

How was the universe created? Science vs. religion.



Christians and Jews believe that God created the world in six days and he rested on the seventh. This account of creation is told in the book of Genesis. **God created man in his image.” Genesis 1:27**

The Big Bang is a widely accepted scientific explanation that states there was a massive expansion of space (about 13.8 billion years ago), which set into motion the creation of the universe.

Some fundamentalist Christians and Orthodox Jews.- The account of creation in Genesis should be taken literally and it describes the exact way the world was created. “Let there be light”

Liberal Christians- The creation story is symbolic. God = why. Science = how.

Reform Jews - The creation story emphasises the special place human have in God’s creation.

Is the Big Bang theory compatible with religion?



<u>Yes- the Big Bang can be used alongside religion.</u>	<u>No- cannot be used alongside religion.</u>
It suggests the world started at a specific point ...just like in Genesis.	The Big Bang was just chance, it was not planned.
The Big Bang could have been designed by God.	If God made the world in 7 literal days (24 hours each) I would not fit with the Big Bang.
If each day of creation is not 24 hours it could align with the Big Bang.	

How should we treat the world?

Stewardship: the idea that believers have a duty to look after the environment on behalf of God. **VS Dominion:** having control or mastery over something. Jews and Christians believe we should use our God given dominion responsibly.

Key environmental problems- Pollution (air, water and land).



Religious reasons for reducing pollution-

- ✓ The world belongs to God, so we should not harm it in anyway.
- ✓ As a **steward of God’s creation** we should take responsibility for the care of the planet.
- ✓ It is an **abuse of dominion** to be selfish and pollute the world.
- ✓ The **principle of bal tashchit** means do not destroy and pollution goes against this.
- ✓ It is a loving act to reduce pollution for future generation and Jews and Christians are **taught to love their neighbor.**

How should animals be treated?



- ❖ Vegetarian: a person who does not eat meat or fish.
- ❖ Vegan: a person who does not eat or use any animal products.

<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Jews can eat some meat, such as beef or chicken, but it must be slaughtered in s specific way (shechita). “Do not slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young on the same day.” Leviticus 22:28	Some meat and fish is not considered Kosher (permitted) in Judaism). Eg. Pork and Shellfish.
Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you.” Genesis 9:3	Factory farming is cruel – not in line with stewardship.
“The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.” Romans 14:3 We should not judge others for their choices.	Meat production is not good for the environment. (Lots of gasses and lots of water used).



How should animals be treated?



<u>Can we use animals for experimentation?</u>	
<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Animal experimentation can lead to the development of new medicine. Inhalers were tested on guinea pigs!	In 2007 Israel (predominantly Jewish) banned animal experimentation for cosmetics and cleaning products.
“Love your neighbour as yourself” Leviticus 19:18. This quotes is teaches Jews and Christians to treat their fellow HUMAN with love and compassion. Developing new medicine can alleviate pain and suffering	In 1998 the testing of cosmetic products on animals was banned in the UK. The main religious tradition is Christian and many Christians supported this decision.
Dominion- humans have God given power to use animals how they wish.	Stewardship- we must CARE for all of God’s creatures. Animal testing causes pain and impacts the quality of life for many animals. “The righteous care for the needs of their animals,” (Proverbs 12:10)

The origins of human life: where did humans come from?

Evolution: the process by which living organisms are thought to have developed and diversified from earlier forms of life, put forward by Charles Darwin- More Liberal Christians / Reform Jews support this view.

- Can argue evolution could be correct if each “day” of creation is millions of years, not 24 hours.
- If Genesis is taken as a symbolic/ spiritual lesson (that God is the creator) rather than being literal, it can be accepted that God could have designed the process of evolution and natural selection.

Fundamentalist Christians (creationists) & Orthodox Jews- **REJECT** evolution. The origin of human life was exactly as recorded in Genesis, with God creating and designing each species separately. Adaptations may occur within a species, but creatures do not evolve from one species to another.



Do Jews and Christians think abortion is acceptable?

Abortion: the removal of a foetus from the womb to end a pregnancy. Made legal in the UK in 1967. Abortions can take place up to 24 weeks into the pregnancy.

Sanctity of life :all life is holy as it is created loved by God. Life should not be abused.

<u>Abortions are acceptable.</u>	<u>Abortions are NOT acceptable.</u>
It is important that the child will have a good quality of life. Abortion may be seen as the lesser of two evils by Jews and Christians if they baby is likely to suffer. “Love thy neighbour as yourself”	Some Christians believe life begins at conception so abortion is murder. “Do not murder” (Exodus 20:13)
In Judaism the mother’s life always takes precedence over the foetus, but there is disagreement about when an abortion should be allowed, so women may consult a rabbi.	Sanctity of Life. Life should be protected. Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart”. Jeremiah 1:5 God knows each of us and has given us a purpose.

Do Jews and Christians think euthanasia is acceptable? Euthanasia: killing someone painlessly and with compassion to end their suffering.

<u>Euthanasia IS acceptable.</u>	<u>Euthanasia is NOT acceptable.</u>
“Love thy neighbour” Luke 10:27	“Do not murder”. Exodus 20:13
Christians believe God gave us free will and this includes the choice to end our lives.	It could be abused and might be against the will of the person- especially the elderly / disabled may feel pressure.
Euthanasia allows for death to be as gentle and pain free as possible. This may not be the case with natural death. Dignity in death.	It goes against the Sanctity of Life. People are still fully human during the final stages of their life and should still be protected and cared for.
Judaism teaches that doctors should not extend the suffering of the dying. Life support machines can be switched off if they are preventing a natural death. Pain relief can be given even if it may make death happen sooner.	“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die”. Ecclesiastes 3:1-2 Only God should end life at the time of his choosing.

What do Jews and Christians think happens when we die?



Atheists- NO afterlife.

<u>Christianity</u>	<u>Judaism</u>
Salvation can be achieved through grace and good works.	The Torah describes death as a time to re-join one’s ancestors.
Heaven in a place that is indescribably wonderful. Hell is a place of eternal punishment.	A belief in resurrection is mainly held by Orthodox Jews. Many Reform and Liberal Jews reject this.
Some Christians believe heaven and hell are spiritual. Others say they are physical.	Sheol is described as a place of darkness and silence.
The Devil resides over hell. “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels”.	Some Jews believe that the Messiah will com in the future and at that time the righteous will resurrect and they will love in peace in a restored Israel.
Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.	The Jewish afterlife is called Olam Ha-Ba (the world to come).

What are the key elements of peace and conflict?

War: fighting between nations to resolve issues between them.

Peace: an absence of conflict, which leads to happiness and harmony.

Justice: bringing about what is right and fair, according to the law or making up for a wrong that has been committed.

Forgiveness: showing grace and mercy and pardoning someone for what they have done wrong.

Reconciliation: The restoring of harmony after relationships have broken down.

When might violence be used?

*War * Revenge *Self defence *Protest



Why do people go to war?

Greed- In modern times wars caused by greed are often focused on gaining control of important resources. Eg. Oil. This will often mean the rich and powerful become more powerful and it can cause poverty in the defeated country as their source of income is taken away. ☹️

Self Defence - If a country is under attack, it seems reasonable for them to defend themselves or to help other countries under threat. For example, in WW2 the UK fought to defend itself against Nazi invasion and to defeat what it saw as an evil threat to the whole of Europe. Ultimately, self-defence can be seen as a reasonable reason for war as its aim is to gain peace and avoid harm. In Judaism, self-defence is also supported ESPECIALLY if Israel is under attack. 😊

Retaliation- Wars are sometimes fought in retaliation against a country that is deemed to have done something very wrong. Retaliation is deliberately causing harm to someone who has harmed you.

It is a spiteful action to punish an enemy. ☹️



Is violence ever acceptable? Protest and terrorism.

- **Protest:** an expression of disapproval, often in a public group.
- **Violence:** using actions that threaten or harm others.
- **Terrorism:** the unlawful use of violence, usually against innocent civilians, to achieve a political goal.

In the UK, the law permits individuals and groups to protest in public to demonstrate their point of view.

Why do people protest?

- ✓ There has been an injustice. (eg. Black Lives Matter protests 2020) or to show compassion to those facing injustice.
- ✓ Defending their faith if attacked.
- ✓ To bring about change. (Eg Suffragettes marches for women's vote)

Christian role model for peaceful protest= Martin Luther King Jr.



Is violence ever acceptable? Peaceful Protest and terrorism.

Quote	How does this quote support peace?
"Love thy neighbour as yourself" Leviticus 19:18 Mark 12:31	Treat people how you want to be treated- peacefully.
"Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." Psalms 34:14	Peace is the ideal we ought to be working towards.

Peaceful protests can lead to great changes to help society become more fair and hopefully more peaceful.

However, and extreme and violent version of protest is terrorism. Eg. Manchester arena bombings.

It kills/ harms innocent people so would not be supported by Jews and Christians "Do not kill" Exodus 20:13



Is it ever acceptable to use nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction?

Nuclear weapons: weapons that work by nuclear reaction; they devastate huge areas and kill large numbers of people. 1945- USA dropped two atom bombs on Japan- Hiroshima & Nagasaki. Death toll= 200k +

☹️ It goes against the sanctity of life- all life is holy as it is created loved by God. Life should not be abused. Mass killing and injury is abusing God's sacred creation.

☹️ Goes against the pacifist message of Jesus. "Love thy neighbour as yourself"

☹️ The death toll/ injury caused is disproportionate to the gain/ benefit. "Do not murder".

☹️ The possession of WMD can act as a deterrent

- prevents enemy attack.



What is a just war?



A war, which meets internationally, accepted criteria for fairness. Essentially, it is a checklist of conditions that must be met in order for a war to be fair and acceptable.

- Just means- No civilians should be involved and no deliberate unnecessary cruelty.
- Just cause- Started for a fair reason, like self defence, not being greedy for money or land.
- Correct Authority- War should be declared by a proper authority such as a government or King.
- Reasonable chance of success- must be possible to win.
- Proportional force- Only the amount of force required to win should be used, no more.
- Last resort- Everything else should be tried, such as diplomatic discussion, before you go to war.
- Intention= Establish good. The war must be being fought in order to achieve a good consequence or to fight evil.

What is a holy war?

Fighting for a religious cause or God, probably controlled by a religious leader. It might be to spread the faith, avenge a blasphemous act or rescue individuals of that faith. Those taking part might believe that they will get a spiritual reward.

Example- The Crusades. A holy war fought by Christians to recapture holy land from Muslims. It was fought from 1095- 1291. The first crusade was started by Pope Urban II.



However, do religions cause violence?

No- The teachings of Jesus make it clear that violence is not justified and will lead to your death. "Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Matthew 26:52

Yes- In the past there have been tensions between Protestants and Catholics. The Troubles- Northern Ireland 1968-1998. Very much interlinked with politics.

What is pacifism and peacemaking?

Pacifism:

- ✓ War and violence can rarely or never be justified
- ✓ It is best to prevent war from becoming a possibility by promoting justice and peace.
- ✓ Prayer and meditation can help people to be at peace with themselves and others.
- ✓ Quakers a Christian denomination that strongly supports pacifism.
- ✓ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God". Matthew 5:9

Peacemaking: Peace is not just an absence of war; it is a sense of wellbeing and security. It is important to resist oppression and injustice in non violent ways to help create a just and equal world where conflict is not necessary.

Eg. The Peace People Mairead Corrigan & Betty Williams



How should we treat victims of war?



How are people impacted by war?

- ❖ Death, grief, financial struggle, Starvation Displacement/ homelessness, PTSD.
- ✓ "Love thy neighbour as yourself" - Treat people how you want to be treated. If you were a victim of war, you would want care and compassion.
- ✓ The Parable of the Good Samaritan- Everyone is your neighbour regardless of race, age, gender, politics and you should help them if they need support.
- ✓ Pikuash Nefesh- In Judaism you are obliged to save a life if you can, even if it means breaking other mitzvot. This will include helping victims of war, as all life is sacred.

Christian Aid- Set up in 1940 with the aim to end poverty, including poverty caused by war. They support local organisations because they believe local people are they likely to be the best people for the job. Recent campaigns have raised awareness of refugees.