

1- INTRODUCTION

It is said that around 2000 years ago a person named "Jesus" came from Nazareth (now known as Israel) is known as the founder of the aforementioned religion. It is one of the monotheistic religions and the Abrahamic religion. It is the branch of the second Judaic sect because it's founder Jesus Christ was a Jew. It has its roots in the Roman province of Judea in the 1st century. The followers of Christianity are called Christians. About 2,000 years ago a person named Jesus came from the town of Nazareth which is now called Israel is the founder of this religion.

Jesus Christ was the preacher and he spread the teachings of God among the people and many became his followers. He had many miracles like healing the sick people, controlling the weather, and multiplying food. He had 12 apostles, whom he has transferred his knowledge before his resurrection. They wrote the Holy book Bible in which they explained the teachings of Jesus Christ and the four Gospels also included in the sacred text. Jesus Christ with his 12 disciples continued preaching and then he was arrested and executed by the Roman Governor. But the followers of Jesus Christ believe that God has raised Christ after his crucifixion and his resurrection saved all the Christians from the punishment of their sins. After the resurrection , Christ started his life as Lord and he will come back again.

After the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Christianity separated from Judaism. Then further developments came in Christianity and it continued to spread. Now it is the world's largest religion with 2.4 billion followers and four major branches including the Catholic Church, Protestantism, Eastern Orthodox Church, and Oriental Orthodoxy.

2-Objective:

To discuss briefly the History, Founder, Sacred book, Beliefs and Practices, Customs and culture or Different types of Christianity.

3-DISCUSSION

3.1- History:

Christianity is a monotheistic religion having roots in the sectarian movement of Jews that is based upon the life, teachings, and preaching of Jesus of Nazareth (also known as Jesus Christ). It started in Jerusalem in Judea in the 1st century and then traveled northward and westward in the Mediterranean region through the endeavors and activities of Jesus and his disciples & apostles - Peter, Paul, James, and John with many others. The story

from the Christian point of view might be put in the following Way. They believed that from the initiation of the human race God wanted to bring men into His fellowship. He has permitted the man's free will and has not forced Himself on human beings. In reply to God's initiative, human beings everywhere were stimulated to search for God. As a result of this many religions were formed. All of these got indulged in the sins and they did not fulfill the purpose of God's creation. For some mystifying reason, God came to know that among the people of Israel several people who responded to Him. Then God wanted to reveal Himself fully through one person who came out of that succession and through him the salvation of humanity would be possible.ⁱ

Christianity spins around the figure of Jesus Christ, who was born miraculously without father. The history of the religion Christianity has its basis upon the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whom the Christians called the son of God.ⁱⁱ Jesus Christ was born in a stable in Bethlehem on the Holy place. His mother was a young virgin and her name was Mary, who became pregnant through the action of the Holy Spirit. Christians believed him as a Messiah who gave them salvation from sins. Jesus began his ministry at the age of 30. He spent three years preaching, healing and showed miracles. Through parables, he taught daily stories that had spiritual and moral lessons for those who might hear it. He had twelve students whom he called to accompany him in his work, and to support him. Jesus openly announced that he was speaking with God's authority. In His preaching, he ministered to the spiritually and physically hurting people of Israel, he gave promotion to a purist, personal faith-based with complete love of God and neighbor, and he worked against the corruption and brutality of the political and religious class. Due to his preaching, he was caught by the Roman Governor and then crucified on a cross. Some of his women followers discovered on the Sunday following his execution that the tomb into which his body was put was empty.

Then Jesus, alive, appeared to them as the Jesus they met before his death. His followers knew God had revived Jesus from the dead. It is mentioned in the Bible that, Jesus was seen by many of his disciples. Then several Jesus disciples got up, the Jewish leaders were already in threat by Jesus' message and his effect upon a society which they wanted full dominance, worried about the Jesus mission could wipe out and turned their criticisms upon Jesus' disciples and followers.ⁱⁱⁱ

Still, several early Christian leaders bravely remained in Jerusalem and Judea to speak out their message of Christian love and redemption, leading to public violence by officials eager

to wipe out this risky sect of Messianic Judaism. A number of the apostles were killed by the Roman but they did not lose heart and continued preaching. Four Gospels along with the Christianity teachings were written by the disciples. It has been asserted that the teachings of Jesus Christ and the effect of his death and resurrection would not have long-lasting impact without the endeavors of Saying, Paul. He found himself filled with the Holy Spirit after Jesus Christ and immediately began preaching the Christian gospel. Christians believed that the resurrection of Christ was a sign for its followers that they do not need to remain under the Jewish law anyone. Paul founded the Christian churches in the Roman Empire including “Europe and Africa”. In 313 Emperor Constantine, I issued the Milan Edict authorizing the worship of Christians. The Roman Empire formally accepted Trinitarian Christianity as its state religion in 380, with the Edict of Thessalonica issued under Theodosius I, and Christianity developed itself as a primarily gentile.^{iv} The following graph shows different stages of Christianity and it’s spread in different countries:

3.2- Founder of Christianity

3.2.1- Birth of Jesus Christ:

The Christianity religion started with Jesus Christ who was born on 25 December according to Christians. A lady named Mary was the mother of the Jesus Christ belonged to Abrahamic religion. It is believed by the Muslims and Christians that Mary was a virgin when she got pregnant. She was a pious lady and it was the Holy Spirit due to which she conceived. When Jesus Christ was born many people called her mother characterless. At that time Jesus was spoken in the lap to his mother and announced that He was the messenger of God. Christians believed that Jesus Christ was born by the Holy spirit, without any sexual intercourse or natural father and they said God came in the world in the form of Jesus Christ. This belief of Christianity was challenged by many Judaic sects. The birth of Jesus Christ, from a virgin Mary is also mentioned in the Quran with his name Isa Ibn e Maryam.^v

3.2.2 - Ministry of Jesus Christ:

The ministry of Jesus Christ began with his baptism by a Baptist of that time who baptized him in the river of Jordan. This was the start of His public ministry or preaching, teaching, and healing. He was followed by a number of followers, some fishermen who left their nets and families, and also some women whose

presence can be seen in the ministry of Jesus. He gave the message of love, forgiveness, justice, and repentance at sins with a remembrance of return to God. He went against injustice and made the doors of liberation for oppression and justice for the poor. That's why Christians called him the Messiah.^{vi}

3.2.3 -Teachings of Jesus Christ:

- He advised to Love God.
- He said that Love your neighbor.
- Forgive the persons who have wrong with you.
- Love even the enemies.
- Beseech from God for the forgiveness of your sins.
- Jesus is the Messiah and was given the authority to forgive others.
- Repentance of sins is important
- Don't be so hypocritical.
- Don't try to judge other people.^{vii}

3.2.4- Crucifixion:

The crucifixion of Jesus is highlighted as an important event in the gospels. Jesus Christ did preaching and let the people obey God. He worked for the oppressed community and for their rights. Because of his preaching, Jesus was caught by the Roman Governor, and was crucified on a cross. Christians believe that Jesus was God in human form and after the crucifixion, he died on the cross on the day Friday. It is said that Jesus has paid for the sins of all humanity by the pains he bears on the cross. According to them, he is the savior of mankind and he saved humanity from the punishment which God would give them for their sins. The crucifixion was a terrible event because Jesus Christ suffered a lot by had to be seen by his friends and his mother. Christians, however, claim this was important for him to return to life and to prove that death has no control over him. In the crucifixion, Christians believe that God has set us free and told the world that Jesus is Lord and that life is everlasting.^{viii}

3.2.5- Resurrection:

Christians believe that after his crucifixion God raised Jesus from the dead, beginning His eternal life as Christ and Lord. The death and resurrection of Jesus both are the most important events in the Christian's religion, it is a cornerstone of Christian faith and

remembered by the Passover. His resurrection is actually a promise of the resurrection of the Christians died before.^{ix}

3.3- Sacred Book:

The Holy Bible is the sacred or teaching based book of Christians which is a mixture of 66 books written by the different authors. It is divided into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament.^x

The Old Testament is followed by the Jews, it also explains the history of Jewish people, composed of basic laws, the life history of prophets, and it also asserted back arrival of the Messiah. After the death of Jesus Christ, it's New Testament was written and the four related books written by Mark, Mathew, Luke, and John are named as Gospels which means Good News. The Gospels were written between the "70 and 100 AD". The life, teachings, and resurrection of Jesus have been explained in them.

Some letters of the leaders of Christians named Epistles are included in the New Testament. These letters tell the instruction that how to operate the Church. The acts of the disciples are also book that became a part of the New Testament which highlights the ministry of apostles after Jesus. Part 2 of Gospels explains that what happened after the death of Jesus Christ. The New Testament final chapter, Revelation, outlines a prophecy and prophecies that will take place at the end of the century, as well as metaphors to explain the state of the earth.

3.4- Religious Beliefs:

Following are the basic beliefs of Christians:^{xi}

3.4.1- Belief on God:

Christians believe that there is only one God. He has created the world and every creature and He is the Divine and not in concrete form whom they named Father.

3.4.2- belief on Jesus Christ:

Christians believe that Jesus Christ was born with the Divine power and He is the son of God. God has sent the Messiah to restrict humanity from doing sins and let them obey God. He gave them the lesson of love and teach them the laws of God.

3.4.3- Justification by faith:

It is the belief of Christians that due to their belief in God, Jesus Christ was the son of God, and his resurrection, they would have a perfect relationship with God. And they have taken salvation from the punishment of sins by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

3.4.4- The Trinity:

Christians believe in the concept of Trinity which means, God has three forms the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of Heaven. Other people misunderstand this and suppose that Christians believe in three different gods. But they don't believe in different Gods. Christians believe that God has human form as Jesus Christ and that He is present in the work of the Holy Spirit and is seen in believers' acts today.^{xii}

3.4.5- Life again after death:

Christians believe that there will be again a life after earthly death. If they will spend their life according to the principles of Father and His son Jesus Christ they will be absolutely successful in eternal life.

3.4.6- Resurrection:

The Resurrection of Jesus is a basic doctrine of Christianity, is based on supposition that Jesus Christ was raised up from the dead on the third day after His Crucifixion and that by His conquest of death, all believers would eventually share in His triumph over "sin, death, and the Devil." The celebration of this occurrence called Easter, or the Festival of the Resurrection, is the main event in the history of Christianity.

3.4.7- The Saints:

The person who spends the Holy life according to the teachings of Jesus and some miracles are attached to him then he become a saint. The title of Saint is provided by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches by a process called "*canonization*". They also believe that Saints created in this way can connect with God on behalf of people who are alive today.

3.5- Practices:

Following are the important practices of Christians:^{xiii}

3.5.1- Bible Study:

Bible study is considered mandatory for Christians. By the study of the Bible, they came to know that what God is saying to them in the text. They believe that the Bible is the words of

God. They study Bible may be individually or maybe in the form of groups in the Church and in some Churches the Father of the Church reads the Bible and others just listen to it.

3.5.2- Fasting:

Like Muslims, Christians also follow fasting. In their fast, they remain abstained from meat, drink, and any natural food. Some do not eat things cooked on the fire and some do not eat eggs or fruits during the fast. They have fast for 2 months, and a fast is for 24 hours and after this duration they celebrate Easter.

3.5.3- Monasticism:

It is an important practice in Christianity which demands a person to leave all the secular world activities and devote life for God and spend the whole life in the worship. The monks, nuns, fathers, or mothers are the main characters in Christianity who devote their whole life to the church and their religious practices.

3.5.4- Prayer:

Prayer is another essential practice in Christianity and according to Christians, it is a way of communication with God. It may be verbal, oral, and in silent form and may be offered individually or in a group in the Church. It can compose of a petition, confession, lamentation, and many other expressions of faith. In the prayer, they repent at their sins, confess their dependence upon God, and beseech for God's mercy and forgiveness.

3.5.5- Baptism:

Baptism is one of the most important or sacred sacraments in Christianity. It includes application of or immersion of person in water, and during this practice, they confess "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Some Christians baptize both children and adults, but others believe that baptism is only rightly done on adults. They think that a person got clear from sins after baptism. They said that baptism is for salvation, a commemoration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it completes the command of Christ to baptize, cleanses the sins, confers grace, and publicly show one's faith.

3.5.6- Confirmation:

Confirmation is also a sacrament, ritual of passage practiced by many Christian denominations. It relates to the strengthening or deepening the relation of a person

with God. According to them the process of confirmation increase their ability to practice their faith in God and Jesus Christ and to obey their teachings. A baptized person is already a member of the Church then confirmation strengthens his bond with the church and religion.

3.5.7- Vestments:

Vestments are the liturgical garments and religious dresses that are seated in the churches and they are for father, bishops, priest, nuns, or brothers. Following are the kinds of vestments which are worn :

- Cassock
- Vestments of Priest s
- Vestments of Bishops
- Vestments used in the Greek Church
- Vestments used in Protestant Church

3.5.8- Eucharist:

The Eucharist is also named as “Communion or Lord’s Supper”, is a religious practice done in the Christian churches showing act of obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ about commemorating the day of his death on the cross and he served the night before he died. Bread and wine are the main elements of Eucharist, the bread recalls Christ’s body and the wine recalls his blood .^{xiv}

3.5.9 -Tithing:

The word "tithe" means "to give the tenth part”, the Christians give the tenth part of the production of their land or any other financial earning to the church. This is called tithing. The tradition of giving the 10th part of the production of the land and the spoils of war to bishops or priests and kings was a very ancient one among many nations.

3.5.10- Catechism:

A catechism is a lesson or textbook on the foundations of Christian belief and practice, typically as a guide to baptism and confirmation. Normally, catechisms include lessons on creeds, the prayer of the Lord, and the Ten Commandments, as well as the Hail Mary in Roman Catholicism.

3.6- Culture and different customs:^{xv}

3.6.1- Christmas Day:

Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ every year on 25 December, which is called Christmas. It is a holiday among Christians. Most of the Christians visit the church on Christmas Eve (24 December) or the day of Christmas also. They traditionally celebrate Christmas. People normally spend the day in their homes and eat a specific meal, which often composed of roast turkey, Christmas pudding, and mince pies. They exchange gifts, send cards to each other, and decorate their houses. Christmas is a special day for children. The young children expect that Father Christmas will bring the presents at the night before Christmas Day. A tree is also decorated with lights in the home.

3.6.2- Boxing Day:

It is the day came after Christmas Day and it is a public holiday for Christians.

3.6.3- Easter:

The event of Easter occurs usually in March or April. It indicates the death of Jesus Christ on Good Friday and his rising towards the sky from the dead on Easter Sunday. Easter Monday and the Good Friday are the public holidays for them. Easter eggs and chocolate eggs are exchanged as presents to each other and as a hope of new life.

3.6.4- Lent:

The 40 days before Easter are named as Lent. It is a time when Christians take time to reflect and prepare for Easter. It's the tradition that people would fast in this period and during fasting, many people will give something up their favorite food.

3.6.5- Shrove Tuesday or Pancake day:

A day before starting the Lent is called **Shrove Tuesday**, or **Pancake Day**. People make traditional pancakes by using milk, egg, fat, or bread for eating before fasting. Lent starts on Ash Wednesday. There are some Churches where Christians make an ash cross on their forehead as a symbol of death and sorrow for sin.

3.6.6- Cross sign or Sleep:

The **Christian's sign of the cross** is used for the representation of the tool of the crucifixion of Jesus is the most important symbol for Christianity. It is about the crucifix (a cross that had a *corpus* with the three-dimensional representation of the body of Jesus Christ). Among the Christians, the Cross sign means Christianity in modern English and named as sleep. Most of them wear a locket with Sleep and some made the sign of Sleep on there for ahead.

3.6.7- Church :

A church is the sacred religious place of the Christians where they went for worship. In some Churches, they have pictures of Jesus Christ as a sign of their love with Jesus. They perform

prayer in groups and study the Bible in the Church. Their wedding ceremony is also performed there. Moreover, they have baptized water in the Church through which the father of the church baptizes the others.

3.6.8- Marriage ceremony:

Christians believe that marriage is a gift of God and it's a blessing with which they are granted. It is the basic right of every person to engage in sexual relations and to make a family. They get married in the Church in front of God. A marriage is a public announcement of love and commitment between the two hearts. Both the Bride and Bride Groom put their hands-on Bible and do promises with each other and at that time Father of the Church read some verses of the Bible , then they get married. A white dress called Reet veil is worn by the bride, the white color shows the purity of her love.

3.6.9- Death ceremony:

Christians offer prayer at the funeral of a deceased person. Other rituals include the singing of hymns, a eulogy to recall the deceased, and the study of the Bible. A funeral is arranged for the friends and family of the dead person to grieve for the person.

3.7- Types of Christianity:^{xvi}

Christianity is composed of three branches which are named Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox.

3.7.1- Catholic:

The Catholic part of Christianity is presided over and governed by the Pope and Catholic bishops in the world.

3.7.2-Orthodox:

The Orthodox (or Eastern Orthodox) has it's division into independent parts each is presided by a Holy Synod. There is no main governing personality akin to the Pope.

3.7.3-Protestants:

There are many denominations included in Protestant Christianity, some of which have a difference in the interpretation of the Bible and the governance of the

church. The main denominations that fall under the inference of Protestant Christianity are:

- “Baptist.
- Episcopalian
- Evangelist
- Methodic
- Presbyterian
- Pentecostal
- Lutheran
- Anglican
- Evangelical
- Assemblies of God
- Christian Reform
- Church of the Nazarene
- Disciples of Christ
- United Church of Christ
- Mennonite
- Christian Science
- Quaker
- Seventh-Day Adventist”

Some sects of Christianity have a different perspective about the worship but all they have their Faith on life and teachings of Jesus

4-Conclusion:

Hence Christianity is a monotheistic religion having believed in one God but three forms, God as Father, God as Son, and God as Holy Spirit. The whole Christianity revolves around

one personality who is Jesus Christ, whom they consider the Son of God, the Messiah, and the savior of mankind. They have consistent belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his raising from dead and his arrival again in the world. According to them, Jesus has wiped out their sins by his crucifixion and his blood or painful death has reimbursed for the sins of the whole of humanity. Jesus gave the lesson of love, justice, kindness, and mercy.

Christianity was a branch of Judaism and it separated from it as a new religion after the death of Jesus Christ. The twelve disciples of Jesus and his all other followers spread Christianity as a religion and many of them were executed by the Romans or Jews but they continued preaching. Among them, the name of Saint Paul is prominent who made churches and did several developments in Christianity. Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John have written the Gospels Which are the collection of the teachings of Jesus Christ. The main Holy book Bible is considered the words of God and His Son and they take guidance from it to spend their life.

From the discussion there believed or practices also got cleared. They believe upon God and His son and offer prayer, study the Holy Bible, and do fasting for the happiness of God. They promote love, justice, and kindness among them. The one who devotes his life for God is a very pious or sacred personality like a saint, bishop, priest, etc. Like other religions, Christianity also divided into some sects such as Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestants. They have some practices in different but belief on Jesus and God and resurrection is the same .

Christianity spread among a large number of people by the preaching of the disciples of Jesus Christ and now it is considered the world's largest religion with 2.4 billion followers. It is the predominant in Russia, North America, Europe, the Philippines, South America, South Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and East Timor.