

DIVINITY

Paper 8041/02
The Four Gospels

General comments

Once again **Question 1**, the gobbets, seemed extremely popular with a lot of candidates. The most popular choices were **(a)** **(b)** and **(c)**. These tended to be well answered even though they were challenging. Gobbet **(d)** saw a lot of candidates confusing the Resurrection story.

The overall performance of the candidates was satisfactory to good but not all centres had prepared the candidates to read the questions and think carefully about their significance. High scoring candidates made good use of scholarly reading.

The general length of essays was a lot shorter than usual with some candidates writing only one side of A4 for their answers. Generally candidates made good use of the time available. The shorter length of some essays did not appear to be due to lack of time. Several candidates made the rubric error of only answering four gobbets (**Question 1**) and not four full questions. Candidates are reminded of the need to read rubric instructions carefully.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** A popular choice which many candidates selected because they were familiar with the story, but some did not comment on significant points. Instead they used the opportunity to retell the temptations of Jesus.
- (b)** As above, this was a popular choice and often well done. Many candidates commented on the significance of Pilate washing his hands and successfully expanded on this.
- (c)** This gobbet was also popular but some candidates confused the relationship with Herodias' daughter and Herod. Some very good comments were made to set the gobbet in context and explain why the request was made for John's Head.
- (d)** A lot of candidates muddled this with other Resurrection accounts and mentioned two angels in the story. Some did comment on the possibility of this being the probable ending of Mark.
- (e)** Few candidates chose this gobbet but those who did tended to answer it very well with good comment and contextual points.
- (f)** Again few candidates answered this gobbet but those who did clearly knew the story well. They talked about the place of 'joy' in the Lukan themes and a lot was made of the place of Satan in the ministry of Jesus and his followers.
- (g)** For this gobbet good comment was made on the Trinity relationship, and good comment on the Father/Son relationship. Some candidates made a link with Jesus' baptism.
- (h)** There were some solid answers to the question, including good contextual comment and attempts to identify the 'other disciple'.

Question 2

Those who chose this question tended to do it justice and knew the links between Moses and Jesus. Some drew them out well, but it was not a popular choice. Some talked too much about who Moses was and not enough about the significance of his role in connection with Jesus. This question tended to be chosen by candidates from the same centre, suggesting that they had been well prepared for such a question.

Question 3

Many candidates latched on to the person of Peter and selected material from other Gospels as well as Matthew. Some candidates did not tackle the importance of the portrait of Peter but wrote all they knew about his character and stories surrounding him. Disappointingly few made comment on the significance of the Confession and Transfiguration. The length of these answers was often short except from centres which had clearly addressed Peter's significance.

Question 4

This was a very popular question which had some candidates producing excellent answers. Often material was drawn from their wider reading and there was a lot of coverage of *when* and *where* it was written, with accurate quotation from the scholars. Well prepared centres did this question very well indeed.

Question 5

A popular choice, but many candidates' answers dealt with the humanity of Jesus and not the significance of the title 'Son of Man'. Few made mention of the theological/christological ideas in the Markan themes or the different types of Son of Man sayings (present, future and suffering). An interesting comment by one or two candidates was Markan's use of this title to cover the lack of birth narratives and so show His human side.

Question 6

Universalism was picked up in the parables and links were made to other Lukan themes. Answers were sound but some candidates resorted to just re-telling the stories with no significant comment on their distinctive features.

Question 7

The temptation for many was to write out the main Lukan themes without an attempt to answer why. Those who clearly prepared for this question covered the main ideas of the dedication to Theophilus and the defending of Christianity to Rome competently. Many covered the Gentile question in the Early Church very well also.

Question 8

Most candidates who attempted this question knew the 'I Am' sayings but not all referred to the stories or occasions in which Jesus said them. Some made reference to Moses and the burning bush with God's declaration of 'I Am'. This question tended to lead to shorter answers. As usual, Johannine questions were less popular than those referring to the Synoptics but one or two made a good attempt at it, giving more of an overview with illustration and example. For those who merely listed the sayings and failed to comment, the highest grades could not be awarded.

Question 9

This question was not popular and poorly answered by those candidates who attempted it. It demanded detailed knowledge of John's presentation of the Passion of Jesus but some candidates merely wrote about Passion points from all gospels or other gospels which led to muddled and confused essays. The length of some answers was shorter than expected for AS/A Level candidates.

Question 10

A popular question bringing out some very knowledgeable answers. Most candidates handled the stories separately but maintained a good balanced essay in the end. For those who had been well prepared, excellent answers were produced.

Question 11

Again a popular choice of question, with attempts to explain why Jesus came into conflict with the Pharisees. A lot of candidates spoke about the Pharisees in negative tones and did not consider Jesus' relationship with them which was not entirely hostile but He recognised their authority. This question produced a good length of essay mainly because of the candidates' ability to identify the areas of conflict and explain their significance.

Question 12

Not many candidates chose this question but those who did adequately talked about the occasions when Jesus urged his followers to give up all their possessions. There was a good knowledge of the relevant stories but the most popular were the Call of the Disciples and the Rich Young Ruler. No candidates covered the Sermon on the Mount in any detail. Relevant parables were mentioned. On the whole, this question was handled well.

Question 13

This was a very popular question with a lot of comment on the instances when women are mentioned in the Gospels. The best candidates made a genuine attempt to discuss and examine the contribution made by women to the life of Jesus. Mention was also made of the treatment of women in society at that time with good analysis. The question urged the candidates to come to their own conclusion and the better answers clearly included good discussion of the relevant material.

Question 14

An unpopular choice only attempted by a very few candidates. The question demands a balanced answer covering both theology and history but this was rarely produced. Responses should have included the purposes and situations of the authors as well as comment on Jesus as Christ and Saviour.