

GCSE Ethics and Society Christianity – Matters of Life and Death

Origins and value of the universe-

- The Big Bang Theory is the most widely held scientific theory about the origin of the universe.
- Some Christians reject the Big Bang Theory, but others believe that religion and science are compatible.
- Christians believe that the universe has value because it was designed and created by God.

Sanctity of life-

- Christians believe God created humanity in his own image. This means that human life is intrinsically valuable.
- The Old and New Testaments make clear statements about the value of life.
- Sanctity of life is usually considered to apply only to humans and help Christians make decisions about life after death matters.

Origins and values of human life-

- Evolution is a scientific theory, which suggests that different species, including humans have developed from earlier forms.
- Christians disagree about scientific and non-religious explanations of the origins of human life.
- Many Christians believe it is important to respond to the challenges posed by these explanations.

Abortion-

- Abortion is the deliberate ending of a pregnancy by removing the foetus from the womb.
- The problem of abortion revolves around the issue of when human life begins.
- Abortions are legal in the UK under certain circumstances.
- Many Christians oppose abortion on sanctity of life grounds; others are more flexible on grounds of compassion.
- Non-religious people might be pro-choice or pro-life.

Euthanasia-

- Euthanasia, providing a patient with an 'easy death' to avoid long-term pain, is illegal in the UK.
- There are different types of euthanasia. Many people campaign for voluntary euthanasia to be legalised.
- Arguments against euthanasia include the view that it undermines the value of all human life.
- Those in favour argue that people should be allowed to die how and when they wish.

Life after death-

- Many non-believers reject the belief in an afterlife, because they believe there is no evidence for it, and argue that beliefs about the afterlife do not make sense.
- Others reject it because they see the ideas of an afterlife as a way of controlling the behaviour and choices of believers.
- Christians would reject many of these arguments and offer alternative viewpoints about the existence of life after death.

Issues in the natural world-

- Problems the world faces include pollution, global warming, waste, and exploitation of animals.
- Christian teaching on stewardship of the environment is based on Genesis where God gives humans responsibility to look after the natural world.
- Many Christians believe that animals should be treated with respect and care, but that it is accepted to use them for human benefit up to a point. Some Christians disagree and oppose the use of animals for human benefit.

Sources of Wisdom

1. "Do not murder." Exodus 20:13
2. "God didn't produce a ready made world. The Creator has done something cleverer than this, making a world capable of making itself." John Polkinghorne
3. "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." Mark 12:31
4. "And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms." Ephesians 2:4-7
5. "Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:28

1. **Abortion** Ending a pregnancy by deliberately removing a foetus by surgical or medical means
2. **Big Bang Theory** A scientific theory about the origins of the universe which suggests that the universe is expanding away from a single point, a process which started around 13.7 billion years ago.
3. **Conservation** Protecting something from being damaged or destroyed
4. **Creationism** The belief that the world was created in a literal six days and that Genesis is a scientific/ historical account of the beginning of the world
5. **Environment** The surroundings in which plants and animals live and on which they depend for life
6. **Euthanasia** The deliberate administering of life ending medication by a third party.
7. **Evolution** The process by which different species have developed from earlier species
8. **Hospice** A place which provides care for people with a serious, terminal or incurable illness
9. **Law** Guidelines as to how people should behave
10. **Prochoice** Holding the belief that the mother should be able to choose whether to have an abortion
11. **Prolife** Holding the belief that the foetus has a right to life'
12. **Quality of life** The value given to life depending on how far a person can find enjoyment and pleasure from it
13. **Sanctity of life** The belief that life is created by God and made holy by him
14. **Situation ethics** Ethical decisions made according to the specific context of the decision
15. **Stewardship** Looking after something so it can be passed on to the next generation
16. **Utilitarianism** The belief that the right course of action is the one that will produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people