
GCSE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

8063/2B Paper 2 Section B: Perspectives on faith (textual studies)
Report on the Examination

8063/2B
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General Comments

It was pleasing to see how well centres had prepared their students for the examination this year. There were some very well argued responses to the evaluation questions which showed that students had the ability to apply what they have learned. Many responses showed a good knowledge and understanding of the set texts. Hand writing was also very good this year.

The paper appeared to be accessible to a wide ability range as most students attempted all questions. However, weaker responses showed that some students did not understand the question or lacked knowledge of the set texts. Many good responses to the 5-mark questions failed to give a source of authority thus lost out on the fifth mark. Centres need to make students aware that there has to be an attribution of the source of authority, not just give a quotation, eg 'St Mark tells us...' / 'the Bible says...' / 'Jesus taught us...' or put the source of the quotation in brackets eg 'The Kingdom of God belongs to such as these' (Mark).

Question-based comments

Theme D: St Mark's Gospel – The life of Jesus

1.1

The question asked students to name the place where Jesus died and most students correctly ticked C- Jerusalem.

1.2

This question requiring two things which Jesus said to his disciples at the Last Supper was generally well answered with two correct statements given, eg one of you will betray me / this is my body / this is my blood. However, some responses showed a lack of knowledge of Mark's Gospel with incorrect statements given eg drink my blood / eat this bread / do this in memory of me / take this all of you and eat it / drink the wine / eat the bread.

1.3

This question on asking for two contrasting views about the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, was generally well answered with many students achieving 4 marks. Popular and creditable responses suggested that some Christians believe that if Jesus was the Son of God then nothing was impossible for him and that he fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish; fundamentalists believe that Mark's Gospel was divinely inspired and tells the historical truth- this miracle, therefore, occurred exactly as Mark recorded it; some Christians look for a symbolic meaning in the story and that Jesus fed the people spiritually with his teachings and not physically with food; he encouraged the people to share what they had.

A contrasting view which some students presented is that atheists don't believe in God so it did not happen. It is important to point out that just because atheists don't believe in God it doesn't mean that the event itself did not take place.

1.4

This question on two ways in which Bartimaeus showed faith in Jesus was generally well answered. Many students knew this set text very well and achieved 5 marks. Many responses referred to Bartimaeus calling Jesus Son of David thus declaring his faith in Jesus as the Messiah as a first way. An example of a second way given referred to Jesus rewarding his faith by saying to Bartimaeus, 'Go your faith has made you well' (source included here) and Bartimaeus followed Jesus on the way.

Some students did give two developed ways in which Bartimaeus showed faith in Jesus but did not include a relevant and accurate reference to St Mark's Gospel (source) thus missing out on the fifth mark.

A maximum of two marks were given for responses that simply narrated the text. Some confused the response of Bartimaeus to his healing with the response of the man with leprosy to his healing.

Some students incorrectly wrote about how faith was shown in the account of the Paralysed Man.

1.5

This question required evaluation of the statement, 'Jesus' baptism was a more important event than his temptation.' Many students gave well-argued Level 4 responses which showed consideration of different points of view, logical chains of reasoning, judgements supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information and clear references to religion throughout. Responses explained clearly why Jesus' baptism was a more important event than his temptation eg it was the beginning of his entire ministry, it was a turning point in his life, it was a public event which identified him to others, Clear references were given to the appearance and importance of the Trinity and how Jesus' baptism clearly links to the sacrament of baptism today.

Strong arguments in support of Jesus' temptation being the most important event were also given eg it was a deeply personal experience for Jesus, he was alone in the desert, was a testing time for Jesus, 40 days suggests it lasted a long time. Christians today remember the temptation of Jesus during the period of Lent in the Church's year, the 40 days before Easter, a time of prayer, spiritual reflection and self-discipline which is what Jesus would have experienced in the wilderness and examples given what Christians do eg fast, pray, give money to charity.

Conclusions reached explained that both events were equally important and significant as according to Mark, the baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of his public ministry and the temptation prepared him for what lay ahead. They argued that both events indicate that Jesus had a deep religious experience and that God was with Jesus on both occasions, eg the Trinity in Baptism, the angels in the temptation.

The difference between Level 4 and Level 3 is the level of argument. Level 3 responses showed reasoned consideration of different points of view but lacked the development needed to reach level 4). Many Level 2 responses were either one sided or showed a recognition of different points of view supported by relevant reasons

Credit was given to relevant references to Gethsemane as 'temptation' but was not given to temptations that were not from Mark's Gospel. eg 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread' (Matthew).

Theme E: St Mark's Gospel as a source of spiritual truth

2.1

The question asked 'which of the following commandments did Jesus say was the second most important commandment in his reply to the scribe'. Most students correctly ticked C- You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

2.2

This question, requiring two ways in which Christians understand the 'Kingdom of God' was generally well answered with two correct statements given eg it is a present reality, it is a future

hope, it is like a mustard seed, it grows but Christians don't know how, it is a state of being with God.

Examples of responses which showed no understanding or explanation of ways in which Christians understand the Kingdom of God included eg Christians believe that the Kingdom of God is perfect, Jesus was ascended into the Kingdom of God, Christians are all children of God, and 'God will provide a safe place for us all'.

2.3

This question on, views about Peter's denials, was generally well answered with many responses achieving 4 marks. Popular examples given included some Christians believe that Peter's actions were cowardly as he denied his friend Jesus three times; he was only trying to save himself, not the example expected of a good friend or role model; some Christians believe that Peter should not be judged too harshly as he was only human and humans make mistakes and humans are not perfect and it is possible to judge a situation wrongly and make an error like Peter did.

2.4

This question, asking for two teachings about Jesus which can be learnt from Mark's account of the man with leprosy, was generally well answered. Two teachings about Jesus and a relevant and accurate reference to Mark's Gospel (source) was needed to achieve 5 marks eg 'a first teaching about Jesus given was that according to Mark the desperate situation of the man aroused Jesus' human emotions when he fell on his knees and begged Jesus for help. Mark states that Jesus was 'moved to pity'. A second teaching given was that Jesus was compassionate and responsive to the needs of the man. Mark writes that Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, 'Be made clean!' (source included here).' This point was sometimes further developed by explaining that at that time the belief was that through physical contact Jesus not only ran the risk of contracting the disease himself but he would have been seen as unclean according to the Law.

Some students did give two developed teachings about Jesus but did not include a relevant and accurate reference to St Mark's Gospel (source) thus missing out on the fifth mark.

A maximum of two marks were awarded on responses that simply narrated the text or gave teachings of Jesus rather than teachings about Jesus.

Some confused the response of the man with leprosy to his healing with the response of Bartimaeus to his healing.

2.5

In evaluating whether or not the teachings of Jesus were important for Christian today, many students gave well-argued Level 4 responses which showed consideration of different points of view, logical chains of reasoning, judgements supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information and clear references to religion throughout.

Many students explained clearly why Jesus' teachings are not important today eg they are outdated, they are from another time, the background to his teachings was very different to life today, etc. Relevant examples of parables were given and explained how they were not relevant to life today. Responses also included the argument that many new issues face Christians today eg abortion, euthanasia, contraception, advances in technology, power, greed /drugs, materialism and that family commitments do not allow for leaving self behind, taking up the cross and follow Jesus.

Strong arguments were given in support of Jesus' teachings and their relevance today eg Jesus' teachings are the word of God and many Christians still listen to it, preach about it and follow it in their daily lives; Jesus taught that Christians should love God and love their neighbour and there

are many examples of this in today's world; many Christians give generously to charities and support agencies which help the poor, eg CAFOD.

Conclusions reached explained that although Jesus' teachings are over two thousand years old they still have relevance in today's world, many Christians pray, worship and learn about their faith and peoples' lives are still being changed by the teachings of Jesus as Christianity is still spreading throughout the world. Others pointed out that there is too much evil in the world today so Jesus' teachings are not important or relevant, eg wars, murders but others stated that this is the very reason why they are still relevant.

The difference between Level 4 and Level 3 is the level of argument. Level 3 responses showed reasoned consideration of different points of view but lacked the development needed to reach level 4. Many Level 2 responses were either often one sided.

Some credit was given to responses that argued that God gave people the Ten Commandments so Christians do not need Jesus' teachings and that more modern teachings are more relevant eg from the Pope, Bishops or the Magisterium.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.