

# Religion and Life

## Unit Content:

1. **Types of Truth** - Scientific, Religious and Historical.
2. **Origins of The Universe** – Big Bang Theory vs Genesis.
3. **Origins and Value of Human Life** – Adam and Eve vs Evolution.
4. **Abortion** – Pro-life vs Pro-choice.
5. **Euthanasia** – 4 types, Arguments for and against, Religious views.
6. **Hospices** – Aims of a Hospice, Palliative Care, Quality of Life vs Sanctity of Life.
7. **Animal Ethics** – Animal Testing, Vegetarianism and Veganism.
8. **Environmental Ethics** – Pollution, Sustainable Development, Earth Summits.
9. **Life After Death** – Christian views and Muslim Views.

### 1. Types of Truth:

- **Scientific** - Theory, hypothesis, repeated testing and observation. Scientific truth is an *evolving* truth because when new discoveries are made science must adapt and change.
- **Historical** - Based on documents, witness reports, photographs and archaeology.
- **Religious** - Holy books, religious experience and faith. This truth is supposed to be eternal and unchanging as it comes from God.

### 2. Origins of the Universe:

#### ■ The Big Bang theory

The Big Bang theory is currently the leading scientific explanation for how the universe began. It suggests that the universe started with an incredibly small, hot, dense something – a singularity, which expanded over the next 13.8 billion years or so to become the cosmos that we know today. As the universe continued to expand and cool, the matter that had been flung in all directions became stars grouped into galaxies. Because current instruments do not allow astronomers to peer back at the universe's birth, much of what we understand about the Big Bang theory comes from mathematical theory and models.



▲ An artist's impression of the Big Bang

Is the study of the origin of the universe an area where science and theology meet or disagree? Was creation a supernatural event that took place outside the natural world? Is there a master architect out there? Most scientists believe that the universe had a beginning. Was God the 'first cause'? Is there a conflict between Genesis 1 and the Big Bang? Yes, if you believe that God created everything in six days, but not necessarily if each day stands for a long period of time. The Big Bang could have been God's way of forming the universe.

#### EVIDENCE FOR THE BIG BANG:

**Red Light Shift** – The furthest away stars in the night sky appear red. The colour red occurs when we perceive a stretched wave length. Therefore, in the time it taken for the light to travel from the star to our eyes the space in-between us has stretched! This means that the universe must be expanding!

**Microwave Background Radiation** – Scientist have discovered left over radiation from the initial explosion still present in space.

#### ■ The creation of the universe

Have you ever been amazed at how many stars can be seen on a cloudless night? The size of the universe is astonishing. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is about 100,000 light years in diameter. It would take roughly 2.5 million years to travel to the next galaxy, if travelling at the speed of light. The currently observable **universe** is about 93 billion light years in diameter and contains more than 100 billion galaxies. Does the universe go on forever? We do not know the answer. How did the universe come into being? Was there a time when nothing existed? How did nothing become something?

Christians believe that the universe didn't just make itself, but that it was designed and made by God. They believe that God created all things that exist *ex nihilo* – a Latin term meaning 'out of nothing'.

Genesis 1:1 – 2:3 gives one of the accounts in the Bible of how God created the universe. In the story, God created the heavens and the earth in six days and then rested on the seventh.

**Day 1:** God said, 'Let there be light.' He called the 'light' day and the darkness night.

**Day 2:** God made the sky.

**Day 3:** God formed the seas and the land, covering the land with vegetation and plants.

**Day 4:** God created the lights in the sky – the sun, moon and stars.

**Day 5:** God made fish and other animals in the seas, and birds in the air.

**Day 6:** God finished by creating all of the animals on land, and by making humans. He made humans in his own image.

**Day 7:** God rested on the seventh day and made it holy. He was very pleased with his creation because it was good.



▲ A spiral galaxy

### 3. Origins and Value of Human Life

**Adam and Eve** - The story is found in Genesis (the first book of the Bible). Adam and Eve were the first two human beings on the planet and were given a paradise to live in known as the Garden of Eden. God's only rule for the pair in the paradise was to not eat from the tree of knowledge (apple tree). Eve eats the apple and God, as a punishment, removes Adam and Eve from their paradise; casting them out into a world of sin.

**Liberal Christian View** - The story is a metaphor for how Humans are responsible for sin. A liberal Christian may also look at this as poetry and not literally believe in that Adam and Eve were the first people; this view seems more compatible with the scientific approach.

**Literal Christian View** – Also known as a creationist view. This is view that every word of genesis is the literal word of God and Adam and Eve were the first two humans to be created. This is typically incompatible with the scientific approach.

**The Theory of Evolution** – Put forward by **Charles Darwin** in his book “On the Origin of Species” (1859) Evolution is the idea that we were not created by an all-powerful God in his image, but instead that we evolved from single celled organisms over millions of years eventually becoming what we are today; humans. This theory was met with widespread criticism but is now the most accepted scientific theory concerning the origin of human and indeed, all life. The concept of “survival of the fittest” is the idea that only the things sited to survive will be survive and this also helps to explain the seemingly perfect synchronisation of human, plant and animal life on our planet (potentially answering Paley's Design Argument).

#### Evidence for Evolution

- Species tend to survive in the environment in which they live, regardless of living conditions.
- Certain species have died out suggesting they were not suitable for survival.
- Natural selection' is the idea that mutations make life forms better suited to their environment.
- DNA analysis suggests that all life on earth shares certain features.
- Scientists have proven that humans have a common ancestry with apes.
- Fossil records show animals with a simpler structure further back in time and more complex structures later.

How non-conformist Christians respond to evolution.	How conformist Christians respond to evolution.	How Creationist Christians respond to evolution.
<p>Non-conformist Christians, for example Protestants, might say that the creation story in the Bible should not be taken literally, but symbolises God's influence on creation.</p> <p>They believe in evolution, but say that God started it off and gave life the ability to evolve and adapt. The days in the creation story show God was part of every stage of evolution, but it didn't literally take 6 days.</p> <p><b>The Special Agenda IV Diocesan Synod Church of England:</b> “Divine design in the universe is achieved by God through the way in which the laws of the universe work and the process of evolution. Genesis offers a general account of creation rather than actual events.”</p>	<p>Conformist Christians, for example Catholic Christians, believe that evolution is a part of God's plan. They argue that God has used the process of evolution to create life.</p> <p>God created humans “in his image” and gave them “dominion over earth” which means that God <b>planned</b> for humans to discover evolution.</p> <p><b>Catholic Catechism:</b> “Scientific studies about the origins of the world have splendidly enriched our knowledge of the development of life forms and the appearance of man. These discoveries invite us to even greater admiration of the greatness of the creator and we thank him for the understanding and wisdom he gives to researchers.”</p>	<p>Creationist Christians believe that science has got it wrong. Evolution is just the latest scientific theory, but is not proven as a fact.</p> <p>They argue that scientists and biologists cannot definitely prove how life began and that the Bible is just as good evidence the fossil record.</p> <p>They believe that the creation story in the Bible should be taken literally and complex life-forms are proof of God's omni-potence.</p> <p>Human life is more valuable than that of animals and plants and God has given human a special mission in ruling over the earth.</p>

### 4. Abortion

**Abortion** – the deliberate termination of a pregnancy and removal of a foetus.

**Pro –Life** – The belief that an unborn baby has to right to live. This is not exclusively a religious belief.

**Pro Choice** – This is the belief that a woman should have the right to choose what she does with her own body; including the termination of a pregnancy.

**Adoption**– The legal process where a person (child) is taken (adopted) into the family as a son or daughter.

**Embryo** - Fertilised ovum at about 12– 14 days when implanted into the wall of the womb.

**Foetus**-Fertilised ovum at about eleven weeks when the organs have developed.

**Conception**– when sperm and egg meet

**Viable** – the point at which a foetus could survive if it were to be born.

**Miracle of life:** the idea that life is wonderful, amazing or special.

**Blessing:** the idea that God has favoured a couple with a child.

**Fostering** - The taking of a child from a different family into a family home and bringing them up with the rest of the new family. Can be short term or longer term. In Britain are paid by the Government.

**The Miracle of Life** – Religious idea that life is a Miracle and therefore should be cherished.

**Quality of life**– A measure of fulfilment. Life is worth living when it is of a particular standard.

**Application of Quality of life:** Child should have a certain quality of life. If the child will suffer greatly may be better to have an abortion. If child will have a high quality of life should continue with the pregnancy. Mother should have a certain standard of life. If having a child would mean that her quality of life, through illness or other problems arising, would be unacceptable then perhaps she should have an abortion.

**Sanctity of Life**- The belief that all life is Sacred, Precious and a Gift from God.

**Application of Sanctity of Life:** Foetus' life is sacred and therefore should not be taken. Mother's life is sacred and so should not be destroyed. If she will die as a result of the pregnancy then her life should be saved by having an abortion.

**When does life begin?** This is important because when a person is alive they have human rights. These include the right to live, which means that killing them is unlawful. The answer depends on what is meant by 'life'. Does life begin at conception, when the spine has developed or at 22 weeks when the child could survive outside the womb?

**The rights of those involved:** The law gives certain rights to mothers, the unborn child and the mothers existing children (their physical and mental health). However no rights are given to the father.

**Rights Considered when discussing abortion include:**

Some argue for the Right to life of the foetus, or a foetus' right to protection from harm.

Mother's rights might include: right to choose, right to safety, right to equality of opportunity, right to make the final decision.

Father has no rights but has legal responsibilities for their children.

**Alternatives to abortion:** Keeping the child, adoption, fostering. Most religions follow the adoption laws of the country in which the believers live, so customs vary. Some religions restrict adoptions to children of the same religion. Muslims believe blood ties are important so probably would not officially adopt a child even if they brought them up as a member of the family.

**Abortion and UK Law** - In 1967 abortions became legal in the UK.

Previous to 1967 women were not allowed to have an abortion. Dangerous backstreet abortions (illegal abortions carried out by untrained people) were often carried out. Under UK law, an abortion can usually only be carried out during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy as long as certain criteria are met (see below). The Abortion Act 1967 covers England, Scotland and Wales but not Northern Ireland, and states:

- abortions must be carried out in a hospital or a specialist licensed clinic
- two doctors must agree that an abortion would cause less damage to a woman's physical or mental health than continuing with the pregnancy
- There are also a number of rarer situations when the law states an abortion may be carried out after 24 weeks. These include:
  - if it's necessary to save the woman's life
  - to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman
  - if there is substantial risk that the child would be born with serious physical or mental disabilities
- Generally, an abortion should be carried out as early in the pregnancy as possible, usually before 12 weeks and ideally before 9 weeks where possible.

**Christianity Views on Abortion** - Many Christians would feel that it is important to show compassion for the woman whatever her decision. This would mean showing that they cared for her and would support her whether or not they agreed with her actions. The Bible commands that we love one another and have compassion for the weak. God gives us free will therefore it is our choice whether we abort a child or keep it.

**Church of England View** - The Church of England generally condemns abortion. However, unlike the Roman Catholic Church who admits to no exceptions, the Church of England does. Although never a good thing, abortions are said to be morally acceptable in situations where the mother's life is in danger due to the pregnancy. Abortions are also permitted at a late stage if, and only if, 'serious fetal handicap' will result in the child surviving only a short time after being born. The Church of England believes when an abortion is necessary, then it should be carried out as *early* as possible in the pregnancy.

**Roman Catholic View** - The Catholic Church teaches that life begins at conception, so abortion is always wrong. It states that the natural law is that human life begins when an egg is fertilised. It is wrong to take life **"thou shall not kill"** (6<sup>th</sup> commandment) therefore abortion is wrong. They claim that every person has a natural 'right to life'. A foetus is a person and abortion destroys that right to life. Abortion is never allowed for Catholics. The only *exceptions* are ectopic pregnancy or if the mother develops cancer. Either of these can kill the mother if left untreated but kill the foetus if treated. Roman Catholics use **the doctrine of double effect** to say that the aim of the treatment is to save the mother not kill the foetus.

**Muslim View** - The official Muslim view on abortion is clear: it is a crime against a living human being and is therefore forbidden. If, though, it is reliably established that a continuance of the pregnancy will result in the mother's death then the abortion is allowable. In the Muslim faith, the Mother's life takes precedence over the baby's life. The reasons for this are clear. The Mother has many responsibilities and duties and, although regrettable, an abortion will be less disruptive to the family than the mother's death.

### Useful Muslim Teachings on Abortion

"Whosoever has spared the life of a soul, it is as though he has spared the life of all people. Whosoever has killed a soul, it is as though he has murdered all of mankind." **Qur'an 5:32**

"Kill not your offspring for fear of poverty; it is We who provide for them and for you. Surely, killing them is a great sin." **Qur'an 17:32**

"I believe that the value of life is the same whether this embryo is the result of fornication with relatives or non-relatives or valid marriage. In Sharia life has the same value in all cases." **Sheikh M. A. Al-Salami, Third Symposium on Medical Jurisprudence**

### Useful Christian Teachings on Abortion

"I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral". **Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, 1995**

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." **Psalms 139:13**

Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. **Genesis 1:26-27**

## 5. Euthanasia

**Euthanasia** - the painless killing of a patient suffering from an incurable and painful disease or in an irreversible coma. From the Greek meaning 'a good death' – mercy killing the deliberate ending of a life.

### Four Types of Euthanasia:

**Passive euthanasia** – A form of euthanasia where no action is taken to postpone death.

**Active euthanasia** – When steps are taken to bring death more quickly

**Involuntary euthanasia** – A form of euthanasia where the patient cannot or does not give his/her consent.

**Voluntary Euthanasia** - A form of euthanasia known as assisted suicide, where someone asks for help to bring death more quickly.

**Euthanasia and the Law** - Assisted suicide. Assisted suicide is illegal under the terms of the Suicide **Act** (1961) and is punishable by up to 14 years' imprisonment. Trying to kill yourself is not a criminal **act**. Switzerland allows people to have voluntary active Euthanasia; this can be provided at Dignitas clinic in Switzerland.

**Arguments for Euthanasia** - It is an act of love or charity to help someone in great pain to end his or her suffering. It is a cruel law that enforces people to suffer. In some cases the quality of a person's life may be so poor that their right to life is no longer valid. They may have reached the stage that their lives have no real value.

**Arguments against** - Once euthanasia is legalised for terminally ill or senile people, will the next stage be to look to end the lives of the severely disabled, the mentally ill? Are we sure death is imminent? People who seem certain to die can make remarkable recoveries. Dr Christian Barnard tells of an occasion when he was about to give a lethal injection to a dying woman. At the last moment he decided not to give it. The woman made a slow but full recovery

**Useful Christian Teachings on Euthanasia** - Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. **1 Corinthians 6:19** You shall not murder. **Exodus 20:13**

**Useful Muslim Teachings on Euthanasia** - Do not take life, which Allah made sacred, other than in the course of justice. **Qur'an 17:33** Destroy not yourselves. Surely Allah is ever merciful to you. **Qur'an 4:29** And no person can ever die except by Allah's leave and at an appointed term. **Qur'an 3:145**

## 6. Hospices

**Hospice** – A place for people who are terminally ill to die in peace and comfort

**Terminally Ill** – A kind of illness that is incurable.

**Palliative Care** – A kind of care that is given in a Hospice. The only aim of this care is to make the patient comfortable (pain relief)

**There are 3 main aims of hospice care:**

**To relieve pain.** Today it is thought it is not necessary for terminally ill patients to die in pain. Hospices specialize in pain control. Hospice staff believe all pain, however severe can be brought under control. **(Palliative care)**

**To help patients, friends and relatives face up to death.** Although many hospices are Christian foundations, no attempt is made to persuade patients to become Christians. Opportunities are given to the patients and to family members to discuss death and dying.

**To care for the emotional needs of friends and family.** Hospices help families cope with bereavement before, during and after the death of their relative.

## 7. Animal Ethics

**Animal Experiments** - Testing on animals, either for medical or cosmetic purposes, to ensure that the product is safe for use by humans

**Factory Farming** - When animals are bred for meat or dairy products, and are kept indoors in very small spaces

**Free-range Farming** - Farming that allows the animals to roam free and behave naturally

**Fur Trade** - The business of farming or hunting wild animals for their fur to be made into clothing

**Genetic Modification** - Plants and animals that have had their natural make up altered by scientists

**Hunting** - The chasing of animals to kill them, which may be done for food, protection or human pleasure.

**Ivory Trade** - The sale of ivory from elephants' tusks, often illegally

**Stewardship** - The idea that believers have a duty to look after the environment on behalf of God

**Vegetarianism** - The belief held by people who do not eat meat

**Vegan** – A person who will not use any animal product

### ■ Christians and animals

Christians believe that animals were created by God for humans to use and care for. Many believe God values animals but that humans are more important because they were created in the image of God, and have souls. The story of Noah and the flood shows this. God commanded Noah to take animals into the ark so they would be safe:

“ Take with you seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ”  
*Genesis 7:2–3 [NIV]*

However, after the flood Noah is given permission to eat meat:

“ Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. ”  
*Genesis 9:3 [NIV]*

The Bible teaches that animals are to be treated kindly, for example:

“ Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain. ”  
*Deuteronomy 25:4 [NIV]*  
“ The righteous care for the needs of their animals. ... ”  
*Proverbs 12:10 [NIV]*

Animals are used by humans as pets, for transport and work, for food, sport, experimentation and entertainment.

### ■ Animal experimentation

Scientists test new products, such as medicines, cosmetics and additives used in processed foods, on animals to check that they are safe for humans to use. Normally, if it is safe to use with chimpanzees, dogs or rabbits, it is likely to be safe for humans.

Testing cosmetics on animals was banned in the UK in 1998, and most Christians support this ban. Other types of animal testing have been reduced as scientists have developed alternative methods using computers or cell culture (cells that are grown



artificially). Most animal experiments that still occur are on mice or rats that are specially bred for the purpose.

In modern societies Christians generally support limited animal testing, providing there is no other safe way to develop medicines and it is carried out as caringly as possible. Christians believe that all human life is sacred and should be treated with respect; using animals to develop new drugs may benefit millions of people and save many lives.

In contrast to Christianity, Hinduism teaches that all living creatures have souls, not just humans, and all deserve to be protected. While the Hindu parents of a child may wish to benefit from animal research, this has to be balanced with the belief that some animals might contain the souls of ancestors. Many Hindus believe the cow to be a sacred animal, so no experiments would be permitted on a cow.

### ■ Should Christians eat meat?

According to Romans 14:2–3, Christians have the choice to be meat-eaters, **vegetarians** or **vegans**. They should also be sensitive to the beliefs of others about what they wish to eat.

“ The one who eats everything [meat] must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. ”

Romans 14: 3 [NIV]



▲ Sheep being reared for meat

Most Christians eat meat, as do around 90 per cent of people in the UK. Meat is a good source of protein, vitamins and minerals and the Bible does not teach that it is wrong to eat animals.

## 8. Environmental Ethics

**Acid Rain** - Rain made through acid by contamination through pollution in the atmosphere as the result of emissions from factories, vehicles, etc.

**Carbon Emissions** - Release of greenhouse gases, such as carbon monoxide from vehicles, into the atmosphere.

**Climate Change** - The idea that the climate is getting warmer.

**Conservation** - Looking after the environment and protecting animals.

**Deforestation** - The cutting down of large amounts of forest, usually because of business needs.

**Droughts** - Long periods of abnormally low rainfall.

**Earth Summits** - Informal name for the UN Conferences on Environment and Development.

**Famine** - Starvation owing to drastic, far reaching food shortage

**Greenhouse Effect** - The trapping of heat from the sun in the lower atmosphere due to an increase in carbon dioxide, methane and other pollution.

**Global Warming** - The scientific concept that the world is getting warmer.

**Natural Habitats** - The places where species of plants or animals live in the wild.

**Oil Spills** - Leaking of oil into the environment, usually the sea.

**Pesticides** - Substances used to destroy insects and pests that attack crops.

**Pollution** - The contamination of something, especially the environment.

**Recycling** - Reusing old products to make new ones.

**Responsibility** - Duty; the idea that we are in charge of our own actions

**Sustainable Development** - Development which takes into consideration the impact on the natural world for future generations.

### Types of Pollution

**Air Pollution** – Caused mainly by factories and vehicles. Causes global warming and has been linked to lung cancer.

**Land Pollution** – Caused by ineffective disposal of waste. **Water pollution** – Caused by dumping waste into sea. E.g.

Oil spills

### ■ Reduce, reuse, recycle

How can Christians help the planet? Christians believe they should avoid waste, conserve energy and reduce the demand for natural resources. Here are a few of the ways this can be done:

- walking, cycling or using public transport instead of the car
- selecting products that don't have a lot of packaging
- turning off lights that are not being used
- reusing bags when shopping
- donating second-hand clothes, toys and furniture to charity shops
- recycling waste.

### The Assisi and Ohito meetings

Leaders from five different world religions were brought together in 1986 by the World Wildlife Fund, to celebrate its 25th anniversary. They met in Assisi (in Italy) to discuss how their faiths could and should help to care for the environment. Another meeting in Ohito (in Japan) in 1995 brought together religious leaders and environmental scientists.

At these meetings Christians said that being in charge of creation does not give people the right to abuse, spoil, waste or destroy what God has made, as humans are only the tenants of God's world (Leviticus 25:23). Thoughtless exploitation should be opposed.

## 9. Life after Death

**After life:** What Christians believe follows life on earth.

**Day of Judgement:** A time when the world will end and every soul will be judged by God and rewarded or punished. Jesus taught that God's love and mercy are unconditional, though many of the parables (stories) he told speak about God's judgement after death. Christianity teaches that there will be a Judgement Day at the end of time and all will be judged by Jesus according to how they behaved. The **Nicene Creed** states that Jesus '*will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead*'. Jesus will make and deliver the judgement.

**Day of Judgement: Roman Catholic Beliefs:** The Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church states there are two judgments: The particular judgement occurs immediately after each individuals' death and the general or final judgement takes place at the **Second Coming** (of Jesus) which is when many Christians believe that Jesus will return to the Earth in Glory. Jesus will judge those who are still alive and those who are dead and as a result of this judgement they will be sent to heaven or hell.

**Important parables about Judgement :** *The Rich Man and Lazarus* (Luke 16: 19-31) warns that ignoring the needs of others may have eternal consequences and *The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats* (Matthew 25:31-46) warns that on Judgement Day some will be rewarded in heaven for helping others - when they served others they were serving God. The goats, those who did not help others are condemned because they did not.

**Resurrection of the Dead** - that the dead will be restored to life. They have this hope because they believe that Jesus resurrected from the dead. It is also based on his teaching. *Some Christians believe that it is a Spiritual resurrection, others that it is a physical resurrection.* Sometimes the life cycle of the butterfly is used to illustrate this teaching about the resurrection life - there is a continuity of identity. Catholic and some Orthodox Churches – resurrection is a bodily one and that people will once again receive their old body but transformed into a glorified state in which suffering will not exist.

**Scripture/Sacred writings** '*I believe in... the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*' (Apostles) Creed. St Paul said belief in Jesus' resurrection was central to Christian faith. '*And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.... If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men*' (1 Corinthians 15: 17, 19). '*The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable.... It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*' (1 Corinthians 15:42, 44)

**Impact/Influence:** Christians have a hope that there is life after death.e.g. prayer at the funeral service 'you promised eternal life to those who believe...'. If resurrection is a reality for people once they have died then life after death must be too. Gives hope in the face of death. Many Christians believe that the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit means that they can feel God's presence in their life, gives them confidence of God's love the love.

**Heaven:** Christianity teaches that heaven is a state of being, not a physical place. It is being with God outside time and space. Heaven is where they experience the presence of God forever – eternally.

**Scripture/Sacred Writings:** '*He [God] will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away* (Revelation 21:4). Revelation 4 '*a rainbow, resembling an emerald*' encircling the throne of God. From this throne comes '*flashes of lightening, rumblings and pearls of thunder*'.

**Impact/Influence:** Heaven encourages Christians to serve God and be obedient to Him. Heaven can be a comfort in times of suffering – this suffering will pass and they have hope for the future.

**Who goes to heaven? 4 different Christian views**

- "**Only Christians** go to heaven". In John 14 (Jesus) "**I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me**". Belief in Jesus **and** following his teaching is also important.
- All those who call themselves Christians act of being baptised into the faith is almost a guarantee of Heaven.
- All who have lived good, principled lives and pleased God in doing so.
- Universalism: ultimately everyone will respond to God's love and this means that everyone will go to Heaven.

**Hell:** The place of being without God or of eternal suffering. Many Christians reject those literal views of hell. Biblical descriptions of hell are symbolic – **hell is eternal separation from God.** This separation results from the deliberate rejection of any relationship with God so hell is not what God decides for people or what He wants but is a result of Free Will – free choice.

**Annihilation:** this means to be completely destroyed so no longer exist. Hell is where the body and soul both cease to exist at the point of physical death. Catholic Church's Catechism which states 'God predestines NO ONE to go to hell; for this, a wilful TURNING AWAY FROM GOD... is necessary and persistence in it until the end'.

**Purgatory: Only Roman Catholics believe in purgatory.** They think this is a middle place between Heaven and Hell. In purgatory you pay for your sins and when you have done this you can enter Heaven.

This means that Roman Catholics will pray for dead people. They pray that their time in purgatory will be reduced.

After death the soul goes to purgatory if it is destined for Heaven. Purgatory is a place of purification for the soul, so that it can become pure and holy enough to enter Heaven. It is not a physical place.