

Theme 1: Religious figures and sacred texts, AS

A. Jesus – his birth

- Consistency and credibility of the birth narratives
- Matthew 1:18-2:23
- Luke 1:26-2:40
- harmonisation and redaction
- interpretation and application of the birth narratives to the doctrine of the incarnation (substantial presence and the kenotic model)

B. Jesus – his resurrection

- The views of Rudolf Bultmann and N.T. Wright on the relation of the resurrection event to history
- interpretation and application to the understanding of death, the soul, resurrected body and the afterlife
- Matthew 10:28
- John 20-21
- 1 Corinthians 15
- Philippians 1:21-24

C. The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority in daily life

- The ways in which the Bible is considered authoritative: as a source of moral advice
- Ecclesiastes 12:13-14
- Luke 6:36-37
- as a guide to living

- Psalm 119:9-16
- Psalm 119:105-112
- as teaching on the meaning and purpose of life
- Genesis 1:26-28
- Ecclesiastes 9:5-9
- as a source of comfort and encouragement
- Psalm 46:1-3
- Matthew 6:25

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as

- The extent to which the birth narratives provide insight into the doctrine of the incarnation.
- The relative importance of redaction criticism for understanding the biblical birth narratives.
- The nature of the resurrected body.
- The historical reliability of the resurrection.
- The relative value of the Bible as teaching on the meaning and purpose of life.
- The extent to which the Psalms studied offer a guide to living for Christians.

Theme 2: Religious concepts and religious life, AS

A. Religious concepts – the nature of God

- Is God male? The issue of male language about God;
- the pastoral benefits and challenges of the model of Father
- Sallie McFague and God as Mother
- Can God suffer? The impassibility of God
- the modern view of a suffering God illustrated by Jurgen Moltmann (The Crucified God)

B. Religious concepts – the Trinity

- The need for the doctrine of the Trinity
- the nature and identity of Christ (issues of divinity and preexistence) and Christ's relationship with the Father (co-equal and co-eternal)
- The origin of the Holy Spirit: the filioque controversy

C. Religious concepts – the Atonement

- Three theories of the Atonement (which are not mutually exclusive)
 1. the death of Jesus as Christus Victor (with reference to the liberation of humanity from hostile powers)

2. the death of Jesus as a substitution (both the belief that Jesus died as a substitute for humanity, and the belief that only the divine-human Jesus could act as a sacrifice by God for the sake of humanity)

3. the death of Jesus as a moral example (of how to live and die)

- The underlying assumptions about the need for divine forgiveness and the conflict between the wrath and love of God in theories of the Atonement

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as

➤ The validity of referring to God as mother.

➤ The theological implications of a suffering God.

➤ The monotheistic claims of the doctrine of the Trinity.

➤ Whether the doctrine of the Trinity is necessary to understand the God of Christianity.

➤ The extent to which the three theories of the Atonement are contradictory.

➤ The extent to which the three theories suggest that the Christian God is cruel

D. Religious life – faith and works

- Luther's arguments for justification by faith alone
- Romans 1:17; 5:1
- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Galatians 2:16
- Luther's rejection of James 2:24
- the Council of Trent as a response to Luther
- E. P. Sanders and the role of works in justification

E. Religious life – the community of believers

- The New Testament community of believers as a model for churches today
- Acts 2:42-47
- the role of churches in providing worship and sacraments, religious teaching, mission, service and outreach, and fellowship for the community of believers

F. Religious life – key moral principles

- Selected key moral principles of Christianity: the importance of love of neighbour
- Leviticus 19:34
- Luke 10:25-28
- God's love as a potential model for Christian behaviour
- Exodus 34:6-7

- 1 John 4:19- 21
- regard for truth
- 1 Samuel 12:24
- Ephesians 4:25-27
- the role of conscience
- 2 Corinthians 1:12
- 1 Timothy 1:5
- and the need for forgiveness
- Matthew 6:14-15
- Colossians 3:12-13

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as

- The extent to which both faith and works are aspects of justification.
- The extent to which the New Testament letters support arguments for justification by faith alone.
- Whether the main role of the church is to provide religious teaching.
- The extent to which contemporary Christian churches should follow the New Testament model.
- Whether love of neighbour is the most important moral principle in Christianity.
- The extent to which God's behaviour towards humans is the basis for Christian morality

Theme 4: Religious practices that shape religious identity, AS

A. Religious identity through diversity in baptism

- The case for infant baptism by Augustine and Zwingli
- the role of baptism in salvation
- the role and importance of Christian parents
- the case for believer's baptism with reference to Karl Barth
- the example of Christ
- importance of consent

B. Religious identity through diversity in Eucharist

- The importance of the Eucharist in the life of contemporary Christian communities
- selected modern Roman Catholic theories
- transignification
- transfinalization
- selected Protestant approaches
- consubstantiation
- memorialism
- the similarities in Eucharistic practice in Christian traditions.

C. Religious identity through diversity in festivals

Christmas

The similarities between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches' celebration of Christmas.

- the focus on incarnation of Christ

The differences between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches' celebration of Christmas.

- date of celebration
- focus of Advent season
- Christmas services

Easter

The similarities between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches' celebration of Easter.

- The doctrine of the resurrection of Christ

The differences between the Eastern Orthodox and the Western churches' celebration of Easter.

- Date
- liturgical practice at Easter
- the diversity within each stream of tradition

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as

- The extent to which both infant and adult baptism are just symbolic acts.
- The criteria for expressing the commitment to be baptised.
- The extent to which there is any common ground within contemporary understandings of the Eucharist.
- The extent to which theoretical beliefs about the Eucharist affect the practice of different denominations.
- Whether the different emphases and practices mean that Easter is a different celebration in the Eastern Orthodox and Western churches.
- The relative importance of Easter and Christmas.