



# Christianity:

## Was Jesus the Messiah?

### Topic Overview

- Jesus was Jewish.
- Christians believe Jesus is God in the flesh.
- They believe that his birth, life, death and resurrection were part of a longer plan by God to restore the relationship between humans and God.
- The Old Testament talks about a messiah. Some texts talk about what this 'messiah' would be like.
  - A special person sent by God.
  - Someone to make Israel a great nation and bring peace to the world.
  - A king for Israel to bring the country back to God.
  - A military leader to fight and defeat the enemy.
  - Someone descended from King David.
  - A great leader like David.
  - Someone born in Bethlehem.
- Christians believe that Jesus fulfilled these expectations, and that he is the Messiah.
- Christians see Jesus as their Saviour.
- For Christians, Christmas is a time of celebration of the arrival of the Messiah.
- The Christian Church use Advent as a time of preparation for the arrival of Jesus.

### Links with other religions

- **Messiah** (Judaism). Jewish people believe that a Messiah will come to save them. They do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah. They are still waiting for the Messiah prophesied in the Tanakh (Old Testament).
- **Messiah** (Islam). Muslims accept the Jewish belief that there were prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. They also accept the Christians claim that Jesus was the expected Messiah. Muslims, however, do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. In the Qur'an, Jesus is recognised as a Messiah as well as a prophet or messenger of God.
- **Mahdi** (Islam). The Mahdi is another messianic figure in Islam. Some Muslims believe the Mahdi will change the world into a perfect and just Islamic society.
- **Maitreya** (Buddhism). In Buddhism, Maitreya plays a similar function to a Messiah. Buddhists believe that Maitreya is the future Buddha who will appear on earth, achieve enlightenment and teach the dharma (law/teachings of the Buddha). Maitreya will guide people who have failed to follow Buddhist teachings to enlightenment.

Key Vocabulary	Definition
Restore	To put or bring back to an earlier or original state.
Messiah	A 'rescuer' or 'anointed one.'
Old Testament	The first of the two main parts of the Bible, which records the history of the Jewish people before the birth of Jesus.
New Testament	The second of the two main parts of the Bible, containing the books written after the birth of Jesus Christ.
Saviour	One who saves from any form or degree of evil.
People of God	People of God is a description in the Old Testament that applies to the Israelites and that in the New Testament applies to Christians.
Prophecy	A prediction of what will happen in the future.
Advent	A season marking the preparation for and celebration of the birth of Jesus

