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GCSE

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

8063/2B: Paper 2 Perspectives on faith (textual studies)  
Report on the Examination

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## General

Centres must be commended on how their students were prepared for the examination this year. Responses showed that centres are teaching the specification content very well and that students are responding with interest and understanding and generally coped well with all sections of the paper.

It is important that students are familiar with the specification and are able to show knowledge of the set texts for study for Themes D and E and an understanding of their importance for Jesus, his early followers and for people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Please make students aware of specification language and content. The specification does contain technical terms and students need to understand these to access the full mark range.

Students should also be aware of the significance, importance and influence of St Mark's Gospel for individuals, communities and societies, including the relevance of Jesus' example and teaching for non-religious believers such as atheists and humanists in contemporary British society. They should understand how varied interpretations of passages from St Mark's Gospel may give rise to diversity within Christian traditions. They should also consider how Christian and non-religious communities give authority to St Mark's Gospel, especially in relation to other sources of contemporary authority.

Students should also be able to show knowledge and understanding that the main religious traditions of Great Britain are Christian but there are also non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism in contemporary British society. They should consider the authority of the Gospel and the relevance of Jesus' example and teaching for non-religious believers in Great Britain today.

Examiners reported that whilst there were some outstanding Level 4 (12 mark) responses, some are still not sufficiently developed to achieve top marks. Students need reminding that to achieve a Level 4, a response must be well argued, show reasoned consideration of different points of view, show logical chains of reasoning, present relevant information coherently and reach a justified conclusion. The difference between a Level 4 and Level 3 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. A well-developed one-sided response can only reach Level 2.

To achieve full marks in a five-mark question, students are required to provide detailed explanations of two relevant and accurate ways/views/beliefs along with a relevant and accurate reference to Mark's Gospel.

To achieve full marks in a four-mark question, students are required to provide detailed explanations of two relevant and accurate contrasting/different ways/views/beliefs. However, if similar ways are given only one of them may be credited.

In 2 mark questions, the first two responses given are marked. Two correct responses given on line 1 would have gained 2 marks. Only one mark was credited if an incorrect response was given on line 1 and two correct responses on line 2.

## Theme D: St Mark's Gospel – The life of Jesus

**01.1** This was a well answered question. Most students selected the correct answer – B, John.

- 01.2** This question was generally well answered with most students showing good knowledge of Mark's account of the Baptism of Jesus and achieving 2 marks. Examples of correct responses given included the heavens opened/the spirit descended/like a dove/a voice came from heaven/'You are my Son'.
- 01.3** In this question students were asked to explain two contrasting (different) views in contemporary British society about the importance of the transfiguration of Jesus (4 marks). Overall students coped very well with the question. The majority of responses given were contrasting views eg the story literally happened/Moses and Elijah did appear (2 marks) with a contrasting view that the story was made up/as it was impossible for both these figures who were long since dead to reappear (2 marks) - thus a full answer gaining 4 marks. Other responses gave examples of different views eg the story showed the divinity of Jesus/as his clothes turned dazzling white (2 marks) with a different view that the story reinforced the importance of heeding Jesus' teaching/as the voice said 'listen to him' (2 marks). If similar views were given, only one of them was credited up to 2 marks.
- 01.4** This question was generally well answered with students able to explain two ways in which Mark's account of the entry into Jerusalem showed that Jesus was the Messiah. An example of one way was that people welcomed Jesus as the Messiah. A simple explanation of a relevant and accurate way (1 mark) was 'the people treated Jesus as the Messiah' or 'the people treated Jesus like a King'. This was further developed by examples such as 'by shouting 'hosanna'' or by them placing their cloaks and palm branches on the ground (2 marks). An example of another way provided by students was in reference to the fulfilment of scripture. To achieve 5 marks, a relevant and accurate reference to Mark's Gospel was necessary eg Jesus acted like the Messiah by riding on a donkey or that the people shouted 'Blessed in the kingdom of our father David which is coming.'
- 01.5** There were some excellent well-argued Level 4 responses to this question, 'The empty tomb proves that Jesus rose from the dead.' Evaluate this statement. Many evaluations showed reasoned consideration of different points of view and logical chains of reasoning supported by relevant references to Mark's Gospel throughout. Examples from those responses supporting the statement explained that there is evidence for the authority of the empty tomb account and the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and gave relevant references to Mark's Gospel. Examples included the statements that the centurion confirmed that Jesus was dead and Pilate granted his body to Joseph of Arimathea, who placed it in the tomb and rolled a stone against the door. Students also pointed out that Joseph was a respected member of council who was also waiting expectantly for the Kingdom of God, so he would not have lied about the tomb. References were made to the women who had followed Jesus and saw exactly where his body was buried so they could not have lied or gone to the wrong tomb. Comments also made use of the knowledge that when the women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus the stone was rolled back and the young man in the tomb told them that Jesus had risen and gone to Galilee and showed them the empty tomb. Some added that the young man was believed to be an angel, a messenger sent by God. Also many suggested that no one would have wanted to steal the body of Jesus eg the disciples were in hiding through fear of arrest, the Jewish authorities would have produced his body to prove that Jesus did not rise from the dead, Jews would not touch a dead body as it would have made them unclean and Jesus was of no real importance to the Romans as he was seen as just another preacher.

Arguments in support of another view stated that maybe the centurion may have made a mistake and that perhaps that Jesus did not really die -he may have just recovered in the cool of the tomb or that his disciples or maybe Joseph helped him escape. Others suggested that the women were hallucinating or had over-vivid imaginations or had forgotten the location of the tomb. Students also used the argument that Mark 16 states that the women ran away from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Examples of conclusions included that the fact that Jesus was the Son of God and so anything was possible for him, even rising from the dead. His appearances to Mary Magdalene and his disciples support the statement that the empty tomb proves that Jesus rose from the dead.

Level 3 responses (7-9 marks) showed reasoned consideration of different points of view with logical chains of reasoning, supported by relevant information from Mark's Gospel. The responses may have lacked a conclusion, had a weak conclusion, lacked developed arguments, were not coherent or references were not from Mark's Gospel eg Mary meeting the gardener, Thomas touching the holes on Jesus' hands, the clothes that were left behind in the tomb or the Turin Shroud, etc.

Level 2 responses (4-6 marks) may have been one-sided or lacked development of different points of view.

Level 1 responses gave a point of view supported by a relevant reason or reasons and achieved 1-3 marks.

### **Theme E: St Mark's Gospel as a source of spiritual truth**

**2.1** This was a well answered question. Most students selected the correct answer – C The widow at the treasury.

**2.2** This question was generally well answered with most students showing good knowledge of Mark's account of the parable of the sower - receiving 2 marks.

Examples of correct responses given included the path/rocky ground (thin soil)/thorns/good soil.

**2.3** In this question students had to explain two contrasting views in contemporary British society about the belief that the woman at Bethany was right to anoint Jesus. This question was generally well answered with most students showing good knowledge and understanding of the story, including similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs. An example of one view given was that she was right to anoint Jesus because Jesus himself praised her for her actions/he said that she had done a beautiful thing for him (2 marks) with a contrasting view that she was not right to anoint Jesus as the perfume was very expensive/and she had wasted it/it could have been sold and the money given to the poor (2 marks) - a full answer gaining 4 marks.

Four marks were also achieved where a response showed one view that she was right to anoint Jesus because she did what she could/she had anointed his body for burial (2 marks) with a different view given that Jesus said you will always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me/her example would be remembered for ever (2 marks).

If similar views were given, only one of them was credited up to 2 marks.

- 2.4** This question was generally well answered with most students showing good knowledge and understanding of St Mark's accounts of the teachings of Jesus about the cost of discipleship. To achieve 5 marks a relevant and accurate reference to Mark's Gospel was necessary.

Some students referred to Jesus' teaching that a Christian must be prepared to deny self and be prepared to make sacrifices (2 marks). An example of a second teaching given by Jesus was to put others' needs first - there was no place for self-interest (2 marks). Students gained the fifth mark by giving specific references to Mark's gospel eg (Mark 6:8-9) eg the disciples were to rely on the generosity of others on their journey or by using a relevant quotation such as 'Whoever wants to save his life will lose it...' etc. There were some excellent responses which achieved the full 5 marks.

A simple explanation given of a relevant and accurate way achieved 1 mark eg disciples had to deny self or take up the cross.

Credit was not given to responses which did not refer to the teachings of Jesus about the cost of discipleship - some responses were just general comments about the costs of discipleship.

- 2.5** There were some excellent well-argued Level 4 responses to this question - 'The twelve disciples that Jesus picked were perfect disciples.' Evaluate this statement.

Many evaluations showed reasoned consideration of different points of view and logical chains of reasoning supported by relevant references to Mark's Gospel throughout.

Examples of arguments in support of the statement were that Jesus obviously saw something special about these men, their backgrounds were diverse, they did not hesitate when called, their response to Jesus was immediate, they left everything behind and references were made to the call of the disciples (Mark 1:1-16). Other examples made reference to the mission of the twelve (Mark 6:7-13) and explained how far the disciples were prepared to go to support the ministry of Jesus eg sent out two by two, take no bread, money, etc. Many stated that even after Jesus warned them about the cost of discipleship (Mark 8:34-38 eg to deny self, rejection, death, etc.) they stayed loyal to him and followed his commands.

Arguments in support of other views included references to stories in Mark's Gospel which point out imperfections, failures and weaknesses of the disciples which certainly show that they were not perfect eg their lack of faith in the calming of the storm, Peter, James and John falling asleep in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas betraying Jesus, James and John looking for positions of personal glory, Peter denying Jesus/all running away when Jesus was arrested, etc.

Conclusions stated that they were only human, with human weaknesses, no one was perfect except Jesus, they still carried out Jesus' wishes after the commission and Peter was first Pope, etc.

Level 3 responses (4-6 marks) showed reasoned consideration of different points of view with logical chains of reasoning, supported by relevant information from Mark's Gospel. Responses may have lacked a conclusion, had a weak conclusion, lacked developed arguments or were incoherent.

Level 2 responses may have been one-sided or lacked development of different points of view and achieved 4-6 marks.

Level 1 responses gave a point of view supported by a relevant reason or reasons and achieved 1-3 marks.

### **Use of statistics**

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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