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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 as Contained in Gospel of St. Luke

Please note that 2004 will be the last year of examination for this syllabus. From 2005, there will be a new syllabus (2048) on both Luke and Acts.

General comments

There were a number of very good scripts which showed an accurate knowledge of Luke's gospel and an understanding of its meaning and significance. The majority of candidates knew the gospel reasonably well. The parts of questions requiring comments on the text were often poorly answered and in some cases not attempted. There were a number of very poor scripts.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The instructions required four out of the six sections to be answered, but a number of candidates wasted time answering all six.

- (a) Most candidates knew that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus immediately after he had been baptized and was praying, but some gave the Temptations. Many stated that the words spoken on this occasion were a confirmation of Jesus' sonship. Very few knew that the words were two quotations from the Old Testament: Psalm 2:7 referring to the Messiah and Isaiah 42:1 referring to the Servant of God, roles which Jesus was called to fulfill.
- (b) The accusation that the disciples ate and drank when others were fasting was well known, but the reply of Jesus about the bridegroom and his guests was not always given accurately. Some pointed out that Jesus was referring to himself as the bridegroom. Many did not go on to say that while he was with his disciples they did not need to fast but things would be different when he was 'taken away' from them.
- (c) The stilling of the storm was usually given in detail. Some gave the miraculous catch of fish when Jesus who was standing on the shore told his disciples to cast their nets. Others gave the healing of Legion when Jesus went ashore. The question clearly asked for what happened as the boat was crossing the lake. Few candidates pointed out that the stilling of the storm seemed to break the laws of nature and so was contrary to scientific teaching.
- (d) The parable of the lost coin was well known and understood. Many answers did not make it clear that God was seeking the lost through the ministry of Jesus.
- (e) The incident of the rich ruler was correctly identified, but some candidates gave the whole incident instead. The question only asked for what Jesus had said to make the ruler sad: sell what you have, give to the poor and follow me. Only a few stated that the incident was important to Luke because he had a special interest in the use and misuse of riches and a concern for the poor.
- (f) The question asking for the conversation between Jesus and the two who were crucified with him was not popular. Not many candidates knew that one thief said to the other, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?" and went on to say that they deserved to die but Jesus was innocent.

Question 2

Descriptions of what happened when Jesus visited the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath were not very detailed. Candidates knew that Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah, but many did not give the passage he read, words that he claimed to be fulfilling. Most said that Jesus was rejected because he was Joseph's son and grew up in Nazareth. Few gave the other reason for Jesus being rejected: his reference to Elijah and Elisha showed the prophets going to Gentiles and this offended Jewish belief that they were the chosen people of God. This incident was important to Luke because he was a Gentile and stressed the universality of the gospel. Some candidates gave the wrong incident: giving a description of a healing on the sabbath which did not take place in Nazareth.

Question 3

The healing of the woman with the issue of blood was well known, but a surprising number of candidates went on to give the healing of Jairus' daughter in detail. The importance of faith was clearly stated, but few pointed out the concern of Jesus for women who were thought of as being inferior.

Question 4

The parable of the Good Samaritan was usually given in detail. Many candidates only gave the question of the lawyer "Who is my neighbour?" instead of the whole conversation between the lawyer and Jesus which led up to the parable. Most answers stressed the hatred between Jew and Samaritan. The explanation of this animosity was not always made clear: Samaritans were generally hated by Jews for both racial and religious reasons. The relevance of the parable for today was given as helping those in need, but not many went on to state that this should transcend all barriers.

Question 5

The question about the centurion's servant and the ten men suffering from leprosy was popular, but often important details were not given in the answers. For example, the centurion sent Jewish elders who said that the centurion loved the Jewish people and built their synagogue: in the healing of the ten men they were healed as they went to see the priest in obedience to the command of Jesus. The incidents were important to Luke because they showed that the good news was for all; the centurion was a Gentile and the Samaritans were generally hated by the Jews.

Question 6

The parable of the great banquet was well known. Many stated that it meant that we should help the poor and needy. Only a few pointed out that the main message of the parable was to stress the importance of accepting the invitation of God given through Jesus.

Question 7

The meeting between Jesus and Zacchaeus was known in outline but significant details were omitted. The important sayings of Jesus at the end of the incident were rarely given. The dishonesty of tax collectors was stressed but they were also hated because they worked for Rome and so were considered to be traitors.

Question 8

Descriptions of the meeting of the two disciples with Jesus on the road to Emmaus lacked important details. Most candidates knew that Cleopas and his friend told the 'stranger' about what had happened in Jerusalem. What Jesus said to them about the Messiah having to suffer and his explanation of how the scriptures were being fulfilled was rarely given. The importance of what Jesus said and did was often restricted to the simple statement that they recognized him when he broke the bread. Little or no comment was made about the significance of his explanation of the scriptures.

Paper 2041/02
The Acts of the Apostles

General comments

In general, performance in this examination was disappointing and there were few impressive candidates. To obtain a good mark, candidates need to show accurate knowledge of the Acts of the Apostles and the ability to produce clear and direct answers to the questions. There were many candidates with little knowledge of Acts, and still some who did not realise that, since Acts refers to the time after the ascension, Jesus in his earthly life plays no part in the story.

Candidates still need to be reminded that brief answers are expected for **Question 1**, and longer answers for **Questions 2 - 8**. All answers must be related to the content of the Acts of the Apostles.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This refers to Pentecost, not Passover, a great Jewish festival attended by Jews from all parts of the Roman empire. The gift of the Holy Spirit enabled the disciples to speak the many languages of those who were present.
- (b) This was a popular question, generally well answered, about Stephen at the end of his defence before the Sanhedrin. The crowd was angry, thinking him blasphemous, shouted, blocked their ears, rushed on him, dragged him out of the city and stoned him.
- (c) There was confusion here. Cornelius was told to send for Peter. Cornelius, a Gentile, centurion of the Italian cohort, was charitable to the needy, faithful in prayer and feared God. Peter preached to him and his household. They received the Spirit, spoke in tongues, praised God, before being baptised. The visit was important since this was the beginning of Gentile admission to the church.
- (d) Few knew the correct answer. Paul met these people in Ephesus. They had been baptised but had not heard of the Holy Spirit, hence Paul laid hands on them. Other occasions were at Samaria when Peter and John laid hands on Philip's converts (8:17-18) and at Damascus when Ananias laid hands on Saul after his conversion (9:17).
- (e) There was again confusion. This event took place at Paul's trial before the Sanhedrin when the high priest, Ananias, ordered him to be struck on the mouth. The expression 'whitewashed wall' implies hypocrisy, Ananias apparently concerned for justice but disregarding the law.
- (f) Agrippa made this statement at Paul's trial before himself and Festus at Caesarea. Agrippa was present since he had come to welcome Festus, the new governor. Festus agreed that Paul should be tried before Caesar. Required to send a letter about Paul and being at a loss, he invited Agrippa to advise him (25:25-26 and 26:3).

Question 2

This was a popular question, though often (c) was the only part adequately answered.

- (a) Peter quoted Scripture to indicate what had been foretold had been fulfilled in Judas. The two Scriptures were Psalms 69:25 and 109:8, 'let his habitation be desolate' and 'let another take his office.' Peter was not acting on his own initiative. Scripture was the basis of authority for the early church.
- (b) Few candidates were aware of the qualifications for the new apostle: someone who had accompanied the disciples during Jesus' lifetime, from the time of his baptism until the ascension. Such a one would be a witness to the resurrection.

- (c) Two names, Matthias and Joseph Barsabbas Justus, were put forward. Prayer was offered for guidance since God knows all hearts, lots were cast, Matthias was chosen and joined the eleven.

Question 3

Parts (a) and (b) on the whole were adequately answered.

- (a) Herod Agrippa I was grandson of Herod the Great (some confused the two). He courted popularity with the Jews particularly, hence beheaded James and imprisoned Peter with four squads of soldiers. He died suddenly in Caesaria during a deputation from Tyre and Sidon, accepting the glory which belonged to God alone.
- (b) Herod could see that by persecuting the church he would gain popularity with the Jews, hence he killed James. Seeing this pleased the Jews he imprisoned Peter, intending to bring him out after Passover since it was not suitable to attack during the festival.
- (c) James' martyrdom would strengthen the disciples as Stephen's had done. Peter's escape by angelic intervention strengthened their faith and reduced Herod's power. Following Peter's escape the word of God grew and multiplied.

Question 4

This question was poorly done.

- (a) There appeared to be confusion between Christians and Jews. Paul was born a Jew, student of Gamaliel, brought up in Jerusalem and trained strictly in the law. He was a pharisee, son of pharisees. He trained in tent-making, following the Jewish custom that all Jews should practise a trade.
- (b) Paul always began by preaching to Jews in synagogues since he was familiar with their worship. Examples are Antioch in Pisidia (13:14-41) and Thessalonica (17:1-3). He proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah (9:22; 17:3). As a Pharisee he believed in resurrection. This gave him an advantage among Pharisees.
- (c) The Jews opposed Paul for two main reasons:
- jealousy at his success
 - disapproval of his messianic teaching.

They resented the admission of Gentiles without circumcision. They regarded him as a lawbreaker since he taught justification by faith in Jesus, and as a traitor, since he now sided with the Christians whom he had formerly persecuted.

Question 5

Not many candidates attempted this question and rarely satisfactorily.

- (a) The letter (15:23-29) explained that the Jerusalem church heard that some Jews were troubling Christians on the question of circumcision. These men were unauthorised. Jerusalem was therefore sending men with Paul and Barnabas, namely Judas and Silas, to confirm that, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, Gentile Christians were not to be burdened with circumcision, but to abstain from the pollution of idols, from blood, from things strangled and from unchastity.
- (b) The letter confirmed that Gentiles did not need circumcision to become Christians. Jewish law was not binding on converts. Faith and baptism were important. Paul responded immediately in Gentile missions (2nd and 3rd journeys) – for example, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus. Despite Jewish opposition, Paul succeeded in Thessalonica, Ephesus etc. The church today is totally international without Jewish restrictions limiting its membership.

Question 6

Very few candidates were successful with this question.

- (a)(i) The hardships of Paul's life were listed in general terms without regard to this particular occasion. He spoke of plots against him by Jews. The Spirit warned him about imprisonment and affliction, such as in Damascus and Jerusalem, stoning in Lystra and the stocks in Philippi (20:19 and 23).
- (ii) His purpose was to preach the gospel, from which he did not shrink. His message of repentance and faith in Jesus, the Messiah, was preached to Jews and Greeks alike. Paul did not value his own life but wished to accomplish his witness to the gospel (20:20-21; 24).
- (iii) Rarely was a candidate able to answer this. Paul worked to support himself so that he should not be a burden to others. 'These hands' could refer to his tent-making. He quotes Jesus' words, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive' (20:33-35).
- (b) They must watch over themselves and the flock, guarding and feeding them like shepherds. He warned of persecution ('wolves'). They must commit themselves to the gospel which would build them up. False teachers would arise, distorting the truth, and lead some to desert the community, i.e. heretics. (20:28-32).

Question 7

This was fairly popular but the details of the trials were often confused.

- (a) *First ambush (23:12-15)*
After the trial before the Sanhedrin more than 40 Jews vowed not to eat or drink till they had killed Paul. They connived with the Jewish leaders to ask the tribune to bring Paul for questioning and would kill him en route.
Second ambush (25:3)
Festus, newly appointed as governor, visited Jerusalem from Caesarea. The Jewish leaders asked him to send Paul to Jerusalem from Caesarea, planning to kill him en route.
- (b) 23:23-25 The tribune, Claudius Lysias, heard of the plot via Paul's nephew. Paul was sent to Caesarea under armed guard.

25:4-5 Festus said he would soon be returning to Caesarea where Paul was under arrest. They must come with their accusers for, according to Roman custom, those accused must have the opportunity for defence. Later Festus reported with disapproval their request to Agrippa.
- (c) Acts presents the Roman officials favourably on the whole. At this period they were tolerant in religious matters. Also Paul was a Roman citizen. But the Jews thought him a traitor because of his teaching.

Question 8

This was a very popular question but poorly answered.

- (i) Comments on apostles, breaking of bread and prayer needed to be related to Acts as the question states. At first, the title 'apostle' was used only of the twelve, then others were included, first Matthias, then Paul and Barnabas (e.g. 14:14). The Greek means 'sent', and they were commissioned at the Ascension to make disciples. Their work was preaching and testifying. The giving of the Holy Spirit is associated with them (8:18; 19:7).
- (ii) Breaking of bread is referred to early in Acts suggesting it was observed from the start of the early church. Reference can be made to the last supper and the command to continue. It was seen as an expression of fellowship (2:42). It was part of the worship (e.g. at Troas) on the first day of the week. It may be implied on the ship en route to Rome.

- (iii) Prayer is mentioned early in Acts, associated with breaking bread. There was corporate prayer before Pentecost (1:14), during Peter's time in prison (12:12), and at Philippi when Paul and Silas were arrested (16:16 and 25), also at Cornelius' reception (11:18). There were temple prayers (3:1), and prayers when appointing to office (1:24; 13:3; 14:23). Thus a pattern emerges of various types.