

# Overview of Christianity

## Key Person, Date, Location

Jesus Christ Founded about AD 30–33, in the Judean province of Palestine (Israel today), under the Roman Empire Followers of Jesus Christ became known as Christians.

## Key Writings

The Bible, written originally in Hebrew and Aramaic (Old Testament), and Greek (New Testament).

## Who Is God?

God is triune in nature—one God in three persons, not three gods: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Often the title “God” designates the first person, God the Father. God is a spiritual being without a physical body. God is personal and involved with people. God created the universe out of nothing. God is eternal, changeless, holy, loving, and perfect.

## Who Is Jesus?

Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity. As God, Jesus has always existed and was never created. Jesus is fully God and fully man—the two natures joined, not mixed. As the second person of the Trinity, Jesus is coequal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. In becoming a man, Jesus was begotten through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus is the only way to the Father, salvation, and eternal life. Jesus died on a cross according to God’s plan, as the full sacrifice and payment for our sins. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, spiritually and physically immortal. For the next 40 days, Jesus was seen by more than 500 eyewitnesses. Jesus’ wounds were touched and he ate meals. Jesus physically ascended to heaven. Jesus will come again visibly and physically at the end of the world to establish God’s kingdom and judge the world.

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## Who Is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is a person, not a force or energy. The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of Christians. The Holy Spirit comforts, grieves, reproves, convicts, guides, and teaches. The Holy Spirit is not the Father, nor is he the Son, Jesus Christ.

## How to Be Saved

Salvation is by God's grace, not by an individual's good works. Salvation must be received by faith. People must believe in their hearts that Jesus died for their sins and physically rose again, which is the assurance of forgiveness and resurrection of the body. This is God's loving plan to forgive sinful people.

## What Happens After Death?

Believers go to be with Jesus. After death, all people await the final judgment. Both saved and lost people will be resurrected. Those who are saved will live with Jesus in heaven. Those who are lost will suffer torment of eternal separation from God (hell). Jesus' bodily resurrection guarantees believers that they, too, will be resurrected and receive new immortal bodies.

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## Other Facts, Beliefs, or Practices

- Group worship, usually in churches.
- No secret rites.
- Baptism and Lord's Supper (Communion).
- Active voluntary missionary efforts.
- Aid to those in need: the poor, widows, orphans, and downtrodden.
- Christians believe that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah promised to Israel in the Old Testament.
- Jesus said his followers would be known by their love for one another.