

Christianity Simplified

A Catechetical Summary of the Christian Faith

Article Covenant and Doctrine Christmas tract, Christ Church, Noida

Luke 2:14

John 3:16-17

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14, King James Version).

This short tract is offered for the glory of God, with the sincere prayer that you may experience the peace of God, the peace that surpasses all understanding, throughout your life.

Who is a Christian?

A Christian is not the follower of a religion, but rather a follower of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, who accepts his own sinfulness in complete humility and believes in the power of Christ to save him. A Christian is a person who has put faith and trust in the person and work of Jesus Christ, in His sacrificial death on the Cross as payment for our sins, and in His resurrection, His rising from death, on the third day. The matter does not end there; a true Christian is one who has internalised the teachings of Jesus Christ, changing his or her lifestyle to that of Jesus, and living as a reflection of Him in thought, word, and deed.

Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus, also referred to as Jesus of Nazareth, after the place where He was brought up, as Jesus Christ, or as Messiah, the Saviour who was expected to come into the world to liberate humanity from the bondage of sin, is the central figure of Christianity, whom the teachings of most Christian denominations hold to be the Son of God. Some further facts about Jesus Christ: virtually all modern scholars of antiquity agree that Jesus existed historically some two thousand years ago, and is not a figment of the imagination, nor a character out of a mythological story. Biblical evidence tells us that Jesus Christ existed in eternity past, and was the Creator of everything that was created. Being of the same substance and mind as the one and only God, Jesus is God incarnate. At the time He walked this earth, He had the unique attribute of being one hundred per cent human and one hundred per cent God, a mathematical improbability; but it is true, for everything is possible with God.

Why Did Jesus Come Into This World?

To answer this question, we must go back to the beginning of time. God existed always, before time and history began. When He created human beings, unlike the rest of His creation, He allowed them to use their own wisdom and free will, because God did not want us to be like machines, or robots. God made it clear that if humans chose to be in relationship with Him, in obedience, all would be well with them; but

if they chose to go their own way, forgetting God, they would face every form of affliction, and a death for eternity, a death from which there is no release.

From that time on, humanity fell for every form of temptation — sin is symbolised as Satan, and it is therefore commonly said that Satan tempts us, for God would never tempt us — and progressively became more and more sinful. When people realised their folly, they would seek God time and again, but would soon backslide into sin, and forget Him once more.

God had to do something to pull humanity out of its sinful life, and to re-establish the relationship between Himself and the human race. Therefore, God incarnated in the Person of Jesus Christ, to take on all our sins and die on the Cross, to release us from them. Jesus personified God, and in Him we come to understand the true nature of God; sinless, He died for our sins, and redeemed us.

How Did God Incarnate as Jesus Christ?

A little over two thousand years ago, Jesus was conceived in the womb of His mother, Mary, who was a virgin, through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, without the agency of a human father, and was born while Mary remained a virgin. Because of this unique birth, Jesus came to be known as the Son of God. The Lord Jesus Christ, therefore, is not a human being in whom God later infused some of His own qualities; rather, He is actually God, who took on human form.

Christians commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ, which brought the good news of the saving grace of God to sinning humanity, on Christmas Day.

What Did Jesus Christ Do on Earth?

He came to serve the lowly and the poor, and treated everyone equally, regardless of their social or economic standing.

According to God's law, a sinner was to be punished, and deserved death. The Lord Jesus Christ, however, took upon Himself the punishment we so richly deserved, accepting the most brutal death known on earth in those days, that of the Cross, and declared us justified, and free from sin, before God.

Anyone who had even a passing acquaintance with Jesus would readily accept that He was an excellent teacher; people find it harder to accept that He is God the Son, or the Son of God, if one prefers that title. Jesus began His ministry, His work on earth, when He was about thirty years old, and His work lasted about three years.

Being God incarnate, His primary task was to enlighten people about God's will for them, to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God, and to invite people to be part of that Kingdom. He presented the true nature of God to us through His sinless life, and through a radical value system of equality, tolerance, peace, forgiveness, and, above all, love. He impressed upon all who heard Him that there is no wealth a person may possess greater than the benevolence, grace, and love of God, and He proved to the world how a person may be wealthy, being blessed by God, while remaining poor in worldly possessions.

What Do Christians Believe?

Here is an important quotation from the Holy Bible, which puts the Christian belief in a nutshell: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16-17, King James Version).

Christians believe that Christianity is not a religion, but a faith: faith in the living God, which prompts us to be responsible towards His creation. Christians believe in serving God through His creation, by taking care of the needy, the marginalised, and the oppressed. Christians believe that the love of God is universal, and is for all, regardless of caste, colour, religion, or nationality; Christians believe in the universal brotherhood of humankind. The Christian faith is based on the Word of God, found in the Holy Bible. A key doctrine of Christianity is the inerrancy of Scripture, meaning that the Bible, in its original, handwritten state, is without error, because the Bible is the Word of God, written as inspired by God. We believe that God incarnated in the Person of Jesus Christ, and was born of the Virgin Mary; that He was begotten by God, and not made. We believe that Jesus Christ was one hundred per cent human and one hundred per cent divine. We believe that Jesus Christ died a terrible death on the Cross for no sin that He had committed, but that, though sinless, He bore the sins of all humanity as the ultimate sacrifice; through the blood He shed, all human beings are cleansed of their sins. We believe that Jesus Christ rose in resurrection on the third day after His death, thereby conquering Satan and sin, and proving that all believers will one day be resurrected from physical death. We believe that all who receive Jesus Christ will no longer suffer eternal death, but will have eternal life in the presence of Jesus Christ. We believe in the Holy Spirit of God, Who indwells all believers, and Who is our Counsellor. We believe in the resurrection of all believers in Christ, and in a blissful and glorious life for ever in the presence of Jesus Christ. We believe that, at the end of time, Jesus Christ will come again, to take us to His new creation, His Kingdom.

This tract has attempted to explain, in simple terms, the basics of Christianity. For more information, you are welcome to speak to the Pastor, or to any of the Elders of our church.

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