Answering Exam Questions

In your exam you will have to answer on 4 different topics on one paper. Each topic is divided into 5 sub questions. They are a), b), c), d) and e). You must answer all five for each topic from the same religion. You will only answer questions on Christianity.

Question A)

This part of the question is worth one mark and your answer should show your knowledge and understanding of a concept. So, for instance, you might be asked ‘What is pacifism?’ and your answer should show that you know what ‘pacifism’ means.

Question B)

This part of the question is worth two marks and asks for two ideas within a concept. So, for instance, you might be asked ‘What are Christian attitudes to fertility treatment?’ and you would need to respond to the trigger word ‘attitudes’ by showing that some Christians would think it was a good idea and explain why and also that other Christians would not agree to it and explain why.

Question C)

This part of the question is worth three marks and asks for three ideas within a concept. So, for instance, you might be asked ‘What do Christians believe about the purposes of marriage?’ and you would need to give three different ideas/ reasons why Christians believe marriage to be important.

Question D)

This part of the question is worth six marks and asks you to describe and explain a belief or attitude, while analyzing the reasons Christians respond in this way. So, for instance, you might be asked to explain Christian beliefs about giving money to charity. You would need to include relevant Christian teachings to support the ideas in your answer. Try to include biblical quotes, but you must make sure you explain what these mean in order to show the examiner that you have understood the teaching. For example, ‘Love thy neighbour’ means to ‘treat other people as you would like to be treated yourself’. You will also need to use specific religious words in these answers when they are relevant. For example, when answering a question
on medical ethics you may wish to refer to the phrase ‘sanctity of life’ which shows the belief that all life is created by God and so is special.

Question E)

This part of the question is worth 12 marks and asks you to show different points of view in response to the statement given. So, for instance, you might be given the statement Abortion is always wrong’ and you would need to refer to a Christian point of view in your answer, showing that there are different Christian approaches to this statement and then give your own personal response. Try to make that response different, if you can, to the ones you have mentioned previously. It is very important that you do give your own point of view otherwise you will not achieve high marks. You will need to support the Christian ideas with reference to Christian teachings/ biblical quotes. Again, explain them in your own words to show your understanding.
Religion and Science

In this topics the examiners expect you to have considered:
Scientific views on the Creation of the world and the origin of humanity
Christian ideas about the Creation of the world and the origin of humanity
Christian views about what sets people apart from animals
Christian ideas about stewardship and their responses to environmental issues.

Key words and terms

Big Bang – Scientific theory of how the world began
Evolution – Scientific theory of how humans have evolved from other less complex organisms
Genesis – Book in the Bible containing creation stories
Myth – story with a deeper meaning
Creationists – literally believe the world was created in 7 days as in Genesis
Natural Selection – Darwin’s idea of survival of the fittest
Omnipotent – God is all-powerful
Stewardship – looking after the world and creation
Dominion – having control/power over creation
The question of how the world and humans originally came to exist is one that people, both religious and scientific, have sought to find the answer to for centuries.

The study of the universe and its origins is called **COSMOLOGY**.

**Scientific views on the origin of the world and humanity**

*Scientific views on the origin of the world*

Most scientists accept that the universe began about 18 billion years ago. Some (but not many) scientists believe that the earth has always been here, and that matter is always coming into existence. The majority of scientists state that there was a massive 'explosion' in which matter came into being, and it caused the newly formed matter to expand rapidly out in all directions. This is popularly called the **BIG BANG**. This explosion formed all the matter in the universe, gradually taking the form of the gases hydrogen and helium.

Scientists believe that as the gases cooled, and other elements formed, they condensed into stars and planets. The earth was one of the planets formed. Background radiation can be detected in space that seems to be left over from the Big Bang.
Scientific views on the origin of humanity

Devised by Charles Darwin and published in his book „The Origin of Species“ (1859)
He believed that human life began with very simple cells that later developed into different species. From his
studies he saw species develop and continue to change to suit their surroundings and environment. He concluded
that the species best suited to the environment would survive and reproduce to create a new, even better
generation. This process he called NATURAL SELECTION. Darwin recognised that through his theory
humans must have evolved, he suggested that as we share similar DNA and features to apes it was a strong
possibility that humanity had begun as a well developed species of ape.

Christian views on the origin of the world and humanity

How do Christians view the Bible – literally or liberally?
Christians believe that the Bible account of the Creation world vary depending on their view on the Bible itself.
LITERALISTS or CREATIONALISTS believe that the Bible and all that is in it is 100% true. They believe that,
as it was inspired by God through the Holy Spirit, there is no reason to suspect falsity within the records and a
Christian should have FAITH in the face of science. They would suggest that everything in the world has a purpose
and reason, linking to the belief in the SANCTITY OF LIFE

LIBERALS alternatively argue that whilst the Bible is a source of knowledge and wisdom it should not be
followed exactly. It provides a meaning and understanding to an unanswered question that provides a role for God in the world. They would say the world is there to explain the purpose and direction for the world.
For example these Christians suggest that a „day” as in the story actually stands for a period of time.

Beliefs in the Genesis 1 account
Recorded in Genesis 1 Christians follow the account
that suggests God created a „good” world in 6 days, resting on the 7th.
The literalist and liberal groups of Christians would argue about how factually true the biblical accounts of
creation are. They do, however, agree that the Biblical account of Creation does suggest key ideas and beliefs
about God:
1. God is Omnipotent - ‘In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth' Genesis 1:1
Christians believe that only God as a **ALL-POWERFUL** being can create the world as we have come to know it from scratch. The world is so complicated it can not have just happened by accident but rather by a powerful designer in control of everything. All of creation is **well ordered** and **interdependent**.

2. **God is Omnibenevolent** - ‘God looked at what he had created and it was good’ Genesis 1

Christians believe that God created a perfect world that humanity could live in. This suggests he did not want them to worry or suffer and so is **ALL-LOVING** in humanity’s favour. They were the last creatures made, and were created **IN GOD’S IMAGE**. They were also given the special responsibility to **RULE OVER CREATION**.

3. **God should be praised for the world created.**

‘The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’ Psalm 24

This Bible quote is taken from the book of Psalms, a collection of prayers and poetry in thanks and praise of the gifts given to humanity by God.

4. **Humans are special and unique as they were created ‘In the Image of God’**

This quote suggests to Christians that there is a spark of God present in every human being which is what makes us different and/unique to other animals

**Implications of Humanity’s Special Responsibility**

Christians believe that because they are made in the **image of God**, they have special responsibility toward the rest of creation. The two most important terms are **stewardship** and **dominion**.

**STEWARDSHIP**- some believe they are to be caretakers- given the task of looking after and protecting the world as given to them by God. But what role do they play in God’s plan?

This involves not abusing the planet, instead protecting both the environment and the animals in preparation for future generations.

**DOMINION**- suggests that Christians have been given ‘Kingship’ or control over the environment. God placed the earth in their hands and they have the control. It’s important for Christians to remember that a true king is **JUST and KIND**, not an abusive tyrant.

In either opinion of the role they play, Christians accept the responsibility of trying to look after the environment- this can take form in a number of ways.
Can you add any further ideas to the chart below?

The environment ....

Christians believe that the earth and all that is on it belongs to God. They should therefore play a part in protecting the earth as best they can for future generations. This takes place in everyday decisions like recycling and transport, as well as bigger decisions like choice of energy and sustainable communities.

“The Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it”

“And God saw that it was good”

Both the above quotes suggest that Christians should respect creation as it belongs to God and God created it ‘good’.
Christians may get involved in conservation groups or environmental campaigns in order to show they are being good stewards of the environment. One such charity that is based on Christian beliefs is A Rocha:

**A Rocha**

- A Christian Nature Conservation organisation
- Its aim is to show God’s love for creation through practical projects e.g. turning wasteland sites into country parks.
- It works with local councils and communities to promote looking after the environment and respecting God’s creation.

**The difference between humans and animals ...**

For many Christians the account in Genesis suggests that Humanity is set apart from animals, that humans are to be seen as a higher with rights and duties that are not shared by other animals.

„*God breathed life into the nostrils of man*” (Genesis 2:7) This passage suggests that humans have a special connection with God, often discussed as a SOUL. This is the spiritual part of a person, that is everlasting and can survive death.

„*Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name*” (Genesis 2:19)

This quote suggests that humans have control (dominion) over animals and therefore some Christians believe we can use animals to our benefit.

**Different Christian views on the use of animals**

Many Christians believe that as rulers over animals, it is acceptable to use them for human benefit e.g. food, medical advancement…

However, as stewards over creation, humans also have a responsibility to ensure animals are not mistreated, abused or kept in unacceptable conditions.

Unnecessary or abusive use of animals goes against the teaching,

“*The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it*”.

For this reason many Christians will be against using animals for cosmetic testing or non-essential clothing e.g. fur coats.

**The Roman Catholic Church**

Medical and scientific experimentation on animals is morally acceptable if it remains within reasonable limits and contribute to saving human lives. Unnecessary suffering though should not be brought upon the animals.

**Church of England**

We should care for animals and look after their welfare, however it may be necessary to use animals in experiments for new drug/diseases medication that will help humans. Any suffering towards animals must be kept to a minimum, even in medical experimentations.
Good & Evil

Major Revision Questions

1. Where does good come from?

**God:** Genesis 1: 31 “God looked at everything he had made and it was very good”. Good comes from God and the world was good until humans sinned.

**Free Will:** Exercising your free will correctly. God gave us the gift of free will. This means that we choose whether to do good or evil. Our choice is made easier by Referring to the Bible. For example the 10 commandments (Exodus 20) help Christians understand that murder is wrong and that they should preserve life at all costs. Therefore if there was a war they may choose to do good and be a conscientious objector.

2. Where does evil come from?

**Genesis 3:** Adam and eve have free will, are tempted by the devil (snake) and commit the original sin. All descendants of Adam are sinners and must seek forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

The **Devil** works in a similar way in the world today and tempts us to do evil things (sin). Christians believe we have free will and therefore sometimes we choose to commit sins. Evil is present in the world because people choose to sin. For example, when there is a war you can choose whether to murder people or not. If you choose to murder you create evil.

3. What different types of evil are there?

**Human/ Moral:** caused by man’s bad decisions E.g. Murder of James Bulger

**Natural:** caused by nature E.g. Tsunami December 2004

4. What do Christians believe about God?

God is omnipotent = All powerful
God is omnibenevolent = All loving
God is omniscient = All knowing

5. What do Christians believe about the Devil or Satan?

The Devil is a fallen angel who tempts people to do wrong. The devil can take many forms and presents him self as temptation to abuse our freewill. He appeared first in Genesis 3 where he tempts eve to eat from the tree of knowledge. The devil also tries to tempt Jesus in the desert after he has been baptised (Luke 4:1-13, Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus manages to resist each temptation.
6. How do Christians explain why is there suffering in the world?

**Original sin:** The world is now in a fallen state. Therefore humans inherit the first sin and must also be punished for it. Humans still make bad decisions which causes suffering and natural suffering is part of the punishment for the original sin.

**Free will:** Humans choose to do wrong.

**The Devil:** Tempts us to do wrong

7. Do these explanations work for atheists (people who are not religious)?

**No!** Evil and suffering is precisely why many people do not believe in God. If God is all powerful (omnipotent) and all loving (omnibenevolent) how can he allow suffering in the world? He is either unable to stop it or does not want to. This leads many to believe that God does not exist and therefore that evil and suffering has no purpose.

8. How do people cope with suffering?

**A Test:** to test faith. If we put up with it and stay loyal to God we”ll be rewarded.

**God has a plan:** we have to just accept God”s plan. After much suffering Job questions God. In the end he realises he just has to accept God”s plan (Job)

**God’s compassion:** God carries and supports us through bad times (footprints)

**Ultimate reward:** in heaven there is no suffering for eternity. 10 years suffering is nothing compared to an eternity of bliss.

9. How do Christians know how to be good?

Christians could use the following sources to guide them

**Bible:** 10 commandments, 2 greatest commandments (“Love God, Love your neighbour”), Good Samaritan, Sermon on the Mount (“Blessed are the poor …”)

Example of Jesus – to live with compassion and a sense of justice, to be willing to sacrifice yourself for the sake of others.

**Conscience** - to act “with knowledge” of what is right and wrong, what is taught, what are the consequences.

10. Why be good?

Heaven is the ultimate reward!
Key Biblical Teachings

Genesis 1 and 3
Creation of the world – humans are given responsibility over creation.
Humans are told not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good & Evil – this would put them “above God” as a moral authority.
Original Sin – the disobedience of Adam and Eve led to the alienation of human relationships

10 commandments
A list of 10 rules for behaving properly toward God, others and self. These rules are to be followed by the Jews (and thus Christians) as part of the COVENANT with God for freeing the Hebrew slaves from Egypt.

Job
Job was a faithful and holy man whom God loved. Satan told God that Job was only good because God gave him many riches. Satan then took everything away from Job – he killed his family, ruined his property, lost all his money – and Job was left confused. Nonetheless, he remained a faithful believer in God and decided that God is the author of history.
Job said “Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.” (Job 1:21)

Matthew 4
Jesus went to the desert before he began his preaching, and thought carefully about his purpose in life. He was tempted in three ways to live a “normal” life:
1. To concentrate on his material comfort – in this case food, by turning stones into bread. But he rejected the temptation.
2. To “prove” his relationship to God, by throwing himself off the Temple roof and being saved. Again Jesus rejected.
3. To forget the mission he had to the poor and lonely, and to use his powers to gain wealth and fame. By rejecting all of these temptations, Jesus proved to himself that he was strong enough to commence his work. He was NOT interested in his own comfort or reputation – he wasn't even interested in God “guaranteeing” his mission.

Matthew 5-7
Jesus famously preached a Sermon on the Mount. Here he spoke to a gathered crowd and told them of the blessings and love that God had for those who are hungry or neglected, poorly treated or unjustly judged. The opening lines are called the Beatitudes, and are very famous.
The rest of these chapters concerns the Jewish law and Jesus’ understanding of it. Jesus wanted to radicalise it, to make an attitude rather than a set of rules. For example:
   o “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
   o “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. … For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

2 Greatest commandments
Jesus was asked by an expert in the Jewish law what the greatest commandment was, and he answered by asking the man to quote from the Jewish Scriptures:

“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”
Jesus then told the parable of the Good Samaritan to illustrate that one’s “neighbour” is anyone who is need.
Christian beliefs about good and evil

Christians believe that God is perfect and the source of all goodness.

Christians believe humans are created in ‘the image of God’ and have a responsibility to live in a way that is pleasing to God by following the moral code in the Bible.

Evil is the result of not following what God wants for us and Augustine taught that evil was the act of turning away from God’s goodness.

In Christianity, evil is often shown in the character of the devil – who acts against God, tempting humans into doing wrong. (E.g. Adam and Eve tempted to eat the forbidden fruit)

The Devil

Traditional view

Traditionally shown as a red creature with horns, holding a pitchfork. The devil is also known by other names such as Satan and Lucifer. It is this creature that some blame for all the suffering in the world.

Symbolic view

Not all Christians see the devil as a real being. Many believe the devil is a symbolic way of showing how people struggle to do what is right – the temptation to do what is wrong. Therefore the devil could be seen as an inner evil force showing the battle going on inside people to do the right thing.

The Devil in the Bible

From passages such as,

“For Satan masquerades himself as an angel of light”

“I saw Satan fall like lightening from heaven”

“Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour”

some Christians believe the devil is a real being as described in the Bible. The Bible says that the devil was originally a good angel created by God, but he tried to make himself better than God, so God cast him out of heaven.

The devil has limited power, but tried to persuade humans to be disobedient to God and can take on other forms in order to do this e.g. Adam and Eve were tempted by the devil disguised as a serpent to eat the forbidden fruit. Jesus was also tempted by the devil in the desert to prove he was the Son of God and offers him wealth and power if he will disobey God.

Christians believe that because God is all-loving, compassionate and forgiving that the devil has limited power and that his power will eventually be ended by God.
The Fall, original sin and redemption

The Fall – Adam and Eve’s disobedience in the Garden of Eden

Original Sin – The sin each human being is born with because of Adam’s disobedience

Redemption – being restored to having a relationship with God – saving someone from sin

Christians believe that when God created the world, Adam and Eve were in a state of innocent and in a perfect relationship with God, as it says in Genesis 3.

God forbade Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge, but Eve was tempted by the serpent to do so and Adam also shared the fruit.

Humanity now had knowledge of good and evil – they were no longer innocent and brought death and evil into the world by disobeying God. God punished Adam and Eve by banishing them from the Garden of Eden and making their lives harder e.g. woman pain in childbirth.

The Fall is the phrase used to show this shift from a perfect relationship with God to one of disobedience and a broken relationship.

Many Christians believe that The Fall has affected all humans and that every person is born with original sin – born out of a relationship with God and needing to be saved by God. Without being saved by God, a person with original sin cannot gain eternal life in heaven.

Christians believe that they must seek to have their broken relationship with God mended and restored and therefore ask for God’s forgiveness in order to gain redemption (restoring a relationship with God). The way that Christians can do this is by following a life in the example of Jesus, because Jesus died on the cross for the sake of all humanity’s sins so that humans can enter back into a relationship with God. Christians believe that anyone who chooses not to follow Christ and live outside of a relationship with God, will be punished after death by hell.

The Problem of Evil

Christians believe that…

- God is omnipotent (all-powerful)
- God is benevolent (all-loving)
- God is omniscient (all knowing)

**SO WHY DOES EVIL EXIST??!!**

If God was omnipotent he should be powerful enough to get rid of evil, if he is benevolent he should love us enough to want to get rid of evil and if he is omniscient he should know how to get rid of evil…

**BUT EVIL STILL EXISTS!!!**

So maybe God does not exist? The problem of evil is the biggest challenge to anyone having a belief in God.

**Moral Evil** – Evil caused by humans e.g. murder

**Natural Evil** – Evil caused by natural events e.g. Tsunami, earthquakes

**Christian approaches to why there is evil in the world**

- **St Augustine** – Evil is the sole responsibility of humans for making wrong choices e.g. Adam and Eve brought evil into the world by their disobedience

- **Iranaeus** – Evil is necessary for us to know what good is. Because evil exists we can be aware of what is good and choose to do good so that we can grow into the ‘image of God’

- **Free will** – Evil and suffering are a result of human free will – humans using their God-given ability of making choices wrongly and causing evil.

- **Suffering is a test** – Evil is a test to see if we remain faithful to God. For example, the story of Job who suffered greatly as God allowed the devil to bring evil and suffering on Job to see if he remained faithful. Job did and was rewarded.

  Many Christians believe that hard times are God testing them to see if they remain true to God.
Coping with Suffering

1. PRAYER – Christians pray to God when they are suffering, hoping that God will listen and comfort and strengthen them in dealing with their suffering. They may also pray for God’s help in ridding them of the suffering e.g. curing them/someone else from an illness.

2. IT IS PART OF GOD’S PLAN – Even though humans may not understand or be aware of the plan, Christians believe that God does have a plan and purpose for everything that happens and this includes suffering. God works through all situations to bring about good, even if this may result in someone dying. It is comforting for Christians to think that a greater good will come out of the suffering they are feeling.

3. JESUS HIMSELF SUFFERED – Christians believe that God can understand the suffering that they go through because Jesus himself suffered on the cross. The Bible teaches Christians to share in the suffering of Jesus and in times of suffering Christians will look to God for strength and support.

Quotes –
“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” – tells Christians to ask God for help and share their worries and concerns with God when they suffer (through prayer)

“For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows” This teaches Christians that God understands and can comfort us through our sufferings because Jesus too suffered an agonising death on the cross.

How do Christians act in a moral way?

1. Bible – The word of God and contains advice in many different forms:
   - Specific commandments/laws e.g. The 10 commandments - including ‘Do not kill’, respect your parents and do not commit adultery.
     Also Jesus gives 2 of the greatest commandments – To love God and love your neighbour. therefore you should aim to please God in all you do and help out anyone in need (including your enemies!)
   - Parables – These are stories told by Jesus which have deeper meanings e.g. the Parable of the Good Samaritan teaches Christians to care for everyone, even enemies.

2. Conscience – Christians believe that this is an inner sense of what is right and wrong given to humans by God. If a person is doing something wrong, they will feel guilty and it is this feeling of guilt that is God helping a person to recognise right from wrong. God cannot force a person to obey their conscience and a person could ignore the feelings of guilt.

3. Faith in Christ – Christians believe that Jesus was God incarnate (God in human form) who came to earth and lived life as a perfect man. Therefore Jesus made all the right decisions and is the ultimate example for Christians to follow when considering what the right thing to do is. Jesus showed qualities of patience, love for all, honesty, kindness, compassion and self-sacrifice. Christians would try and copy these qualities and put them into practice in their own lives.
Past Exam Questions

(a) What is meant by the term ‘Big Bang’ (1)

(b) How does science believe humans began? (2)

(c) Why do some Christians believe that animals are different to human beings? (3)

(d) Explain why Christians believe it is important to look after the environment (6)

(e) ‘Science is right about how the world began and so religion is wrong.’ (12)
   Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

(a) What is meant by redemption? (1)

(b) What is meant by the term Original Sin? (2)

(c) Describe Christian beliefs about God being good (3)

(d) Explain how Christians respond to the idea that a loving God allows evil and suffering to exist in this world. (6)

(e) ‘Suffering is caused by the devil’ (12)
   Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.
Sources of Information:

- Bible
- Discovery: Philosophy and Ethics For OCR GCSE Religious Studies, Nelson Thornes, Jon Mayled, Libby Ahluwalia
- Religion in Focus: Christianity in Today’s World, Jon Murray
- Examining Religions: Contemporary Moral Issues, Joe Jenkins
- Philosophy Through Christianity, Lorraine Abbott
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