

DIVINITY

Paper 9011/11

Prophets of the Old Testament

Key Messages

Answers to the 'gobbet' questions should contain an explanation and analysis of the context, background and meaning of each text, they should be more than a simple paraphrasing of the text. As a final message concerning the gobbets, answers to **Question 10** are frequently much shorter or else much longer than for **Questions 1-9**. The same amount of time should be spent on each of the four questions answered.

General Comments

Candidates need to pay careful attention to the wording of questions. It is not uncommon for candidates to answer a question they have prepared for as opposed to answering the question set.

Questions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 9 were the most popular. Some of the most sensitive theological writing was seen in answer to **Question 6** in considering how far judgement and love can co-exist in the message of Amos. **Question 10**, gobbets (a)-(f) were the most popular, with most candidates showing a detailed knowledge of the material. It is not necessary for candidates to write out the gobbets.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

'Prophecy in Israel was copied from prophecy in the surrounding nations.' How far do you agree?

This was one of the most popular questions, and most candidates answered well. The best responses had an in-depth knowledge of prophetic phenomena seen in a variety of Ancient Near Eastern texts, showing analogues with the various technical terms used in the Old Testament. The general consensus was that prophecy as a phenomenon was copied, since Israel appeared relatively late on the historical scene, but that its own version of prophecy was unique in that it was inspired by the monotheistic, ethical God of Israel. A favourite phrase was that 'What was borrowed was transformed'. Listing all the theories about when prophecy first appeared in Israel was not relevant to the question, since even if a definite date for first appearance could be established, that on its own would not give an answer to the question of whether or not it was copied.

Question 2

Examine the use of miracles in the message of the pre-canonical prophets.

The most successful essays focused on the word 'use', as opposed to simply writing out various miracle stories. Some answers distracted themselves by writing in excess of two sides just on Moses and the plagues, and much the same happened with Elijah's confrontation with Jezebel's prophets on Mount Carmel. Those who did examine the 'use of miracles' referred, for example, to: their use in establishing Yahweh's ultimate power (as in the escape from Egypt); their visual power (as on Carmel); their ability to establish monotheism (Elijah's miracles in general); their proof of God's loving nature (raising from the dead, with Elijah and Elisha), and so on. Most candidates argued that miracles were one part of what prophets could do in delivering Yahweh's messages. A list of all the other methods available to prophets, such as oracles, symbolic acts, songs, poems, etc., was not necessary since the wording of the question focuses precisely on miracles. Some gave an interesting analysis of the violence involved in some miracles, such as the death of

the Egyptian first-born, the annihilation of all Jezebel's prophets, and Elisha's use of two she-bears to maul forty-two small boys merely for calling him 'baldhead'.

Question 3

Consider the view that Moses and Elijah were ideal prophets rather than real prophets.

The opposition of the words 'real' and 'ideal' in the question led to some unusual interpretations of the word 'ideal'. In so far as this particular form of wording has been used on many occasions, to call Moses and Elijah 'ideal' implies that the editors of the Moses and Elijah traditions transformed them from who they were historically to what they became in the religious tradition. Several candidates referred usefully to their appearance in Jesus' transfiguration in the New Testament, where Moses stands as the ideal lawgiver and Elijah as the ideal representative of prophecy. Reference was made to the number of different roles held by both prophets, their powerful miracles, and the mysterious nature of their deaths, for example, all of which make them out as figures who are in some ways larger than real life. By contrast, they appear as 'real' prophets in so far as they do those things that most prophets did, such as having a call, standing up for social justice, interceding and the like. The Examiners accepted any reasonable definition of 'real' and 'ideal', and it was important that candidates made it clear what they meant by those words.

Question 4

In your view, which of the many roles played by Samuel was the most important?

The best answers did exactly what the question asked, which was to look at the important roles played by Samuel and to judge which was the *most* important. Less successful answers went no further than listing the things Samuel did, saying that he was a seer, a priest, a judge, a war leader, a prophet, a politician, an anointer of kings and a remover of kings. In judging which role was most important, many argued well that all roles were subsumed under that of 'prophet', since having being called to be a prophet, Samuel did whatever he was required by God to do, which included all those things. Some went a little further and suggested that Samuel's character, like that of Moses and Elijah, has been expanded by the editors and redactors so that it may not be possible to define which roles Samuel really did undertake, although even here the prophetic role has to be seen as the most important. A few argued persuasively for the importance of Samuel's role as a war leader, without which neither Israel nor Yahwism would have survived. Others made an equally strong case for his role as a priest, on the grounds that most prophets operated within the cult anyway, and it was Samuel's priestly role that allowed him to anoint Saul in the first place.

Question 5

Explain both how and why prophetic oracles were collected and preserved.

This was the least popular question. Most gave reasonable detail of the 'how?', although a few forgot to discuss the 'why?', which again is an object-lesson in reading the question carefully. For the 'how?', reference was made to prophetic disciples, particularly for Isaiah and Jeremiah. Candidates were generally competent in describing the role of both oral and written material in collecting the prophets' oracles. Equally, the work of editors and redactors was considered well, for example in the Book of the Twelve. For the 'why?', most referred to the weaknesses of the human memory, and to the need to preserve the prophetic oracles for the future, since oracles can have more than one application in history. A few candidates made an important distinction between collection and preservation, referring to the storage (and later discovery) of the Dead Sea Scrolls as an example of careful preservation of prophetic oracles and other scriptures, carried out through reverence for the text.

Section B

Question 6

'The message of Amos is about God's judgement and not about God's love.' Discuss.

This was the most popular question, and candidates showed a detailed knowledge of the text of Amos. Most were able to show very clearly that Amos was the harbinger of doom and judgement in a manner not seen in the words of any other prophet. Most associated Amos' attitude with his work as a shepherd, arguing that he had suffered in Judah through the machinations of the rich, and felt compelled to judge the rich in the Northern Kingdom in unstinting terms, on the grounds that (1) the king and the priests were at the head of Israel's corruption, and (2) he had been given the command to do so by Yahweh, whose disgust with what

was going on in the North took Amos 'from the flock' in order to issue dire warnings. The general impression was that love was in short supply in Amos' message, as can be seen by the very few comments that could be interpreted as showing anything of the kind. Most referred to Amos' intercessions, and to the ending of the book, although most dismissed the ending as a piece of later Judaeon editing. Perhaps the strongest evaluatory comment about love was the claim that the very fact that Amos bothered to give Israel any kind of message shows God's love, since there would be no point in saying anything at all if it were not possible for some to repent and survive. Moreover Amos was passionate in defending the oppressed poor, so he must have seen them as potential survivors of any judgement. Perhaps, then, Amos' language was hyperbole – deliberate exaggeration for effect. Against that, some pointed out the obvious, that Assyria annexed the North in 721.

Question 7

'None of the details of Hosea's life as a prophet are clear.' How far do you agree?

The best answers generally had a simple but effective approach: they argued that what was not clear (on the whole) was that Hosea should go against the Law and marry a prostitute, whereas what was clear was the parallel between Hosea's relationship with Gomer and Yahweh's relationship with Israel. This worked very well, since candidates pointed out that the Hosea/Gomer relationship could be interpreted literally, symbolically, allegorically, or metaphorically, but no interpretation was without its problems, not least the question of whether the woman in ch.3 is the same as the woman in ch.1, and the question of the parentage of the three children. For the rest, candidates expounded the Hosea/Gomer // Yahweh/Israel relationship very clearly. Other candidates needed to address the last five words of the question, since some had a tendency to expound the relationship parallels without saying what might be clear or unclear.

Question 8

Consider the importance of Isaiah's call for his work and message.

The depth of knowledge of the tension between Judah's rulers and Assyria and the backdrop of the Syro-Ephraimite War was very impressive, and many candidates wrote about Isaiah's involvement in the ongoing political drama. The important themes picked out from Isaiah's call included his vision of Yahweh's holiness and universal power, Isaiah's Jerusalem theology in connection with the Davidic dynasty, and Isaiah's knowledge that his message would meet with rejection. Some candidates could have reached higher levels by linking what Isaiah said and did more firmly with the details of his call, whereas not infrequently that link was assumed rather than shown. Some had a tendency to dwell on the Christian interpretation of Isaiah's theology, which really is irrelevant to the interpretation of Jewish texts from the 8th century BCE.

Question 9

Discuss the view that Jeremiah's message was an equal mixture of doom and hope.

One common issue with answers to this question, which was very popular, was the amount of writing. Candidates generally knew Jeremiah in vast detail. Where the detail was relevant, answers were good; where it was not so relevant, the results were not so good. Most got off to a very good start by using the wording of Jeremiah's call, showing the balance between his commission 'to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow' on the one hand, and 'to build and to plant' on the other (1:10). Some tried to show this kind of balance in all of what Jeremiah said and did, which sometimes became difficult to show in view of the heavy preponderance of doom oracles and Jeremiah's own comment that no true prophet before him had ever prophesied salvation. The vision of the 'good and bad figs' did fit well with the doom/hope balance, although some could have been more convincing by identifying who the good and bad figs were. Most concluded that there is some kind of doom/hope balance in Jeremiah's message since so much of what he says is positive, although the doom oracles inevitably are more prominent because (as with Amos) history showed that Jeremiah's predictions of foreign invasion were correct.

Section C

Question 10

(a) (the commissioning of the 70 elders to receive a share of Moses' spirit)

Knowledge of the text as a whole and of its background was generally very good. There was a lot of useful comment on: Moses' readiness to show his annoyance to Yahweh; the significance of the number 70; the choice of elders (as opposed to younger men); the exclusion of female advisers; the tent of meeting; the theophany; Medad and Eldad; and the distribution of the spirit/ecstatic utterance. Some candidates could have been more evaluative. As an example, some of the best answers referred to the anachronistic appearance of the narrative, which might perhaps be explained as the work of a later editor or redactor seeking to vindicate ecstatic prophecy in the face of later criticism of Israel's ecstasies.

(b) (God's first revelation to Samuel)

The detailed knowledge here was phenomenal, both of the immediate context and its general background. In contrast to some responses to gobbet (a), both the explanatory and the evaluative comment for (b) were generally at a very high level. For explanation, candidates referred (for example) to: the significance of the traditional view that Samuel was about 12 at the time; the likely timing of the call (in relation to the lamp of God) just before dawn; the nature of the ark of the Lord and its eventual fate at the hands of the Philistines; the relationship between 'word' and 'vision'; Samuel being called to supersede the Elide priesthood; Samuel's prophetic call within the context of the cult; the emergence of *nabi*-type prophecy in relation to anointing and supervising kings, etc. Some of the best evaluation concerned the different sources/editors involved in the Samuel narratives and the different roles and responsibilities of Samuel. A few candidates gave rather narrow answers focusing solely on the three-fold repetition of the call. While this material was of course relevant, the number of issues raised by the gobbet means that candidates could have looked more widely at some of those issues. The text itself has no shortage of key words for candidates to consider.

(c) (the secret choice of Saul as king: Samuel's anointing of Saul)

Again, a number of candidates commented on the differences between the portraits of Samuel here (the so-called 'early source') and those elsewhere where he is in effect the ruler of all Israel. Hence in this extract, Samuel comes into contact with Saul's father through the episode of the lost asses, and Samuel is working as a paid clairvoyant. Saul is selected and anointed in secret with the express intention that he should remove the Philistine threat. There was intelligent comment for example about the ceremony of anointing, in connection with priests (Exodus 29:7), prophets (1 Kings 19:16) and kings, together with the fact that this was the origin of the designation of the king as God's 'anointed' *mashiah* (Messiah).

(d) (Jezebel's threat to Elijah and the revelation to Elijah on Mount Horeb)

Although a few candidates got bogged down in re-telling the story of the contest on Mount Carmel, this was a popular and very well done gobbet. A few confused it with the story of Naboth's vineyard, but most understood that the general context was Elijah's revelation on Mount Horeb. There was excellent comment on the character and determination of Jezebel, together with her determination to impose the cult of Canaanite/Phoenician Baal on Ahab. Some were incredulous at Elijah's backing down before 'a mere woman' (as they put it), having just slaughtered several hundred of her prophets, although others were more realistic, suggesting that Jezebel was as formidable as any man, and had at her disposal the whole Israelite army, so Elijah had reason to be concerned! The focus of most other comment was on the theophany at Horeb, where Elijah is portrayed as a second Moses, and is commissioned for further bloodshed.

(e) (the confrontation between Micaiah son of Imlah and Ahab's court prophets)

Although most candidates focused on the confrontation between so-called 'true prophets' and 'false prophets', a common characteristic of comment on this passage was a reluctance to acknowledge the role of the 'lying spirit of prophecy' co-opted by Yahweh to entice Ahab (apparently to fulfil the earlier prediction of Ahab's death). If Yahweh co-opted the lying spirit, then the text is stating quite clearly that false prophecy can come from Yahweh; moreover this appears to be offered as some kind of explanation of false prophecy in general and of why Yahweh allows it. Conversely, the historical background in the context of the Aramean wars was well known, and in general the gobbet was well done.

(f) (Amos' visions of God's judgement: the locusts)

There was good comment on Amos' use of vision as a means of conveying Yahweh's message, this particular vision being one of a series. Some candidates gave an abbreviated version of the doom-language used by Amos throughout the entire book, which detracted from the language used specifically in this passage. Equally, some went into great detail on the following visions of the fire, the plumb line, and the basket of ripe summer fruit, the amount of detail being irrelevant to the extract given. Most candidates, however, made good comment on: the extent of the destruction that would follow from a plague of locusts; the similarity with the eighth plague announced by Moses; the king's prerogative of the 'first mowings'; Amos' intercession in which the 'smallness' of Israel contrasts strongly with Israel's own view of itself as being powerful; and the anthropomorphic nature of God's 'repentance'. There was some sensitive comment on the nature of God.

(g) (Hosea's imagery of revival following acceptance of God's exhortation to repent)

Most candidates identified the general context as an extended passage (5:15-6:3) in which Hosea insists that if Israel will return to Yahweh, Yahweh will heal Israel's sickness. There was good comment on the change of mood that is typical of Hosea, where the language moves from God's judgement on Judah and Israel in the aftermath of the Syro-Ephraimite War to the language of 'binding up' and 'healing' wounds. Some assumed that the reference to the 'third day' must be a reference to Jesus, which in this context would be a reasonable Christian inference. Others discussed whether the passage is referring to resurrection in general or specifically to the theme of the 'dying and rising' god Baal (cf. 13:1). A few candidates made only general references to God's forgiveness.

(h) (the tension between destruction and salvation in Hosea: God's compassion)

Many candidates who answered this question referred to it in general terms only, reiterating the kind of general comment used also in response to gobbet (g). Those who did know the passage well commented on its terminology, e.g. – Ephraim; Admah and Zeboiim; 'I am God and not man'; 'the Holy One'. A few knew that these verses again represent the mood-swing typical of Hosea, following the general context of 9:1ff. where Israel has rejected Yahweh and so must be punished by losing king, children, sanctuaries and country. Israel now appears as the son for whom Yahweh feels compassion and tenderness. There was insightful comment on the relationship between the ideas expressed in this passage and Hosea's life experiences.

(i) (the sign of Immanuel in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite War)

As with **Question 8**, candidates who attempted this gobbet tended to have a good knowledge of the general historical context of the passage in the Syro-Ephraimite War. Most candidates resisted the urge to Christianize the 'sign of Immanuel', although many commented legitimately on the fact that later Christian interpretation did see this passage as having a future fulfilment in Jesus as well as a contemporary application perhaps in connection with Hezekiah. Most suggested that the 'young woman' was a 'virgin', although nobody commented on the fact that the word used by Isaiah ('*almah*') properly speaking means 'a woman of marriageable age'. Such a woman would generally be a virgin, but to translate it as such puts an unwarranted interpretation into the text. Some commented reasonably on the preceding sign of Shear Jashub, 'a remnant shall return', being a promise that in the event of catastrophe, the return of the remnant would keep God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7.

(j) (Jeremiah's preaching concerning the covenant)

Although there was some reasonable comment about 'this covenant', very few picked up on the assumption made by some scholars that the discovery of the law-book in 2 Kings 22 was the discovery (or writing) of the Book of Deuteronomy, and that Josiah had caused it to be found as a 'pious fraud' in order to use the law-book as the basis for his reforms, which Jeremiah probably supported. A few assumed that Jeremiah was talking about his 'new covenant', but this appears in Jeremiah 31:31-34. 'Cursed be the man' is typical Deuteronomic covenant language (e.g. Deuteronomy 4:13), and the reference to being brought out of the iron furnace of Egypt (verse 4 here) is also typical Deuteronomic language (e.g. Deuteronomy 4:20). Whether or not Jeremiah was in direct support of Josiah's reforms, a desire to return to the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant is typical of Jeremiah, and in this context, candidates made astute reference to the distinct new covenant in chapter 31, where Jeremiah now looks forward to the future as opposed to looking back into the past.

(k) (Jeremiah's allegory of the potter)

All candidates correctly identified this as the allegory of the potter, and suggested that Jeremiah derived it both a message of doom and a message of hope, thus this passage featured well in those who answered **Question 9**. The spoiled and remoulded pot leads to the oracle in verses 6-12, where the point is that an all-powerful God can do what he likes, just as the potter can do what he likes with the clay. Israel is no more independent of God than the clay is independent of the potter – God can bring evil or God can restore. Some referred further to the symbolic act in chapter 19, which continues the pottery metaphor with the purchase and destruction of the potter's earthen flask.

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Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

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the Egyptian first-born, the annihilation of all Jezebel's prophets, and Elisha's use of two she-bears to maul forty-two small boys merely for calling him 'baldhead'.

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The opposition of the words 'real' and 'ideal' in the question led to some unusual interpretations of the word 'ideal'. In so far as this particular form of wording has been used on many occasions, to call Moses and Elijah 'ideal' implies that the editors of the Moses and Elijah traditions transformed them from who they were historically to what they became in the religious tradition. Several candidates referred usefully to their appearance in Jesus' transfiguration in the New Testament, where Moses stands as the ideal lawgiver and Elijah as the ideal representative of prophecy. Reference was made to the number of different roles held by both prophets, their powerful miracles, and the mysterious nature of their deaths, for example, all of which make them out as figures who are in some ways larger than real life. By contrast, they appear as 'real' prophets in so far as they do those things that most prophets did, such as having a call, standing up for social justice, interceding and the like. The Examiners accepted any reasonable definition of 'real' and 'ideal', and it was important that candidates made it clear what they meant by those words.

Question 4

In your view, which of the many roles played by Samuel was the most important?

The best answers did exactly what the question asked, which was to look at the important roles played by Samuel and to judge which was the *most* important. Less successful answers went no further than listing the things Samuel did, saying that he was a seer, a priest, a judge, a war leader, a prophet, a politician, an anointer of kings and a remover of kings. In judging which role was most important, many argued well that all roles were subsumed under that of 'prophet', since having being called to be a prophet, Samuel did whatever he was required by God to do, which included all those things. Some went a little further and suggested that Samuel's character, like that of Moses and Elijah, has been expanded by the editors and redactors so that it may not be possible to define which roles Samuel really did undertake, although even here the prophetic role has to be seen as the most important. A few argued persuasively for the importance of Samuel's role as a war leader, without which neither Israel nor Yahwism would have survived. Others made an equally strong case for his role as a priest, on the grounds that most prophets operated within the cult anyway, and it was Samuel's priestly role that allowed him to anoint Saul in the first place.

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Section B

Question 6

'The message of Amos is about God's judgement and not about God's love.' Discuss.

This was the most popular question, and candidates showed a detailed knowledge of the text of Amos. Most were able to show very clearly that Amos was the harbinger of doom and judgement in a manner not seen in the words of any other prophet. Most associated Amos' attitude with his work as a shepherd, arguing that he had suffered in Judah through the machinations of the rich, and felt compelled to judge the rich in the Northern Kingdom in unstinting terms, on the grounds that (1) the king and the priests were at the head of Israel's corruption, and (2) he had been given the command to do so by Yahweh, whose disgust with what

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Section C

Question 10

(a) (the commissioning of the 70 elders to receive a share of Moses' spirit)

Knowledge of the text as a whole and of its background was generally very good. There was a lot of useful comment on: Moses' readiness to show his annoyance to Yahweh; the significance of the number 70; the choice of elders (as opposed to younger men); the exclusion of female advisers; the tent of meeting; the theophany; Medad and Eldad; and the distribution of the spirit/ecstatic utterance. Some candidates could have been more evaluative. As an example, some of the best answers referred to the anachronistic appearance of the narrative, which might perhaps be explained as the work of a later editor or redactor seeking to vindicate ecstatic prophecy in the face of later criticism of Israel's ecstasies.

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The detailed knowledge here was phenomenal, both of the immediate context and its general background. In contrast to some responses to gobbet (a), both the explanatory and the evaluative comment for (b) were generally at a very high level. For explanation, candidates referred (for example) to: the significance of the traditional view that Samuel was about 12 at the time; the likely timing of the call (in relation to the lamp of God) just before dawn; the nature of the ark of the Lord and its eventual fate at the hands of the Philistines; the relationship between 'word' and 'vision'; Samuel being called to supersede the Elide priesthood; Samuel's prophetic call within the context of the cult; the emergence of *nabi*-type prophecy in relation to anointing and supervising kings, etc. Some of the best evaluation concerned the different sources/editors involved in the Samuel narratives and the different roles and responsibilities of Samuel. A few candidates gave rather narrow answers focusing solely on the three-fold repetition of the call. While this material was of course relevant, the number of issues raised by the gobbet means that candidates could have looked more widely at some of those issues. The text itself has no shortage of key words for candidates to consider.

(c) (the secret choice of Saul as king: Samuel's anointing of Saul)

Again, a number of candidates commented on the differences between the portraits of Samuel here (the so-called 'early source') and those elsewhere where he is in effect the ruler of all Israel. Hence in this extract, Samuel comes into contact with Saul's father through the episode of the lost asses, and Samuel is working as a paid clairvoyant. Saul is selected and anointed in secret with the express intention that he should remove the Philistine threat. There was intelligent comment for example about the ceremony of anointing, in connection with priests (Exodus 29:7), prophets (1 Kings 19:16) and kings, together with the fact that this was the origin of the designation of the king as God's 'anointed' *mashiah* (Messiah).

(d) (Jezebel's threat to Elijah and the revelation to Elijah on Mount Horeb)

Although a few candidates got bogged down in re-telling the story of the contest on Mount Carmel, this was a popular and very well done gobbet. A few confused it with the story of Naboth's vineyard, but most understood that the general context was Elijah's revelation on Mount Horeb. There was excellent comment on the character and determination of Jezebel, together with her determination to impose the cult of Canaanite/Phoenician Baal on Ahab. Some were incredulous at Elijah's backing down before 'a mere woman' (as they put it), having just slaughtered several hundred of her prophets, although others were more realistic, suggesting that Jezebel was as formidable as any man, and had at her disposal the whole Israelite army, so Elijah had reason to be concerned! The focus of most other comment was on the theophany at Horeb, where Elijah is portrayed as a second Moses, and is commissioned for further bloodshed.

(e) (the confrontation between Micaiah son of Imlah and Ahab's court prophets)

Although most candidates focused on the confrontation between so-called 'true prophets' and 'false prophets', a common characteristic of comment on this passage was a reluctance to acknowledge the role of the 'lying spirit of prophecy' co-opted by Yahweh to entice Ahab (apparently to fulfil the earlier prediction of Ahab's death). If Yahweh co-opted the lying spirit, then the text is stating quite clearly that false prophecy can come from Yahweh; moreover this appears to be offered as some kind of explanation of false prophecy in general and of why Yahweh allows it. Conversely, the historical background in the context of the Aramean wars was well known, and in general the gobbet was well done.

(f) (Amos' visions of God's judgement: the locusts)

There was good comment on Amos' use of vision as a means of conveying Yahweh's message, this particular vision being one of a series. Some candidates gave an abbreviated version of the doom-language used by Amos throughout the entire book, which detracted from the language used specifically in this passage. Equally, some went into great detail on the following visions of the fire, the plumb line, and the basket of ripe summer fruit, the amount of detail being irrelevant to the extract given. Most candidates, however, made good comment on: the extent of the destruction that would follow from a plague of locusts; the similarity with the eighth plague announced by Moses; the king's prerogative of the 'first mowings'; Amos' intercession in which the 'smallness' of Israel contrasts strongly with Israel's own view of itself as being powerful; and the anthropomorphic nature of God's 'repentance'. There was some sensitive comment on the nature of God.

(g) (Hosea's imagery of revival following acceptance of God's exhortation to repent)

Most candidates identified the general context as an extended passage (5:15-6:3) in which Hosea insists that if Israel will return to Yahweh, Yahweh will heal Israel's sickness. There was good comment on the change of mood that is typical of Hosea, where the language moves from God's judgement on Judah and Israel in the aftermath of the Syro-Ephraimite War to the language of 'binding up' and 'healing' wounds. Some assumed that the reference to the 'third day' must be a reference to Jesus, which in this context would be a reasonable Christian inference. Others discussed whether the passage is referring to resurrection in general or specifically to the theme of the 'dying and rising' god Baal (cf. 13:1). A few candidates made only general references to God's forgiveness.

(h) (the tension between destruction and salvation in Hosea: God's compassion)

Many candidates who answered this question referred to it in general terms only, reiterating the kind of general comment used also in response to gobbet (g). Those who did know the passage well commented on its terminology, e.g. – Ephraim; Admah and Zeboiim; 'I am God and not man'; 'the Holy One'. A few knew that these verses again represent the mood-swing typical of Hosea, following the general context of 9:1ff. where Israel has rejected Yahweh and so must be punished by losing king, children, sanctuaries and country. Israel now appears as the son for whom Yahweh feels compassion and tenderness. There was insightful comment on the relationship between the ideas expressed in this passage and Hosea's life experiences.

(i) (the sign of Immanuel in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite War)

As with **Question 8**, candidates who attempted this gobbet tended to have a good knowledge of the general historical context of the passage in the Syro-Ephraimite War. Most candidates resisted the urge to Christianize the 'sign of Immanuel', although many commented legitimately on the fact that later Christian interpretation did see this passage as having a future fulfilment in Jesus as well as a contemporary application perhaps in connection with Hezekiah. Most suggested that the 'young woman' was a 'virgin', although nobody commented on the fact that the word used by Isaiah ('*almah*') properly speaking means 'a woman of marriageable age'. Such a woman would generally be a virgin, but to translate it as such puts an unwarranted interpretation into the text. Some commented reasonably on the preceding sign of Shear Jashub, 'a remnant shall return', being a promise that in the event of catastrophe, the return of the remnant would keep God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7.

(j) (Jeremiah's preaching concerning the covenant)

Although there was some reasonable comment about 'this covenant', very few picked up on the assumption made by some scholars that the discovery of the law-book in 2 Kings 22 was the discovery (or writing) of the Book of Deuteronomy, and that Josiah had caused it to be found as a 'pious fraud' in order to use the law-book as the basis for his reforms, which Jeremiah probably supported. A few assumed that Jeremiah was talking about his 'new covenant', but this appears in Jeremiah 31:31-34. 'Cursed be the man' is typical Deuteronomistic covenant language (e.g. Deuteronomy 4:13), and the reference to being brought out of the iron furnace of Egypt (verse 4 here) is also typical Deuteronomistic language (e.g. Deuteronomy 4:20). Whether or not Jeremiah was in direct support of Josiah's reforms, a desire to return to the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant is typical of Jeremiah, and in this context, candidates made astute reference to the distinct new covenant in chapter 31, where Jeremiah now looks forward to the future as opposed to looking back into the past.

(k) (Jeremiah's allegory of the potter)

All candidates correctly identified this as the allegory of the potter, and suggested that Jeremiah derived it both a message of doom and a message of hope, thus this passage featured well in those who answered **Question 9**. The spoiled and remoulded pot leads to the oracle in verses 6-12, where the point is that an all-powerful God can do what he likes, just as the potter can do what he likes with the clay. Israel is no more independent of God than the clay is independent of the potter – God can bring evil or God can restore. Some referred further to the symbolic act in chapter 19, which continues the pottery metaphor with the purchase and destruction of the potter's earthen flask.

DIVINITY

Paper 9011/13

Prophets of the Old Testament

Key Messages

Answers to the 'gobbet' questions should contain an explanation and analysis of the context, background and meaning of each text, they should be more than a simple paraphrasing of the text. As a final message concerning the gobbets, answers to **Question 10** are frequently much shorter or else much longer than for **Questions 1-9**. The same amount of time should be spent on each of the four questions answered.

General Comments

Candidates need to pay careful attention to the wording of questions. It is not uncommon for candidates to answer a question they have prepared for as opposed to answering the question set.

Questions 1, 3, 4, 6 and 9 were the most popular. Some of the most sensitive theological writing was seen in answer to **Question 6** in considering how far judgement and love can co-exist in the message of Amos. **Question 10**, gobbets (a)-(f) were the most popular, with most candidates showing a detailed knowledge of the material. It is not necessary for candidates to write out the gobbets.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

'Prophecy in Israel was copied from prophecy in the surrounding nations.' How far do you agree?

This was one of the most popular questions, and most candidates answered well. The best responses had an in-depth knowledge of prophetic phenomena seen in a variety of Ancient Near Eastern texts, showing analogues with the various technical terms used in the Old Testament. The general consensus was that prophecy as a phenomenon was copied, since Israel appeared relatively late on the historical scene, but that its own version of prophecy was unique in that it was inspired by the monotheistic, ethical God of Israel. A favourite phrase was that 'What was borrowed was transformed'. Listing all the theories about when prophecy first appeared in Israel was not relevant to the question, since even if a definite date for first appearance could be established, that on its own would not give an answer to the question of whether or not it was copied.

Question 2

Examine the use of miracles in the message of the pre-canonical prophets.

The most successful essays focused on the word 'use', as opposed to simply writing out various miracle stories. Some answers distracted themselves by writing in excess of two sides just on Moses and the plagues, and much the same happened with Elijah's confrontation with Jezebel's prophets on Mount Carmel. Those who did examine the 'use of miracles' referred, for example, to: their use in establishing Yahweh's ultimate power (as in the escape from Egypt); their visual power (as on Carmel); their ability to establish monotheism (Elijah's miracles in general); their proof of God's loving nature (raising from the dead, with Elijah and Elisha), and so on. Most candidates argued that miracles were one part of what prophets could do in delivering Yahweh's messages. A list of all the other methods available to prophets, such as oracles, symbolic acts, songs, poems, etc., was not necessary since the wording of the question focuses precisely on miracles. Some gave an interesting analysis of the violence involved in some miracles, such as the death of

the Egyptian first-born, the annihilation of all Jezebel's prophets, and Elisha's use of two she-bears to maul forty-two small boys merely for calling him 'baldhead'.

Question 3

Consider the view that Moses and Elijah were ideal prophets rather than real prophets.

The opposition of the words 'real' and 'ideal' in the question led to some unusual interpretations of the word 'ideal'. In so far as this particular form of wording has been used on many occasions, to call Moses and Elijah 'ideal' implies that the editors of the Moses and Elijah traditions transformed them from who they were historically to what they became in the religious tradition. Several candidates referred usefully to their appearance in Jesus' transfiguration in the New Testament, where Moses stands as the ideal lawgiver and Elijah as the ideal representative of prophecy. Reference was made to the number of different roles held by both prophets, their powerful miracles, and the mysterious nature of their deaths, for example, all of which make them out as figures who are in some ways larger than real life. By contrast, they appear as 'real' prophets in so far as they do those things that most prophets did, such as having a call, standing up for social justice, interceding and the like. The Examiners accepted any reasonable definition of 'real' and 'ideal', and it was important that candidates made it clear what they meant by those words.

Question 4

In your view, which of the many roles played by Samuel was the most important?

The best answers did exactly what the question asked, which was to look at the important roles played by Samuel and to judge which was the *most* important. Less successful answers went no further than listing the things Samuel did, saying that he was a seer, a priest, a judge, a war leader, a prophet, a politician, an anointer of kings and a remover of kings. In judging which role was most important, many argued well that all roles were subsumed under that of 'prophet', since having being called to be a prophet, Samuel did whatever he was required by God to do, which included all those things. Some went a little further and suggested that Samuel's character, like that of Moses and Elijah, has been expanded by the editors and redactors so that it may not be possible to define which roles Samuel really did undertake, although even here the prophetic role has to be seen as the most important. A few argued persuasively for the importance of Samuel's role as a war leader, without which neither Israel nor Yahwism would have survived. Others made an equally strong case for his role as a priest, on the grounds that most prophets operated within the cult anyway, and it was Samuel's priestly role that allowed him to anoint Saul in the first place.

Question 5

Explain both how and why prophetic oracles were collected and preserved.

This was the least popular question. Most gave reasonable detail of the 'how?', although a few forgot to discuss the 'why?', which again is an object-lesson in reading the question carefully. For the 'how?', reference was made to prophetic disciples, particularly for Isaiah and Jeremiah. Candidates were generally competent in describing the role of both oral and written material in collecting the prophets' oracles. Equally, the work of editors and redactors was considered well, for example in the Book of the Twelve. For the 'why?', most referred to the weaknesses of the human memory, and to the need to preserve the prophetic oracles for the future, since oracles can have more than one application in history. A few candidates made an important distinction between collection and preservation, referring to the storage (and later discovery) of the Dead Sea Scrolls as an example of careful preservation of prophetic oracles and other scriptures, carried out through reverence for the text.

Section B

Question 6

'The message of Amos is about God's judgement and not about God's love.' Discuss.

This was the most popular question, and candidates showed a detailed knowledge of the text of Amos. Most were able to show very clearly that Amos was the harbinger of doom and judgement in a manner not seen in the words of any other prophet. Most associated Amos' attitude with his work as a shepherd, arguing that he had suffered in Judah through the machinations of the rich, and felt compelled to judge the rich in the Northern Kingdom in unstinting terms, on the grounds that (1) the king and the priests were at the head of Israel's corruption, and (2) he had been given the command to do so by Yahweh, whose disgust with what

was going on in the North took Amos 'from the flock' in order to issue dire warnings. The general impression was that love was in short supply in Amos' message, as can be seen by the very few comments that could be interpreted as showing anything of the kind. Most referred to Amos' intercessions, and to the ending of the book, although most dismissed the ending as a piece of later Judaeon editing. Perhaps the strongest evaluatory comment about love was the claim that the very fact that Amos bothered to give Israel any kind of message shows God's love, since there would be no point in saying anything at all if it were not possible for some to repent and survive. Moreover Amos was passionate in defending the oppressed poor, so he must have seen them as potential survivors of any judgement. Perhaps, then, Amos' language was hyperbole – deliberate exaggeration for effect. Against that, some pointed out the obvious, that Assyria annexed the North in 721.

Question 7

'None of the details of Hosea's life as a prophet are clear.' How far do you agree?

The best answers generally had a simple but effective approach: they argued that what was not clear (on the whole) was that Hosea should go against the Law and marry a prostitute, whereas what was clear was the parallel between Hosea's relationship with Gomer and Yahweh's relationship with Israel. This worked very well, since candidates pointed out that the Hosea/Gomer relationship could be interpreted literally, symbolically, allegorically, or metaphorically, but no interpretation was without its problems, not least the question of whether the woman in ch.3 is the same as the woman in ch.1, and the question of the parentage of the three children. For the rest, candidates expounded the Hosea/Gomer // Yahweh/Israel relationship very clearly. Other candidates needed to address the last five words of the question, since some had a tendency to expound the relationship parallels without saying what might be clear or unclear.

Question 8

Consider the importance of Isaiah's call for his work and message.

The depth of knowledge of the tension between Judah's rulers and Assyria and the backdrop of the Syro-Ephraimite War was very impressive, and many candidates wrote about Isaiah's involvement in the ongoing political drama. The important themes picked out from Isaiah's call included his vision of Yahweh's holiness and universal power, Isaiah's Jerusalem theology in connection with the Davidic dynasty, and Isaiah's knowledge that his message would meet with rejection. Some candidates could have reached higher levels by linking what Isaiah said and did more firmly with the details of his call, whereas not infrequently that link was assumed rather than shown. Some had a tendency to dwell on the Christian interpretation of Isaiah's theology, which really is irrelevant to the interpretation of Jewish texts from the 8th century BCE.

Question 9

Discuss the view that Jeremiah's message was an equal mixture of doom and hope.

One common issue with answers to this question, which was very popular, was the amount of writing. Candidates generally knew Jeremiah in vast detail. Where the detail was relevant, answers were good; where it was not so relevant, the results were not so good. Most got off to a very good start by using the wording of Jeremiah's call, showing the balance between his commission 'to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow' on the one hand, and 'to build and to plant' on the other (1:10). Some tried to show this kind of balance in all of what Jeremiah said and did, which sometimes became difficult to show in view of the heavy preponderance of doom oracles and Jeremiah's own comment that no true prophet before him had ever prophesied salvation. The vision of the 'good and bad figs' did fit well with the doom/hope balance, although some could have been more convincing by identifying who the good and bad figs were. Most concluded that there is some kind of doom/hope balance in Jeremiah's message since so much of what he says is positive, although the doom oracles inevitably are more prominent because (as with Amos) history showed that Jeremiah's predictions of foreign invasion were correct.

Section C

Question 10

(a) (the commissioning of the 70 elders to receive a share of Moses' spirit)

Knowledge of the text as a whole and of its background was generally very good. There was a lot of useful comment on: Moses' readiness to show his annoyance to Yahweh; the significance of the number 70; the choice of elders (as opposed to younger men); the exclusion of female advisers; the tent of meeting; the theophany; Medad and Eldad; and the distribution of the spirit/ecstatic utterance. Some candidates could have been more evaluative. As an example, some of the best answers referred to the anachronistic appearance of the narrative, which might perhaps be explained as the work of a later editor or redactor seeking to vindicate ecstatic prophecy in the face of later criticism of Israel's ecstasies.

(b) (God's first revelation to Samuel)

The detailed knowledge here was phenomenal, both of the immediate context and its general background. In contrast to some responses to gobbet (a), both the explanatory and the evaluative comment for (b) were generally at a very high level. For explanation, candidates referred (for example) to: the significance of the traditional view that Samuel was about 12 at the time; the likely timing of the call (in relation to the lamp of God) just before dawn; the nature of the ark of the Lord and its eventual fate at the hands of the Philistines; the relationship between 'word' and 'vision'; Samuel being called to supersede the Elide priesthood; Samuel's prophetic call within the context of the cult; the emergence of *nabi*-type prophecy in relation to anointing and supervising kings, etc. Some of the best evaluation concerned the different sources/editors involved in the Samuel narratives and the different roles and responsibilities of Samuel. A few candidates gave rather narrow answers focusing solely on the three-fold repetition of the call. While this material was of course relevant, the number of issues raised by the gobbet means that candidates could have looked more widely at some of those issues. The text itself has no shortage of key words for candidates to consider.

(c) (the secret choice of Saul as king: Samuel's anointing of Saul)

Again, a number of candidates commented on the differences between the portraits of Samuel here (the so-called 'early source') and those elsewhere where he is in effect the ruler of all Israel. Hence in this extract, Samuel comes into contact with Saul's father through the episode of the lost asses, and Samuel is working as a paid clairvoyant. Saul is selected and anointed in secret with the express intention that he should remove the Philistine threat. There was intelligent comment for example about the ceremony of anointing, in connection with priests (Exodus 29:7), prophets (1 Kings 19:16) and kings, together with the fact that this was the origin of the designation of the king as God's 'anointed' *mashiah* (Messiah).

(d) (Jezebel's threat to Elijah and the revelation to Elijah on Mount Horeb)

Although a few candidates got bogged down in re-telling the story of the contest on Mount Carmel, this was a popular and very well done gobbet. A few confused it with the story of Naboth's vineyard, but most understood that the general context was Elijah's revelation on Mount Horeb. There was excellent comment on the character and determination of Jezebel, together with her determination to impose the cult of Canaanite/Phoenician Baal on Ahab. Some were incredulous at Elijah's backing down before 'a mere woman' (as they put it), having just slaughtered several hundred of her prophets, although others were more realistic, suggesting that Jezebel was as formidable as any man, and had at her disposal the whole Israelite army, so Elijah had reason to be concerned! The focus of most other comment was on the theophany at Horeb, where Elijah is portrayed as a second Moses, and is commissioned for further bloodshed.

(e) (the confrontation between Micaiah son of Imlah and Ahab's court prophets)

Although most candidates focused on the confrontation between so-called 'true prophets' and 'false prophets', a common characteristic of comment on this passage was a reluctance to acknowledge the role of the 'lying spirit of prophecy' co-opted by Yahweh to entice Ahab (apparently to fulfil the earlier prediction of Ahab's death). If Yahweh co-opted the lying spirit, then the text is stating quite clearly that false prophecy can come from Yahweh; moreover this appears to be offered as some kind of explanation of false prophecy in general and of why Yahweh allows it. Conversely, the historical background in the context of the Aramean wars was well known, and in general the gobbet was well done.

(f) (Amos' visions of God's judgement: the locusts)

There was good comment on Amos' use of vision as a means of conveying Yahweh's message, this particular vision being one of a series. Some candidates gave an abbreviated version of the doom-language used by Amos throughout the entire book, which detracted from the language used specifically in this passage. Equally, some went into great detail on the following visions of the fire, the plumb line, and the basket of ripe summer fruit, the amount of detail being irrelevant to the extract given. Most candidates, however, made good comment on: the extent of the destruction that would follow from a plague of locusts; the similarity with the eighth plague announced by Moses; the king's prerogative of the 'first mowings'; Amos' intercession in which the 'smallness' of Israel contrasts strongly with Israel's own view of itself as being powerful; and the anthropomorphic nature of God's 'repentance'. There was some sensitive comment on the nature of God.

(g) (Hosea's imagery of revival following acceptance of God's exhortation to repent)

Most candidates identified the general context as an extended passage (5:15-6:3) in which Hosea insists that if Israel will return to Yahweh, Yahweh will heal Israel's sickness. There was good comment on the change of mood that is typical of Hosea, where the language moves from God's judgement on Judah and Israel in the aftermath of the Syro-Ephraimite War to the language of 'binding up' and 'healing' wounds. Some assumed that the reference to the 'third day' must be a reference to Jesus, which in this context would be a reasonable Christian inference. Others discussed whether the passage is referring to resurrection in general or specifically to the theme of the 'dying and rising' god Baal (cf. 13:1). A few candidates made only general references to God's forgiveness.

(h) (the tension between destruction and salvation in Hosea: God's compassion)

Many candidates who answered this question referred to it in general terms only, reiterating the kind of general comment used also in response to gobbet (g). Those who did know the passage well commented on its terminology, e.g. – Ephraim; Admah and Zeboiim; 'I am God and not man'; 'the Holy One'. A few knew that these verses again represent the mood-swing typical of Hosea, following the general context of 9:1ff. where Israel has rejected Yahweh and so must be punished by losing king, children, sanctuaries and country. Israel now appears as the son for whom Yahweh feels compassion and tenderness. There was insightful comment on the relationship between the ideas expressed in this passage and Hosea's life experiences.

(i) (the sign of Immanuel in the context of the Syro-Ephraimite War)

As with **Question 8**, candidates who attempted this gobbet tended to have a good knowledge of the general historical context of the passage in the Syro-Ephraimite War. Most candidates resisted the urge to Christianize the 'sign of Immanuel', although many commented legitimately on the fact that later Christian interpretation did see this passage as having a future fulfilment in Jesus as well as a contemporary application perhaps in connection with Hezekiah. Most suggested that the 'young woman' was a 'virgin', although nobody commented on the fact that the word used by Isaiah ('*almah*') properly speaking means 'a woman of marriageable age'. Such a woman would generally be a virgin, but to translate it as such puts an unwarranted interpretation into the text. Some commented reasonably on the preceding sign of Shear Jashub, 'a remnant shall return', being a promise that in the event of catastrophe, the return of the remnant would keep God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7.

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(k) (Jeremiah's allegory of the potter)

All candidates correctly identified this as the allegory of the potter, and suggested that Jeremiah derived it both a message of doom and a message of hope, thus this passage featured well in those who answered **Question 9**. The spoiled and remoulded pot leads to the oracle in verses 6-12, where the point is that an all-powerful God can do what he likes, just as the potter can do what he likes with the clay. Israel is no more independent of God than the clay is independent of the potter – God can bring evil or God can restore. Some referred further to the symbolic act in chapter 19, which continues the pottery metaphor with the purchase and destruction of the potter's earthen flask.

DIVINITY

Paper 9011/21
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. 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

Paper 9011/22
The Four Gospels

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 ‘Betrayal’ 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 were 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.

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Paper 9011/23
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.

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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.

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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.

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Paper 9011/31
The Apostolic Age

Key Messages

In answering **Question 1**, identify the context accurately and comment on the key words or ideas in the passage set.

In answering other questions, read the question carefully so you are sure exactly what is being asked.

Quote evidence from the texts, at least by referring to particular passages if not by actually including something to what Acts or the writer says.

General Comments

There was a significant increase in candidate numbers this session. There were some outstanding scripts submitted by candidates, and a great number of very good, well-informed scripts.

There is a pattern of candidates writing very good answers to essay questions, but scoring lower marks in answering **Question 1**. The model for **Question 1** answers is a good biblical commentary. Candidates should:

- (a) Identify the broad context of the passage set, though this will sometimes be quite a short section of the book.
- (b) Identify the immediate context of the passage, which will usually be the preceding verse.
- (c) Identify words or ideas in the passage and comment on them.
- (d) Try to avoid merely writing out the passage in their own words without a comment.
- (e) Keep the answer to less than one side of paper unless their handwriting is very large. Answers longer than one side of paper usually do not add much in their later part, and increase time pressure on the candidates.

In answering essay questions, candidates need to be more careful in writing to the question asked. Several examples of not doing this are identified later in this report.

There were excellent examples of candidates referring to the work of scholars accurately and relevantly. In several answers the range of different scholars named and used by candidates was impressively wide.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a popular option among candidates. The texts from I Thessalonians were more popular than those from I Corinthians, especially I Thessalonians 5:1-2. The context was generally known, though not all candidates gave the immediate context as well as a general one. Comments on I Corinthians often showed a too general approach to identifying contexts: I Corinthians 2:12 was often identified in relation to I Corinthians 4, rather than the discussion at the start of I Corinthians 2. I Corinthians 6:11 was often linked to I Corinthians 5 rather than its own chapter.

- (a) This passage was not always linked to Paul's discussion of his method of preaching in 1 Corinthians 14, which is at the start of chapter 2. This meant that 'spirit of the world' was not properly interpreted. The Holy Spirit and his gifts were recognised, but more could have been said about the actual gifts that God gave to the Corinthians.
- (b) This was too often linked to Paul's discussion of the case of incest in chapter 5 rather than the treatment of avoiding law suits in chapter 6. The threatening tone of 1 Corinthians 6:10, the immediate context, was too often missed. This is an example of a verse where the text guides candidates easily to what they should do. 'You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified' give baptism, sharing in God's holiness, and being set right with God as topics for comment. This is also an example of a text which contains potentially more than six points. Candidates who wrote about six of them scored full marks.
- (c) Too many candidates who commented on this verse failed to read the reference at the end. They wrote about divisions at the Corinthian Eucharist between the rich and the poor rather than about the discussion in 1 Corinthians 10 about food as a way of participating in a spiritual reality. So Paul rejects eating meat from sacrifices offered to idols as a participation in pagan worship. Instead Christians should recognise their union with Christ in Communion, coming from Paul's discussion of Old Testament types of baptism in the earlier part of the chapter.
- (d) This allowed candidates to write well-informed and useful comments, including discussion about why the Corinthians might find the idea of resurrection difficult, especially if they were of Greek origin. Some candidates missed the significance of 'I delivered to you ... what I also received' but others wrote well about the Damascus road experience or Paul's discussions with the other apostles. There were good comments about Christ dying for humanity's sins, but the importance of 'buried' and 'according to the scriptures' could be missed. Some candidates correctly identified Isaiah and Hosea as the most likely scriptures in Paul's mind.
- (e) Candidates were good at recognising this passage as from the opening thanksgiving of the letter. They were also able to comment that 'we' and 'our' refer to Paul's colleagues Timothy and Silas. There was slightly less about the evidence of the missionaries' behaviour in Thessalonica, but 'word', 'power' and 'Holy Spirit' were well interpreted.
- (f) This was the most popular passage, tackled by almost every candidate who attempted this question. The Parousia was thoroughly understood and well explained. Not all answers commented on Paul's seeming expectation that the Parousia was imminent, and not everybody noticed the possible quotation from Jesus in 'the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night'. There were good comments about the use of similes or analogies – either is an appropriate category here.

Question 2

This was by far the most popular essay question in **Section A**. Answers often illustrated the importance of reading the question carefully. A very large number of answers started with the problem of factionalism, moved to the case of incest, then to lawsuits, then to women covering their heads in Church, then to divisions between rich and poor at the Eucharist, and then to questions about the resurrection of the dead. In this approach, only some of the comments about factionalism could receive credit. To score high marks candidates had to address 1 Corinthians 12-14 where Paul looks at the variety of gifts which the members of the Church possessed, at their respective significance, at the supreme role of love in their use, and then gives practical advice about the respective uses and importance of prophesying and speaking in tongues. Those candidates who did write about these chapters failed to explain prophesying here as what modern Christians would call preaching, that is a coherent and understandable speech about belief or practice. There were some references to Acts 2 to explain speaking in tongues, but not enough on the apparent varieties of glossolalia found at Corinth. Paul himself spoke in tongues, he tells us, but sees the Church's meetings as attended by outsiders (potential converts) who could be brought to belief by hearing prophecy. There is also his final comment about the Spirit as the 'spirit of order' which could usefully be discussed.

Question 3

Answers to this question were in many cases very well-informed and sensible discussions of the roles of Silas and Timothy at Thessalonica, especially after Paul was chased out by his opponents, and of the discussion about parties at Corinth and the roles of Apollos and Cephas (Peter). Priscilla and Aquila received honourable mentions, both in relation to Paul and to Apollos. The discussion in I Corinthians 9 about the conditions of apostolic ministry was often missed, as was the important list of witnesses to the appearances of the risen Jesus from the start of I Corinthians 15. Weaker answers lacked these sorts of detail and merely gave a generalised account of Paul as a missionary without looking at the successes and failures of his collaborators and rivals.

Question 4

There were some sound answers to this question. The main weaknesses were a failure to use the evidence from Acts about the brevity of Paul's time in Thessalonica, and the resulting importance of Silas and Timothy there and at Berea (Berea), and the plausibility of fitting the writing of I Thessalonians into Paul's stay at Corinth. The other element which was not fully used was the discussion of the resurrection of the dead and the Parousia in I Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11. A comparison of this passage with I Corinthians reveals clearly the development of Paul's thought about the resurrection of the dead and the likely time of Christ's return. Most commentators direct readers onward to look at Philippians – generally thought to be among the latest of Paul's undisputed letters – to argue for a movement in his thinking from immediate expectation of the Parousia in the next few years in I Thessalonians to a much longer horizon of expectation in I Corinthians and certainly in Philippians. So the argument is based both on a reconstruction of Paul's life and on the shifts in his thinking.

Section B

Question 5

This question produced some thorough and competent responses. Candidates had a sound knowledge of Acts and could often use it successfully. Weaknesses came when candidates did not recognise the very different background of the Gentile audience for early Christian preaching. Gentiles outside Palestine started from polytheism rather than monotheism, as the Athenian misunderstanding of Paul in Acts 17 suggests. They were aware that the gods could appear among them, as when Barnabas and Paul were mistaken for Zeus and Hermes at Lystra in Acts 14. But they had very different ideas about moral behaviour as the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 show. Gentiles had only a sketchy knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, so sermons such as those of Peter in Acts 2 and Stephen in Acts 7 to Jewish audiences would be pointless. A good comparison might be the sermon of Peter in Acts 2 and Paul's address to the Areopagus in Acts 17. Candidates were almost all very clear about the universal scope of the Christian message, authenticated in Acts 1:8 and commented usefully on Philip's initiatives in preaching to the Samaritans and baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch as well as on Peter's vision in Acts 10.

Question 6

This was a very popular question and produced some very good answers. Candidates tended to rely on the Galatians version of justification by faith – which was a sensible choice given the wide possible range of material to be used in the essay – but this did sometimes lead to claims that Paul's teaching about the resurrection of Jesus was distinct from his theology of justification. Using Romans 6 might have reduced this slightly misleading approach. Weaker candidates failed to give a satisfactory account of Paul's ideas about justification by faith which limited the comparison called for by the question. Alternative centres for Paul's teaching including resurrection and new life in Christ, the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit and the moral imperative of love as the central principle of Christian living – again relying more on I Corinthians than on the later chapters of Romans.

Question 7

This question attracted rather few answers, but they were of a high quality. Those who chose it clearly knew the theology of Colossians very well, and most recognised the questionable status of the epistle as part of Paul's writings. This gave their comments a distinctive and welcome edge, allowing them to explore Colossians without assumptions drawn from the main Paul corpus of thought. That said, they drew comparisons when appropriate with mainstream Paul letters, particularly about the rather different uses of the head and body analogy in Colossians and in Romans and I Corinthians. There were many particularly good accounts of the hymn in Colossians 1 and the early verses of Colossians 3.

Question 8

This question, like **Question 7**, attracted few candidates, but their work was of a very pleasing quality. They knew the relevant passages about priesthood in Hebrews. They had a clear understanding of the Old Testament concepts associated with the Aaronic priesthood. They could, mostly, correctly describe and apply the Hebrews' view of Melchizedek. They were very good on Jesus' unique sacrifice of himself on the cross as a priestly act, opening up a new and living way into the holiest place of all.

Question 9

This was another question where successful candidates read the question correctly and answered generally accurately. Less successful candidates saw James and Paul and wrote a pre-prepared essay on justification by faith which did not generally respond to the question. Candidates needed to identify the significant amount of ethical reflection in James, which includes chapter 1 on concern for social outcasts such as widows and orphans, chapters 1 and 3 on control of the tongue and the right use of speech, chapter 2 on treatment of the rich and poor (a useful comparison with Paul in I Corinthians 11 here), the quotation of the 'royal law' about loving your neighbour (with Romans 12 as the parallel text) in the same chapter, active charity which has many parallels through the writings of Paul. Perhaps James is distinctive in his discussion about future plans and Old Testament in his counsel about paying labourers, but his comments about judging are very close to I Corinthians 6 and his stress on patience is close to a lot of Paul. Differences between Paul and James probably would focus on the role of Jesus Christ as a model.

Question 10

This was a popular question, but the standard of answers overall, despite some very good individual performances, was not high. The current state of scholarship about early Christian worship is both confused and confusing, with old certainties rather brashly swept away. The current picture is by no means satisfactory. Certain elements though are still clear.

The similarities between Jewish and Christian worship could include the use of something very like a synagogue, a regular meeting for worship which included the reading of the Old Testament, preaching on the texts, and prayer. This could be supported by reference to Acts where the Jewish synagogue is a starting place for Christian preaching (and the synagogue did not have to be a building as Acts 16 about Philippi shows), but when the Christians are excluded, they meet in a parallel assembly, as the Acts 18 account of Paul's use of the house of Titus Justus shows. Christians also continued to sing psalms, but added their own spiritual songs and hymns. For this the general text is Colossians 3:16, though the (pre-)Pauline hymns in Philippians 2, Colossians 1 and even Ephesians 1 could be cited.

The distinctive break with Jewish origins came, as most candidates noted, with the abandonment of circumcision as the rite of entrance into the worshipping community (Acts 15 for this and Galatians 3) and its replacement by baptism (Acts 2, 8, 10, and particularly 19, Romans 6, I Corinthians 1 could all be used, or any as the candidate thought fit). The distinctive Christian act of worship, dragged out of Jewish practice by Jesus himself, was the Eucharist, which represented a transformation of the Passover meal into a new memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and an anticipation of heavenly realities. This could be usefully linked with the shift of the weekly day of communal worship from the Sabbath to the day of the resurrection. Those who want to go beyond the Pauline corpus might cite Revelation 1 or Pliny's letter to Trajan.

Though the very first Christians in Jerusalem continued to use the Temple as a place of prayer and preaching and teaching (candidates cited Acts 3 and Peter and John going up to the Temple at the ninth hour), there is one remarkable and outstanding change in Christian practice from all that had gone before. Jewish religion in Jerusalem and pagan practice universally was focused on the slaughter and burning of animals in front of a sanctuary as a sacrifice to the divine powers. Christians had nothing of this. In a change so profound and long universal that modern people do not even notice it, for Christians the only sacrifice took place on a wooden cross outside the gates of Jerusalem and was accepted by God in the resurrection on the third day of the Lord himself.

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Paper 9011/32
The Apostolic Age

Key Messages

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General Comments

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Comments on Specific Questions

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- (e) Candidates were good at recognising this passage as from the opening thanksgiving of the letter. They were also able to comment that 'we' and 'our' refer to Paul's colleagues Timothy and Silas. There was slightly less about the evidence of the missionaries' behaviour in Thessalonica, but 'word', 'power' and 'Holy Spirit' were well interpreted.
- (f) This was the most popular passage, tackled by almost every candidate who attempted this question. The Parousia was thoroughly understood and well explained. Not all answers commented on Paul's seeming expectation that the Parousia was imminent, and not everybody noticed the possible quotation from Jesus in 'the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night'. There were good comments about the use of similes or analogies – either is an appropriate category here.

Question 2

This was by far the most popular essay question in **Section A**. Answers often illustrated the importance of reading the question carefully. A very large number of answers started with the problem of factionalism, moved to the case of incest, then to lawsuits, then to women covering their heads in Church, then to divisions between rich and poor at the Eucharist, and then to questions about the resurrection of the dead. In this approach, only some of the comments about factionalism could receive credit. To score high marks candidates had to address 1 Corinthians 12-14 where Paul looks at the variety of gifts which the members of the Church possessed, at their respective significance, at the supreme role of love in their use, and then gives practical advice about the respective uses and importance of prophesying and speaking in tongues. Those candidates who did write about these chapters failed to explain prophesying here as what modern Christians would call preaching, that is a coherent and understandable speech about belief or practice. There were some references to Acts 2 to explain speaking in tongues, but not enough on the apparent varieties of glossolalia found at Corinth. Paul himself spoke in tongues, he tells us, but sees the Church's meetings as attended by outsiders (potential converts) who could be brought to belief by hearing prophecy. There is also his final comment about the Spirit as the 'spirit of order' which could usefully be discussed.

Question 3

Answers to this question were in many cases very well-informed and sensible discussions of the roles of Silas and Timothy at Thessalonica, especially after Paul was chased out by his opponents, and of the discussion about parties at Corinth and the roles of Apollos and Cephas (Peter). Priscilla and Aquila received

honourable mentions, both in relation to Paul and to Apollos. The discussion in I Corinthians 9 and the conditions of apostolic ministry was often missed, as was the important list of witnesses to the appearance of the risen Jesus from the start of I Corinthians 15. Weaker answers lacked these sorts of detail and gave a generalised account of Paul as a missionary without looking at the successes and failures of his collaborators and rivals.

Question 4

There were some sound answers to this question. The main weaknesses were a failure to use the evidence from Acts about the brevity of Paul's time in Thessalonica, and the resulting importance of Silas and Timothy there and at Berea (Berea), and the plausibility of fitting the writing of I Thessalonians into Paul's stay at Corinth. The other element which was not fully used was the discussion of the resurrection of the dead and the Parousia in I Thessalonians 4:13 – 5:11. A comparison of this passage with I Corinthians reveals clearly the development of Paul's thought about the resurrection of the dead and the likely time of Christ's return. Most commentators direct readers onward to look at Philippians – generally thought to be among the latest of Paul's undisputed letters – to argue for a movement in his thinking from immediate expectation of the Parousia in the next few years in I Thessalonians to a much longer horizon of expectation in I Corinthians and certainly in Philippians. So the argument is based both on a reconstruction of Paul's life and on the shifts in his thinking.

Section B

Question 5

This question produced some thorough and competent responses. Candidates had a sound knowledge of Acts and could often use it successfully. Weaknesses came when candidates did not recognise the very different background of the Gentile audience for early Christian preaching. Gentiles outside Palestine started from polytheism rather than monotheism, as the Athenian misunderstanding of Paul in Acts 17 suggests. They were aware that the gods could appear among them, as when Barnabas and Paul were mistaken for Zeus and Hermes at Lystra in Acts 14. But they had very different ideas about moral behaviour as the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 show. Gentiles had only a sketchy knowledge of the Jewish scriptures, so sermons such as those of Peter in Acts 2 and Stephen in Acts 7 to Jewish audiences would be pointless. A good comparison might be the sermon of Peter in Acts 2 and Paul's address to the Areopagus in Acts 17. Candidates were almost all very clear about the universal scope of the Christian message, authenticated in Acts 1:8 and commented usefully on Philip's initiatives in preaching to the Samaritans and baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch as well as on Peter's vision in Acts 10.

Question 6

This was a very popular question and produced some very good answers. Candidates tended to rely on the Galatians version of justification by faith – which was a sensible choice given the wide possible range of material to be used in the essay – but this did sometimes lead to claims that Paul's teaching about the resurrection of Jesus was distinct from his theology of justification. Using Romans 6 might have reduced this slightly misleading approach. Weaker candidates failed to give a satisfactory account of Paul's ideas about justification by faith which limited the comparison called for by the question. Alternative centres for Paul's teaching including resurrection and new life in Christ, the Christian experience of the Holy Spirit and the moral imperative of love as the central principle of Christian living – again relying more on I Corinthians than on the later chapters of Romans.

Question 7

This question attracted rather few answers, but they were of a high quality. Those who chose it clearly knew the theology of Colossians very well, and most recognised the questionable status of the epistle as part of Paul's writings. This gave their comments a distinctive and welcome edge, allowing them to explore Colossians without assumptions drawn from the main Paul corpus of thought. That said, they drew comparisons when appropriate with mainstream Paul letters, particularly about the rather different uses of the head and body analogy in Colossians and in Romans and I Corinthians. There were many particularly good accounts of the hymn in Colossians 1 and the early verses of Colossians 3.

Question 8

This question, like **Question 7**, attracted few candidates, but their work was of a very pleasing quality. They knew the relevant passages about priesthood in Hebrews. They had a clear understanding of the Old

Testament concepts associated with the Aaronic priesthood. They could, mostly, correctly describe the cross and apply the Hebrews' view of Melchizedek. They were very good on Jesus' unique sacrifice of himself on the cross as a priestly act, opening up a new and living way into the holiest place of all.

Question 9

This was another question where successful candidates read the question correctly and answered generally accurately. Less successful candidates saw James and Paul and wrote a pre-prepared essay on justification by faith which did not generally respond to the question. Candidates needed to identify the significant amount of ethical reflection in James, which includes chapter 1 on concern for social outcasts such as widows and orphans, chapters 1 and 3 on control of the tongue and the right use of speech, chapter 2 on treatment of the rich and poor (a useful comparison with Paul in I Corinthians 11 here), the quotation of the 'royal law' about loving your neighbour (with Romans 12 as the parallel text) in the same chapter, active charity which has many parallels through the writings of Paul. Perhaps James is distinctive in his discussion about future plans and Old Testament in his counsel about paying labourers, but his comments about judging are very close to I Corinthians 6 and his stress on patience is close to a lot of Paul. Differences between Paul and James probably would focus on the role of Jesus Christ as a model.

Question 10

This was a popular question, but the standard of answers overall, despite some very good individual performances, was not high. The current state of scholarship about early Christian worship is both confused and confusing, with old certainties rather brashly swept away. The current picture is by no means satisfactory. Certain elements though are still clear.

The similarities between Jewish and Christian worship could include the use of something very like a synagogue, a regular meeting for worship which included the reading of the Old Testament, preaching on the texts, and prayer. This could be supported by reference to Acts where the Jewish synagogue is a starting place for Christian preaching (and the synagogue did not have to be a building as Acts 16 about Philippi shows), but when the Christians are excluded, they meet in a parallel assembly, as the Acts 18 account of Paul's use of the house of Titus Justus shows. Christians also continued to sing psalms, but added their own spiritual songs and hymns. For this the general text is Colossians 3:16, though the (pre-)Pauline hymns in Philippians 2, Colossians 1 and even Ephesians 1 could be cited.

The distinctive break with Jewish origins came, as most candidates noted, with the abandonment of circumcision as the rite of entrance into the worshipping community (Acts 15 for this and Galatians 3) and its replacement by baptism (Acts 2, 8, 10, and particularly 19, Romans 6, I Corinthians 1 could all be used, or any as the candidate thought fit). The distinctive Christian act of worship, dragged out of Jewish practice by Jesus himself, was the Eucharist, which represented a transformation of the Passover meal into a new memorial of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and an anticipation of heavenly realities. This could be usefully linked with the shift of the weekly day of communal worship from the Sabbath to the day of the resurrection. Those who want to go beyond the Pauline corpus might cite Revelation 1 or Pliny's letter to Trajan.

Though the very first Christians in Jerusalem continued to use the Temple as a place of prayer and preaching and teaching (candidates cited Acts 3 and Peter and John going up to the Temple at the ninth hour), there is one remarkable and outstanding change in Christian practice from all that had gone before. Jewish religion in Jerusalem and pagan practice universally was focused on the slaughter and burning of animals in front of a sanctuary as a sacrifice to the divine powers. Christians had nothing of this. In a change so profound and long universal that modern people do not even notice it, for Christians the only sacrifice took place on a wooden cross outside the gates of Jerusalem and was accepted by God in the resurrection on the third day of the Lord himself.

DIVINITY

Paper 9011/33
The Apostolic Age

Key Messages

In answering **Question 1**, identify the context accurately and comment on the key words or ideas in the passage set.

In answering other questions, read the question carefully so you are sure exactly what is being asked.

Quote evidence from the texts, at least by referring to particular passages if not by actually including something to what Acts or the writer says.

General Comments

There was a significant increase in candidate numbers this session. There were some outstanding scripts submitted by candidates, and a great number of very good, well-informed scripts.

There is a pattern of candidates writing very good answers to essay questions, but scoring lower marks in answering **Question 1**. The model for **Question 1** answers is a good biblical commentary. Candidates should:

- (a) Identify the broad context of the passage set, though this will sometimes be quite a short section of the book.
- (b) Identify the immediate context of the passage, which will usually be the preceding verse.
- (c) Identify words or ideas in the passage and comment on them.
- (d) Try to avoid merely writing out the passage in their own words without a comment.
- (e) Keep the answer to less than one side of paper unless their handwriting is very large. Answers longer than one side of paper usually do not add much in their later part, and increase time pressure on the candidates.

In answering essay questions, candidates need to be more careful in writing to the question asked. Several examples of not doing this are identified later in this report.

There were excellent examples of candidates referring to the work of scholars accurately and relevantly. In several answers the range of different scholars named and used by candidates was impressively wide.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1

This was a popular option among candidates. The texts from I Thessalonians were more popular than those from I Corinthians, especially I Thessalonians 5:1-2. The context was generally known, though not all candidates gave the immediate context as well as a general one. Comments on I Corinthians often showed a too general approach to identifying contexts: I Corinthians 2:12 was often identified in relation to I Corinthians 4, rather than the discussion at the start of I Corinthians 2. I Corinthians 6:11 was often linked to I Corinthians 5 rather than its own chapter.

- (a) This passage was not always linked to Paul's discussion of his method of preaching in 1 Corinthians 14, which is at the start of chapter 2. This meant that 'spirit of the world' was not properly interpreted. The Holy Spirit and his gifts were recognised, but more could have been said about the actual gifts that God gave to the Corinthians.
- (b) This was too often linked to Paul's discussion of the case of incest in chapter 5 rather than the treatment of avoiding law suits in chapter 6. The threatening tone of 1 Corinthians 6:10, the immediate context, was too often missed. This is an example of a verse where the text guides candidates easily to what they should do. 'You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified' give baptism, sharing in God's holiness, and being set right with God as topics for comment. This is also an example of a text which contains potentially more than six points. Candidates who wrote about six of them scored full marks.
- (c) Too many candidates who commented on this verse failed to read the reference at the end. They wrote about divisions at the Corinthian Eucharist between the rich and the poor rather than about the discussion in 1 Corinthians 10 about food as a way of participating in a spiritual reality. So Paul rejects eating meat from sacrifices offered to idols as a participation in pagan worship. Instead Christians should recognise their union with Christ in Communion, coming from Paul's discussion of Old Testament types of baptism in the earlier part of the chapter.
- (d) This allowed candidates to write well-informed and useful comments, including discussion about why the Corinthians might find the idea of resurrection difficult, especially if they were of Greek origin. Some candidates missed the significance of 'I delivered to you ... what I also received' but others wrote well about the Damascus road experience or Paul's discussions with the other apostles. There were good comments about Christ dying for humanity's sins, but the importance of 'buried' and 'according to the scriptures' could be missed. Some candidates correctly identified Isaiah and Hosea as the most likely scriptures in Paul's mind.
- (e) Candidates were good at recognising this passage as from the opening thanksgiving of the letter. They were also able to comment that 'we' and 'our' refer to Paul's colleagues Timothy and Silas. There was slightly less about the evidence of the missionaries' behaviour in Thessalonica, but 'word', 'power' and 'Holy Spirit' were well interpreted.
- (f) This was the most popular passage, tackled by almost every candidate who attempted this question. The Parousia was thoroughly understood and well explained. Not all answers commented on Paul's seeming expectation that the Parousia was imminent, and not everybody noticed the possible quotation from Jesus in 'the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night'. There were good comments about the use of similes or analogies – either is an appropriate category here.

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