

Christianity assignment

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Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Christians believe that God sent his Son to earth to save humanity from the consequences of its sins. * One of the most important concepts in Christianity is that of Jesus giving his life on the Cross (the Crucifixion) and rising from the dead on the third day (the Resurrection). * Christians believe that there is only one God, but that there are three elements to this one God: * God the Father God the Son * The Holy spirit * Christians worship in churches. * Their spiritual leaders are called priests or ministers. The Christian holy book is the Bible, and consists of the Old and New Testaments. * Christian holy days such as Easter and Christmas are important milestones In the Western secular calendar The Assumption of Mary Assumption of the Virgin by Antoine Salter (1585-1650) Roman Catholics believe the doctrine of the Assumption, which teaches that at the end of her life, Mary, the mother of Christ, was taken body and soul (I. E. Both physically and spiritually) Into heaven to live with her son Jesus Christ) for ever.

Human beings have to wait until the end of time for their bodily resurrection, but Mary's body was able to go straight to heaven because her soul hadn't been tainted by original sin. Catholics elaborate the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on August 15th each year. Eastern Orthodox Christians, following the Julian calendar, mark the event as the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God on 28th August. Top Divergent approaches This is an ancient teaching, first found in the 5th century, but it remains controversial to Protestants because it is not explicitly referred to in the Bible.

The Roman Catholic Church bases the doctrine on other valid authority. A report in 2005 by Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians found common ground (but not common authority) for life in the Assumption: ... We can affirm together the teaching that God has taken the Blessed Virgin Mary in the fullness of her person into his glory as consonant with Scripture and that it can, indeed, only be understood in the light of Scripture. Roman Catholics can recognize that this teaching about Mary is contained in the dogma. 2005 report by Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians Top Catholic doctrine Doctrine first proclaimed The doctrine of the Assumption was proclaimed as infallible Pope Pius XII on All Saints Day 1950 in the bull (formal proclamation) *Ineffabilis Deus*. We pronounce, declare, and define it to be a divinely revealed dogma: that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. Pope Pius XII, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1950 This made it an important article of faith for Roman Catholics.

This was only the second time that a Pope had proclaimed a doctrine to be infallible. The first was the Immaculate Conception, another doctrine that concerns Mary. The Pope justified the Assumption not on Biblical authority but largely on: * the "universal consensus of the Church" * the theological "suitability" of the doctrine Universal consensus of the Church The "universal consensus of the Church" means that what the Church as a whole teaches and believes must be treated as a revealed and thus indisputable truth.

The Church can only reach such a consensus through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit cannot be wrong. This doesn't mean that Church doctrine cannot change - theologians use the idea of

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dogmatic progression, by which human ideas, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, slowly develop towards the real truth. Once the real truth is established, the “universal consensus” of the Church then confirms it as an eternal truth. Before proclaiming the doctrine Pope Pius XII made sure that there was really was a consensus in the Church.

In 1946 he wrote to all the Roman Catholic bishops to ask them a) whether they thought the Assumption should become Catholic dogma, and b) whether the priests and the laity agreed with them. 99% of the bishops said yes. Theological suitability The other main argument for the Assumption was that it fitted well with other Catholic teaching, and would reinforce believers' faith that they too would eventually go to heaven. The Assumption was also clearly in harmony with other Catholic ideas about Mary: * Her immaculate conception * Her perpetual virginity * Being the mother of God must have been taken up to be with him in heaven. Transduction Virtually all religions include an explanation for life on Earth in their scriptures. In the I-J, and even more so in the USA, the creationism debate largely involves Christians. In March 2006, Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, joined the evolution versus creationism debate when he said in an interview with the Guardian newspaper that he did not believe that creationism – the scriptural account of the origins of the world – should be taught in schools. I think creationism is, in a sense, a kind of category mistake, as if the Bible were a theory like other theories.

Whatever the biblical account of creation is, it's not a theory alongside theories. It's not as if the writer of Genesis or whatever sat down and said well, how am I going to explain all this... ' In the beginning God created the

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heavens and the earth... ' Rowan Williams in The Guardian, 21 March 2006

So what is creationism all about – what does it mean, and why does it matter so much to many religious people? And what is intelligent design and how does it differ from recreation?

Creationism The main points of creationism are these: * All life was created by the actions of God * Some Creationists say God did this in a single creative event * Some Creationists don't limit creation to one event * All the forms of life existing today were created by the actions of God * The organisms created by God can't produce new forms of organism – only God can do this * The most common theory follows the accounts in the Biblical Book of Genesis, but most religions have their own creation story * Modern creationism uses scientific evidence to support scripture * Most scientists say the creationism theory is false and unscientific Intelligent design (also called neo-creationism) * The current state of life on Earth has come about through the actions of an intelligent Designer * This is because * Some living things contain certain types of complexity that are best explained as the result of an intelligent cause * Some aspects of the universe show positive evidence of having been designed by some form of intelligence * This designer need not be God but most proponents of intelligent design seem to have God in mind * This theory has been accused of being creationism in disguise *

Although a few scientists have supported intelligent design, the majority of those working in the field regard the theory as false and unscientific

Creationism in depth Creationism teaches that: * everything in the universe has God as its ultimate cause * the nature of life on Earth is the direct result of God's creative actions An alternative way of putting the same idea is: *

the universe and everything in it could not have come into being without a supreme being causing it to happen Creationism is largely based on religious belief, but gains much support from what its protagonists see as the failures of other horses to explain the evidence properly. Different religions and cultures have different creation theories, but this article deals with the Jewish/Christian version. The Immaculate Conception doctrine of the Immaculate Conception teaches that Mary, the mother of Christ, was conceived without sin and her conception was thus immaculate.

Mar's sinless conception is the reason historical refer to Mary as " full of grace". The Feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated by Catholics on December teach year. Misconceptions Mistakes There are two mistakes that people often make about the Immaculate Conception: * Many people confuse the Immaculate Conception with the " virgin birth"; the belief that Mary gave birth to Jesus while remaining a virgin. They are not the same thing. * A less common mistake is to think that the Immaculate Conception means that Mary was conceived without sexual intercourse. In fact Mary had ordinary human parents who conceived her in the usual manner.

Top In detail Mary received God's grace from the first moment of her existence, and was totally and completely redeemed by this grace. Because she was redeemed, Mary spent her whole existence in a perfect relationship with God. God did this so that Mary would e worthy to be the mother of God. ... To the Christian intelligence the idea is unthinkable that the flesh of Christ, holy, stainless, innocent, was formed in the womb of Mary of a flesh which had ever, if only for the briefest moment, contracted any stain. Pope

Pips X, 1904 Mary received this redeeming grace not because of any merits of her own, but because God freely gave her the gift of his love.

Christians believe that God's redeeming grace is available to all believers: those who accept the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception regard Mary as the perfect example of the redeeming action of God's grace, and believe that Mary was only able to receive this grace because Christ would later redeem all humanity through his death on the cross. Chosen in advance to be the Mother of the incarnate Word, Mary is at the same time the first-fruits of his redeeming action. The grace of Christ the Redeemer acted in her in anticipation, preserving her from original sin and from any contagion of guilt. Pope John Paul II, Deck 82003 Catholic and Protestant views This is an ancient teaching, but it remains controversial to some Protestants because it is not explicitly referred to in the Bible. Early Protestant thinkers were more devoted to Mary than some of their successors.

Martin Luther, for example, was a firm believer in the Immaculate Conception: The infusion of Mar's soul was effected without original sin... From the first moment she began to live she was free from all sin. Martin Luther, sermon: On the Day of the Conception of the Mother of God A 2005 report by Anglican and Roman Catholic theologians found common ground for this belief when it stated that: In view of her vocation to be the mother of the Holy One (Luke 1 : 35), we can affirm together that Christ's redeeming work reached ' back in o the teaching of Scripture, and can only be understood in the light of Scripture. Roman Catholics can recognize in this what is affirmed by the dogma - namely ' preserved from all stain of original sin' and ' from the first moment of her conception. 2005 report by Anglican <https://assignbuster.com/christianity-assignment/>

and Roman Catholic theologians Doctrine's " infallibility" The doctrine proclaimed as infallible The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was proclaimed quantifiable by Pope Pius IX in the bull (formal proclamation) *Ineffabilis Deus* in 1854, and thus is an important article of faith for Roman Catholics. We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful.

Pope Pius ' X, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854 Before proclaiming the doctrine the Pope took steps to see whether the Church as a whole agreed by asking 603 bishops whether he should proclaim the Immaculate Conception; 546 (90%) said that he should. Bernadette's vision at Lourdes in 1858, where Mary revealed herself as the Immaculate Conception, put the stamp of God's approval on the doctrine. **Top What is original sin?** Original sin is an Augustine Christian doctrine that says that everyone is born sinful. This means that they are born with a built-in urge to do bad things and to disobey God. It is an important doctrine within the Roman Catholic Church. The concept of Original Sin was explained in depth by Saint Augustine and formalized as part of Roman Catholic doctrine by the Councils of Trent in the 16th Century.

Original sin is not just his inherited spiritual disease or defect in human nature; it's also the ' condemnation' that goes with that fault. An explanation for the evils of the world Some Christians believe that original sin explains <https://assignbuster.com/christianity-assignment/>

why there is so much wrong in a world created by a perfect God, and why people need to have their souls ‘ saved’ by God. A condition you’re in, not something you do Original sin is a condition, not something that people do: It’s the normal spiritual and psychological condition of human beings, not their bad thoughts and actions. Even a newborn baby who hasn’t done anything at all is damaged by original sin. The sin of Adam

In traditional Christian teaching, original sin is the result of Adam and Eve’s disobedience to God when they ate a forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Effects of original sin Original sin affects individuals by separating them from God, and bringing dissatisfaction and guilt into their lives. On a world scale, original sin explains such things as genocide, war, cruelty, exploitation and abuse, and the “ presence and universality of sin in human history”. How to cure original sin Some Christians believe that human beings can’t cure themselves of original sin. The only way they can be saved from its consequences is by the grace of God. The only that Jesus Christ died on the cross to redeem their sins, and getting baptized.

Secular ideas of original sin Modern thinkers don’t think the doctrine of original sin is literally true, but they do think it contains real truths about the human condition: * The world is not as good as we want it to be * We are not as good as we want to be * Individual behavior is greatly influenced by things outside the individual’s control * Many of these are historical things: * events in the individual’s past * events in the past of the individual’s family * customs that their culture has built up through history * These things affect unanimity as a group as well as individuals Top Christianity and the fall Original sin is part of the Doctrine of the Fall, which is the belief that when <https://assignbuster.com/christianity-assignment/>

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they ‘ fell’ from perfection and brought evil into a perfect world. Fall goes with redemption For Christians, the fall is inseparable from redemption – the act by which human souls are washed clean of the stain of original sin. A tale of two Adams Christians believe that the story of the fall and redemption is a story of two Adams, and sometimes refer to Christ as the “ Second Adam”.

The first Adam sins and causes unanimity to fall; the second Adam atones for that sin with his death and redeems humanity. The traditional story of original sin The story behind original sin is told in the Old Testament book of Genesis: God originally made a perfect world. He created Adam and put him to live in the Garden of Eden – a blissful place where he had nothing to do but take care of the garden. Serpent God told Adam that he could do anything he wanted, except eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Later, God created Eve to be Dam’s wife. Eve was tricked by the serpent into eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of life and death. She gave some of the fruit to Adam and he ate it too.

Adam and Eve realized that they were naked and hid in shame. When God next visited the Garden he realized that they had disobeyed him. God banished them from the Garden of Eden into the harsh world outside. God also banned them from eating the fruit of the tree of life, and so death entered the world. The Fall and the origin of evil Christians believe that when Adam and Eve sinned in Eden and turned away from God they brought sin into the world and turned the whole human race away from God. The doctrine absolves God of responsibility for the evils that make our world

imperfect by teaching that Adam and Eve introduced evil to a perfect world when they disobeyed him.

An alternative understanding of the story of the fall emphasizes that Adam and Eve did wrong because they 'gave in' to the temptation of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. These two versions offer radically different ideas about the origin of evil: * in the first version Adam and Eve bring evil into the world by disobeying God * in the second version evil already exists, and Adam and Eve bring sin to humanity by giving in to it This second understanding fits well with human nines to 'give in' when tempted by the prevailing evils of the society around them, rather than standing up for good, and it helps explain why each individual finds temptation so hard to resist. As the Bible puts it: I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...

Romans 7: 14-15 A third understanding teaches not so much that Dam's sin brought sin into the world, but that it removed from humanity the gift that enabled people to be perfectly obedient to God. A modern interpretation A modern interpretation of the fall might go like this: Adam was created in the image of God with the potential to be perfectly fulfilled wrought his existence and his relationship with God. But Man failed to fulfill his potential and opted to go it alone and estrange himself from God. Jesus as the "Second Adam" re-established the relationship with God and showed how man can become perfectly human - which puts him in right relationship with both the creator and his creation.

Usefulness of the doctrine Original sin is a difficult doctrine, and a rather gloomy one, but it had some key theological benefits that have kept it as a

mainstream Christian teaching: Universality: Original sin teaches that all human beings are flawed and sinful – no- one is better than anyone else *

Non-dualist: Original sin explains evil without having to portray God as having a bad side, or an evil partner, responsible for the badness in the world; evil comes from human rebelliousness *

Non-designed: Original sin explains how a world that God designed to be perfect is actually full of evil *

Not inevitable: Original sin teaches that the world could have remained perfect – it was not inevitable that Adam and Eve would disobey God *

Mechanism: Original sin demonstrates a mechanism that enabled the original disobedience to damage everyone

The Fall and Christian Europe

What effect has the concept of original sin had on Western culture, and how did it influence gender and morality in Christian Europe? Discussing the question are Martin Palmer, theologian and Director of the International Consultancy on Religion, Education and Culture; Griddled Pollock, Professor of Art History at the University of Leeds; and John Carrey, Emeritus Professor of English Literature at Oxford University.

Transmission of original sin

How does original sin get from Adam to 21st century human beings?

One rather difficult explanation says that the whole human race was somehow contained in Adam and so when Adam fell, they fell too. The other explanation, expanded below, is that all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve. Modern Catholic teaching is less clear about the mechanism of transmission and refers to it as a mystery.

SST Augustine theory

SST Augustine, who largely devised the theory of original sin, thought that original sin was transmitted from generation to generation through sexual intercourse. Augustine did not say exactly how this happened. He said that it

was transmitted by “concupiscence”, when people had sex and conceived a child.

Concupiscence is a chemical theological word that Augustine used to refer to sexual desire as something bad in the soul that was inseparable from normal human sexual impulses. Sexual depriving them of self-control and rational thought. This disapproving view of passion was quite common among Christians of Augustine time. Augustine thought that concupiscence was present in all sexual intercourse. He thought that it was just as bad and uncontrolled in a marriage as it was in non-marital sex, but that an excuse could be made for it within marriage because its purpose was to produce legitimate children. This bad element in sex provides the means by which original sin is transmitted from father to child.

It transmits both humanity's guilt for Adam's crime and the sickness or defect that gives human beings a sinful nature. ... Whenever it comes to the actual process of generation, the very embrace which is lawful and honorable cannot be effected without the ardor of lust.... [This lust] is the daughter of sin, as it were; and whenever it yields assent to the commission of shameful deeds, it becomes also the mother of many sins. Now from this concupiscence whatever comes into being by natural birth is bound by original sin... Augustine, *De bono conjugali* The Council of Trent The Council of Trent (1545-63), or Trenting councils were a series of Roman Catholic theological meetings in response to the Reformation.

The Council of Trent gave the official stamp to the idea that original sin was transferred from generation to generation by propagation – which means

during the sexual act that led to conception. This formalized the notion of Original Sin as part of Roman Catholic doctrine. The Council explicitly ruled out the idea that original sin was transferred by “imitation”; in order to block the idea that human beings just copied the bad example of their parents and others. Imitation and mimesis. These closely related ideas teach that original sin is passed on by copying the sinful tendencies of other people. The Council of Trent decreed that this idea was false.

Getting rid of original sin. The only way a person can ‘cleanse’ their soul from sin is to: * accept that Christ’s death on the cross atoned for this sin * accept that only God’s grace can cure this sin * confess their sins and ask for forgiveness * be baptized. Many churches accept that infants can be cleansed of original sin by being baptized soon after birth. The other elements required are carried out by adults on the baby’s behalf during the ceremony.

Redemption. In St Paul’s letter to the Galatians, he wrote: “Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery”. This conception of Redemption as freedom from bondage is crucial for Jude-Christian thought. Three academics – Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford; Janet Cook, Reader in Modern Theology and Philosophical Theology at Cambridge University; and Stephen Mulhall, Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at Oxford University – discuss the idea of redemption from falseness to salvation.

Top Problems with original sin. The unanswered question world; instead it leaves other questions to be answered. As one writer puts it: Why is there original sin? Because Adam sinned? Then why did Adam sin? If it was because of the serpent, why did the serpent sin? If the serpent is supposed

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to have been a fallen angel, why did the angel sin? And so on. Serpent And there is a second, but related, question. If evil did not exist before Adam sinned, how could Adam know that what he was about to do was evil – how was he to know that it was wrong to disobey God? It's unfair For modern people the idea of being punished for a crime committed by someone else is unethical and unacceptable. Original sin belongs to each of us because it belongs to all.

It's misogynistic The doctrine of original sin blames Eve for tempting Adam into sin and has been responsible for centuries of Christian bias against women. It's anti-sex Augustine theory of original sin was so intrinsically tied up with his disapproval of human sexual love that for centuries it contaminated all sexual passion with the idea of sin. It's too pessimistic Some Christian thinkers are unhappy with the idea that human beings start out so bad that they can't become good without God's help. It's not literally true Science shows that the Biblical creation story is not literally true, and demonstrates that Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden are myths and not historical figures.

This destroys the idea of original sin as being caused by the misbehavior of the first man and woman, and the idea of inheriting guilt or punishment for that misbehavior. Most modern theologians don't think this a good reason to abandon the doctrine of the fall. They believe that although the story is not historically true, it does contain important truths about the state of humanity. It's contradicted by evolution The doctrine of original sin is based on the idea that God created a perfect world, and that humanity damaged it

and themselves by disobeying him. Evolution, on the other hand, suggests that life in the world is steadily changing and becoming more diverse.

Scientists do not tend to think of this as a moral good or evil, but in a sense evolution sees life on earth as moving closer to ‘perfection’ – becoming better adapted to its environment. The biblical story of the perfect and finished creation from which human beings fell into sin is pre-Darwinian mythology and post-Darwinian nonsense. Bishop John Shelby Spong, *A Call for a New Reformation*, 1998 A more modern idea is to give an ethical spin to the evolutionary idea and suggest that humanity should not be concerned about a past fall from grace, but concentrate on becoming more ethical beings and thus bringing about a better world. What about unappeased babies?

Bishop Richard Holloway has described the idea that unappeased babies go to hell as “one of the most unsympathetic of the Christian doctrines,” and not greatly improved by the teaching that there is a special “limbo” for unappeased babies on the outskirts of the inferno. This is covered later in this article. Is guilt good? Original sin has been criticized for inspiring excessive feelings of guilt. The 18th-century politician and philosopher Edmund Burke once said: “Guilt was never a rational thing; it distorts all the faculties of the human mind, it perverts them, it the feeling of guilt a vital part of our moral lives or can it do more harm than good?”

Discussing the question are Stephen Mullah, Fellow and Tutor in Philosophy at New College, Oxford; Miranda Fricke, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Firebrick, University of London; and Oliver Davies, Professor of Christian

Doctrine at King's College London. Top Unappeased babies The concept of 'Limbo' One of the biggest problems the Catholic Church faced over the years was the problem of children who died before they were baptized. Before the 13th Century, all unappeased people, including new born babies who died, would go to Hell, according to the Catholic Church. This was because original sin had not been cleansed by baptism. This idea however was criticized by Peter Ballard, a French scholastic philosopher, who said that babies who had no personal sin didn't even deserve enmeshment. It was Ballard who introduced the idea of 'Limbo'. The word comes from the Latin 'limbs', meaning the edge.

This would be a state of existence where unappeased babies, and those unfortunate enough to have been born before Jesus, would not experience pain but neither would they experience the Beatific Vision of God. Ballard's idea was accepted in the 13th century by Opalescent III, the most powerful Pope in Roman Catholic history. The idea of Limbo was defined in 1904 by Pope Pips X in his catechism. Babies dead without baptism go to Limbo, where they o not enjoy God, but neither do they suffer, because, having Original Sin alone, they do not deserve Paradise, but neither do they merit Hell or Purgatory. Pope Pips X However, unease remained over reconciling a Loving God with one who sent babies to Limbo and the church still faced much criticism.

The Church, which has never claimed to definitely know who will go to Heaven apart from the Saints, or Hell, has said that the issue has long been one of speculation in the Church. This speculation has led to an oversimplification of the matter, and some people have regarded it as act <https://assignbuster.com/christianity-assignment/>

when it was never the case. Catholics are only sure of the following two pieces of information in this matter: * that God is merciful * that baptism is necessary for salvation Catholics feel sure that God won't impose punishment on babies who are free from personal guilt, but they do admit they don't know what their afterlife will hold. State of Limbo revised In 1992, Pope John Paul II had Limbo removed from the catechism and both Pope John Paul and Pope Benedict Quivered further study on the concept.

In April 2007 Pope Benedict XVI approved the findings of a report by the International Theological Commission, a Vatican advisory body, which found grounds that the souls of unappeased children would go to heaven, thus revising traditional teaching on Limbo. The report said there were " reasons to hope that infants who die without baptism may be saved and brought into eternal happiness". Parents were urged to baptize their children, as the Vatican stressed that baptism is still considered necessary to achieve salvation; the report emphasized that " there are reasons to hope that God will save these infants precisely because it was not possible" to baptize them.