

T & P

PAPER 3 - Theology (03)

SUMMARY  
NOTES

AND

ESSAY PLANS

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# Augustine on Human Nature

## The Fall

- Before = love (caritas, cupiditas)
- After = pride (original sin)
- soul became divided

## Original Sin

- ontological condition of human existence
- transmission through sexual intercourse

## God's Grace

- undeserved, generous act of God
- election (only a few receive it)

## Influences

- Manichaeism (soul trapped in body)
- Neo-Platonism (evil is absence of good)

## FOR

- ✓ Takes responsibility for evil
- ✓ Humans have sinful tendencies
- ✓ Optimistic view of God

## AGAINST

- ✗ Punishment for others' crimes
- ✗ Jesus died for redemption
- ✗ Grace given unjustly
- ✗ Gives no chance to be good

## ESSAY PLAN

### P1 - Taking the Bible literally

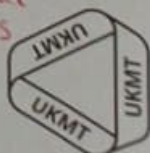
- ✓ Augustine's account of the Fall
- ✗ Dawkins - sin should not be contracted (condemns unborn children)
- ✗ Pelagius - how can God punish his creation and allow imperfection?
- ✓ God's grace can help us reach Summum Bonum
- ✗ Limits free will, and is unfairly given
- ✗ Undermines the Christian belief that Christ died for all the sins of the world

### P2 - Beyond the literal story

- ✓ Fall is a symbol for life's difficulties
- ✗ Doesn't work for materialists as it includes a spiritual journey
- ✓ Niebuhr - we need to accept responsibility for sin
- ✗ Humanity cannot be rendered objectively sinful

### P3 - Opposing views

- ✗ Freud - the libido is a natural part of life
- ✗ Religious obsession with ~~grat~~ <sup>sin</sup> is a major cause of ~~grit~~ <sup>guilt</sup>
- ✓ Manichaeism - cravings linked to lower soul
- ✗ Pinker - humans' capacity for moral goodness doesn't require God



# Death and the Afterlife

## The Sheep and the Goats

- Everyone is eventually judged
- Sheep (good) go to heaven ("eternal life")
- Goats (bad) go to hell ("eternal punishment")

## Heaven

- Physical place of eternal life
- spiritual state of unity with God
- symbol for moral life on Earth

## Purgatory

- state after death where soul can seek forgiveness and continue to heaven
- Rejected by Protestants

## Election

- Limited = God chooses who goes to heaven/hell
- Unlimited = everyone is saved by God

## Hell

- Dante - physical place of eternal torture
- Tillich - symbol for a bad life
- Origen - spiritual state of separation from God
- Gregory of Nyssa - result of a guilty conscience

## Predestination

- Aquinas - single: God elects the righteous only
- Calvin - double: God also knows who goes to hell

## ESSAY PLANS

### Heaven and Hell

#### P1 - Heaven as physical

- ✓ Matches revealed theology of Bible
- ✗ ~~Barth~~ Issue of boredom
- ✓ Must be a place for judgement to mean anything

#### P2 - Heaven/Hell as symbols

- ✓ Tillich - judgement is a metaphor
- ✗ Sheep and the Goats suggests that the righteous will reach God
- ✓ Helps us to focus on moral actions in the present

#### P3 - Other interpretations of Hell

- ✓ Augustine - literal everlasting torment
- ✗ Self-imposed misery

### Judgement / Election

#### P1 - Limited Election

- ✓ God predestines the righteous to heaven (single, ~~Augustine~~ Aquinas) thus God is just
- ✗ No room for free will
- ✗ Calvin - God also knows who goes to hell

#### P2 - Unlimited Election

- ✓ Barth - all Christians are elected
- ✗ How could a just God exclude equally good people from other religions (Hick)?

#### P3 - Universalism

- ✓ Hick - everyone goes to heaven
- ✗ No incentive for moral behaviour, no justice
- ✓ Reconciliation/forgiveness





# ③ Knowledge of God's Existence

## Innate Knowledge

- Cicero, universal human belief
- John Calvin, seed of religion
- Humans are religious beings

## Revelation

- Calvin: revelation through Christ ("mirror and mediator of the divine")
- scripture (Bible) but Catechism warns that faith should not be reduced to the Bible

## The Natural World

- Catholicism, Natural Law: innate sense of moral goodness
- Calvin: conscience is gift from God
- Aquinas, Paley: order and design

## Faith over Reason

- The Fall made it harder for us to connect with God
- Faith is about things where certainty cannot be tested
- God's Grace allows us to know God through faith

## Scholarly views

- Aquinas, reason and faith: faith is a choice (free will) and reason props up faith; reason is proof, faith is truth; have to believe (have faith in) resurrection, etc.
- John Locke, reason is faith: reasoning is a gift from God; faith is a rational belief in God
- Kierkegaard: reason is opposite of faith; cannot know God with reason
- Tischendorf and Strauss, biblical criticisms: if Bible is unchanged word of God, how are there 35000 corrections?

## ESSAY PLAN

### P1 - Natural Theology

- ✓ Aquinas: point of contact (order)
- ✓ Paley's design argument
- ✗ Calvin: epistemic distance amplified by the Fall
- ✓ Calvin's seed of Religion
- ✓ Cicero: universal human belief

### P2 - Revealed Theology

- ✗ Martin Luther: "reason is a whore"
- ✓ Martin Buber: religion is personal, cannot be attained only through reading
- ✗ Calvin: knowledge of God revealed through Christ
- ✓ Tischendorf: 35000 corrections in the Bible

### P3 - Faith / God's Grace

- ✓ Locke: faith is guided by reason
- ✗ Dawkins criticises faith ("belief in spite of, or perhaps because of, lack of evidence")
- ✗ Kierkegaard: reason is opposed to faith
- ✓ Aquinas: faith is stronger than rational knowledge but we need reason to make the essent



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# Jesus christ

## A teacher of wisdom

- Hick: Miracles are metaphors
- Jesus had no real authority
- Wittgenstein, Tolstoy: Jesus set an example for how to live life

## Jesus' teachings

- Forgiveness and Repentance: Parable of the Lost Son
- Inner Purity: Sermon on the Mount
- Personal responsibility

## Liberation Theology

- Christians believe it is their duty to set free the oppressed
- Many Christians (e.g. Leonardo Boff) went against social injustice in South America by acting, not just talking
- But, Jesus was a pacifist

## Miracles

- Healed bleeding woman by touch
- Calmed storm with words
- Turned water into wine
- Resurrected himself

## Opposing views

- Hume: lack of probability and convincing testimonies
- Hick: they are to be interpreted as metaphors

## Jesus' consciousness

- Humans have a sinful corrupting nature: did Jesus have this too?
- But if Jesus wasn't human, did he really suffer on the cross?
- However, how could a human perform miracles
- Rahner: Jesus' consciousness was layered like an onion

## ESSAY PLAN

### P1 - Jesus' Divinity

- ✓ Miracles show Jesus' connection to God
- ✗ Hume: criticism of miracles
- ✗ N.T. Wright: healing miracles are just symbolic
- ✓ Passages in Gospels support divinity
- ✗ If not human, did he really suffer on the cross?
- ✓ Rahner's ONION

### P2 - Jesus' Teachings

- ✗ Hick: Jesus was "gift to the world" - just a moral teacher
- ✓ But if Jesus was not Son of God then Christianity becomes secularised
- ✗ Wittgenstein: Jesus set example for how to live life
- ✓ C.S. Lewis: Jesus either liar, lunatic, or divine: not just moral teacher

### P3 - Jesus as a Liberator

- ✓ Jesus seems to prefer the marginalised (healing of lepers, bleeding woman, etc.)
- ✗ E.P. Sanders: Jesus only criticised applications of the law, not the law itself
- ✓ Bonhoeffer: moral action is what liberates us





# 5 Christian Moral Principles

## Theonomous Ethics

- God has enforced commandments directly into scripture
- Writers of Bible are scribes of God's word
- Bible acts as sole source of moral decision-making
- Karl Barth: God's word cannot be captured fully in human language
- Richard Hays: Bible must be read hermeneutically (paying attention to context in which it was written)

## Heteronomous Ethics

- Christians can look at multiple sources for guidance
- The Church aids one's interpretation of fundamental truths
- Roman Catholic: Natural Law, Magisterium, Liberation Theology
- Protestant: Bible, Reason, Conscience
- Hauerwas: importance of community

## Autonomous Ethics

- Guided by agape only
- Love is central theme in New Testament
- Catholic (Hans Kung): global ethic - euthanasia ok
- Protestant (Joseph Fletcher) - situation ethics
- Paul Tillich: love, justice, wisdom

## ESSAY PLAN

### P1 - Theonomous Ethics

- ✓ Bible inspired by God
- ✗ Can be contradictory e.g. sermon on the Mount
- ✓ Clear guidance on moral matters
- ✗ Backward/limited e.g. same-sex marriage
- ✓ Shown through examples
- ✗ Barth - God's word cannot be captured fully in human language
- ✗ Cannot be read literally e.g. "if your eye causes you to tear it out"

### P2 - Heteronomous Ethics

- ✓ Roman Catholic - "law written on their hearts" (Paul)
- ✗ Humans can never fully understand God's word
- ✓ Magisterium offers up to date source of wisdom
- ✗ Jesus warned against blindly following authority
- ✓ More flexible than Theonomous Ethics

### P3 - Autonomous Ethics

- ✓ Tillich - ethical norms of love, justice, wisdom
- ✗ agape is too vague
- ✓ Focuses on people
- ✗ Hauerwas - Christians must be distinctive
- ✓ Aristotle: need to develop character
- ✗ Augustine - original sin means that humans are too corrupt to make ethical decisions

# Christian Moral Action

## Bonhoeffer's Life

- Lecturer of theology at Berlin University
- Radical reinterpretation of Luther: state had too much power
- In New York he realised that Christianity needed to build relationships between churches
- Joined resistance against Hitler
- Rejected pacifism because true justice and peace are not aspects of this world
- Was captured and hung in 1945

## God vs. State

- Luther had taught to always be obedient to state
- But state can never represent God's will because humans are sinful

## Civil disobedience

- Christians have a duty to disobey state if it makes 'reasonable people face unreasonable situations'
- But, no ultimate rational justification
- Bonhoeffer never justified his attempt to kill Hitler

## The cost of Discipleship

- Cheap grace = bad, costly grace = good
- God sacrificed his son for the payment of our sins so we must be willing to sacrifice ourselves

## Relevance today

- Global politics: many argue that his ethics were developed in a time of extreme fascism
- Moral societies: Fletcher supports his teaching on relativism
- Multi-Faith societies: He wanted the Jews to become Christians

## ESSAY PLAN

### P1 - Obedience

- x Luther - duty of Christian to obey the government
- ✓ No obligation to the state if against God's will
- ✓ Nazism allows the state to justify principles that subordinate justice
- x Romans 13 - "Let everyone be subject to governing authorities"
- ✓ Leadership (community) vs. Leader (tyrant)

### P2 - Peaceful pursuit of justice

- ✓ Matthew 26 - "Those who live by the sword, die by the sword"
- x Bonhoeffer agrees with Kant, saying that duty is acting in solidarity with humankind
- ✓ At Finkenwalle, Bonhoeffer trained pastors to focus on spiritual disciplines instead of active resistance
- x The seminary was also focused on standing up for minorities

### P3 - Costly Grace

- ✓ True discipleship requires complete obedience to God, including suffering
- x Nietzsche - we can be consumed by the darkness
- x No justification for attempt to kill Hitler
- ✓ Christians can maintain a moral path at a community like Finkenwalle

