1.2 Different Christian Interpretations of the Genesis Creation Accounts: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer the short questions in note form where possible. Two extended questions (one 6-mark and one 15-mark with SPaG) should be written in full sentences. Time guidance: 30 minutes total.

1 Give three possible consequences for a Christian's beliefs about human dignity and ethics if they accept a literal young-earth reading of Genesis 1 and 2.

(Total for Question 1 is 3 marks)

2 Explain two reasons why some Christians accept a non-literal or figurative reading of the Genesis creation accounts.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Explain two ways a non-literal reading of Genesis might affect how a Christian engages with scientific education and public policy.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Explain the importance for Christians of how the Genesis accounts are interpreted, considering consequences for belief and practice.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

5 Evaluate the view that Christians cannot accept scientific explanations of the origins of the universe. In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments, and reach a justified conclusion.

(Total for Question 5 is 15 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.2 Different Christian Interpretations of the Genesis Creation Accounts: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

humans are seen as specially created in God's image, supporting strong ideas of intrinsic dignity, oe	**B1**
support for doctrines about original sin and need for salvation, oe	**B1**
possible rejection of ethical arguments based on evolutionary explanations of behaviour, oe	**B1**

Answer: Any three: emphasis on humans made in God's image and intrinsic dignity; support for original sin; scepticism towards ethics grounded in evolutionary accounts of human behaviour.

Question 2

point 1: Genesis is seen as theological poetry that teaches about God's role rather than giving scientific detail, oe	**B1**
development: this view allows Christians to accept scientific evidence for the Big Bang and evolution while keeping Genesis as a statement of divine purpose, oe	**B1**
point 2: the biblical genre and use of symbolic language suggest the days are not literal, oe	**B1**
development: scholars note parallels with ancient Near Eastern creation imagery, supporting a non-literal interpretive approach, oe	**B1**

Answer: E.g. Genesis as theological poetry emphasising God's sovereignty so compatible with scientific accounts; recognition of symbolic genre and ancient context means days are not necessarily 24-hour periods.

Question 3

point 1: acceptance of non-literal reading allows Christians to support teaching evolution in schools, oe	**B1**
development: this may lead to engagement with science-friendly public policy and collaboration between faith groups and scientists, oe	**B1**
point 2: non-literal readers may promote environmental stewardship by seeing humans as entrusted to care for creation rather than dominion permitting exploitation, oe	**B1**
development: this can influence policy positions on climate change and conservation, oe	**B1**

Answer: E.g. supports teaching evolution and collaboration with science; encourages stewardship-based policies on the environment rather than exploitative approaches.

Question 4

Level 3 A detailed, well-structured answer that explains several ways interpretation affects Christian belief and practice, with clear reasoning and specific examples.	**5-6**
Level 2 An answer that explains some ways interpretation affects belief and practice, with relevant supporting detail but limited range or depth.	**3-4**
Level 1 A few basic points about the effects of interpretation on belief or practice, with little development.	**1-2**
Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Interpretation affects doctrine of human nature, for example belief in Imago Dei and what it means for human dignity and ethics.
- It influences views on original sin and the need for redemption, changing pastoral teaching and emphasis.
- Interpretation shapes engagement with science and education, affecting whether Christians support teaching evolution in schools.
- It can determine environmental attitudes, either dominion as control or stewardship as responsibility.
- Interpretive stance may affect evangelism and apologetics, for example defending biblical authority or emphasising compatibility with science.

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Question 5

Level 4 A balanced, well-developed evaluation that presents reasoned arguments for and against the view, engages with religious arguments and implications, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion.	**10-12**
Level 3 A clear evaluation with several developed points on both sides and a conclusion, though one side may be stronger than the other.	**7-9**
Level 2 Some attempt at evaluation with arguments on both sides, but with limited development or balance, and an attempted conclusion.	**4-6**
Level 1 A few simple points for or against the statement with little or no attempt to consider the other side and no clear conclusion.	**1-3**
Level 0 No relevant material.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Arguments supporting the statement: classical biblical literalists argue that scriptural inerrancy means scientific accounts that contradict a literal reading must be rejected.
- Literalist view often holds that accepting scientific origins undermines core doctrines such as special creation, the Imago Dei and original sin.
- Some fear that adopting scientific explanations leads to moral relativism or weakens the authority of the Church and Scripture.
- Arguments against the statement: many Christians accept methodological naturalism in science while maintaining theological claims about purpose, so science and faith can be complementary.
- The Big Bang and evolutionary theory do not necessarily exclude God as first cause or sustainer, and can be interpreted as methods God used, as in theistic evolution.
- Historical and theological precedent exists for non-literal readings of Genesis, allowing reconciliation between faith and scientific discovery.
- Religious arguments include appeal to the transcendent nature of God, who is not constrained by scientific categories, and to Scripture that emphasises purpose over technical detail, for example Genesis 1:1.
- Considerations of religious practice and pastoral care: insisting on rejection of science may alienate believers and hinder dialogue with society, while integration can strengthen witness.

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