Crucifixion, Resurrection & Ascension Summary

(Pages 18-21 in the Christianity textbook)

This summary sheet is to help you learn about the death, rising from the dead and travel into heaven of Jesus Christ. According to the AQA specification you need to know the following things:

‘Beliefs and teachings about: ...

• the crucifixion, resurrection and ascension [of Jesus Christ]’

Terminology

**The Ascension** - when Jesus went up into heaven alive 40 days after his resurrection

**blasphemy** - speaking lies about God

‘The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.’

Jesus in Mark 10:45

**crucifix** - a cross with an image of Jesus on it

**crucifixion**  - 1. execution on a cross; 2. the death of Jesus

**Good Friday** - the day on which Jesus died

**heaven**  - a place of perfect happiness in the presence of God

**Israelites** - another name for Jews. (They were descended from a man called Israel.)

**Jerusalem** - the capital city of Israel and the holiest place in Judaism

**Maundy Thursday** - the last day before Jesus died

**Paradise**  - heaven

**Passover** - a Jewish festival to celebrate the Israelites leaving Egypt with the sacrifice of a lamb

**resurrection**  - 1. when a dead person rises back to life; 2. the rising of Jesus from the dead

‘When Jesus came face to face with death he grappled with his victim.’

(anonymous)

**sabbath**  - a religious day of rest

**Son of Man** - a title that Jesus called himself

Events of the crucifixion

1. **Jesus** was in Jerusalem for the festival of **Passover**.
2. He had the Last Supper on **Maundy Thursday** with his disciples and one of them, Judas went to Jesus’s enemies to betray him for money.
3. In the early hours of **Good Friday** Jesus was **arrested** after staying up all night praying. Judas showed the temple guards where to find him.
4. Jesus is put on **trial before the Jewish religious leaders** and found guilty of blasphemy because he claimed to be the Son of God.
5. Jesus is put on **trial before Pontius Pilate**, the Roman governor. The religious leaders want someone else to be unpopular for killing Jesus rather than themselves.
6. Pilate asks the crowd to name a prisoner they want to release. They chose a murderer called **Barabbas** to be released instead of Jesus.
7. Jesus is **whipped**, mocked and beaten by the Roman soldiers who put a **crown of thorns** on his head.
8. Pilate finds Jesus **not guilty** but there is massive pressure from the violent crowd to kill Jesus so Pilate has him **executed anyway**.
9. Jesus is **crucified** between two robbers. One of them insults him. The other repents and believes in him. Jesus tells him, ‘I tell you the truth: today you will be with me in Paradise.’
10. **Jesus forgives** the soldiers killing him. ‘Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.’

‘Surely this man was the Son of God.’

The Roman centurion in charge of crucifying Jesus.

1. **Darkness** covers the land for several hours.
2. Jesus shouts ‘It is finished,’ and **dies**.
3. There is a violent earthquake and the **temple curtain is torn in two**, symbolising the end of the dividing line between humans and God.
4. Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Jewish council gets permission from Pilate to **bury** Jesus’s body in Joseph’s cave tomb.
5. The tomb entrance is sealed with a giant stone disk and an **armed guard** is posted by the Romans to stop anyone stealing his body.

The impact of the crucifixion on Christians today.

1. The voluntary death of Jesus on the cross shows **God’s deepest love to humanity**. God became a human (the Incarnation) and was willing to die a humiliating and agonising death to save us from the hell that we deserve. Jesus swaps places with sinners.
2. His death enables **forgiveness** of sins for all who repent. The punishment for sin has been carried out on Jesus.
3. Humans are **reconciled to God** and can be in relationship with him because of this.
4. People can now go to **heaven** and avoid **hell** after they die if they follow Jesus in their life.
5. His death shows that **humans are extremely valuable** in God’s sight. Therefore, Christians try to see the value in others and save/respect other people, especially people who are not easy to like.
6. Christians **worship** God for his mercy to them.
7. Christians remember the death of Jesus with **crucifixes** and **crosses**. Catholics prefer crucifixes because they want to remember the suffering he chose to take on for them. Protestants prefer empty crosses because Jesus is alive now and no longer suffering. Also, in the Ten Commandments it says that one should not make images to be used in worship.

The resurrection of Jesus

1. Jesus had **predicted** his death and resurrection but even his disciples did not believe that he would come back to life.
2. Jesus was buried on Good Friday just before sundown. The next day was a Saturday sabbath so normal burial preparations had been missed out.
3. During the early hours of Sunday morning there was another earthquake and an **angel rolled away the stone** at the tomb entrance, terrifying the Roman soldiers who fled. This is called **Easter Sunday**.
4. Some female followers of Jesus went to the tomb to preserve the body by anointing but found it empty. Jesus appeared to one of them, **Mary Magdalene** (not his mother), and told her to tell the disciples that he was risen.
5. They don’t believe her but **Peter and John** (from the 12 Disciples) go into the empty tomb and see men in shining clothes who say ‘Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He has risen as he told you.’
6. Over the next 40 days **Jesus appears to his followers** at different times and places. On one occasion he appears to 500 people at once.
7. They do not always recognise him straight away and he has the **ability to appear** behind doors that have been locked **and to disappear** in front of people.
8. He is however, **physically alive** and eats fish on at least one occasion.

The importance of the resurrection for Christians today

1. This shows that Jesus keeps his **promises**.
2. It shows that he is **God** in human form.
3. It gives them hope that they too will be brought **back to life** one day.
4. They need **not fear death** any more. ‘Death has lost its sting.’
5. **Good** has defeated evil.

The Ascension

In Luke’s Gospel it says that after the 40 days were over, Jesus spoke to his disciples telling them that he would send the Holy Spirit and that they would take his message to the uttermost parts of the earth. As he spoke he **rose up into the air** until he disappeared from their sight behind a cloud and was not seen any more. Angels appeared to the disciples telling them that he would come back again one day.

The importance of the Ascension for Christians today

1. He did not die a second time this means that **Jesus is alive**.
2. He is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. This means that he jointly reigns with God the Father and is **lord of the universe**.
3. It is a reminder that he will **come back** to judge the world on Judgement Day.

Different views on the resurrection, etc.

1. **Liberals** believe that the resurrection and ascension of Jesus are **not literally true**; they are fables to help people understand that God will give people some kind of afterlife and to show that Jesus is a special person.
2. **Conservatives** believe that these stories are literally true because they were recorded by **eye witnesses** and **God has power** to do anything, especially for such important occasions as these.

Possible Exam Questions

Explain two ways in which the resurrection is important for Christians today. In your answer you must refer to scripture. (5 marks)

Explain two ways in which the crucifixion affects Christians today. In your answer you must refer to scripture. (5 marks)

‘The crucifixion of Jesus is more important than his resurrection.’ (12 marks)

‘The resurrection and ascension of Jesus are not real events.’ (12 marks)

‘The death of Jesus is not important for people today.’ (12 marks)