

Examiners' Report  
June 2018

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 03

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# Introduction

This year was the first sitting of the new specification and it was a privilege to read scripts which clearly demonstrated the academic grasp of the subject that candidates possessed. These achievements are only possible through the hard work and dedication of centres that, despite the lack of a formal text book, drew together a wide range of their own resources to empower their candidates within this subject. Centres across the country are to be congratulated for the clear success of their candidates. New Testament Studies is one of three papers that candidates can choose to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in Advanced Level Religious Studies. The marks from each individual paper contribute to one overall subject grade.

The paper was set as follows:

Q1 Topic 4.1: Ways of interpreting scripture – ‘Explore’ question

Q2 Topic 6: Luke’s gospel – ethical teachings – ‘Assess’ question

Q3 Topic 5a: Luke’s gospel- Kingdom of God – Two part essay (30 marks)

Q4 Topic 5b: John’s Gospel – Religious and political conflict in the ministry of Jesus. Extended essay (30 marks)

The two essay questions allowed candidates to showcase their knowledge on both gospels. Question 4 did not preclude the use of valid material drawn from across the specification. Key lessons could be learned and applied in terms of tackling the new style questions and the mixture of content which draws from the legacy specification as well as introducing new topics.

Centres are expected to teach the whole specification and should not make assumptions about what may or may not be tested on the exam paper or in what combination. There is no relationship between this paper and AS Religious Studies apart from the possibility of co-teaching similar content between AS and AL in Year 12. There should be no assumption that a ‘co-taught’ topic will appear on an A Level paper although it is likely that in some sittings this might be the case. Candidates can be asked a question from anywhere in the specification and are best advised to ensure that revision covers the whole course because there are no ‘options’ or ‘choices’ of questions available.

Both the two-part essay (Question 3(a/b)) and the extended essay (Question 4) represent a significant proportion of the marks for the whole paper and should be given sufficient time and attention. Candidates who spent far too much time on Question 1 and/or Question 2 would have been better advised to answer the essay questions first, whilst keeping an eye on timings, as cumulatively these add up to 60 out of 80 marks.

There is no substitute for accurate knowledge. Questions 1 and 2 could not be answered through guess work - given that Question 1, an ‘Explore’ question attracts 8 marks solely for AO1 it can be expected that factual information is required for full marks because there is no requirement to discuss or analyse. In Question 2 it was clear that some candidates did not know the topic and used other information instead that could not be credited. It is important to note that candidates who gave general responses to a topic rather than addressing the question tended to be less successful as they could not answer the question fully. It remains the case that candidates invariably perform better when they are able to apply information they have carefully learnt to the specific demands of a question, rather than just reproducing a previous essay with no reference to the question.

It is imperative that centres explain to candidates where to write their answers ahead of the exam and encourage them to read the instructions page on the front of the paper in the exam room carefully. It is not good practice to encourage unnecessary attached paper when there was already sufficient space in the booklet to write the answer. Some candidates did this with every question and ultimately this wastes time turning backwards and forwards.

Overall, the most successful candidates produced impressive responses that evidenced sound learning, engagement with the subject matter and accurate knowledge of the textual content and relevant scholarship.

## **Question 1**

This question should be answered succinctly without any discussion or analysis. Candidates will benefit from practising these answers under timed conditions, ensuring they focus solely on the factual information required to gain full marks.

Candidates were asked to explore the key ways of interpreting scripture. The best candidates confidently discussed the quadriga fourfold method of Cassian and understood how Aquinas developed this exegetical tactic at a later date. Many candidates discussed their material as the fourfold sense of scripture under the headings of the most common approaches such as: literal, moral, allegorical and anagogical. Candidates also successfully explored the enlightenment and post enlightenment categories and referred most often to Barth and Bultmann. All valid material was credited and some responses went into great detail about effectively using the Quadriga for interpreting scripture.

The command word 'explore' required candidates to demonstrate understanding by investigating valid approaches to interpreting scripture. Candidates needed to know what exegetical method they were exploring and correctly identify how the methodology worked. On the whole candidates explored two dominant pathways for the question; one exploring the fourfold sense of scripture and the other exploring the alternative approaches favoured by Barth and Bultmann. A small, but impressive, number of candidates took a wider approach and included reference to both pre and post Enlightenment methods, showing an encouraging grasp of a complex and technical area of study. Some candidates misunderstood the question and discussed critical methodologies and the synoptic problem and of these a few were able to successfully relate some of this material to biblical interpretation. All valid commentary on the interpretation of scripture was credited but it was clear that the weakest candidates had not understood either area of study.

On the whole the question was answered to a good standard and there was a clear distinction between those candidates who had gained a thorough understanding of the course content and those who had not. The best responses were characterised by accurate application of scholarly thought in regard to the interpretation of scripture and the capacity to summarise the methodology being explored. Achievement was affected in the lower range by irrelevant exploration of other material not required by the question.

This exemplar demonstrates a valid approach to this question. Whilst many candidates presented different material this candidate summarised succinctly a range of scholarly views on the topic.

## 1 Explore key ways of interpreting Scripture.

C H Dodd and Origen both conclude that the New Testament should, in some cases, be interpreted allegorically rather than literally. Bultman called for a demythologization of the New Testament citing that it contained some mythological, rather than historical elements. Different scholars have different views on the Bible. The high-view considers it the inerrant Word of God. Karl Barth believes in the Middle view that the Bible becomes ~~the~~ inspired (God-breathed) through the faith of the believers reading it. Dawkins has a low view of the Bible and considers it ~~less~~<sup>akin</sup> to any other book. Differing ways of hermeneutics result in different interpretations of the text. Origen also believed that the Bible was inspired, had a purpose to convey moral truths and was a unity ~~book~~ between Old and New Testaments. The Bible may also be read literally by Christian fundamentalists and taken at face value, and therefore interpreted in a literal way where everything <sup>that</sup> the Bible says happened, happened in reality.



The candidate has solid knowledge of the content and covers with precision a comprehensive range of relevant academic scholarship.



This response earned full marks and demonstrates that the question can be answered in the space provided.

This is an example of an unfinished response. It is possible that the candidate might have left this question until the end and ran out of time.

1 Explore key ways of interpreting Scripture.

~~Allogorical~~ is when you focus on the deeper meaning in the scripture.  
The are four key ways of interpreting scripture. These ways are, allegorical, spiritual

Allegorical is when you focus on the deeper meaning behind the scripture. So you are not just looking at the surface meaning but how the affects you.  
Spiritual is when you focus on how to get closer to God ~~through~~ through the scripture.  
Literal is when you interpret the scripture just how it is written. So you only ~~take~~ take into consideration the surface meaning



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate refers accurately to four ways of interpreting scripture and gains 3 marks but offers no more detail. Examiners can only mark what is actually written.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

The highest levels can be only be accessed through presenting enough material. Time management is crucial.

## Question 2

This question asked candidates to assess the significance of the parables of the Lost in Luke's Gospel. The 12 mark Assess question can only gain full marks if there is evidence of analysis over and above the narrative of the parables of the Lost which was the required target AO1 knowledge. The command word 'assess' required candidates to apply reasoned argument of factors to reach a judgement regarding their importance/relevance to the question context. The expectation of this question is that AO1 knowledge and understanding of the parables of the Lost will underpin AO2 analysis and evaluation and the question demanded that the 'significance' of selected AO1 material be addressed. It would not be sufficient to write about the parables of the Lost in a narrative style without saying anything about the *significance* of these sayings in general.

Candidates who achieved the best marks understood the demands of the question and were able to discuss a range of relevant theological themes that emerged from the content such as loss, repentance, compassion and forgiveness with some making reference to atonement theology. These responses were characterised by the ability to assess the implication of the parables of the lost for ethical living, rather than simply recalling their narratives. Many candidates showed an impressive grasp of some of the scholarship referred to in the specification, including Marshall and Matera. The vast majority of candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of the Lost Parables; a common trait of lower scoring responses was that they recounted the parables, focusing solely on AO1, thereby ignoring the command word, 'assess'. Some candidates focussed on two parables (often the Lost Sheep & Lost Coin), citing what they tell readers about the Kingdom of God in terms of repentance and celebration. Candidates who chose to assess all three parables exegeted the Lost Son to varying depth: some only examined the prodigal son and his father, whilst others spoke at length about the attitude of the elder brother, drawing analogies to the Pharisees of First Century Palestine, and modern readers.

Some candidates misunderstood the 'target' of the question and instead spent time discussing alternative parables for other gospels or the 'I am' sayings and their discourses in the Fourth gospel. The weakest responses either failed to grasp the target of the question or did not show any detailed knowledge or capacity for evaluation. A significant number did not know what the parables of the Lost were and proceeded to discuss a plethora of different parables. Weaker candidates relied on any knowledge they had about scripture in order to attempt the question. Some candidates confused the Parable of the Lost Sheep with 'I am the Good Shepherd'. Some candidates were clearly not prepared for the parables of the Lost and dealt with it in two ways; firstly, simply focussing on the word 'lost' and attempting to link it to being lost and then being found by Jesus. Secondly, they focussed on other parables being more significant than the parables of the lost. Overall, whilst this question attracted some excellent responses there was evidence of varied levels of achievement.

This answer on the parables of the Lost in Luke's Gospel focuses on the question and presents more than just a brief narrative of three parables. The full range of elements in the question is assessed and enough is done to score 12 marks.

2 Assess the significance of the parables of the Lost in Luke's Gospel.

parable of rich man / Good Samaritan / other parables  
NOT b/c more important  
significant b/c they show themes of love, forgiveness & superceding (12) of old way

It is most tenable to argue that the parables of the lost are significant in Luke's Gospel due to their focus and representation of key themes such as love.

The 'parables of the lost' refers to a set of three parables about things that were lost; the sheep, the coin and the son. Each contains allegories to God and how they treat repentant sinners as well as what being spiritually 'lost' means. Because there is a focus on contextual importance to Jews this also makes them significant. For example, in the parable of the lost son, the boy has<sup>(or thinks of)</sup> to eat out of the trough of a pig. The pig is considered 'unclean' in Jewish culture and so demonstrates how these parables may be significant to a contemporary audience in breaking down complex concepts into familiar ideas. What makes these parables really significant however is their depiction of the New Testament God and the theme of forgiveness. God is always portrayed as the "protective shepherd" or the "loving father" filled with unconditional love for his children and always ready to forgive a truly repentant sinner. This is a far cry from the vengeful and cruel old Testament God, who smited sinners and is significant as it also represents Jesus superceding the old Jewish tradition and creating a new covenant.

It is significant because it portrays levels of love and forgiveness which is particularly important as Luke's Gospel is for the outcasts and Gentiles, representing a new way and a God for all people.

This suggests that these parables are highly significant.

These parables may not be significant due to their relative importance in the Bible.

Other passages such as the Last Supper and Resurrection have much more theological weight as they contain the theological history of Christianity.

Other parables such as the good Samaritan show us how to treat each other and have more viable moral messages we can apply. Furthermore

since these parables are all fairly similar, we can argue they are irrelevant unless collected together.

That being said, their significance lies in their message and how they represent the changing times and values of God. Furthermore, they represent

the relationship we have to God, which is just as important as Christology. <sup>in one of the parables</sup> ~~Furthermore~~ Jesus even

points out the hypocrisy of being good for reward and the need to treat sinners kindly - <sup>arguably they</sup> ~~they~~ is therefore also significant in a moral sense.

This would suggest they are significant. Overall it is evident that the parables of the lost are highly significant in Luke's Gospel. Though they may not be the only important parables, their messages and presentation of theology and God make them highly significant. (Total for Question 2 = 12 marks) overall.



Comprehensive accurate coverage of the required textual material and identification of the significance of appropriate theological themes makes this a very good answer.



Solid learning pays off. Stay on topic. If the question asks for a specific topic then a comprehensive assessment of the right material will achieve a high outcome.

This answer indicates that the candidate did not really know enough about the topic to go further than a brief narrative of the parables followed by an attempt to assess their significance.

2 Assess the significance of the parables of the Lost in Luke's Gospel.

(12)

Jesus Speaks about the parable of the lost coin, he says that if we lose a coin we would do anything to find it and once we find it we rejoice in happiness, ~~this~~ is the ~~sign~~ significance of this parable is that it is referring to how God rejoices after receiving back a ~~refer~~ sinner after he has repented.

Jesus also speaks of the parable of the lost son, ~~with~~ the older son goes and wastes all his money through gambling and prostitutes and when he comes back bankrupt his father rejoices and throws a party for him, this parable refers to the ~~father~~ God as the father in the story celebrating and rejoicing at the return of his children through repentance.



This answer is too brief to achieve Level 3. There is sufficient AO1 and AO2 material to place this response in Level 2 but without the additional AO2 comment this would have been a Level 1 answer.



Adding detail will increase the rewards. Marks cannot be awarded if the material is not there.

### **Question 3 (a)**

This question, the first of a two-part essay question on an excerpt, asked candidates to clarify the significant ideas contained in the parable of the Sower and the Seed. This question should be answered succinctly with close reference to the passage and it was answered very well by the majority of candidates who offered a helpful clarification of the key messages of the parable of the Sower from Luke's gospel.

The best responses were able to take the narrative of the parable and offer some conclusions as to the intention of the evangelist or how the parable has been interpreted through history. Some of the very best responses offered alternative interpretations from pre and post enlightenment thought which was remarkable, especially in regard to the eschatological significance of the text. Almost all candidates were able to explain the key ideas contained within the Parable of the Sower, citing the seeds as an allegory for the Word of God and the different surfaces for people's attitudes towards it. Full marks required close attention to the passage itself and attention to the command word in the question 'clarify' which demanded that key ideas be identified and key concepts explained.

The expectation of this question is that AO1 knowledge and understanding of the subject matter will underpin AO2 analysis and evaluation and the question demanded that the 'clarification' of selected AO1 material be addressed. Some potentially good responses plateaued at the top of Level 2 due to a failure to clarify the key ideas; the question requires more than just breaking the extract into sections and repeating it almost verbatim without any discussion or analysis and access to higher levels is restricted by merely listing some verses without comment. Candidates will benefit from practising these answers under timed conditions, ensuring they focus solely on the factual information required to gain full marks and thinking about how to use this excerpt on the paper directly to the fullest benefit.

This is an example of a Level 2 response. The candidate presents a range of knowledge but there is not enough detail to award this response a higher level. The candidate addresses a narrow range of key concepts triggered by the passage and could have included much more reference to the excerpt.

The candidate is not really in control of the topic and struggles to answer the question.

3 (a) Clarify the significant ideas illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Jesus is ~~is~~ essentially talking about the people who are listening to what he is teaching. ~~He~~ ~~that~~ through this parable Jesus ~~was~~ says that ~~whoever~~ whoever ~~is~~ listens to my teachings but does not ~~to~~ accept it are like seeds that have fallen "along the path", the people who listen to his teachings but do not act

according to it are <sup>the</sup> ~~an~~ <sup>equi</sup>  
Same as the seeds that fall  
on rocky areas and die out  
due to harsh conditions, and  
people who do not listen to  
his words are like the seeds  
that are ~~not~~ grown next to those  
that choke other plants due to them  
not ~~encouraging~~ encouraging others to also  
follow Jesus teaching after given  
knowledge, therefore leaving ~~others~~  
~~others~~ others to be ~~the~~ misguided  
and the people who follow what  
Jesus is ~~teaching~~ teaching are  
like the seeds that fall on  
good ~~soil~~ soil and as a result  
come out and "yielded a crop"  
referring to the pleasant ~~the~~ reward  
they will receive for following  
Jesus.



This is not a fully developed response. The available excerpt has not been exploited fully by the candidate.



An excerpt printed on the paper is a gift that can be used to gain valuable marks because the verses are there in front of you. Learn how to analyse material and draw out from it the essential concepts.

This is an example of a helpful, succinct clarification of the significant ideas in the parable of the Sower from Luke's gospel. The candidate works carefully through the verses in the excerpt inclusive of Verse 10 and mentions a wide range of key concepts ending with a reference to realised and future eschatology that is usefully supported with reference to Marshall's view in the closing comment. Whilst many candidates who achieved full marks wrote three sides, this candidate gets the job done effectively in 2 ¼ pages.

3 (a) Clarify the significant ideas illustrated in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

one significant idea within this passage is the idea of the spread of the word of God. In the passage the "farmer" is God and the "seed" that he is sowing is his words and wisdom. Most of the seeds are scattered in places that would not easily produce good plants, e.g. they are "trampled on", fall on "rocky ground" or fall "among thorns". These places are used by Luke to symbolise people who are unable to take the word of God and use it in their lives. The plants that attempt to grow from these seeds ~~symbolise~~ symbolise how the people should live their lives but due to sin the words of God cannot develop for these people and die. This serves to highlight the idea of universal salvation as everyone is given the opportunity to take in the word of God and reject but

not everyone does so which serves to highlight how not all the plants grow.

In addition to this, there are references to "good soil" which "yielded a crop". This symbolises the believer's heart which can accept the word of God and live in accordance with it to live a good and righteous life. The crop is better than that which is sown as the individual can take the word of God and preach it to other people as well as using it in their own life.

Likewise, in the parable Jesus says "though hearing they may not understand" and "though seeing they may not see". This is significant as it demonstrates that everyone can hear and see the stories they are told but they do not truly understand them due to their lack of being believ. In this way, it is important that the individual opens their heart to God so that they can understand his words.

Another key aspect that is prevalent in this passage can be seen when Jesus says "whoever has ears to hear let them hear". This clarifies the concept of universal salvation which is the idea that everyone has the opportunity to be saved if they wish but only if they respond positively to the message of God.

In this passage, the "kingdom of God" is also mentioned which is not a place but the God saving activities of God in the world. There is debate as to when the kingdom will be established as some believe that the kingdom is a present reality in Jesus as the kingdom of God will stand up against the kingdom of Satan, such as when Jesus exorcised demons. Others, such as singer

believe that the kingdom is a future one but Marshall is the most believable scholar as he argues that the kingdom of God is a present reality in the life of Jesus but it will be ultimately established in the future on the last day.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This answer focuses on the question with close reference to the passage and reaches Level 3 in both AO1 and AO2 and scored 10 marks. The candidate knew how to handle the material.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

There is no substitute for either depth or breadth. Fluency in the topic really does achieve high marks.

## Question 3 (b)

Question 3(b) drew a significant variety of approaches from candidates – some focussed more attention on the parable in part (a) plus one or two other parables of the Kingdom of God in Luke whilst the majority of candidates preferred a more programmatic approach through Jesus' teaching in Luke drawn from a wider selection of the parables of the Kingdom and the respective conclusions that have been drawn from them. Some excellent responses drew on their study of religious and ethical language and drilled down into what is meant by 'meaning', while others preferred a more programmatic approach through Jesus' teaching in Luke and discussed links between the parables and different types of eschatology, debating whether or not the various groups in First Century Palestine shared the same views and, hence, whether or not they would have understood what Jesus was telling them about the arrival of the Kingdom. All valid approaches were considered as the wording of the question did not restrict responses exclusively to 'early believers'.

Candidates predominantly discussed the context of Jesus' parabolic teachings, why Jesus taught in parables and the meaning of the parables for the audience at this time in Jesus' ministry. Some mentioned 'early believers' as those who heard the parables first hand from Jesus and discussed oral tradition before moving on to analysing why the parables might have meaning for modern day believers with the benefits of scholarly insight and tradition. Candidates cited examples of parables and analysed why Jesus used familiar images and discussed the impact on hearers if the meaning of parables is accessible. Some used a brief link with 3(a) to argue allegorically about preaching which carried different levels of meaning for hearers who respond accordingly. Candidates discussed why Jesus appeared to conceal the meaning of some parables as they were designed to make hearers think and ponder their meaning. Some responses made good use of Morris' view and related this successfully to the question by arguing parables both reveal and conceal truths which suggests parables have meaning for the genuine seeker who takes the trouble of discovering the meaning for themselves but therefore will remain concealed from or have little meaning for the listener 'who hears them' and does nothing about it.

Some very good use was made of the first century background – candidates clearly discussed how Jesus taught under the Roman occupation to an audience with intensified hopes for the coming of God's Kingdom and many candidates analysed the difference this might make for a first century listener who shared this expectation. Indeed, the varied religious and political groups of the time were argued by some candidates to possess a predisposition to either find deep meaning within Jesus' teachings, or reject them through fear of alienation from their religious or political group if accepting the message meant a life style change – in this way candidates drew a distinction between different groups of hearers and effectively answered the question. Some candidates concluded to Jesus' own interpretation that the seed falling on fertile ground related to listeners with a noble and good heart whilst other 'hearers' would not be as receptive and productive; therefore not everyone would find the parables meaningful or be prepared to act on them. The best responses analysed the claim and all justified judgments fully supported by comprehensive appraisal of the evidence earned high marks. Most candidates understood that parables are not lost on everyone but it is fair to say that there *is* varied response to Jesus' parabolic teachings related to the level of understanding that the listener has and whether the parable was able to convey the message intended by Jesus. Overall, this question was very well done by candidates who confidently deployed their extensive knowledge of parabolic teachings.

This is clearly a short script that had potential for development if the candidate knew the parables of the kingdom of God or had planned their time more carefully as it is highly likely that time had just ran out.

The plan contains a reference to the parable in Question 3(a) and the comments made on this are coherent. The ideas in the plan are repeated in the very brief narrative and there is just not enough

material on the page to award more than 4 marks. There is no evidence of any further knowledge on the parables beyond that which already appeared in the extract in 3(a).

(b) Analyse the claim that the parables of Jesus have little meaning for some hearers.

(20)

Plan

spiritually blind

spiritually weak / unspiritually connected

need ears to ~~hear~~ listen and eyes to see

do not believe in parables of Jesus.

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The parables of Jesus may have very little meaning to some hearers as they may not believe in Christianity or the parables of Jesus therefore not being able to understand equalling they have little meaning. Also the maybe epintually blind and deaf as said in the passage 'who ever has ears, let them hear' thus meaning that to be able to understand the parables of Jesus the listener needs to be spiritually inclined to understand what is meant by the parables aka the deeper meaning.



The candidate may have ran out of time and the lesson to be learned is that of time management. It is also possible that this topic was omitted in revision.



Practise time management under examination conditions. Examiners cannot award marks if the material is not there on the page.

This is an example of a Level 5 answer that demonstrated a wide range of knowledge with accurate use of relevant scholarship. Specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and the candidate clearly had control over the material which was sustained throughout. The interesting aspect of this response is the intelligent reference to Topic 4.1 whereby the question was answered directly through a discussion of the interpretation of scripture. This material was effectively applied to drill down into what is meant by 'meaning' and suggestions adapted directly from scholarly interpretations were deployed to answer the question. The response was awarded a high Level 5 to acknowledge the quality of religious thinking but missed out on full marks because the range of parables deployed could have used a little more narrative detail wider to demonstrate the candidate's knowledge of parables.

- moral (Fr. Matera)
  - information of salvation (I H Marshall)
  - demythologising - invalidating?
  - Barth
- (b) Analyse the claim that the parables of Jesus have little meaning for some hearers.

(20)

The claim that the parables of Jesus carry little meaning for some hearers may be supported by his disciples asking what the parable of the sower meant. Perhaps they had followed him so diligently that non-literal meanings being derived from Jesus as "logos" would have sounded untruthful and therefore meaningless. This may be an interpretation likened to Karl Barth's literalism, in which he believed that the Bible carries only literal meaning as the word of God. By taking scripture at face value, one omits the possibility of deriving further meaning from the text. However, the claim that Jesus' parables carry little meaning for their audience can be rejected in many ways.

Rudolf Bultmann, who emphasised in "de-mythologizing" the Bible claimed that Christians can reject the mystical portions of the Bible as exaggerations to reveal deeper meanings. This is shown through Jesus' use of parables, such as the sower, to convey a message for his audience. Taken literally, like the disciples, one may not be able to reveal further meaning; but the parables are rich in allegory. The parable of the sower conveys Jesus' ~~and~~ God's word to be 'like' a sower, and his followers like growing plants: reaching towards salvation is their faith wills it. However, one can argue that "de-mythologizing" scripture may lead to the rejection of fundamental Christian doctrine, such as the resurrection of Christ. On the other hand, it is useful to

consider as this gives parables and miracles their meaning.

The parables may also carry meaning for many hearers, as they gave early Christians insight on how to reach the kingdom of God. For example, the parable of the great banquet suggests that His kingdom is available to all who seek it. I H Marshall stated that Jesus gave promises of salvation to the poor, and stern warnings to the rich. Therefore, many hearers of these parables may have either been comforted by the good news; or motivated by Jesus to act in order to reach salvation. Furthermore, Frank Matera led a sermon about how Jesus' teachings revealed how Christians should act (at the Sermon on the Mount). Jesus' parables are given meaning, perhaps, in Matthew's Beatitudes which reveal "blessed are the poor in spirit, for you will inherit the kingdom of God."

~~Overall~~, hearers of Jesus' parables may have derived much meaning from them, in accordance to their lives as Christians, how to seek the kingdom of God, and to understand these concepts through allegory. For example, the parable of the unforgiving servant dictates the teaching of Jesus' Golden Rule: do unto others what you wish to be done to you. It also teaches the importance of forgiveness in an accessible means to an audience which may have been largely uneducated.

Overall, the parables of Jesus did have much meaning to his hearers. They explored the nature of God (Ego Eimi) in the Torah's

Exodus, which may reveal meaning to Jewish listeners. Allegorically, they were accessible to Gentiles who may not have known concepts such as the Messianic Kingdom, and salvation before through common concepts such as sowing seeds. They also revealed how Christians must act in order to reach salvation and inherit the Kingdom of God.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This response demonstrates a well-thought out response with accurate scholarship and relevant subject knowledge.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Add a little detail to named parables to suggest full knowledge but don't use this as padding to make up for lack of commentary which is ultimately a higher order skill. There are occasions when detail can enrich commentary and it is better to include than to omit detail.

## Question 4

This question was by far the most successful question for many candidates on the paper. Within these very impressive responses candidates deployed a variety of approaches and there was more than one pathway to an excellent mark. The best candidates made nuanced and mature links to other areas of study, whether focussing on meaning and language, the application of situation ethics or a comparison between the biography of the Prophet Muhammad and Jesus. The best responses maintained a clear focus on the statement being evaluated and demonstrated an impressive depth of textual understanding of the key conflict narratives in the fourth gospel, or the birth narratives in Matthew. However, many of the high Level 4 responses failed to make an accurate or developed link to an alternative area of study. The question itself was open in that it did not prohibit the use of material from Luke's gospel for discussing 'why did Jesus have to die?' (as a result of conflict issues) or for those who wanted to discuss the ethical permutations of conflict with closer reference to either ethical teachings in Luke or to material from the Study of Ethics. Many candidates deployed ethical perspectives surrounding conflict and a few candidates considering the crucifixion of Jesus evaluated utilitarian aspects surrounding events that led up to the crucifixion. These discussions were handled very well by candidates who clearly understood the question and used many sensible connections across the specification to the full to offer a mature response.

Candidates exploited fully an opportunity to deploy material from other topics on the specification directly related to the Fourth Gospel such as 2.3b *Miracles and signs in the Fourth Gospel*, and 3.2a *The purpose and authorship of the Fourth Gospel*. Candidates recognised both of these topics contained relevant material for answering Question 4 because conflict situations surrounding Jesus' miracles often arose as Jesus went about his ministry. The different purposes of the Fourth Gospel (3.2a) also provided relevant material for discussing 'who he was' (Question 4) as amongst a variety of purposes of the Fourth Gospel an obvious purpose was that of Christology. This point was not missed by the majority of candidates who also engaged with their background knowledge on the world of the first century from topic 1.2 to highlight their discussion about the various religious and political authorities who had reasons for 'conflict with Jesus' (5.2a) as per Question 4. The omission of a reference to the crucifixion and resurrection narratives in Luke's gospel in Question 4 placed this question very firmly within the narrative of John's Gospel but not to the exclusion of material usefully deployed from other parts of the specification. The wording of the question relates very closely to 5.2a which specifically is 'presented in the Fourth Gospel' however, the omission of a specific gospel in the question equally opened up an alternative pathway that was very well traversed in some excellent responses. Overall, this question was very well answered and it was a privilege to read the vast range of knowledge or the depth and control that the best candidates had over their material. A few weak responses were either descriptive, or failed to demonstrate the breadth of understanding required to access the higher levels but for the majority, there is no doubt that candidates performed very well on this question.

This is an example of a Level 2 response. The candidate offers a limited range of knowledge and begins to deconstruct some religious information but there is just not enough material there to get into Level 3. The candidate has not written enough to explore any other links with other papers that have been studied. There is little or no attempt to appraise the evidence presented so overall this is a weak answer.

- 4 Evaluate the claim that the religious and political authorities came into conflict with Jesus because they misunderstood who he was.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in New Testament Studies have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- Religion and Ethics
- Study of Religion (excluding Christianity).

(30)

Religious and Political authorities were always ~~known~~ that seen to be having difficulties with each other but most severely with Jesus.

The religious authorities also seen as the zealots

The political authorities ~~was~~ were seen to be the Pharisees which were in charge of the ~~law~~ laws and mostly against Jesus. For example when he heals the blind man at the pool the Pharisees get angry with him because ~~he~~ he did it ~~over~~ during the Sabbath which is seen the holy day for the Jews Jews where they are not allowed ~~to~~ to practise any work and Jesus ~~he~~ breaks the law. They also tend to focus more on Jesus breaking the law than ~~the~~ Jews along this miracle and healing the blind man.

This ~~proves~~ shows that the Pharisees were quite strict and ignorant towards Jesus and did everything to eliminate him. Their ignorance made them go blind themselves and did not see Jesus' ~~royal~~ majesty.

The religious believer however did not recognise him either ~~thought of him~~ because Jesus proclaimed to be the Messiah which in the 1st century AD was seen as something outrageous because for them there was only one Messiah who was sent from God.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate is not really in control of the topic and struggles to answer the question.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

There is no substitute for knowledge of the material. Read the question carefully to check that all avenues have been explored because the Question 4 essay allows scope for drawing from a wide range of material.

This is an example of a Level 5 answer that demonstrated a wide range of knowledge with accurate use of relevant scholarship. Specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and the candidate clearly had control over the material which was sustained throughout 6 pages.

The interesting aspect of this response is the breadth of conflict situations that were discussed in relation to the question. The candidate deployed this material confidently to answer the question and also made reference to logical positivism that fulfilled the requirement to make a link with one other paper. This requirement is difficult to integrate into essays and many candidates crowbarred a statement for this link that was badly juxtaposed to surrounding content. This exemplar shows a reasonable attempt to include this link.

The response was awarded a high Level 5 to acknowledge the quality of response in an essay that logically drew together a wide range of ideas. Connections were made between the full range of elements in the question and the only point that could have been improved was the reference to Atheism and Dawkins within a NT context. There are other more qualified NT scholars in this subject that deserve a mention. That said, the candidate did cite some very good classical scholars and the point is being made here that the inclusion of this exemplar is not by way of supporting Dawkins within the range of expected scholarship. The candidate was in no way penalised for mentioning Dawkins but surely there are better examples. The essay is included because it covers the topic very well and represents one of the pathways to high marks adopted by candidates.

4 Evaluate the claim that the religious and political authorities came into conflict with Jesus because they misunderstood who he was.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in New Testament Studies have been influenced by **one** of the following:

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(30)

John's Gospel states how Pilate didn't understand who Jesus was or why the Jewish religious authorities wanted him dead. He seems to try to find Jesus to be innocent but Rivkin is sceptical and believes that Pilate did ask Jesus if he was 'King of the Jews' to find him innocent or understand him better but rather to lure Jesus into making a political confession, as such a claim defied Caesar ~~Caesar~~ and was an act of rebellion that must be quashed. C H Dodd also believed that the Fourth Gospel was trying to appeal to a Hellenistic audience and was trying to popularise Christianity in Rome, something quite

difficult if the Gospel condemns Jesus' death as the Roman fault. Pilate would've come into conflict with Jesus just because he didn't understand but rather because Pilate saw him as a political threat and historical accounts ~~show that~~ from Josephus show that Pilate was a cruel man who rebelled in other misfortunes, thus contradicting the claim that conflict only existed because between Jesus and the Romans because they misunderstood him.

Many Christians today agree that his own people rejected him because they didn't understand who he was. John's Gospel clearly demonstrates how much the religious authorities hated him due to disagreements in the law, Jesus' bold actions and their seeing of him as a nuisance and threat to security. Jesus doesn't come into conflict with the Sadducees in the Temple over a misunderstanding in

Jesus' Christology but rather because Jesus had driven out the money changers from the Temple and had declared that he would destroy it and raise it up again in three days. The Jewish Authorities saw this as a direct threat to their authority and recognised that Jesus had caused unrest (in the Synoptic Gospels, near the time of Passover - one of Judaism's most sacred festivals) in the Holy Temple. The Fourth Gospel's author also often refers to those Jesus came into conflict with as 'The Jews' in order to create antagonism there, generalise them and make them Jesus' adversary. John purposefully brings the two into conflict not because they don't understand Jesus but to sell the Gospel to a Gentile audience who could scapegoat the Jews for the death of Jesus rather than the Gentile Romans.

The 'Jews' also often came into conflict over who Jesus is and would suggest that they try to seize and stone him because they don't recognise him as the Son of God but the crowd often did hate Jesus for what he said. His claim to authority and as the Son of God made the 'Jews' accuse him of blasphemy which was a crime punishable by death in the ~~is~~ Jewish Hebrew law thus causing them to hate him. Jesus also states how that just because they're sons and daughters of Abraham it doesn't mean they'll be saved. Most Jews saw themselves as God's chosen people and would find such a claim to be very disrespectful and heretical. The Jews hate him so much that they try to seize him, stone him and took his ~~into~~ defying Roman taxation, a

rebellious crime but it could be argued that these Jews ~~would~~ couldn't see through their own ego and if they understood who Jesus was as Messiah and Son of God then they wouldn't have persecuted him.

However, atheists like Richard Dawkins would not see Jesus as the Son of God and would agree that the Jews hated him justly.

Furthermore logical positivists would even consider any discussion of Christology meaningless as any truth statement about him is meaningless as it would be a verifiably synthetic statement or a ~~factology~~ factology/analytic statement. The Verification and Falsification principles, favoured by A.J. Ayer and R.M. Hare respectively, would find religious language to be meaningless. However, the Verification and Falsification principles are ~~meaningless~~

meaningless by their own definitions and are self-defeating making their contribution to the debate meaningless.

Overall, some Christians would argue that Jesus only came into conflict with the Jews and the Romans because they misunderstood who he was. But Ruckin points out how Pilate would see Jesus as rebellious and a threat to peace during the busy ~~pas~~ Passover time. The Jews also hated him because he blasphemed against the Torah, claimed to be in sacred unity with the Father, criticised their holy ancestors and brought a nuisance and trouble to the Temple - the holiest place in Judaism. It can therefore be concluded that the religious and political authorities came into conflict with Jesus, not because they didn't understand him, but they hated and feared him and his influence.



The candidate covers the topic comprehensively and clearly answers the question.



Consider the inclusion of relevant scholarship to enhance your answer.

## Paper Summary

A very good year's work has been done by centres and candidates, in general equipping candidates to respond well to the demands of this paper. Candidates appear to enjoy the material they study and are able to respond with enthusiasm.

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Respond to the specific demands of the question by tailoring relevant information.
- Practice writing to timed practice questions using the exam timing.
- Use the answer booklet correctly and avoid unnecessary attachments.
- Support points made with examples and relevant textual detail.
- Express your viewpoint clearly where AO2 is required.
- Continue to develop a good range of scholarship and avoid citing Dawkins who is not a NT scholar.
- Take care with subject specific spellings (terminology and scholars).

## Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>



