



Chapter 5: Christianity



THE RELIGION OF LOVE AND REDEMPTION

STUDYING CHRISTIANITY IS THE KEY TO "UNDERSTANDING THE HEART OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION."

Why Study Christianity?

- ▶ Global Influence: It is the world's most practiced religion and shapes global culture (e.g., Christmas, Valentine's Day).
- ▶ Relevance to Thai Society: As Michael Wright noted, Thailand adopted Western culture's "shell." To understand the "core" and Western logic, one must study Christianity.
- ▶ Jesus as a Historical Figure: Often called the "most dangerous man" because his teachings radically challenged and transformed the world's social and religious structures.

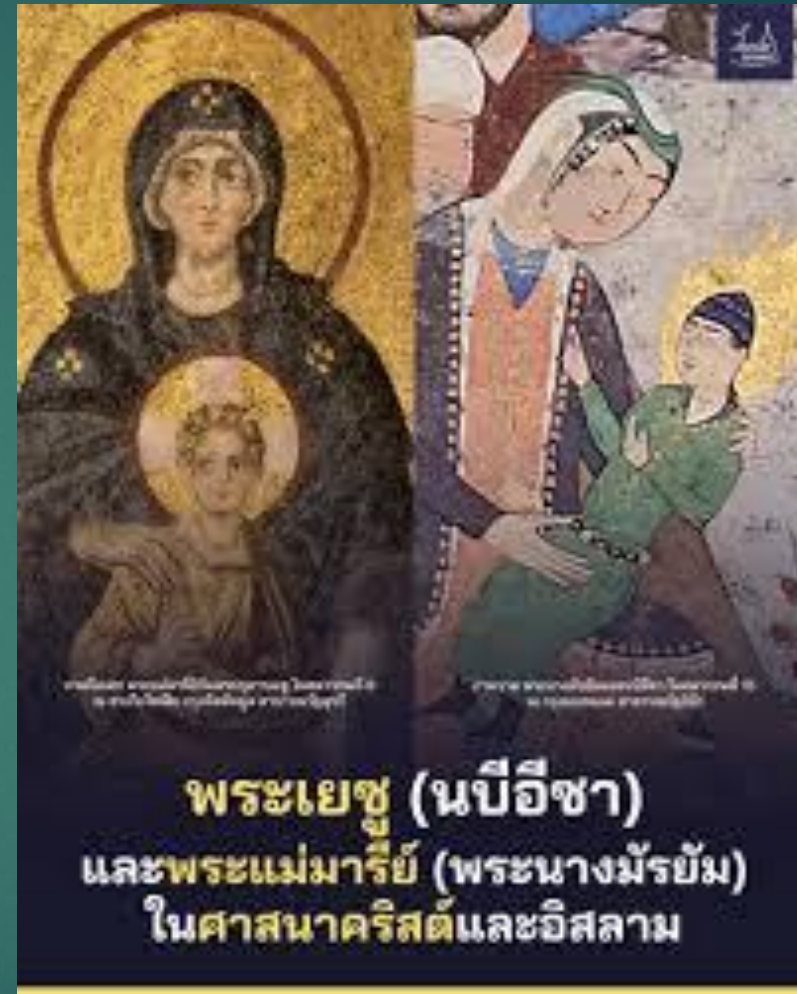


<https://knowgod.in.th/why-do-christians-go-to-church/>



5.1 The Meaning of "Christ" and "Jesus"

- ▶ Christ: Derived from the Greek Christos, equivalent to the Hebrew Messiah.
- ▶ Meaning: "The Anointed One"—chosen by God as His representative
- ▶ Jesus: Derived from the Hebrew Joshua (Yehoshua).
- ▶ Meaning: "Yahweh is Salvation" or "The Savior."
- ▶ Summary: Jesus Christ is the specialized title for the individual chosen by God to redeem humanity from sin.



5.2 History: The Primordial Era

- ▶ The Beginning: It does not start with Jesus' birth, but with the "Creation" and the "Fall of Man."
- ▶ Adam and Eve: The first humans who disobeyed God (The Forbidden Fruit), leading to "Original Sin" passed down through generations.
- ▶ God's Love: Despite human sin, God initiated the "History of Salvation" to restore the broken relationship.
- ▶ [Visual: Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden]



Covenants with Abraham and Moses

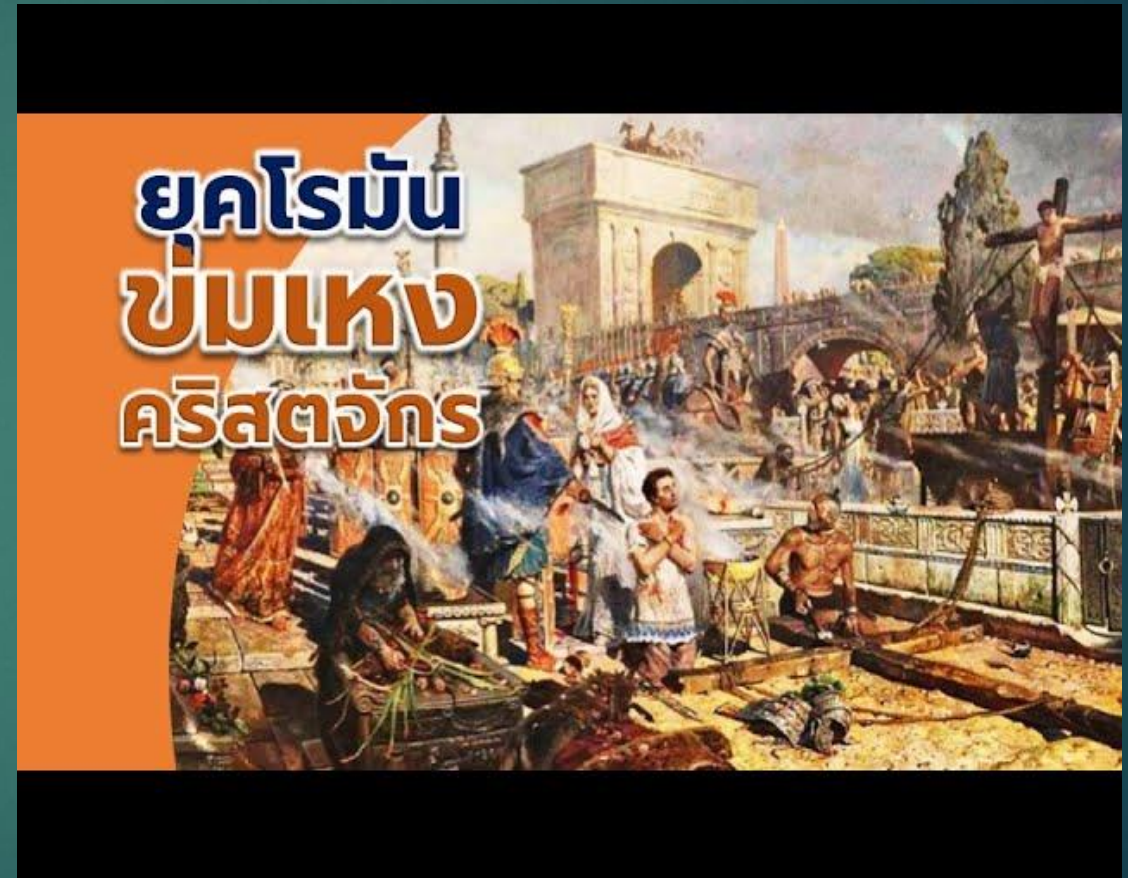
- ▶ Abraham: The patriarch of the Jews; God promised to make his descendants a great nation.
- ▶ Moses: Led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt (The Exodus). He received the "Ten Commandments" at Mount Sinai.
- ▶ Foundational Beliefs (Judaism): Monotheism (One God, Yahweh) and the persistent hope for a coming "Messiah" to liberate the people.
- ▶ [Visual: Moses holding the Stone Tablets]



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hbp5yMWkD0w>

5.2.2 The Context Before Jesus

- ▶ Political Climate: Palestine (Israel) was under the oppressive occupation of the Roman Empire.
- ▶ Social Fragmentation: Jewish society was divided into groups with different ideologies:
- ▶ Zealots: Revolutionary fighters seeking independence through force.
- ▶ Pharisees: Strictly focused on religious laws and traditions.
- ▶ Essenes: Ascetics who lived in the desert, awaiting the end of the world.
- ▶ Sadducees: The wealthy elite who collaborated with Rome to maintain order.



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_ei7Z6Ya88

5.3 Elements of the Religion: The Founder

- ▶ Who is Jesus?: In Christian doctrine, He is fully "Human" and fully "Divine."
- ▶ Birth: Born in Bethlehem in a lowly manger (symbolizing humility and closeness to the poor).
- ▶ Early Life: Grew up in Nazareth as a carpenter's son. He was known for his wisdom, compassion, and deep devotion to God.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUUpnhf2HXk>

Baptism and the Start of Ministry

- ▶ The Turning Point: At age 30, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River.
- ▶ Baptism: A symbolic cleansing of sin and the beginning of His public mission.
- ▶ The Wilderness: Jesus spent 40 days in the desert facing temptation, emerging as a perfected spiritual leader.
- ▶ [Visual: Jesus being baptized by John in the Jordan River]



Core Teachings: "The Law of Love"



- ▶ Sermon on the Mount: The definitive collection of His moral teachings.
- ▶ A New Paradigm: While traditional Jewish laws emphasized "fear" and "strict adherence," Jesus emphasized "Love for God and Love for Neighbor."
- ▶ The Goal: To lead humanity back to God and establish the "Kingdom of Heaven."
- ▶ The 12 Apostles: Jesus chose ordinary people (fishermen, tax collectors) to spread the "Good News."



<https://th.kingdomsalvation.org/gospel/sermon-on-the-mount.html>

Passion, Death, and Resurrection



- ▶ The Conflict: Jewish leaders charged Him with blasphemy (claiming to be the Son of God) and defying Roman authority.
- ▶ Crucifixion: Jesus accepted a painful death on the cross to "atone" for the sins of humanity.
- ▶ Resurrection: He rose from the dead on the third day (Sunday), symbolizing victory over death and evil.
- ▶ The Cross: Transitioned from an instrument of execution to a symbol of ultimate love and sacrifice.



<https://www.catholicthailand.com/read.php?id=115&aid=1&bid=5>

5.5 The Ultimate Goal of Christianity



- ▶ The Kingdom of God: The ultimate goal is not a physical territory on Earth, but a spiritual kingdom within the hearts of those who truly believe.
- ▶ Salvation: The core objective is being saved from the "Final Judgment" and avoiding the "Second Death" (eternal destruction in Hell).
- ▶ Two Levels of Life Goals:
- ▶ Present Life: To achieve happiness and peace for oneself, family, and society.
- ▶ Afterlife (Ultimate Goal): To be liberated from sin and enter the Kingdom of God—an eternal realm of love and bliss.
- ▶ The Key Condition: Faith, specifically faith in Jesus Christ, is the essential path to this salvation.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CcQxoTLCIFQ>

Perspectives on the Ultimate Goal



- ▶ Life Eternal: A never-ending life that begins immediately after death following individual judgment by Christ.
- ▶ Returning to God: The purpose of human life is to restore the original relationship with God.
- ▶ The Law of Love: Achieving the goal requires following the two greatest commandments:
 - ▶ 1"Love God with all your heart and soul."
 - ▶ 2"Love your neighbor as yourself."



<https://www.bible.com/th/reading-plans/46919-khwaamrkkh-ngphraecchaathmt/day/1>

5.6 Religious Practices

- ▶ Daily Worship: Living in constant connection with God through personal prayer and gratitude.
- ▶ Adherence to the Ten Commandments: Following the moral laws given through Moses, which Jesus reaffirmed as the path to heaven.
- ▶ The Lord's Day (Sunday): Gathering at church for the Mass or worship services to commemorate Jesus, listen to sermons, and receive blessings.
- ▶ Continuous Prayer: Praying before meals, sleep, or travel to remain close to God and maintain the mindfulness needed to avoid sin.



<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7r6ZPa0fYHDxKyQXIQwfdk6kHHE9tjqc>

Roles of the Laity and Clergy



- ▶ For the Laity (Laypeople):
- ▶ Prioritize education and professional integrity.
- ▶ Apply Christian values to solve complex social problems.
- ▶ Participate in nation-building and civic duties.
- ▶ For the Clergy (Priests/Ministers):
- ▶ Study and teach the Gospel and Church doctrines faithfully.
- ▶ Remain politically neutral to serve all people equally.
- ▶ Be role models of justice, sacrifice, and humble living.



<https://www.istockphoto.com/th>

5.7 Major Sects and the Causes of Division

- ▶ Causes of Schism: Historical splits were driven by power struggles, nationalism (East vs. West Rome), and differing interpretations of scripture.
- ▶ The Three Major Denominations:
- ▶ 1 Roman Catholic: Led by the Pope; emphasizes sacraments, saints, and the Virgin Mary.
- ▶ 2 Orthodox: Focuses on strict adherence to ancient traditions; regards the Bible as higher than the Pope's authority.
- ▶ 3 Protestant: Born from the 16th-century Reformation; emphasizes the Bible as the sole authority and the "priesthood of all believers."



5.8 Symbols of Christianity: The Cross

- ▶ The Ultimate Sacrifice: The cross represents Jesus dying to atone for human sins.
- ▶ Symbolism of the Two Beams:
- ▶ Vertical Beam: Man's responsibility toward God.
- ▶ Horizontal Beam: Man's responsibility toward his neighbors.
- ▶ The "Ego" Interpretation (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu): A cross represents cutting through the "I" (the vertical bar) to eliminate selfishness.



<https://www.shutterstock.com/th/image-vector/crosses-christian-religion-set-isolated-orthodoxy-755450920>

Variations of the Cross

- ▶ Anchor Cross: Symbolizes hope and security in Christ.
- ▶ Celtic Cross: The circle represents eternity.
- ▶ Eastern/Russian Cross: Features additional bars representing the "INRI" sign and Christ's footrest.
- ▶ Papal Cross: Used exclusively in the Pope's processions.

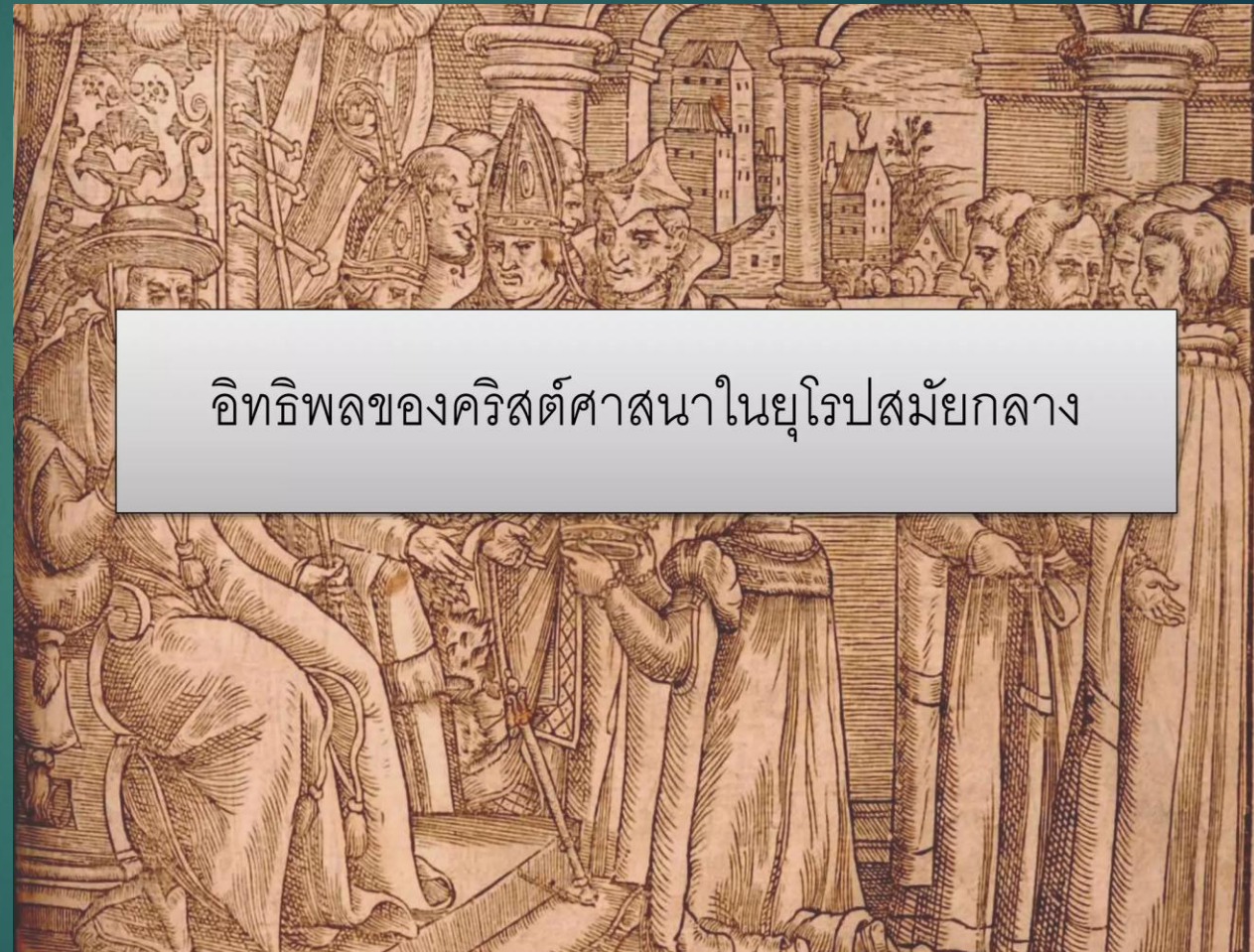


<https://www.shutterstock.com/th/search/cross-anchor>



5.9 Influence on Global Society

- ▶ Positive Impacts:
- ▶ Social: Founded world-class universities, hospitals, and orphanages.
- ▶ Political: Introduced the concept of "Divine Right" and helped mediate European conflicts.
- ▶ Economic: Promoted values of sacrifice, diligence, and organized living.
- ▶ Negative Impacts: Historical instances where religion was used to justify the Crusades, the Inquisition, or aggressive colonialism.



<https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/421-42438511/42438511>

Influence on Thai Society



- ▶ Positive Contributions:
- ▶ Introduction of modern medicine and public health.
- ▶ The birth of the printing press and Thai newspapers (Dr. Bradley).
- ▶ Founding of high-quality educational institutions across the country.
- ▶ Negative Aspects: Historical friction caused by aggressive proselytizing or publications that attacked local Buddhist beliefs, leading to social misunderstanding.



<https://www.christian.ac.th/trang-christian-suksa-school/>

Conclusion

- ▶ Christianity is the world's most practiced religion, shaping Western logic and global culture.
- ▶ Its core is Love, Sacrifice, and Redemption.
- ▶ Understanding Christianity is essential for navigating our globalized world and fostering interfaith harmony.



https://www.reddit.com/r/Christianity/comments/1it8dgp/which_tradition_of_christianity_do_you_follow_or/?tl=th

