

Key Concepts

Creation ex nihilo	The belief that God created the universe 'from nothing'.	Imago Dei	The belief that humans were created in the image of God.
Omnipotent	The belief that God is all powerful.	Stewardship	The belief that humans should protect and preserve the environment and hand more on to the next generation.
Transcendent	The belief that God exists above and beyond space and time.	Revelation	The way in which God makes himself known to the world e.g. the Bible.
Evolution	The gradual change and development of species over time. Associated with Charles Darwin.	Inspiration	The belief that the writers of the Bible were guided by the Holy Spirit to write what is good and true.

The Bible & Genesis 1 and 2

Catholics believe that the Bible including Genesis is the word of God and a direct form of revelation. This is the way in which God makes himself known to the world. Catholics believe the Bible writers were guided by the Holy Spirit to write what is good and true. However, the Bible must be read in context of when it was written. Fundamentalist Christians read the Bible and Genesis as a literal account.

Sources of Authority

- "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1)
- 'So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them.' (Gen 1.27)
- 'God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number...Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."' (Gen 1:28)
- "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils" (Gen 2)

Key Beliefs

Catholic beliefs about Genesis 1 & 2	Catholics read the stories of creation in Genesis in a symbolic way , believing that they reveal some important things about the nature of God and humanity. Genesis 1 reveals God to be omnipotent as he creates the universe from nothing. God is seen as transcendent as he exists in the beginning above and beyond the universe. God is also seen as eternal as he exists before all things. Genesis 2 shows that God is omnibenevolent as he creates the universe out of love. Catholics also believe that the two Genesis accounts highlight important beliefs such as the sanctity of life, the Imago Dei and stewardship (the belief that humans should protect and preserve the environment).
Fundamentalist Christian beliefs about Genesis 1 & 2	Fundamentalist Christians read the stories of Genesis literally . They believe that the creation of the world and everything in it took place in six calendar days , exactly as the book of Genesis says. This stems from the view that the Bible is the direct word of God , which is never mistaken. In a similar way to Catholics, Fundamentalists believe that Genesis reveals important beliefs about the nature of God and humans.
Catholic beliefs about the Bible	Catholics believe that the Bible is a direct form of revelation . Revelation is the way in which God has made Himself known to the world. They also believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God . Catholics believe the Bible writers were guided by the Holy Spirit . Not everything they wrote might have been historically or literally accurate. Catholics must work carefully to determine exactly what a sacred author is saying to be true. An author might write metaphorically to help bring out the truth more clearly. The Bible contains a variety of different literature and must be read in context of when it was written. For example, there is no problem accepting evolution and the Big Bang. The creation story in Genesis is a poetic reflection on the significance of God as creator. This links to Pope John Paul II's teaching on the compatibility of science and religion.
Fundamentalist beliefs about the Bible	Fundamentalist Christians believe that the Bible is the literal word of God . For example, they believe that God created the world in a single week and that everything was made perfectly at that time. They would reject the Theory of Evolution. They believe the Holy Spirit dictated the Bible and that no one should question anything that the Bible teaches because it comes from God. Where there appear to be contradictions, they think that this just shows that people do not yet have enough understanding.

Exam Practice

c) Explain either from Catholic Christianity and Judaism or two Christian traditions, beliefs about abortion. (8)