

Chapter 1 : Basic Beliefs and Teachings of Christianity

The central or primary beliefs of Christianity can be found in the book of Acts. (1) The belief in Jesus' death (2) The belief in Jesus' bodily resurrection.

There are many great teachings in the Bible, but here are 10 of the most important, or fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. Within each of these broad categories there are many other doctrines that could fill whole books and bookshelves. This is just a quick overview of what Christians believe.

God Theology is the study of God. This includes who He is in person and personality. This is an absolutely fundamental belief of Christianity. In the pages of the Bible it is taken for granted by the writers that God does exist. The Bible opens with the words that God created the Heavens and the earth Genesis 1: He is the creator, or source, of all life John 5: Nature teaches us that there is a Creator and we have within us a basic understanding of a higher power Romans 1: God is a Spirit John 4: He does not want to be worshiped through graven images or idols because He does not have a form as we know it Exodus Though a spirit, He has personality as denoted by the names He has been given or claims of Himself Genesis God knows all Job He is all powerful Genesis He is present everywhere at the same time Psalm ; Jeremiah God is eternal and unchangeable Psalm He is holy Isaiah He is righteous and just, yet merciful and gracious Psalm And God is love John 3: It is wonderful to know that God communicates to us through His Word so that we can know about Him and His plan

Christ Christology is the study of Christ. Christianity would not be what it is if there was not a risen Savior, who was the promised redeemer Genesis 3: Though Jesus was the Son of God Matthew 8: Jesus had a physical body that grew and had normal physical needs Matthew 4: Jesus died on a cross as the substitute for the sins of mankind 1 Corinthians He rose bodily the third day after His death Matthew He ascended to Heaven to God Acts 1: Holy Spirit

Pneumatology is the study, or doctrine, of the Holy Spirit. He is referred to in many of the same passages as the Father and the Son Matthew The Holy Spirit is who indwells believers 1 Corinthians 6: By the Spirit we are born again John 3: That means it is breathed out from Him 2 Timothy 3: We learn about God and understand God through the Scriptures Matthew

Man Anthropology the study of man in a Christian perspective deals with the nature and origin of man. Where man came from and why. First of all, Christians believe that man is made in the image and likeness of God Genesis 1: Though created by God Genesis 1, 2 man did not always obey God Genesis 3. We call this the fall of man.

Salvation The study of salvation is called Soteriology. This is an area of Christian teaching that has many different aspects. These include the purpose of salvation, the method of salvation and the means of salvation just to name a few. The purpose of salvation can be summed up with the words regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification. Regeneration is to be made new in Christ John 3: Justification is where we are made right and just before God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Deuteronomy We are sanctified made holy or set apart through salvation 1 Corinthians 6: Ultimately we will be glorified in Heaven as a result of our salvation 1 Thessalonians 3:

Church God has established a few institutions in this world. One of them is the church. The study of the doctrine of the church is called Ecclesiology. The first church was in Jerusalem. Other congregations were established in various places. This started in Judea and Samaria Acts 1, 2. Throughout the book of Acts there is a spreading of the Gospel and a constant establishment of churches. On a broad scale the church is the body of Christ made up of Christians 1 Corinthians There is also the idea of a local church assembly where believers meet on a regular basis Philippians 4: The purpose of the church is to worship God and bring glory to Him on the earth Ephesians 1: It is to evangelize the world Matthew Shunning the attendance of church leads to false doctrine Hebrews

Angels Angels are beings created by God Colossians 1: They are ministers of God Psalm Angels have great might and power Psalm Their is a hierarchy of angels 1 Thessalonians 4: There are some angels who have abandoned God 2 Peter 2: Satan is one of these fallen angels and is at war with God and His angelic host Daniel He is called the prince of the power of the air Ephesians 2: He is an adversary to the Christian 1 Peter 5: His final judgment is to be cast into the lake of fire Matthew

Future Escatology is the study of the last things. While there is some controversy among Christians over the exact order of events, the general idea of things to come is that Christ will return to rapture the church and resurrect the dead believers 1

Corinthians 15; 1 and 2 Thessalonians; Titus 2: There will be judgment for the unsaved Psalm While the saved will be judged 1 Corinthians 3: Prayer Though this is not a strictly Christian belief, prayer is vital to a Christian. So important that the Bible says that neglecting prayer grieves the Lord 1 Samuel Prayer is the way God has ordained for us to communicate with Him Matthew 7: It is so important the founders of the church sought help in the ministry so that they could dedicate their time to prayer Acts 6: Throughout the Bible prayer can be seen to take many forms. Moses talked with God in prayer more like a dialogue between two friends. In Joshua and Judges the Israelites often cried out to God. Samuel, and many other prophets prayed more in a manner of intercession on behalf of others. David considered himself able to go to God in prayer on his own behalf instead of needing someone to pray for him. The book of Psalms is full of a crying out to God on a continual and consistent basis. We can pray to God Acts The normal pattern in prayer is that we pray to God through the Holy Spirit with the authority of Christ John There is no required position in prayer prescribed in the Bible. We can pray standing up John Basic Beliefs of a Christian As I said at the outset, these are just some of the basic beliefs of a Christian. It is wonderful to know that God communicates to us through His Word so that we can know about Him and His plan. I want to encourage you to take the basic Bible teachings here and study more about God and His Word on your own. Feel free to share with us what you learn in the comments below. Take a look at some more helpful articles:

Chapter 2 : What are the central beliefs of Christianity

The following beliefs are central to almost all Christian faith groups. They are presented here as the core doctrines of Christianity. A small number of faith groups who consider themselves to be within the framework of Christianity do not accept some of these beliefs.

What are the beliefs of Christianity? That the following beliefs of Christianity have been brought down through the ages as follows: The Bible is the only inspired, infallible, and authoritative written Word of God, penned by man with the leading of the Holy Spirit. There is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Christians believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, in His personal, future return to this earth in power and glory to rule a thousand years. The Church is all who believe in Jesus as their Savior. The only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ. Good works alone will not get you into heaven, although good works should follow those who believe. We believe in water baptism by immersion. This is a public display of the authenticity of your repentance. Spiritual healing and deliverance comes by the redemptive work of Christ on the cross. God desires us to have a personal relationship with Him and through His Holy Spirit, we communicate with Him. The Christian can live a holy life. The beliefs of Christianity state the resurrection of the saved and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting damnation. Then Jesus will establish His eternal kingdom. Learn More about Christianity! God , the Father, sent His only Son to satisfy that judgment for those who believe in Him. Jesus , the creator and eternal Son of God, who lived a sinless life, loves us so much that He died for our sins, taking the punishment that we deserve, was buried , and rose from the dead according to the Bible. If you truly believe and trust this in your heart, receiving Jesus alone as your Savior , declaring, " Jesus is Lord ," you will be saved from judgment and spend eternity with God in heaven. What is your response?

Chapter 3 : Protestantism - Wikipedia

*Catholic Answer*The central beliefs of Christianity are contained in the Nicene Creed: *I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.*

The Latin word *sola* means "alone", "only", or "single". The use of the phrases as summaries of teaching emerged over time during the Reformation, based on the overarching principle of *sola scriptura* by scripture alone. This idea contains the four main doctrines on the Bible: The necessity and inerrancy were well-established ideas, garnering little criticism, though they later came under debate from outside during the Enlightenment. The most contentious idea at the time though was the notion that anyone could simply pick up the Bible and learn enough to gain salvation. The second main principle, *sola fide* by faith alone, states that faith in Christ is sufficient alone for eternal salvation. Though argued from scripture, and hence logically consequent to *sola scriptura*, this is the guiding principle of the work of Luther and the later reformers. The other *solas*, as statements, emerged later, but the thinking they represent was also part of the early Reformation. Catholics, on the other hand, maintained the traditional understanding of Judaism on these questions, and appealed to the universal consensus of Christian tradition. The reformers posited that salvation is a gift of God i. Glory to God alone All glory is due to God alone since salvation is accomplished solely through his will and actionâ€”not only the gift of the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus on the cross but also the gift of faith in that atonement, created in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit. The reformers believed that human beingsâ€”even saints canonized by the Catholic Church, the popes, and the ecclesiastical hierarchyâ€”are not worthy of the glory. The Protestant movement began to diverge into several distinct branches in the mid-to-late 16th century. One of the central points of divergence was controversy over the Eucharist. Early Protestants rejected the Roman Catholic dogma of transubstantiation, which teaches that the bread and wine used in the sacrificial rite of the Mass lose their natural substance by being transformed into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. They disagreed with one another concerning the presence of Christ and his body and blood in Holy Communion. This is often referred to as dynamic presence. Anglicans refuse to define the Presence preferring to leave it a mystery. The Prayer Books describe the bread and wine as outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace which is the Body and Blood of Christ. However, the words of their liturgies suggest that one can hold to a belief in the Real Presence and Spiritual and Sacramental Present at the same time. Perhaps the best way to see it is that the Anglican view incorporates all three of the above positions and the Roman and Orthodox. Perhaps the closest that one can get to pinning down an Anglican view they are notorious for refusing to so are the words of St. John of Damascus, "the bread and wine are visible symbols of a spiritual reality.

Chapter 4 : What is Christianity and what do Christians believe?

The basics of Christian beliefs. Last updated Prayers through Mary, as the mother of God, are central to some churches and form a traditional part of their worship.

Read the bible for TRUE answers if you really want them. What are Christian beliefs? We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father, by Whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Who for us humanity and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate, was made human, was born perfectly of the holy virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit. By whom He took body, soul, and mind, and everything that is in man, truly and not in semblance. He suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven with the same body, [and] sat at the right hand of the Father. He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father, to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there is no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the uncreated and the perfect; Who spoke through the Law, prophets, and Gospels; Who came down upon the Jordan, preached through the apostles, and lived in the saints. We believe also in only One, Universal, Apostolic, and [Holy] Church; in one baptism in repentance, for the remission, and forgiveness of sins; and in the resurrection of the dead, in the everlasting judgement of souls and bodies, and the Kingdom of Heaven and in the everlasting life. What are the central beliefs within Judaism Christianity and Islam? The central belief of these three religions is that there is one God monotheism , and that people should live with respect for one another. The idea that faith can help people in times of crisis or need is also central to these three religions. This relates to the fallability of humans, themselves, not necessarily the faiths they attempt to practice. What is the central belief of Christianity? That Jesus fulfilled the law of the old testament by being a sacrifice to pay for mankind's sin. The above is true also, but the resurrection is the central belief of Christianity. No honest history scholar or professor will deny the resurrection of Jesus. The event proved Jesus is God. People are imprisoned by guilt, anger and remorse. Jesus empowers us to forgive others and ourselves, the Way to abundant New Life. This central belief concerning forgiveness is explained in the Bible, but Christianity is a religion centered on a Living God, not a book. What are the beliefs about Christianity? Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They believe that Jesus was crucified and rose from the grave three days later and was taken into heaven shortly afterwards. They believe that Jesus died for their sins, and that because of his death, they are redeemed and forgiven of their sins and can have eternal life with Him in heaven because of this. We share in common the Nicene Creed That is the belief of all "Christians" [Catholics included as we are Christians as well] Share to:

Chapter 5 : Christianity - ReligionFacts

The central teachings of traditional Christianity are that Jesus is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit ; that his life on earth, his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven are proof of God's love for humanity and God's.

The Atonement is a controversial topic. Theologians have held very different views on it. A god who punished through pain, despair and violent death is not a god of love, but a sadist and despot. Hopkins 3 "The atonement is accomplished in the work of Christ, whose suffering is vicarious, representative and sacrificial in character; it is on behalf of men [sic], in their name, and for the purpose of their approach to God. A human father who would nail his son to a cross for any purpose would be arrested for child abuse. Yet that continued to be said of God as if it made God more holy and more worthy of worship. In a religious sense, "atonement" means "at-one-ment. The fruit has often been referred to as an apple. However, apple trees were not indigenous to the Middle East. A pomegranite or similar fruit is more likely. Their action created a massive gulf between God and humanity -- Adam, Eve, their children, and over generations of their descendents. This gulf was seen as incapable of being bridged except by the torture death of Yeshua of Nazareth Jesus Christ on the cross. An additional problem is that many systems of ethics, including those found in the Bible teaches that each individual is responsible for their own immoral, unethical, or illegal acts and other transgressions. In particular, these ethical system hold that no person can possibly be held responsible for the activities of others that were done before the person was born -- let alone those done sixty centuries before they existed. That is called scapegoating. Unfortunately, examples of this are found throughout the Bible. For centuries, the Christian Church used scapegoating to blame all Jews who were alive between the first century CE until the mid 20th century for the judicial murder of Jesus. Modern Jews were referred to as "Christ Killers. That genocide would probably not have been possible without Christian scapegoating down through history. The church has generally abandoned the Christ Killer label, but it is still seen occasionally today. If this is a loving and important deed for humans, it would presumably be so for Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, God presumably could have simply forgiven Adam and Eve for their sinful act, and not continued to condemn their billions of descendents. Unfortunately, the Bible text does not provide a clear and unambiguous explanation on exactly by what mechanism the life -- and particularly the death -- of Yeshua was able to make it possible to reconcile God and humanity through the atonement. Christian theologians from the second century CE until today have developed five main theories, and many sub-variations, to explain how the atonement works. In recent centuries, no one theory has received a consensus. We describe various violent interpretations of the atonement, as well as non-violent and secular views of the atonement. Topics described in this section: Why the atonement is needed. Theories on how the atonement works. Is a consensus possible?

Chapter 6 : Basic Tenets of Christianity

Question: "What are the core beliefs of Christianity?" Answer: The term Christianity seems to imply a religious system in the same way that Islam and Buddhism are religious systems. Within religious systems are core beliefs, along with codes, rules, and standards that must be mastered in order to.

What are the major beliefs of Christianity? That Jesus is the son of God and died to save the souls of sinners. Jesus Christ died on the cross for our salvation. You can accept salvation through prayer. Go to [Christian website](#). What are the major beliefs of Christianity and Islam? In reality, there really is no similarity to best describe the Judeo-Christian beliefs of God to the Muslim Islamic belief. Judaism and Christianity have the Old Testament in common. The Christian text teaches the God of the Old Testament was the Word and it was He who Abraham and the other patriarchs and prophets worshiped. Liberty," World, Sept 10, Lastly, the Quran never presents Allah as a god of love. All in all, there are more differences and conflicts between the Judeo-Christian texts and the Muslim text, as well as how the Koran conflicts with secular history. Major beliefs of Islam and Christianity? Islam in its original language was called Salam which translates as peace and surrender. Those people that believe in Islam are commonly known as Muslims. Muslims believe that everything began with Allah, or God, although most outsiders would say the religion began with Muhammad. First and foremost the Koran is followed and then the sunnah prophet Muhammad saying and practices. Late in the 7th century we find Muhammad, a prophet, who was believed to be the final prophet and he was called The Seal of the Prophets. He was said to have had angels of God fill his heart with light. Later he meditated in a cave on the outskirts of Mecca where he was meditating on the Abrahamic way. He heard the first verses of Quran from Angel Gabriel without knowing that it is Quran and without knowing that it is from an angel. He returned scared to home, told his wife, who called her cousin for advice. Her cousin was Jesus believer and told her that it is God revelation to him through the angel. Quran God revelation continued and Muhammad was ordered to convey God Islam message to people. The most basic faiths of Islam are faith in God, in all God prophets, God angels, all God holy books, the Day of Judgment, and the destiny. They believe Allah God in English is the Ultimate. They believe that Allah "deliberately created" the world. The third is charity, in which one "should share with the unfortunate. The fifth and final pillar is the pilgrimage to Mecca. Every Muslim, if physically able, is expected to travel to Mecca at some point during his life. Islam religion call for good morals that are close to that in Christianity. Muslims believe that Jesus is one of the five greatest prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. Christianity is the most wide spread religion and has the most number of people that claim it has their religion. Christianities roots come from Jesus of Nazareth and has spread like wild fire since that time. But, it is technically an offshoot of Judaism since the Jews were waiting and looking for the messiah to come and after he did then the Christians were formed by the Disciples of Christ. Jesus is known as the savior of the world and so is worshiped as the savior of humanity. They believe that the world was created by God in seven days; some believe that is a literal seven days while others believe that is a representation of perhaps years; more of an evolutionist creation. Then on the opposite side there is the end of the world. Christians all see this a little differently depending on their specific church. Some believe that there will be a grand second coming and that everyone will be raised up to meet God in the sky all together. Although all Christians believe in God and believe that Jesus is the son of God and came to die for our sins, not all believe in the trinity. The Trinity is the God head three in one. This is where we believe they are three identities in one while some believe that they are completely different individuals. One characteristic is that most Christians have a church organization. They meet on the weekend and worship God together. This has been an important aspect for Christians ever since the beginning when God called his disciples together to pray and support one another and worship God. There are many branches of Christianity but they are all based off of the same main concepts and beliefs: Refer to questions below for more information. God is above all else. We must love God above all else. Jesus is the only way to God. God is love itself. We must love others as we love ourselves. And we must love ourselves. Mary is the mother of Jesus. Christ is the son of God. Christ was crucified, and rose again in three days. We are to love one another.

Chapter 7 : What are the core beliefs of Christianity?

Christians believe that there is one triune God, who is father, son and holy spirit. They believe that salvation comes from a belief in Jesus as the son of God and in his death and resurrection. Salvation is not earned but rather comes by faith alone. Christians also believe that the church is a.

Michael Bradley For the record, we believe that all of the main denominations of Christianity are accepted and honored by God the Father. As we all know, the Christian faith has been divided up into many different denominations such as the Baptists, Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, etc. I believe that denominationalism is actually an offense against God, as He obviously would like to have all of His Body to be unified as one with Him, not being divided up into all of these different denominations. We only have one God and one Bible, but yet we have all of these different denominations. As a result of this big divide in the Body of Christ, we do not present to the rest of the world a perfectly unified Body. The Bible tells us that we will only know in part while we are all down here, so it should come as no surprise that there are going to be some major differences between some of us on interpreting different parts of the Bible. As a result of many of these different interpretations of the Bible over the years, the Body of Christ has now been split up into all of these different denominations. But though the Body of Christ has now been split up into all of these different denominations, this should still not prevent us in making sure that all of these different denominations stay true and loyal to the basic tenets of the Christian faith. We believe that as long as all of these different denominations stay true and loyal to the basic tenets of the Christian faith, that God will still continue to work with all of them. But if any one of them ever start to get off into any serious error on any one of these basic tenets, they could then get themselves into serious trouble with the Lord, as I do not believe there is any slack with the Lord on any of these basic fundamental tenets. In this article, I am going to give you 12 basic tenets of the Christian faith that absolutely have to be accepted, believed and incorporated into the basic teaching system of any particular Christian church or denomination. There is no room for compromise or negotiation with the Lord on any of these basic tenets. These tenets are the absolute bottom-line basics of the Christian faith and any church, pastor, or denomination that starts to get too far away from any of these basic tenets should immediately be called out on it by the rest of the Body so they do not fall any further into serious error. If any particular church or denomination starts to get too far away or too far off from any of these basic tenets, then it will not be long before they start to get too far away from some of the other basic tenets. And before you know it, they will then end up teaching nothing pure heresy. Here are the 12 basic tenets of the Christian faith so you can have all of them right at the top of this article. From there, I will discuss each one of them separately under the individual captions below so you can have all of this information and ammunition right at your fingertips should God ever call any of you to properly defend Him on any of these basic tenets. It is extremely important that each and every Christian have a firm and solid grasp on each one of these basic tenets, as the Bible tells us that in the latter days that there is going to be some who will be departing from their faith in Jesus as a result of coming under direct demonic influence. And if there is going to be some who will be departing from the one and only true faith, then you can bet your bottom dollar that some of it will be starting with some of these basic tenets. Here is the verse that is telling us that there will be some who will be falling away and departing from their faith in Jesus in the latter days, which I believe we are now all living in: I will now discuss each one of these basic tenets under the captions below so you can fully understand what each one of them are all about, along with having all of the appropriate verses from the Bible to back up each one of these basic fundamental tenets. Though we have talked about many of these basic tenets in some of our other articles, I want to put all of them together for you in this type of an article so you can have all of this information right at your fingertips. Due to the extreme importance of this topic, these basic, fundamental tenets need to be put into their own article.

Chapter 8 : What is the central belief of the Christian faith? | Yahoo Answers

Christians believe in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. The Christian can live a holy life. The beliefs of Christianity state the resurrection of the saved and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting damnation.

Put another way, some 4. But whilst Christianity is declining in Europe , Asia has the fastest-growing churches in the world. Christian belief is formally set out in Christian Creeds. A less formal and broader summary of beliefs held by many evangelical Christians is as follows: God There is an unseen spirit realm - the domain of God and His created beings angels are ministering spirits. There is only one God, the God of Israel. All three persons were present at the creation. God is Creator and Sustainer of all things, seen and unseen. God has many attributes: He is holy, sinless, righteous, sovereign, just, loving, merciful, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God showed His love for us by becoming the man Jesus Christ. As such He is divine and sinless, and men should give the same honour to Christ as they do to the Father. In essence, God loves us so much that He suffered and died for each one of us. Jesus lives and is the only way to God the Father. Jesus is co-Creator of heaven and earth and holds all things in His hands. He is omnipresent i. He is everywhere throughout His creation. Jesus is coming again soon. Many prophecies point to His return to earth to defeat the defiant armies of rebellious nations, to reign as King of the earth from Jerusalem, and to usher in a time of peace on the earth. The Holy Spirit The Holy Spirit is a person He can be grieved for example and could be seen as the presence and power of God amongst men. Followers of Jesus are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, enabling them to have a close, loving relationship with the Father and with Jesus His Son. So they are never alone - God is always with them. The Holy Spirit enables a believer to know God and glorify Him through powerful supernatural experiences, as in words of knowledge, guidance and physical healing. All that God requires of an individual is belief in the living Christ and acceptance of His forgiveness for past sin. God has done the rest. Followers of Jesus believers are then promised forgiveness, reconciliation to God, a resurrected immortal body and eternal life. Followers are saved from the judgement of God; they have passed from death to life. There are many promises to believers and benefits of the Christian life. Man lives only once and after death will be judged righteously by God according to his response to received revelation. Followers of Jesus believers will not come under this judgement, but instead will receive rewards for their service to Christ at the resurrection. The existence of Heaven and Hell was confirmed by Jesus. Believers have eternal life and their final destiny is with God in the New Earth. The Bible gives many prophecies pertaining to the end of the age. The role of the church is to proclaim and demonstrate the coming kingdom of God. All true believers, past and present will take part in this resurrection. They will receive immortal bodies and be with Christ forever.

Chapter 9 : Christian Beliefs, The Doctrine of Christianity

How are the central beliefs of judaism and Christianity different A) Christian's observe a monotheistic religion, but Jews do not. B) Christians belief is based on the old and new testaments of the Bible but Judaism is not.

It has dominated western culture for centuries and remains the majority religion of Europe and the Americas. Christian beliefs center on the life of Jesus of Nazareth , a teacher and healer who lived in first century Palestine. The primary source of information about the life of Jesus are the Gospels, which were written sometime between 20 and years after his death and became the first four books of the New Testament. The Gospels describe a three-year teaching and healing ministry during which Jesus attracted 12 close disciples and other followers who believed him to be the Messiah Christos. Along with some of his teachings, his growing popularity with the masses was seen as dangerous by Jewish religious leaders and the Roman government, leading to his execution by crucifixion. Christians believe Jesus rose from the dead three days later, and in so doing made it possible for those who believe to be forgiven of sin and attain eternal life. Much of Christian belief and practice centers on the resurrection of Christ. The New Testament contains 27 books: Nearly all Christians regard the Bible as divinely inspired and authoritative, but views differ as to the nature and extent of its authority. Some hold it to be completely without error in all matters it addresses, while others stress its accuracy only in religious matters and allow for errors or limitations in other areas due to its human authorship. Christianity has divided into three major branches. Roman Catholicism represents the continuation of the historical organized church as it developed over the centuries, and is headed by the Pope. Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism separated in , when the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope excommunicated each other. Eastern Orthodoxy which includes the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches and several others differs from Catholicism in its refusal of allegiance to the Pope, its emphasis on the use of icons in worship, and the date it celebrates Easter. Other cultural, political, and religious differences exist as well. Protestantism arose in the 16th century. Protestants do not acknowledge the authority of the Pope, reject many traditions and beliefs of the Catholic Church, and emphasize the importance of reading the Bible and the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Protestantism encompasses numerous denominational groups, including Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Pentecostals and Evangelicals. Christian practices vary by denomination, but common elements include a Sunday worship service, private and corporate prayer, study and reading of the Scriptures, and participation in the rites of baptism and communion. Distinctive Catholic practices include recognition of seven sacraments, devotion to Mary and the saints, and veneration of relics and sacred sites associated with holy figures. Eastern Orthodoxy holds many practices in common with Catholicism, but is especially distinguished by the central role of icons. The 40 days prior to Easter form the Lenten season, a time of fasting and repentance. Another holiday that has become important is Christmas, which commemorates the birth of Jesus on December 25 January 6 in Orthodox Churches. Some of these, such as St.