



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**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.

Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:

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

Band (marks)	Assessment Objective AO1 – Section A questions [30 marks] <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i> - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice - approaches to the study of religion and belief.
5 (25-30 marks)	• 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.
4 (19-24 marks)	• 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.
3 (13-18 marks)	• 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.
2 (7-12 marks)	• 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.
1 (1-6 marks)	• 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. N.B. A maximum of 3 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'.
0	• 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)	• 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)	• 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)	• 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)	• 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)	• 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	• No relevant analysis or evaluation.

WJEC GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES
UNIT 6 – TEXTUAL STUDIES (NEW TESTAMENT)
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To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1. **Examine the parable of the prodigal son with reference to John Dominic Crossan's different types of Jesus' parables.**

[AO1 30]

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

- Candidates may refer to Crossan's four different types and illustrate them with the parables of the Prodigal and the Great Banquet or examine how Crossan's four types may apply to both parables.
- Riddle Parables – 'so that they may not understand'. Crossan also describes these as 'lethal parables' as in Mark's Gospel they are used as a way of rejecting those who reject Jesus e.g. Parable of the Sower.
- Example Parables – 'go and do (or do not do) likewise'. Again, pointing beyond themselves these parables are designed to instruct behaviour so that people lead better lives.
- Challenge Parables – 'Let anyone with ears to hear, listen' Crossan looks at on the Parable of the Good Samaritan suggesting the challenge Jesus gave for was his hearers. Unlike Riddle & Example parables the Challenge Parables give over control to the hearer. They are often aimed at societal improvement, challenging humans to collaborate with God in bringing his justice to the world.
- Attack Parables – 'weeping and gnashing of teeth'.
- **The Prodigal Son** – as an Example Parable of 'go and do (or do not do) likewise' so the parable is designed to instruct behaviour so that people lead better lives. In the case for the Parable of the Prodigal Son not to be the disrespectful son but rather be a repentant son, to be the forgiving father, not to be the unforgiving elder brother.
- Candidates may employ arguments from JD Crossan to suggest that the Prodigal Son is an example parable by combining / comparing it to the Parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin i.e. the message is the same – rejoicing over the lost that is found. Is this sufficient to make it an example parable?
- Crossan particularly looks at Luke's Gospel and asks whether Luke has superimposed this element onto the parable/s giving it a false morality. Is this the case for the Parable of the Prodigal Son? If so, is it Jesus presenting an example or is it Luke?
- The introductory context may affect one's answer in that Jesus delivered these three parables because the Pharisees and Scribes were grumbling that Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. Jesus in delivering the parables may accept that the sinners are lost but through him they are being found and so it is right to rejoice and that everyone should rejoice. Does this make it a Challenge Parable – the lost son represents the tax collectors and sinners who are 'lost and found' and so celebrate along with the Father – God – the elder angry son represents the Pharisees and scribes who grumble? It challenges us to think, discuss, argue and to ultimately decide about its meaning for us today.

- Can this be regarded as an Attack or Riddle Parable?
- While candidates may answer the above question variously JD Crossan determines that, overall, this is an example parable showing metaphorically and illustrating microcosmically that what Jesus is doing is just common sense, compared to his opponents, and so it is an example parable; we are to do the same – to rejoice when the lost are found.
- Ultimately every reader of the parable of the prodigal son has / needs to see themselves as the younger son in terms of their relationship to God and so this must be the example parable par excellence in terms of our own spiritual life and relationship to God.

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

2. Examine the set texts within I Peter.

[AO1 30]

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

Historical origins.

- Wayne A. Grudem notes that, in the superscription to the letter, the author identifies themselves as “Peter, and apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1). This was a standard way for New Testament authors (such as Paul, James, Jude, and John) to identify themselves as the author of the letter in question.
- There are similarities between 1 Peter and Peter’s speeches in the Acts of the Apostles, which implies the same person was behind each.
- David G. Horrell explains that there are a number of signs that the letter was written after 70AD (so after Peter’s death). These include the presence of a wide range of early Christian traditions in the letter; the implication of developing leadership structures in the early Christian communities; and the use of the term “Christian”, which is very rare in the New Testament.
- There are no references to personal connections to Jesus in 1 Peter, which we would expect if written by the apostle Peter (since this would give the letter extra historical authority).

Structure.

- Question whether the structure of the letter suggests it is for Jewish Christians, as Origen proposed. Others do not see this given the way Peter refers to their former lives ‘former lusts in ignorance’ etc. which suggest a gentile structure of the letter.
- Some see the original purpose of I Peter as being rather a baptismal sermon which has been combined with a general address.

Key words and phrases.

- Assuming Peter is writing as he says to ‘the dispersion scattered throughout...’ (1.1) it is designed for a specific group of Christians scattered over a wide area. Some translations refer to this group of Christians as ‘pilgrims’ further illustrating the purpose of the letter being addressed to those who are on a particular, Christian, path of life and so addressing what they, in the area they live, may meet along their path.
- There appears clear evidence of Peter’s Old Testament background both in quotation and allusion. Peter calls the Chosen ‘a royal priesthood’ with its clear connection yet development of Hebrew / Old Testament priesthood into ‘the priesthood of all believers’ which is a new status of understanding.
- This may connect with Peter’s unique appreciation / understanding of the suffering of the church which becomes Christ like – as a Chosen people.
- Submission as slaves plays a part of suffering but this key word is extended to wives to their husbands and all to Christ.

Possible theological message.

- Peter shared much of Paul’s theology e.g. Ephesians, Colossians, etc. and the letter encourages the audience to grow in trust and obedience to God.
- However, Peter provides unique theological messages referring to Jesus, after his death, proclaiming to spirits in prison (3:18–20). This passage, and a few others (such as Matthew 27:52 and Luke 23:43), are the basis of the traditional Christian belief in the descent of Christ into hell, or the harrowing of hell where the souls of pre-Christian people waited for the Gospel.
- See the Apostles’ Creed which makes Peter’s letter unique.

- A key theological message may be considered as 'hope' – the hope received through Jesus Christ from which he gives practical guidance to assist in their human relationships and particularly exhorts them to endure their suffering in a joyful manner for Christ's sake.
- Identifying similarities and differences between I Peter and other New Testament letters that suggest that I Peter was not written to deal with theological heresy.

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

Section B

3. 'The parables are the work of Jesus rather than the early Christian community.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- In the Judaism of Jesus' time, rabbis often taught in the style of parables to ensure their messages were easily understood and memorable. To guarantee that Jesus was understood as a similar authority figure the early community had to make sure that Jesus' teachings were presented in a similar style, so phrased them as parables.
- However, since parables were a traditional form of teaching in Judaism at that time, it is very likely that Jesus—a Jewish man who likely underwent religious training—used them in his own teaching.
- Indeed, the Bible tells us, "when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes," (Matthew 7:28-29). This explains that Jesus used parables in part because He spoke with authority. The scribes often quoted both long passages of the Law as well as traditions of other Jewish teachers to support their message and yet Jesus spoke from His own authority, breaking from tradition, the parables are His.
- Since we know that parables were used as a style of teaching in Jesus' time, historians have argued that the parables are actually the most reliable part of Jesus' recorded teachings.
- The historical context and situation of the parables in the Gospels is sometimes unclear. This could suggest that the parables were added (to the texts or oral stories) at a later date, with a slightly different context to the gospel stories in which they were placed.
- The Gospels themselves had a period of oral transmission before being written down and were then edited in their written form. It is likely that some of the gospel material, (including some of, or parts of, the parables were added and/or edited by the early Christian community during these periods of transmission.
- The parables are sometimes inconsistent, either in small details, or in their general message (compare, for example, Matthew 22:1-10 and Luke 14:16-24). This is more easily explained by attributing the parables to the early Christian community (with the multiple conflicting voices therein) rather than the historical Jesus.
- Might Jesus have used the same idea but to different effect with each audience? Parables required those who were listening to think. Jesus told parables to see if we really understand the Gospel.
- Apart from Jesus' parables, we have no other record of New Testament characters or the early Christians using parables in their own teachings and writings. It is therefore unlikely that the early Christian community would have created the parables and attributed them to Jesus.
- In the synoptic gospels, parables form around a third of Jesus' teaching. Even if additions were made during the transmission of Jesus' teachings, this is too much for the early Christian community to have simply invented.
- Crossman suggests that the Gospel authors did something very similar to what Jesus did: Jesus made up stories about ordinary people and situations to convey his counter-cultural vision of the kingdom of God. The Gospel authors made up stories about Jesus to convey their compelling visions of who Jesus

was and why he was significant. Jesus' stories involved "*fictional* events about *fictional* characters"; the Gospels include "*fictional* events about *factual* characters". Jesus himself becomes a parable of the early Christian community.

- The parables meet Robert H. Stein's "criterion of dissimilarity" – since they are dissimilar to both the Judaism of Jesus' time and the teachings of the early Christian church, they are likely to stem from the historical Jesus.

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

4. There is no difference between New Testament ‘works’, ‘signs’, ‘powers’ and ‘wonders’ and modern understandings of ‘miracles.’

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- ‘Works, signs, powers, wonders and miracles’ are all words suggesting the immediate and powerful action of God in history, nature and /or people and so overall there is no difference.
- The New Testament is founded on the Old Testament and so it is noteworthy that the two Hebrew words most often used for ‘miracle’ are ‘sign’ and ‘wonder’ and often appear together in the same text. The basic nature of ‘sign’ is that it points people to God. ‘Wonders’ describe God’s supernatural activity and / or a special manifestation of His power.
- False prophets were reported to perform actions perceived as signs and wonders.
- Signs seek to bring belief but they do not compel a person to believe which can be the same for a modern understanding of miracles.
- A modern understanding of miracles may be understood from different perspectives e.g. Bultmann would encourage people to de-mythologise what we read as a miracle and possibly see the real action as a sign or wonder rather than an historic event e.g. feeding of 5,000 a wonder of peoples’ charity rather than selfishness.
- ‘Signs’ is the word used in John’s gospel and Revelation rather than ‘miracles’ and is taken as evidence of divine authority.
- ‘Wonders’ in the New Testament translates a Greek word from which ‘terror’ comes. It suggests something unusual that causes the beholder to marvel. Whereas sign appeals to understanding wonder appeals to imagination.
- ‘Works’ is also used in the New Testament in the sense of miracle e.g. John the Baptist heard of the works of Jesus while he was in prison.
- ‘Powers’ or a sense of inherent ability is used in the New Testament to refer to activity of supernatural origin or character.
- Modern understandings of ‘miracles’ often reflect an altered worldview with a tension between the natural which squeezes out the previously dominant supernatural realm no matter which words are used.
- New Testament people did not have that dichotomy. They saw the universe created, sustained and providentially governed by God. Many Christians today would uphold the same and so would not see a difference between biblical terms and any modern understanding of miracles which is nothing more than a long debate as to whether miracles were contrary to nature. Augustine and CS Lewis are examples of those who hold they are not contrary.
- Other Christians would see a difference. along with Aquinas who saw that miracles stand outside the law of nature but that God intervenes with the miraculous.
- One’s view of miracles and whether there is any difference between modern understanding of miracles, of which there is no one understanding now any more than there has been through history, will depend on one’s view of God, faith and the universe.

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

5. 'The message of submission in I Peter presents a problem for modern readers.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Peter admonishes all Christians to be subject to ruling human powers. Everyone is to obey laws, pay taxes etc. and not to do so would be advocating breaking the law, being selfish and so represents no problem. However, it cannot be right to support a tyrannical regime or an invading foreign power.
- Household servants / slaves are to be submissive to their masters. This can have no place today especially as modern slavery has reappeared, the Christian faith surely cannot support such a phenomenon.
- If you have a literal understanding of the Bible then as strange, even unpalatable as this may appear in God's wisdom there must be reason for slaves to obey, and workers to obey their bosses. Modern biblical exegesis shows this is a problem to be addressed in 21st Century understandings.
- Submission is present in humanity's relationship to God and therefore not strange it should be replicated within creation.
- 'Wives be subject to your own husband' is not Peter saying women be subject to men. It is a submission based on a specific, voluntary covenant / sacrament and so is acceptable to many readers today.
- Other readers would say that today no woman should be subject in any way to a man not least as it removes her own God given dignity.
- However, reading the 'be submissive' text in context shows that for a wife it becomes a natural expression of her depth of love and faith in God but can that love and faith only be shown by submission?
- The Book of Common Prayer and weddings from it are still practised today and include the vow by women 'to love, honour and obey' their husband. The fact this service is rarely used shows it is a problem.
- It can be argued, contrary to popular opinion that submission does not mean: agreeing with everything the husband says, or leaving intelligence or will at the wedding ceremony, does not prevent the wife seeking to change her husband, does not allow the husband's will to be put before that of Christ, does not abrogate her spiritual life to the husband and explicitly does not mean that the wife should be fearful (I Peter 3.6).
- Is that dignity found in the symbiotic relationship which is not one-sided when one reads Peter's list of responsibilities that a man has to his wife in return (not seen with subject/rulers, servants/masters).
- Peter is ultimately saying that the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts and that is achieved by appropriate submission.
- Being submissive also shows confidence in God's justice but may leave a problem when considering God's love.
- Christ's own submission is the final pattern and proof of all Christian living / submission. This may connect with Peter's unique appreciation / understanding of the suffering of the church which becomes Christ like – as a Chosen people.

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

6. 'The Book of Revelation is best understood as apocalyptic literature'.

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

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

- Apocalyptic literature refers to the expectation that God's will and purpose will be revealed but it can no longer be within creation or in our time because both have become too contaminated that God must destroy them in order to create something completely new which is the central theme of Revelation.
- Yet eschatological aspects are also referred to with a future expectation where God's will and purpose will be revealed in the world and the faithful will be vindicated which is also a central theme of Revelation.
- Indeed, some would say that Revelation is best understood as a Revenge Fantasy.
- Apocalyptic imagery lends weight to this focusing on fire bringing cleansing and purification and ridding world of evil; clear endings. But rather than a clear ending it shows there is a continuum, like gold seven times refined remains the gold it was at first albeit refined.
- It is indeed literature which provides an idea of how God will act but does not necessarily give us all the understanding required or plan of the process or finished result and so to create a distinction could easily be a false one.
- Is the Book of Revelation therefore better understood as a prophecy whereby not all the details need come true, but the overall message witnessed that God is in control and evil will not triumph.
- Yet as literature it can be classified and as such is best classified as apocalyptic given the style of literature which tends to focus on: cosmic dualism, visions and revelations, references to numerism and animal symbolism, idea of unity of history and the goal towards which it is moving, belief in life after death that differentiates between believer / unbeliever – good / bad.
- Meanwhile eschatology is actually concerned with the theological end result; however, it may come. This can be seen in future (even including apocalyptic elements) or realised eschatology.
- That theological end-result begins with the life each Christian leads and so eschatology is intricately involved with Christian discipleship and the influence that has on the Church and world. In contrast, the apocalyptic is an exterior act, separate from how life is lived and so surely cannot be the best way to understand Revelation?
- Does that depend where / how you live? A Christian living in a persecuted place may well read Revelation best understand it and pray for an apocalyptic ending to their troubles while a Christian in the UK living a comfortable life would pray for an eschatological or prophetic outworking of God's will.

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