*B602 Paper 2*

**Good and Evil**

**Key terms**

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| *Evil* | Without goodness (seen as bad) |
| *Suffering* | Having something horrible happen to you |
| *The Fall* | When Adam and Eve were said to ‘fall’ because Eve ate from the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden |
| *Natural Evil* | Evil caused by nature |
| *Moral behaviour* | Actions people take in life which could be good or bad |
| *Temptation* | Being tempted (led) to do something (normally a bad action) |
| *Moral evil* | Evil caused by people |
| *Freewill* | Have the freedom to make our own decisions |

**All religions teach the difference between good and evil, but have different beliefs about evil and suffering.**

Religion has a great deal to say about 'good' and 'evil'. Religious leaders and sacred texts all encourage believers to live 'good' lives. The problem of evil and suffering is one of the commonest reasons people give for not believing in God.

There are two types of evil:

* **natural evil** - suffering caused by events that have nothing to do with humans, and which are to do with the way the world is, eg, natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, floods or earthquakes
* **moral (or human) evil** - suffering caused by humans acting in a way that is considered morally wrong eg, bullying, murder, rape, theft or terrorism

Human evil and natural evil can often work together, with human evil making natural evil worse – or better! For example, the suffering caused by an earthquake or floods can be made worse by people looting, but it can be made more bearable by people showing compassion and making personal sacrifices to help those who are suffering.

It is important to remember that: 'evil' is a cause of suffering; 'suffering' is a result of evil.

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* **Natural Evil- evil caused by nature**
* **Moral Evil- evil caused by humansThe Fall**

The story of humanity’s battle with good and evil is told in the story of Adam and Eve in the **Garden of Eden** (Genesis 3). Adam and Eve chose to disobey God by eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is called the Fall. This was the first sin done by humans and is known as **original sin.**

* Some people believe that as a result of Adam and Eve’s first sins, each human is born with a tendency towards evil.
* **“***And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it”*

**What does Christianity teach about good and evil?**

* God has given people **free will** – the ability to choose between right and wrong for themselves. God has shown people how they should live (eg the Ten Commandments (a list of religious and moral rules that were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai); Jesus’ life and teaching), but it is up to them to decide whether or not to follow God’s instructions.
* As well as a power for good there is also a power for evil. Traditionally this is said to be **Satan**, one of the archangels who disobeyed God and was thrown out of heaven (Luke 10:18). In the form of a serpent, Satan tempted Eve to eat the fruit in the Garden of Eden.
* In another story in the Old Testament Satan tempted Job
* In another story Satan attempted Jesus to give up his ministry
* Some people say that they have been possessed by **demons** and people try to ‘exorcise’ these demons. There are examples in the New Testament of occasions when Jesus drove out demons.
* Some people no longer see evil as a ‘person’ or ‘being’. St Augustine in the fourth century suggested that **evil is ‘an absence of good’**. Therefore, if enough people do good, evil would be removed. Some people think of evil as a psychological or emotional problem, that no one is inherently evil, but circumstances can lead them to become so.
* When Jesus came to earth (the **Incarnation**), human beings were given a chance to escape everlasting punishment after death by following the teachings of Jesus and **asking God’s forgiveness** for their [***sins***](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs/god/chgoodandevilrev2.shtml).
* Jesus died on the cross (the **Crucifixion**) and in this way the broken relationship between God and humanity caused by sin was restored. This is called the **Atonement**.
* Jesus rose from the dead three days after he had been crucified. This is called the **Resurrection**. From that time onwards people who follow his teachings will go to heaven. Jesus explained this to his disciples at the **Last Supper**:

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’ ***Matthew 26:26-28***

* When the **Eucharist** is celebrated, Christians remind themselves of Jesus’ actions and the fact that because of his sacrifice they are **forgiven by God**.

**Is God good?**

**Claims...**

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| If God is all powerful and a God of love how can he allow bad things to happen? |
| He either wants to stop suffering but cannot... |
| Or he can but will not stop suffering. |
| How can anyone worship a God like this? |

**Christian responses**

* There was no suffering before the fall so suffering is the fault of humans.
* When man rebelled (by eating the fruit) the process of decay and death began. Suffering is part of that process.
* Suffering is often due to the consequences of mans own actions.
* Suffering is not always negative
* Suffering is necessary in an orderly world e.g. if you fall you will hurt yourself due to the law of gravity.

**The Story of Job**

* Job was known to be the most obedient of all God’s creations....
* One day the angels in heaven were discussing how Job’s obedience had been rewarded with lots of a children, money, health and happiness...
* Satan overheard this conversation and became annoyed and jealous. Satan tried to tempt Job away from God, but this did not work and this made Satan even more angry...
* So Satan went to God and complained that Job was only obedient to God for his own personal gain and not out of sincerity ...
* God said that he was so sure that Job was a good man that he told Satan that he could do what ever he wanted to Job to test his faith, apart from killing him....
* Satan killed all of Jobs children, destroyed all his cattle, gave him diseases and turned all his friends against him...
* But never once did Job lose faith in God.

**What do you think this suggests to Christians about how they should behave?**

Read parables (stories) from the Bible which contain moral messages

Follow Jesus’ example

Follow their conscience. Some Christian thinks their conscience comes from God

Refer to the Bible for guidance