



RS.CB11 Different Christian Interpretations of the Genesis Creation Accounts

AQA 8062 · Calculators not allowed · about 50 minutes

Total Marks

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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: 50 minutes total.

- 1** This question checks key vocabulary used when Christians discuss interpretations of Genesis 1 in the context of origins debates.
- (a)** Which one of the following best describes a 'literalist' reading of Genesis 1 in the context of Christian belief about origins? **(1)**
- ☐ A. The six days are symbolic and compatible with scientific timescales
 - ☐ B. The six days are literal 24-hour periods and the account is factual
 - ☐ C. Genesis is a later myth with no connection to God as creator
 - ☐ D. Genesis records only moral teachings and rejects any historical meaning

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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- 2** Define the term 'literalism' as it is used by some Christians when interpreting the Genesis creation accounts.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

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- 3** Outline two reasons why some Christians interpret Genesis 1 literally, in the context of debates about creation.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5** Explain two contrasting Christian beliefs about how the universe and human life came into existence. Refer to scripture in your answer; include a scriptural reference to earn the additional marking point.

(Total for Question 5 is 5 marks)

- 6** 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 6 is 3 marks)

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

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

- 8** Explain two reasons why many scientists and Christians who read Genesis non-literally accept the Big Bang and evolution as descriptions of origins.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

- 9** Give three phrases or images from the Genesis accounts that some Christians interpret as symbolic or metaphorical rather than literal scientific description.

(Total for Question 9 is 3 marks)

- 10** Explain two reasons why some Christians reject the evolutionary account of human origins while accepting other scientific findings.

(Total for Question 10 is 4 marks)

- 11** State two features of young-earth creationist practice or emphasis within some Christian communities, and briefly explain the purpose of each feature.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

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

(Total for Question 12 is 6 marks)

- 13** 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 13 is 15 marks)

Mark scheme · RS.CB11 Different Christian Interpretations of the Genesis Creation Accounts

Question 1

- (a) **B1** selecting option B, the six days are literal 24-hour periods and the account is factual
- (a) **Answer: B**

Question 2

- **B1** a definition that says literalism treats the Genesis account as factual, historical and usually chronological, oe
- **Answer: Treating the Genesis account as factual history, with the six days taken as literal, chronological days.**

Question 3

- **B1** reason 1: some believe Scripture is inerrant, so Genesis must be historically accurate, oe
- **B1** reason 2: it upholds traditional teaching about humanity made directly by God, supporting moral authority and purpose, oe
- **Answer: Any two reasons including such points as: belief in biblical inerrancy; preserving traditional teaching that God created humans directly; rejecting human-led scientific explanations seen as conflicting with Scripture.**

Question 4

- **B1** 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
- **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 5

- **B1** belief 1: young earth creationism holds the universe and life were created by God in six literal days and relatively recently, oe
- **B1** development: this often includes belief that humans were created directly in their present form and that scientific theories which imply long timescales are rejected, oe
- **B1** belief 2: many Christians accept the Big Bang and evolution as describing processes God used to bring about the universe and life, oe
- **B1** development: this view reads Genesis figuratively so that God is the sustaining cause behind scientific processes, oe
- **B1** accurate reference to scripture made to support one view, for example Genesis 1:1 or Genesis 2:7 or another appropriate citation, oe
- **Answer: Contrast: young earth literalist view of six literal days with direct creation of humans, versus non-literal view that God created through processes like the Big Bang and evolution. Reference e.g. Genesis 1:1 as a scriptural source for belief in God as creator.**

Question 6

- **B1** 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
- **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 7

- **B1** 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
- **Answer: E.g. supports teaching evolution and collaboration with science; encourages stewardship-based policies on the environment rather than exploitative approaches.**

Question 8

- **B1** reason 1: strong empirical evidence from cosmology, geology and biology supports an ancient universe and common descent, oe
- **B1** development: such Christians see scientific evidence as describing mechanisms God could use, so no conflict, oe
- **B1** reason 2: methodological naturalism in science does not attempt to answer metaphysical questions about purpose, so science and theology can be complementary, oe
- **B1** development: many accept that science explains how processes occur, while Genesis addresses why creation exists, oe
- **Answer: E.g. empirical evidence for ancient universe and evolution is accepted and seen as compatible with God using natural processes; science and theology considered complementary, with different questions of how and why.**

Question 9

- **B1** the 'six days' as a phrase, oe
- **B1** the description of God 'breathing' life into Adam, oe
- **B1** the ordering of creation (light before sun) as thematic rather than chronological, oe
- **Answer: Any three: the 'six days'; God breathing life into Adam; literary ordering such as light created before the sun, understood as thematic.**

Question 10

- **B1** reason 1: they believe evolution undermines the idea that humans are uniquely made in the image of God, oe
- **B1** development: concerns that human uniqueness, moral responsibility and the basis for human dignity would be weakened, oe
- **B1** reason 2: some argue that evolutionary explanations cannot account for the origin of consciousness or soul, oe
- **B1** development: this leads them to prefer explanations that preserve a special divine act in making humans, oe
- **Answer: E.g. evolution seen as threatening human uniqueness and the image of God; difficulty in explaining consciousness or the soul via evolutionary processes, so a special divine act is preferred.**

Question 11

- **B1** feature 1: regular teaching emphasising biblical inerrancy, oe
- **B1** meaning 1: to reinforce confidence in the Bible as authoritative and resist secular interpretations, oe
- **B1** feature 2: apologetics and education promoting creation science or critique of evolution, oe
- **B1** meaning 2: to defend a literal Genesis reading and equip believers against secular or scientific challenges, oe
- **Answer: E.g. teaching biblical inerrancy to reinforce scriptural authority; active apologetics and educational programmes critiquing evolution, done to defend a literal Genesis reading and equip believers against secular challenges.**

Question 12

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

Question 13

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