

# DIVINITY

**Paper 8041/02**  
**The Four Gospels**

The standard of questions was good and consistent in degrees of difficulty/ease. The questions on the Synoptics were, as always, more popular than questions on St. John's Gospel and the more general **Questions 10–14**.

Overall performance was consistent with previous years, satisfactory to good with most candidates making an informed and structured answer to each question attempted. Evidence of wider reading was not as clearly shown. All Centres showed evidence of satisfactory preparation of their candidates and it was clear that attempts had been made to address past Examiners comments. The standard of writing was good which demonstrated a clear attempt at understanding key theological terms.

All questions succeeded at achieving the intended differentiation. Use of time was very good – hardly any appeared to be under pressure to get 4 question answered. There were a few rubric errors. Overall – the understanding of the examination instructions was very good indeed.

## Comments on Individual Questions

### Question 1 Gobbets

- (a) A very popular question – usually put into the correct context. There was very good comment surrounding its place in the Sermon on the Mount.
- (b) This was a popular question – accurate comment and context on the whole, although some candidates confused it with the mission of the 12.
- (c) Again a popular choice with good comment on the humanity of Jesus and the place of the leper in society.
- (d) Although this was a popular choice it was often confused with Jesus healing the man with the withered hand. There was a lot of relevant comment on the Pharisees, the Sabbath and the Son of Man title.
- (e) This was identified accurately as part of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Good candidates made comment on the role of the other son who stayed at home. Some candidates still merely wrote of the parable.
- (f) Correctly identified as the Parable of the Dishonest Steward but comment was limited and lacked understanding of its meaning and relevance.
- (g) This was very well attempted. Relevant links of Genesis 1 were made and the better candidates commented on the *logos* and the role of the *logos*. The word was identified as God and the powers and attributes of God were inherent within.
- (h) The context was correct. Much was made about the 'cup of suffering' which Jesus faced. There was a lot of relevant comment on the role of Peter. Well done.

### Question 2

Many candidates chose this question but it was not as well answered as expected. It was popular because Matthew's Gospel is a popular subject to get to grips with. More comment from the Sermon on the Mount was anticipated, with mention on the Beatitudes and 5v24, but this was not forthcoming. Good candidates made mention of 1v19 (re Joseph) and/or 3v15 (Jesus to John the Baptist). Answers were all too general with little reference made to the use of the term 'righteousness'.

### Question 3

Although this was a new question it was thought, that the familiar theme of discipleship would draw comment: there was a lot of material which could have been used. Several candidates drew from the Sermon on the Mount and the call and cost of discipleship. The good candidates used the specific discourses of chapter 10 on apostleship. Better candidates gave more than a mere list of examples but tried to assess Jesus' teaching.

### Question 4

This was clearly the most popular question on the paper, the familiar question of the synoptic problem but with a slightly new twist. Many Centres had prepared their candidates well for issues around the synoptic problem and reference to different schools of thought and theories were well handled. On the whole this was well attempted.

### Question 5

The usual comments on Mark's sense of urgency throughout the gospel, the Parables of Judgment and the Parousia; references to the imminence of the kingdom of God all played their part in a well structured answer. Not widely chosen but for those candidates who did attempt it, their answers were clear and relevant.

### Question 6

This was amongst the most popular choice of questions. Candidates were well prepared for the key themes found in chapters 1 and 2 of Luke. Many did not take this further and make the clear link with stories and examples from the rest of the gospel. The themes of joy, women, and the poor were all commented on. Some candidates failed to get the balance of the question right and erred on the side of too much analysis of the birth narratives and not enough from further in the gospel.

### Question 7

Again one of the most popular questions on the paper and on the whole competently answered. A lot of comment came from the birth narrative of Luke but there was plenty of comment from other incidents e.g. Mary, Elizabeth, Mary and Martha, the prostitute (7v36–50), the widow of Nain (7vii–17), the cure of Mary Magdalene (8v2), the women who provided for Jesus (8vi–3) and the lament (27–31). The majority of candidates did answer this well.

### Question 8

An unpopular choice but for those who did attempt to answer it there was a great need to show how these stories demonstrate the theology of John's Gospel. Some candidates merely re-told the two encounters but failed to comment on the wider issue.

### Question 9

Poorly attempted – only a handful of candidates gave reasonable answers to this question – it was important to comment on both the WHO and the WHEN. There was a lot of material which could have been used – and it was important that more than one view be offered. Many concentrated largely on the argument for the Beloved Disciple. Some mention of the Gnostics and Gnostic language, some mention of personal testimony and reminiscences.

### Question 10

This question was not popular. For those who attempted this answers concentrated largely on the Pharisees, but for a well constructed answer there needs to have been balance and discussion of the other religious groups. Some candidates wrote about the Sadducees, a few about the Essenes. The Zealots were mentioned by a few.

### Question 11

Answers to this question were disappointing. Very few who attempted this did so with reference to different ways in which the gospel writers used the miracle stories. Answers sometimes lacked planning and appeared more as a catalogue of miracles rather than explanation of their use. There was a lot of material drawn from and with clearer structure the answers could have been better. The question allows comment from all the gospel writers' material, not just the Synoptics. Some of the better answers did make reference to the signs of John and not just miracle stories.

### Question 12

Not a popular choice but those who did choose it tried to make comment on both theological evidence and historical evidence. All attempts were satisfactorily done.

### Question 13

Some candidates concentrated more on the Jewishness of Jesus as opposed to unpacking what was meant by the Jewish Messiah. Having said that, the answers were usually satisfactory to good and gave mention of relevant material e.g. the temptation, the comparison of the suffering servant motif and Son of Man expectations, the confession at Caesarea Philippi; the baptism and transfiguration, Jesus' trial and response, the role of the miracles.

### Question 14

This was a new question to the paper and a popular one. Most candidates acknowledged the different emphases that exist. Many gave background information about Pilate's position in society. This question allowed candidates to approach this answer any way they wanted to. It was well answered and candidates were allowed to draw their own conclusions.