

MARK SCHEME for the May/June 2015 series

9774 PHILOSOPHY

9774/02

Paper 2 (Topics and Key Texts in Philosophy and Theology 1), maximum raw mark 50

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Topic 1 Epistemology

Section A

[Extract from **Bertrand Russell**: *The Problems of Philosophy*: Ch.4: 'Idealism', pp.27–29]

1 With reference to this passage and to Russell's views on Berkeley:

- (a) Give a brief overview of Russell's account of Berkeley's idealism, and explain how Russell objects to it. [10]

Russell accepted as valid Berkeley's reasoning that sense data depend on our perceptions, since where minds stop perceiving tastes, sights, etc., then the sense data themselves cease to exist. Since sense data exist in minds, then all knowable things exist in minds / a mind. To exist is to be perceived, so reality is the product of a mind. In Berkeley's terminology, sense data are 'ideas'. Berkeley answered *the* epistemic problem of what happens to objects when they are not perceived by arguing that objects have permanent existence as perceptions in the mind of God, who guarantees the consistency of perceptions.

Russell argued that Berkeley could not rationally claim that objects exist 'in' the mind, since it is more coherent to accept that there really are material objects that are the cause of our perceptions of the world. Idealism is therefore a counter-intuitive philosophical system. Berkeley treated the concept of sense data as something subjective / in the mind, whereas it manifestly is not. Moreover Berkeley fails to distinguish between the awareness of an object and the object itself. He refers back to his comment in ch.1, where he argues that whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation of the colour, but the colour itself is a sense datum, and not a sensation. So in ch.4 Russell says, "Our previous arguments proved that ... a certain colour will exist, in a certain light, if a normal eye is placed at a certain point relatively to the table. They did not prove that the colour is in the mind of the percipient."

- (b) 'Berkeley's idealism can stand up to any objections.' Critically assess this claim. [15]

Berkeley's 'Master Argument' is that since it is impossible to conceive of mind-independent objects, such objects do not exist. For a tree to exist outside the mind, it is necessary to be able to think of an unconceived tree; but in endeavouring to do that, we inevitably conceive it; so it seems inescapable to conclude that trees do not exist outside the mind. According to Russell, Berkeley's main error was to conflate the act of perception with what is perceived, which led him to the false conclusion that since the former is in the mind, the objects of perception must be in the mind also. This may not be a justifiable criticism on the part of Russell, since Berkeley was aware of this issue (and his articulation of idealism anticipates and deals with many other criticisms). According to Berkeley, the only true mental act is an act of the will, whereas perception itself is passive, and not an act. There is no confusion, therefore, between the act of perception and what is perceived.

The wording of the question means that candidates are at liberty to refer to any further objections to Berkeley's idealism: for example that the inclusion of God as the guarantor of the consistency of sense impressions appears to be circular logic; or Berkeley's assumption that minds exist, since we never experience mind directly – only ideas.

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Section B

2 Analyse foundationalism as a theory of knowledge.

[25]

Expect some description of foundationalism as the claim that all knowledge rests on a foundation that is justified non-inferentially. Foundationalism stems from the rejection of the 'infinite regress' argument: for there to be any justified knowledge at all, there must be some beliefs that are self-justified / foundational, and not inferred from any other beliefs. Foundationalism generally entails infallibilism, although there is disagreement over the composition of the infallible foundation. The Cartesian infallible foundation rests on the certainty of the *cogito*, although a more common infallibilist foundation is justification by immediate experience, hence some argue that all knowledge is founded on what we experience immediately in consciousness. For example, although I can be mistaken in assuming that the patch of red in front of me is a tomato, I can hardly be mistaken if I say that, 'I seem to see a round patch of red', a belief that is 'given' to me and not inferred. On this view, then, our experience of sense data is infallible, and justifies all our other beliefs.

Infallibilist claims face a major problem in that neither belief nor experience can meet infallibilist demands. Cartesian certainty is psychological, based on certainty in the mind, which is not the same as an indubitable belief, because any mind can be mistaken. The appeal to experience is equally dubious, since what I *seem* to see I may not in fact see at all, for example if I seem to see a patch of red but am colour-blind. Moreover foundationalism can lead to scepticism, because even if we grant that the alleged foundations are sound, what else is entailed by them? To avoid this, foundationalists might waive the infallibilist requirement and instead claim that experience is a sufficient foundation, giving us good, or sufficient grounds for knowledge; but this merely reduces to reliance on sense data, and people can be mistaken about sense data. The only basis for the claim that sense data might be foundational would be evidence and probability, but evidence and probability can only be inferred through experience, whereas the foundation needs to be *non-inferential*.

Candidates might also analyse foundationalism by comparing it with coherentism and reliabilism.

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3 Critically assess objections to phenomenalist theories of perception. [25]

Phenomenalist theories claim that propositions about material objects reduce to propositions about actual and possible sensations / sense data: talk about material objects is talk about sense data. Phenomenalism seeks to avoid the difficulties facing realist and idealist theories of perception, for example where realists might talk about material objects that are beyond perception, when we have no proof that there are things beyond perception. The phenomenalist claim is therefore that it is not legitimate to go beyond the evidence of sense experience.

Candidates are likely to consider phenomenism through J.S. Mill and A.J. Ayer. Mill's metaphysical account describes material objects as 'permanent possibilities of physical sensation' which, through experience we have come to expect as being permanently available under certain conditions. Material objects are clusters of possible sensations. Ayer's linguistic account sees material objects as logical constructions out of sense data, so a table can be defined using sentences that do not contain that word but do contain symbols that stand for sense data (e.g. a table is an experience of smoothness, flatness, etc.). On this account there is no 'thing in itself', and to say that a table exists is to say that certain types of sense data have been experienced / will be experienced under certain conditions.

Candidates might assess several objections to phenomenism, for example if all I can know is my immediate experience, what can be said about other minds? Phenomenalists find it peculiarly difficult to explain objects and events in the past, or to account for the orderly nature of sense data. If sense data are predictable, this might be good evidence that external material objects really exist. Ayer's account has particular difficulty in describing events that are not being observed. Candidates might discuss some or all of these points in assessing the strength of phenomenalist theories.

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Topic 2 Philosophical and Theological Language

Section A

[Extract from **A.J. Ayer**: *Language, Truth and Logic*: Ch.1, 'The Elimination of Metaphysics', pp. 13–16]

4 With reference to this passage and to Ayer's views on the elimination of metaphysics:

(a) Explain how Ayer attempts to eliminate metaphysics.

[10]

Like all philosophers, would-be metaphysicians need to begin with the evidence of their senses. If they do this, metaphysics will eventually depart from their mental horizons. Metaphysics can't be overthrown by discussing where it comes from, since the metaphysician will simply plead intuition; so it is necessary to debunk metaphysical propositions and claims. According to Ayer, it is by definition impossible to know what lies beyond sense experience. Whatever metaphysicians do or don't do, they don't obey the rules governing the significant use of language. Ayer thus applies the criterion of verifiability to test the genuineness of what appear to be statements of fact. 'There are mountains on the far side of the moon' passes that test, whereas F.H. Bradley's, "the Absolute enters into, but is itself incapable of, evolution and progress" is not even in principle verifiable; neither is the nebulous concept of 'substance', and the dispute between realists and idealists is equally vacuous, for example in endeavouring to work out using realist / idealist criteria whether or not a picture thought to be by Goya is really by Goya. The sentence 'unicorns are fictitious' resembles the statement that 'dogs are faithful'; but the fact that dogs must exist in order to be faithful has led metaphysicians to presume that the two propositions are analogous, so that unicorns must have some form of existence in order to possess the property of being fictitious. It is no better to assert that metaphysics is a kind of poetry, expressing emotion and providing moral inspiration - this is false. Poets do not make a habit of writing sentences with no literal meaning, and even when they do, their sentences are often chosen for rhythm. The metaphysician doesn't intend to write nonsense: he lapses into it through being deceived by grammar. Strong verification demands too much, whereas weak verification allows significance to historical propositions, for example. Religious language is a form of metaphysical language, and candidates might also outline Ayer's analysis of propositions about a transcendent God and about souls, since as metaphysical propositions these are also meaningless.

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(b) 'Ayer fails to eliminate metaphysics.' Discuss.

[15]

From Ayer's chapter on the elimination of metaphysics, Ayer offers his principle of weak verification as a decisive criterion of meaning. Candidates are likely to discuss the methodology of weak verification and verification in principle, which have the advantage over strong verification and verification in practice in being less intolerant in not showing vast swathes of human culture from poetry and history to art and music to be meaningless nonsense. With regard to metaphysics itself, Ayer perhaps confused metaphysics with mysticism, since much of his attack is directed at the existence of God as a metaphysical entity, whereas the existence of such a being as a creator is hardly eliminated by verificationism. One of the main issues with Ayer's critique is that it is self-refuting: to claim that all non-verifiable statements are meaningless is itself a metaphysical claim: it cannot be grounded in sense experience so is unverifiable by its own criteria, a fact which Ayer himself later accepted. The influence of his introductory chapter on the rest of the book is clear, where Ayer concludes that aesthetics and ethics are meaningless, theology is false, and philosophy should finally be identified with the logic of science. Metaphysics concerns itself with a range of subject material, such as space and time, objects and their properties, determinism and free will, the nature of mind, and cause and effect; and since none of these areas shows any sign of going away, candidates might conclude that metaphysics is alive and well.

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Section B

5 'Good cannot be a factual property.' Discuss. [25]

Candidates are likely to begin with some version of ethical naturalism, that good is a natural factual property. Factual / cognitivist theories of ethics include, for example, Natural Law and Utilitarianism, and candidates might spend some time in showing why these qualify as naturalist theories. For Natural Law, the facts of morality can be discovered in the facts of the world; the good is obedience to God's moral commands seen in our common human nature. For Utilitarianism, the good revolves around various definitions of the happiness principle: self-interest in psychological egoism and the pain / pleasure principle in Bentham. In naturalist theories, good is a complex, analysable term, which is the basis of G.E. Moore's argument that ethical naturalism commits the 'naturalistic fallacy' of drawing ethical conclusions from natural facts. For Moore, good is a simple, unanalysable concept, like 'yellow': it is irreducible, so cannot be defined using synonyms or other terms. Candidates might refer to Moore's Open Question argument, or to the 'fact-value gap'; they might conclude that a non-cognitive theory of ethics is preferable, e.g. Emotivism or Prescriptivism, or else virtue ethics in which good centres on the facts about the behaviour of the moral agent.

Some will refer to the contrasts between absolutist and relative ethical theories, where relativist theories stress the absence of an agreed / common body of facts from the moral traditions of different societies. This might lead some to an existentialist approach to ethics, where the emphasis is on the necessity for human choice in the absence of any external moral / factual constraint on behaviour. Judge by quality of argument.

6 Assess critically the view that Wittgenstein's concept of language games provides a complete understanding of religious language. [25]

Wittgenstein's language game theory is essentially an alternative view of religious language which avoids the general cognitive / non-cognitive divide. Candidates might describe Wittgenstein's analysis of religious language and of God in anti-real terms, rooted in forms of life needing no justification. Its surface grammar can be misleading by appearing to be empirical whereas its depth grammar is about passionate commitment. Religious language expresses an emotional attitude and understanding of life, with a commitment to leading life according to that understanding. Candidates are likely to illustrate these points with reference to specific types and usages of religious language.

In deciding whether or not Wittgenstein's approach offers a full understanding of religious language, there are several routes candidates might take. Some might argue that it neutralises the threat from verificationism and falsificationism, since truth is user-defined. It might also be said to remove the spotlight from the cognitive / non-cognitive debate, in so far as the facts of religion are part of the definitions bestowed by the believing community using either cognitive or non-cognitive language in pursuance of their faith. Some are likely to argue that Wittgenstein does not provide a complete understanding of religious language on account of the fact that many see it as falling into a fideistic bog, with the excuse that if truth is user-defined, then *anything* one wants to believe in lies outside the domain of analysis by external authorities or of those who have no use for that particular language game. Realists might want to argue that where religion makes cognitive claims, then cognitive tests should apply. There seems little doubt that Wittgenstein's comments about the construction of language in a social context go some way to explaining fideistic approaches to religion, but candidates might argue that language game theory does not seem to offer a complete understanding of religious language in so far as it does seek to defend some of its claims cognitively. Alternative claims that religious language is mythopoeic, allegorical and symbolic arguably stand in their own right, irrespective of the claims of language game analysis, and many would claim that 'There is a God' is a straightforward cognitive (probabilistic) claim regardless of Wittgenstein's requests for silence.

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Topic 3 Philosophy of Religion

Section A

[Extract from **John Hick**: *Evil and the God of Love*, Ch.XV, 'Suffering', pp. 318–319]

7 With reference to this passage and to Hick's views on suffering:

(a) Explain Hick's argument that suffering is ultimately about soul making and mystery.

[10]

Hick begins by discussing pain as the cause of suffering. Some pain is useful / beneficial, e.g. that suffered by a mountain climber or a yachtsman, but most human misery transcends physical pain, for example the trauma of long illness and the fear of death, together with the feelings of remorse and failure that people feel on many occasions. On the whole, however, the sum total of contentment and happiness is greater than the sum total of misery and pain. However that is not a solution to the problem of evil. God could have made the world a paradise without suffering, but this contravenes what Hick has said before of the necessity for creation to be at an epistemic distance from God: humans must be free to learn to love the good through all the vicissitudes of life. God could intervene, but this would not be true freedom. Excessive / dysteleological suffering is a major problem, for example the sheer extent of the misery caused by hurricanes, and the vast loss of life in famines in China; or the fact of a child dying of meningitis. The traditional answer is that the world has been corrupted by fallen angels, but again, Hick refers to his earlier rejection of that supposition. Hick concludes that the purpose of suffering lies in soul-making. As for suffering that is excessive / dysteleological, we have to conclude by a frank appeal to the Christian value of 'mystery'.

(b) Critically assess Hick's explanation of suffering.

[15]

Candidates may discuss some or all of the points raised in Hick's chapter on suffering, and are free to draw upon material from elsewhere in Hick's book and from the wider context of the debate concerning the issues he raises. For example, how convincing is his 'frank appeal to the Christian value of mystery'? Is it good enough to (in effect) say that it's a mystery, when elsewhere Hick strives to use his rational faculties to assess the problem of evil? Hick touches on the major problem of dysteleological evil, where the real issues are not just the amount of it, but its type. Candidates might mention different types of dysteleological evil, for example those which afflict non-human animals, and for which Hick has no answer at all, not least because Christian theodicy does not include non-human animals in its views of a future heavenly kingdom. Judge by quality of analysis and breadth or depth of the discussion.

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Section B

8 Critically examine cosmological arguments for the existence of God. [25]

Technically speaking, Aquinas' three formulations of the Cosmological Argument are different forms of the argument, so candidates who offer only Aquinas' Ways are compliant with the request to examine 'arguments' in the question, and are eligible for full marks. Aquinas' arguments are inductive in nature but deductive in form. Candidates are likely to explain their background in Aristotelian arguments concerning the Four Causes, alongside Aristotle's understanding of act and potential. Way 1, from motion, is arguably false, since it is in necessary ignorance of gravity as an inbuilt process of motion. Some candidates will be aware that in this and the other Ways, Aquinas is talking about an essentially ordered series of movers, and not an accidentally ordered series, so the argument is essentially about motion here and now rather than about a linear cause in the remote past. Similarly the arguments from efficient cause and from necessity and contingency have the same underlying assumptions, so criticism lodged against Aquinas based on the belief that Aquinas is referring to God as a linear first cause and necessary being is not really applicable to Aquinas' version of the argument, although it is applicable, for example, to the Kalam argument. Further analysis might be based on the supposition that the first mover / first cause / necessary being is equivalent to the God of theism; or to arguments about the 'fallacy of composition', for example.

Candidates might look at other versions of the CA, for example the Kalam argument, Leibniz' Principle of Sufficient Reason, and Swinburne's C-Inductive argument. Swinburne raises the point that the CA is an inductive argument, so seeks to establish the probability of God and not a proof of God. For the higher Levels, arguments need to be unpacked and analysed.

9 'Religion is the product of human psychology.' Discuss. [25]

Psychological assessments of religion and religious behaviour are diverse, and candidates are at liberty to consider any relevant material. Most are likely to focus on Freudian arguments concerning (principally) his assessment of religion. For the higher Levels, this needs some attention to the detail of Freud's analysis as opposed to simplistic comments about the Oedipus complex. Candidates might refer, for example, to his writings in 'Moses and Monotheism' and 'Totem and Taboo', concerning which the consensus of Christian scholarship is that Freud knew little and researched little about the origins of Judaism and Christianity beyond subsuming both within the all-embracing explanation of the psychology of guilt. Some might argue that Freud was on reasonably sure ground in his general comments concerning the association between religious ritual and neurotic obsession, and that religion does in part appear as a response to human fear of the unknown. Freud's analysis of the religious conscience would also be relevant to the discussion.

Further discussion might for example consider Marx's analysis of religious psychology; Nietzsche's psychological critique of religion and the religious disposition; the Jungian analysis of archetypes, and others. A specific response to the format of the question is expected for the higher Levels. Judgements can be of any kind so long as the argument is coherent.

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Topic 4 New Testament – The Four Gospels

Answer Question 10 **and** either Question 11 **or** Question 12

Section A

Luke 7:11–17 New Revised Standard Version

Jesus Raises the Widow’s Son at Nain

10 (a) **Examine what this passage shows about the person and role of Jesus.** [10]

Students need to relate the points from the passage to the person and role of Jesus. All valid points made about Jesus should be related to aspects of the passage, not simply be generalisations.

e.g. Jesus was such an attractive personality that large crowds followed him. Mark suggests the large crowd was because people wanted to see miracles. He made people want to know more, to hunger for the truth. The compassion shown to the widowed mother reflects God’s love for the lowly and the outsider. God is often described as defender of the widow and here Jesus is enacting this role. Jesus is not asked to intervene – he does so out of love. His first words are to the mother, ‘Do not weep’, showing his understanding of the human condition. The words ‘I say to you rise’ are similar to the words spoken to Jairus’ daughter and to Lazarus, showing more that the person is asleep rather than dead. This could be to make people question whether death had taken place, because if it had not, Jesus has not done a marvellous deed. The act replicates the acts of Old Testament prophets, notably Elijah, showing that Jesus is in that tradition and is the fulfilment of the prophets. This is echoed in the people’s words ‘A great prophet has arisen among us’. In Luke 7 Jesus’ reply to John the Baptist’s disciples includes reference to the dead being raised to life. This event occurred in the period that people thought that prophecy was a thing of past ages, that God had abandoned his people. Jesus is seen as God’s visitation and act of caring for the Jews. Jesus is the one who gives true life.

(b) **‘Only the miracles in which Jesus raises someone from the dead show Jesus as God.’ Critically assess this claim.** [15]

Expect answers to consider the validity of the raising from the dead stories as well as the interpretation of these accounts. Students may focus on the nature of Jesus’ miracles as a whole and consider what any / all of these demonstrate about Jesus’ power and person.

e.g. Raising from the dead, giving new life, are true works of God. Only God can give life. By Jesus raising anybody from the dead, he is asserting his position as God-made-man. In John 11 Jesus refers to himself as the resurrection and the life, one of the ‘I am’ sayings, linking him to God. These raisings are also done out of love either for his friends or for the parents of the deceased, which also shows the divine qualities in Jesus. All other healing miracles seem to be low-key in comparison. Many people throughout history and in the time of Jesus were able to ‘miraculously’ heal the blind, the sick, the lame etc. There are very few proven cases of dead people being given back their lives. This raises one big question: were the people actually dead or did Jesus simply see signs of life that others had missed? Were these ‘miracles’ as genuine as they are presented in the gospels? Did they actually take place or were they just stories that got embroidered in the retelling? Don’t the healings that show the removal of evil from a person’s life, particularly sicknesses that destroyed a person’s ability to relate to others like leprosy or blindness, better reflect God’s gifts in Jesus. Are not nature miracles like walking on the water and feeding large crowds just as much signs of God’s power at work? Were there actually any miracles other than the Resurrection, which was done by God not by Jesus?

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Section B

- 11 'The Synoptic Gospels have no value since we do not know their authorship, dating or purpose.' Critically assess this claim. [25]**

Expect students to link the information presented by scholars, form-critical analysis etc. to the usefulness or otherwise of the Gospels. Expect some comment on the role of these documents for the believer and the Church.

e.g. There is an ancient tradition, going back to the time before Papias, that Matthew was the tax-collector apostle, Mark was the interpreter of Peter and Luke based his material on Paul's teaching. This would suggest that we do know who the gospel writers were and that their material comes from those who actually were or close to the followers of Jesus. If this were true, the Gospels would be invaluable for believers. However, there are too many questions raised. Why does Matthew appear to use Mark's account of the calling of himself (the tax-collector)? Why are there so many differences between the accounts of incidents while at the same time there are so many verbal consistencies? On closer inspection, using form critical methods, the ancient traditions have to be rejected. There are very few definite things that can be said about the Synoptic Gospels. Most of what is said is supposition and interpretation of "data". This means that people can get what they want out of a passage or a Gospel and twist it to their own ends, claiming that they are under the influence of the Holy Spirit. If people can twist things, there is no definitive value, and this raises the issue whether there is any value in these documents.

However, looking at the three documents, there are many things that can point us in a positive direction. That the Early Church valued these documents in the second century at least, cannot be doubted, though other documents that claimed to be similar were rejected. The Gospels contain teachings that were passed round by the early Christians in the oral period and these teachings were selected, written down, copied by hand to share with other Christians. While the exact details of who wrote down this information are lost, there are clues contained in the writings that help modern readers to gain insight into the mind of the Gospel writers. The more simplistic literary style of Mark would suggest that his document was written for a group that was not refined, certainly in comparison to Luke's style. The style, format and content help the modern reader to appreciate something about the community for which each individual Gospel was written. However, even if these hints are misleading, the modern believer can be inspired by the same documents that inspired the very early Christians. There is enough evidence to guarantee the early dating of these Gospels and therefore their reliability as a true reflection of the Christian message. Nothing else is really important on this issue.

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12 ‘John’s account of Jesus’ trial before Pilate and of the crucifixion has more value as history than as theology.’ Critically assess this claim. [25]

Expect students to include reference to the features of John’s Gospel that seems to contradict the Passion material in the Synoptic Gospels. Students will probably make reference to the symbolic nature of many of the events recorded in John’s accounts and assess their historical value. Valid statements could include the fact that theology and history are necessarily interlinked so it is not relevant to ask which has the most value (this position needs to be supported, not simply stated). e.g. As history there are many areas that can be included. The passion narratives as a whole in John and the Synoptics show close similarity indicating very early sources that are probably as reliable as any original source for historical documents. There are a number of features in John’s accounts that suggest historical reliability: the claims to eye witness testimony by the cross (19:35); the timing of events (18:28, 19:14) is closer to the commonly accepted dating of AD30 for the death than the Synoptics’ timing; the Jews’ refusal to enter the Praetorium is explained by their scrupulous adherence to the Law (18:28); reference to elements like The Pavement, Gabbatha, (19:13) from where judgement was given out (an unknown area for centuries) has probably been identified by excavations; the habits of sharing and casting lots for garments and the nature of Jesus’ garments (19:23–24) suggest eye-witness.

However, many elements of the accounts seem stylistic, which would argue about them being more for a theological purpose. The whole structure of the conversation between Pilate and Jesus is poetical: seven sections (A, B, C, D, E, F, G) with A = G, B = F etc. puts the whole focus on D the guards crown Jesus = accept him as their king, while the Jews reject God and his anointed as their king (19:16). The use of the titles King of the Jews and Son of God show the importance of Jesus. The paralleling of Jesus with the Paschal lamb being offered up in sacrifice stresses the innocence of Jesus. The events that are seen as fulfilling the scriptures (e.g. 19:36) might be actual events but their meaning is what is important to John. Jesus in control of what is happening (e.g. 19:30) contrasts sharply with Matthew and Mark’s accounts.

There needs to be some analysis of these and similar points, not just a listing of them to gain Level 4.

Both the trial before Pilate and the crucifixion need to be included to gain Level 5.