

Christian Beliefs

Attributes: the qualities something has

Omnipotent: all-powerful

Benevolent: all-loving

Omniscient: all-knowing

Just: being fair

Natural suffering: suffering caused by nature, e.g. because of earthquakes, volcanoes.

Man-made suffering: suffering caused by the actions of humans, e.g. war.

Just suffering: suffering that is fair, e.g. criminals suffering through imprisonment.

Unjust: suffering that seems unfair or not right, e.g. children being abused.

Theodicy: a justification for the existence of God in the light of evil and suffering

Free will: the ability to do what we want

Soul making: God allows evil and suffering so that we can develop qualities like compassion

Trinity: the belief that there are three persons in the One God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit: the third person of the Trinity whom Christians believe is the inspiring presence of God in the world.

Son of God: a title used for Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. It is used to show the special relationship between Jesus and God the Father.

Incarnation: becoming flesh, taking human form.

Monotheism: the belief that there is only one God.

Polytheism: the belief in many gods

Creation: the act by which God brought the universe into being

The Word: the term used at the beginning of John's gospel to refer to God the Son

Symbolic interpretation: not literal, but representing something. People who interpret the Bible symbolically might argue that God created the world but not in exactly six days.

Liberal: a person who does not interpret the Bible in a strict, liberal way.

Fundamentalist: a person who believes in the strict, literal interpretation of scripture in a religion.

Literal interpretation: people who interpret the Bible literally believe that everything in the Bible is literally true. The Bible says that the Earth was created in six days, so it took six periods of twenty-four hours.

Ex nihilo: out of nothing. Christians believe God created the world out of nothing.

Stewardship: looking after something so that it can be passed on.

Incarnation: becoming flesh, taking human form

Virgin birth: when a baby is not conceived sexually.

Crucifixion: a Roman method of execution in which criminals were fixed to a cross. It also refers to the execution and death of Jesus on Good Friday.

Atonement: restoring the relationship between people and God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus

Sin: any action or thought which takes human beings away from God or behaviour which is against God's laws

Original sin: an Augustinian Christian doctrine that says that everyone is born with the urge to do bad things and to disobey God as a result of Adam and Eve betraying God.

Resurrection: rising from the dead. It also refers to Jesus rising from the dead.

Ascension: the event 40 days after the resurrection when Jesus returned to God the Father in Heaven

Sin: any action or thought which separates humans from God or behaviour which is against God's laws and wishes.

Crime: an action which is against the law

Original sin: an Augustinian Christian doctrine that says that everyone is born with the urge to do bad things and to disobey God as a result of Adam and Eve betraying God.

Salvation: being saved from sin and going to heaven. This is achieved through Jesus.

Grace: God's unconditional love that God shows everyone, even if it is not deserved.

Atonement: restoring the relationship between people and God through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Forgiveness: showing grace and mercy and pardoning someone for what they have done wrong.

Afterlife: What Christians believe follows life on Earth.

Day of Judgement: a time when the world will end and every soul will be judged by God and rewarded or punished.

Heaven: a state of eternal happiness in the presence of God; the place of eternal peace ruled over by God.

Hell: the place of eternal suffering or the state of being without God.

Purgatory: the intermediate state where souls are cleansed in order to enter heaven.

Satan: the name for the Devil – the power and source of evil.

Judgement: God will judge your actions and decide on your fate.

Resurrection: rising from the dead

Key Quotations/Teachings:

1. **'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28:19)**
2. **'The Word became flesh and lived among us.' (John 1:14)**
3. **'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.' (John 3:16)**
4. **'God saw that it was good'.**
5. **'Let us make mankind in our own image' (Genesis 1:27)**
6. **Rule over...every living creature' (Genesis 1:28)**
7. **'if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.' (1 Corinthians 15:17)**
8. **'So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable' (1 Corinthians 15 42:44)**

Biblical stories/Core Teaching:

- **The story of Job**
- **The story of Creation**
- **The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats**
- **The Nicene Creed**

Framework for Evaluation questions:

- a. State your opinion
- b. Explain two or more arguments counter to your own.
- c. Explain your view countering these arguments
- d. Include scriptural reference
- e. Conclusion: brief summing up

Criteria for questions 3 and 4

2 marks for detailed explanation of each point

1 mark for reference to scripture (Q4 only)

Past Exam Questions

1. Which one of the following is not a means of salvation (1)
2. Give two Christian beliefs about the Trinity. (2)
3. Explain two reasons in which belief in Judgment by God influences Christians today. (4)
4. Explain two Christian beliefs about the crucifixion of Jesus. (5)
5. 'For Christians what the Bible says about Creation is true.' (12)
6. Which one of the following means omnipotent? (1)
7. Give two Christian teachings about original sin (2)
8. Explain two ways in which Jesus' crucifixion influences Christians today (4)
9. Explain two Christian teachings about the incarnation. (5)
10. 'A loving God would not send anyone to hell.' (12)
11. Which one of the following is not a means of salvation (1)
12. Give two Christian beliefs about Jesus' Ascension. (2)
13. Explain two ways in which belief in the Trinity influences Christians today. (4)
14. Explain two Christian beliefs about the causes of sin. (5)
15. 'God cannot be loving because people suffer.' (12)
16. Which one of the following is not part of God's nature? (1)
17. Give two Christian beliefs about God's creation of the world. (2)
18. Explain two ways in which beliefs about hell influence a Christian. (4)
19. Explain two Christian beliefs about the role of Jesus in salvation. (5)
20. 'The resurrection of the dead is the most important Christian belief.' (12)
21. Which one of the following is the book in the Bible where the creation story is to be found? (1)
22. Give two qualities which Christians believe describe the nature of God. (2)
23. Explain two ways in which belief in the resurrection influences Christians today. (4)
24. Explain two Christian teachings about Judgment. (5)
25. 'If God were a loving God there would be no suffering the world.' (12)

Sample answer

Explain two beliefs about the role of Jesus in salvation. (5)

Christians believe that it is through the atonement that Jesus brought about salvation. In the gospels it says '... if anybody sins we have an advocate with the father – Jesus Christ.' The atonement is where Jesus died on the cross in the crucifixion. In this Jesus atoned for the sins of all humanity. Christians think that what they need to do to receive this salvation is to have faith in Jesus. Then they will be saved from their sinful nature that came into the world after Adam and Eve's Fall.

