Different Ideas about the Divine: Summary Handout

Key terms

**the divine** – God/gods/ultimate reality (exam board definition)

**enlightenment** – in Buddhism this means understanding fully the meaning of life

**general revelation** – the idea that God is revealed *indirectly* through things like nature, morality, logic, etc.

**the Holy Spirit** – in Christianity, the spirit of God; his non-physical presence everywhere

**immanent** – directly involved with this world

**law of karma** – the idea that all good deeds will bring good fortune to the person who does them and all bad deeds will produce suffering

**omnipotent** – all powerful

**omniscient** – all knowing/knowing everything

**rebirth** – Buddhist idea of being born into another life (e.g. on earth) after death

**scripture** – holy books

**special revelation** – the idea of God revealing himself *directly* through things like visions, miracles, dreams, angelic messengers

**transcendent** – beyond this world

Buddhism

There is no god in Buddhism therefore the AQA exam board uses the word ‘divine’ to mean the ultimate reality. That means the ideas taught by the Buddha including the law of karma, enlightenment, rebirth, release from suffering. This means that **the divine is:**

1. **Not omnipotent or omniscient** because these ideas only apply to a person;
2. **Impersonal**;
3. **Immanent** because these ideas affect this earth but also **transcendent** because they talk about an afterlife and different realms of existence.

Christianity

In scripture (the Bible) **God is:**

1. **Omnipotent** (he makes the world) and **omniscient** (he predicts the future through the prophets);
2. **Personal** (he speaks, has feelings, has a personality);
3. **Immanent** (does miracles, is involved with people by his spirit; becomes a human in Jesus) and also **transcendent** (is in heaven and cannot be contained in a building because he is present everywhere).

Both of these religions believe you can get these ideas from the scriptures. They believe you can also get these ideas from observing the natural world and using logical reasoning.