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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.**

RELIGIOUS STUDIES/BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 2041/01

The Life and Teaching of Christ in the Gospel of Luke

General comments

As usual, there were some good scripts which showed an accurate knowledge of Luke's gospel and an understanding of its meaning and significance. Many candidates knew the text of Luke reasonably well, but their comments on its meaning were often brief and sometimes did not answer the question. At the other end of the scale, there were many very poor scripts.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This compulsory question asked for only four sections to be answered, but a significant number of candidates attempted all six sections.

- (a) The message given to the shepherds by the angel was usually well known, but a number of candidates said that they were told to follow a star, which is part of Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus.
- (b) The healing in the synagogue of the man with an unclean spirit was often confused with the healing of Legion when the evil spirits were sent into the swine. Those who correctly identified the incident answered the question well.
- (c) Many candidates instead of completing the saying about putting new wine into new wineskins, gave the companion saying about putting a new patch on an old garment. Few knew that Jesus was claiming that his teaching was new and that the old teaching could not contain it.
- (d) The visit of Jesus to the home of Martha and Mary was well known and usually accurately given. Few gave Martha's criticism of Jesus: 'Do you not care that she has left me to prepare on my own?'. This incident shows Luke's special interest in women, a characteristic of his gospel.
- (e) The parable of the man who planted a fig tree in his vineyard was accurately given, but the meaning of the parable was not so well known. Jesus was warning of judgement and was calling on people to repent while there was still time. Few stated that the fig tree was a symbol of Israel.
- (f) The incident of the widow putting her gift into the treasury was well known, and most answers stated that Jesus judged a gift, not by its size, but by the spirit of the giver. The widow, by giving her all, was an example of sacrificial giving.

Question 2

The question about the healing of the paralysed man was popular and often very well answered. A significant number of candidates, however, missed the main point: Jesus said to the man, 'Your sins are forgiven', which caused the Jewish leaders to accuse him of blasphemy as only God could forgive sins. Many candidates only gave the command of Jesus, 'Take up your bed and walk'. This meant that in the comment on the incident, no reference was made to the authority of Jesus to forgive sins.

Question 3

This question, on the occasion when Jesus chose his twelve disciples, was not popular, but those who answered it gave good answers. The fact that Jesus prayed before choosing the twelve disciples was well known, but few candidates stated that the significance of 'twelve' was its link with the twelve tribes of Israel and Jesus was indicating that he was creating a new Israel, a new people of God. Many answers included instructions given to the seventy-two disciples, when Jesus sent them on a mission, as well as instructions given to the twelve. There were some good comments on what these instructions teach us about discipleship: a ministry of preaching and caring, relying upon God for help, being willing to face opposition.

Question 4

The question on the meeting of Jesus with the sinner in the house of Simon the Pharisee was popular and well answered. Many candidates did not give the parable of the two debtors, which Jesus told Simon, or the conversation which followed the parable. The different attitudes to the woman shown by Jesus and the Pharisee were not well given. Often candidates simply repeated what had already been given in the description of the incident. Few contrasted the compassion of Jesus and his willingness to forgive a sinner with the way in which the Pharisee despised her and treated her as a sinner and rejected her.

Question 5

The Transfiguration was not always correctly identified. A surprising number of candidates described the Ascension of Jesus. The significance of Moses and Elijah was not always clearly understood. Most knew that they represented the Law and the Prophets. Not many said that their appearance showed that the ministry of Jesus fulfilled the Law and Prophets and they were encouraging Jesus as he journeyed to Jerusalem to face the cross.

Question 6

The two parables about prayer were well given and it was clearly stated they taught persistence in prayer. Few candidates pointed out that both parables involved a contrast. If a man in bed could be persuaded to get up and give bread, and if a judge who had no respect for God or man could be persuaded to help a widow because she kept on asking, then, similarly, a loving God will answer our requests. Some good comments were made on the value of prayer.

Question 7

The parable of the dishonest steward was not well known, and many candidates gave the parable of the king who entrusted his money to his servants. Little of the teaching that Jesus gave at the end of the parable was given: often only 'No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and Mammon.' Comments on the relevance of this teaching were brief, often only quoting the saying, 'The love of money is the root of all evil.'

Question 8

The question about what Jesus said and did with the bread and the wine at the Last Supper was often not well done. The account in Luke differs in several ways from that found in Mark and Matthew and few candidates knew the differences; for example, in Luke there are two cups mentioned, one before the bread and another after the bread was distributed. There were some excellent answers to the last part of the question showing that the significance of the Last Supper for Christians today was well understood.

Paper 2041/02
Acts of the Apostles

General comments

Performance in this examination varied widely. Unfortunately, there were only a few impressive candidates who demonstrated accurate, detailed knowledge, together with the ability to produce a reasoned answer. There were many extremely weak candidates who displayed a lack of knowledge of the Acts of the Apostles. Some did not realise that Jesus himself does not play a part in the story, having already ascended to heaven. Some drifted occasionally into Old Testament narrative. There was still some confusion of Peter with Paul, which consequently lost marks.

Candidates continue to need advice on how to answer questions briefly in **Question 1**, more fully in **Questions 2 - 8**, and to avoid irrelevant detail. Time should be taken before a question is answered to see exactly what is required.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This was scarcely ever answered adequately. The apostles were addressed after many people were healed by Peter's shadow (not the healing at the Beautiful gate, ch.3). The Sadducees were jealous and arrested the apostles. When found preaching in the temple, they were brought before the Council. The high priest was angry because they had been warned not to preach. Gamaliel intervened and they were released.
- (b) This was popular but by no means always correctly answered. Paul/Saul (not Moses or the paralytic) was lowered in a basket to escape Jews who were plotting to kill him since he preached Jesus as Messiah/Christ. It happened in Damascus. He went immediately to Jerusalem where the disciples were wary of him and the Hellenists made a plot to kill him.
- (c) Again, candidates displayed insufficient accuracy. The city was Antioch in Pisidia; Paul and Barnabas were invited to preach. The sermon was well received and they were invited back for next Sabbath. This time many Gentiles were present. The Jews were jealous, stirred up a riot, and Paul and Barnabas were driven out.
- (d) Few knew the answers to this part of the question. There was a lot of guesswork. Paul had visited Athens and the Areopagus. Some people mocked because resurrection of the physical body was foreign to Greek thought. For many candidates, disbelief in resurrection indicated (wrongly) the Sadducees. Anastasis (resurrection) sounded like the name of a goddess (no one mentioned this). Dionysius, an Areopagite, was converted as well as Damaris and a few others.
- (e) This was popular and reasonably well answered. The incident took place in Philip's house in Caesaria. He was one of the deacons or had four daughters who prophesied. They begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem because Agabus, a prophet, had prophesied by a symbolic action that Paul would be imprisoned by the Jews and handed over to the Gentiles.
- (f) This was a very popular choice. Paul was the speaker, addressing passengers on the ship taking him to Rome. In a storm they threw the cargo overboard. Paul knew they would not perish and only the ship would be lost, as an angel had told him so.

Question 2

This question was not popular and never well done. Some were very confused and identified Theophilus with Luke. The main points to make were the similarity of dedication to Theophilus in Luke and Acts, the reference in Acts to a 'former' book concerning Jesus' ministry (indicating Luke's Gospel). Luke ends and Acts begins with the Ascension, thus linking them. Theophilus (a lover of God), was a believer. Luke's authorship of Acts is referred to in the Muratorian fragment, and later in Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian.

For part (ii), the 'we' sections, there are four passages, written by someone present with Paul, perhaps from a diary: vision at Troas (16:10-17), 2nd visit to Troas and the Eutychus episode (20:5-15), the episode of Philip's daughters and Agabus, journey to Caesarea and Jerusalem (21:1-18), and voyage to Rome (27:1-28:16).

For part (iii), Paul refers to Luke as the beloved physician (Colossians 4:14). Examples should include the following: healing of the man lame from birth (3:2), man with weak feet (14:8), Publius' father with fever and dysentery. In each the duration and/or details of the illness are described.

Question 3

This appealed to many and was done, on the whole, reasonably well. Part (a)(i) in particular attracted good answers. Koinonia was just developing, with possessions shared. Money from property sold was brought to the apostles for distribution to the poor. Barnabas is a good example. Ananias' dishonesty was a threat, not his retaining part of the purchase price but the fact that he pretended it was the whole sum. This threatened the church's integrity.

Knowledge was less accurate in part (a)(ii). Some confused Simon with Elymas. Simon, impressed by Philip's success in healing, believed and was baptised. Peter and John came to Samaria, laid hands on the believers who then received the Holy Spirit. Simon offered them money for this gift, a misappropriation of God's power.

For part (b), Peter's part was confrontation with Ananias, challenging him to tell the truth and not lie to God. He accused him of letting Satan overpower him. This resulted in Ananias' death and fear in the church, Peter expressed his anger to Simon in strong words, urging him to repent. Simon asked Peter to pray for him so that none of the words of condemnation would be fulfilled. Peter's reaction to both incidents promoted discipline in the early church.

Question 4

Many attempted this and part (i) was well done. Ananias was told in a vision to visit Saul who had been chosen by God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. Initially he was afraid, knowing of Paul's reputation as a persecutor of Christians. He did obey and restored Paul's sight, hence enabling his ministry among the Gentiles.

Part (ii) presented more difficulty. Barnabas helped initially by introducing Paul to the disciples in Jerusalem when they were afraid of him, explaining Paul's conversion and commitment to the gospel. He fetched Paul from Tarsus to work among the Gentiles in Syrian Antioch and accompanied him on his first missionary journey. After a quarrel with Paul he took John Mark with him and continued preaching. He also spoke in favour of the Gentiles at the Council of Jerusalem. (The fact that he sold land and gave the proceeds to the church is not relevant in this instance, which concerns ministry to the Gentiles.)

Part (iii) presented the greatest difficulty and was rarely adequately answered. Antioch in Syria became the headquarters for Gentile Christians when the believers were scattered after Stephen's death. Here the name 'Christian' was first used. Antioch launched the first missionary journey and was prominent in raising the question of circumcision which led to the Council of Jerusalem. The resulting decisions were sent by letter to Antioch, carried by Paul and Barnabas.

Question 5

Most candidates were familiar with this incident in Lystra, though sometimes details were confused. The main points to note are that the man was lame from birth. Paul saw his faith, healed him by a command to stand. The man responded. The people thought the gods had come down in human form. Paul was called Hermes (messenger of the gods) because he was the chief spokesman. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of the city, prepared to offer sacrifice.

For part (ii) the sermon was not about the Gospel. They tore their clothes, affirmed they were ordinary mortals, and urged worship of the living God, creator, who had provided Lystra with the blessing of rain and necessary seasons.

For part (iii) the sermon differed as there were no scriptural references (these people were not Jews), nor was there reference to Jesus. Again, these people knew nothing of Christian beliefs. Paul and Barnabas had to start on a level meaningful to this agricultural community. Their basic message was to turn from polytheism to the one true God.

Question 6

Few candidates attempted this question on Paul's visit to Corinth, and there was rarely an adequate answer. For part **(i)**, Paul preached to Jews and Greeks each Sabbath in the synagogue. When he claimed that Jesus is the Messiah, the Jews opposed him, whereupon he left them and turned to the Gentiles. This made him unwelcome at the synagogue so Titius Justus, a believer, allowed Paul to stay and preach at his house which was next to the synagogue.

For part **(ii)**, Paul had many Jewish enemies in Corinth, but in a vision God told him not to fear but to continue preaching. God would protect him and there were many Christians in Corinth. Consequently, Paul was able to stay there for 18 months.

For part **(iii)**, details of Gallio's action were, on the whole, well known. The Jews brought Paul to Gallio's court (Gallio was proconsul of Achaia) claiming that he was persuading people to worship God contrary to Jewish law. Since Paul was guilty of no crime, Gallio dismissed the case and refused to become involved with questions of Jewish law. He felt that the Jews must deal with it themselves. Thus Paul had the freedom to continue his preaching.

Question 7

Comparatively few candidates attempted this question, and the answers were rarely adequate. The three occasions when Paul claimed the rights of Roman citizenship were:

- (a)** Philippi (16:37). Paul and Silas were imprisoned without trial. A casual message allowed their release. Paul demanded that the magistrates themselves come to release them. They were afraid when he claimed Roman citizenship and complied immediately with his demand.

Jerusalem (22:25). On his final visit the tribune ordered him to be scourged under questioning. Paul claimed Roman citizenship. The centurion told the tribune who became afraid and the scourging did not take place.

Trial before Festus (25:11). Paul realised he would get a fairer hearing before the imperial court than before the Sanhedrin, hence he appealed to Caesar on the basis of his Roman citizenship. Julius subsequently took him to Rome for this purpose.

- (b)** The Romans were tolerant towards Christians at this time, allowing them privileges like the Jews (e.g. excused from Emperor worship). This lasted until Nero's time when Christianity was seen to be distinct from Judaism and more of a threat.

Question 8

This was both unpopular and poorly answered. Part **(a)** asked about Paul's two meetings with leading Jews in Rome at the beginning of his imprisonment there. The first meeting (28:17-22) after three days was at Paul's invitation at his own house. He explained that the Jerusalem Jews were responsible for his imprisonment, although he had not disobeyed their customs. The Romans had wished to release him but the Jews objected so he appealed to Caesar. He claimed Jewish hostility was due to his conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, and this he wished to explain to them. They replied that they had heard nothing against him but the Christian sect had a bad reputation and they wished to learn more about it. A day was fixed for the second meeting (28:23-35) and they came in great numbers. Paul spoke at length about the kingdom of God and Christ as fulfilment of the Scriptures. Some believed, others did not. They left in disagreement with each other. Paul quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 against them.

For part **(b)** the meaning of the prophecy was that the Jews would not respond because their minds, eyes and ears were closed to the truth. Hence, salvation was offered to the Gentiles who, as Paul had experienced, would listen and respond.