



Christianity:

Was Jesus the Messiah?

Topic Overview

- The Old Testament talks about a messiah. Some texts talk about what this 'messiah' would be like.
- Christians believe that Jesus fulfilled these expectations, and that he is the Messiah.
- Although Jesus fulfilled the old prophecies, there are new twists to the story. The longed-for Messiah was not a warrior, but the son of a humble carpenter, who teaches his followers to love their enemies and offers to save not just the Jewish people, but the whole human race.
- Jesus was a surprising person who turned expectations on their head.
- For Christian's, the belief that Jesus is more than the Messiah - but God in the flesh - means that faith in Jesus can transform people's lives now.
- Christians try to reach out to others as God reached out to them through Jesus.
- Christians believe Jesus was:
 - A saviour who rescued through making peace with enemies.
 - A humble, ordinary man yet the Son of God.
 - Part of an older story, yet the first chapter of a new story.
- When Jesus entered into Jerusalem on **Palm Sunday**, he is treated like a king. However, he behaved in a humble and peaceful manner by entering into Jerusalem on a donkey, not like the idea of a regal king or someone who was going to fight off the Romans.
- Christians need to learn that their Messiah was humble and a peacemaker.
- Christians try to demonstrate that they too are peacemakers like their Messiah.

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
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.
Messiah	A 'rescuer' or an 'anointed one.'
Saviour	One who saves from any form or degree of evil.
Transfiguration	Transformation.
Gospels	The Gospels in the New Testament are eyewitness accounts of the people who lived and spoke with Jesus (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John).
Prophecy	A prediction of what will happen in the future.

