DIVINITY

> **Paper 8041/21**
>
> **The Four Gospels**

General Comments

1. **Questions 1–7**, relating to the specific Gospels, were the most popular choices and within those, the first four questions were the most frequently answered. The questions on John's Gospel were attempted by fewer candidates.

2. Overall performance was good with a range of marks being achieved. There were fewer candidates at the top end than in previous years. There was evidence that more candidates made errors in timing this year and answered too few questions. Candidates displayed evidence of satisfactory preparation with improved evidence of the appropriate use of scholarly material within the written answers. It is important that candidates follow the rubric and not attempt to answer **all** 14 questions. This has an obvious impact upon the candidates' final result.

3. The standard of writing was very good. No scripts were illegible.

4. (See 2. Above) All questions succeeded at achieving the intended differentiation. More candidates struggled with their use of time in this examination. Several candidates failed to get four questions done in the time allowed. They did three very good answers but failed to do the fourth question and therefore lost 25% of the possible marks. Overall the exam instructions were clearly understood.

Specific Questions

The Gobbets

Question 1

The gobbet question was answered very well this year. A lot of candidates scored highly on this question because they gave structured answers that drew out and commented upon the points of interest within each gobbet rather than go off at a tangent.

(a)   This was a popular question. Candidates recognised the genealogy and commented very clearly on the interest and significance of this verse.

(b)   A popular choice and correctly and clearly answered by all those who attempted this.

(c)   All candidates who did this gobbet answered it very well. It was a very popular choice. All were able to identify the context as the baptism of Jesus. Some candidates merely retold the incident without making comments on the specific gobbet but the majority did address the significance of this passage and the key points within it.

(d)   A popular question which was well answered. Candidates identified this as part of the resurrection account when the women went to the tomb and found it empty and commented upon the section given rather than the whole of the resurrection account.

(e)   Fewer candidates attempted this and identified the exact nature of the context of this gobbet but comment was made on the role of women in Luke's gospel and the presence of evil spirits.

(f)   This was not a popular choice but was answered very well.

(g)   Not as popular as some of the other gobbets but for those candidates who had a good understanding of John's Gospel this was answered well. The connection with the 'I am' sayings and the significance of the light/darkness theme were included in most answers.

(h)   A popular choice amongst the candidates and answered competently. A lot of good comments about Jesus' pending death but candidates were not as good about setting it in its immediate context.

Essays

Question 2

This was not a popular question. Few candidates attempted this, but for those who did, their comment was not restricted to examining the importance of the end of the world in the parables. They tended to recount relevant (and irrelevant) parables in Matthew with inadequate reference to the focus of the question.

Question 3

This was a popular question and good, relevant comment was given on the role and significance of Peter. There was clear evidence that candidates had prepared well for any question which asked about the significance of Peter and they were able to write clear, well-structured answers.

Question 4

This was a popular question which was well answered by many candidates. The best essays were based around Wrede's theory and many candidates were familiar with the traditional texts and arguments surrounding this question.

Question 5

This question gave candidates the opportunity to draw upon a range of relevant material. The best essays were selective in their use of the examples chosen. A lot of candidates wrote about the connections with the persecuted Christian community at Rome in AD 64/65. This question was well answered on the whole.

Question 6

Questions on Luke are always very popular choices. There was a lot of material which could be used and was used but the best essays used their choice of material to show the distinctive nature of discipleship in Luke. Some failed to organise their answers to show they had tried to do this but instead wrote all they knew on the subject of discipleship in Luke.

Question 7

This was a very popular question and was generally well answered by all who attempted it. A discussion of the main themes of Luke formed part of most candidates' answer in an attempt to show why Luke would write his gospel. There was mention by some of the significance of Theophilus and Luke's claim to write 'the truth'. Good, well-structured answers were given.

Question 8

This question is a straight forward one about the 'I am' sayings of John. Fewer candidates attempted this, as questions about John's Gospel are not as popular as those about the Synoptics. On the whole it was clear that those who did answer it had been well prepared for this and wrote relevant and clear answers.

Question 9

This was not a popular choice of question with hardly any candidates attempting it. Synoptic questions are more popular. The question appears in the negative, asking for candidates to discuss 'themes of the first chapter of John **do not** appear again in the gospel'. It was asking for the use of the main Johannine themes to be discussed.

Question 10

This was largely well answered and much was written about the last week leading up to the crucifixion. The better answers came from candidates who clearly identified the different approach of each gospel account when it records the last week of Jesus.

Question 11

This was another popular question which gave candidates the opportunity to discuss the Kingdom of God material in all the gospels. It was generally well answered by all who attempted it. The focus of the question was adhered to with answers discussing whether this was a present or future event.

Question 12

This was a very popular question with a lot of good, informed answers given. Any question about the role of women in the gospels is always selected by many candidates and to provide an overview from all the Gospels allowed candidates to write in detail about this theme.

Question 13

This was a well answered question and most candidates covered the expected material with relevant references made to outside sources.

Question 14

This question was not a popular choice. For those who did it, it was an opportunity to discuss their understanding of what is meant by 'history' and 'theology' and how these were seen together in the first century. Some references were supported by texts but this is clearly an area of discussion which needs developing for future occasions.

DIVINITY

Key Messages

Questions 1–7, relating to the specific Gospels, were the most popular choices and within those, the first 4 questions were the most frequently answered. The questions on John's Gospel were attempted by fewer candidates.

Overall performance was good with a range of marks being achieved. There were fewer candidates at the top end than in previous years. There was evidence that more candidates made errors in timing this year and answered too few questions. Candidates displayed evidence of satisfactory preparation with improved evidence of the appropriate use of scholarly material within the written answers. It is important that candidates follow the rubric and not attempt to answer **all** 14 questions. This had an obvious impact upon the candidates' final result.

The standard of writing was very good. No scripts were illegible.

All questions succeeded at achieving the intended differentiation. More candidates struggled with their use of time in this examination. Several candidates failed to get four questions done in the time allowed. They did three very good answers but failed to do the fourth question and therefore lost 25% of the possible marks. Overall the exam instructions were clearly understood.

Comments on Specific Questions

The Gobbets

Question 1

(a) This was a popular question, correctly identified by all those candidates who answered it. There was good knowledge of the key points found in this gobbet.

(b) Candidates identified this verse as being part of the overall confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi and they were able to make very detailed comment.

(c) All candidates who did this gobbet answered it very well. It was a very popular choice. All were able to identify the context as the request by Salome for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Some candidates merely retold the incident without making comments on the specific gobbet whilst others made accurate comment on the reason behind this request and scored highly.

(d) This was a popular question which was well answered. Candidates correctly identified this as part of the dialogue at the last supper. Good comments were made on the 'Betrayer' and the role of Judas within this passage.

(e) Many candidates used this as an opportunity to comment upon the role of Mary and correctly identified this as part of the Magnificat. This was a popular question producing a lot of very good answers.

(f) This was well answered by those candidates who opted to choose this gobbet. There was a lot of comment on Pilate's part in the trial of Jesus and his insistence on Jesus' faultless position.

(g) This was not as popular as some of the other gobbets but, for those candidates who had a good understanding of John's Gospel, this was answered well. A few candidates were confused by the context of the gobbet and therefore failed to give an accurate understanding of the text.

(h)   This was a popular choice amongst the candidates and answered competently.

Essays

Question 2

This was a very popular question. Candidates wrote very detailed answers to this question and showed a good understanding of the parallels which could be made between Jesus and Moses.

Question 3

For those candidates who are familiar with the gospel sources this was answered well. It was a popular choice of question and candidates gave relevant answers.

Question 4

This question gave candidates the opportunity to discuss the role of Peter as a key member of the disciples. Generally this was well answered and candidates used the Petrine material to its best advantage. Many discussed the identity of John Mark and his relationship with Peter as well as showing that the gospel had the traits of being written as an eyewitness account. This question brought about some high scoring answers.

Question 5

This question allowed candidates to write about the miracles from a different angle. The emphasis was on the nature miracles found in Mark. Some candidates chose to include healing miracles within their answers but some gave very structured answers which concentrated on those miracles which were to do with the natural elements.

Question 6

Questions on Luke are always a very popular choice amongst candidates. The importance of this question was to deal with the distinctive nature of the Lukan teaching on discipleship not write about it in general. The best candidates were able to link the passages they selected to the purpose of Luke and bring out his unique nature but many wrote everything they knew about the disciples and their life and overlooked Luke's specific teaching on the cost of being a disciple.

Question 7

This was a very popular question and was generally well answered by all who attempted it. The success of their answers rested on the parables they referred to and many selected clear examples. Some candidates where less careful and they chose parables they were familiar with and made them 'fit' the question which did not work at all.

Question 8

This question is a straight forward one about the use of signs in John to show the nature of Jesus as the Christ. Fewer candidates attempted this, as questions about John's Gospel are not as popular as those about the Synoptics. On the whole it was clear that those who did answer it had very good knowledge of John's Gospel.

Question 9

This was not a very popular choice of question but those who did attempt it needed to be more specific to the relevant passages. A lot spoke about the Passion of Jesus but they were not highlighting the Johannine account specifically. Candidates need to be clear about what the Johannine material is and what is from the Synoptics if they are to succeed in answering this question well.

Question 10

This was a popular choice amongst the questions which are not Gospel specific. This was largely well answered and much was written about the Jewish authorities and the apparent conflict with Jesus. There were a lot of very good answers to this question.

Question 11

This was another popular question which gave candidates the opportunity to discuss discipleship again but in a more general nature and with a clear emphasis on possessions. This was generally well answered with a good use of relevant material coming from all the different traditions. Better answers referred to the different Gospel material by name and linked it to that particular writer and his main themes.

Question 12

John the Baptist is always a popular question to answer and this general one about the significance of his role in the different gospel traditions was again a popular choice. For those who were well prepared in the significance of this character it was an opportunity to shine, and many did. The answers to this question were, on the whole, well structured, informative and detailed.

Question 13

This question was not attempted very often. The strength of a good answer lay in the ability to comment upon life as depicted from the four gospel traditions and other writing available at the time. Candidates need to be able to create a detailed picture of the religious, political and social conditions at that time with reference made to various texts.

Question 14

This was a popular question and it was largely well answered with reference to the other contributing factors which led to Jesus death and not just the role of Judas Iscariot. This brought some of the best answers from candidates and showed the depth of understanding and preparation around this issue.

DIVINITY

General Comments

1. **Questions 1–7**, relating to the specific Gospels, were the most popular choices and within those, the first four questions were the most frequently answered. The questions on John's Gospel were attempted by fewer candidates.

2. Overall performance was good with a range of marks being achieved. There were fewer candidates at the top end than in previous years. There was evidence that more candidates made errors in timing this year and answered too few questions. Candidates displayed evidence of satisfactory preparation with improved evidence of the appropriate use of scholarly material within the written answers. It is important that candidates follow the rubric and not attempt to answer **all** 14 questions. This has an obvious impact upon the candidates' final result.

3. The standard of writing was very good. No scripts were illegible.

4. (See 2. Above) All questions succeeded at achieving the intended differentiation. More candidates struggled with their use of time in this examination. Several candidates failed to get four questions done in the time allowed. They did three very good answers but failed to do the fourth question and therefore lost 25% of the possible marks. Overall the exam instructions were clearly understood.

Specific Questions

The Gobbets

Question 1

The gobbet question was answered very well this year. A lot of candidates scored highly on this question because they gave structured answers that drew out and commented upon the points of interest within each gobbet rather than go off at a tangent.

(a) This was a popular question. Candidates recognised the genealogy and commented very clearly on the interest and significance of this verse.

(b) A popular choice and correctly and clearly answered by all those who attempted this.

(c) All candidates who did this gobbet answered it very well. It was a very popular choice. All were able to identify the context as the baptism of Jesus. Some candidates merely retold the incident without making comments on the specific gobbet but the majority did address the significance of this passage and the key points within it.

(d) A popular question which was well answered. Candidates identified this as part of the resurrection account when the women went to the tomb and found it empty and commented upon the section given rather than the whole of the resurrection account.

(e) Fewer candidates attempted this and identified the exact nature of the context of this gobbet but comment was made on the role of women in Luke's gospel and the presence of evil spirits.

(f) This was not a popular choice but was answered very well.

(g)   Not as popular as some of the other gobbets but for those candidates who had a good understanding of John's Gospel this was answered well. The connection with the 'I am' sayings and the significance of the light/darkness theme were included in most answers.

(h)   A popular choice amongst the candidates and answered competently. A lot of good comments about Jesus' pending death but candidates were not as good about setting it in its immediate context.

Essays

Question 2

This was not a popular question. Few candidates attempted this, but for those who did, their comment was not restricted to examining the importance of the end of the world in the parables. They tended to recount relevant (and irrelevant) parables in Matthew with inadequate reference to the focus of the question.

Question 3

This was a popular question and good, relevant comment was given on the role and significance of Peter. There was clear evidence that candidates had prepared well for any question which asked about the significance of Peter and they were able to write clear, well-structured answers.

Question 4

This was a popular question which was well answered by many candidates. The best essays were based around Wrede's theory and many candidates were familiar with the traditional texts and arguments surrounding this question.

Question 5

This question gave candidates the opportunity to draw upon a range of relevant material. The best essays were selective in their use of the examples chosen. A lot of candidates wrote about the connections with the persecuted Christian community at Rome in AD 64/65. This question was well answered on the whole.

Question 6

Questions on Luke are always very popular choices. There was a lot of material which could be used and was used but the best essays used their choice of material to show the distinctive nature of discipleship in Luke. Some failed to organise their answers to show they had tried to do this but instead wrote all they knew on the subject of discipleship in Luke.

Question 7

This was a very popular question and was generally well answered by all who attempted it. A discussion of the main themes of Luke formed part of most candidates' answer in an attempt to show why Luke would write his gospel. There was mention by some of the significance of Theophilus and Luke's claim to write 'the truth'. Good, well-structured answers were given.

Question 8

This question is a straight forward one about the 'I am' sayings of John. Fewer candidates attempted this, as questions about John's Gospel are not as popular as those about the Synoptics. On the whole it was clear that those who did answer it had been well prepared for this and wrote relevant and clear answers.

Question 9

This was not a popular choice of question with hardly any candidates attempting it. Synoptic questions are more popular. The question appears in the negative, asking for candidates to discuss 'themes of the first chapter of John **do not** appear again in the gospel'. It was asking for the use of the main Johannine themes to be discussed.

Question 10

This was largely well answered and much was written about the last week leading up to the crucifixion. The better answers came from candidates who clearly identified the different approach of each gospel account when it records the last week of Jesus.

Question 11

This was another popular question which gave candidates the opportunity to discuss the Kingdom of God material in all the gospels. It was generally well answered by all who attempted it. The focus of the question was adhered to with answers discussing whether this was a present or future event.

Question 12

This was a very popular question with a lot of good, informed answers given. Any question about the role of women in the gospels is always selected by many candidates and to provide an overview from all the Gospels allowed candidates to write in detail about this theme.

Question 13

This was a well answered question and most candidates covered the expected material with relevant references made to outside sources.

Question 14

This question was not a popular choice. For those who did it, it was an opportunity to discuss their understanding of what is meant by 'history' and 'theology' and how these were seen together in the first century. Some references were supported by texts but this is clearly an area of discussion which needs developing for future occasions.