

AS LEVEL

Examiners' report

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

H173

For first teaching in 2016

H173/03 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers are also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

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Paper 3 series overview

This paper, on Developments in Christian Thought, assessed a range of the specification this year. Two questions were structured as a statement, followed by 'discuss' and one through the command phrase 'critically assess'. The approach to answering questions using different command phrases remains the same: a critical discussion of different approaches to the issue in question. The important thing for candidates to remember is to make sure they have identified the purpose of the question before beginning writing.

While the assessment objectives are separated in terms of marking, the most successful essays bring together AO1 and AO2 through good paragraph structure. There is no need to 'go beyond' the specification, especially in terms of scholars studied and then named, but it is clear that engagement with the subject beyond a textbook or class materials does lead to more fluency in writing.

A large number of scripts contained high-level responses that answered the questions well. Essay structures were well-rehearsed and therefore candidates were able to focus on the question while producing a coherent argument, given the time available. There was about an even spread of responses to the questions.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wrote in a clear style with well-rehearsed paragraph structures that contributed to a good argument through the paper • focused on the question set, rather than the topic in general • gave scholarly views (not necessarily scholars' names) concisely and as part of their overall argument. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wrote too little or did not focus their writing on relevant material • wrote illegibly. • named scholars but did not discuss their views.

In all your responses, you should:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:
 - religious thought and teaching
 - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, societies and communities
 - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice
 - approaches to the study of religion and belief.
- analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

Question 1*

1* Critically assess the Christian view of heaven.

[30]

A broad range of approaches to this question were seen and all attempts to explore the coherence of the Christian view of heaven were given. Some candidates focused on the nature of heaven as either a real place or a spiritual place or something more symbolic. These responses were more successful when focused directly on heaven, rather than spending too much time on hell and/or purgatory. Some candidates simply presented an amount of material on hell and stated that it is the opposite of heaven. A good range of Biblical examples and scholarly approaches were in evidence to illustrate both AO1 and AO2. Some candidates dwelt for too long on the argument that an eternity heaven must be boring.

Candidates who took alternative approaches often examined what constitutes entry to heaven or on the broad area of election. These approaches were certainly valid, although some candidates focused too much on internal arguments in these sub-topics, rather than drawing themselves back to the question set. Some candidates used some of the set texts from the specification well, although a textual-focus was not required.

Some responses seemed to indicate that the command phrase 'critically assess' was not as well-rehearsed as others. These questions simply require a discussion of the AO1 offered by the candidate and any relevant AO1 can be used. A successful approach can be seen in Exemplar 1.

Key point call out

Any relevant material that answers the question can be given.

Exemplar 1

		<p>Christians also believe that Some Christians also view heaven as the transformation and perfection of creation. The main argument for this is through Revelations 21:1 which states, "Then he saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and first earth had passed away". This suggests that the "new heaven" is the earth and therefore, God is creating this new heaven as the how he intended the Garden of Eden. Furthermore, the Messiah would return and people would live happily under God's rule. While only some Christians view heaven in this way, this is a strong argument that that is based on solid biblical evidence. While not all Christians agree about this, most Christians view heaven as a physical place. This is due to biblical descriptions of heaven as a ^{physical} place full of angels and Jesus' physical body moving to heaven after his death which suggest that heaven is a physical place. This is a strong argument which shows that heaven is a physical place.</p>
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This is a good example of a candidate who has critically analysed a selection of material about heaven. The paragraph would have been improved by some consideration of weaknesses of the point offered.

Question 2*

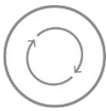
2* 'Jesus was **not** a political liberator.' Discuss.

[30]

Responses to this question often demonstrated excellent understanding of the scholarship surrounding the topic on the person of Jesus. While scholars do not have to be named, there were sophisticated portrayals of debates surrounding the nature of Jesus' relationship with the Zealots and the implications of his crucifixion, and these were well-contrasted by discussions about his focus on non-violence or 'giving to Caesar what is Caesar's', for example. The most successful responses focused their discussions purely on the notion of liberation. Some brought in liberation theology, although this was not required. Many observed the differences between political and religious liberation and the overlap between the two when discussing the first-century world.

Where responses were less successful, there tended to be too much emphasis on the remainder of the person of Jesus topic. Candidates were sometimes quick to discuss the divinity of Jesus or whether he was a teacher of wisdom. While this can be relevant when compared to the material on Jesus the liberator, this comparison was not always evident. Some candidates demonstrated that they were answering a slightly different question through their arguments that Jesus was 'merely' or 'no more than' one or other – and through their repetitions of those words or phrases. Others stated in their introductions that Jesus could only be one of the three categories, which are, of course, arbitrary selections for the purposes of an A Level specification.

Assessment for learning



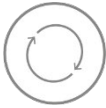
Candidates need to be able to write a full essay on each of the sub-sections from this topic and to discuss internal issues without resorting to comparing with other sub-sections (unless the question asks for it).

Exemplar 2

		In fact, Jesus was actually, a religious divine liberator . Evidence for this can again be taken from the Beatitudes, Matthew 5. Jesus states talks about the laws of Moses, and the Commandments given by God, and follows it up with "but I say to you...". This occurs numerous times as Jesus gives his followers new Commandments. The importance of these 5 words can not be overlooked overlooked. Jesus is placing his authority at least on level with that of Moses - the greatest source of authority at that time. Jesus, also here is displaying to the world that he is not merely a priest, but a divine figure sent by God. This is not This shocking declaration created resentment from the pharisees at the time.
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In this exemplar, we see a candidate who has attempted to bring material on Jesus' divinity back to the question of liberation but has not done so explicitly. This was actually the candidate's second main paragraph, and they discussed Jesus' divinity for over a page before moving back very briefly to Jesus the liberator. The final AO2 mark of 10 demonstrates that there was an attempt in places to bring the response back to the question, but this was not fully successful.

Assessment for learning



This sub-topic requires more than simply an understanding of situation ethics, as found in Paper 2.

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