

Examiners' Report
June 2016

GCE Religious Studies 6RS04 1J

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Introduction

At Standardisation meetings examiners considered three important documents for assessment and marking. First, the General Marking Guidance document sets out the policy of positive marking. Secondly, The Generic Mark Scheme divides each level across both AO1 and AO2 into 3 sublevels and this is helpful to achieve precise marking. Finally, the Indicative Mark Scheme is not intended to be prescriptive but to indicate possible legitimate ways of answering a question. The teams of examiners, by adopting these policies, have a broad and detailed understanding of the assessment process.

There are two fundamental principles for examining this paper based on the assessment objectives:

- One is that in AO1 it is essential to examine the text, noting there are various ways of achieving this.
- Two is that in AO2 it is essential to answer the full demands of this evaluative objective. This includes: 'do you agree with the idea(s); justify your point of view and discuss its implications for understanding religion and human experience'.

Question 1

Good practice regarding AO1:

- Candidates showed evidence of a systematic focus on the passage, noting that this may be achieved via a variety of methods.
- Engagement with the New Testament issues regarding the religious and theological significance of the death of Jesus, including beliefs about atonement.
- Candidates used a variety of different approaches such as biblical text, including the Old and New Testaments and historical and theological arguments.
- Many students presented well-structured answers following through ideas about the defeat of evil; the example of the humility and love of Jesus, and the significance of sacrifice.
- Candidates presented synoptic links to the source as a whole, and to related anthologies and to links in other units such as 6RS03
- There was wide ranging scholarship used to unpack key issues.

Good practice in AO2:

- The best answers in part (b) struck a balance between insightful personal engagement with a critical analysis of the implications for understanding religion and human experience.
- There were some excellent answers with sound arguments and thoughtful discussions based on a range of scholarship.
- Candidates were able to offer supportive and alternative evaluations raised by the passage.

Areas for improvement for AO1:

- A comparatively small number of candidates paid scant attention to the passage itself. An examination of the passage is essential, noting that there are various different methods of achieving this. However, to evade the passage is very poor practice.
- Some presented a mere comprehension of the passage with little analysis or comments on significant points. This amounted to a re-telling of the biblical narrative.
- Some mentioned a few scholars but at this level there was limited understanding of their contributions.

Areas for improvements for AO2:

- Some answers did little more than express an opinion, making sweeping claims, without supporting justifications with the ideas of scholars.
- More attention could have been given to alternative views of a topic and this is one of the criteria of Level 4.
- There was a limited ability to comprehend the implications for religion and human experience.
- Some candidates resorted to a personal response and at times to a confessional stance, unsupported by evidence or text.

The two scripts below received marks in the highest levels across both AO1 and AO2:-

- the first one displayed a systematic analysis of the key ideas in the passage coupled with a detailed focus on significant terms such as 'sacrifice' and 'atonement'. The candidate had an ability to argue for a point of view.
- the second paid close attention to the passage with a clear analysis of important beliefs and concepts. There was a discussion of alternative points of view.

a) This extract comes from a passage which evaluates and considers the possible reasons for Jesus' death; the writers argued that it had two different areas of significance, historical significance and religious significance. This extract places a particular focus on the 'great religious and theological significance' of the death of Jesus.

The first idea presented in this passage is the idea that Jesus died in order to 'defeat evil'. Reid and Tyler highlight evil as being the 'forces of darkness', an idea which is clearly supported by John within his writings of the four gospels. John states in the Prologue that the 'light has shone in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it'. This emphasises the idea presented in this passage as it shows that John supports the claim that Jesus' purpose the purpose of Jesus' death is to defeat the darkness. This introduces the connotations that Jesus is 'light' as this is the way in which he defeats evil. Jesus is quoted as saying himself 'I am the light of the world' suggesting ~~the~~ and emphasising

that his whole purpose is in fact to overcome the darkness, using his light, and to defeat evil. Moreover, the crucifixion that Jesus had to die, in order to defeat evil can be seen to be presented in media worldwide. For example, in the Harry Potter series, it can be seen that Harry's entire purpose throughout his life was to defeat Voldemort, the evil and force of darkness. In the films it can be seen that in order for Harry to truly defeat the evil forces, he in fact has to die first. This is similar to the idea presented by Reid and Tyler, as Jesus in order to complete 'the defeat of evil' has to die, before he can then be resurrected.

Another idea presented in this extract is the idea that Jesus' death was 'fighting against the power of sin'. This idea is known as salvation; the purpose of Jesus' death was for him to bring salvation to all. Upon his crucifixion Jesus states 'when I am lifted up, I shall gather the world to myself', highlighting and supporting the idea presented by Reid and Tyler, in that Jesus' death aimed to save all

from sin and give them salvation. Furthermore, the idea that Jesus' death was fighting against sin, can be reiterated by John in his passage on the 'woman in adultery'. Jesus states 'he who is without sin shall cast the first stone'. This suggests that Jesus is aware that all people sin and thus portrays the suggestion by Reid in his passage, that his death concludes his fight against such sin. A development of this can in fact be seen to be that Jesus teaches forgiveness of sin, as Jesus himself tells the woman in adultery to 'go and sin no more' suggesting him to be forgiving of sins as well as fighting against them.

Reid and Tyler present in his passage one argument that Jesus' death also had the aim to 'encourage them to lead lives of humility and self-sacrifice'. An example of such an argument is presented in John through the carrying of the cross ~~in~~ during Jesus' crucifixion. In the other Synoptic Gospels it can be seen that Simon of Cyrene carries Jesus' cross for him, however, this is not the case

in John. In John ~~the~~ Jesus carries the cross himself when walking to his crucifixion thus highlighting the idea that Jesus lived a life of humility in order for others to do the same - and this is the idea which is explained within this extract. Another example of such is the fact that Jesus gave himself up to the authorities in preparation for his sacrifice. In John Jesus states 'who is it that you look for?' This is an example of one self-sacrifice outlined by Reid and Tyler in this passage; Jesus is aware that he is to be sacrificed and therefore he approaches the guards himself in order to hand himself in.

A further key idea presented in this extract by Reid and Tyler is that Jesus is 'a sacrifice'. It can be seen that this was in fact the purpose of Jesus, to be the 'sacrificial lamb' which saved all. This is emphasised in the four gospels as it can be seen that John changed the time of crucifixion in order for it to occur at the same time as the sacrifice of the lamb, at Passover. This suggests the idea presented by Reid and Tyler as

having a particular significance, as Jesus is seen to be the sacrifice of the world. The book/film 'The Chronicles of Narnia' can be seen to present this idea also. Aslan (the symbol, representing Jesus within the film) is seen to die on the stone table, as a sacrifice, in order to save both Edmund and the entirety of the kingdom. This is similar to the actions of Jesus and thus supports the idea outlined by Reid/Tyler, that Jesus was a sacrifice in order to save the entirety of the human population. Hooker described Jesus' sacrifice as God's plan of 'embodying his saving purpose in human flesh and blood' in order for him to be sacrificed on the cross. John highlights Jesus' awareness of being a ~~part~~ one of the 'sacrificial procedures' when he says, at the wedding at Cana 'my hour ~~is~~ has not yet come', suggesting his knowledge in that he has to die in order to carry out God's plan, as Jesus is a sacrifice.

Reid and Tyler within this extract make consistent references to the 'blood

from the lamb' and the 'blood of the animal', which can be seen to be presenting Eucharistic connotations. For example wine is symbolic of Jesus' sacrificial blood and bread symbolises Jesus' body. Muri herself states that Jesus' sacrifice was essentially turning the 'water of Judaism into the wine of Christianity', the wine of Christianity being the blood of Jesus. This idea is further emphasised by John in the crucifixion narratives. To ensure that Jesus was fully dead (in medical terms meaning fully sacrificed) he had a guard 'plunge a lance' into Jesus' side upon which 'blood and water oozed out'. This shows that Jesus is a sacrifice as his blood was drained in a similar way to how priests drained the blood of the lamb during their sacrifice.

A final idea presented by Reid and Tyler is that Jesus' death brings 'atonement'. The literal meaning of this is 'atone'. Therefore the suggestion by Reid and Tyler is that Jesus' death brings man

me same level as God. This is highlighted in John as it states 'for God, so loved the world that he sent his only son, he who believes in him shall receive eternal life'. This suggests that Jesus brings one into eternal life with God, thus reducing the epistemic distance between heaven and earth. Thus it can be seen that this supports the idea outlined by Reid, as Jesus' death offers an opportunity for atonement.

1b) I believe that it can be greatly argued that Jesus is in fact 'a sacrifice' and such a reason justifies his death. The sacrifice of Jesus, to me, is the basis of Christianity and his death on the cross is symbolic. It can be seen that if Jesus was not sacrificed, no one would feel safe from sin, as there would never have been an act fighting against the power of sin. Believers in Christianity could be seen to in fact turn to other religions, as the salvation they expected

to receive would never have fully been achieved - how could they be expected to tell that in their own religion if they had never been saved by the sacrifice of Jesus? Thus it can be suggested that without the concept of Jesus being a sacrifice through his death, Christian following would not be as large as it is today. Furthermore, I believe that the idea that Jesus is a sacrifice, does in fact maintain eucharistic connotations, without which, I believe the fundamental basis of religion would be lost. If the ~~bread~~ wine taken in occasions such as holy communion, was not symbolic of Jesus' sacrificial blood, the meaning behind ~~the~~ ~~engulfing~~ the wine would be lost ~~over~~. Thus, what would the purpose of holy communion be? Without Jesus' sacrifice, ~~it~~ ~~it~~ it can be seen that the idea of sacraments would cease to exist completely and thus the Christian religion would lose all tradition which it ever had.

Furthermore, Reid and Tyler put forward the argument that Jesus'

death was him 'fighting against the power of sin'. I believe that without this concept, believers would not think about their actions and thus the entire world would dissolve into a consistent chaos of sin. The Christian faith itself would no longer sell the need to condemn more than sin, and thus practices such as "confession" would no longer exist. Many would argue that without Jesus setting an example of defeating evil and preventing sin, would the world now do the same? I believe that if Jesus had not done this, institutions like the army would call influence and power. There need to fight against the sins of the world would vanish, as the nature of 'stopping evil' would never have been pre-disposed by Jesus. Furthermore, the basis of most films world wide revolves around a good force, over taking and stopping a bad force. I strongly argue that without Jesus' own defeat of evil, films such as Superman and Harry Potter would have failed to come into existence. How would the notion of fighting off sin

become so prevalent within society, if Jesus had not done it himself? Thus, I agree that Jesus' death being a defeat of evil is a ~~core~~ concept which cannot ~~be~~ be refuted and is fundamental to both religion and humanity.

To me, hope for religious believers derives from the belief that one day they shall receive atonement and be at one with God. Reid and Tyler outline this concept in their passage, as a reason for Jesus' death. Without the concept for atonement, hope for all religious believers, as they would have nothing left to work towards. For religious believers worldwide, receiving atonement is a goal which they are able to work towards. Thus without the existence of this concept, religion to me would become stagnant. I believe that an individual is likely to lose faith throughout their life, as they reach death; this is because atonement gives them ~~the~~ hope upon death and thus it is a fundamental idea in this extract which should not be ignored. Overall,

I largely agree with the views & and ideas presented in this extract, as I believe they are all fundamental to belief in the Christian faith, without them it would cease to exist.

Alan Watts

(a) This passage by Corden Reid and Sarah Tyler, 'Why did Jesus have to die' is about who Jesus was, what he came to do and the different views about what he did during his ministry. Tyler and Reid begin by explaining how Jesus' death had 'great religious' significance. This is true today ~~as and is~~ as the idea that Jesus died on the cross is one of Christianity's main beliefs. This is because the whole of Christianity is based around the fundamental idea that Jesus, God incarnate, was sent to die on the cross for salvation of all. Without dying on the cross, many argue, there would be no Christian faith as this divine act, 'erga', conquered salvation for all.

Tyler Reid then describe Jesus as a 'defeat of evil', someone who fought against the devil to achieve salvation by dying on the cross. The idea of the devil is shown in Genesis - the creation story - who encouraged Eve to eat the fruit of the tree during 'The Fall' - this was the moment evil entered and sin on earth began. However, throughout the gospels, it is made clear that despite disobedience of God, sinners who confess their sins will be forgiven through

the love and grace of God. The Reid uses ~~darkness~~ 'darkness' to refer to sin, in which Jesus conquered. At 'the hour' of his death similarly, Jesus overcoming darkness is also emphasised during the Plague (John) where he writes, 'Jesus is the light and that light is the life of man... darkness never overcame it'. This not only shows Jesus brings life, just how God created life in Genesis, but it shows the true love of Jesus - Jesus is the light who guides believers to safety through eternal life. Those who believe in his name shall be saved from a life of misery and torture with the devil. This has been made possible by Jesus' crucifixion. As Carson explains, Jesus' death was 'part of God's sovereign plan' which will enable him to fight 'against the power of sin in people's lives'.

Jesus also shows himself as a defeat of evil during the signs (John), or mighty works ('erga'). For example, in the Healing of the Blind Man, Jesus proclaims 'I am the light of the world' - 'I am' meaning God. Similarly, during the Woman in Adultery, Jesus saved the woman from being stoned to death, despite breaking the commandment 'Do not commit adultery', and telling her to 'sin no more'. Here, not only is Jesus seen as the

light who saves his people from darkness, but he is shown as to offer eternal life and salvation of all, all of which must have been achieved during his death on the cross.

Secondly, Tyler Reid explain Jesus as 'an example' of 'humility and love' in which his believers should follow and live their lives the same way. There are many miracles and signs throughout the Bible where Jesus was shown as 'an example'. For example, Jesus's teachings issued during his ministry are still very much followed today, such as 'Love thy neighbour'. Jesus showed his love universal love by during his healings of the Blind Man, Official's Son and Nicodemus. Similarly, his meeting with The Samaritan Woman, of little authority, also emphasized the important teaching of 'Love thy neighbour' as it shows everybody is equal in the eyes of God - 'For God so loved the world that he sent his only Son' (John). Jesus' 'self-sacrifice' is an act of loving kindness, in which people should follow, and do to others as Jesus did. For example, Marsh explain, 'Jesus went to his own death entirely reliant upon his own, more than adequate, resources'. This teaching is a central Christian belief and those looking

for eternal life, should follow how Jesus lived his.

Finally, Tyler Reid shows how Jesus was a sacrifice through the act of atonement. As mentioned, animals were previously used as a sacrifice for sin and this was laid out in Leviticus, that a sinner should bring before the priest an unblemished animal to give up its life in replacement for someone's wrong doing. For humanity, this was Jesus. Before, in the old Testament during Passover, a lamb's blood would be spread over doorways to avoid the angel of death who flew over. However, around the time of Jesus, a sacrificial lamb would be sacrificed on the Day of Preparation and on Passover, as mentioned in the passage, the priest would take the blood of the animal to the altar as a symbol representing Jesus' life. This is significant in John, who has Jesus crucified on the cross during the Day of Preparation, when the sacrificial lambs were being slaughtered. Carson explains, 'this is God's sovereign plan', that Jesus' unblemished body shall be given up for humanity in order that it may gain salvation and eternal life. This moment is referred to as 'the hour' in which Turner explains, 'this whole uncarved life is in fact meaningless,

apart from the man which is inevitably moving'. Through this act of atonement, Jesus was able to be God's 'vicarious sacrifice' (smaller) in which all sin was to be forgiven. This message is still a main Christian belief - that believers must follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, but if ~~and~~ they fail, they shall be saved through God's love and grace - 'For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth through Jesus Christ'.

b) In this passage, Tyler Reid put forward three ~~much~~ ~~synoptic~~ ~~and~~ ~~particular~~ examples of who Jesus was and how he was referred to. I strongly agree that Jesus was the defeat of evil, as outlined in John's Prologue, 'Jesus was the light and that light was the life of men. darkness never mastered it'. This is because, there is much historical evidence to support the fact Jesus died on the cross for sin, as supported by all Gospels. For example, Jesus' physicality was shown when he was thirsty on the cross for example, and when he was laid in Lazarus' tomb. This is vital for Christian believers, such as myself, as Jesus had to be human in order to die on the cross and defeat evil.

by conquering salvation. The fact that Jesus died on the cross across all four gospels gives Christians reassurance and hope that, one day, they will be offered eternal life and live with God in heaven, after all, as Cavan explains, this is 'God part of God's sovereign plan'.

However, if it were to be revealed Jesus did not die on the cross to defeat evil, this would ~~have~~ ^{cause} serious implications for believers. Jesus' death is one of the most crucial doctrines of Christianity, as without it, evil would not be defeated, salvation would not be conquered and eternal life would not exist. This would therefore mean, Christians would be basing their entire ~~of~~ lives on a lie and Jesus' teaching of loving one another and to not sin, would be meaningless as nothing would happen if they were not to be obeyed by. This would therefore mean Jesus was just a man who suffered a horrific death and whose life, although had a huge impact on the world, is now meaningless. This could consequently cause upset and fear among Christians who lived their lives in the hope of an afterlife. Yet, even more

worshiping, this would undermine the whole of the Christian faith. As a result, there would be no more Jail Summer Weekends and school assemblies would no longer contain teachings of Jesus and prayer.

This links in with Tyler Reid's next point of Jesus as an example. If Jesus was just a man, how could millions of people around the world follow his teachings and believe what he is saying as true? Surely, he becomes just a very wise man. However, I strongly disagree with this implication as, even if Jesus was just a man, who made up teachings and proclaimed himself as God, he can still be seen as an example to all. For example, his teachings such as 'love thy neighbor' and 'do not kill' are very powerful messages, even today; without following these basic teachings of a man called Jesus, the world could be a very nasty place - a place of torture and suffering, similar to what Jesus described Hell. Therefore, I believe Jesus as 'an example' is a strong argument of Tyler Reid's who died on the cross to offer salvation.

As Mark explained, 'Jesus went to his

death entirely reliant upon his own, more than adequate, resources'. Although many may dispute Jesus' death as an act of atonement to gain salvation, Turner's message highlights the importance of doing for others as you wish to be treated, an important life lesson for both the believer and non-believer.

Finally, I also agree that Jesus was 'a sacrifice'. This links in with the last point made, that Jesus, as an act of love and kindness, gave up his body as a 'vicarious sacrifice' (Smalley) in order to conquer salvation. However, if Jesus was not who he said he was, and so not a sacrifice, this could cause many implications. For example, this would mean Jesus' death was meaningless and had no impact on sin. Would sin really have been defeated? Would Jesus ~~be~~ really be able to offer eternal life to all if he was not God's sacrifice? ~~Moreover,~~ I do not ~~be~~ agree with Tyre Reid. However, despite not agreeing with this, I strongly question the idea that people can have all sin forgiven, no matter how many times they disobey God. For example, the Bible teaches that, although a person may sin, for example, commit adultery,

God will forgive them - 'For the Law was given through Moses, Grace and truth through Jesus Christ'. Surely this would send the wrong message to believers who wish to gain eternal life - would this mean a person would be forgiven and given eternal life even if they were to murder 100 people?

Therefore, I do strongly agree with the ideas expressed by ~~the~~ Reid Kavera if the ideas of ~~Jesus~~ Jesus was were to be falsified, this would raise many complications for religious believers. However, if this were to happen, this would confirm ideas of atheists who simply believe Jesus was just a man. Despite this, although there are many opposing arguments, I do believe Jesus was both a defeat of evil, an example and a sacrifice of God who was sent by God to suffer death on the cross and offer salvation and eternal life to all. As Calvin agrees, this is 'part of God's sovereign plan' and believers must live how Jesus did in order to be united with God on Judgement Day.

Paper Summary

This paper was first examined in 2010. It has been a significant and worthwhile feature of the current specification, enabling candidates to study sources in detail and to develop synoptic links.

In 2018 the new A level specification will be first examined (with AS in 2017). The new A level includes the current sources by Morison and Wilson plus develops the opportunity to study New Testament texts. All A level components will have anthologies, and these will have a compulsory question on all A level papers.

It can be noted that the ideas in the current anthologies can continue to be used in various ways across the new specification.

Grade Boundaries

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

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