin.
• This was God taking the initiative in reconciling humanity to God.

Many Christians believe they have salvation (are saved) because of Jesus’ death. They also believe they will be saved if they live their life properly through what they do in life. They have to help others like Jesus did. The gift of salvation is a free gift to all that choose to follow Jesus and accept him.
**Atonement** means making up for, making amends. It means putting something right.

Christians believe the human relationship with God was so damaged that drastic action was needed. Christians believe that human beings needed to be reconciled with God so that they can be reunited with Him in Heaven. Human beings could not make that happen so it was up to God through a drastic event; this event was God’s self-sacrifice in the form of Jesus. They believe Jesus accepted this because he knew it was the only way for reconciliation to happen.
According to the New Testament, Joseph of Arimathea was given permission by Pilate to have Jesus’ body taken down from the cross and handed over to him for burial. The body was placed in Joseph’s own tomb and the boulder closed over. As it was the Sabbath (Jewish day of rest is a Saturday), the women could not take care of the body. They closed the boulder and returned on the Sunday to find the body gone and the boulder moved. The women were terrified as Mark says in his Gospel that Jesus appeared to them after he died to say he was risen and to go back to Galilee to tell the others. He’s also said to have appeared to Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of John. Over the next 40 days, Jesus makes many appearances to his disciples.
### DID JESUS RISE FROM THE DEAD?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument against</th>
<th>Counter argument</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The women went to the wrong tomb and when the young man they saw said “He is not here. See the place where they laid him” he was redirecting them.</td>
<td>The women knew where Jesus because they had been with Joseph to place Jesus’ body in the tomb.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus was not actually dead when he was taken off the cross. He came round in the tomb and either got himself out or someone came and got him.</td>
<td>He would not have been capable of getting himself out. If he had got out, surely someone would have seen him. Also many people saw Jesus die.</td>
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<td>The disciples were in denial because the appearances of Jesus were just wishful thinking.</td>
<td>Jesus’ resurrection was the last thing the disciples expected of Jesus. They were hiding in fear for fear of being arrested themselves.</td>
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<td>The story was made up by the disciples to get respect.</td>
<td>The disciples didn’t get respect as they were persecuted and attacked from the start. They were killed for their beliefs.</td>
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The Ascension is when Jesus went up to Heaven and this was 40 days after his resurrection. Jesus takes his disciples to a place called Bethany and blessed them. Then he is taken to Heaven.

SIN

The story of original sin (The Fall) is found in Genesis 3. In the story Adam and Eve God told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit from the tree of good and evil.

The serpent tempted them to think that God wanted them to eat it. As a result, God punished Adam and Eve. They damaged this relationship with God.

A sin is when you do something wrong and in Christian terms go against God.
Grace

The word grace refers to the unconditional love that God shows to everyone, even when it seems underserved. God loves human despite what we do or do not do.