



Examiners' Report

June 2023

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 03

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Introduction

The 2023 sitting of the GCE Religious Studies 9RS0_03 specification saw some excellent responses, which demonstrated the academic grasp of the subject and significant movement away from the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Candidates' thorough knowledge and understanding across the paper reflected the ability to address the specific demands of each question. Improved recognition of the links to other papers in Question (Q) 04 featured heavily and thus indicated increased competency in addressing this aspect of the paper.

Greater awareness of how much each question was worth assisted higher achievement and made for an improved balance of material across the whole paper. Candidates used their time appropriately and there were very few unfinished or 'not attempted' responses overall.

However, there was evidence of a few candidates who organised their material in the wrong place; there were more 'out of clip' responses and centres need to be aware that questions are marked separately. A plan written for a question in a space intended for the previous question means that the examiner will not see this initially. There is always the risk that a creditworthy point could be missed. Candidates should write a plan on the first page of the question answer lines, where it will be seen by the examiner. It will help to maintain focus and may receive credit, because the examiner will be apprised of all content intended for inclusion.

In addition to this, greater numbers of candidates are continuing Q01 on extra paper when technically no more marks could be awarded beyond the available 8. In some cases, such time management impacted on Q03(b) and Q04 and these questions are obviously worth more marks.

Key areas of advice for improving overall achievement from 2022 still applied for 2023. Attention to time management, subject knowledge and appropriate use of the answer booklet were still needed.

Further emerging from the evidence of the 2023 series, another point warrants attention: there is no substitute for accurate awareness of the Gospels of Luke and John; for example, the 'I am' sayings appear only in John. The Good Samaritan parable is a core ethical teaching, but **not** found in all four Gospels. The 'Walking on Water' sign is not found in Luke's Gospel.

Guesswork did not earn marks, especially if the wrong text were selected for a question that clearly stated where the content was located. Some responses indicated that the Prologue was not in the Fourth Gospel and this reinforced the need for sound subject knowledge and basic accuracy.

Marks were spread across the whole range, suggesting that the questions performed as intended and, with the exception of one question, candidates were able to respond in a decisive manner.

Enthusiasm for Religious Studies A level remained unchanged, with candidates showing real enjoyment of the subject and a willingness to engage in discussion and evaluation. Centres had worked hard on preparing candidates for the specification areas and this was most notable in Q04.

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. 2023 was a successful year and candidates deserved the rewards they earned for thoroughgoing study of the New Testament.

Question 1

Candidates explored a wide range of key ideas directly relevant to the project of hermeneutics, with reference to Bultmann's approach to interpreting scripture. Most candidates included accurate technical terms such as: kerygma, proclamation, hermeneutic, liberal theology, and demythologisation.

At the highest-level, candidates moved through a wide range of ideas that conveyed solid knowledge of Bultmann's specific contribution to liberal theology. At the lower range of ability there was basic confusion between liberation theology and liberal theology, accompanied by a lack of, if any, real knowledge about Bultmann's work. There is no substitute for accurate knowledge. Q01 could not be answered through guess work. Bultmann is named clearly in the Specification and his work is integral to ways of interpreting scripture inclusive of other forms of biblical criticism.

It is worth noting that Q01, an 'Explore' question, attracts 8 marks solely for A01. Information about the topic is required for full marks – there is no requirement to discuss or analyse. Q01 can also be an indicator of time management issues, when more than necessary for 8 marks is written onto extra paper. It is notable that candidates who wrote two pages for Q01 often did not have time to write an extra page for the essay questions such as Q03(a)/(b) and Q04, which carried more marks.

The candidate gives a detailed and wide-ranging response focussed entirely on the demands of the question.

The candidate clearly knows and understands Bultmann's work and has much relevant material in the response.

The highest levels may only be accessed through presenting accurate material: including important details increases the quality of the response.

Luke and Paul - justified
that the ^{offices}

- Kerygma
SECTION A

- free from anxiety - live the
Jesus

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 Explore key ideas of Bultmann's approach to interpreting Scripture.

(8)

Bultmann believed that in order for scripture to be meaningful it has to be de-mythologized. This is the process of stripping Biblical scripture down from its myths in order to discern its true ^{and} deeper meaning. He believed this because in today's world people have a scientific world view whereas those at the time of Jesus had a mythological world view. This means today we can conclude that things such as miracles and resurrection did not happen as they are not scientifically possible. For this reason, Bultmann rejects the Bible as inerrant (without flaws). However, he still believes that scripture is the 'word of God' but in a different way from the traditional sense. He believes it offers a way of life through Jesus' ethical teachings. By following the way Jesus lived we can become free from fear and anxiety, and love others. * This is done through Jesus' 'Kerygma' (preaching). Bultmann thought people feared death but promoted an existentialist philosophy which rejected the 'triple decker theory', the idea that there is heaven, hell and earth. By discerning Jesus' parables ^{of myths} ^{of} true meaning we can become free from this fear. Bultmann justified his de-mythologizing by arguing it had already begun in the early church. For example, Luke delayed the Parousia (second coming of Christ) to satisfy believers. (Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



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This is a good example of how extensive, accurate terminology can build up a picture of a scholar's approach.

Fully-deserved maximum marks.

Total: 8 marks

In this second essay the candidate has thorough knowledge of the context of the enlightenment and how this influenced Bultmann's approach.

This different style of response also earns 8 marks – there is some relevant reference to one of the articles in the Anthology for 9RS0_01 and the candidate transfers this knowledge across to their response with skill, and yet still has the ability to deploy a background of biblical criticism to this question.

1 Explore key ideas of Bultmann's approach to interpreting Scripture.

(8)

Bultmann's approach to interpreting Scripture is that the text must be demythologised to uncover the true meaning of Scripture. Therefore, Bultmann rejects divine revelation and labels it as the "irrational hell". This is in response to the enlightenment - philosophical and intellectual movement, emphasising reason and deism. By introducing a scientific world view, religion was becoming redundant, but Bultmann rescued liberal theology by emphasising the central role of Jesus. By doing so, the Christian kerygma changed and was highlighted, making science and religion compatible. Bultmann was inspired by existentialism, the view that God created humans, but left us to navigate the world ourselves, meaning He does not intervene. By demythologising Scripture, and removing supernatural elements, Bultmann argues that religion can respond to modern thought strongly and the message behind Jesus' healing acts be enhanced. This shows how Bultmann argues for the importance of symbolism, but miracles are not just Jesus as a charismatic miracle worker, they provide a unique message. To conclude, Bultmann believes we should liberate the Scripture as true, and stop trying to prove them wrong.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



The content reflects Bultmann's approach accurately to interpreting scripture.

The wider context of the enlightenment is appreciated, and salient points deployed to build up a picture.

Total: 8 marks



Be focussed.

Tailor your answer to the question set.

All valid content will be credited.

Question 2

The question targeted very specific knowledge of the Prologue. Anything other than content about the Prologue or material directly related to it, would not suffice. This topic is very well-supported in literature, and scholarship is an integral aspect of understanding the Prologue.

Some candidates did not know that the Prologue was in the Fourth Gospel and to earn marks they were expected to *know* the Prologue and to identify that the question was not asking about the entire Fourth Gospel. In general, candidates were expected to offer accurate exegesis on the Prologue itself, which demonstrated that they do know and understand the status of the Prologue within the Fourth Gospel.

The best responses focussed on the **question**, which asked for *differing views* about the Prologue. Candidates covered a wide range of possibilities such as origin, purpose, themes, and influences. Many responses identified various scholars and integrated their work on the Prologue into an assessment of the differing views. Relevant detail was important: the most popular scholar identified was Morna Hooker, in addition to other well-known classical or modern scholars.

There was no requisite to cover a minimum number of differing views but the general structure at this level allowed for two or three views to be covered in some detail, or a slightly wider range in less depth.

Marks were lost for the inability to distinguish material that related specifically to the Prologue or in general to the whole Fourth Gospel. Guesswork and/or general knowledge did not work and therefore resulted in a response that did not move beyond a simple outline of some ideas or themes in the Prologue, instead of identifying at least one specific view.

Overall, 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 because they did not answer the question fully. It remained the case that candidates invariably performed better when they were able to apply information they had learnt carefully to the specific demands of a question, rather than just reproducing a previous essay with no reference to the question.

Identify what the question is looking for – then a comprehensive assessment of the right material will achieve a higher outcome.

2 Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

(12)

The prologue of John is labelled by Morna Hooker as the 'glorious key' to understanding the gospel, and provides the reader with solid theology. Scholars have noted that the prologue uses high christology to emphasise Jesus' divinity and high status as God and the Messiah. This is in strict contrast to the synoptic gospels that use low christology to emphasise Jesus' humanity.

Key themes in the prologue include: the word made flesh, children of God, life, light and darkness, and law, grace and truth. The word made flesh emphasises how God has "made his dwelling among us" through the word incarnate. The children of God demonstrate that a spiritual birth is needed to become a child of God. This challenges traditional Jewish thought about being children of God by birth right, due to the old covenant which could cause a rift. Their rebirth is through God's grace, which is freely given to all, emphasising Jesus' universal ministry. Life, light and darkness present Jesus as the true light who is the giver of life and will always have victory over darkness.

Law, grace and truth present replacement theology, as it is through God's grace that eternal life is achieved, not the Law of Moses. It could be argued that John's prologue is influenced by Hellenism - the

culture imposed on the Jews by the Romans during their occupation. This is because Platonic philosophy can be seen in the contrast between flesh and spirit, as they believe in a material and metaphysical world. Parallels can also be seen with Stoicism, in the concept of the Logos - they believed seeds of the Logos were in the minds of all humanity, and this was the pathway to a special relationship with God. Despite this, Jews believed the Logos to be a principle of reason rather than the word made flesh. Some scholars have suggested that John's prologue was to refute Gnosticism, the belief that the Logos was not the word made flesh and would not be rejected by their own people. This emphasis on Jesus' humanity as the Logos, challenged their beliefs greatly. The origin/nature of the prologue is discussed by scholars. Brown believed it was an old Christian hymn, Robinson believed it was a later addition to provide greater understanding and find fulfillment in Jesus, whereas Barrett simply saw it as part of the original text.

There are differing views on who the Gospel/prologue was addressing as its audience. Some believed it was for the Greeks, due to the familiar concepts and Hellenistic influences, whereas some thought it was for a Jewish audience, to warn them not to reject Jesus.

~~who~~ who supersedes Jewish law and is the means to salvation. Barnett however, believed the prologue was written to provide support to an early Christian community who were persecuted for rejecting the Jewish faith. By having the prologue, their faith would be strengthened, making them aware that their beliefs are correct.

There are differing views on the authorship of the prologue, but Marsh concludes that the author must "remain wrapped in anonymity" and so a conclusion has not been reached. Many people believed that John the Apostle could be the author due to internal and external evidence. Internal evidence includes the intricate details, such as how many fish were caught and the trial before Pilate - this points to an eyewitness. Irenaeus also testifies to this, and knowledge of Palestine makes it likely the author was Jewish.

There is however tradition that John the Apostle died alongside his brother before the time of writing, and if he was a fisherman, would he have the education to formulate such sophisticated writing. Other theories of authorship of the Fourth Gospel include: the Beloved Disciple, John the Elder, or community authorship, inspired by oral tradition. The Beloved Disciple is an unlikely theory however, as they could be a few different people. The Beloved Disciple could be Lazarus "Lord the one you love is dead", or John the Apostle as not named, or an ideal disciple inspired.

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS



There is comprehensive accurate coverage of the required textual material and identification of differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

This answer reflects the mark scheme very well and is very clear and accurate.

That said, the mark scheme is indicative and other valid material can be credited.

Total: 12 marks



Stay on topic.

Solid learning pays off.

Read the question carefully.

Marks cannot be awarded if the material is not there.

2 Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

(12)

John's prologue doesn't include anything of the person of Jesus. Instead, according to Morna Hooker, "John offers us solid theology". This is very different to the Fourth Gospel, which talks very much of the person of Jesus, as John adopts a narrative of high Christology towards him.

Secondly, John does not give a birth narrative for Jesus, like the Synoptic Gospels do. This could suggest to some that John did not know much of the person of Jesus and his early life. ~~However~~, However, the Fourth Gospel would suggest otherwise, as many scholars believe that John's Gospel was written closest to the time of Jesus, due to his style of writing and the original language it was written in.



There are many learning points that can be extrapolated from this response.

The candidate begins with an inaccurate claim followed by the only accurate sentence on the page.

Material on the birth narrative is not asked for in the question. The response ends by moving into another topic, that also was not requested by the question.

To say that 'John's prologue doesn't include anything of the person of Jesus' is inaccurate. Whilst scholars agree that the Prologue teaches nothing new about the person of Jesus, they do agree that the Prologue sums up the testimony Jesus gave concerning himself and formulates it into an expression that has profoundly impressed Christianity.

Again, the claim in the second paragraph that 'John did not know much of the person of Jesus' is also inaccurate when John is considered to be one of the key witnesses to the life and work of Jesus.

Total: 1 mark



Guesswork does not replace knowledge of the topic.

Question 3

Both the two-part essay Q03(a)/(b) and the extended essay Q04 represent a significant proportion of the marks for the whole paper and should be given sufficient time and attention. Candidates who spent too much time on Q01 and/or Q02 would be better advised to answer the essay questions first, whilst keeping an eye on timings, because cumulatively these two questions add up to 60 out of 80 marks.

Q03(a)

This question enabled candidates to demonstrate their knowledge of the anthology with specific reference to Matthew's proof texts.

The most successful responses focussed closely on clarifying the text to suggest more ideas relevant to the narrative. Other Dreams of Joseph usefully integrated into many responses. Knowing the context of the Flight into Egypt was essential for a full response and most candidates at this level had sound knowledge of the full context.

A reminder of the purpose of the 'clarify' question is worthwhile because candidates in general lost marks for:

- confining their response to a basic comprehension exercise
- being at times, vague and confused
- imprecise knowledge of any of the proof texts

Indeed, far too many candidates missed salient aspects of the text such 'He shall be called a Nazarene' and were content to paraphrase or regurgitate the extract.

The question called for taking some of the issues in the extract, 'unpacking' them and making them easier to understand. This can be done successfully by:

- explaining an issue in more detail
- illuminating a contextual layer
- elucidating a concept

Familiarity with the Anthology beyond the extract obviously enabled candidates to interpret the extract itself. This was not an easy question because it demanded very specific knowledge of Matthew's proof texts.

Q03(b)

Candidates were expected to know the religious and political scene that defined the first century. Many candidates were able to draw from knowledge about the conflicts that culminated in Jesus' crucifixion.

The extract dealt with the fulfilment of prophecy regarding the identity of Jesus but there were wider factors in relation to his ministry that informed the relationships he had with the various religious and political factions of the time.

Most candidates were well-equipped to offer discussions of the political context that surrounded Matthew's proof texts and in this way brought together both part (a) and part (b) as a coherent whole. Some interpretations of the first century were very interesting in that material from the first century BCE was deployed successfully to analyse the context of the first century AD, by way of its historical impact.

Candidates seemed to prefer Q03(b) to Q03(a) and therefore responses to part (a) were varied in quality. The length, depth, and/or breadth of answers to part (b) was impressive. Candidates were able to discuss in detail different aspects of the first century that were significant for understanding the life and work of Jesus. The weaker responses were heavily factual and missed the opportunity to analyse the significance of first century issues.

The candidate's deployment of a wide range of knowledge gives the answer academic credibility.

The response fits the levels criteria for full marks.

2¹³When they had gone, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him!...

¹⁹After Herod died, an Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰'Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead!...

²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

(Source: Extract from *The Holy Bible*, New International Version, Matt 2:13,19-23, Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the Flight into Egypt.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

This passage, taken from Matthew 2 has a plethora of complex ideas, primarily relating to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy to portray Jesus as the Messiah. The prominence of this old Testament fulfilment is particularly prominent in Matthew due to his Jewish identity. Matthew's identity was primarily Jewish - as attested by his organisation of his gospel into 5 key blocks of teaching, thereby mirroring the layout of the Torah.

This passage specifically refers to Jesus' flight to Egypt - an event in which Herod was attempting to kill Jesus' infant son, as he had heard of a child who would potentially be the Messiah. The first idea

presented - this passage is the concept of historical legitimacy. By placing Jesus in an extremely historical setting, Matthew attempts to add inherent credence to the legitimacy of his gospel. This is essential for understanding Matt's Jesus.

Another idea illustrated - this passage is the promise of Angels in the flight to Egypt. This taps into the essentially visionary culture which was experienced - Israel at the time. Additionally, the mention of 'Angel of the Lord' attests to the divine choice of God to anoint Jesus as the Messiah.

The final idea - regard to the Angels is that ~~of~~ - St. Joseph reacts to the Angel. Although he questions the Angels at Jesus' birth, in this passage he follows without qualification - a clear testament to the promise & reality of the Virgin Birth - this passage.

The next prominent idea illustrated - this passage about the flight to Egypt is the significance of Old Testament fulfillment. There is a plethora of attestations to OT texts such as the ^{scripture} mention of the 'land of Israel'. This may have Messianic links & be an explicit attempt by Matthew to highlight the relationship between Jesus & Moses. However, the most significant fulfillment of the OT is the specific mention that 'as was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene'.

The presence of such a ~~to~~ quote cannot be underlined in particular when considering the highly litigious & theologically informed society. Since Matthew's gospel would have been circulated. This is a good idea as it shows Jesus' role in fulfilling OT texts.

The final key idea illustrated in the passage about the flight to Egypt is the presence of 'dreams'. The highlighting use of dreams once again alludes to their visionary culture, but also that dreams are a efficient means by which God can access us.

It is also good to note that this text is a later part of Matthew's wider narrative of proof of Jesus being the Messiah. As such the OT fulfillment is clearly indicative of this.

PEMEHR

Para 1: Unsignificant

Para 2: Not as Kerygma & Altman.

Para 3: More sign for understand Gospels

(b) Analyse the significance of the first century context for understanding the life and work of Jesus.

There has been an increasing scholarly shift ⁽²⁰⁾ ~~to~~ the past few decades to highlight Jesus' context - primarily that of a 1st Century Jew. Jewish history was epidemic in Jesus' society & there would have been extensive knowledge about the Patriarchs, Exodus, the Maccabees, the Hasmoneans & Hellenistic rule. However, focusing on specifically 1st Century context, the most powerful factor was that of Roman rule. There are a variety of views on the significance of this 1st Century context for Jesus' work & life, first being that it was significant, secondly that it was & should not be & thirdly & most convincingly that it was not significant or the Gospel writer's portrayal of Jesus.

Numerous scholars are keen to place Jesus in his context as a first Century Jew under Roman rule. Scholars such as Sanders believe that Jesus ~~was~~ formed an essential part of the society & accurately represented the conflicts & teachings. Attestation to this can be seen with Jesus' conflicts with the Jewish authorities. Across all four gospels, conflict with the Jewish & Roman authorities is endemic. It is absolutely essential for the understanding of important texts such as the Authority of the Son - John & other conflict

texts like the Temple Cleansing, that we place them
in their context. During the period of Roman
rule, it was the Sadducees who prospered - having
the high priest & dominating the Sanhedrin. Conversely,
the Pharisees were at their downfall. Such internal dispute
meant that conflict surrounding Jewish practices & events
was commonplace. This is best alluded to by the Sabbath
controversies. During Jesus' ministry, he questioned (particularly
in John) the significance of the Sabbath. Attestation to
this can be seen in his healing of the Man at Bethesda
in John 5 & subsequent conflict with the Pharisees
in which he accuses them of hypocrisy as they continue
to allow crucifixion, but not healing. Scholars
such as Landis & ~~Landis~~^{Landis} have emphasised the
significance of these teachings being placed into a
1st Century Jewish context - in which there was
no set of pre-determined rules, rather the Sabbath
was part of various ongoing debates - as shown
by debates over it was right to bury animals above
ground. This illustrates that in relation to Jesus'
teaching & life that came into conflict with the Jewish
context that placing him in a 1st Century context
is absolutely vital.

Another area of Jesus' life & teaching to which
his 1st Century context is paramount is that of his
eschatology. Eschatology is his view, the central theme's

of Jesus' views, however to fully understand it, it is a requisite that we first understand the context in which it was said. For many scholars, such as Schweitzer, Jesus proposed a future eschatology - as supported by quotes such as the Lord's prayer & other teachings like the parable of the leaven. However, there are some scholars such as Dodd who propose that Jesus had a realised eschatology, attesting to texts such as the 'Kingdom of God is in the midst of you'. Whilst there are other linguistic means of fitting & making out Jesus as more convincing, the decisive factor is that of Jesus' context. The common Jewish view of the eschaton was held per Daniel 4:34 & Psalm 31:1 and presented a fundamentally futuristic eschatology. Furthermore, & arguably more prominent is that Jesus' words - in the Baptist - had a future eschatology. By understanding Jesus' place within Jewish context, it ~~is~~ significantly reduces the prominence of Dodd's case for a realised eschatology as this would have been foreign & unusual. A ~~new~~ current to this is proposed by scholars of an inaugurated eschatology, who propose that ~~the~~ Jesus had an inaugurated view - which was consistent with present Jewish views as the Sabbath was presented 'a day of the Kingdom' in some Old Testament Texts. Thus, whilst ~~the~~ Jesus' context is not the only

decisive factor in working out Jesus' exaltology, it is exceptionally significant as it effectively rules out the possibility of a realised exaltology.

The final area is about the significance of Jesus' 1st Century context ~~of the~~ Jesus' life & preaching is that of moral or ethical guidance. Whilst there is extremely differing views on whether Jesus had an ethic - St. Kees proposing that it is the 'role of the ethic-minded interpreter' & Schnatzler's interpretation. For the sake of the significance of his 1st Century context, it is optimal that we assume Jesus did have an ethic - one based on the central principle of love. Various scholars have believed this to be Jesus' ethic. Though attestations primarily to the greatest command of 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you' & pacifist preaching such as 'love thy enemy' & 'respect those who persecute you'. Such attestations evidently have contextual influences - primarily that of Roman rule. Although Jesus & the Romans are in a vitally continuous conflict - culminating in his crucifixion as a result of the domination system (Barry & Crossan), there are various attempts of Jesus trying to limit his interaction with political factors. Potential allusions to this can be seen in his preference for 'son of man' - a fundamentally un-blasphemous term, less likely to offend the Roman dignity than 'son of God'. Thus,

the significance of Jesus' 1st Century context for understanding Jesus' life & work - relates to his times & is paramount.

However, whilst it is clear that Jesus' context is significant, some scholars would argue that the context of 1st Century Roman Palestine has more of an impact on the gospel writers (evangelists). This is an exceptionally strong argument as the context in which the gospels were written clearly has vast ramifications on the portrayal of Jesus. For example, the conflict between the Johannine community & the Jewish authorities is accurately reflected in John's use of 'apostomagegai' - reflecting his community's excommunication from the synagogue. However, this was significantly after Jesus' life & death, meaning that the contextual ramifications are greater on the actual portrayal of Jesus rather than his life & actions. This argument is exceptionally strong, as the only caveat being that it is truly meaningful to separate the understanding of Jesus with his portrayals in the gospels? This is a relatively weak argument & would be rebutted by scholars of redaction criticism such as Conzelmann who emphasises the role of the gospel writers.

In conclusion, although there are some scholars such as Bultmann who would deny the significance

of the last century content for understanding the life & work of Jesus - believing in the promise of eschaton. The majority & far stronger argument is that Jesus' content is vitally significant for understanding all of our life & teachings, from eschaton to Eschatology & others. However, the strongest argument is that I have the most significant impact on the Evangelists' portrayal of him.



In part (a), the candidate avoids repetition of the extract and places it firmly in the context of the whole article.

The candidate gives a clear foundation and relevance to the clarification of one of Matthew's Proof Texts.

Part (b) is very well-organised and structured around the political situation of that time, coupled with current eschatological understandings and expectations for ethical behaviour, based on Jesus' teachings.

Part (b) offers the candidate a chance to showcase knowledge of the first century.

Q03(a): 10 marks

Q03(b): 20 marks

Total: 30 marks



Answer the question as set and not what you think it should be.

Structure your answer: this helps focus on the question.

Ensure that your answer is well-developed and sustained.

The question is about the significance of the first century context and this is not clearly addressed in this response.

2¹³When they had gone, an Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'...

¹⁹After Herod died, an Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰'Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead.'...

²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

(Source: Extract from *The Holy Bible*, New International Version, Matt 2:13,19–23, Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the Flight into Egypt.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

There are many ideas illustrated in this passage about the Flight into Egypt. For example, "When they had gone" suggests that the angel was waiting for the right moment to appear to Joseph, perhaps not wanting to create panic amongst the family.

"Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt" is a key phrase. Not only is it what saves the life of Jesus, but more specifically "his mother" suggests a deeper meaning in that Mary in this passage does not seem to be viewed as Joseph's wife.

Instead, there is a detached feeling towards her from Joseph's perspective.

*

"After Herod died" further emphasises the angel's care for the safety of the family. It is as though God wanted to make absolutely sure that no harm would come to Jesus. This suggests that a Father-Son relationship exists between the two, which was evident in the language used by Jesus throughout his ministry.

Another example of repetition in this passage is the use of the phrase, "take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel". Not only is this further driving the point of the necessity of Jesus' safety, but it is again emphasising a detachment between Joseph and Mary from Joseph's perspective.

A third example of this is the beginning of paragraph three. "So he got up, took the child and his mother and ~~go~~^{went} to the land of Israel". Matthew seems to be reminding his audience of the detached nature between Joseph and Mary and Jesus. However, he is

also reminding his audience that, despite this, he follows through with the command of the angel, as he understands the importance of keeping Jesus alive.

"But when he heard that Archelaus was resigning in Judea in place of his ~~father~~ father Herod, he was afraid to go there."

This ~~statement~~ clarifies to ~~the~~ Matthew's audience the ~~historical~~ historical context at this point in time. One can begin to understand the tension that the citizens felt, as it was a time of uncertainty. Therefore, Joseph feeling afraid ~~to go there~~ gives a first ~~hand~~ hand perspective of life at this time to Matthew's audience.

* The phrase, "for Herod is going to search for the child ~~and~~ to kill him", suggests that this was a time of uncertainty and a struggle of power. It suggests that power was of much importance at this time if ~~there~~ even so much as the idea of ~~there~~ being another potential king could upset Herod so much as to eliminate any possibility of his success by killing innocent children

(b) Analyse the significance of the first century context for understanding the life and work of Jesus.

(20)

The first century context is what many scholars use in order to explain the life and work of Jesus and to justify the chain of events that ~~occurred~~ occurred from his birth to his death.

An example of this would be Jesus being compared to the suffering servant. The suffering servant was a supposedly ordinary man who was persecuted and punished for the sins of others, though he himself had done no wrong. ~~His life and death much resemble~~ This story was written in Isaiah, more specifically the part that is thought to have been written during the Babylonian exile. The life and death of the suffering servant much resemble that of Jesus' life and death, so therefore, it is believed by many that the song of the suffering servant acted as a prophecy for Jesus' ministry.

However, there is much debate over whether or not Jesus himself believed he was the suffering servant, or whether he even was

him at all. Morna Hooker for example believes that "there is no sufficient evidence" to suggest Jesus believed in any way that he was the suffering servant. This may be ~~down to~~ down to the fact that Jesus never indicated anything of the sort in his words. He never even claimed he was the Son of ~~God~~ God, despite the Father-Son language he used.

On the other hand, one could say that Jesus didn't have to say aloud that he felt he was the suffering servant, in the same way he somewhat implied he was the Son of God without actually saying it directly. Throughout his ministry, Jesus would imply that certain events had to happen in order to fulfil a certain prophecy. Many of these events resemble that of the suffering servant. For instance, Jesus said to his disciples that he would have to suffer and die, which is what happened to the suffering servant. He ~~supposedly~~ died for the sins of humanity without sinning himself. Additionally, he was persecuted and hated by the Pharisees and the suffering servant was also hated and abused throughout life.

Aside from the suffering servant, there are other important aspects of the first century that were significant for Jesus' teachings. For example, there was a lot of tension between the different groups of citizens, particularly between the Samaritans and everybody else. This was due to the fact that the Samaritans had intermarried with the Babylonians during the Babylonian Exile. As a result of this, Jesus told the ^{Parable} ~~story~~ of the good Samaritan. This is crucial for understanding the life and work of Jesus because it shows that he wanted everyone to get along and to "love one another", which was an example he always set to his followers.

In conclusion, it is clear that the first century context ~~was~~^{is} extremely important for understanding the life and work of Jesus. In my opinion, the most significant part is that of the suffering servant, because it quite clearly highlights the similarities between the life and death of Jesus and that of the suffering servant.



This response to Q03(b) illustrates the difficulty of deploying material effectively.

Arguably, the candidate only begins to answer the question on page 11; however, the focus of the question is not about prophecy, such as the suffering servant, unless the context of this fulfilment is placed firmly within the first century.

Material on the first page needs to be analysed for its significance for the first century context.

Points are made about the Babylonian exile that are not first century and this needs some commentary regarding the significance of 597BCE for the people living in the first century during the life of Jesus.

Did the destruction of the Temple in 70BCE influence Jesus' behaviour in the temple when he threw out the money lenders? Or was it more significant to examine the Roman occupation or religious groups at the time and analyse how Jesus interacted with these first century groups up to the crucifixion? Including some narrative about that would have helped this candidate to make more use of their material.

Q03(a): 7 marks

Q03(b): 5 marks

Total: 12 marks



Consider why any material deployed is useful for answering the question.

Ensure that the question is addressed.

Question 4

Most candidates addressed this question by evaluating the parables of the Lost, the Sermon on the Plain, the Good Samaritan and the Rich Man and Lazarus. Some made reference to the parables for the Kingdom of God and evaluated ethical demands for entry into the Kingdom of God to demonstrate balanced analysis of the question.

The best responses set out a wide range of parables that were discussed with reference to scholarship, accurate textual knowledge, and reasonable commentary of their importance as a source of ethical teachings. This was generally a well-answered question, with many candidates demonstrating secure understanding of accurate textual material. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the main parables and could evaluate their usefulness, meaningfulness, or importance, for extrapolating ethical teachings.

Achievement was self-limiting by an insufficient or inaccurate overview of various teachings, albeit with a tenuous link to their usefulness as a source of ethical teaching. Short answers to Q04 with an attached page for Q01 suggested, in some cases, that the candidate had not managed their timing successfully. Significant numbers of responses were self-penalising for not making links, thus limiting available marks up to 24 marks.

On the other hand, there was an improvement in the handling of the demands of Q04. The compulsory synoptic element of the question was answered to a high standard.

There were some good responses that drew on a range of detailed and carefully-selected knowledge to deconstruct the issues in the question before offering a fully-justified conclusion based on review and analysis of material. There were some excellent examples of well-crafted and pertinent links made with other components studied, demonstrating that this aspect of the question can be achieved without a 'bolt-on' paragraph approach.

This is an example of a very strong response that reaches the top of Level 5, with maximum marks.

The candidate controls their material very well, making good, reasoned judgements throughout.

A defined structure to the longer essays is very beneficial for maintaining clarity of thought.

It is sensible to select a link, which inevitably adds to the quality of the answer because of its aptness.

① → yes → good Samaritan lost sheep → Jesus

③ → no Parables are CFL.

② → no eschatological → narrow door Rich man and Lazarus

↓ cryptic gestures?

SECTION C

Write your answer in the space provided.

4 Evaluate the importance of the parables as a source of ethical teachings.

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 a Religion (excluding Christianity).

(30)

The Parables are significant in many ways, there is debate over whether they were written for ethical teaching, eschatological verification, or for each evangelist's individual agenda.

The Parables can be seen as important source of ethics especially Jesus ethics. This is a strong argument because we can assess this in the parable of the good Samaritan, in which we see Jesus love command 'love thy neighbour' and his golden rule of 'do unto others as you would have done to you'. These are uttered in response to how should we treat others making it very liable that they are a good source of ethical teaching. This is a strong argument because Jesus ethics similarly of love and can be found in the lost parables. In which Jesus stresses the importance of the one sinner in every 99 in the sheep metaphor, in the

parable of the Lost Sheep. This is strong as the actions of the Shepherd are shocking and as soon as leaving 99% of his flock in the wilderness to find one is shocking, but it highlights the importance of the parables stressing that God's love is shocking and we should enact it. Furthermore the importance of the parables grows as we look at the Lost Son parable. In which we see the radical act of love by the father in order to take back his son and love him again, despite Jewish tradition that the son who rebelled on return should be kicked. He isn't and is welcomed highlighting how we should act. Therefore the parables are important for stressing how we should act, with the good Samaritan making a reference to the sermon on the mount (plain of 'love your enemy') to stress that we should act lovingly always, supported by the lost parables stressing the importance of love forgiveness. Highlighting the importance of the parables as a source of ethical teaching of love and forgiveness.

A further strength of why the parables are important as a source of ethical teaching links to my study

of ethics and religion, in which Joseph Fletcher
responding to an ever-growing liberal society and
a still strict and legalistic church in the
60's called upon the parables to coin
his ethical theory of 'situation ethics.' In
which he calls upon Jesus' teachings of
'love your neighbour' in the good Samaritan
to make a maxim that an action is
morally right if and only if it is the
most loving thing to do. Showing how the
parables are important for a source of ethical
teaching, as an ethical theory was coined
out of it. However this can be undermined
by scholar Keck, who states that Jesus
ethics were 'interim ethics' they were not
meant to be used in the long run but
instead was a call for how people should
act in order to enter the Kingdom of
God. Potentially undermining the importance of
them as a source of ethical teaching.

It can also be argued that the
parables are not important for Jesus ethics
but more important for eschatological
verification. This can be seen in the parables
such as the thief in the night, and the
parable of the sower. In 'the thief in the

Knight's message is based purely on eschatology and not on ethical teaching. Suggesting the importance of the parables is about eschatology. This is a strong argument because, this can also be seen in the parable of the Sower where the allegory suggests that the seed has been laid (Jesus) and the bumper crop will arrive soon (Kingdom of God), alluding to how the importance of the parables is solely based on eschatology. This is supported by the parable of 'Rich man and Lazarus' where Jesus claims "~~It is easier for a rich man to pass through the eye of a needle.~~" "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God". Showing how the importance of the parables is about ~~eth~~ eschatology and the Kingdom of God than ethics. Some weakly try to rebutte this using Jesus' statement, claiming that it is important of a source of ethical teaching, stating we should not be clouded by possessions. However this is easily countered with Keats' interim ethics, suggesting that Jesus may have said this in terms of ethics but still with the eschaton in mind, showing

how the importance of the parables lies in eschatology not in a source of ethical teaching.

However another view on the importance of the parables stems from Theissen and his hypothesis of 'community forming literature.' Stressing that the ethical messages and eschatological ones are actually a product of the Gospel writers agenda specifically Luke. This is a strong argument as we see that the ethics of 'love' in the good Samaritan and 'forgiveness' in the lost parables, is as a result of writing for Luke's audience, the Gentiles. In which we see the stressing of radical equality because his audience would have been excluded. Suggesting the importance behind the parables such as the good Samaritan, lost sheep and lost son is actually to spread awareness of inclusivity not to be a source of ethical teaching from Jesus. A potential weakness of this is that even if the script was altered for Luke's community it may take away the theological significance however they still do provide a source of ethical teaching regardless of the motive. 'Do unto others as you would have done to you. ~~Further~~

In regards to the parables being important for eschatological purposes we see that this can be criticized for falling under Luke's agenda. Dodd who ~~is~~ pushes the thesis that the parable of the Sower is about an inaugurated eschatology, stating 'Jesus is standing in the presence of a ripe crop' can be criticized for pushing a pro-Christian agenda and for trying to see a dying Jesus. And the eschatological importance of the parables can be undermined because we see that Luke's community was struggling with the 'delay of the Parousia' and beginning to lose faith, as such Luke pushed a realized eschatology to encourage belief and stress that it was not a failure. Undermining that the parables are a significant source of ~~ethical teaching~~ eschatological teaching.

To conclude I believe that there is no undermining that the parables are an important source for ethical teaching, allowing an ethical theory to be gained out of them. However this importance is undermined as they are also substantially important for eschatological teachings and for cultures to

Weave in the agenda, despite this I still believe that ethical principles are most important as a source of ethical teachings.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate uses a wide range and variety of material.

There is a clear structure and a good link is made with the Study of Ethics.

A short plan above the opening paragraph is helpful for guiding the response.

Total: 30 marks



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Write a plan before you begin your answer and remember the structure you had in mind.

This response indicates with a couple of notes above the question that the selection of material might result in a stronger response.

There is no substitute for solid subject knowledge. There is not enough material here to raise the achievement.

SECTION C

Write your answer in the space provided.

- good samaritan
- equality, pluralism etc
- Parable of rich man and Lazarus

- 4 Evaluate the importance of the parables as a source of ethical teachings.

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 a Religion (excluding Christianity).

(30)

one might argue that the parables in Luke's gospel act as a ~~by~~ hugely important source of ethical teachings, through analysis of the Parable of the good Samaritan. ~~In this parable, a Samaritan, who would normally be opposed to the~~ This Parable sees a Samaritan aiding a Jew who is hurt, and ~~cleansing~~ ^{cleansing} wounds of a hurt Jew with wine, despite the ~~religious~~ ^{religious} ~~conflict~~ ^{conflict} ~~and~~ that was occurring between Jews and the Samaritans at the time. Jesus highlights how the immoral actions of ~~a~~ two religious individuals, ~~the~~ ^a Levite and ~~the~~ a Pharisee, who do not stop to help the fellow Jew ~~bec~~ due to belief that touching a ~~far~~ ^{far} dead or severely injured body would corrupt their cleanliness, rendering them unable to perform their religious duties. Jesus appears highly critical of the religious individuals, therefore it can be argued that ~~such an ethical~~ ^{an ethical} ~~te~~ ^{te} within this ~~p~~ ^p this parable contains ethical teachings of equality and pluralism. For instance ~~on the~~ ^{on the} selfless ~~treat~~ ^{treat} action of the Samaritan demonstrates how

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It everyone should be treated fairly and equally regardless of race, ~~gr~~ or nationality. As the good Samaritan ~~wa~~ did not acknowledge the fact ethnicity of the Jewish man or use it as an excuse to ignore him, thus demonstrating that we all have a moral responsibility to one another, ~~for~~ which strengthens the role of parables as a source of ethical teachings. In addition to this, one might argue that this parable is ~~a source of arg~~ is a source of ethical pluralism, as it demonstrates how the Samaritan and the Jew are both unified under God, and cultural presuppositions do not matter as much. Furthermore, the criticism ^{negative} towards depiction of the Pharisee + the Levite ^{illustrates} ~~that~~ how Jesus is critical of prioritising ~~ethica~~ religious rituals over showing love to ones neighbour, (which is another moral teaching this parable emphasises) links to my study of ^{Fletcher's} situation ethics, as this highlights how Jesus ~~if~~ is favouring a situational approach ~~to~~ and emphasising ^{the supposition of} personalism (prioritising the individual over religious maxims) as it is more important that the Samaritan showed agape to the hurt Jew.

However one might argue that this parable has been misused by ~~many~~ ^{some} individuals promoting capitalist regimes, such as Margaret Thatcher.

Who argued that if the Samaritan had no money, he would not have been able to help the Jew. This demonstrates how the parable can actually be used to reinforce ^{systems} regimes which prioritise wealth over caring for the poor, thus weakening the argument that parables are a source of ethical teachings. ~~In addition to this the parable of the prodigal can be argued to lack ethical teachings.~~ In addition to this, it can be argued that parables such as the parable of the lost have failed as being a source of ethical teachings, as many Christian churches/groups have continued to see themselves as ~~the jealous son~~ take on the role as the 'jealous son', ~~unwilling to forgive~~ through ~~taking a~~ historically ~~taxing~~ a rather absolute approach towards sexual sin and carnal desires, which has often lead to the excommunication of some members of the church, demonstrating how the parables in Luke somewhat fail to provide ~~ethical teachi~~ a source of ethical teachings, ~~in add~~ on forgiveness. Furthermore the ^{distinction} ~~establishment~~ ^{between} of venial sins (those which can be forgiven by humans and mortal sins (which can only be forgiven by God) are punishable via excommunication emphasises the lack of influence of the parables on ethical behaviour.

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In addition to this it can
However ~~it can be~~ argued that the parable of
the rich man and Lazarus is a further example of
Ethics the parables being a source of ethical teaching,
~~which~~ as some scholars ~~are~~ argue that ~~it provides~~
~~an~~ ethics the tale was derived from a folk tale
told in eastern traditions, which demonstrates a
pluralist ethical teaching from Jesus.

To conclude, ~~the~~ the parables are useful as a
source of ethical teachings because they
teach about equality.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate exhausts their material, and evaluation towards the end of the response becomes self-limiting by writing out the question twice.

The selection of a link to the Study of Ethics is relevant for this question but in order to raise the level of achievement a much wider range of subject knowledge about parables is required to sustain any evaluation.

This essay is presented with a simple structure – question structure cannot be underrated for maintaining clarity of thought. However, no amount of structure will compensate for lack of subject knowledge: this response needs more.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Work on the structure of essays for the evaluation question and spend time learning the topic.

Paper Summary

A very good year's work had been done by centres and candidates, in general equipping candidates to respond well to the demands of this paper. Candidates appeared to enjoy the material they studied and were 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
- Practise writing to timed practice questions using the examination timing
- Use the answer booklet correctly and avoid unnecessary attachments
- Be careful of time management and the number of available marks for Q01
- Spend enough time on the questions that carry most marks
- 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
- 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:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

