



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - UNIT 6
TEXTUAL STUDIES – NEW TESTAMENT
1120U60-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

UNIT 5 – TEXTUAL STUDIES (NEW TESTAMENT)

SUMMER 2024 MARK SCHEME

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance, if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner. When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

<p>Band</p> <p>(marks)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Section A questions 30 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> - <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i> - <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(25-30 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. • Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(19-24 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
<p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(13-18 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
<p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(7-12 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable) • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
<p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(1-6 marks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable) • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication. <p>N.B. A maximum of 3 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Section B questions 30 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5 (25-30 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4 (19-24 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3 (13-18 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2 (7-12 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought, appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Some mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1 (1-6 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied (within and/or across themes where applicable). • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary. • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

UNIT 6 – TEXTUAL STUDIES – NEW TESTAMENT

SUMMER 2024 MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1.	Examine the purposes of New Testament parables.
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[AO1 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses will be credited.

- Recognition can be given that there are different types of parables which may in and of itself suggest the purpose, reference may be made to Crossan's ideas of: Riddle, Challenge, Example, Attack parables but the question focus is on purpose, not type.
- Robert H. Stein states 'Parables are earthly stories that illustrate heavenly truths' yet also sees a purpose of parables as a means of concealing as illustrated in Mark 4. 10-12.
- Stein also sees a purpose to be Jesus revealing his message to 'those outside'. The purpose of the parable may also depend on the person who hears it. The parables themselves present clear stories from everyday events that many in the crowd would recognize. Jesus did not code His teaching to prevent some people from understanding, since all equally would understand the imagery. His teaching divided the listeners into two groups based on their own responses. Parables are told so that those who care will stay and ask e.g. the disciples but those with hard hearts and closed eyes / ears will not care and so the parable sorts the listener. This can be related to the parable of the sower. Parables have a purpose of teaching us about ourselves.
- For Stein this use of parable enabled those who were actual or potential enemies of his ministry to be 'confused' in what he was and was not saying and in such a way that could not be used in evidence against him cf healing on the Sabbath.
- Stein also sees a purpose to be an opportunity to penetrate the hardness of heart of his listeners comparing Nathan's parable to King David to open his heart to his wrongdoing.
- Parables also reveal truths about God and the kingdom of God e.g. the prodigal son and great banquet.
- Parables reveal the human need for mercy, forgiveness and redemption which we need to display to each other but ultimately receive from God e.g. the Good Samaritan.
- Parables serve as a guide to the way we live now and its influence on our eternal future e.g. the great banquet.
- Parables point to Jesus and salvation.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

2.	Examine the literary setting and possible theological messages of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand.
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[AO1 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses will be credited.

- Literary Setting
- The set texts are Mark 6. 30-44 and Luke 9. 10-17 but Matthew and John's accounts may be referenced and provide in themselves further literary setting e.g. The synoptic gospels are so similar that it is generally considered that Matthew and Luke used Mark, which is the longest account, as their source while this is Jesus' only miracle, apart from the resurrection, to be recorded in all four gospels.
- If Mark's gospel is based on the Apostle Peter's eye-witness account this explains the vivid details: 'the green grass', 'sit down in sections of a hundred' word for sections used for rows of vegetables in a garden, very pictorial, 'twelve basketful' of scraps.
- The crowd would have made connections between their miraculous feeding and e.g. Elisha (2 Kings 4. 42-44) and even of Moses under whose leadership the Israelites in the wilderness were fed mana for bread for 40 years (a parallel made more explicit in John's gospel).
- The numbering is of men raising the question of even more being fed with women and children present or was it an all male and so, a religious event.
- Possible theological messages
- Ehrman sees no message via a miraculous event as it is now represented e.g. Jesus is God incarnate able to perform miracles as evidence of his divinity, but does see that a deeper message is meant to be conveyed. To Ehrman with the passing of time, Jesus's miracle-working abilities became increasingly pronounced in the tradition, to an exorbitant extent; so the stories of his miracles were always told to make a theological point/s about Jesus.
- In *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium*, Ehrman agrees with Albert Schweitzer's thesis that Jesus was a Jewish apocalyptic preacher and that his main message was that the end times was near, that God would shortly intervene to overthrow evil and establish his rule on Earth, and that Jesus and his disciples all believed these end time events would occur in their lifetimes.
- The humanity of Jesus is shown in that he was seeking escape from the crowds to rest, yet being unable to escape he was moved to pity for them as sheep without a shepherd – prefiguring Jesus' role as the Good Shepherd.
- The divinity of Jesus illustrated by this miracle of his power. No account suggests anything other e.g. an act of psychological persuasion to share hidden food plus it is repeated with feeding 4,000 (Mark and Matthew).
- Prefiguring, identically in all four gospels, of the Last Supper as bread: taken, blessed, broken and shared introducing the Eucharist to the Church and used again at Emmaus on the day of resurrection. The feeding of the crowd is a foretaste of the central act of worship for the Church which itself is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

Section B

3.	'A parable needs to feature all the main literary characteristics to be considered a parable.'
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Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

- Candidates will need to identify the main literary characteristics of the set and possibly other parables in an evaluative way and in so doing may include:
- A concise speech – the set parables illustrate this yet there are examples of 'The kingdom of heaven is like....' Lost coin, finding hidden treasure parables which are even more concise with a sentence or two. Yet some may be described as short stories e.g. Labourers in Vineyard, Unforgiving Servant.
- Single perspective – CH Dodd sees this as a common feature of all parables whether they be a simple metaphor, a more elaborate similitude or a story. Each one has its own point and cannot be confused. Yet is the prodigal son parable directing attention to the father, or the elder or younger son?
- Minimal descriptions may be a characteristic but whatever the level of description all are true to the life, world and experience of Jesus' listener. Minimal description may conjure a fuller mind picture e.g. woman searching for lost coin places you into a full scene of a home, the woman, searching and cleaning while other parables are more detailed, the great banquet.
- Features repetitions which can come in a mini-series of parables 'The Kingdom of God is like e.g. seed growing secretly, mustard seed, leaven or within one e.g. the labourers in the vineyard or the tenants of the vineyard.
- Emphasis at the end as whether long or short it is universally the finale that elicits attention. If so, the finale of the Prodigal Son is rather more between the father and elder son than the prodigal, is that where the focus is meant to be and the parable mis-named, or can there be more than one point to learn throughout the parable?
- Involve the audience with a verdict e.g. the Good Samaritan has a direct question yet this is not found in the set parable of the sower, yet at its simplest form the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from everyday life leaving the mind with sufficient doubt / question to evoke fresh thinking and in that sense every parable involves a verdict individual to each listener.
- Whether parables should be interpreted allegorically as with the parable of the sower which Jesus himself interprets that way. Others have unnecessarily done so e.g. St. Augustine's interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Question whether this interpretation is provided for gentile listeners as Jewish ones would have been familiar with the rabbinic teaching method Jesus uses.
- JD Crossan through his categorisation of parables would illustrate that different characteristics may be found in different parables, but all have the literary style of parable i.e., a story that never happened but always does (p.5 *The Power of Parable*).
- Robert H Stein would lead us to the ultimate question common to all parables – Seek what God is saying to us today.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

4.	'Miracles were not the most important part of Jesus' ministry.'
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Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

- Jesus' miracles can claim to be a vital aspect of his self-revelation as the Messiah fulfilling Old Testament expectations. Without his miracles, Jesus' identity, role and purpose would not have been fully developed. Keith Warrington assesses that overall the Gospels allocate 20% of content to miracles providing a platform to evaluate their importance.
- Jesus' miracles can claim to be a vital aspect of his self-revelation as the Messiah fulfilling Old Testament expectations. Without his miracles, Jesus' identity, role and purpose would not have been fully developed. The miracles Jesus performed allowed his followers to see that he was able to work outside the laws of nature which provided evidence of his divinity. Indeed, without the birth miracles there arguably would be no ministry.
- However, given many doubt the miracle of the birth of Jesus and from that seek other explanations for those events recorded as miracles, they can scarcely be regarded as the most important part of his ministry.
- Yet, alongside his parables and teaching which may be regarded as more important, Jesus' miracles helped to spread the news of his ministry and prompted people to believe in Jesus' powers and authority (e.g. Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1- 20) so can be seen as the most important ministry.
- Some of Jesus' miracles—particularly exorcisms—dealt with purity and impurity and often crossed the borders between the two. This shows miracles were the most important part of Jesus' ministry, proving it to be revolutionary in that time and culture.
- However, Jesus' miracles were limited to certain groups or individuals (e.g the healing of the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5:1-20) and only directly benefitted those people. In this sense, they were not as significant as Jesus' moral instructions to large groups, or symbolic acts performed in front of public audiences and which therefore had a far wider effect even to today.
- The importance of Jesus' miracles is dependent on how we understand the purpose of his ministry. If it was to bring socio-economic-political change they only have limited relevance compared to his teachings. Some of Jesus' miracles were not obviously related to his ministry, but met immediate needs (e.g. the feeding of the five thousand in Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10- 17).
- Bart Ehrman explains that the term "miracle" has only been understood to refer to something supernatural since the Enlightenment. Witnesses would not necessarily have understood them as supernatural, but a wondrous event and a sign of earthly authority. So, the miracles did not have cosmic significance attributed to them by modern readers so cannot be the most important aspect.
- Reference could be made here to Hume's challenges to the existence and occurrence of miracles or to Bultmann's belief they needed demythologizing questioning their place as being the most important part of Jesus' ministry.
- The greatest miracles of all was Jesus' resurrection from the dead and arguably without that there would be no Christian faith and so this miracle alone must be the most important part of Jesus' ministry.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

5.	'The author of 1 Peter was writing for Jewish Christians.'
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Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

- Wayne A. Grudem suggests that the opening verse answers the question – ‘exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia’ as they describe the circular travel route of the Letter let alone copies that may be distributed from each point. On the basis the letter was written c.62-63AD then by that point the rapid growth of Christianity would mean that both Jewish and Gentile Christians would receive the Letter.
- However, Peter (for ease his authorship can be assumed) readily and understandably uses Jewish terminology suggesting a more restricted readership. Yet, he may be applying to the Church of the New Covenant, language that previously was restricted to the Jewish Covenants.
- It can be considered that Peter assumed there to be a gentile readership of the Letter e.g. ‘Once you were no people but now you are God’s people’ and that their lives had been filled with sin uncharacteristic to Jews, “Let the time that is past suffice for doing what the Gentiles like to do...” while unbelievers ‘are surprised that you do not now join them in the same wild profligacy’ which would not be surprising to Jewish converts to Christianity. However, he could be writing to Hellenistic Jews of the Roman Empire for who such language could be appropriate returning it to a Jewish readership.
- None of this undermines the fact that there had to be Jewish converts at these destinations not least as they are included amongst the visitors in Jerusalem listed on the Day of Pentecost.
- David G Horrell essentially agrees with Grudem’s opening premise as he sees the letter ‘saturated with quotations and allusions to the Jewish Scriptures’ (p.47) using thoroughly biblical and Jewish terms and thereby describing the identity of the people to whom he is writing – Jewish – as also understood by Eusebius, Jerome, Calvin and Wesley.
- It is recent commentators who rather believe that the Letter was addressed ‘mostly’ to gentile converts, picking up the verse examples as Grudem highlights, above.
- The fact that the letter in part addresses slaves would generally discount a Jewish readership of that class, evidencing instead a gentile one. This forms part of the Letter’s concentration on the suffering of its readers in various forms and so would not be restricted to a purely Jewish readership. The common denominator of those who suffer is their faith in Christ not their race.
- If Peter was addressing a Gentile audience, then the epistle becomes one of the strongest supports for the theological idea that *the church has replaced Israel as the people of God* i.e. “replacement theology” or “supersessionism” (i.e. the church supersedes Israel). 1 Peter 2:9, the readers are said to be ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession’ — phrases from the Jewish Scriptures as descriptors of the nation of Israel. If Peter is applying this imagery to Gentiles, then as Scot McKnight claims “There is no passage in the New Testament that more explicitly associates the Old Testament terms for Israel with the New Testament church than this one.” But if the original readers of 1 Peter were ethnically Jewish, then Peter’s language is unsurprising and would undercut the use of 1 Peter as a proof-text in support of supersessionism.
- Ultimately, we have no direct evidence with which to be able to answer this question which comes down to supposition and best guess.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

6.	'The apocalyptic literature of the New Testament has value for Christians today.'
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Evaluate this view with reference to the Book of Revelation.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

- The Book of Revelation is written for churches and so must have value just as the rest of the Bible. Yet can the issues of those particular seven churches almost 2000 years ago and in specific locations be the same as today? Any value has to be time, space and issue limited. Richard Baukham outlines his case for the value of Revelation in his *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* pp159-64 which can be evaluated.
- Even to non-Christians this literature appears to have value as the inspiration for books, films, games which are enjoyed by those who are unaware of their origin. This may illustrate the difficulties of understanding the actual meaning / value of Revelation as it is too full of symbolism, dreams and visions and so they are used as inspirations for other creativity. However, this style of writing makes Revelation the only Christian prophetic book, so valuable in itself and validated by being included in the canon of the New Testament, although Bultmann called it 'weakly Christianised Judaism'.
- The ultimate message of Revelation has to have value today as it assures Christians that Christ will return, as promised, and in judgement so that the faithful will be rewarded. The value increases to those Christians who are still persecuted for their faith and its practice. As such, less has changed in the world than may be anticipated but even though the reading can be challenging the ultimate assurance is of God's sovereignty triumphing over evil.
- The apocalyptic texts can be characterised as containing violence and destruction which does not seem to be of value to anyone and to many Christians would be diametrically opposed to what they believe and live precisely because they are Christians. The problem is exacerbated when the portrayal of God is vengeful and without any obvious sign of love.
- Scholars assign four basic schools of interpretation to the book of Revelation: *Historicism* interprets the writing as a prophetic and panoramic overview of history, from the first century until the second coming of Christ. *Futurism* sees the visions (with the exception of chapters 1-3) as related to end times events still to come in the future. *Preterism* treats the visions as dealing with past events alone — specifically, events in the time John was living. *Idealism* interprets Revelation as primarily symbolic, providing timeless and spiritual truth to encourage persecuted believers. All of which through various academic endeavour shows present value.
- As a consequence of the literature and questioning its value today everybody is reduced to making a personal assessment of its meaning and its acceptability which leads to multiple interpretations de-valuing it. Yet, some of the passages are among the most treasured for Christians and particularly read at funerals e.g. God wiping every tear from eyes, the new Jerusalem.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised