



General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Religious Studies (4051/4052)**  
Full and Short Course  
*Specification A*

Unit 5      St Mark's Gospel (405005)

**Report on the Examination**  
*2010 examination - June series*

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## Unit 5 St Mark's Gospel

### General comments

The core of the entry for this new unit was most encouraging. What was even more encouraging was the positive way in which the candidates and their teachers had prepared for the examination and the quality of the responses seen. It is clear that the new structure of the paper has given candidates time to develop some outstanding responses – particularly in Part B. With only one structured essay question to answer candidates have been able to spend more time developing coherent arguments. There were very few rubric infringements, with only a very small number of candidates answering both B5 and B6. The marking of Quality Written Communication in AO3 answers was successful in that candidates gained implicitly from coherent answers. Some candidates continued to lay out their answers in two columns marked 'For' and 'Against'. This strategy prevented them reaching the higher levels as this type of answer lacks coherence and centres need to be aware that while this kind of format is helpful for revision, it is not appropriate for the examination itself.

### Question A1 *Jesus' Ministry*

Part (a) was designed to elicit the distinctive features of the baptism of Jesus, and most candidates were able to gain marks on this. There was some confusion with the Transfiguration; for example, some candidates said that Jesus turned white as he came out of the water.

Some candidates confused Moses (Law) and Elijah (Prophets) in part (b), and some did not know their significance. Candidates who showed that they knew that the appearance of Moses and Elijah represented the law and the prophets or emphasised the religious significance of Jesus' ministry gained full marks.

Candidates who focussed on the support for Christians from the Christian community, prayer and study of the Bible scored well in part (c). Most clearly knew the story of the temptations but realised that this question demanded evaluation rather than narrative. Many referred to Jesus being tempted to run away in Gethsemane; this was credited.

### Question A2 *The Person of Jesus*

The stimulus was well used in part (a)(i). Even so, a few candidates told the wrong story. Many wrote far too much here and told the whole story. Candidates should be aware of the need to focus their answers on the precise question asked and to use the number of lines given as a guide to how much to write.

In part (a)(ii) candidates did not always link the criticism with the incident of the paralysed man. Answers referring to the reasons for religious leaders' criticism in any part of St Mark's gospel were credited.

Part (b) was well answered overall. Candidates understood the meanings of the title 'Son of Man', although few candidates were able to explain the eschatological significance of the title. Some had a good knowledge of the Old Testament background to and understanding of the title. Many demonstrated good knowledge of the other titles, but a few stated that there were better titles for Jesus without saying what they were or why they were better. Some confused 'Son of Man' with 'Son of God' and said 'Son of Man' was a good title because God used it on occasions such as the baptism and transfiguration. Candidates should note that, while they need to give two points of view in their answers, they can reach the higher levels without the two view points being evenly balanced.

In part (c) a few candidates tried to argue that it was not dangerous to call Jesus 'Christ'. This worked well when they related it to a specific situation. Most, however, agreed that, in Jesus' lifetime, it was a risky title and made good reference to the Messianic Secret.

### **Question A3 Discipleship**

Part (a) was well answered on the whole. Less able candidates gained 3 marks by knowing the wording of Jesus' reply even if they could not remember the rest of the incident. Once again, a few candidates wrote far more than was required.

Part (b), on the other hand, proved more challenging to some candidates. Many candidates disagreed with the statement, believing that the story did not draw this conclusion. Many argued that the rich can give away a lot of wealth without becoming poor and some used contemporary examples such as Bill Gates and Bono. Other candidates were able to use other teachings from Mark's Gospel to support their answers, for example, the teaching relating to the camel through the eye of a needle and the Rich Young Man.

Candidates who focussed on an individual in part (c) were able to demonstrate good knowledge and gain good marks in explaining how they demonstrated self-sacrifice as a disciple of Jesus. Those who made general statements scored no more than Level 2, as the question clearly asked for an example.

### **Question A4 Background to St Mark's Gospel**

There is a skill in being able to pick up a narrative part way through that some candidates need to develop. This enables them to score marks in questions like this without having to tell the whole story. There was no need to describe the calming of the storm in full in part (a), just the reaction of the disciples after Jesus has calmed the storm.

The answers to part (b) were well known, and candidates were able to score well on this part, giving reasons with examples in most cases, for example to support persecuted Christians being harassed in Rome by Nero.

Too many candidates failed to focus on persecution in part (c). A large number seemed to think that persecution no longer exists in the world today. This topic would benefit from being taught with some present day examples. Many answers fell into a general discussion of why Mark's Gospel was written. Candidates need to be specific and give examples when making general statements to support an alternative view such as 'There are other sources of help'.

### **Question 5 Jesus' Relationships with Others**

This was the more popular choice in Part B. A few candidates thought that the title in B5 was a question and wrote comments on it. This was not necessary.

Part (a) was a straight textual recall question. To gain 6 marks candidates needed to give an accurate version of the story including specific detail. Many were able to do this. Others gave more general answers and were credited accordingly. A few confused this with other healing miracles in the gospels, for example the blind man at Bethsaida.

There were some good responses to this part (b). Candidates were able to draw on a number of texts to illustrate their ideas. The most able showed how some healings were clearly linked with faith, the most popular example being the Woman with Haemorrhages, but there are others

where faith was not demonstrated, for example the man with the withered hand. There was much good discussion about the faith shown by others, for example the men who carried the paralysed man to Jesus or Jairus' faith on behalf of his daughter. Some went on to talk about modern cures and the effect of faith in modern medicine. This was credited as part of a supported point of view.

In part (c) some candidates thought that the tax collectors in first century Palestine were doing a good job and fulfilling their civic duty by enabling the Romans to provide for the people. Most understood the key message of Jesus' ministry illustrated by his association with outcasts and developed their arguments well, including the example of the call of Levi in their responses.

There were some very good answers to part (d) which looked carefully at both sides of the question. Many said that Jesus was the Son of God and so had every right to clear his father's house and bring it back to its proper purpose as a place of prayer. However, they also noted the implied violence in his actions and said he should have gone about it in a more conciliatory way. Many noted that the traders were in the Temple lawfully and helping others to fulfil their religious obligations of sacrifice etc. Many less able candidates appeared not to know the story in detail and talked about Jesus ejecting everyone so that he could have the Temple clear for his own prayer.

### **Question B6 *Jesus' Suffering, Death and Resurrection***

Part (a) was generally well answered, with some candidates including the introduction about the plot to arrest Jesus or Judas going to the religious leaders after the incident. A few candidates confused the story with the Lucan version where Jesus' feet are washed and a few candidates related what was in fact the answer to part (c) here.

Candidates answered part (b) very well, indicating that prayer was a key element in Jesus' relationship with God and that he set an example to later Christians by showing that prayer is a key part of their faith. They made the link with persecuted Christians who pray when facing similar trials to Jesus.

Most candidates were able to score well on part (c). They knew the detail of the resurrection narrative, although a few confused the 'man in white' with the Johannine narrative of Mary and the gardener. This was another example of a question where some candidates wrote more than they needed to by not beginning their accounts with the arrival of the women at the tomb. A few confused this with the anointing at Bethany. Sound knowledge of the set texts is essential for gaining marks in this type of question.

Candidates were able to make a judgement on the ending of Mark at 16:8 in part (d). They linked it to the statement at the beginning that the 'good news' was not fulfilled if there was the ending filled with fear. Many made the point that the women must have said something eventually, and some argued that the longer ending completed the story as it ends with the commission. Many candidates showed good reflective skills in their answers to this question.