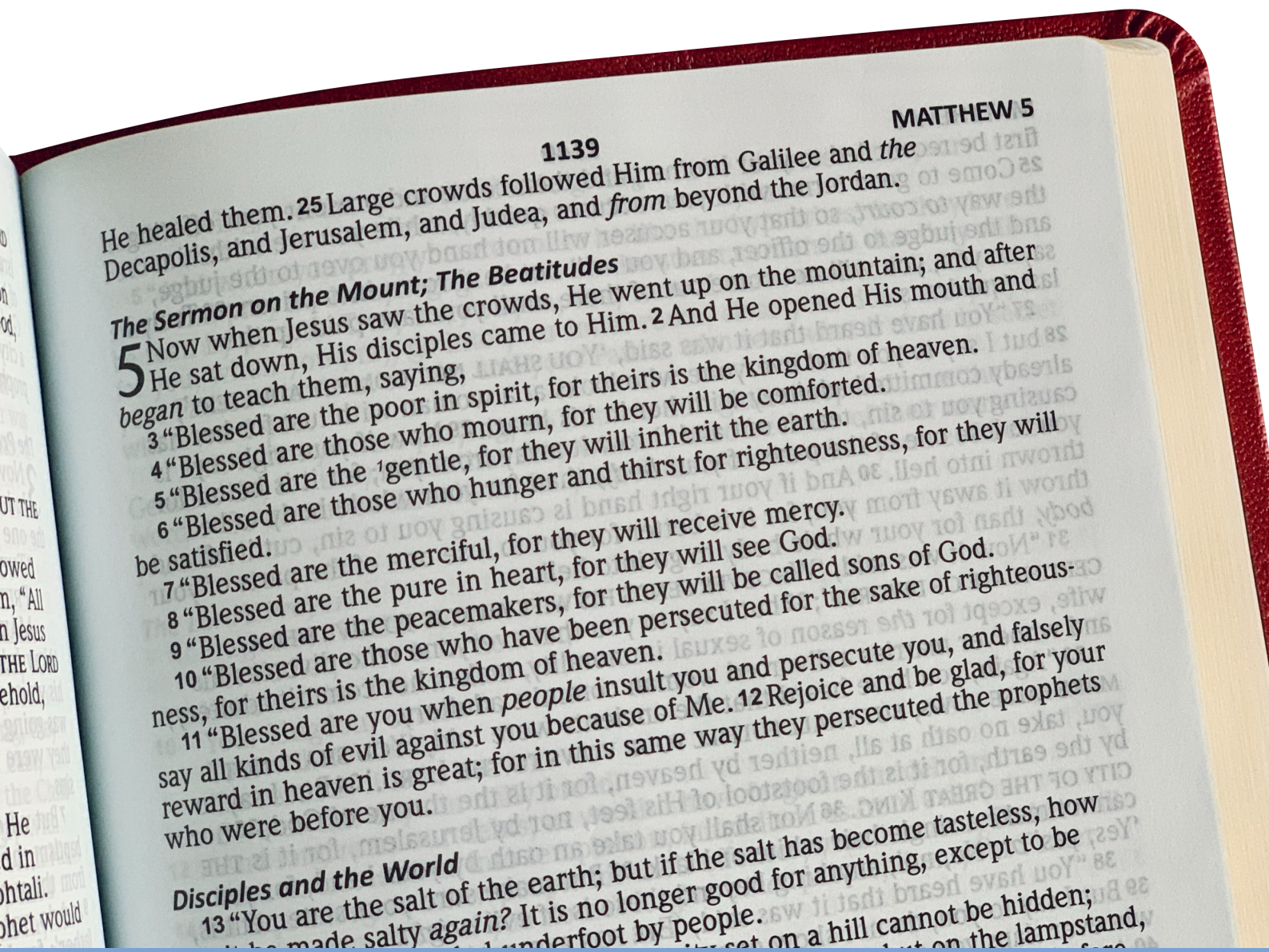


Religious Studies

Beliefs and Teachings

Christianity

Work Booklet

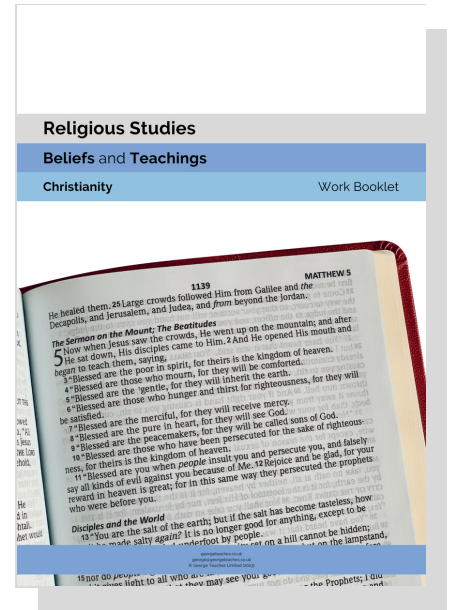


Preface

This work booklet is all about Christianity. It covers the important elements of the religion's beliefs and teachings, including those about the nature of God and the Trinity, the problem of evil, creation, sin and salvation, and the afterlife. Additionally, it covers the evaluation of beliefs and teachings about the person of Jesus, including his life, incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, and his role in the process of salvation according to Christians. It is a comprehensive resource and provides clearly arranged spaces for organised note-taking.

This work booklet follows the video lessons available at George Teaches and is designed for use in conjunction with it. It is accompanied by an information booklet and work booklet, which can be used to support teaching and learning. Additional assessment resources are available online that facilitate knowledge testing with automatically marked multiple-choice questions for students. Throughout this script booklet, interpuncts (•) are used to indicate forward presentation transitions, and presentation images are used to visualise areas the content covers.

As always, I am deeply indebted to my colleagues and students for the production of this publication, which has been inspired by their desire for more extensive and holistic resources for teaching and learning about religious studies. At all times, I have attempted to produce material that covers popular and important content but is not confined by the straitjacket of any particular curriculum or specification. Consequently, whilst this covers all relevant content for Christianity at GCSE, it goes far beyond. My earnest hope is that it proves capable of both supporting students of all abilities and challenging the ablest to embark upon their own self-directed inquiries. Above all, it is my sincerest wish that it proves beneficial to your teaching, and the learning that you (like me) try to inspire among all your students.



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London, UK
26 August 2023

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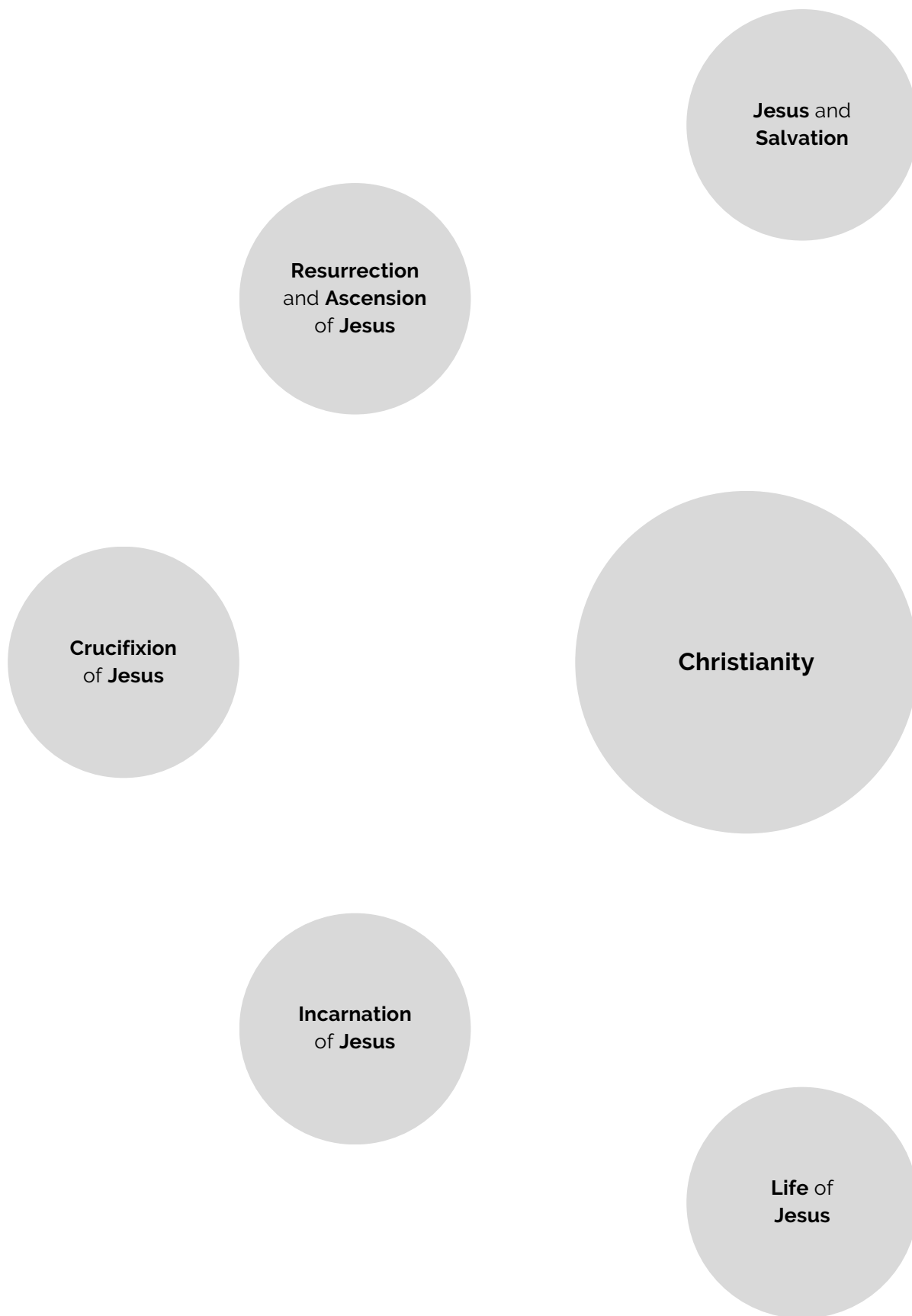
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Key Terms in Christianity

Agape	Afterlife
Ascension	Benevolent
Blasphemy	Creation
Crucifixion	Eternal
Evil	Free Will
Forgiving	Grace
Heaven	Hell
Immanent	Incarnation

Judge	Judgement
Law	Lord
Messiah	Monotheistic
Omnipotent	Omniscient
Original Sin	Personal
Purgatory	Resurrection
Salvation	Saviour
Sin	Transcendent
Trinity	Word of God



**Nature
of God**

**Problem
of Evil**

Trinity

Creation

Afterlife

**Sin and
Salvation**

Nature of God

1. **What** is the nature of God?
2. **How** does the nature of God work?
3. **Why** is the nature of God important?

1. **What** is the nature of God?

When Christians talk about the nature of God, what do they mean? Generally, Christians describe God using a collection of famous qualities. Write definitions for "benevolent", "eternal", "forgiving", "immanent", "judge", "monotheistic", "omnipotent", "omniscient", "personal", and "transcendent".

Benevolent	Eternal
Forgiving	Immanent
Judge	Monotheistic
Omnipotent	Omniscient
Personal	Transcendent

2. **How** does the nature of God work?

Generally, Christians believe what they do about what God is like because of the Bible, which describes God's nature in great detail. For example, God's benevolent character is presented through the life and death of Jesus (i.e. God the Son) and some Old Testament passages like Psalm 86:15, which describes God as merciful, gracious and abounding in steadfast love. Make a note about how the Bible influences Christian beliefs about God's benevolent, forgiving and omnipotent nature and his role as judge.

How the Nature of God Works	
Benevolent	Forgiving
Judge	Omnipotent

3. **Why** is the nature of God important?

Christian beliefs about the nature of God are important because they have a huge influence on how Christians behave. For some Christians, God's benevolent, immanent and personal nature is emphasised in Jesus, God the Son. With these aspects of God's nature emphasised, he becomes a role model that Christians can attempt to emulate. For other Christians, it is God the Father, the omnipotent, omniscient and transcendent judge whom they imagine in their mind's eye. Make a note about why the nature of God is important.

Why the Nature of God Is Important

Problem of Evil

1. **What** is the problem of evil?
2. **How** does the problem of evil work?
3. **Why** is the problem of evil important?

1. **What** is the problem of evil?

The presence of pain and suffering undermines belief in the existence of a deity that is both benevolent (i.e. all-loving) and omnipotent (i.e. all-powerful). If God is benevolent and omnipotent, surely he would remove evil from the world? Write a definition for "evil" and make a note about natural evil and moral evil.

Evil	
Natural Evil	Moral Evil

Regardless of type, the problem of evil is best expressed by the inconsistent triad, which consists of the three following claims: (1) evil exists, (2) God is benevolent, and (3) God is omnipotent. The triad is inconsistent because at least one of the claims must be false. Make a note about the inconsistent triad.

The Inconsistent Triad

2. **How** does the problem of evil work?

Christians respond to the problem of evil in different ways. One of the most famous is using the soul-deciding defence. This defence maintains that people have free will and can use it to make right decisions and do good or make wrong decisions and do evil. Write a definition for "free will" and "original sin".

Free Will

Original Sin

Other Christians claim that an all-loving and all-powerful deity allows evil because it is only through pain and suffering that human souls can be developed and perfected. Make a note about how both the soul-deciding defence and the soul-making defence to the problem of evil work.

How the Problem of Evil Works	
Soul-Deciding Defence	Soul-Making Defence

3. **Why** is the problem of evil important?

How people respond to the problem of evil has a significant effect on whether they subscribe to atheism, agnosticism or theism. For example, Christians who accept the soul-deciding defence maintain their faith by insisting that the God-given gift of free will gives rise to evil as an unavoidable byproduct, whilst Christians who accept the soul-making defence claim pain and suffering can develop human souls. However, for some people, the problem presented by the existence of evil is just too much. Make a note about why the problem of evil is important.

Why the Problem of Evil Is Important

Trinity

1. **What** is the Trinity?
2. **How** does the Trinity work?
3. **Why** is the Trinity important?

1. **What** is the Trinity?

The doctrine of the Trinity is a central Christian teaching about the nature of God that states he is like a shamrock, which is a species of clover almost entirely comprised of three distinct leaves. Write a definition for "Trinity" and make a note about the three persons who form the Trinity.

Trinity		

Trinity		
God the Father	God the Son	God the Holy Spirit

2. **How** does the Trinity work?

The doctrine of the Trinity is never explicitly articulated in the New Testament; however, between 100-400, it became a central teaching that almost all Christians accept today. Make a note about how the doctrine of the Trinity became official teaching and about the Bible passages from which it was developed.

How the Trinity Works

How the Trinity Works		
Pauline Epistles	Gospel of Matthew	Gospel of John

In 325, the First Council of Nicaea officially affirmed belief in one God (the Father), one Lord (the Son) and the Holy Spirit; a development accompanied by the creation of the Apostles' Creed. Make a note about how the Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed created a systematic doctrine of the Trinity.

How the Trinity Works	
Nicene Creed	Apostles' Creed

3. **Why** is the Trinity important?

Most Christians argue that belief in the doctrine of the Trinity is compulsory. Although some Christians reject the existence of the Trinity, they are outside the mainstream. For Catholics and Orthodox Christians, subscription to the doctrine of the Trinity is essential; likewise, the vast majority of Protestant Christians accept the belief that God is one in three persons. Beyond this, the Trinity is important because it allows Christians to make sense of the sometimes contradictory nature of God. Make a note about why the Trinity is important.

Why the Trinity Is Important

Creation

1. **What** is the story of creation?
2. **How** does the story of creation work?
3. **Why** is the story of creation important?

1. **What** is the story of creation?

The story of creation is all about the origins of the universe and life on Earth. Christians believe that important details about creation are revealed in the New Testament, in the Gospel of John, which go beyond the information provided in Genesis. Write a definition for "creation" and make a note about what Genesis and John reveal about it.

Creation

Story of Creation	
Genesis	John

2. **How** does the story of creation work?

For Christians, the story of creation works by demonstrating that all three persons of God were present and active in the process of bringing the universe into being; God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in Genesis, and God the Son (or the Word of God) in John. Write a definition for "Word of God".

Word of God

Genesis 1:1 reveals God the Father at work during creation; John 1:1-3 introduces the role of God the Son in creation with the words, "In the beginning was the Word"; and God the Holy Spirit may be identifiable in the opening verses of the Bible. Make a note about how the Bible suggests each person of the Trinity was involved in creation.

How the Story of Creation Works		
God the Father	God the Son	God the Holy Spirit

3. **Why** is the story of creation important?

The story of creation is important because it forms a major faultline in Christianity: did God bring the universe into being precisely as described in Genesis 1, or is this passage merely a metaphor for a process that looked radically different? Make a note of three reasons why the story of creation is important.

Why the Story of Creation Is Important	
1	
2	
3	

On the subject of salvation, Paul the Apostle claimed that being saved from the consequence of sin (or death) is the free gift of God. However, whilst this idea is repeated throughout the letters of Paul the Apostle, it appears at odds with some of the things that Jesus said according to the authors of the gospels, which imply that salvation may also require good deeds or right action. Make a note about how different passages from the Bible explain the role of grace in salvation and the role of law (i.e. good works) in salvation.

How Salvation Works	
Role of Grace	Role of Law

3. **Why** are sin and salvation important?

There is one principal reason why sin and salvation are important: the way Christians make sense of these ideas influences what they believe will happen to them in the afterlife. Take the Last Judgement, for instance: who will get into heaven and who will end up in hell? Some Christians believe everyone who accepts God's grace will ascend to paradise. Some argue that people must be good to receive this gift, but others (i.e. universalists) think it is available to anyone regardless of their behaviour. Make a note of three reasons why sin and salvation are important.

Why Sin and Salvation Are Important	
1	
2	
3	

Afterlife

1. **What** is the afterlife?
2. **How** does the afterlife work?
3. **Why** is the afterlife important?

1. **What** is the afterlife?

The afterlife can be defined as a state that exists after death and that human beings experience when they die (if they can experience anything at all). For Christians, there are three principal destinations for people at the end of their lives. All Christians agree on the existence of heaven. Other Christians, most famously Catholics, believe in the existence of purgatory; and, whilst purgatory might not be as pleasant as heaven, it is certainly not as nasty as the third and final potential destination, hell. Write definitions for "afterlife", "heaven", "purgatory", and "hell".

Afterlife	Heaven
Purgatory	Hell

2. **How** does the afterlife work?

What are the rules of the afterlife for Christians, and what can they expect if their beliefs are correct? First, many believe the afterlife will come shortly after Jesus's return and the Last Judgement. It is after this event that the saved are going to ascend to heaven, and the condemned are going to descend to hell. According to the gospels, these places are very real. Write a definition for "judgement" and explain how this concept is related to the Christian belief in the Last Judgement.

Judgement

First, Christians believe that all humanity will be resurrected immediately before the Last Judgement at the general resurrection; second, they believe that Jesus will return to judge everyone at this final event. According to the Gospel of Matthew, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another." Make a note about how Christians believe the general resurrection and Last Judgement are connected to the afterlife.

How the Afterlife Works

General Resurrection

Last Judgement

3. **Why** is the afterlife important?

One primary reason the afterlife is so important is that Christian beliefs regarding it are bound up with teachings about the Last Judgement, which is only sometimes evident in presentations about the central beliefs and teachings of Christianity. Officially, all Christians believe that the dead will rise from their graves or tombs at some point in the future, as has been depicted in Christian art for centuries. At that time, the living and the resurrected will have their bodies transformed, and then all will be judged by Jesus. Make a note of three reasons why the afterlife is important.

Why the Afterlife Is Important

1

2

3

1. **Who** was Jesus, and what are the key moments of his life?
2. **How** do the key moments of Jesus's life work?
3. **Why** are the key moments of Jesus's life important?

1. **Who** was Jesus, and what are the critical moments of his life?

Little is known definitively about Jesus's early life; however, he was almost certainly baptised in the River Jordan by John the Baptist around 29 CE. This event launched a period of travelling and teaching that lasted between one and three years. Finally, scholars agree that the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, ordered Jesus's execution by crucifixion sometime around 30 CE. Make a note about who Jesus was and the key moments of his life.

Who Jesus Was and What the Key Moments of His Life Are

For Christians, what makes the key moments of Jesus's life important is that they point towards Jesus's identity as messiah (a title that describes Jesus's role as the saviour of humanity prophesied in the Old Testament), as lord (a title that describes Jesus's role as a master over others and may imply his divinity), and as saviour. Write definitions for "messiah", "lord", and "saviour".

Messiah

Lord

Saviour

2. **How** do the key moments of Jesus's life work?

What does the ministry of Jesus reveal for Christians if the gospel narratives are taken at face value? To answer this question, it is best to divide the events of Jesus's ministry into two significant and essential categories: Jesus's miracles and Jesus's teachings. Make a note about how these categories reveal Jesus's identity for Christians.

How the Key Moments of Jesus's Life Work	
Miracles	Teachings

Jesus claimed that agape was at the heart of God's laws and Jewish teachings, which is a form of selfless, unconditional love that extends to all human beings. This may show Jesus as divine, for who has the authority to reinterpret the divine commandments except God himself? Write a definition for "agape".

Agape

3. **Why** are the key moments of Jesus's life important?

The miracles of Jesus have immense theological significance (i.e. they are essential for understanding the nature of God the Son), and the teachings of Jesus have tremendous ethical significance. Make a note about why the key moments of Jesus's life are important.

Why the Key Moments of Jesus's Life Are Important

Incarnation of Jesus

1. **What** is the incarnation of Jesus?
2. **How** does the incarnation of Jesus work?
3. **Why** is the incarnation of Jesus important?

1. **What** is the incarnation of Jesus?

The incarnation is the event at which God became flesh and took human form in the person of Jesus. It comes from a Latin word that means to become flesh or be in-fleshed; the famous Christmas carol, Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, refers to the incarnation involving God being "veiled in the flesh". Write a definition for "incarnation".

Incarnation

The biblical passages in which the incarnation is described include the nativity of Jesus, as recounted in the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and the opening verses of the Gospel of John, which is known as the prologue. Make a note about what the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of John record about the incarnation of Jesus.

What the Incarnation of Jesus Is	
Luke	John

2. **How** does the incarnation of Jesus work?

What is the incarnation about, and how do Christians understand it? Although many things go on across the accounts of the incarnation, their primary function is to demonstrate Jesus's identity. The incarnation stories found in the nativity accounts from Matthew and Luke's gospels and the prologue to the Gospel of John tell Christians essential things about Jesus's nature. Principally, the nativity stories emphasise Jesus's messiahship whilst, in the prologue, the stress is on Jesus's divinity. For example, the nativity story in the Gospel of Luke implies Jesus's messiahship by showing the reader how Jesus fulfils messianic expectations. Make a note about how the Gospel of Luke works to demonstrate Jesus's messiahship and how the Gospel of John works to demonstrate Jesus's divinity.

How the Incarnation of Jesus Works

Luke

John

3. **Why** is the incarnation of Jesus important?

The belief that Jesus was God the Son, as well as the messiah, may have been behind the charges of blasphemy that he faced during his ministry and at his trial before the Jewish authorities immediately before his death. Write a definition for "blasphemy".

Blasphemy

The nativity stories in the gospels of Matthew and Luke show that Jesus fulfils expectations about the messiah whilst the prologue in the Gospel of John confirms Jesus's divinity (the Word of God was God and became human). Make a note about why the incarnation is important.

Why the Incarnation of Jesus Is Important

Crucifixion of Jesus

1. **What** is the crucifixion of Jesus?
2. **How** does the crucifixion of Jesus work?
3. **Why** is the crucifixion of Jesus important?

1. **What** is the crucifixion of Jesus?

The crucifixion is the event at which Jesus was executed. Needless to say, this was more than a method of execution, it was an appalling form of punishment designed to torture the victim, publicly humiliate them and subsequently deter others from committing similar crimes. Typically, crucifixion was reserved for people who had committed crimes against the Roman Empire (e.g. attempted revolutionaries). Write a definition for "crucifixion".

Crucifixion

The crucifixion and the events that triggered it took place over two days: Thursday and Friday. Jesus had his last meal with the disciples after sunset on Thursday and was betrayed by Judas before being arrested shortly after that. Then, after sunrise, Jesus was tried by the Roman prefect, Pontius Pilate, sentenced to death and crucified. Make a note about what happened on the Thursday before Jesus's crucifixion and the Friday of his crucifixion.

Timeline of the Crucifixion of Jesus	
Thursday	Friday

2. **How** does the crucifixion of Jesus work?

What do Christians believe happened at the crucifixion of Jesus beyond his physical death, and what purpose did his execution serve? In other words, what was accomplished by Jesus's death? To answer these questions, it is essential to consider the events immediately before the crucifixion as well as the crucifixion itself. Chief among these is the Last Supper, Jesus's final meal with his disciples before his arrest, trial and execution. Make a note about how the Last Supper and crucifixion reveal important things about Jesus's identity for Christians.

How the Crucifixion of Jesus Works

Last Supper

Crucifixion

3. **Why** is the crucifixion of Jesus important?

Why is Jesus's death so significant to Christians? First, it is the moment Christians believe Jesus sacrificed himself so that God's relationship with humanity could be restored. As such, it is the focus of Christian worship at Easter and Holy Communion. Christians believe that Jesus gave his body and blood so they would not have to pay the price of eternal death for their sins; instead, thanks to Jesus's sacrifice, they will be resurrected at the Last Judgement and ascend into heaven. Make a note about why the crucifixion is important.

Why the Crucifixion of Jesus Is Important

Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus

1. **What** are the resurrection and ascension of Jesus?
2. **How** do the resurrection and ascension of Jesus work?
3. **Why** are the resurrection and ascension of Jesus important?

1. **What** are the resurrection and ascension of Jesus?

Although there is widespread agreement among Christians and non-Christians that Jesus died by crucifixion, atheists and followers of other religions reject the belief that he was raised from the dead and, after that, ascended into heaven. Notwithstanding this, historians concede that something happened: some of his followers had experiences that convinced them of the resurrection. Write definitions for "resurrection", and "ascension".

Resurrection

Ascension

2. **How** do the resurrection and ascension of Jesus work?

The first thing to note is that Christians believe that Jesus genuinely returned from the grave. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-6, Paul the Apostle writes, "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures and... he was buried and... he was raised on the third day". Make a note about how different passages from the Bible explain the resurrection.

How the Resurrection of Jesus Works

Acts of the Apostles, which is traditionally attributed to the author of Luke's Gospel and can loosely be described as a gospel of the disciples, tells readers that Jesus ascended physically into heaven and simultaneously reinforces the belief that Jesus will return. Make a note about how different passages from the Bible explain the ascension.

How the Ascension of Jesus Works

3. **Why** are the resurrection and ascension of Jesus important?

The resurrection and ascension are both of tremendous theological significance. In other words, they inform the Christian view about what God is like. For Christians, the resurrection confirms that Jesus is God the Son: he is the second person of the Trinity, responsible for saving humanity from the consequences of sin. Likewise, it is proof that Jesus's death on the cross restored the relationship between God and humanity. Make a note of why the resurrection and ascension of Jesus are important.

Why the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Are Important

Resurrection	Ascension

Jesus and Salvation

1. **What** is the role of Jesus in salvation?
2. **How** does the role of Jesus in salvation work?
3. **Why** is the role of Jesus in salvation important?

1. **What** is the role of Jesus in salvation?

Jesus's role in salvation is to facilitate atonement, which is the process by which the relationship between God and human beings is restored. For Christians, Jesus's sacrifice on the cross makes forgiveness possible, which, in this case, refers to being pardoned by God for sinful behaviour. Write definitions for "atonement", and "forgiveness".

Atonement

Forgiveness

Debate rages about precisely how atonement happens; in other words, there is much disagreement over the mechanics. Crudely put, Christians agree that the crucifixion is something that produces human salvation but disagree about how exactly it works. Make a note about three different Christian theories.

What the Role of Jesus in Salvation Is

Ransom Theory

Satisfaction Theory

Scapegoat Theory

2. **How** does the role of Jesus in salvation work?

In the most famous formulation of ransom theory, proponents argue that Adam and Eve sold humanity into bondage to Satan and eternal death by sinning in the Garden of Eden. In order to save humanity from Satan, God the Father gave his son, Jesus, as a ransom payment. A more popular hypothesis since the first half of the second millennium is satisfaction theory. According to its proponents, God requires satisfaction for human disobedience, which is why the just punishment he metes out for it is death. Make a note about how ransom theory and satisfaction theory work.

How the Role of Jesus in Salvation Works	
Ransom Theory	Satisfaction Theory

3. **Why** is the role of Jesus in salvation important?

How Christians conceive of Jesus's role in salvation reveals a lot about the nature of God the Father. They learn from his apparent desire to absolve humanity from the consequences of sin by sacrificing his only son that he is both benevolent and forgiving. Likewise, Christians infer that God the Father wants a personal relationship with them like the one he had with Adam and Eve. Christians claim that God wants to restore this relationship and that his sacrifice of Jesus demonstrates how important it is. Make a note about why the the role of Jesus in salvation is important.

Why the Role of Jesus in Salvation Is Important

MATTHEW 5

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He healed them. ²⁵ Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

The Sermon on the Mount; The Beatitudes

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. **2** And He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

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 gentle, for they will inherit the earth.
6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
10 "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

Disciples and the World

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by people.