



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 1061

RSS07 New Testament

Report on the Examination

2009 examination - January series

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RSS07 *New Testament*

General comments

A small number of candidates entered for this paper in this January assessment opportunity.

Question 1 (Topic 1 *How the synoptic gospels came into being*)

Part (a)

Some candidates focussed on the more general reasons why the material was edited. However, most candidates also considered the individual gospel writers and the needs of their audience. It was encouraging to see good use made of the text to illustrate and explain the reasons for the editing. Candidates should be aware that the trigger 'Examine why...' requires more than just listing reasons.

Part (b)

A common weakness in the responses to this question was that arguments supporting and challenging the claim were presented separately. The AO2 skill of evaluation requires a reasoned argument. In other words, there needs to be a clear process of reasoning. Listing arguments for one side and then listing arguments for the other side addresses AO1 skills; in contrast, AO2 requires that arguments are developed, i.e. How do you weight the argument? What are the counter arguments? Is one side more convincing than the other, and if so, why? Disappointingly few candidates raised any questions about the validity of the findings of redaction or form criticism itself.

Question 2 (Topic 2 *Aspects of Jesus' teaching and action, parables and healings*)

Part (a)

There were some good answers to this question displaying understanding of the parable and clear explanations of its teaching and theology. Some candidates gave a list of the allegorical features, such as the servants are the prophets, but they then failed to explain the significance of the allegorical features, so little or no account was given of the actual teaching of the parable. It was pleasing to see that candidates resisted the attempt to retell the actual parable, but rather alluded to it.

Part (b)

Again, there was a tendency to isolate the arguments that supported the view from those that challenged the view. As a result, a reasoned argument was often lacking, as was good critical evaluation.

Question 3 (Topic 3 *The arrest, trial and death of Jesus*)

Part (a)

There were some good answers covering the teaching about the person of Jesus in Luke's account. However, Mark's account was addressed less well. A small but disappointing number of candidates did not seem to understand what text they were meant to be considering, and so answered on the arrest and trials of Jesus or even the birth narratives. It is important that candidates justify their findings by reference to the actual text, to show from where such

conclusions are derived. For example, that Jesus was forgiving could be supported in Luke's account by reference to Jesus' words on the cross and his conversation with the criminals.

Part (b)

Candidates clearly found the whole of Question 3 difficult, with some choosing not to answer part (b) at all. Given that candidates answer two of the four questions on the paper, it is important that they read both parts of each question before they make their choice of which question they are going to answer; to neglect to address the whole of part (b) significantly reduces the marks that it is possible to achieve on a paper. Good answers usually made reference to the supernatural elements in accounts, the theological problems that God died on cross, and the findings of form and redaction criticism. Challenges to view tended to focus on the accounts being reliable and from eyewitnesses.

Question 4 (Topic 4 *The resurrection of Jesus*)

Part (a)

Some candidates took the phrase 'the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus' to refer to the actual events at the tomb of Jesus on the first resurrection morning. Others gave the phrase a wider interpretation and included Jesus' resurrection appearances. Both approaches were acceptable. Again, the trigger in the question was 'Examine...' This requires more than just listing the differences.

Part (b)

Candidates should note that the question had a clear focus for debating the resurrection narratives. The issue was whether or not the resurrection narratives were important for the Christian faith. Disappointingly, some candidates neglected the focus of the question about the importance for Christian faith. As a result there was a tendency to debate whether the resurrection narratives were historically reliable. Though this may be one aspect of the debate, the central focus was not addressed and thus the number of marks that could be achieved was limited.