

DIVINITY

Paper 8041/02 The Four Gospels

1. **Questions 1-7**, relating to the specific Gospels, were the most popular choices. The questions on John's Gospel were attempted by fewer candidates. The **Questions 10-14** were less popular.
2. Overall performance was good with the range of marks reaching the 90's. There was evidence of satisfactory preparation by candidates but there was little evidence of the appropriate use of scholarly material within the written answers.
3. All questions succeeded at achieving differentiation. More candidates struggled with their use of time in this examination. Several candidates, (more than usual) failed to get four questions done in the time allowed. They did three very good answers but failed to do the fourth question. Overall the exam instructions were clearly understood.

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

Specific Questions

The Gobbets

Question 1

- (a) A popular question. Candidates recognised that this was a parable about the kingdom but not enough comment was focused upon the gobbet, much was said about parables as a whole. Few candidates gained the full marks available for the context of this gobbet.
- (b) It was important to identify the context of this gobbet correctly. This was not always done therefore inappropriate comments were made by some. For those who did identify it as part of the overall confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi 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 raising of Jairus' daughter'. Some candidates merely retold the incident without making comments on the specific gobbet.
- (d) A popular question which was well answered. Candidates identified this as part of the resurrection appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene. Some candidates included comment on the person of Mary Magdalene and her inclusion in the gospel elsewhere.
- (e) Many candidates used this as an opportunity to comment upon the identity of Theophilus. This was a popular question producing a lot of very good answers.
- (f) The specific context of this gobbet was not identified well. A lot of good comments about the cost of discipleship were made but little about the position of this gobbet in the ministry of Jesus.
- (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. Few made mention of this being part of the call of the disciples in John and peculiar to his Gospel only.
- (h) A popular choice amongst the candidates and answered competently. There was much good comment about the Spirit as Counsellor but some candidates were not as good about setting it in its immediate context.

Essays

Question 2

This was a very popular question. Candidates gave good answers on the whole as many identified importance of the Sermon on the Mount as a key feature to the answer. Better answers included comment about the book having five 'sermons' and linked this with the Mosaic tradition. Some spoke about the early ecclesiastical matters.

Question 3

There was some confusion of the Matthean parables with those found in the other Synoptic Gospels therefore some essays were not specific and did not answer the question asked. This was a popular question but few candidates elaborated on the distinctive nature of the parables found in Matthew. This question, on the whole, was not satisfactorily answered by all.

Question 4

This was a popular question which was well answered by many candidates. The dominance of the passion narrative in Mark was expanded and many also commented on the mental and emotional suffering of Jesus when he was rejected by his home town and his disciples.

Question 5

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 6

Questions on Luke are always very popular choices but, as with answers to **Question 3**, the importance of this question was to deal with the distinctive nature of the Lukan teaching on the kingdom of God. It was important not to just write about the kingdom of God in general.

Question 7

This was a very popular question and was generally well answered by all who attempted it. Many expanded upon the role of Mary and Elizabeth in Luke's birth narrative. Fewer candidates spoke about the role of other women who are found in Luke but all comments were relevant.

Question 8

This question was about the authorship of John. Fewer candidates attempted this, as questions about John's Gospel are not as popular as questions about the Synoptic Gospels. On the whole it was clear that those who did answer it were well prepared for this.

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. Many spoke about the significance of the prologue as setting the scene as a spiritual gospel and they mentioned Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus but few developed deeper answers. There was a wide range of material which could have been commented on but did not get any mention.

Question 10

This was a popular choice amongst the questions which are not specific to one gospel. This was largely well answered and much was written about the Jewish traditions and customs.

Question 11

This was another popular question which gave candidates the opportunity to discuss the baptism and transfiguration stories of Jesus. Both were well known stories amongst candidates therefore this gave opportunity for well-balanced answers which addressed the question asked.

Question 12

This was not widely selected. Many who did attempt this question expanded on the teaching of Jesus through parables. Few linked the ethical teaching with his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. It was clear that some candidates were unsure what was meant by 'ethical teaching'.

Question 13

This was an opportunity for those candidates who had learnt about it to give a detailed discussion of the synoptic problem. A few candidates did not make this link and therefore struggled to show what they understood by 'a literary relationship' amongst the Gospels.

Question 14

This question demands that a candidate is aware of the differences between the gospel writers relating to the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus therefore it is easy to get them muddled together if unsure of the differences. Few candidates chose this question and few candidates achieved high marks.