

DIVINITY

<p>Paper 8041/21 The Four Gospels</p>

Key Messages

Candidates who achieved highest were able to identify what the main thrust of each question was and then adhere closely to these requirements. A question will never be about merely retelling information but there will always be a need to either make an assessment, an analysis, an evaluation, a comparison etc. Candidates who were able to show that they had a good grasp of any relevant scholarly trends and developments, achieved very well.

General Comments

Overall the standard of responses for this paper was very good with many candidates scoring the higher end of the marks. Some candidates did not answer sufficient questions. Four passages need to be commented on and these four passages form one question. If a candidate chooses to answer the gobbets then they must also select three other essay questions as well.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1

This question remains a popular choice amongst the candidates and those who attempted it generally did well. There were a small minority of candidates who did not follow the instructions and so did not fully answer the question as they did not select four gobbets to write about. A small number of candidates mistook **Question 1**, with its four parts, as being an alternative to answering 4 essays from the entire paper which seriously affected their final grade.

- (a) This was a very popular gobbet to comment on. Candidates wrote clear answers which identified this passage and the key points contained within it. There was good comment on the ancestry of Jesus and the significance given to the fourteen generations.
- (b) This was a popular choice of gobbet and was well answered by the majority of candidates. There were relevant comments made about the significance of the twelve being sent on mission but to go nowhere near the Gentile territory. Answers demonstrated good understanding of who 'the Gentiles' and 'the Samaritans' were.
- (c) There were some good answers given regarding the family of Jesus. Few candidates commented on who 'they' refers to in the last phrase.
- (d) This gobbet was generally correctly identified and the comments that followed were relevant to the gobbet. Candidates wrote about the identity of 'the betrayer' and about the fickle nature of the disciples in falling asleep. The human nature of Jesus was also well considered. Some, however, did not get the location of this event correct and mixed it up with the transfiguration story.
- (e) This was a less popular choice and while there were some strong answers it was generally not well done. Some candidates produced a lot of information about John and who he was which was not the focus of the gobbet.
- (f) This was a popular gobbet about the resurrection appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Stronger candidates were able to make wider reference in their answers and consider the context in which the event was happening.

- (g) This was another popular gobbet and was correctly identified by most candidates. There was good comment about the context being Jesus' first miracle in John: turning water into wine. The majority of answers confined themselves to writing about the passage here and not the miracle in general.
- (h) This was the least popular of the gobbet passages and was not selected by many candidates. Those who did had some difficulty in correctly identifying the passage and were not able to bring in wider knowledge.

Question 2

This was a popular choice of questions with many candidates giving full and detailed answers. It gave candidates the opportunity to present their knowledge of the teaching (didache) material in the Gospel within the context of Jesus as Messiah. A lot of information taken from the Sermon on the Mount was referred to with mention made of the Mosaic link with Jesus.

The strongest candidates offered an alternative view of the Messiah. He was not only presented as a teaching Messiah but other alternatives were argued for. Generally, this question produced very good answers and gave candidates the opportunity to display the wider reading they had done.

Question 3

This question was a popular choice with the majority of candidates showing a strong understanding of the Sermon on the Mount. Better answers placed the Sermon in the context of Matthew's technique and with regard to the Gospel as a whole. The question was generally well answered by all who attempted it.

Question 4

Fewer candidates selected this question but there were some strong answers where candidates were able to give a comprehensive essay answer with relevant detail considering a range of the problems associated with the final chapter in Mark.

Question 5

This question provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their wider reading on the miracles in Mark and some candidates performed well here. For some, answers were more generally about miracles and not Markan specific. Some candidates retold any miracle story regardless of its origin which inevitably limited the level at which they could achieve.

Question 6

This was a popular question but was not always answered well. Candidates needed a good knowledge of the key texts in Luke which endorsed the view of Luke being the most historically accurate. Some candidates were able to compare the information found in Luke with that found in the other Gospels and therefore produced good answers. Some stronger answers also made reference to Luke's 'second part' i.e. the Acts of the Apostles, in the quest to show Luke's interest in writing an accurate account. Candidates who had wider reading to draw on were able to answer this question well.

Question 7

This question produced some interesting answers although it was not as popular as other questions. There were instances of non-Lucan material being used to try to evidence the question. Again the type of answers produced reflected a strong level of understanding of the candidate and evidence of their access to scholarly material and wider resources.

Question 8

Overall answers to this question were very general and more detail was required. Few candidates displayed a lot of knowledge and understanding surrounding the 'anti-Jewish' flavour of John. Greater preparation regarding John's Gospel in general and the specific themes and ideas which can be brought out, would have improved some responses.

Question 9

This was a popular choice of question and there were a lot of strong answers. The question specifically asks about arguments for the apostolic authorship of John and this was largely adhered to. Most answers displayed a good knowledge of the different lines of thought around this.

Question 10

This was another popular question which was generally answered well. Candidates were able to show their wide knowledge and understanding around the account of the transfiguration of Jesus. The significance of the Transfiguration was explored and assessed by the candidates.

Question 11

This question brought a variety of detailed answers and candidates were able to discuss the various texts which relate to this topic. It was important to remember that material could be used from across all Gospels and a lot of candidates made a good use of this fact. The answer needed to reflect both aspects: repentance and forgiveness in order to give a balanced answer. This question was generally well answered by all who undertook it.

Question 12

Although this was not a popular choice there were some strong responses. Some candidates made a very good assessment of miracles being regarded as parables in action with answers which were clearly thought out and presented. Weaker candidates failed to make a convincing link between the two because they did not fully understand the question and wrote out accounts of various miracles.

Question 13

This question on John the Baptist was very popular. A lot of candidates showed how the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus developed and grew within the Gospel story. Much was made about the two different birth stories relating to John and Jesus and how their relationship changed to reflect their individual roles. The Baptism account of Jesus was included as a pivotal point. Some candidates displayed wider reading and made reference to scholarly opinion. Some very good answers were produced for this question.

Question 14

Strong responses were able to assess why the Pharisees challenged Jesus' teaching and did not merely recount the instances where the two bodies met. Jesus' involvement with the Pharisees was not entirely hostile and some candidates picked up on this point and wrote about the genuine attempts of some of the Pharisees to get a closer understanding of Jesus, i.e. Nicodemus, Simon the Pharisee. These responses were very thorough and showed a good understanding of the area.

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- (a) Candidates wrote clear answers which identified this passage and the key points contained within it. Candidates showed a strong knowledge of this aspect of the birth narrative of Jesus and the significance of divorce within the Jewish culture.
- (b) This was a popular choice of gobbet and was well answered by the majority of candidates who made relevant comments made about the Pharisees in Jewish society.
- (c) There were some good answers given regarding this miracle. Relevant comments were made on Sabbath laws imposed by the religious leaders of the time and the significance of the Synagogue and the purpose of the Pharisees being to 'accuse him'.
- (d) Stronger answers to this question made reference to the 'Son of Man', and the notion of 'serving' and giving his life as 'a ransom for many'. This reflected a detailed understanding of this verse.
- (e) There were some detailed answers to this question although weaker candidates felt they should comment in detail on the Temptation accounts as a whole and did not restrict their answer to this passage only.
- (f) This passage proved challenging for candidates to identify and contextualise and was not a popular choice.
- (g) This was a popular choice and was correctly identified by most candidates. There was good comment about the context being Jesus' first miracle in John. The majority of answers confined themselves to writing about the passage here and not the miracle in general.

- (h) Although this was not a popular choice, those candidates who chose it were generally able to give detailed comment on John's Gospel and produced good answers.

Question 2

This was a popular choice of questions with many candidates giving full and detailed answers. It gave candidates the opportunity to present their knowledge of the Old Testament usage in Matthew and many candidates were able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of Matthean theology.

Question 3

This was a well answered question and most candidates covered the expected material with relevant references. Candidates who achieved best, ensured that they gave full attention to all three aspects of the question.

Question 4

This was also a popular question. It was clear that some Centres had used wider reading on the title 'Son of Man' and prepared the candidates to write about this in detail. Many candidates were able to demonstrate good awareness of current scholarly developments which enabled them to produce very good written answers.

Question 5

This question provided candidates with the opportunity to demonstrate their wider reading on Mark and some candidates performed well here although it was not a popular choice. For some candidates, answers were more general and not Markan specific which inevitably limited how well they could achieve.

Question 6

This was a popular question but was not always answered well. Candidates needed a good knowledge of the key texts in Luke which endorse this view of Luke being the most historically accurate. Some candidates were able to compare the information found in Luke with that found in the other Gospels and therefore produced good answers. Some stronger answers also made reference to Luke's 'second part', i.e. the Acts of the Apostles, in the quest to show Luke's interest in writing an accurate account. Candidates who had wider reading to draw on were able to answer this question well.

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Question 8

Too few candidates chose this question for a report to be produced.

Question 9

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Question 10

This was a very popular question and was usually done well. Candidates were able to show their wide knowledge and understanding around the Roman and Jewish authorities of that time.

Question 11

This question brought a variety of detailed answers and candidates were able to discuss the various texts which relate to this topic. It was important to remember that material could be used from across all Gospels and a lot of candidates did this. Better responses were able to demonstrate the extent of the candidates' wider reading in answering this question.

Question 12

This was not a popular choice. Many candidates restricted their answers to material found mainly in the Sermon on the Mount. Parables and teaching could have been used from many different occasions in Jesus' ministry drawing on material from all the Gospels.

Question 13

This question was well done by almost all candidates who chose it. A lot of candidates referred to the usual scholars when tackling this question and many produced their evidence in diagrammatic form. It was essential that any diagram given carried a written explanation with it which addressed the specifics of the question.

Question 14

This was a popular question which was well done by the majority of candidates. Good candidates displayed a genuine attempt to assess why Jesus used parables and gave explanations as to the benefits of this form of teaching.