1.4 The Trinity: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain two contrasting views on whether belief in the Trinity is essential to being a Christian. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 is 5 marks)

2 Give three Christian beliefs about the Trinity.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

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3 This question is about the Trinity in Christian belief. It is the AQA-style 24-mark, five-part question.

(a) State one word for the Christian doctrine that God is three persons in one Being. **(1)**

(b) Give two things all three persons of the Trinity are believed to share. **(2)**

(c) Explain two ways the Trinity is presented as active at creation. Refer to scripture in your answer. **(4)**

(d) Explain two contrasting Christian views on whether analogies, such as water existing as ice, liquid and steam, are a helpful way to understand the Trinity. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer. **(5)**

(e) Evaluate this statement: 'The Bible provides clear evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity.' In your answer you should: refer to Christian teaching, refer to different points of view, reach a justified conclusion. **(12)**

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(Total for Question 3 is 24 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.4 The Trinity: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

view 1: most Christians, including Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Christians, hold that belief in the Trinity is essential, since it is the Church's central teaching about who God is, oe **B1**

development: the Nicene Creed, used in worship by many churches, states belief in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and Matthew 28:19 speaks of baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, oe **B1**

view 2: some groups that describe themselves as Christian, for example Jehovah's Witnesses, reject the Trinity and teach that God is one person, the Father; or some Christians, such as Unitarian Christians, do not hold the doctrine; or a Christian view that what matters most is faith in Jesus and a Christian life rather than agreement with a doctrine, e.g. Romans 10:9, oe **B1**

development: they teach that the Son is distinct from and subordinate to God the Father, and point to John 14:28, where Jesus says that the Father is greater than he is, and to the fact that the word 'Trinity' does not appear in the Bible, oe **B1**

reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast: the Trinity as essential (Nicene Creed, Matthew 28:19) vs rejection by some groups who teach that God is one person (John 14:28).

Question 2

the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct persons, oe **B1**

each person of the Trinity is fully and equally God, oe **B1**

the three persons are united in one Being/Godhead, not three separate gods, oe **B1**

Answer: Any three: three distinct persons; each fully/equally God; united in one Being (not three gods).

Question 3

(a) the Trinity, oe **B1**

(a) Answer: The Trinity.

(b) full/equal divinity, each is fully God, oe **B1**

(b) eternal existence, each is eternal, without beginning, oe **B1**

(b) Answer: E.g. full/equal divinity, and eternal existence.

(c) point 1: God (the Father) creates, and the Spirit of God is present and active at creation, oe **B1**

(c) development: Genesis 1:1-2 describes God creating the heavens and the earth while 'the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters', oe **B1**

(c) point 2: the Word, understood by Christians to be the Son, is present and active at creation, oe **B1**

(c) development: John 1:1-3 states the Word 'was with God' and 'was God' at the beginning, and that 'through him all things were made', oe **B1**

(c) Answer: E.g. the Spirit hovering over the waters (Genesis 1:2); the Word active in creation (John 1:1-3).

(d) view 1: some Christians find such analogies helpful for making an abstract doctrine easier to grasp, oe **B1**

(d) development: e.g. water as ice, liquid and steam, or, according to a popular but historically unverified legend, St Patrick's use of a three-leaf shamrock, are used to help explain how something can be one thing yet exist/appear in three ways, oe **B1**

(d) view 2: other Christians argue these analogies are theologically misleading, oe **B1**

(d) development: such analogies can suggest the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are only three different forms or stages of one being appearing at different times, a view historically rejected as the heresy of modalism, rather than three distinct persons who exist together, at the same time, oe **B1**

(d) reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe **B1**

(d) Answer: Contrast: analogies as a helpful teaching tool vs analogies as theologically misleading (risking modalism), assessed against the Nicene Creed's insistence on three co-existing persons.

(e) **L4** A well-argued, balanced answer that considers more than one point of view in a developed way, using accurate and detailed references to Christian teaching and/or scripture to support each point, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion. **10-12**

(e) **L3** A clear and reasoned answer that considers more than one point of view, supported by relevant references to Christian teaching and/or scripture, though the justification of the conclusion may be less developed. **7-9**

(e) **L2** A reasoned answer that considers at least one point of view, with some relevant supporting evidence, but with limited or no consideration of an alternative view. **4-6**

(e) **L1** One or more relevant points are made, but with little or no supporting evidence and no reasoned conclusion. **1-3**

(e) **L0** No relevant content. **0**

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(e) Indicative content:

- Agree: the baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19 names Father, Son and Holy Spirit together in a single instruction from Jesus.
- Agree: 2 Corinthians 13:14 names all three persons together in one blessing, suggesting they were already thought of together in the earliest Church.
- Agree: John 1:1 states the Word 'was with God, and the Word was God', which Christians take as clear evidence for the divinity of the Son alongside the Father.
- Agree: some older English translations, following the King James Version, include 1 John 5:7-8, which states directly that 'there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one' - if original, this would be the single most explicit statement of the doctrine in the whole Bible.
- Disagree: the word 'Trinity' itself does not appear anywhere in the Bible; it was first used in Christian theology by the writer Tertullian, around 200 AD, showing the precise doctrine was formulated by the later Church rather than stated as such in scripture.
- Disagree: the passage quoted above, 1 John 5:7-8 (sometimes called the Comma Johanneum), is regarded by the great majority of modern biblical scholars and textual critics as a later addition, not present in the earliest surviving Greek manuscripts of 1 John; most modern translations (e.g. the NIV, ESV and NRSV) omit it from the main text or clearly mark it as a later addition, so it cannot be relied on as clear, original biblical evidence.
- Disagree: the fullest doctrinal statement of the Trinity was only formally agreed at the Councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD), which some see as evidence that the Church had to interpret and develop scattered scriptural evidence into a single settled doctrine, rather than the doctrine being stated outright and completely within the Bible itself.
- A balanced answer might conclude that scripture contains strong Trinitarian patterns, such as the triple formula in Matthew 28:19 and the divine claims made about the Word in John 1, which most Christians see as more than sufficient grounds for the doctrine, even though the single most explicit verse sometimes used to 'prove' it (1 John 5:7-8) is textually disputed and the precise term 'Trinity' was coined only later by the Church.

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