1.7 The Incarnation and the Nature of Jesus: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain two contrasting Christian views on the virgin birth of Jesus. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 is 5 marks)

2 Give three things the Gospels teach about the circumstances of Jesus's conception and birth.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

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3 This question is about the incarnation and the nature of Jesus in Christian belief. It is the AQA-style 24-mark, five-part question.

(a) State one title given to Mary in Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, meaning 'God-bearer'. **(1)**

(b) Give two Old Testament prophecies Christians believe were fulfilled by Jesus's birth. **(2)**

(c) Explain two ways the incarnation is presented as fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. Refer to scripture in your answer. **(4)**

(d) Explain two contrasting Christian views on the significance of Mary in the incarnation. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer. **(5)**

(e) Evaluate this statement: 'Jesus could not have been both fully God and fully human.' In your answer you should: refer to Christian teaching, refer to different points of view, reach a justified conclusion. **(12)**

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(Total for Question 3 is 24 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.7 The Incarnation and the Nature of Jesus: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

view 1: many Christians, including Catholic and Orthodox Christians and many evangelical Christians, believe the virgin birth was a real historical event in which Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, oe **B1**

development: they point to Luke 1:34-35, where the angel tells Mary that the Holy Spirit will come on her and the child will be called the Son of God, and they see the virgin birth as showing that Jesus is uniquely God's Son, oe **B1**

view 2: other Christians see the virgin birth as a symbolic way of expressing Jesus's divine significance, rather than as literal biology, oe **B1**

development: they note that only Matthew and Luke record it, and argue that the message of the incarnation, that God is present in Jesus, does not depend on how Jesus was conceived, oe **B1**

reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast: a literal, historical virgin birth (Luke 1:34-35) vs a symbolic expression of Jesus's special status, given that only Matthew and Luke record it.

Question 2

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit while Mary was still a virgin, oe **B1**

his birth was believed to fulfil Old Testament prophecy, oe **B1**

he was born in Bethlehem, oe **B1**

Answer: Any three: conceived by the Holy Spirit while Mary was a virgin; birth fulfilled prophecy; born in Bethlehem.

Question 3

(a) Theotokos, oe **B1**

(a) Answer: Theotokos.

(b) Isaiah 7:14, a virgin conceiving and giving birth to a son called Immanuel, oe **B1**

(b) Micah 5:2, a ruler for Israel coming from Bethlehem, oe **B1**

(b) Answer: E.g. Isaiah 7:14 (virgin birth, Immanuel) and Micah 5:2 (ruler from Bethlehem).

(c) point 1: Jesus's virgin birth is presented as fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy, oe **B1**

(c) development: Matthew 1:22-23 states this 'took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet', quoting Isaiah 7:14, oe **B1**

(c) point 2: Jesus's birthplace is presented as fulfilling Micah's prophecy, oe **B1**

(c) development: Micah 5:2 names Bethlehem as the origin of a coming ruler, and Luke 2:4-7 records Jesus being born there, oe **B1**

(c) Answer: E.g. virgin birth fulfilling Isaiah 7:14 (Matthew 1:22-23); birth in Bethlehem fulfilling Micah 5:2 (Luke 2:4-7).

(d) view 1: Catholic and Orthodox Christians hold Mary in very high regard, honouring her with the title Theotokos, oe **B1**

(d) development: this title was affirmed at the Council of Ephesus, 431 AD, and Catholic teaching additionally holds the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (defined 1854), that Mary herself was conceived without original sin so she could be a fitting vessel for God the Son, oe **B1**

(d) view 2: most Protestant Christians give Mary a more modest role, oe **B1**

(d) development: honouring her as the mother of Jesus and a model of faithful obedience, based on Luke 1:38, 'I am the Lord's servant... may your word to me be fulfilled', without holding doctrines about her own sinlessness or a distinct devotional veneration, oe **B1**

(d) reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe **B1**

(d) Answer: Contrast: high veneration of Mary as Theotokos, including the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (Catholic and Orthodox) vs a more modest emphasis on Mary's obedient faith (Luke 1:38, typical Protestant view).

(e) **L4** A well-argued, balanced answer that considers more than one point of view in a developed way, using accurate and detailed references to Christian teaching and/or scripture to support each point, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion. **10-12**

(e) **L3** A clear and reasoned answer that considers more than one point of view, supported by relevant references to Christian teaching and/or scripture, though the justification of the conclusion may be less developed. **7-9**

(e) **L2** A reasoned answer that considers at least one point of view, with some relevant supporting evidence, but with limited or no consideration of an alternative view. **4-6**

(e) **L1** One or more relevant points are made, but with little or no supporting evidence and no reasoned conclusion. **1-3**

(e) **L0** No relevant content. **0**

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(e) Indicative content:

- Agree: full divinity (such as omniscience and omnipotence) can seem logically incompatible with the genuine limitations of a human life, such as hunger, tiredness, and, as Mark 13:32 records Jesus saying of the timing of the end times, 'no one knows... nor the Son, but only the Father'.
- Agree: the doctrine involves an element of mystery that cannot be fully explained by reason alone, which some see as a weakness in the claim rather than an acceptable feature of it.
- Agree: some historical groups (e.g. Arian Christianity in the fourth century, formally rejected as heresy at the Council of Nicaea) argued Jesus could not be fully, eternally God in the same sense as the Father, showing the claim has been genuinely contested even within the early Church.
- Disagree: mainstream Christian teaching, agreed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD, states Jesus is 'truly God and truly man', two natures united in one person - a formulation accepted across Catholic, Orthodox and the great majority of Protestant Christianity for over 1,500 years.
- Disagree: scripture is used to support both natures without contradiction: Colossians 2:9 for full divinity, and Hebrews 4:15 and John 1:14 ('the Word became flesh') for full humanity.
- Disagree: many Christians argue both natures are necessary for salvation to work theologically - a fully human but not divine Jesus could not achieve salvation (Philippians 2:6-8), while a fully divine but not truly human Jesus could not authentically represent or redeem humanity.
- A balanced answer might conclude that, while the doctrine cannot be proven by reason alone and involves genuine mystery, most Christians across denominations hold it is not logically self-contradictory, since 'fully God and fully human' describes two distinct natures united in one person, rather than a single nature with contradictory properties.

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