

Jesus Christ

We believe in the pre-existence of Christ.

Christ was alive when the world began. The Gospel of John commences, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2 KJV). Paul speaks of Jesus Christ as "the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him" (Colossians 1:15 -16 NIV).

God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From before time, through time, and after time shall end, God always is—Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, Empowerer, and Enlightener. To speak of the pre-existence of Christ, is to say that God's redemptive work has always been active, flowing eternally from the loving heart of the living God.

We believe in the incarnation.

Incarnation literally means becoming flesh. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14 KJV). A central fact of Christianity is that God became flesh in Jesus Christ according to the prophecy of Isaiah as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23 KJV). Christ came into the world—the meaning of advent—having been conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20) and born of a virgin (Matthew 1:23). He came as the Son of God, God with us.

We believe Christ's nature is human and divine.

Jesus was truly human. Physically he was fashioned in the womb of a human mother, conceived by the Holy Spirit. The New Testament's first glimpse of Jesus is as a baby lying in the manger. Luke reveals that he grew up as any other child of his day (Luke 2:40). Jesus lived a life of perfect obedience to the old covenant, thus fulfilling its requirements (Matthew 5:17) and laying the foundation for the new covenant.

As he matured, Jesus' humanity was evident. He grew tired (John 4:6), slept (Matthew 4:2), experienced hunger (Matthew 21:18), was thirsty (John 19:28), felt sorrow and wept (John 11:35), and experienced heartbreak and anger (Mark 3:5). He died. All the Gospels report his death in detail. Jesus was wholly human.

Jesus is wholly God. Paul wrote about Jesus, "who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:6-9 KJV).

John the Apostle records Jesus' claim to divinity when he said "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30 KJV) and "Whoever sees me sees also him who sent me" (John 12:45 TEV).

We believe the characteristics of Jesus' divinity are the very characteristics of God.

Even though he was under the self-imposed limitations of the flesh, Jesus' divinity was present and evident. "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know" (Acts 2:22 NIV). Or, as Paul put it, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority" (Colossians 2:9-10 NIV).

These characteristics are most apparent as we see the Father's omniscience and omnipotence flowing through Jesus. This omniscience (all knowledge) was demonstrated in his earthly ministry to the extent that Peter stated, "Lord, thou knowest all things" (John 21:17 KJV). Omnipotence (all power) was demonstrated as storms were calmed, all kinds of diseases healed, devils cast out, and the dead raised. His own testimony to his disciples was, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18 KJV).

We believe Jesus is Savior and Lord.

Jesus is Savior. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16 -17 KJV). This is the core of God's plan for mankind's redemption. Jesus is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8 KJV). John the Baptist declared upon seeing him: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29 KJV). Jesus Christ is our Savior through his obedience to God and death on the cross (Hebrews 12:2).

Jesus is Lord. "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:10 -11 NIV). We acknowledge Jesus as Lord when we accept him as our Savior and allow him to be ruler of our lives.

We believe in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is historical fact, attested to by many witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Acts 2:32 ; Luke 24). His resurrection is the basis for the Christian hope of eternal life. It proves that God controls life and death. "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins ... But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:17 , 20-22 NIV; also Romans 14:8-9).

Jesus ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9). Jesus "has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him" (1 Peter 3:22 NIV). Therefore Jesus

serves as our advocate before the Father, and sends the Holy Spirit to comfort, empower, and guide our lives until he returns (Acts 2:32-33; Romans 1:4-5).

We believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ.

This same Jesus who came to earth as God in the flesh will some day come again to receive us that we may be with him forever (Acts 1:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18).