

LIFE AND DEATH

Euthanasia	Ending someone's life prematurely and painlessly because they are dying from an incurable illness
Evolution	The process by which different living creatures are believed to have developed from earlier less complex forms during the history of the earth
Abortion	When a pregnancy is terminated (ended) so that it does not result in the birth of a child
Quality of Life	The extent to which life is meaningful and pleasurable
Sanctity of Life	The belief that life (usually human) is precious, or sacred because it is a gift from God.
Afterlife	Life after death; the belief that existence continues after physical death
Soul	The spiritual part of a being which lives on after death and is often believed to connect a person to God
Origins of the Universe	How the Universe began e.g. 6 days of creation; Big Bang
Origins of Humanity	How humans first came to exist e.g. Adam and Eve; Evolution
Pro-life	The belief that life should be preserved no matter what
Pro-choice	The belief that the choice to end life should be up to an individual
Situation Ethics	A Christian ethical theory that says the best thing to do in any situation would be whatever is the most loving
Stewardship	Looking after creation on God's behalf
Animal rights	Believing that animals should be given the exact same rights as human beings
Utilitarianism	An ethical theory that teaches that the right decision is always the one that brings about the most happiness

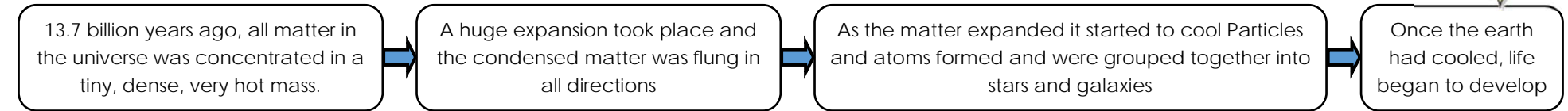
Origins and Value of the universe

Essential information: Many Christians accept the Big Bang theory, but some believe it is not compatible with a literal interpretation the Genesis creation story. **Most Christians** value the universe as a gift from God, which they should look after in a responsible and sustainable way.



Scientific explanations for the origins of the universe

The **Big Bang theory** is the most widely accepted scientific theory to explain the origins of the universe. It was first proposed by the Catholic priest Georges Lemaitre in 1927 and is supported by scientific evidence.



Christian responses: Christians differ in their views of whether the Big Bang theory is compatible with belief in God:

God created the universe but NOT with the Big Bang	God created the universe WITH the Big Bang
The Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally	The Genesis creation story is a metaphor its main message is that God created the universe
The Genesis creation story says that God created the universe in six days	It is possible for God to have created the universe through the Big Bang
Scientific theories are always being updated and may not be completely correct.	Georges Lemaitre did not think his theory disproved the existence of God, and many scientists today believe that science and God are compatible

The value of the universe

The value of the universe Christians believe the universe has value because:

- the universe is God's creation, and he continues to sustain it
 - the universe reflects God's love and power
 - the universe is a gift from God to humanity.

"God blessed them 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.'" Genesis 1: 28



A minority of Christians interpret Genesis 1:28 to mean that the universe is a **commodity**: it can be used to satisfy their wants and needs, so they can exploit the world's resources in any way they wish. However, most Christians believe they have been given a responsibility by God to look after the universe on his behalf. This means they should use the world's resources in a way that is respectful and **sustainable**.

Sanctity of Life

Essential information: ALL Christians believe in the sanctity of life. All life is **holy** because God created it. Humans are made in the **image of God** (imago dei). Belief in the sanctity of life helps Christians make decisions about matters of life and death.

What is sanctity of life?

Sanctity of life refers to the belief that life is created by God and made holy by him. It means that:

- human life is sacred, and humans have intrinsic value because they are made in the image of God
- human life must be treated with care and respect



Biblical teachings

"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them: male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27

The following teachings in the Bible reinforce the Christian belief in the sanctity of life:

- Humans are made in God's image. God breathed life into humans.
- God planned each person before they existed. Every part of a person's life was designed by God.
- The human body was designed to be a special dwelling for the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 1: 27 describes humans being made in the image of God, but does not mention animals. For this reason most Christians believe that sanctity of life only applies to people.

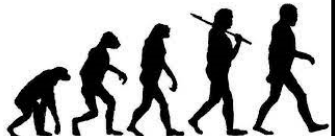
The importance of sanctity of life for Christians today

Sanctity of life is very important for Christians today. It means that:

- God cares for humans, who are able to form a relationship with him.
- All people are made in the image of God and loved by God unconditionally. This means all people should be treated with dignity and respect, including the young, the ill, and the elderly.
- Decisions about life and death must be taken very seriously. E.g. decisions about abortion and euthanasia.

Origins and Value of Human Life

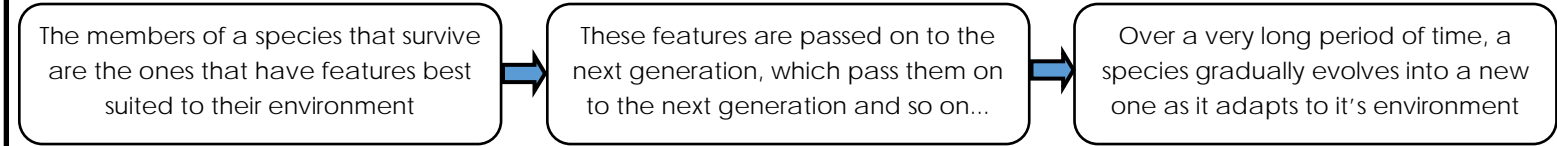
Essential information: the theory of evolution is the leading scientific theory explain how life developed. It is accepted by many Christians who believe that God is involved in the process.



The Theory of Evolution

This means that humans and apes evolved from the same species. This species was a type of ape that lived millions of years ago

- The theory of evolution suggest that:
- Life started billions of years ago with single-celled creatures in the sea
 - Over millions of year, these simple organisms evolved into different species
 - This happened through a process called survival of the fittest



Some Christians accept the theory of evolution because...	Some Christians don't accept evolution because...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Genesis creation story in the Bible is a metaphor. its main message is that God created the universe and all life in it God used the process of evolution to create life. Even if God's creation has developed through evolution, it is still perfect and purposeful There is strong evidence to support the scientific claims, science and religion can work together! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally The Bible tells how God created humans on the sixth day and in his own image. This goes against the idea that humans evolved over millions of years. Human life is holy and particularly valuable to God. This is undermined by the idea that humans share a common ancestry with apes.

The **General Synod** is the group within the Church of England that debate issues relating. In 2010 they agreed that that the universe was created by God through evolution, and that believing in science and religion is completely compatible.

Life and Death

Abortion

Essential information: Abortion is the deliberate ending of a pregnancy and is legal in England, Scotland, and Wales in certain circumstances. Most Christians are pro-life and oppose abortion, although some accept that it may be the right thing to do in some circumstances.

REMEMBER: Attitudes towards abortion revolve around the question of when human life begins—at the moment of conception, at some point while the foetus is developing, or when the baby is born?

What is abortion?

- Abortion is the deliberate ending of a pregnancy
- In the UK, abortion is allowed if two doctors agree that there is a risk to the physical or mental health of the mother, the baby, or existing children in the family.
- Abortion is only allowed during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, unless the mother's life is in danger or the child is likely to be severely disabled

Christian Attitudes to Abortion

The **catholic church is Pro Life** (against abortion). They believe...



1. The sanctity of life means that human life is sacred
2. All human life should be protected and valued; God has a plan for everyone
3. Life begins at the moment of **conception** (when sperm meets the egg)
4. This means abortion a **form of murder**, which is a **sin**.

In 1968, the **Catholic Church** condemned abortion in the Papal Encyclical **Humanae Vitae**.

"all direct abortion (is) to be absolutely excluded as lawful means of regulating the number of children"



The **Church of England** is also opposed to abortion in most circumstances, but accept that in certain situations it may be the most loving and compassionate option. For example, where the pregnancy is the result of rape or if the baby is likely to be born with a serious disability.

Some liberal Christians are pro-choice (for abortion). They argue that:

- Jesus stressed the importance of behaving with love and compassion,
- There are other situations where Christianity allows the sanctity of life to be disregarded (such as in the case of war).
- it is not clear that life begins at conception.

Life after Death

Christians believe in life after death because:

- The Bible promises an afterlife.
- Jesus' resurrection demonstrated that life after death is possible and guaranteed life after death for all who believe in him.

Other, non-religious arguments for life after death

Argument	Explanation	Christian response
Remembered lives	Some claim to be able to remember a past life. This supports reincarnation	Disagree - each person only has one life on earth.
The paranormal	Some believe it is possible to communicate with the dead, who live in a spirit world.	While Christians believe there is an important spiritual element to life, most do not believe in the paranormal.
Near death experience	Some argue that it is logical to believe in life after death, and that near-death experiences can act as proof.	Christians might argue that it is logical to believe in life after death, but because God is eternal and loving and therefore wants people to join him when they die.
Reward	Some believe there must be an afterlife, so that people who live good lives are rewarded after they die.	Agree; God will reward those who live good lives by judging them favourably on the Day of Judgement.
Comfort	Belief in afterlife provides comfort for those who are mourning loved ones.	Agree that there is a better life to come and take comfort from this in difficult times.
Meeting loved ones	Some people sense that their loved ones are still with them, which means they must 'live on' in the afterlife. They believe that when they die, they will be able to meet their loved ones again.	Many Christians also believe they will be able to meet loved ones when they die. They base this belief on Bible passages that describe being together with Jesus and other followers in heaven.

Issues in the natural world



Essential information: problems facing the world today include pollution, global warming, and the overuse of natural resources. Most Christians believe God has given them a responsibility to look after the world. Most Christians believe this responsibility extends to caring for animals.

Christian responses:

- a minority of Christians interpret Genesis 1:28 ("Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky...") to mean that they have been given the authority to use the Earth's resources as they wish without worrying about the damage.
- However, most Christians believe God has given them a responsibility to care for the world on his behalf.

Care for animals:

Most Christians believe that as stewards of the earth they must care for animals as well as the environment. They might do by:

- Protecting natural habitats
- Challenging cruelty to animals
- Campaigning against needless animal experimentation (most Christians accept it for medicines, but not cosmetics)
- Supporting species conservation



The Christian declaration on Nature, Assisi 1986

Leaders from 5 world religions met in the town of Assisi to discuss how they could work together to help save the natural world.

As a result they all wrote statements outlining their approach to the care of nature. **The Christian statement stressed that anything exploiting nature that threatens to destroy the natural world is a sin.**

Euthanasia

Essential information: Euthanasia is the deliberate administering of life-ending medication by another person. It is illegal in the UK.

Most Christians oppose euthanasia because they believe it undermines the sanctity of human life. They believe that only God has the authority to end life. Those in favour of euthanasia argue that it is sometimes the most loving and compassionate thing to do.

Christian beliefs about euthanasia

Many Christians oppose euthanasia:

- It goes against the principle of the sanctity of life.
- Only God has the authority to end a person's life.
- It is viewed as murder, which is forbidden in the Bible
- God made all people to be equal, therefore all people should be treated with dignity.
- Terminally ill patients can still worship God and show people God's love

The closest the Bible comes to the topic is in the story of **Job**. Job has a serious illness and his wife suggests he should die to end his pain:

"His wife said to him, 'Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!' He replied, 'You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?' In all this, Job did not sin in what he said." Job 2: 9-10



Many Christians argue that Job was being encouraged to euthanize himself, but he refused because this would be a sin.

For **Christians who oppose euthanasia**, respect and compassion should be shown to a person who is dying by:

- providing them with hospice care if possible (hospices provide care and pain relief for people with terminal illnesses, but they can be expensive to run and are not always available)
- making sure they have access to pain relief
- respecting any decision they make to end medical treatment that is just prolonging their life
- supporting them and those close to them as they prepare for death
- trusting their future to God.



Humanist View: most humanists support euthanasia and believe that it should be legalised.

They believe that the intention of euthanasia is to end a person's suffering, which is a loving thing to do.

They say people should have a choice, but should **be fully informed of all options**, including hospice care and pain relief.

