

Christianity

Christianity is the world's most widely practiced religion, encompassing a rich diversity of traditions and expressions. Despite denominational differences, Christians are united in their faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. At its heart, Christianity is not merely a moral system or a cultural tradition, but a living relationship with the [Triune God](#), revealed supremely in the person and work of [Jesus](#) Christ.

The term Christianity is derived from the Greek word Christ ([Χριστός](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigΧριστός

Christ means "anointed one"

The equivalent Hebrew word is Messiah (מָשִׁיחַ)

Noun, masculine.), meaning "Anointed One," which is the equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah ([מָשִׁיחַ](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigמָשִׁיחַ

Messiah means "anointed one"

The Greek word is Christ (Χριστός)

Masculine, noun). Christians are thus those who follow Jesus, the Christ.

The Essence of Christianity

Christianity is fundamentally the story of God's initiative to reconcile fallen humanity to Himself. [God](#) created the world and everything in it ([Genesis 1:1](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 1:1

Hebrew [וַיְבָרֵא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ](#) ESV In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. NIV In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. NLT In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. LXX ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν). God is a personal, holy, and loving Creator, eternally existing as one God in three persons - [Father](#), [Son](#), and [Holy Spirit](#) ([Matthew 28:19](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigMatthew 28:19

Greek πορευθέντες μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ESV Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, NIV Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,...).

Humanity was created in God's image ([Genesis 1:27](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigGenesis 1:27

Hebrew [וַיְבָרֵא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם](#) ESV So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. NIV So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created

them. καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτόν καὶ θῆλον ἐποίησεν αὐτούς...) to live under his rule in relationship with Him. However, through sin and rebellion, humanity has turned away from God ([Romans 3:23](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigRomans 3:23)

Greek πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ, ESV for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, NIV for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, NLT For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. KJV For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;). The result of [sin](#) is spiritual death and separation from Him ([Isaiah 59:2](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigIsaiah 59:2)

Hebrew וַיַּחַד אֱלֹהִים בְּיָדָיו לְבַיִן אֶלְהֵיכֶם וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּיָדָיו לְבַיִן אֶלְהֵיכֶם וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּיָדָיו לְבַיִן אֶלְהֵיכֶם ESV but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. NIV But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. ἀλλὰ τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ὑμῶν οὐκ ἀποστρέφουσιν ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ὑμῶν ἡμᾶς... Yet God, in His mercy, did not abandon His creation. Instead, He entered the world in the person of Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man ([John 1:1](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigJohn 1:1)

Greek Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. ESV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. NIV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. NLT In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. and [John 1:14](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigJohn 1:14

Greek καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. ESV And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. NIV The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth....).

Jesus lived a sinless life, proclaimed the good news of the [Kingdom of God](#), and willingly laid down His life on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinners ([1 Peter 3:18](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big1 Peter 3:18)

Greek ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἅπαξ περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπέθανεν, δίκαιος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων, ἵνα ὑμᾶς προσαγάγῃ τῷ θεῷ, θανατωθεὶς μὲν σαρκὶ ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ πνεύματι. ESV For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, NIV For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,...). On the third day, Jesus rose bodily from the dead ([Luke 24:6](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigLuke 24:6)

Greek οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε, ἀλλὰ ἠγέρθη. μνήσθητε ὡς ἐλάλησεν ὑμῖν ἔτι ὦν ἐν τῇ Γαλιλαίᾳ, ESV He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, NIV He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: NLT He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee,) demonstrating His victory over sin and death and confirming His divine identity.

Jesus calls all people to repent of their sin, trust in Him for salvation, and follow Him as Lord ([Mark 1:15](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigMark 1:15)

Greek ὅτι πεπλήρωται ὁ καιρὸς καὶ ἤγγικεν ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ· μετανοεῖτε καὶ πιστεύετε ἐν τῷ

εὐαγγελίῳ. ESV and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." NIV "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news! and [Romans 10:9](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigRomans 10:9

Greek ὅτι ἐὰν ὁμολογήσῃς ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, σωθήσῃ· ESV because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. NIV That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord,). Through faith in Jesus, believers are justified, that is, declared righteous before God, and not by works, but by grace alone ([Ephesians 2:8](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigEphesians 2:8

Greek τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· ESV For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, NIV For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-[9](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigEphesians 2:9

Greek οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων, ἵνα μή τις καυχήσῃται. ESV not a result of works, so that no one may boast. NIV not by works, so that no one can boast. NLT Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. KJV Not of works, lest any man should boast.).

To be a Christian, then, is not merely to adhere to a moral code or belong to a religious institution, but to be born again by the Holy Spirit ([John 3:3](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigJohn 3:3

Greek ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. ESV Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." NIV In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.), adopted into God's family, and transformed by the ongoing work of grace. To be Christian is to know and walk with Jesus Christ as Savior, Lord, and Friend.

The Bible

See also: [Bible](#)

The Bible is the divinely inspired and authoritative word of God, comprised of 66 books, 39 in the [Old Testament](#) and 27 in the [New Testament](#). Written by human authors under the guidance of the [Holy Spirit](#) ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big2 Timothy 3:16

Greek πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ESV All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, NIV All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,... and [2 Peter 1:21](#)plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big2 Peter 1:21

Greek οὐ γὰρ θελήματι ἀνθρώπου ἠνέχθη ποτέ προφητεία, ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι ἐλάλησαν ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἄνθρωποι. ESV For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. NIV For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.), it is without error in its original manuscripts and is the authority in all matters of faith and life.

The Bible tells the grand story of redemption: creation, fall, promise, fulfillment, and new creation. The Old Testament points forward to the coming of the Messiah through God's covenant relationship with Israel. The New Testament reveals Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of those promises and details the birth and growth of the early Church.

The Bible includes various genres including historical narrative, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy, gospel, and epistle. It calls readers not only to knowledge but also to faith, obedience and worship. The Bible is the standard by which all doctrine and experience must be tested.

The Church

See also: [Church](#) and [Church History](#)

The Church is not primarily a building, but the community of all who have been redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ. It is described in Scripture as the body of Christ ([1 Corinthians 12:27](#) plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big1 Corinthians 12:27

Greek ὑμεῖς δὲ ἐστε σῶμα Χριστοῦ καὶ μέλη ἐκ μέρους. ESV Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. NIV Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. NLT All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it.), the bride of Christ ([Ephesians 5:25-27](#)), and the temple of the Holy Spirit ([1 Peter 2:5](#) plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_big1 Peter 2:5

Greek καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε οἶκος πνευματικὸς εἰς ἱεράτευμα ἅγιον, ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. ESV you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. NIV you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus C...).

While Christians are united spiritually in one body, the visible church is expressed in a multitude of local congregations and denominations. These reflect historical, cultural, and theological differences. Among the largest traditions are Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism—including Reformed, Anglican, Baptist, Pentecostal, and non-denominational churches.

The church is called to gather for worship, preaching of the word, the celebration of the sacraments (or ordinances) of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and to be a light to the nations ([Matthew 28:18-20](#)).

The Christian Life

The Christian life is one of ongoing discipleship, growing in holiness, love, and obedience through the work of the Holy Spirit. Believers are called to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love their neighbours as themselves ([Matthew 22:37-39](#)).

Christians are also called to engage in mission, proclaiming the gospel to every nation ([Acts 1:8](#) plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigActs 1:8

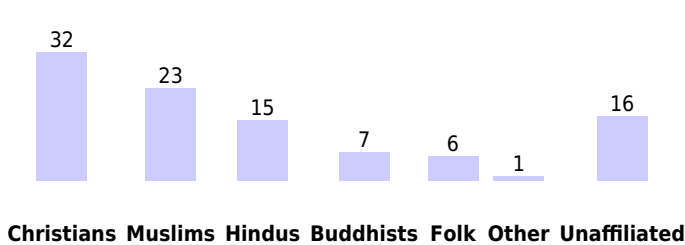
Greek ἀλλὰ λήμψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἐν τε Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρίᾳ καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς. ESV But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem

and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” NIV But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to...).

This calling is not only the task of clergy or missionaries but the calling of every follower of Jesus. As salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), Christians are to reflect God’s character in every sphere of life, including work, family, politics, and the arts.

The World

As of the early 21st century, Christianity remains the largest religion globally, with over 2.3 billion adherents, comprising approximately 32% of the world’s population. Christians are found on every continent, with rapid growth occurring in Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia. By contrast, many traditionally Christian nations in Europe and North America are experiencing secularization. ¹⁾



Despite the global presence of Christianity, believers in many countries face significant opposition, ranging from social exclusion to legal restrictions and persecution. Yet the gospel continues to spread, and Jesus’ promise remains: “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18plugin-autotooltip__default plugin-autotooltip_bigMatthew 16:18

Greek *καὶ ἐγὼ λέγω σοι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ πύλαι ᾗτου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς.* ESV And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. NIV And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it....).

Quotes

- Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue with that; I'm right and I will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now; I don't know which will go first — rock and roll or Christianity - *John Lennon, 1966*
- I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else - *C.S. Lewis in Mere Christianity*

References and Resources

¹⁾ Pew Research Centre (2012). [The Global Religious Landscape](#)

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