



Highsted Knowledge Organiser

Religious Studies GCSE: Issues of Life and Death

Year 10 Term 1– The World

What I need to know

What do different Christian groups believe about the origins of the universe?
What is the relationship between Christian views and non-religious views of creation and how far do they conflict?
What is Stephen Hawking's view of the Big Bang ?
What are Christian and non-religious beliefs, teachings and attitudes about dominion, stewardship, environmental responsibility, sustainability, and global citizenship

Key Vocabulary

Fundamentalist – someone who believes in a strict and literal interpretation of a religion
Dominion: Ruling or having control over something
- Stewardship: The task of supervising or taking control of something
- Environmental responsibility: the duty that people have to operate in a way that does not harm the environment
- Sustainability: Acting in a way that does little or no damage to the environment so that this can continue for a long period of time
- Global citizenship: When you are aware of and understand the wider world and your place within it.

Student reference point

Genesis 1 gives an account of how God created the world and everything on it. God created everything in 6 days and rested on the 7th.

Some **fundamentalist** Christians interpret the creation story **literally** and believe that it means that each part of creation took place within 24 hours and within the same week. They reject the scientific belief that the universe has developed over millions of years and concepts such as the 'big bang' and 'evolution'. They may believe that dinosaurs and humans existed at the same time.

However, other Christians adopt a more **liberal, non-literal interpretation**. They may see a day in Genesis as representing millions of years, allowing for scientific theories to be incorporated within the account (such as evolution, with life appearing first in the waters and then on land)

Furthermore, other Christians may see the story as being entirely **symbolic**, designed to inform us of God's power and nature rather than to be a historical account.

Genesis 2 – Adam lives in paradise in the Garden of Eden and God creates a companion for Adam from his rib – a woman called Eve. God gives them one commandment – not to eat fruit from the tree of knowledge.

Big Bang Theory: A scientific explanation of the creation of the universe

'Big Bang' theory states that about 13.7 billion years ago all the matter in the Universe was concentrated into a single incredibly tiny point. This began to enlarge rapidly in a hot explosion, and it is still expanding today.

Evidence for the Big Bang includes:

- all the galaxies are moving away from us
- the further away a galaxy is, the faster it is moving away.

These two features are found in explosions - the fastest moving objects end up furthest away from the explosion.

Scientists have also detected a cosmic microwave background radiation or CMBR. This is received from all parts of the Universe and is thought to be the heat left over from the original explosion.

Stephen Hawking was a British theoretical physicist who spent his life looking at the nature of the universe including how it started and built upon existing understanding and theories from other scientists.

Conflict between religious and non-religious views?

Yes...

Some Christians **reject** Big Bang Theory because it does not fit within their literal interpretation of Genesis. **Young-Earth Creationists** believe that the universe is less than 10,000 years old so will not accept the suggestion that the universe has expand over billions of years.

No...

However, many more **liberal Christians** are happy to combine the Genesis account with what we know from scientific research. For example, they would state that the Big Bang was created by God and the days in Genesis may represent billions of years. Whatever we discover from science simply tells us more about God's design.

Interesting point...the person most commonly credited with developing 'Big Bang' theory, Georges Lemaitre, was a Catholic priest who was also a physicist.

Christian beliefs on the environment

Genesis 1: 28

God blessed them (Adam and Eve) and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. **Rule over** the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Psalm 8:6

You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet

Many Christians believe that we have a responsibility to look after Gods creation as **stewards**.

They believe that we should give thanks to God for what he has given us and make every effort to look after it for ourselves and future generations.

However, **some Christians** may emphasise the concept over **dominion** and **ruling** over the earth, and may interpret this as allowing them to use the planet as them deem fit.

Non religious beliefs...

Many atheists will believe that we have a shared responsibility to look after and planet and maintain the environment for future generations. For example, **Humanists** would see this as their **moral duty** to other humans. Such decisions are based on reasoning rather than religious beliefs.

Suggested reading

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/z68sjhv>



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Religious Studies GCSE

Year 10 Term 2: Issues of life and death

What I need to know

What are different Christian beliefs, teachings and attitudes toward the origin and sanctity of human life?

What do non-religious people believe about evolution?

Key Vocabulary

Origin of life = how life started

Sanctity of life = life is holy and sacred

Student reference point

Christian beliefs...

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, states that God created human and animal life. All life is therefore special as it was created by God and it should therefore be protected. Each human life is unique and valuable and God is interested and involved in every human life. Only God should take life away.

NOTE - It is likely that the vast majority of Christians will agree with these ideas. However, if you were asked to talk about diverse views you could refer to the material on abortion and euthanasia as there are different interpretations there.

Charles Darwin developed the theory of **evolution** as a result of his studies of the natural world. The theory of evolution proposes that all species of living things have **changed over time**. Scientists believe this is the reason why all living things on Earth exist today.

Darwin proposed the theory of **natural selection** which states that individuals with characteristics most suited to the environment are more likely to survive and reproduce the genes that allow these individuals to be successful are passed to their offspring. Darwin **did not** see himself as an **atheist** but more as an **agnostic** – being uncertain about whether there is a God or not.

Richard Dawkins is a prominent **evolutionary biologist** and **atheist**. He is well-known for his criticism of creationism and religion in general, writing books such as 'The God Delusion'.

Young-earth creationists reject evolutionary theory as it does not fit within the account in Genesis or a belief that the world is less than 10,000 years old.

Liberal Christians may be happy to combine their beliefs with scientific evidence, stating that evolution is God's design and that the days in Genesis represent millions or billions of years, with life starting in the water at first, then on land and finally as humans.

Suggested reading

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/z68sjhv>