



RS.CB9 Christian Responses to Suffering: The Cross and the Book of Job

AQA 8062 · Calculators not allowed · about 50 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

- 1** Which one of the following statements best describes the Christian idea that God suffers with humanity, as shown through the cross?

- ☐ A: The cross shows God is distant and uninvolved in human pain.
- ☐ B: The cross shows God experiences human suffering and shares in it.
- ☐ C: The cross proves that suffering is always a punishment for sin.
- ☐ D: The cross teaches that suffering has no meaning and must be ignored.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Give two Christian teachings about suffering that come from the Book of Job and the New Testament.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** Explain two Christian beliefs about why suffering happens, referring to Christian teaching rather than philosophical theodicies, in the context of the Book of Job and the New Testament.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4 Explain two contrasting Christian beliefs about how believers should respond to suffering. One of your points must include a reference to scripture.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

- 5 Evaluate the view that Christian teaching gives a satisfying answer to the problem of suffering. 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)

- 6 Define the term 'suffering' as it is used in Christian teaching about human experience.

(Total for Question 6 is 1 mark)

7 Give three features of the Book of Job that are relevant to Christian responses to suffering.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

8 Explain two ways the image of the crucified Christ helps Christians who are suffering today.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

9 State two teachings from Romans 8:18-28 and briefly explain what each teaches about suffering.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

10 Give three examples of how Christian communities might respond practically to people who are suffering.

(Total for Question 10 is 3 marks)

- 11** Explain two ways the Book of Job can offer comfort to a believer who has experienced injustice or loss.

(Total for Question 11 is 4 marks)

- 12** Explain two reasons why some Christians might struggle with the idea of a God who allows suffering, despite scripture about the cross and Job.

(Total for Question 12 is 4 marks)

- 13** Which one of the following best describes the message of Romans 8:28 as commonly taught in Christian churches?

- ☐ A: God guarantees that no bad thing will ever happen to believers.
- ☐ B: God will always remove suffering immediately for those who pray correctly.
- ☐ C: God can bring good out of suffering for those who love him, even when suffering occurs
- ☐ D: Suffering shows that God has abandoned believers forever.

(Total for Question 13 is 1 mark)

Mark scheme · RS.CB9 Christian Responses to Suffering: The Cross and the Book of Job

Question 1

- **B1** choice B is correct, the cross shows God experiences human suffering and shares in it, oe
- **Answer: B**

Question 2

- **B1** teaching 1: suffering is not always punishment for sin, as shown in the Book of Job, oe
- **B1** teaching 2: through the cross Christians believe God shares in human suffering and can bring good from suffering, oe
- **Answer: Any two: e.g. Job shows suffering is not always punishment; the cross shows God suffers with people and can bring good from suffering.**

Question 3

- **B1** point 1: some Christians believe suffering happens as part of living in a broken world, shown in Job where suffering occurs without obvious moral cause, oe
- **B1** development: Job's story shows that even the righteous can suffer, so suffering is part of human experience not always linked to personal sin, oe
- **B1** point 2: some Christians believe suffering can lead to spiritual growth or trust in God, as Paul suggests in Romans 8:18-28, oe
- **B1** development: Paul teaches present suffering is temporary and God can bring good out of it, encouraging believers to maintain faith, oe
- **Answer: E.g. suffering as part of a fallen, broken world shown by Job; suffering can lead to spiritual growth and be used by God for good, as in Romans 8:18-28.**

Question 4

- **B1** response 1: some Christians respond by trusting in God and persevering in faith, believing God shares their suffering as shown in the cross, oe
- **B1** development: this trust is supported by Romans 8:18 which says present suffering is not worth comparing with future glory, oe
- **B1** response 2: other Christians respond by questioning and demanding explanation from God, as Job did when he pleaded with God about his suffering, oe
- **B1** development: Job challenges God and receives no simple explanation, showing that faithful questioning is an allowed response, oe
- **B1** reference to scripture correctly included as required, oe
- **Answer: Contrast: trusting perseverance in hope of future glory (Romans 8:18) and seeing the cross as God sharing suffering, versus openly questioning God as Job did, with no simple answer.**

Question 5

- **Level 1** (1-3): Simple, brief statements about Christian teaching on suffering with little development, limited use of scripture or religious argument, and a weak or missing conclusion.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some developed arguments for and against the view with reference to Christian teaching or scripture, but limited evaluation and a partial conclusion.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Clear, developed arguments on both sides, using Christian sources such as the Book of Job, the cross and Romans 8:18-28, and a reasoned conclusion that addresses the question.
- **Level 4** (10-12): A comprehensive, balanced evaluation with sustained, well-supported arguments for and against, showing understanding of theological complexity and arriving at a justified, well-argued conclusion.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Arguments that Christian teaching is satisfying: the cross shows a God who enters suffering with humanity, making pain meaningful because God shares it.
 - Job provides a model where faith can persist even without explanation, which comforts believers who face unexplained suffering.
 - Paul in Romans 8:18-28 promises that God can bring good out of suffering and that present suffering is temporary compared with future glory, offering hope.
 - Christian responses include practical care by the church, pastoral support and liturgical practices that give sufferers a sense of being held by a faith community.
 - Arguments that Christian teaching is not fully satisfying: some sufferers find the idea of a loving, omnipotent God who allows extreme suffering hard to reconcile, and promises of future glory may not comfort those in acute distress.
 - The Book of Job does not provide a clear explanation or justification for suffering, and God does not give a direct answer, which can leave believers dissatisfied.
 - Some critics argue that appeals to future good or spiritual growth can seem to minimise present pain or to demand passive acceptance rather than justice or action.
 - A balanced conclusion might accept that Christian teaching offers meaning, companionship and hope for many, while acknowledging that for others it does not fully resolve the emotional and intellectual problem of suffering.

Question 6

- **B1** a state of pain, distress or hardship, whether physical, emotional or spiritual, experienced by people, oe
- **Answer: Pain, distress or hardship, physical, emotional or spiritual, experienced by people.**

Question 7

- **B1** feature 1: Job is a righteous man who suffers greatly without clear reason, oe
- **B1** feature 2: Job and his friends debate the cause and meaning of suffering, showing different theological responses, oe
- **B1** feature 3: God speaks to Job but does not offer a simple explanation, emphasising mystery and divine sovereignty, oe
- **Answer: Any three: Job is righteous yet suffers; debate between Job and friends about cause; God responds without giving a simple explanation, highlighting mystery.**

Question 8

- **B1** point 1: it reassures believers that God is not distant but has shared human pain in Jesus, oe
- **B1** development: this can bring comfort and a sense that God understands personal suffering, oe
- **B1** point 2: the crucifixion is seen as redemptive, so sufferers may find meaning in thinking that God can bring good out of pain, oe
- **B1** development: this links to the hope of resurrection and ultimate healing, giving long term hope to sufferers, oe
- **Answer: E.g. comfort from God sharing pain; meaning and hope from the redemptive purpose of the crucifixion and the promise of resurrection.**

Question 9

- **B1** teaching 1: present sufferings are not worth comparing with future glory (Romans 8:18), oe
- **B1** explanation 1: teaches hope that current pain is temporary and will be outweighed by future blessing, oe
- **B1** teaching 2: God works for the good of those who love him and can bring good out of suffering (Romans 8:28), oe
- **B1** explanation 2: teaches trust in God that suffering may lead to a greater purpose or transformation, oe
- **Answer: Romans 8:18 - present suffering is temporary compared with future glory; Romans 8:28 - God can bring good**

Question 10

- **B1** providing pastoral care or counselling, oe
- **B1** offering practical support such as food banks, befriending or hospital visiting, oe
- **B1** praying with sufferers and offering liturgies or memorial services, oe
- **Answer: Any three: pastoral care/counselling; practical support like food banks or visiting; prayer and liturgical support.**

Question 11

- **B1** point 1: Job models honest lament and questioning of God, showing that expressing grief and anger can be part of faithful life, oe
- **B1** development: this can comfort sufferers who fear that doubt or complaint is disallowed, oe
- **B1** point 2: the book ends with restoration of Job, offering hope that God may ultimately restore or bring justice, oe
- **B1** development: this provides hope that current injustice or loss may not be the final word, oe
- **Answer: E.g. Job shows faithful lament is permitted; Job's restoration offers hope of future restoration or justice.**

Question 12

- **B1** point 1: the scale of some suffering, such as natural disasters or child suffering, seems incompatible with belief in a loving, all-powerful God, oe
- **B1** development: this emotional difficulty can lead to loss of faith or anger even if scriptures offer theological responses, oe
- **B1** point 2: scriptural answers may appear to defer answers to the future (Romans) or to avoid direct explanation (Job), which some find intellectually unsatisfying, oe
- **B1** development: this can lead some Christians to seek additional philosophical or pastoral explanations rather than accept the scriptural responses alone, oe
- **Answer: E.g. the scale of suffering can make belief in a loving omnipotent God hard; scriptural responses that defer answers or avoid direct explanation can feel unsatisfying.**

Question 13

- **B1** choice C is correct, it matches Romans 8:28 teaching that God works for good for those who love him, oe
- **Answer: C**