



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
June 2012**

Religious Studies 4050

Unit 5: St Mark's Gospel

405005

Report on the Examination

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Unit 5: St Mark's Gospel

General Comments

The examination enabled many students to demonstrate a good knowledge of Mark's Gospel and the quality of the answers demonstrated that teachers had prepared them well. As always, those who had a good grasp of Mark's Gospel text were the most successful. This not only enables them to answer the text recall questions but enables them to use examples from Mark's Gospel in evaluation questions. There are still too many who include examples from the other gospels e.g. the Good Samaritan, which are not creditable. The new layout of the paper assisted some students by providing them with extra space but too many still did not select information correctly. It is not always necessary to include the background to an incident. Teachers should continue to remind students to answer the question set; the space provided in the answer booklet should be sufficient. Legibility and handwriting remain issues. Students may be disadvantaged if their handwriting is very difficult to read.

The paper enabled many students to produce some thoughtful answers, particularly B6d where there was good evidence not only of the text of the gospel but also references to current events and issues. Overall in evaluation questions, students offered mature, well thought-through answers.

Part A

Question A1: Background to Mark's Gospel and Discipleship

Part (a) this was generally well done. Students resisted the temptation to just repeat Mark 1¹ and were able to offer 'understanding' answers. It is clear that the knowledge that 'gospel' means 'good news' is well taught. Some students did not succeed in answering this question because they made general comments about what a good start to the gospel Mark 1¹ is without demonstrating that they knew what it actually contained.

Part (b) this was well done with few students gaining fewer than 2 marks.

In part (c) very few students just repeated the narrative of the calming of the storm. This is appropriate because it demonstrates the ability to apply knowledge of the text. Some students offered an exegesis of the text, often running onto additional pages. The number of lines in the answer book is the guide to the length of answer required.

Part (d) was about persecuted Christians and whether the disciples make good role models. Many concentrated on the failings of the disciples without then going on to apply the examples they use. This would be good exercise for preparing students in applying their knowledge of the text to the question. There were some very interesting perspectives though, for example, those who regarded the disciples as poor role models because they deserted their own families to follow Jesus.

Question A2: Discipleship

Many students were successful in their answer to part (a). Some confused this with the end of Mark's Gospel and the Commission. Others confused it with the collection of the colt or the preparations for the Last Supper.

In answers to part (b), a few students believed that the rich man complied with Jesus' proposal that he sell all he had. This demonstrates how important textual knowledge is.

There were a number of non-attempts on part (c). The best responses included references not only to the expectations on the disciples of Jesus but also on modern disciples. Many referred to examples of those who had not regarded discipleship as too great an obligation. There was a materialist approach in many answers – that it was somehow easier to give up everything for discipleship in the first century but is not at all possible today.

Question A3: Jesus the Miracle Worker and Teacher

There were some extraordinary answers to part (a). For example, in some responses the disciples took the money and went off to buy food. Most knew the narrative well enough to score the three marks.

For part (b), there was generally good knowledge of the Messianic Secret and the reasons for it. Even the weakest students were able to demonstrate an understanding that the authorities were unhappy about people claiming to be the Messiah. There was evidence here that students had been well prepared.

Too many students missed the reference to God in part (c). They spoke about Jesus' powers. Nevertheless there were many excellent, insightful answers which analysed selected stories. The importance for teaching is that the students are encouraged to apply their knowledge – 'So what does the healing of Jairus' daughter teach *about God.....?*'

Question A4: The Ministry and Person of Jesus

Part (a) produced some concise answers. A few responses focussed on Christian baptism today whilst the question focused on Jesus. There was no need to include the Temptations as some did. Again this is a good question to use as a teaching tool – the need to focus on the essence of the question.

Part (b) was well answered. Students knew this clearly on the whole. This was an example of students writing more than necessary. They need to use the marks allocated as a guide – this was clearly a question which needed 4 points.

Overall the account of the Transfiguration required in part (c) was not a well-known passage. However, many students were able to gain credit from understanding the importance of the eyewitness to the Transfiguration. There were some imaginative answers – that lack of oxygen up the mountain led to hallucinations, for example.

Part B

Question B5: Jesus' Relationship with Others

Part (a) was a straight text recall question. It is essential that students are taught the stems for text recall questions. It is always disappointing not to be able to credit very good exegeses when the text is all that is needed. A few confused this with the incident of the paralysed man let down through the roof. Those who identified the correct incident tended to get the higher levels.

In answer to part (b), some students just gave an account of a couple of healings without relating it to the question of faith. The majority though were able to consider whether faith was a key issue and the best included some references to healings today with modern medicine. In these answers students can be encouraged to look widely but references to the text must be to Mark's Gospel – as the questions state.

Part (c) required knowledge of a short passage and students were able to gain credit from accurate recall. Even so, a few students discussed Jesus' instruction to not pay tax (?) and his relationship with Levi.

There were some extremely good answers in part (d). There were references to Jesus clearing the Temple and to his response to Peter when he cut off the high priest's servant's ear. Many then went on to mention modern issues such as recent events in Libya or the London riots. Some though did not make any reference to religious teaching. This limits their ability to score highly.

Question B6: Jesus' Suffering, Death and Resurrection

There was good knowledge of the collection of the colt in response to part (a) but the detail is concentrated in the entry itself. Students need to know the whole of the text in detail for 6 marks.

Answers to part (b) showed good understanding of Pilate's dilemma here. Many students indicated that in the end Jesus and Pilate were caught in a greater plan. It is important that students do not muddle the Jewish authorities with the Romans. Thus, for example, the statement that Pilate condemned Jesus for blasphemy could not be credited.

Too many students did not know the account of the burial arrangements required in part (c) well. They muddled Peter with Joseph of Arimathea and they wrote about Easter morning. Where they were confident about the text, this led them to score Levels 5 and 6.

For part (d) there were many responses which indicated that Jesus should have stopped Judas betraying him or that Jesus should have run away. Some linked this question with B6b and stated again that it was all God's plan. Those who discussed Jesus' response at the trials, or lack of it, and his suffering servant mission were able to score very well.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [AQA results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.

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