



# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
In Religious Studies (6RS04)  
Paper 1J Implications – New Testament

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Publications Code 6RS04\_1J\_1706\_ER

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## **2017 Report on 6RS04**

With some thoughts on the Anthology in the new Spec.

### **Introduction:**

There were a significant proportion of scripts that were truly excellent. Examiners had opportunities to read outstanding scripts showing independent thought. Credit should be given to candidates and their teachers who have prepared the thoroughly, fostered a love of the subject and nurtured degrees of insightfulness. Candidates used a variety of methods in their answers to these textual questions. Some concentrated almost entirely on the selected passage, analysing each part and referring to their wider knowledge. Others set the passage within the context of the overall article illustrating key points from the passage itself. Whatever method is used the fundamental requirement is an examination of the passage. These principles will apply to the anthology passages used in the new Spec in the compulsory questions taken from the Anthology. (See conclusion below for more on this topic of Anthologies in the new Spec.)

### **1J New Testament**

New Testament candidates are usually able to offer a skilful blend of theology, scholarship, biblical knowledge and careful analysis. However, this year, responses to the set passage yielded far fewer answers of the usual quality. A few candidates wrote about passages from previous years, particularly Wilson and Morison's 'Who moved the stone?' and used them to discuss the historical evidence for the life of Christ. A few candidates resorted to philosophical arguments on life after death to prove that Christ really existed.

The set passage offered several opportunities to analyse the gospel accounts of the resurrection and the problems arising from them, and the best candidates drew on a range of scholars, strong textual knowledge and the pertinent links which could be made from the articles by Wilson and Morison. However, many candidates this year seemed taken by surprise by the extract and were not able to make relevant links or analyse the passage in the context of the exam. Many candidates wrote about eschatology in general, the death of Jesus or even the wider ministry of Jesus. Some worked systematically through the extract but did little more than offer a summary or explanation of it in their own words. There was limited use of scholarship. Resourceful candidates analysed the implications of consideration of alternative explanations for the resurrection and the wider issue of whether without the resurrection Jesus could be considered divine and Christianity valid. There were some excellent evaluations of the arguments and the implications were varied and imaginative.

Less resourceful candidates wandered around the issue of the resurrection narratives or the ministry of Jesus, whilst some candidates had clearly prepared a devotional response to part (b), in some cases going so far as to offer the examiner the opportunity to make their own confession of faith to access salvation.

Centres studying New Testament on the new specification should ensure that candidates are able to make relevant use of scholarship and do not rely on personal response alone.