

What is Christianity?

Christianity is a way of life, a religion based on the birth, life, sacrificial death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

God created a beautiful world with no pollution, no sin and no death. He placed our ancestors, Adam and Eve, in a garden with good fruit to eat and pleasant work to do taking care of the garden. They even had access to the tree of life (immortality). But they wanted to be wise like God, so they chose to disobey God, to sin, and brought down the curse of death on all mankind.

God, is so holy that he cannot stand sin but He loves us so much that he paid the penalty for our sin by sending his son, Jesus, to live as a human and to die for our sin. Jesus rose from the dead overcoming sin and death for all of us. Then Jesus ascended to Heaven to be with God and he is coming back to reward us and to judge each one of us.

All of us humans are sinners, but Christians are forgiven sinners. We look forward to an eternal home with God in a wonderful place called heaven. Christianity is not foolishness or a lie promulgated on the illiterate and uneducated. It is a well documented fact with a great deal of confirming evidence. There are many many reasons to believe in Christianity, two of the strongest reasons are explained in this FAQ and a third in FAQ 2.

The Christian worldview is based on the all powerful, all wise, ever present God who loves all mankind, we are his children. He placed us in this world to glorify him, to take care of the world for him and to share a wonderful eternal future with him. He loves us so much that he gave us the choice to be with him or not. The choice is up to us. He gave us a book, an operator's manual, for life in the world. We call this book the Bible and regard it as the word of God. An explanation of why we believe this is included as the last section of this FAQ.

God carefully designed this world complex with intelligence far beyond our comprehension. Consider the complexity of the DNA molecule which defines genetic structure. There are several complex organisms such as the bombardier beetle whose genetic characteristics cannot have developed sequentially, but must have come into existence at the same time. To say that all DNA evolved by "random chance" requires more faith than to just simply conclude that "God did it". We are the product of an intelligent designer, God, not random chance.

Genesis 1:1-4 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty. Darkness was on the surface of the deep. God's Spirit was hovering over the surface of the waters. God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw the light, and saw that it was good. God divided the light from the darkness.

Many years later, God told a man named Abraham to leave his homeland and take his family

and go to a land he would show him. Abraham did as God said and was blessed with the gift of a son in his old age (100 years). When asked by God, Abraham was willing to offer his son to prove his devotion, but God provided a ram instead. Many years later God fulfilled his plan to redeem mankind by offering his son to die in our place.

God blessed Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites, but they were rebellious and chose to worship idols instead of God. He sent prophets who warned them to repent, but they refused to listen and so were defeated and killed or carried off to Babylon.

Isaiah 59:1-3 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it can't save; neither his ear heavy, that it can't hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness.

The sins of the Israelites kept their prayers from getting through to God. Today, our sins can do the same thing to our prayers. God loves us, but he is holy. Our sins are like smoke in his nostrils. God's justice and his holiness demand that he swat us like flies, but his love yearns to forgive us. He cares so much for us that he devised a plan to save us, a costly plan. He sent his son, Christ, to pay the penalty for our sins by dying for those who believe in him.

John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him.

Instead of implementing his plan instantaneously, God did it over hundreds and thousands of years and gave his servants, the prophets, many predictions of what would happen in their future. These prophecies are scattered throughout the Old Testament. Christianity is not an illogical faith, but rather one based on very good evidence not only on the Bible but on archaeology and history, (check it out). Christ's fulfilling the prophecies about him is one of the main reasons to believe in him.

God's plan to pay for our sins (our redemption) was a strange idea, a suffering servant who would be despised and rejected by mankind. When Christ came into this world, he was not born in a king's palace, but in a stable with a manger for a cradle. The Jewish people misunderstood the prophecies. They expected a messiah who would be a military leader and defeat all their enemies and make them the dominant nation in the world as they had been at the time of Solomon. Here is one of the most famous prophecies, written hundreds of years before Christ was born:

Isaiah 53:2-6 For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no good looks or majesty. When we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of suffering, and acquainted with disease. He was despised as one from whom men hide their face; and we didn't respect him. Surely he has borne our sickness, and carried our suffering; yet we

considered him plagued, struck by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Not only are these verses included in the Bible, but they have been confirmed by the Dead Sea Scrolls which include a copy of the whole book of Isaiah written many years before Christ was born. About 30 years after his birth, Christ began his public ministry preaching that the kingdom of God was near, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and helping the poor. He spoke to the people in parables and only explained what the parables meant to his disciples, so to most of the people he seemed crazy. Just as Isaiah had prophesied, Christ was despised and rejected by men. He refused to follow the Pharisee's carefully developed rules and traditions, which made the Pharisees hate him. He offended all the powers that be in Judea at that time. So they arrested him, arranged a kangaroo court and railroaded him to be crucified. When he was arrested all of his followers ran off. Even Peter, whom he had named the rock, denied him. The Roman governor, Pilate, tried to free him by having Jesus scourged (brutally beaten) to satisfy the Jews. Scourging would make the victims almost unrecognizable. But that wasn't enough to satisfy the mob. They threatened a civil disturbance and threatened to complain to Caesar, so Pilate reluctantly gave in and had Jesus crucified. The Roman soldiers pierced the side of this suffering and cruelly beaten man, scourged till he was nearly unrecognizable; a man who was pierced for our transgressions and who bore our punishment; a man who was the Son of God. This is just one of many prophecies that Christ fulfilled, there isn't time to cover all of them here.

A second reason to believe in Christianity is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Either it's true or it's false. Consider the evidence. Christ's disciples ran off when he was arrested; a fearful Peter denied knowing him; later they were hiding in an upper room terrified by their fear of the Romans. But then a few days later, after they saw and spoke with the risen Christ, we see these same timid souls standing up to the government saying that "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 4:12) and rejoicing that they were beaten for the name of Christ. What would it take to take a bunch of trembling fearful men to suddenly become brave. A miracle! All but one of the apostles died as martyrs for the Christian faith, only John lived to reach old age. These men were in a position to know if the resurrection was faked. But they clearly believed it, believed strongly enough to suffer and die for their belief. People don't endure persecution and die for a lie. The resurrection is one of the strongest evidences for Christianity.

Christians not only believe in a creator, God, who gave his son, Jesus, to die for our sins; we believe in a final day of judgment where the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished. Paul told the pagan Athenians about God, who created the world and who has appointed a day of judgment so that everyone needs to repent. Note that he used the resurrection as his final proof.

Acts 17:26-31 He made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the surface of the earth, having determined appointed seasons, and the boundaries of their dwellings,

that they should seek the Lord, if perhaps they might reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.. Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, or silver, or stone, engraved by art and design of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked. But now he commands that all people everywhere should repent, because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained; of which he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead.

Christians believe in a final day of judgment, but even though we have committed bad sins, terrible sins, we can become children of God and escape the judgment. Peter told the very ones who had killed Christ that they could be forgiven of their sins, if they would "repent and be baptized". We all need to do this. Notice that we Gentiles are the ones "far off" about which Peter spoke.

Acts 2:38-39 Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are far off, even as many as the Lord our God will call to himself'.

Once we have faith and become children of God, we need to remain faithful to him and to keep his commandments. This will be better explained in FAQ 2 on "Can I be Saved?". Peter and Paul and the other Christians we read about in the New Testament fulfilled Christ's parting command to preach and teach the gospel all over the world.

Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus came to them and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen.

For those who like their information really condensed, Paul gives us a summary of the basic facts of the gospel in the following verses:

1 Corinthians 15:1-5 Now I declare to you, brothers, the Good News which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you also stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold firmly the word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

WHY DO CHRISTIANS BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD?

The Old Testament Scripture was written for our good.

Romans 15:4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that through patience and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Christ considered the Old Testament to be Scripture, the Word of God.. When he said the following verse the New Testament had not yet been written.

Matthew 26:52-54 Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place, for all those who take the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I couldn't ask my Father, and he would even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so?'

When he was getting the disciples ready for his coming crucifixion, Christ promised to send the Spirit of Truth to them.

John 14:15-18 If you love me, keep my commandments. I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, that he may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world can't receive; for it doesn't see him, neither knows him. You know him, for he lives with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.

Since they didn't have recorders in those days, how could they correctly remember what Jesus had said? The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, would teach them all things and remind them of what Jesus had said to them.

John 14:25-26 I have said these things to you, while still living with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and will remind you of all that I said to you.

In Acts 2 after the Day of Pentecost when they received the Holy Spirit, it is clear that the apostles were teaching the church. That's what Jesus said the Holy Spirit would enable them to do.

Acts 2:41-42 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized. There were added that day about three thousand souls. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and prayer.

The apostle Paul says that the Scriptures can equip us to teach, reprove, correct and instruct in righteousness, i.e. equip us for every good work. Clearly he was speaking about the Old Testament and the apostles writings which became the New Testament.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 Every Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The writings of Paul, the last of the apostles, are Scripture. Peter, one of the foremost apostles speaking with the guidance of the Holy Spirit says that Paul's writings are Scripture.

2 Peter 3:15-16 Regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote to you; as also in all of his letters, speaking in them of these things. In those, there are some things that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unsettled twist, as they also do to the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

The preceding verses indicate why Christians believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, both the Old and New Testaments. These verses are but the tip of the iceberg, there are many books written about the authenticity of the Scriptures and about the Council of Nicea where the church leaders selected the books to go in the New Testament from the ones then commonly accepted as scripture and rejected some spurious books. Copies of all of the New Testament books exist in the original Greek from the second and third century and the few differences that have been found so far as I know do not have any effect on the primary doctrines of the church.

Obviously, an all-powerful all-wise God is quite capable of preserving the veracity and accuracy of his Word over the nearly two thousand years since the New Testament was written.

SUMMARY

We have good reason to believe that Christ is the Son of God, that he lived, preached, was crucified, died, rose from the dead, gave his disciples the mission to make disciples of all men and he is coming again to judge the world. We believe that He has given us a manual for our salvation and for subsequent holy living called the Bible.

Hopefully after reading this you understand the fundamental points of Christianity. FAQ 2 "Can I Be Saved?" will cover what Christ expects us to do, the wonderful benefits he has provided for us and will offer a third compelling reason to believe in Him.

Where did this world come from. Why am I here. Where am I going. Your answer to these questions will determine the choices you make. The choices you make determine your life. Belief in God is a choice. Can you honestly say that you don't believe in God. Not if you haven't investigated the evidence instead of ignoring it. What will you do?

Make God your choice!

[Selector](#)

[Home](#)