

DIVINITY

Paper 8041/02 The Four Gospels

General comments

The overall performance of the cohort was, in comparison to previous years, weaker. There were no instances of very high quality answers this session and the highest marks achieved were noticeably lower than in previous sessions. The overall standard of the paper was not deemed to be more difficult; it had a good balance of questions and differentiation was achieved.

Once again a number of candidates made the mistake of answering only **Question 1** and producing four extended answers for the gobbet question. This tended to be in Centres with low candidate numbers. In preparation of candidates for this examination, Centres are reminded of the need to ensure candidates are fully aware of what is required of them and that they adhere to the rubric.

In general, time was used wisely. Only one or two candidates ran out of time on their last answer and resorted to writing bullet point notes in order to reproduce all they knew.

It is of note for Centres and teachers preparing candidates for both AS and A Level that the majority of candidates who attempted **Question 2** did not fully understand the meaning of the word "ethical". It was a popular choice of question but candidates tended to write answers about Matthew's parables and general teaching of Jesus. Few candidates made mention of the Sermon on the Mount's teaching.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

As always, the gobbet question proved popular. There were some candidates who failed to adhere to the rubric by answering this question only and writing four essay length answers in response. Centres are advised to remind candidates of the need to adhere carefully to the rubric or they will forfeit a considerable number of marks.

Candidates also need to be reminded to give the context of each gobbet. There are still a reasonable number of candidates who just re-tell the instance from which the quotation arises (in narrative form) and give no further comment or insight.

All gobbets were drawn from familiar passages. The most popular choices were those taken from Matthew, Mark and from John. Question 1(g) was poorly answered with several candidates confusing this quotation with the height of the World. Questions (e), (f) and (h) were rarely attempted.

Many candidates did not select key words or issues in the gobbets but opted instead for a general overall comment. More specific comment and detail is required in responses to this question.

Question 2

The majority of candidates who attempted this question did not understand the meaning of the word "ethical". These candidates offered a lot of irrelevant comment on parable teaching in Matthew and little comment on the Sermon on the Mount. As in previous years, candidates did not find it easy to limit their answers to specifically "ethical" material in responding to this question.

Question 3

The wording of this question, which asked *when, where and by whom* Matthew's Gospel was written, was not ideal. Most candidates and most answers followed this plan. Some answers were clearly restricted by the access to text books. Generally, however, this question was well attempted.

Question 4

Responses to this question were disappointing. Some candidates did discuss Mark's other interests apart from suffering and death which was good. However, many candidates used it as an opportunity to write all they knew about Markan themes without structuring their response to answer the specific question asked.

Question 5

For those who attempted it, this question was answered satisfactorily with comment on the reason why Jesus spoke in Parables. This did not prove to be as popular a question as imagined.

Question 6

In answers to this question, not all candidates endeavoured to discuss *the truth* for Theophilus or indeed who Theophilus might be. General comment on Luke was satisfactory but there was little if any comment on the historical context of Luke.

Question 7

This was not a popular choice. Few candidates commented on the closeness or immediacy of the Kingdom. Most offered a general answer without mention of the Magnificat, the Benedictus etc. from Chapters 1 and 2. In addition, there was a noticeable absence of comment on John the Baptist and the preparation and heralding of the Kingdom.

Question 8

This was not a popular choice of question. The one or two candidates who did attempt it failed to highlight what they understood as "anti-Jewish".

Question 9

There was some emphasis on miracles being signs in John which was good but most answers stopped short of taking this further and developing its significance.

Question 10

The question was very poorly answered. Candidates tended to discuss Jesus' relationship with Pharisees and Sadducees in all aspects of the Gospel not just the Jerusalem section. These candidates gave an overall view of the Gospel.

Question 11

This question proved to be a popular choice which was generally well answered. Some responses lacked depth, however.

Question 12

This was again a popular choice, though few candidates made links with the Baptism. Most responses re-told the two instances but offered little comment or depth of analysis.

Question 13

Most candidates who answered this question re-told the Judas part in the Jesus story but not did not attempt to discuss *why Judas may have betrayed Jesus*.

Question 14

Few candidates attempted this question. In general, answers were confused (including comment on Palestine in the 20th/21st century) and rather short with little depth of discussion.