



The Bible as a source of wisdom and authority in daily life

Eduqas A level R.S. C1A Christianity Theme 1C

Key Concepts:

- There are eight key Bible passages in the specification which show a range of themes that are authoritative for believers.
- Read each passage yourself in Biblegateway.com and put it into your own words. Here is a guide to the key knowledge:
- Ecclesiastes 12: 13-14 (moral advice) is about the **fear of God** as the basis for the moral life. 'Fear' could be translated as 'awe' or 'respect' - we are wise to act humbly in the face of great power.
- Luke 6:36-37 (moral advice) is about acting with **mercy** towards others because this is a main character quality of God. Mercy involves compassion, not being quick to judge others and the ability to forgive.
- Psalm 119:9-16 (a guide for living) is about having joy that God has given humanity rules and standards. Judaism has been unfairly characterized as 'legalistic'; however, there is real joy in Judaism over the fact that God cares enough to communicate ways of living.
- Psalm 119: 105-112 (a guide to living) this is about the revelation of God's ways being like a light to guide one's path. When a religious believer faces a dark or uncertain time, they find their way by reading God's revelation.
- Genesis 1:26-28 (meaning and purpose of life) is about how humans are made in God's **likeness** and have **dominion**. Christians link this to the theme of stewardship - the care and responsibility for the material world.
- Ecclesiastes 9: 5-9 (meaning and purpose of life) is about the **enjoyment of life**. This passage urges people to not waste time in hatred, envy and sadness but to enjoy what we are able to enjoy.
- Psalm 46:1-3 (comfort and encouragement) is about God being a **refuge** in uncertain times. The analogy is that just as we seek shelter in an earthquake, we can find emotional shelter in God.
- Matthew 6:25 (comfort and encouragement) is about life being more than food or clothing. Jesus teaches that not only are there more important things to think about, but that God cares about the believer's basic needs.
- The Bible continues to bring meaning to culture (Ten **Commandments** as a basis for the legal system), rituals (1 Corinthians 13 at wedding ceremonies) and the shape of our year (the prominence of festivals such as Christmas and Easter).
- The Psalms are important for Christians as they believe they refer to Jesus (Psalm 22), describe a worshipful life and have informed **hymnody** (Luther's 'A Mighty Fortress is our God' -Psalm 46)
- However, it could be argued that, for Christians, the Psalms are not central because they believe in the 'Old' testament, do not cover key contemporary issues (such as genetic engineering, abortion, etc.) and were originally written for **Temple** worship in Jerusalem.

Key arguments/ debates:

Many Christians argue that the Bible gives meaning and purpose to life - they cite its compelling grand narrative of sin and salvation, that meaning is found through revealed morality and how the Bible has shaped culture. However, the narrative of evolution, the possibility of goodness without God/ religion and the increasing irrelevance of the Bible in culture may tell a different story. There are differences between Christians on the importance of the Psalms; see the last two bullet points above in the Key Concepts area.

Key questions:

- Is the prominent role of the Bible in culture evidence of the Bible's ability to impart meaning and purpose?
- Is the moral guidance provided by the Bible outdated?
- Can the Bible effectively guide life in the modern era?
- Do Christians consider the Psalms to be the most important part of the Bible?
- How is the Bible more than merely a source of metaphysical beliefs for Christians?

Key quotes:

'The Psalter is the prayer book of Jesus Christ ... He prayed the Psalter and now it has become his prayer for all time.' (D. Bonhoeffer)

'The scripture in times of disputes is like an open town in times of war, which serves indifferently the occasions of both parties.' (A. Pope)



Key words:

Fear of God | merciful | delight | lamp | likeness dominion | enjoy life | refuge | Psalter | commandments | Temple | hymnody