

**Sara & Megan's**  
**The Study of World Religions NTC**



### **Announcements:**

- You must know the sacraments on the handout. However, the Chart of Major Christian Groups is for your knowledge only.

### **Christianity:**

Christ/Messiah- Literally means "anointed one." The messiah is an eschatological prophet, which means in this person's life the end of history will be captured.

Messianic Secret- Subversion of the Jewish philosophy of a messiah. The Jewish expectation of a messiah was someone that would bring the Promised Land back under the Jewish rule. However, when Christians say that Jesus was a messiah, they mean it in a different sense. They do not mean that he is a political conqueror, but rather he is a figure that demonstrates a new way of life. The Christian expectation of a messiah is someone that will go to the cross and die versus the Jewish messiah that will lead the people back to the Promised Land.

Sin- Humans do not measure up to their purpose. In other words, they "miss the mark" in the sense that they are disconnected or estranged from God.

Kingdom of God- In the Christian sense, the Kingdom of God still retains political imagery, but also refers to your heart. It refers to how you live with other people and in submission to God himself. Christ embodies the Kingdom of God, and those who follow Christ are also part of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is heaven on earth, not a realm beyond this world.

Gospel- Literally means "good news." We have four gospels at the beginning of the New Testament that announce that God has become man. God has come through the life of Christ to set things right again.

The Incarnation- A creator so powerful that he can call this world we know into existence and still be embodied as a human in the world we know. Thus, God incarnates himself into a human body, which is Jesus' body.

The Atonement- A doctrine or teaching. Jesus Christ perfectly models the life of God and the image of God. By dying on the cross, he gives us the opportunity to reconcile with God. Christ "atones" for what regular humans cannot atone for. We miss the mark, but Christ doesn't. He lives his life perfectly in alignment with God's.

Resurrection- The doctrine of the resurrection, which the four gospels present as a reality. After being crucified, Jesus spends three days in the tomb and then comes to life. The point is that all humans die, and with Christ's resurrection, we see hope that there is a possibility of a better life after death. When Christ rises from the grave, he rises as a human. The hope that is offered is that after death, your body should be returned to you in this world.

Pentecost- After Christ rose from the grave, he walked and talked with his disciples for 40 days. He then disappeared to heaven. The disciples no longer knew what to do because they lost their leader. They are all gathered in a house and the Holy Spirit descended upon them. They were then empowered to go out and preach the Gospel.

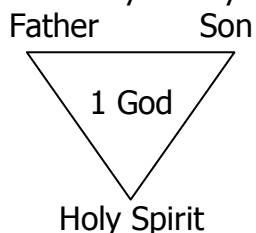
Holy Spirit- Within Christian doctrine, we have God who is both one and three at the same time: God the father, God the son (who incarnated himself as Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. However, it is still referring to monotheism. There is a lot of debate about how the three are related.

Imago Dei- "Image of God"

Peter- The leader of the apostles. Christ had many disciples. He specifically chose 12 to be leaders in the community, and Peter was chosen to be the leader of the 12. The pope in Rome sits on the throne of Peter.

Paul the Apostle- Paul wasn't among the group of the original 12 apostles. He spent his time before becoming an apostle persecuting the Christian church. At some point in his career as a persecutor, he had a supernatural encounter with Christ and became a Christian follower. Paul is the first person to bring non-Jewish people into the Christian faith.

The Trinity- The idea of the trinity was formally defined 2 centuries after the writing of the Gospel. This Holy Trinity is usually represented as a triangle similar to the following:



The Holy Trinity can be interpreted as three separate people that are one God. This is the Christian explanation of monotheism. This is the most accepted orthodox model.

Church Visible/Invisible- There exists the church that we can see, which includes a community of people. This is the visible church. The invisible is the work of God in people's private heart. It is the part of the person that you cannot see and you simply have to trust them and take them on their word.

Fish- In the Roman Empire, the Christians were under heavy suspicion and persecution, so they identified themselves with a fish symbol to be more discreet.



The idea was to not identify themselves explicitly to escape more prosecution, but they did want to give a sign to show where Christians would gather and live. Thus, when other Christians were

passing through the town, they could go to the households with the fish symbol and find other Christians.

Liturgy- Literally means "the work of the people." In this form, it is the worship of God. If you go to church, you will see a liturgical form of worship. If you go to a Church, there is a series of steps that happen in the service and this is the work of the people. The series of steps are a ritual.

Ecclesia- Literally means "the assembly of people that form the church."

Teaching Authority- The people that lead the community and have the authority to teach certain doctrines. Contemporarily, the most important obvious example of this is the Pope.

Constantine- One of the first emperor's to adhere to the Christian faith. He believed in the faith and worships the Christian God. He was about to go into battle but was outnumbered. At that moment, he abandoned his own God and told the Christian God that if he won the battle, he would convert to Christianity. He told all his soldiers to paint crosses on their horses. He won the battle and from then on he worshipped the Christian God. The tides changed for Christians. Instead of being an oppressed minority, they were gaining power.

Edict of Milan- In the year 313, the edict of Milan granted tolerance to Christianity. The Edict said that Christianity was tolerated as a form of religion. Constantine signed the edict.

Ecumenical Councils- gathering of the leaders of the church where they decided on the doctrines of the church (i.e. what Christians were to believe). They dealt with questions like: "Is the man Jesus Christ also God?" and "Is the Holy Spirit God? In what sense is the Holy Spirit God?"

Council of Nicaea (325 CE) - This council responded to the doctrines of a man named Arius. Arius was teaching that Jesus was a good man, the best man perhaps, but was in no way God. The council of Nicaea condemned Arius' position and reaffirmed that Jesus Christ was actually God.

Athanasius of Alexandria (369 CE) - We owe a canon of the New Testament to him. He was the first person to give a clearly defined list of what books were to be included in the New Testament and which ones were not to be included.

Council of Constantinople (381 CE) - This council reaffirmed that God was both three in one, which was said at the council of Nicaea.

Council of Ephesus (431 CE) - How do you conceive a person that is God? At this council, Mary was affirmed as the mother of God, and not merely the person who was the mother of someone who became God.

Council of Chalcedon (451 CE)- Who is the man Jesus Christ? This council affirmed that he was both God and man. He had two natures: human and divine. The two identities were not mixed or confused, but rather they were united in this one person.

Thomas Aquinas (13<sup>th</sup> century) - One of his controversial contributions was to articulate the Christian message in ancient Greek philosophy, especially in the work of Aristotle.

Second Vatican Council (Roman Catholic)-Instead of looking at Christian as an exclusive religion, the Second Vatican opened the discussion for Christian religion with other faiths. They claimed that Christianity was not an exclusive religion and not the only way to God.

Orthodoxy- more specifically Eastern Orthodoxy. This included churches in Eastern Europe, Russia, and Middle East. The main point of distinction is that the Roman Catholic tradition has a pope that is the ultimate ruler and in Eastern Orthodoxy you have bishops that collaborate with each other.

Lutheranism and Reformed Churches – Came into existence at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century through the work of Martin Luther and John Calvin. In Roman Catholic you have a pope and in orthodoxy you have the bishops, but in Lutheran you do not have an authoritative leader. Each church has their own ruling body.