

Theme 2 - Beliefs about death and the afterlife

- † Christian beliefs about life after death and the afterlife including soul, judgement, resurrection, Heaven and Hell
- † How Christian and Humanist funerals reflect beliefs about the end of life and the afterlife.

Key Concepts

Afterlife	Life after death; belief existence continues after death	Euthanasia	'Mercy killing'; allowing the death of someone suffering from a terminal illness
Environmental Responsibility	Duty of humans to respect, care for and preserve the natural environment	Evolution	Process by which different creatures are believed to have developed from earlier, less complex forms
Abortion	When a pregnancy is ended so there is no birth	Soul	Spiritual aspect of a being that connects someone with God
Quality of Life	Extent to which life is meaningful	Sanctity of Life	Belief that life is precious or sacred

Key Sources of Authority

Jesus' teachings, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in me will never die' - John 11:24-27

The teachings of St Paul regarding the spiritual body being raised - 1 Corinthians 15:42-44

Key Quotes

'You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness'
Psalm 5:4

'In the beginning God created heaven and earth' Genesis 1:1

'In the image of God, He created him, male and female He created them' Genesis 1:27

Christian beliefs about life after death

Although there are many different views about the nature of the afterlife, Christians believe that death is not the end and that the **soul** lives on. It is believed **God** on **Judgement Day** will decide who will be rewarded. There are different views about the nature of **Heaven** but most believe it is entered through beliefs in the **teachings of Jesus**. There are also different views about the nature of **Hell** although most Christians believe it is a separation from **God**. Beliefs about resurrection are often based on interpretations of **John 11** and **1 Corinthians**. **Catholics** believe the **souls** of good believers go straight to **Heaven**. Many believe there is a **Purgatory** which is a place of cleansing before gaining entrance to **Heaven**.

How Christian funerals reflect beliefs about life after death

Many Christians consider it important to be buried as they believe on the **Day of Judgement** bones of the dead will reform for bodily **resurrection**. At Christian funerals **prayers** are said for the dying person, so showing the importance of a relationship with **God**. **Biblical** passages which refer to **resurrection through faith** with **Jesus** are read at funerals e.g. **John 11:25**. **Candles** are often lit to reflect **Jesus** as the **light of the world**.

How Humanist funerals reflect beliefs about the afterlife

Humanists do not believe in a **soul** or in an afterlife. There are many different views amongst Humanists and funerals can be held in many places as they do not have a place of **worship**. Funerals will have readings and songs that were special to the deceased.

Exam Practice

'The belief in the afterlife is the most important one.' Discuss this statement showing that you have considered more than one point of view. You must refer to religious and non-religious beliefs in your answer. (15)

Key Connections

Each area of study will connect with other areas in Christianity and other philosophical and ethical issues.

Consider how beliefs about life after death relate to **good, evil and suffering**.

Consider how beliefs about life after death relate to the **resurrection of Jesus**.