



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

2011
HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION

WRITING BOOKLET

Examination

History Extension

Section	Part	Question Number
II		2

Date

3/11/14

Number of booklets
used for this question

3

Instructions

- Write your Centre Number and Student Number at the top of this page.
- In the boxes provided write the name and date of this examination, and the number(s) of the question(s) attempted in this booklet.
- If you have not attempted the question, you must still hand in the Writing Booklet, with the words 'NOT ATTEMPTED' written clearly on the front cover.
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Start here The Historicity of Jesus

While ^{trying} to assess who Jesus really was, it is evident that "historians are left forever chasing shadows, painfully aware of their inability ever to reconstruct a dead world in its completeness however thorough or revealing their documentation." This applies in particular to the historicity of Jesus; was he the Messiah, preaching the coming of God's Kingdom on Earth or a radical/revolutionary figure, who was trying to free the Jews from the Roman occupation of the Galilee?

A Messiah true to Jewish beliefs, differs than the definition provided in Christian theology. The Jews believe a Messiah, ~~as~~ one who has come from the Davidic line, in order to rid the Jewish population of oppression. A holy figure anointed by God, by holy anointing oil, as found in Exodus. This is important to note that true to Hebrew teachings a Messiah is not God or the Son of God.

The Christian belief in the Messiah, differs

greatly from the Jewish and the Islamic. True to Christian theology, ^{the meaning of} Christ and Messiah are synonymous. An eschatological prophet preaching, the coming of God's Kingdom on Earth. The word ^{Christ} comes from the Greek work 'kristos', which was used by the Jews in Antioch to prescribed those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah. Meaning God or God the Son.

It is important to note that the basis of Christianity and the belief of Jesus the Messiah lie in the synoptic Gospels. However one sees even through the holiest of Christian texts that 'historians are left forever chasing shadows,' as here, in these texts despite many similarities, many differences are evident and hence four Jesus's arise from these text, a Jesus for Jews, Gentiles, Greeks etc.

However thorough of revealing their documentations, historians are unable to ever reconstruct the dead. ~~Hence ever who~~ Hence Robert Stein hard line Christian convert says those who believe that Jesus is the Messiah, most

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believe all that is said about in the Gospels, Nicene Creed, there is no room for debate. He believes "Christ died on the Cross for our sins and will return on the last day." Stein even claims that one must believe in Christ's/the Messiah's healing and resurrection abilities, even when different documentations, sources ~~never~~ portray events that ^{many} find hard to believe, such as the alleged incident when Jesus was healing someone, made a mistake, paused and then corrected himself.

Nicholas Thomas Wright (N.T. Wright) New Testament Scholar and former Bishop of Durham, holds conservative Christian beliefs. He believes that Jesus was the Messiah preaching the coming of God's Kingdom on Earth.

Wright writes, "Jesus came to replenish us of our sins," he also claims that Jesus knew when he would die, and did so unquestionably for the salvation of mankind, "he went to the mountain not to preach, but to die..." Wright also

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rejects the 'Q plus Thomas' proposal of a non-eschatological movement, due to his belief in Jesus the Messiah. In regards to the historicity of Jesus, Wright agrees with Albert Schweitzer (throughgoing eschatology).

The fact remains that the historical Jesus is unrecoverable, as one will never fully attain an understanding, nor is able to ~~reconstruct~~ "reconstruct a dead world;" historians are left forever casting shadows, however history is open for interpretation, based on what little evidence the historian has, and the perception that is gained, as highlighted in the debate about the historicity of Jesus

In recent times, in particular after the Holocaust of the 1940s, the belief that Jesus was a radical social revolutionary figure who was executed for political purposes has taken hold.

Radical, postmodernist Robert Eisenman is one such believer, who is trying to re-claim Jesus as Jew (he himself being a post holocaust Jew).

It is evident in his work, particularly in his book James the Brother of Jesus, that historians are left forever casting shadows, painfully aware of their inability to recover the past. He states that Jesus was punished as he was against the Roman occupation of Jews in Judea, that he was trying to rid the Jewish population of oppression.

Christianity he believes is a pro-Roman, pro-Gentile movement, Paul's Hellenistic cult. In his book James The Brother of Jesus, he believes the Jesus movement, was primarily a Jewish, Torah observant, nationalist, insurrectionalist bent movement. That ^{Christianity is, in fact a} ~~Jamesian~~ ^{the} Christianity (James is central ~~to this idea~~), Gospels have omitted him from history), he likens James to the Teacher of Righteousness and Paul as the spouter of lies. That Jesus was a radical revolutionary Jew and was punished for being so with his life.

Although not as radical himself, Hyam

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Maccoby, to sees Jesus as a Radical, revolutionary figure, a non-violent person, vidding to Jews of Occupation. He believes that "Paul is the ^{Roma} 'real' founder of Christianity and not Jesus."

Most significantly, as he himself unlike Eisenman is not Jewish, believes it was the Jews who brought Jesus under the attention of Pilate. ^{ultimately deceived him} They were threatened by his destruction of the temple, and presented him as a political figure, which wasn't hard due to the nature of his speeches, and words. The Jews were threatened by his endeavours as "the Prophet of Social Change." These differing interpretations, even amongst those who hold the same 'view point', is testament to Schama's conviction that "historians are forever left casting shadows, painfully aware of their inability ever to reconstruct a dead world in its completeness however thorough or revealing their documentation."

^{Expanding upon} ~~in accordance with~~ Simon Schama's views in Dead Certainties, Albert Schweitzer, stated

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that one is never going to understand who Jesus really was; he is a figure of the past, God to some and not to others. He even suggested that the search for the historicity of Jesus should cease as one was never going to fully understand who Jesus was, despite their beliefs. To an extent this was followed for some time.

However history is subject to interpretation, as ^ahistorians views, beliefs, time, situation; ~~and~~ in essence his context will shape his perception of events ^{and people in history} despite being painfully aware of their inability ever to reconstruct a dead world in its completeness!! It is true Jesus and the world in which he lived are long gone, however we are left with documentation, archeological sources, differing viewpoints and a thirst to uncover the historical Jesus. Everyone has an opinion on the historicity of Jesus; There are those like Steinhilber and Wright who believe that Jesus was the Messiah, God or God the Son, despite the difficulties present, the fact that the past is unrecoverable one who believes, believes at all, uncertainly ~~indeed~~.

Those like Eisenman and Maccoby, whilst having similar beliefs in Jesus the radical prophet of social change, differ over some discrepancies, highlighting that historical documentation however thorough or revealing never account for a full truth or an accurate portrayal of the past. Hence the debate over the historicity of Jesus, whether Jesus was the Messiah, a pacifist preaching the coming of God's Kingdom on Earth or a radical, revolutionary figure, the prophet of social change, ~~highlight~~ aiming to rid the Jews of Roman Occupation, (historians are left forever casting shadows, painfully aware of their inability ever to reconstruct a dead world / figure in its / his completeness however thorough or revealing their documentation." Evident in the fact that the true historical Jesus is unrecoverable and debate ^{in regards} ~~arise~~ to his historicity arises from, the uncertainties and inability to reconstruct the past regardless of whatever avenues we have to help us attempt do so (revealing documentation)

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