

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

The Person of Christ

JESUS IS GOD

1. He is called God in the scriptures. See Isaiah 9:6 and John 1:1, 14, 29, 30, 20:28.
2. He is called the names and titles of God:
 - King of Israel (Isaiah 43:15; Matthew 21:4-5; Revelation 17:14)
 - Judge (Psalm 50:6; John 5:22-30)
 - The Rock (Deuteronomy 32:3-4; 1 Corinthians 10:4)
 - The Shepherd (Psalm 23:1; Hebrews 13:20)
 - The first and the last (Isaiah 44:6; Revelation 1:8)
 - The Son of God (John 10: 36)
 - Lord (Matthew 12:8; Exodus 31:13, 17)
 - Christ (John 1:17; Acts 4:10)
 - Savior (Isaiah 43:11; Ephesians 5:23)
 - Son of Man (Daniel 7:13; Matthew 9:6)
3. Jesus is worshipped. (Matthew 2:2, 11; 14:33; Revelation 5:13, 14)
4. Jesus claimed to be God. (John 5:18, 8:58, 10:30)

JESUS IS MAN

1. He is called a man. (Matthew 11:19, John 4:29)
2. He had human characteristics. (Luke 2:40, 52; John 4:7; Mark 4:38)
3. Jesus had a human body and spirit. (Matthew 26:37-38, Philippians 2:7-8, Luke 24:39)
4. Jesus is called the descendant of David. (Matthew 1:1-16, Luke 3:23-38)
5. Jesus is called the seed of Abraham. (Galatians 3:16)
6. Jesus is both completely man and completely God (John 1:14, Colossians 1:19, 2:9)
7. Jesus is equal with God. (Philippians 2:5-11)
8. Jesus the only mediator between God and humanity. (1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 1:3; 2:17; 7:26-27; 9:12,14)

The Work of Christ

Jesus came to our world to fulfill God's plan: he offered himself as a sacrifice to save us from the eternal punishment we deserve for our sins. (Romans 3:24-26, 1 Peter 2:24)

JESUS IS GOD'S LAMB

Israelites of the Old Testament times saw the need for sacrifice in events such as the Passover (Exodus 12:3-4) and the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:1-34). Animals were sacrificed on a regular basis as well due to the perpetual nature of sin.

In the Old Testament society, animals were sacrificed in place of sinful individuals, showing that sin deserves death (Leviticus 17:11), but God would accept a substitute.

When Jesus shed his blood at the cross, he was the perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity (Hebrews 9:11-14). Sacrifices as prescribed in the laws that Moses shared, found in books such as Leviticus, are no longer necessary (Hebrews 10:11-18).

JESUS IS OUR PROPITIATION

Propitiation is “the turning away of wrath”.

To understand this concept, we have to recall what we know about the nature of God.

God is Holy.

- *“Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: ‘Be holy because, I, the Lord your God, am holy.’”* (Leviticus 19:2 NIV)
- *“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”* (Revelation 4:8b NIV)

Therefore, God responds to rebellion with wrath.

- *“Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.”* (Deuteronomy 4:23-24 NIV)
- *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”* (Romans 1:18 NASB)

God is Love.

- *“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”* (1 John 4:16 NIV)

Therefore, God’s desire is bring mercy and forgiveness to us.

- *“And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...’”* (Exodus 34:6-7a NIV)

Jesus’ death on the cross fulfills both aspects of God’s nature: his love and his justice.

- *“But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished-- he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”* (Romans 3:21-26 NIV)

God pours out his wrath on Jesus – not us!

Jesus conquered death.

The bodily resurrection of Jesus was and is the most important event to take place in the history of the world.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Paul, an early missionary in the church, outlines the facts of Jesus’ resurrection:

“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: 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 Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.” (1 Corinthians 15:1-8 NIV)

See also the Gospel accounts found in Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-10; John 20:1-9.

Paul explains that Jesus' resurrection is essential to the Christian faith:

"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men." (1 Corinthians 15:14-19 NIV)

"...If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'" (1 Corinthians 15:32b NIV)

Since Jesus has risen from the dead, we can join the apostle Peter in saying:

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith--of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire--may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:3-9 NIV)

The resurrected Jesus ascended into Heaven. (Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11)

Since Jesus ascended into Heaven:

1. All believers will ascend to Heaven at his second coming (1 Corinthians 15:20).
2. Jesus continues his work in Heaven (Hebrews 9:11-12 and Romans 8:34).
3. When he ascended, the Holy Spirit was sent to dwell in the hearts of believers and empower the church (John 7:39 and Ephesians 4:7-12).