

# ResultsPlus

Examiners' Report

June 2011

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1J

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## **Introduction**

Congratulations are due to many candidates who achieved success in their thorough understanding of the selected passage and for their commendable examination techniques.

It is essential for candidates to examine the passage on the exam paper. Candidates must relate what they have learned and apply it to the extract. Examiners know there are many ways of examining a passage and there is no preferred method. What is essential is an explicit focus on the text, whatever method is used to examine it. There was evidence of some candidates inserting several paragraphs of material not linked to the question.

The division on the paper into the two assessment objectives is intended to assist candidates to structure their answers and to enable them to make sensible use of their time in the allocation of material. In most cases candidates had the required examination technique to make effective use of their material. There is no necessary requirement to follow the structured division as seen in the question. However, for candidates creating a holistic answer, there is a tendency to pay inadequate attention to AO2, especially in relation to the implications aspect of part (b).

### **Question 1 (a)**

Examiners were impressed by the depth and quality of candidate's answers to this paper. At the higher levels, answers were excellent and received impressive marks. There was a clear and detailed understanding of the issues and of the theological debates behind them. Candidates referred to a range of scholars, both ancient and modern, as well as detailed debate and argument. There was proficient use and understanding of complex ideas and use of biblical and of other sources was equally impressive. The best candidates tackled the passage explicitly and used a variety of scholarly arguments to support or oppose Wilson's views on the resurrection. Biblical evidence was widespread and the range of scholars impressive. Some candidates displayed good understanding of the differing gospel accounts of the resurrection and offered explanations of these differing accounts. Other candidates looked at the Wilson account more holistically. The fluency and use of technical language were admirable and it was particular good to see candidates attempting original analysis.

In the middle levels, candidates were slightly less comfortable with the range of material and tended to concentrate on writing all they knew about the overall topic of resurrection, often at great length. Others, perhaps hedging their bets on which passage would come up, tended to write a 'one answer fits all' to resurrection questions, with a number relying heavily on analysis of Morrison's passage from a previous exam paper.

At the lower end, candidates concentrated largely on re-writing the passage, offering little more than simplistic resurrection information whilst other candidates paid scant attention to the particular selected passage. Some focused on a range of possible theories that supported the resurrection stories but paid only incidental attention to the selected passage.

### **Question 1 (b)**

The most able candidates made copious use of scholarship and good, clear examples. Implications were varied and always interesting and much of the critical evaluation was handled in an intelligent manner and backed up with substantial evidence. In this context some candidates drew out implications in relation to other Gospels and to debates about the person of Christ.

In the mid-range, most responses were well-structured and offered a fair evaluation of the issues, though in a much more general way. Sources were useful and appropriate, though biblical exegesis was somewhat limited. The main difference between the top and mid-range was how close the candidate stuck to the issues raised directly by the text, rather than more general observations about the resurrection.

A few candidates at the lower end wrote GCSE accounts of the resurrection, with some comments on the accuracy of scripture, but with little real depth. Less successful candidates presented partial answers giving attention to opinion or implications but not both.

a) In the passage, Wilson argues that the discrepancies within the resurrection account can lead to its invalidity. He uses the examples of the different women <sup>who went to</sup> ~~the~~ tomb and the somewhat confusion over who was there to tell them 'he is not here, he has risen'. However, it must be remembered that within his passage Wilson also explores how Jesus really did rise, <sup>(the story)</sup> despite these apparent confusion for the reader.

~~Arguably~~ Arguably the gospels can be hard to <sup>deceive</sup> because of these discrepancies, but it must be remembered that each gospel, which in Latin is defined as "a good story about God" (John MacArthur) was written by different authors who based their accounts on various testimonies from eyewitnesses. These in turn were put into the canon of scripture by the Early Church Fathers a few hundred years later, seen to be as the most accurate ~~however~~. This therefore can explain their discrepancies. It can be said that sceptics may be able to 'denide them'. However, as Burrows says, "The excessive scepticism denies not from a careful evaluation of the available data, but from a personal predilection against the supernatural", that is to say it

will depend on the personal belief of the reader <sup>the gospel narratives can be seen as</sup> as to whether these discrepancies allow the gospels to be discarded. It is as R.M. Hare states, <sup>on religious experience</sup> a 'but', ~~and~~ based upon the personal predisposition ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> believe or not.

Additionally, Wilson examines the various accounts on <sup>who</sup> exactly went to the tomb. John only allows for Mary Magdalene to go to the tomb, but it must be remembered that as Tyler/Reid say, the gospel writers use their narratives to emphasise "the key themes" in the gospel, and for John, Mary highlights how Jesus calls his sheep by name: "Mary". It is in this account, portrayed as the Good Shepherd, with regards to the Beloved Disciple <sup>+ Peter</sup>, John puts forward the idea of seeing and believing, as the Beloved Disciple "saw and believed." This is John's main purpose, that his readers believe by reading his gospel alone: "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and by believing, have life in his name." <sup>Joh 1:20:31</sup> Therefore as Tyndale states, these resurrection appearances are "fundamental to the gospel". As Smalley states, "it is the heart of the matter." <sup>N.P.</sup> [Wilson explores the other synoptic accounts as well, saying Matthew incorporates another 'Mary, the mother of James and Joseph' and Luke also mentions Joanna.



There is therefore some confusion, but it must be remembered that 'like a road accident' all eye-witness accounts will be different. The more important thing is not ~~whether~~ <sup>how many</sup> the women went to the tomb, or whether they told the disciples or not, as they were 'afraid', but ~~that~~ that the women did visit the tomb, and found it empty. As Professor Laico concludes, cited Manson: ~~the~~ the account of the women is "so embedded in Christian literature other than to be treated with respect"

Moreover, again Wilson explores the apparent contradictions within the gospel narratives. <sup>(in John,</sup> Mary sees 'two angels' and then 'Jesus'. In Matthew, there is only one angel. Mark talks about a man in a 'white robe' and Luke refers to 'men in brilliant clothes'. Unmiraculously, all accounts here refer to an angel or divine messenger from God. Even when put together, these accounts are not contradictory. The main message again of the gospel and the use of the angels is: "He is not here, he has risen!" ~~This is what~~ The empty tomb stands as empirical evidence to it, and this is the importance of the women and the angels. They testify to the empty tomb. As Wilbur Smith states: "The fact that the body disappeared from the tomb was a matter to be decided upon by physical evidence." Jesus fulfilled his

promise and rises again, proving himself as God. Consequently, the number of angels who work to the tomb is not important.

To continue, Wilson states that 'all four gospels describe Jesus subsequently appearing to the disciples.' This is seen throughout the gospels, and John argues that it is one of the main lines of evidence for the resurrection. Again, it does not matter who Jesus appears to, but it is the reality and nature of his resurrection. As Tyler Reid says: "The evangelists were not concerned with the mechanics of God's activity, but rather the reality of it." Particularly for John, Jesus' resurrection proves him as the messiah, and through it people can gain eternal life (although the crucifixion is the "hour" of glory when salvation is achieved). This is seen in Jesus appearing to Thomas, who goes from complete disbelief to full declaration of Jesus as God "My lord and my God." Thomas represents all faced with the challenge to believe and is blessed because of his belief after seeing the physical Jesus, but John states that even more blessed are those who ~~do~~ have not seen Jesus and believe: "Blessed are those who have not seen Jesus and yet believe." It is an address to believers throughout the ages. Therefore, despite the contradictions in



who Jesus appears to, all portray the same <sup>as a message</sup> message <sup>at the end of the</sup> that Jesus is God and eternal life is now available.

Furthermore, Jesus appears to his disciples to emphasise his bodily resurrection, which in turn, as DF Strauss says would have convinced them in his believing he was the 'Prince of Life' and to take the ~~the~~ gospels to the rest of the world. The disciples were not expecting Jesus to return and locked themselves away in a room. However, Jesus appeared to them "though the doors were locked" and said "Peace be with you." The nature of Jesus' body was different. Clearly he possessed a 'spiritual body' that Paul describes for believers in 1 Corinthians 15, and because there is an <sup>(K.P. Fuller)</sup> "organic and constitutive relationship" <sup>resurrected</sup> between the body of believers and of Christ, we can assume that that is the body he would have ~~received~~ <sup>From it, the disciples can believe in their own resurrection</sup> received. His wounds were still visible to allow <sup>(as he was unrecognisable at first)</sup> for recognition and belief in his resurrection (eg for Thomas). He could eat for pleasure instead of sustenance, but he was not a ghost as he had "flesh and bones," <sup>(Luke)</sup> something he himself states. Therefore, it is the reality of Jesus' resurrection that is more important, despite Wilson's claims about the confusion of the appearances.

Wilson continues his line of argument in saying that Paul's account to the Corinthians gives the fullest amount of information about the

resurrection appearances, and as the conyigma, it is regarded as the earliest statement of faith about the resurrection. In fact, Paul presents a cumulative argument with his reference to 'Cephas', 'the twelve', 'more than 500 brothers at one time', 'James', 'all the apostles', and even himself 'as to one abnormally born' (which is personal testimony) to argue for the resurrection of Christ. It is this overwhelming weight of these appearances that can be convincing, although women are not mentioned (due to Paul's Jewish ideas ~~about women~~) and there is no reference to the empty tomb (as he saw Jesus on the road to Damascus in the form of a life-transforming religious experience). We can ~~apply~~ apply Swinburne's Principles of Testimony and Credibility here, to say that the disciples would probably tell the truth; and that the sheer weight and extent of the experiences can argue in favour of the resurrection: 'How things seem to be is a good guide to how things are.' In fact if all who saw Jesus spoke about their experience for just 15 minutes, then without breaks, it would take over 120 hours to interview all these witnesses. This is what Paul puts forward, and his main reason can be seen by Wilson as giving the fullest information.

In conclusion, although the experiences can appear to be 'a jumble of confusion', according to Wilson, like witnesses after a road accident, Wilson ends his argument by saying that it is still the 'same true story' and this is what the gospels emphasise: the importance of the empty tomb, the reality that Christ had risen, which in turn transformed the lives of the disciples, and to all he witnessed, and that gave them hope of their own resurrection.

b) "For what I received I passed on to you, that Christ died according to the scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day" 1 Corinthians 15.

For me there can be no doubt that despite the confusions in the gospels over the number of women who went, or the number of angels who were there to greet them, or Jesus' appearances to the disciples, that Jesus Christ really rose again. It is 'a true story', and therefore I agree with Wilson. Ultimately, it is down to a belief in Christ's resurrection.

For if Christ didn't rise then the Christian faith is futile. Paul states: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile", and as H.P. Liddon states, "Faith in the resurrection is the keystone of the Christian faith" without it, all



would crumble into ruin. For if Christ did not  
resurrect, man would still be in sin, as Paul states:  
"you are still in your sins!" As John Blanchard states,  
"man would be <sup>permanently</sup> infected with sin's  
deadly disease." Those who believed and died  
in Christ ~~are also~~ <sup>would be</sup> lost: "Those asleep in Christ  
are lost."

If Christ did not resurrect, there would be  
no salvation, or eternal life. But if Christ did rise,  
He is proved as God: <sup>the messiah promised from Genesis onwards</sup> "His being or not the messiah  
stands or falls with it." He fulfilled <sup>would</sup> all the prophecies  
about the messiah, a 1 in  $10^{157}$  chance, as Hoer  
says.

If Christ had not risen, the disciples would have  
also died for a lie, believing him to be the victor  
over death. As Adolf Harnack says: "The firm  
confidence in the disciples was that Jesus did  
not abide in death, but was raised by God."  
They would have believed in a false redeemer,  
as Jesus would not be the Prince of Life, and  
would have ~~been~~ <sup>been</sup> crucified, beheaded, stoned  
to death, clubbed to death and exiled to the  
island of Patmos for a lie. As Strobel says: "Nobody  
willingly dies for something that is false, and therefore  
Jesus must have resurrected. For if he did not, he  
would be the greatest fraudster of all time,

deceiving people into believing in his salvation for over 2000 years. All those who would have attested to the resurrected Jesus are also deceived. Therefore he must have resurrected as C. S. Lewis states: "The first fact in all of Christendom is the number of people who say they have seen the resurrection."

As D. F. Strauss says, only by Jesus' resurrection could he have convinced the disciples that he was the 'father of life'. Therefore Jesus must have raised, for by D. F. Strauss' reasoning, if he did, the disciples were would have been utterly transformed and as Scott concludes: "Perhaps the transformation of the disciples is the greatest evidence of all for the resurrection." Therefore, the reality of the resurrection is once again more important.

To add, if Jesus had not been raised, then there is no hope of bodily resurrection for the believer ("if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.") Jesus would have died a death with no significance, and would have just been a man, as "God raised him up", proving him as God. There would be no hope of eternal life for believers, as Paul says, they would be of men "most pitied" and eternal life would be no drink for mankind. <sup>heaven</sup> It would be as Stephen Hawking states: "a fairytale" Therefore,



if Christ has been raised, and there is a hope of bodily resurrection, and although there are some problems with personal identity, something which tries to combat with the Replica Theory, eternal life would be available through the "grace" of Jesus Christ. He would be the *hincmas*, the one and all time sacrifice that conquers death to bring a *renewment* with God.

There are alternative explanations for if Jesus Christ was raised or not, <sup>as offered by Wilson and Morison</sup> But if no-one had stolen the body and Christ had not been raised, then the empty tomb would be a mystery. <sup>if Christ had not been raised</sup> the angels would not have been there to greet the women and Jesus would not have appeared to the disciples or transformed their lives. He would not have appeared to Paul and ultimately perhaps the church would not have gone to the Gentile world, with Paul destroying the church instead of contributing to its foundation. *it was violently persecuting the church!*

In conclusion, <sup>personally</sup> there is only one clear answer, based upon the implications of Christ's resurrection. For me, despite the discrepancies in the gospels, Christ truly raised, "as a superior not a superstar" (John McDowell) and ~~changed life as we know it~~ changed the course of the world's history (Robinson) forever.

TOTAL FOR PAPER 1J: 50 MARKS



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### Examiner Comments

This represents a high standard answer especially in AO1. Throughout the answer the candidate systematically focuses on the selected passage. There is a clear opening paragraph and identifiable summaries at strategic points in the answer. The candidate has a superb grasp of scholarship and incorporates a range of views. The clear exposition is amplified by references to related ideas and sources. In AO2 the candidate considers important implications and puts forward a clear line of reasoning.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Although this answer received high marks there are ways in which the quality of the work could be further improved. The candidate mentions alternative approaches in part (b) but this could have been more rigorously developed.

a.) ~~The argument in this passage~~

a.) This passage highlights many discrepancies about the state of affairs concerning the tomb Jesus was meant to be laid in.

The mere fact that different accounts of the scene of the empty tomb display different information about who visited the tomb raises concerns when trying to acknowledge the true facts of what happened and who was at the tomb.

Accounts from John's gospel state that Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb alone yet the Matthew author relates that Mary Magdalene was accompanied by 'Mary the mother of James and Joseph'. These are contradictory statements and therefore it is difficult to understand the truth.

The passage informs that 'Joanna' together with other women go to tell the disciples what they have seen but Mark's gospel highlights the fact that the women said nothing because they were afraid. This is another inconsistent surrounding

the accounts of the empty tomb.

More concerns are raised in this passage regarding the sights that people saw at the tomb. Mary Magdalene supposedly saw two angels and then Jesus; Matthew's gospel contains writing that the two Marys saw one angel and then Jesus, Mark's gospel states three women saw a young man in a white robe and Luke's gospel mentions an appearance of Jesus to Simon Peter. All of the gospels, ~~are~~ Matthew, Mark, Luke and John's are claiming that the tomb contained a divine being yet they all claim this using different people as the witnesses of this being. These contradictions have formed the basis of much debate amongst scholars.

Paul's letter concerning the 'truth' about the happenings at the tomb has ever been criticised because the account cannot be treated as evidence detailing what happened. Paul's letter has been slated in the book 'Did Jesus really rise from the dead' as it states, 'The documentation is an almost hopeless jumble of confusion' and



'highly confused versions of the same story.' This questions the accuracy of the accounts about the empty tomb and raises the concerns that actually all of these accounts given to us ~~are~~ have been written by confused people trying to prove that Jesus was raised from the dead.

The events and accounts given to us by the gospel writers and those closest to Jesus ~~at~~ try to make us believe that Parousia has happened through the person of Jesus, yet all their accounts are different. This passage highlights these differences and makes us wonder that perhaps the disciples and Jesus' closest people were in fact just putting accounts together in order to make everyone believe that God had risen from the dead, ~~as~~ and as such prove that he was the Son of God.



b.) The ideas expressed gives alot for us to question and think about when trying to learn what happened at the tomb. The idea that these accounts have been created not in truth raises great concerns for religion as a whole. If Jesus had in fact been moved to another tomb by Religious and political authorities in order for no shrine to be built for Jesus and not actually risen, then the whole of the Christian faith would have been built on a lie. The faith is based on the idea that Jesus' resurrection meant mankind could be free from sin and have a chance in the second life. E.P Sanders believed this kingdom would be a future event possibly after a day of judgement but this day of judgement would not occur if Jesus ~~hadn't~~ didn't rise from the dead. If he actually didn't rise from the dead then Christians ~~and Jews~~ have been worshipping at Mass ~~for~~ based on a lie.

I believe that there is some truth in the gospel accounts when the tomb was seen to be empty and I think Jesus did rise again but that whoever went to visit the

tomb saw nothing. I would suggest that the gospel accounts claiming that Jesus was seen is a lie so that people believe that Jesus did rise. Like doubting Thomas mankind is built to believe when they see.

So perhaps the gospel writers felt the need to log the fact that Jesus was seen in order for the accounts to seem true. People would not have believed that Jesus had risen from the dead just because the tomb was empty.

It is claimed that Joseph of Arimathea removed the body of Jesus from the tomb because it was Joseph's own tomb given to Jesus. Perhaps Joseph wanted to take it for himself to worship because he was a

secret follower of Jesus, or perhaps because he felt guilty about his death as he was part of the Sanhedrin who put Jesus

to death. It is written that all seventy members of the Sanhedrin were present at the decision. If Joseph did remove the body then this means Jesus didn't rise from the dead body and soul as scriptures say.

~~Religion~~ The implication of this on Christianity is huge because Christians base

their faith on the risen Jesus and the hope of the Parousia, a place for us to be saved. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead then humans will not be given the chance for an afterlife free of our sins.

If the Gospel accounts are incorrect and based on a lie then and the gospel writers have lied so easily about these accounts then it is so easy to lie in all of the Bible. We then start to question the truth and accuracy of any of the Bible and in turn question our own beliefs in religion. Communities and all faiths come together in worshipping and praising God and Jesus. If we may be praising and worshipping a false prophet. This has a massive effect on religion and mankind.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This answer is selected because it shows unsatisfactory allocation of material between A01 and A02. The mark scheme allocates 30 out of 50 for part (a) and 20 out of 50 for part (b). The candidate has virtually an equal amount of material in both parts and this is not a good examination technique. The content is narrative and descriptive and the student has limited ability to identify and to select the most important information from the passage. There is minimal use of scholarship and this indicates a basic response to the question.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Candidates should be aware in advance of the mark distribution in the questions so that they can plan their priorities in managing their material. Candidates could contrast this type of approach with more successful answers in order to set specific targets which aim to improve their standard of work. For example candidates may compare a narrative and descriptive paragraph with a small sample of work that displays critical analysis.

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