1.3 Christian Beliefs About the Atonement and the Meaning of the Cross: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Give two ways Christians describe the cross as a sacrifice, in teaching about atonement.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Give two Christian phrases connected to the idea of the cross as a ransom, naming how each phrase expresses release from sin's power.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Give two ways the Old Testament system of animal sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins is used by Christians to help explain the meaning of the cross.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Explain two contrasting Christian beliefs about how the title 'the Lamb of God', given to Jesus, helps to explain the meaning of his death on the cross. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

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5 Explain two Christian beliefs about how the cross brings forgiveness, in the theological discussion of atonement.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 Evaluate the view that the cross is the single most important belief for Christians. 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 teachings, and reach a justified conclusion. Include spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in your answer for up to 3 additional marks.

(Total for Question 6 is 15 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.3 Christian Beliefs About the Atonement and the Meaning of the Cross: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

it is described as Jesus offering himself in the place of sinners, a substitute sacrifice, oe **B1**

it is described as the fulfilment or replacement of Old Testament sacrifices, bringing atonement once and for all, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. Jesus as substitute sacrifice for sinners; the cross seen as fulfilling or replacing Old Testament sacrifices.

Question 2

phrase 1: 'ransom for many', indicating Jesus pays a price to free people from slavery to sin, oe **B1**

phrase 2: 'redeemed' or 'redemption', indicating people are bought back from the power of sin, oe **B1**

Answer: Examples: 'ransom for many' showing Jesus pays a price to free people; 'redeemed' or 'redemption' showing people are bought back from sin.

Question 3

Jesus' death is seen as fulfilling and ending the need for that sacrificial system, since his sacrifice is taught to be sufficient where the old sacrifices had to be repeated, oe **B1**

the Old Testament idea that sacrifice restores the relationship between God and his people is used to help explain how Jesus' death restores humanity's relationship with God, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. Jesus' death fulfils and ends the need for repeated sacrifice; it restores the relationship between God and humanity, as Old Testament sacrifice was believed to do for Israel.

Question 4

view 1: some Christians connect this title to the Jewish festival of Passover, in which a lamb's blood was believed to protect a household, so Jesus' death is understood as protecting believers from the power of sin and death, oe **B1**

development: this view draws on the Gospel accounts placing the crucifixion around the time of the Passover festival, oe **B1**

view 2: other Christians place less weight on the Passover connection and instead stress the title's meaning of innocence, describing Jesus as an innocent victim whose undeserved suffering shows the depth of his self-giving love, oe **B1**

development: this view is supported by John 1:29, in which John the Baptist calls Jesus 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world', emphasising Jesus' role in removing sin, oe **B1**

reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, e.g. John 1:29, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast: the title read through the Passover lamb, protection from sin and death, versus the title read as emphasising innocence and self-giving love (John 1:29).

Question 5

point 1: the cross is seen as enabling God's forgiveness by Jesus taking the penalty for sin, oe **B1**

development: this allows God to remain just while offering mercy, so human sin can be forgiven without undermining divine justice, oe **B1**

point 2: the cross restores the broken relationship with God, removing barriers caused by sin, oe **B1**

development: this restored relationship means believers can be reconciled to God and receive his grace, affecting their moral and spiritual life, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. Jesus takes the penalty so God can forgive while remaining just; the cross restores the relationship with God so believers are reconciled and receive grace.

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Question 6

Level 4 A well-developed, balanced evaluation that addresses both the view and alternatives, uses detailed religious arguments and teachings, and reaches a reasoned conclusion.	**10-12**
Level 3 A clear evaluation that considers both sides with some religious argument and comes to a supported conclusion, though the argument may be less developed.	**7-9**
Level 2 A partially developed response that addresses the statement and provides some relevant reasons or evidence, but with limited balance or depth.	**4-6**
Level 1 A basic response with simple, relevant points and limited development, possibly one-sided.	**1-3**
Level 0 No relevant material.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Arguments supporting the statement: the cross is central because it is the means of atonement, enabling forgiveness and reconciliation with God, and is commemorated in core Christian rites like the Eucharist, making it foundational to Christian identity.
- Reference to religious teaching supporting its centrality, for example Romans 5:10 on reconciliation through Christ, or John 3:16 on God's love expressed through the giving of his Son.
- Protestant emphasis: the doctrine of justification by faith centres the cross as the decisive, once-for-all act that secures salvation for believers, so the cross is supreme in Protestant theology.
- Catholic and Orthodox perspectives that the cross must be understood with the resurrection and sacramental life, so while the cross is essential it is not the only foundational belief; the Church, sacraments and ongoing participation in grace matter too.
- Arguments against the statement: other beliefs are equally or more central for some Christians, for example the resurrection (which secures victory over death), the nature of God as love, or the doctrine of the Trinity which shapes all Christian worship and theology.
- Some Christians argue the cross cannot be isolated from the resurrection and ascension, so calling the cross the single most important belief risks oversimplifying the New Testament narrative and the fullness of salvation history.
- Consideration of diversity: different traditions weight the cross, resurrection, incarnation, and Church teachings differently, so a universal claim that the cross is single most important may not hold across Christianity.
- A reasoned conclusion weighing the strength of the cross as central to atonement against the need to include resurrection and other doctrines, and a judgement about whether 'single most important' should be accepted or qualified.

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