

GCE



CCEA GCE AS
Exemplifying Examination
Performance
Religious Studies

AS 2: An Introduction to the Acts of the
Apostles

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EXEMPLIFYING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

GCE Religious Studies

Introduction

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Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Finlay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

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GCE: AS Religious Studies

SRE21: An Introduction to the Acts of the Apostles

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Answer **one** question from Section A.

Q1a With reference to evidence from the text, examine the arguments surrounding the reasons for the writing of Acts. [25]

Student's response

Acts was written for a variety of reason however Luke states in his prologue that the main reasons was "to give an accurate and orderly account of the origins of Christianity" so that you may have "certainly regarding the things you have been taught".

Dunn states that "This does indeed seem to be his fundamental" concern and Bruce agrees. He wanted to provide historical evidence and Marshall explains this was "to strengthen faith" by providing evidence of how Acts began.

Another reason for writing Acts may have been in order to show the universal message of Acts. Luke is writing to both men and women, Gentile and Jew to show that the kingdom is for everyone. This is clear as in the text there is emphasis put on the missionary Journeys of Paul to the Gentiles and the fact women like Lydia were involved.

William states that another reason may be to show the triumph of the Gospel in a hostile world whereas other scholars argue that the reason for writing Acts was to show the potential of the message to change the world.

Another key reason for writing Acts was to evangelise and Neil states the reason was to "proclaim the Good News". Neil furthers his point by saying Luke was a "theology-minded" historian and in Acts Luke often picks and chooses events in order to highlight their significance. He writes very little about Derbe except a large number of converts were made whereas he writes a lot about Athens where less people convert to Christianity.

In addition many people think that Luke writes Acts in order to showcase the importance of the Holy Spirit and its work. With some scholars saying it should be called "The Gospel of the Holy Spirit." In Acts the Holy Spirit is mentioned on average, twice per chapter which gives evidence for this.

Furthermore, another reason for writing Acts may have been as an apology to the Jews. Luke shows the similarity between Judaism and Christianity in order to convince the Jews of its validity. In the text we are told how Paul circumcises Timothy and preaches in synagogues. Some argue that it was really an apology to

the Romans as Luke is at point to show their impartiality. Bruce says Christianity may have been seen as “a menace to Imperial Law and order” and Luke wanted to prove it was innocent and harmless.

Another key purpose may have been to act as a defence for Paul’s trial and Theophilus was a high-ranking Rome official who Luke was providing an account of Christianity to clear up misconceptions and prove Paul’s innocence. The text provides evidence for this as Paul’s former trials and defence speeches take up a large part of Acts (see very last booklet)*

On the other hand, Green suggests that we are being “trained to plant churches in a way that honours God” and that the purpose of writing was to provide a training manual. The text focuses a lot on Paul’s missionary Journeys how he trained Timothy and establish churches and elders provides more evidence for this.

Many people may argue that Acts wasn’t to provide the history of the church as Dibelus points out that the church believed that Jesus would return in their life time and so it wouldn’t have a history, whereas Marshall disagrees and describes Acts as the “history book” of the early church with Guthrie agreeing and saying it was to document history but not in the “dry chronicle sense.”

Overall I believe Luke clearly states his purpose for writing Acts in his prologue and it was to provide an accurate and orderly account however that were many other factors such as to spread the word and mend the split between the church regarding Jewish Christianity with Peter and Gentile Christianity with Paul.

Examiner’s comments

Band 5, 22/25

This response is an excellent attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the reasons for the writing of Acts and uses a very high degree of evidence and example from the text as the task demanded. Reference is made to the variety of possible purposes such as providing an accurate and orderly account of Christianity or an apology for Christianity or Paul. Evidence from the text included Paul’s missionary journeys as an example of universalism and the circumcision of Timothy and Paul preaching in the synagogues as evidence of convincing the Jews of the validity of the gospel. It addresses the task in a sophisticated and mature manner. The use of scholarly opinion is not a requirement but in this response the candidate uses it to show understanding. It would have been possible for the candidate to further develop the examples that were offered from the text.

Q1b “The Book of Acts provides an accurate account of the work of the leaders in the early Church.”

Evaluate the truth of this view Justify your answer. [25]

Student’s response

The books of Acts is an accurate account of the work of the leaders in the early church however it isn’t always completely accurate and often contradicts other parts of the bible.

Marshal regards Acts as “a masterpiece of historical accuracy” and many would agree with him as all of the names of places and locations in Acts are precise and correct regarding the work of the early leaders in the missionary journeys. Cadbury notes he is exact in his locations for example “perga in pamphylia.”

The book of Acts is also accurate in describing the culture and religion and trade of the places where the early leaders worked, for example Lydia is described as a purple cloth seller and Philipps is known for this. In Acts Paul notices statues “to a unknown God” and this is backed up that such statues existed.

Furthermore, Acts is an accurate account of the work of the leaders in the church as Luke never fails to record even events Dillion would describe as “sordid” and painting the leaders in a bad light. Luke records the punishment of Anonias and Sapphira for Lying to Peter about how much money they donated to the fund. Peter didn’t Sapphira that her husband had been struck dead and she too was struck dead when she chooses to lie again. Luke recording these events adds to his reliability as a historian and he is at pains to be accurate even when it doesn’t suit his purpose.

On the other hand many may argue that Luke isn’t accurate with the Tusrgnen school regarding his work as propaganda and stating that he twisted facts in order to suit his purpose of evangelism.

The “we” passages further raise questions about his accuracy as if the “we” passages show when Luke was a travelling companion of Paul, then we are left to consider the fact that Luke wasn’t with Paul for all his missionary Journeys and so the information is a secondary source. The primary sources of the “we” passages point to being accurate however the fact that Luke wasn’t with Paul always and relied on other people, like Mark’s accounts hints that it may be not be accurate on the account of the work of the early leaders.

There are also many “historical blunders” in Acts which further lessons the view that it is an accurate account. In Luke’s Gospel it was stated that the Ascension on the same day as the resurrection whereas in Acts it happened 40 days later. There are

also differences in the number of visits Paul made to Jerusalem and farther differences in the way the early leaders spoke in tongues compared to how they did in Corinthians. This suggests it may not be accurate.

Likewise, there are also many discrepancies over the attitude of Paul which suggests that it can't be accurate in reflecting the work of the leaders in the early church. Peter in Acts follows the Law and circumcises Timothy whereas elsewhere Peter states that circumcision isn't needed and rebukes the imposing the Law. Luke also acts like the decision over Gentile acceptance is sorted at the Jerusalem council.

Overall I feel that Luke is accurate in describing the work of the early leaders as his use of proper titles such as "proconsul" for Sergius Paullus faults are accurate, his use of names, places and religions customs that the work of the early leaders encounter are all very accurate however The Book of Acts isn't completely reliable and accurate at points as Luke wasn't there at all events and there are also small historical blunders where Luke states Paul made more than 3 visits to Jerusalem with Paul contradicting this.

Examiner's comments

B5 23/25

A coherent response that demonstrates an excellent attempt at critical analysis using scholarly opinion as a platform. Both elements of the task are addressed directly and in a structured manner. Reference is made to evidence that Acts is an accurate account of the work of the early leaders, such as the places and locations that are referred to e.g. Philippi being known as a centre for the selling of purple cloth. Reference is also made to the fact that controversial incidents like the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira are part of the narrative thus adding to the accuracy of the account. An excellent attempt is made by using evidence and reasoning to construct a well informed and balanced argument. Reference is made to the argument over the authenticity of the "we" passages. A sophisticated answer with clear and coherent structure.

Q2a With reference to the text, discuss the significance and importance of the Pentecost event in Acts. [25]

Student's response

Pentecost is after regarded as the 'the birthday of the church', in that point the Apostles and their disciples cowered in fear of persecution, hesitant to continue Jesus' ministry without him. It is important as it began the resurrected Ministry and made way for the fulfilment of Acts 1:8, this they would spread His word message to "Israel, Sanoria, Judaea and to the ends of the Earth".

The apostles were gathered in the Upper room a Jerusalem house, after being told by the angels at Jesus' ascension to wait for the Holy Spirit. It was Passover, and so many nations were represented in the crowds at Jerusalem, as it was a truly international festival. As they waited, there was a sudden gust of wind and little 'tongues' of fire appeared above the heads of each Apostle. In the Old Testament, the presence of God was very much signified by wind and fire, with wind being God's breath 'breath' which created the world and Adam, and the fire being his enlivening presence in the time of Abraham and the burning bush, which the Apostles, being Jews, would have been familiar with. Filled with courage and confidence, they spilled out into the market square to meet the large crowds present.

The Apostles quickly found they could speak, and be understood in, many different languages. There is much scholarly debate surrounding the reasons for this phenomenon, with Hewitt suggesting they had been granted the gift of languages, through the Holy Spirit, which allowed them many languages. Barday disagrees, and argues that they were simply speaking the three most common languages of Israel at that time – Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek – which the vast majority of the crowd would have known. Hewitt contradicts this belief by stating the unlikeness if the Apostles poor men from Galilee, largely, knowing Greek to any great extent. Another point of view is that of Guy who believes the Apostles were simply regurgitating foreign words they had picked upon their travels with Jesus, subconsciously amidst all the excitement.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians decides the 'Glossolalia', or gift of tongues, which the Apostles may have possessed through the Holy Spirit, which Paul himself recognises of a genuine gift of the spirit, although he discourages the importance and reverence given to it by the Corinthians.

The crowd gathered was amazed and some accused the Apostles of drunkenness "for these men have drank the new wine" Peter understood by all all of a sudden, began to give the a speech were he denied the charge of drunkenness, instead attributing this gift to the power of the Holy Spirit. He described Jesus' death at the hands of the Jews, how he had risen from the dead and was acended into Heaven to

sit at the right hand of God, with the bible. He announced that Jesus was the Messiah who had been prophesied in the scriptures as a descendant of David, and that they must now repent and be baptised in order to gain forgiveness. The crowd were again amazed and some were converted to Christianity.

Pentecost is extremely significant as it represents the enlivening presence of God through which, Guy believes God will be more active than he was through Jesus' Ministry. It allowed the Apostles the courage needed to spread His message beyond the Israeli Jews to the Gentiles, which allowed for the evangelisation of foreign nations and the fulfilments of God's promise in Acts 1:8. To conclude, it served primarily as the beginning of the early church, a new era in the spread of God's message.

Examiner's comments

B5 22/25

This response is an excellent attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the Pentecost event. In discussing the significance and importance of the Pentecost event in Acts the response made excellent use of the text in addressing the task. The response placed the event firmly in the context of Acts 1:8 and showed some sophistication in the understanding of the significance of the symbolism and Old Testament prefiguration of e.g. wind and fire. Further analysis displays an understanding of the different interpretations of speaking in tongues including evidence drawn from Corinthians. The response also made a very good attempt to provide some analysis of Peter's speech and the importance of Pentecost for the apostles themselves and the continued spread of the gospel message. An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary is evident.

Q2b Explore the view that preaching was more important than miracles in the spread of the Gospel. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

I agree with this statement that Preaching was more important than miracles as Jesus commissioned his disciples "to make Disciples of all nations". This can be achieved through preaching. However, miracles do help the spread of the Gospel.

Firstly, as we see in Peter's speech at Pentecost many people can be converted to Christianity. We know that there was over 3,000 converts at Pentecost this is more than any other event in Acts of the Apostles. Meaning that preaching is more important than miracles as it converts more people.

Secondly, when preaching Peter expounds the Kerygma this would become the backbone of the early church and is the message that many people in the early church followed. Thus preaching is more important than miracles as the preachers can not only spread the Gospel but ensure those listeners understand the Gospel.

Thirdly, in Paul missionary journey, he frequently preaches the Gospel and evangelises many people for example in Cyprus many people flocked to hear Paul preach. The fact that 3 missionary journeys was devoted to preaching the Gospel shows how important it is to the spread of the church. Through his preaching Paul established many churches and the office of Elders which would become the backbone of the early church. This is why it is more important than miracles.

Furthermore miracles can cause confusion for example Paul's healing of the crippled man led people to worship him as a God. Thus Paul said "we to like you are only human, men like you". Thus led to the crowd "feeling resentful" as Bruce said. Thus shows miracles are less important than preaching as it can lead to confusion.

However, miracles could be seen as more important as without the miracles of the descent of the Holy Spirit the Apostles would not have been filled with the courage to preach the Gospel. This is why miracles are more important as they often lead to the spread of the Gospel and preaching just helps explain the Gospel.

Secondly, in Paul's third missionary journey we can see the power of miracles as the handkerchief's Paul touched led to people being healed. This would spread the Gospel as they could see the divine power. Similarly, with the Demon overthrowing the seven sons of Sceeva people could see that Paul was filled with the holy spirit. These examples show that people were amazed with the power of God hence why it is more important than preaching.

Thirdly, we are given a direct example of preaching versus in Paul's counter with Sergius Paulus. Paul preached to the Roman Governor even explaining how Jesus changed him on the road to Damascus. However it was Paul's miracle in temporarily blinded Elymas that led to his conversion. This shows that miracles more effective and thus they are more important.

Finally, when the Gospel was preached it often led to opposition, both Stephen and Paul were stoned for trying to spread the Gospel. Although many people were converted by Preaching it did also lead to opposition and in fact turning people away from Jesus. Thus miracles are more important as no one can oppose a miracle and dispute the power of God.

In conclusion, I still believe that Preaching is more important than miracles as it is something that everyone can do to help the spread of the Gospel. As Mother Theresa said "Not all of us can do great things but we can all do small thing with great love".

Examiner's comments

B5 23/25

The response is comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis. The response displays an excellent attempt at the application of preaching and miracles to the spread of the gospel. There is an excellent attempt at using evidence from the text to formulate reasoned, well informed and balanced arguments e.g. the impact of Peter's speech on the spread and understanding the gospel leading to 3000 converts. There is also good evidence of critical analysis of the speech. Paul's preaching on his missionary journeys is used to show how he establishes churches and develops ministry. The response then argues that miracles can potentially cause confusion e.g. the response to Paul's healing of the crippled man. This view is balanced with the assertion that miracles are works of the Spirit and thus important to spread of the gospel. Evidence is drawn from Paul's missionary journeys. For example, having preached to Sergius Paulus it was his temporary blinding of Elymas that convinced the governor to convert. The response further argues that preaching sometimes led to opposition as in the case of Stephen. A conclusion is drawn to this sophisticated answer.

Section B

Answer **one** question from Section B

Q3a “The Gospel was first preached to the Jews and then rejected by them.”
How is this quotation reflected in Paul’s first missionary journey? [25]

Student’s response

Acts 13 and 14 recounts the first planned missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. Paul has been described by Hewitt as “the Apostle to the Gentiles”. However Paul’s meaning was to spread the Gospel and he did this to everyone creating a Universal church.

Paul initially took the Gospel to Cyprus this was probably selected as many Christians had fled there after persecution broke out in Jerusalem. Many people flocked to hear Paul and Barnabas speak. The majority of people in Cyprus were Jewish showing that Paul initially took the Gospel to Jews. Although here he was not rejected.

Paul began to preach in Pisidian Antioch. Here he preached the Jewish synagogue however some Jews began to oppose Paul and they formed with the God – fearing women and banished Paul from returning to Pisidian Antioch. Once again Paul took the Gospel to the Jews and was rejected by them.

After being rejected at Antioch Paul travelled to Iconium. He initially took the Gospel to the Jews however the Jews formed with some Gentiles and the political leaders to form a mob. Paul received word that he was going to be stoned so he quickly fled. This did force Paul to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Luke records Paul’s words saying “I will go to the Gentiles”. This follows what Hewitt calls “the synagogue formula”.

At Lystra and Derbe Paul healed a crippled man and began to evangelise the amazed crowd telling them to turn away from their “Idoltarous worship”. However some Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium arrived they won the crowd over and dragged Paul outside of the city and began to stone him. Paul the original persecutor had become the persecuted. Scott said “credit must be paid to the courage of those two men returning so soon to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium and Lystra”. Thus it is clear that Paul took the Gospel to the Jews but had been rejected by them.

However Paul was not rejected at all times he converted a large number of people in Cyprus. Being Barnabas' native land it was a very good place to begin the expansion of the church. Once persecution broke out these converts would have taken the Gospel throughout the Empire with them showing that Paul was not rejected by the Jews.

Paul was able to establish many churches and also the office of Elders. This would not have been possible if he had been rejected by everyone. These Elders were in charge of organisation, discipline and worship. Showing that despite the difficulties he faced the Holy Spirit guided him meaning it was impossible for these difficulties to thwart the spread of the Gospel.

Finally, his missionary journey would have provided comfort to many Christians being persecuted in the early church. Thus Paul being rejected by the Jews and facing persecution would provide comfort as his courage and faith to continue his mission was something to be admired.

In conclusion, It is clear that Paul did initially take the Gospel first to the Jews and then was rejected by them. However this simply meant that Paul could evangelise the Gentiles making his just missionary journey ultimately a success.

Examiner's comments

B5 23/25

This response is an excellent attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the Paul's evangelical strategy and its response particularly from the Jews on his first missionary journey. There is a very high degree of evidence and example from the text as the task demanded. At times, the response details a very good knowledge and understanding of the narrative from the first missionary journey. The response also then refers specifically to the examples of when the Jews rejected the gospel in particular in Pisidian Antioch with some good although not extensive detail. Further evidence is drawn from the text of those Jews who followed Paul in order to disrupt his missionary work in Lystra. The answer also reflects the variety of response to Paul's message with some Jews not rejecting. The response attempts to address the task in a sophisticated and mature manner. There is an extensive range of technical language and vocabulary.

Q3b With reference to other aspects of human experience, comment on the view that religious belief should be a private matter. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

There is much debate as to whether religious belief should be kept as a private matter. Firstly many argue that it should be a private matter since it can cause problems for people in a work environment. For example, Nadia Ediewa was recently suspended from her position at British Airways for wearing a crucifixion. Similarly, a mother of a 5 year old child who was reprimanded for stating her faith as "fact", was investigated for professional misconduct. The mother who worked in the primary school part time and was found to have emailed her friends along to pray about the issue.

Also, many believe that religious belief should be a private matter in that it inevitably leads to persecution and rejection. For example, in 2004 vicars were warned not to wear their 'dog collars' in public since it left them exposed to violence. In fact a 2001 academic study showed that at least 12% of the clergy felt as though they had been a victim of a violent attack because of their belief. More than this, proclaiming religious belief has proved to be a problem for Christian towns in Kenya who have been targeted by Islamic State. Similarly Islamic State representatives in Syria also have beheaded Christian missionaries in 2015.

Moreover, many believe that religious belief should be a private matter since it causes tension between other faiths, or those with no faith at all. For example, The Christian Party Office was vandalised after releasing a bus campaign in response to the famous atheist bus campaign which states "There probably isn't a God, so enjoy your life! The Christian Party offer a counter argument to those stating "There definitely is a God so join the Christian Party and enjoy your life". Moreover many feel that Christian evangelism is forceful and tells people off and should therefore be kept as a private matter.

However, on the other hand many believe that religious belief should not be kept as a private matter as it can better the lives of many. For example, Corrie Ten Boom was enabled to enrich the lives of more in a Nazi concentration camp by making her faith known. She was able to make the last days of their lives valuable. As well as this, Eric Liddel while in a detention camp in China was able to help others by sharing the faith.

Similarly, Nikki Cruz was thankful that David Wilkenson did not keep his religious belief private even after spitting in his face. This is evident through the establishment of the famous Nikki Cruz church. Lastly it is clear that religious believes should not keep their belief private as God, in commands Christians to make disciples of all nations.

Also, Christian teaching ministry has certainly enriched people's lives for example, the Coleraine/Belfast vineyard church reaches out to those who are suffering by offering prayer for healing. Thus it is clear that religious believers should not keep their belief as it provides hope. In conclusion, I believe this is therefore important for religious beliefs.

Examiner's comments

B5 22/25

In the light of other aspects of human experience the response provides a comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis of the claim that religious belief is a private matter. Evidence is drawn from a variety of situations in contemporary life to display how problematic public religious belief can be. The example was used of the controversy over the difficulties of wearing religious symbols in places of employment or school. The quality of the evidence was further enhanced statistics. Further evidence is offered in the case of persecuted Christians who could not publicly proclaim their faith in some countries. Religion is also argued to be a cause of division and tension. This showed an excellent attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked. An excellent attempt was also made to formulate a counter argument. The positive impact of people like Corrie Ten Boom and Eric Liddle who were public about their religious belief were used as evidence to the contrary. Arguments were reasoned, well constructed and well informed.

Q4a Examine the role of Philip in Acts and consider his importance for the spread of the Christian message. [25]

Student's response

Philip is first seen in Acts at the choosing of the seven. This is when men were chosen from the church to be deacons and carry out administrative jobs in the early church. But these men were required to be "full of the spirit." Philip also acted as a missionary and an evangelist. This happened after the death of Stephen. The church was dispersed from Jerusalem as they faced persecution. The diaspora brought Philip to Samaria.

Philip has an effective evangelist here as he was a hellenist. This means he was a Greek speaking Jew. So like the Samaritans he was an outcast from the main Jewish believers. Barclay comments how "his message was welcomed," in Samaria. The Samaritans were schismatics or half Jews who had split from the Jerusalem Jews. Stott says the hatred between the Jews and Samaritans had lasted over "1000 years." Yet Philip was able to convert many believers through teaching and miracles.

In his ministry Marshall point out he reassured the "marginal and outcasts like Jesus did". This shows how he was able to spread the Christian message to people who a normal Jew would look down on. Philip was the first person to convert people outside Jerusalem. He made a big step in bringing the gospel to "the ends of the earth." as the commission instruted the disciples. Philip also had to face opposition from Simon the sorcerer. A local who had powers and was highly regarded by many. It was Peter who rebuked him when he tried to pay for the ability to lay hands. Once this opposition was defeated it allowed Philip to move on from Samaria.

Philip was called by an angel to go to the road between Gaza and Jerusalem. Philip went and came across an Ethiopian Eunuch. Marshall says it was "surprising he met the Eunuch at all" as the road was usually deserted. This shows that God was directing and helping Philip. The Eunuch was a high ranking official and it is thought by Stott "he may have been a Jew". Others think it is likely he was a God fearer. As he travelled he was reading Isaiah 53. Bruce described this as "an ideal passage for an evangelist.

Philip approached the Eunuch and asked him if he understood the passage. He didn't so Philip explained how Jesus was the one who suffered and he is the messiah. The Eunuch believed and as they past a stream he asked to be baptised. The holy spirit came upon him and he rejoiced. The conversion of the Eunuch was thought to have brought Christianity to Ethiopia in Egypt. Evidence of this is that there were many members of the Coptic Church by the 1st century AD. This showed how Philip through the angels guidance was able to bring the message to Egypt.

I believe that Philip was essential to the spread of the Gospel and that he paved the way for Paul to follow on as the second missionary.

Examiner's comments

B5 23/25

This response is an excellent attempt to provide a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the role of Philip and his importance for the spread of the Gospel. The response identified Philip's first role as a deacon and the qualities needed to fulfil that role. Philip's role as an effective evangelist in Samaria and the challenge that brought for a Jew was referred to with a very high degree of evidence and example. The response also referred to Philip's dealings with Simon Magus and in particular displayed a comprehensive understanding and knowledge of the evangelization of the Ethiopian official and the role of the Holy Spirit. Emphasis was given to the importance of this conversion for the spread of Christianity to the wider world. Philip is correctly identified as a forerunner of Paul. The response contains a very good range of technical language and vocabulary.

Q4b With reference to other aspects of human experience, to what extent do sacred texts always have a positive impact on the lives of religious believers? Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

Sacred texts are crucial to the faith of millions of believers worldwide. In Christianity there is the Bible in Islam the Qur'an and Hinduism the Vedas. But these sacred texts don't always have a positive impacts on the lives of believers.

If we look at Christianity Christians believe that the bible is "God breathed". This means they rely on it to guide them, in the form of the ten commandments. They also use it to show them how to live – following the example of Jesus. It also shows them how they should pray – the Lord's prayer. All of these things should have a positive impact on believers as they know how to live their lives.

But sacred texts can also cause issues for Christians. As in the Old Testament there are laws that are not followed anymore – for example food laws. These old laws can confuse Christians and can have a negative impact on them. There are also issues that arise from the bible such as adult and infant baptism. Churches like the Presbyterian and Methodist practice infant and Baptist and Pentecostal churches practice adult baptism. This shows that the bible can cause division among the church.

If you look at the Qur'an it is very important to Muslims. They believe that it should be put on the top shelf in the house and it is very sacred. It can bring positives impacts to the believers as it shows them how to pray and how often they should pray. They believe it comes directly from Allah and it was received by Muhammad over 23 years. This is why they follow it so strictly.

The Qur'an can have negative impacts on believers as it has to be read in Arabic. This can cause problems for believers who don't speak Arabic. This often results in believers learning the Qur'an but having no idea what it means. This makes worship a lot more empty and useless. Another issue with the Qur'an is that the mix of meccan and medinan surahs can leave the readers confused on it's order.

In the Roman Catholic church they don't believe the Bible is the only source of authority. They also think the Pope has authority. This means that they don't rely as heavily on the Bible as other Christians. This can have a more positive impact on them as other Christians may be pressurised by the high moral standards of the bible alone.

Personally I believe that sacred texts do have positive impacts on believers as it provides them with guidance on how to live. But not always as it can leave the believer confused and put off by the demands of it's instructions.

Examiner's comments

B5 23/25

In the context of other aspects of human experience, the response demonstrates a comprehensive response to the task and provides a series of well-structured and balanced arguments in the context of other aspects of human experience, on the impact of the interpretation of sacred texts on religious believers. Texts from a variety of world faiths were correctly identified. An excellent attempt was made to give critical analysis of the Christian understanding of their sacred scripture, the bible and then critiqued the potentially negative impact different interpretations of scripture can have. Reference was made to food laws in the Old Testament that no longer have meaning and different interpretations of the text leading to when baptism is given that can cause division among Christians. In a similar way the response offered a critique of the impact of the Qur'an. Positively it helps people pray and negatively non-Arabic speakers may have difficulty with its meaning. The response also made an excellent attempt at identifying and applying different teachings. For example how the Catholic Church have other sources of authority other than the Bible. A Sophisticated answer with clear and coherent structure.



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

