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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

DIVINITY

GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level

Paper 8041/02

Paper 2 - The Four Gospels

General comments

The overall performance of the candidates was satisfactory to good with most candidates making an informed and structured answer to each question attempted. Some Centres showed evidence of satisfactory preparation of their candidates and it was clear that attempts had been made to address past weaknesses and/or comments made in the Examiner's Report.

The standard of writing was very good indeed with a clear understanding of theological and specialist terms and phrases.

It appears that, at first glance, candidates assumed that **Question 2** was easy, therefore making it very popular. However a lot of candidates concentrated on the themes found in the Birth Narratives only and failed to make the link with the rest of the Gospel. **Questions 1 to 14** were all of the usual standard of difficulty which led to a balanced Paper in general.

Practically all candidates used their time to its full advantage. A couple of candidates did not understand the rubric and failed to answer four questions. One candidate only answered the gobbet question, possibly thinking this was four questions instead of four parts to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comment on points of interest or difficulty in four of the following passages (wherever possible answers should refer to the context of the passage but should not retell the story from which the passage is taken):

The Gobbets: Fewer candidates opted for this question this year. However, some Centres had clearly concentrated on preparing for this type of question and their candidates *all* tended to choose it. The standard of answers varied: many candidates tended to give a mere commentary surrounding the Gobbet rather than concentrating on the points of interest.

Question 1 (b) was the most popular gobbet and relevant comments were made.

- (a) This was popular. Most made very good reference to the role of John the Baptist and the need for Jesus to be baptised by him. A few realised it was only found in Matthew and a few made worthwhile comment on the meaning of 'righteousness'.
- (b) This was the most popular gobbet. All were correct in the context of this saying – some made reference to the role of baptism and all commented on the universality of the baptism and mission. One or two candidates confused this saying with the sending out of the twelve. A very few made comment on the Trinitarian formula, which was overlooked by several.
- (c) This was popular. Nearly all were correct on the context. No one picked up on the harshness of this saying in Mark, which was softened by Matthew and Luke. A few commented on the significance of Mary, which a lot of candidates overlooked. Little comment was made about the siblings of Jesus. This gobbet was poorly dealt with by some who just retold the story of rejection at Nazareth.

- (d) This was also popular. A lot was made of the disagreement between the Pharisees and Jesus which most candidates were knowledgeable about.
- (e) This was also popular. Most recognised the Lukan interest in women and the outcast and commented on the theme of Forgiveness. Only a few made comment on the significance of dining with Simon the Pharisee.
- (f) This gobbet was not as popular as the others were. No one commented on this being a saying from 'Q' Source – most concentrated on the need for more disciples to go as labourers. All made comment on the Idea of Mission.
- (g) This was also a less popular gobbet. For those who attempted this, the answers and comments made were very good. A lot of candidates made reference to it being Johannean only, and a lot of comment on the practices and rituals related to the Feast of Tabernacles. Similarly, a lot of comment was made on the symbolism of 'living water'.
- (h) This was very popular. All recognised it as belonging to the farewell discourse and commented on the Trinity and the significance of 'Father' and Counsellor. Most commented on 'forever'. All recognised this as belonging to John's Gospel only.

Question 2

To what extent do the Birth Narratives in Matthew (chapters 1–2) provide an introduction to the theology of the Gospel?

This was a very popular choice. Most candidates knew and recognised the themes found in Matthew's Birth Narratives – prophesy fulfillment; the genealogy; conflict with the authorities; the miraculous element of Jesus' life and ministry. However, candidates often did not balance their comments about the Birth stories with their comments on the continuation of these themes in the rest of the Gospels. Those candidates who did manage this balanced answer gained high marks and gave expert answers.

Question 3

Discuss the importance of the Kingdom in Matthew's gospel.

This was also very popular. The weakness of many answers was concentrating too much (and, in some cases, solely) on the Parable of the Sower. Some good candidates made reference to the importance of Kingdom in Matthew and went on to discuss the Kingdom present and future giving plenty of examples/references drawn from the Gospel.

Question 4

Examine and explain the use of miracles in the Gospel of Mark.

This was very popular. There was a lot of discussion of the 'Messianic Secret' and in some cases this was the main thrust of the essays. Good candidates referred to the human/divine elements of the Markan Jesus and that the miracles are used for teaching and illustrative purposes by the author – 'acted out parables'.

Question 5

Assess the role of the disciples in Mark's gospel.

This was popular. There was a lot of comment on the 'inner circle' disciples and how Jesus was misunderstood on occasions. Good candidates referred to the specific roles of Peter and Judas and showed how the disciples were far from perfect characters but that their importance was within the Markan message as a whole.

Question 6

Discuss the authorship and purpose(s) of Luke's gospel.

This question was also popular. The majority of essays dealt with the reasons for Luke writing his Gospel and his themes. Some attempted to discuss 'who was Luke?' The usual theories were given, such as Luke as the 'physician' writing the 'truth'. The dedication to Theophilus was discussed in the usual manner and the link between Luke and the Acts of the Apostles made.

Question 7

Luke's account of the death and resurrection of Jesus is different from the accounts in Matthew and Mark. Discuss the significance of these differences.

This was not as popular as the other questions but some good essays were produced by candidates who were familiar with the differences in the death and resurrection accounts and could discuss the significance of these. The main differences mentioned and commented on were:

- the trial scenes
- the introduction of Herod
- the penitent thief
- no charge of blasphemy made
- the words on the cross.

Candidates who did not know the relevant texts produced muddled answers lacking in detail.

Question 8

Explain the use and importance of the "I am" sayings in John's gospel.

Overall, this unpopular question brought a reasonable standard of essay with many commenting on the different 'I am' sayings. However, candidates who merely listed points relating to each saying failed to achieve high marks. Good candidates gave an overview with specific points being brought out.

Question 9

Discuss the attitude to Judaism in the Gospel of John.

This was not very popular either. A few candidates attempted this question, but their comments concentrated mainly on the role of Nicodemus and failed to note other key points: the theme of Jesus as the fulfilment of Judaism; the relationship with John the Baptist; the Samaritan Woman; Jesus as the replacement of the Jewish festivals; the Cleansing of the Temple and later Passion references.

Question 10

Examine and explain the teaching in the gospels about ethics.

Most candidates attempting this question gave good answers with a lot of discussion of the Sermon on the Mount and the importance of right behaviour and actions. The traditions of the Pharisees and Jesus' interpretation of the Torah are of significance and were discussed in detail by many.

Question 11

Show why scholars believe there to be a literary relationship between the first three gospels. How convincing are their arguments?

This was quite a popular question. This question brought the usual comments and analysis of the Synoptic Problem in a tidy and well prepared fashion. The best candidates attempted to assess the material offered in the light of the question asked. A clear knowledge of the 'literary relationship' between the gospels was expected.

Question 12

Explain the use and importance of the parables in the teaching of Jesus.

This was very popular, with a lot of material used in the answers. A few candidates merely narrated the parables with little comment on their significance. However, most showed a wide knowledge of the parables and produced a discussion as to why Jesus used parables as a method of teaching, referring to contrasts between the uses of parables by the different evangelists.

Question 13

Using examples from the gospels, discuss whether Jesus saw himself as the Jewish messiah.

Most answers assumed that Jesus did not see himself as Messiah and talked about how the title was misunderstood. Good candidates talked about what was meant by 'Messiah' at the time, its background and expectation. A good essay also included:- the temptations, the nature of Messiahship (Suffering Servant and Son of Man), the use of miracles, the Kingdom, defeat of Satan, the confession at Caesarea Philippi, baptism and transfiguration, and trial scenes.

Question 14

To what extent can the gospels be used as reliable historical sources for life and events in Palestine in the first century AD\CE?

This was not very popular. Most candidates highlighted the differences between the gospel accounts and stressed the influence of individual evangelists on the presentation of material. Several concentrated on the purpose of Luke and discussed the issue of reliability.