

Theos: Easter Survey – Feb 08

METHODOLOGY NOTE:

ComRes interviewed 1107 GB adults online between 22nd and 24th February 2008. Data were weighted to be representative demographically of all GB adults.

ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.

HEADLINES:

- 66% of the British public think that 'Jesus was a good man and wise teacher'; 47% think that 'Jesus was a holy prophet'; 40% think that 'Jesus was the son of God' and 13% think that 'Jesus never existed'.
- While 46% of women think that Jesus was the son of God, only 34% of men believe this.
- 95% of regular church attending Christians think that Jesus was the son of God, compared to 15% of agnostics and 7% of atheists.
- There is a trend of increased agreement as age increases. While 29% of 18-24 year olds agree that Jesus was the son of God, 53% of 55-64 year olds agree.
- Again, as age increases the percentage of those who agree that Jesus was a holy prophet increases. While 33% of 18-24 year olds agree that Jesus was a holy prophet, 59% of over 65s agree.
- Unsurprisingly 90% of Muslims agree that 'Jesus was a holy prophet'
- Two thirds of the public agreed that 'Jesus was a good man and wise teacher' this was agreed with by the majority of most belief groups. 94% of Muslims, 90% of Christians who regularly attend church, 82% of Christians who do not regularly attend church, 74% of people from other religions, 58% of agnostics and 34% of atheists.
- It is the atheists who most strongly believe that Jesus never existed, with 40% of atheists agreeing with this statement. In contrast 8% or less of any other group agreed.
- The views, as held by the British public, about what happened at Easter are as follows:

	Agree
Jesus was executed by crucifixion, buried and bodily rose from the dead	30%
Jesus was executed by crucifixion, buried and his spirit rose from the dead	27%
Jesus was executed by crucifixion, buried and remains dead to this day	17%
Jesus was never crucified	6%
Jesus was crucified but didn't die and was resuscitated by his disciples	4%

- Christians were most likely to say Jesus bodily rose from the dead. Muslims were most likely to say that Jesus was never crucified. Other religions and agnostics were most likely to say that Jesus' spirit rose from the dead and atheists were most likely to say that Jesus remains dead to this day.
- 43% of the public say that 'The Easter story is about Jesus Christ dying for the sins of the world'. 88% of Christians who regularly attend church agree with this, compared to 14% of atheists.
- 26% of the public say that 'The Easter story has no real meaning today'. 56% of atheists held this view compared to just 4% of church attending Christians.
- 19% of the public think that 'The Easter story shows that even in the face of terrible evil people should act with love and forgiveness'
- The survey showed that there are a wide range of views held about what happens to people when they die. The table below shows the percentage of people who agreed with each of the statements.

	Agree
I don't believe in a physical resurrection but I do believe that your spirit lives on after death	44%
I believe that death marks the end of human existence	41%
I believe we are judged after death on the way we have lived our lives	32%
I believe that I will go to heaven when I die	27%
I believe in reincarnation-after death I will be reborn into another body	13%
I believe in a physical resurrection	9%

- 76% of church attending Christians agree that they will go to heaven when they die and also 76% believe that we are judged after death on the way we have lived our lives. A majority of 90% of Muslims also believe that there will be judgement after death.
- 44% of Muslims and 42% of Christians who regularly attend church believe in a physical resurrection.
- 64% of people who call themselves Christians who do not regularly attend church believe that your spirit lives on after death.
- Three quarters of atheists, 73%, say that they believe that death marks the end of human existence.
- 34% of people from other religions believe in reincarnation.