

DIVINITY

<p>Paper 9011/12 Prophets of the Old Testament</p>

Key messages

The key message this year concerns conclusions to essays. These often amount to candidates stating two viewpoints about the question concerned but without making any attempt to judge between them. This was particularly evident in some of the responses to **Question 4**, where some candidates gave a brief summary of what they had written for each side of the argument without giving their decision or their reasons for that decision. Candidates need to show that they have reasoned their way to whatever conclusion they reach.

General comments

The background/textual knowledge of the Book of Amos was excellent, and enabled many candidates to gain high marks on **Question 6**.

With the 'gobbet' questions, answers were often extremely detailed, showing good critical analysis. Some need to be careful of time management, since gobbet answers were occasionally so lengthy that candidates were left with insufficient time to write three complete essays. The most popular gobbets were: **(a)**, **(b)**, **(c)** and **(e)**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Some found it hard to admit that Moses showed any violence at all, and in each paragraph, after describing how Moses performed a violent action, concluded that he was not violent. Some candidates could have gained more marks by not writing wholly descriptive paragraphs, each one ending with the statement that this shows that Moses was/was not violent. The strongest answers tended to be those which pointed out that most of Moses' violent acts, such as announcing the death of the Egyptian first-born and drowning Pharaoh's horses and riders during the miracle of crossing the sea, were in fact commanded by Yahweh: Moses was God's prophetic spokesperson, so the violence was not the product of Moses' own brain. Some of the very best answers suggested that it depends on what is meant by 'involved in'.

Question 2

This question was generally well answered. The key texts were known, and some candidates commented effectively on why they might indicate achievement on the part of Samuel. Conversely, some candidates could have gained more marks by not writing out a long list of the things that Samuel did. A few candidates attempted an overall evaluation of the question, in particular assessing the value of Samuel's involvement in bringing about the kingship of Saul.

Question 3

This was also a very popular question, and there were some excellent responses, with detailed argument on both sides of the debate. A number referred to the text in Deuteronomy 18, although very few referred to the detailed comments in Jeremiah 23. The strongest answers were generally those which referred to the case of Micaiah ben Imlah and the 'Spirit of lying prophecy', pointing out that the text expressly says that the lying spirit was sent by Yahweh, so to this extent Yahweh is the author false prophecy. This inevitably complicates any decision on the differences between true and false prophets. Some responses consisted of a range of points with exemplification from true prophets, with the simple statement that false prophets did the same.

Question 4

Some answers consisted of several pages listing various miracles followed by a paragraph (or sometimes nothing at all) on oracles. The best answers pointed out that prophetic oracles were generally messages to various recipients announcing the will of Yahweh. In particular, the doom oracle and the salvation oracle are stylistic, such as those in Amos, and use oracular formulae such as, 'Thus says Yahweh/the Lord', concluding with 'Oracle of Yahweh'. The importance of oracles consisted in transmitting the will of Yahweh through the medium of a prophet who was understood to stand in the heavenly council and felt compelled to prophesy (Amos 3:8). They were therefore important in spelling out God's will to the people.

Question 5

A number of responses did not understand what the question was after. Some answered with exclusive reference to Samuel anointing Saul and then David as the first two kings of Israel, although much of what was written here was a reissue of what had been said in response to **Question 2**. There were, however, some excellent answers that made perceptive comments on the success (or lack of it) of Elijah's dealings with Ahab, and Isaiah's varying success with the monarchs of his day.

Section B

Question 6

The best answers used a range of texts and quoted or paraphrased them accurately. Some wrote answers to an alternative question asking whether Amos was nothing more than a prophet of doom, ignoring the issue of social justice. The majority of responses argued that Amos was a prophet of social justice and a prophet of doom/of intercession/of salvation, etc. The very best answers tended to be those which pointed out that the doom oracles were given in response to Amos' accusations of social injustice, and that these applied to the oracles against the nations as well as to the material in the rest of the book. Oracles of doom and oracles against social injustice were therefore parts of the same issue.

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This was also very popular. Most confined their answers to chapters 1–3. Some could have obtained more marks by not going into different views about what (if anything) actually happened to Hosea. Others did not structure their essays, so their answers tended to be repetitive. The strongest answers made effective use of a number of texts from Hosea, including the love between Yahweh and Israel as that between father and son. Many candidates ignored Hosea's use of the 'covenant lawsuit' form in which Yahweh indicts Israel for attempting to find security in political alliances by flitting between Assyria and Egypt, so other emotions are visible in Hosea's message beyond love.

Question 8

This was the least popular question. Some responses confused the political situations in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah. Others confused the extent and the application of Isaiah's symbolic acts. Some made good use of Isaiah's call narrative in chapter 6, relating it to Isaiah's sense of Yahweh's universal power and sovereignty over all nations and history. A few responses were outstandingly good, clearly understanding Isaiah's concern both with social injustice and political crises.

Question 9

Answers to this question varied considerably. Most referred to the waistcloth, the potter, the wooden yoke and the letter to the exiles, although the significance of these was often confused. Incidentally, it should be noted in connection with Jeremiah's wooden yoke (Jer. 28), that Jeremiah did not return to confront

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Section C

Question 10

- (a) Some could have made better use of the time available by not getting bogged down in a discussion of which particular Pentateuchal source was being used. The four-source theory has been discarded by some scholars, and even if that were not the case, many of the reasons given for suggesting that this gobble came from one or more sources were inaccurate. Equally, some could have gained more marks by not simply paraphrasing the text. Useful comment ranged over points such as: the nature of the theophanic cloud; the reason for the appointment of the 70 elders; the power of Moses' spirit; the phenomenon of ecstasy and its contagious nature; the place of Eldad and Medad; and the significance of the event as marking the beginning of Israelite prophecy or of prophetic guilds.
- (b) Answers to this question tended to vary between those which were detailed and accurate and those which were detailed and inaccurate. The best answers included comment on some or all of the following: warnings about the Israelites before the entry to Canaan, faced with the prospect of the worship of other gods and their prophets; the raising up of a prophet like Moses who would speak exactly what was commanded; Moses as the prototype of a true prophet; false prophets who would invent their oracles and prophecy in the name of false gods; and the criterion that the people should not listen to those whose prophecies do not come true. Some pointed out that this raises the whole question of false prophecy as discussed in Jeremiah and elsewhere: the boundaries between true and false prophets were not so easy to see.
- (c) Most focused on the choice of Saul as king, and the events leading up to that choice, most of which form the substance of the passage and its surrounding verses. Some gave some detail about the story of Kish and the lost asses. Some centred their comments on the role of Samuel as a seer and the leader of a prophetic band, together with the fact that seers evidently expected to be paid for their services. Many discussed the relationship between the seers and the *nabîs* in the light of the editorial comment that 'he who is now called a *nabî*/prophet was once called a seer'. Some commented on Saul's concern that there was no gift available to pay Samuel. There were very few really weak responses.
- (d) Some chose to comment on this gobble having little knowledge of its content, with the result that comment was sometimes very restricted, being reduced to paraphrase of the text together with inaccurate comments about what it is supposed to be about. Many thought that God wanted David to build a temple. Better answers linked the passage to David's established status and to the oracle relating to the Davidic dynasty. Some gave useful comments on Nathan's status in relation to David and Solomon. Very few commented on the fact that despite the promise in the oracle, the Davidic dynasty came to an end in the sixth century BCE.
- (e) This was generally well done, with most candidates seeing the nub of the matter being in Jezebel's ignorance of (or indifference to) Jewish laws concerning inherited property. There was some interesting psychological analysis of the characters of Jezebel, Ahab and Elijah, and knowledge of the background of the accession and influence of Jezebel was good. There were very few weak responses, and some really outstanding ones.
- (f) Most identified (f) as an inversion of the national expectation of the Day of the Lord, a future event during which Israel expected that Yahweh would intervene in favour of his chosen nation. The focus of the oracle is on Israel's sins, which merit destruction and mourning. Comment on Bethel generally lacked focus, so that very few identified Bethel as the major northern shrine. Equally, few understood that to punish its altars meant the destruction of both the sanctuary and the king, which explains why Amaziah was so angry with Amos. Some knew that the horns of the altar related to

the horns of Bull El, a Canaanite god whose worship was merged with that of Yahweh. Most argued that the destruction of winter houses, summer houses and houses of ivory was part of Amos' concern for social justice, in that the rich built themselves these imposing houses at the expense of the poor.

- (g) The best answers were aware that these verses are seen by many scholars as additions to the Book of Amos, added in order to soften the prophet's message of absolute destruction. Some were aware that the reference to rebuilding the ruined cities potentially dates the passage to the Babylonian exile or to a time when the exile was about to end. Some could have gained more marks by avoiding simple paraphrases of the text, particularly where paraphrase really added nothing. For example, simply to state that the ploughman would overtake the reaper adds nothing to what is given in the passage, where the imagery is of a great increase in the fertility of the land so that the processes of ploughing, planting and reaping follow in very quick succession.
- (h) Not many answered this, and most of those who did were unsure of what to say. Of those who answered both this gobbet and gobbet (g), only a tiny minority made any comparison between the two passages. Again, there was much paraphrasing of the text, with the paraphrasing adding little to make the meaning of the passage any more clear.
- (i) Very few commented on this gobbet or knew that it was an oracle against Egypt. Equally, very few were aware of the historical background of Judah's attempt to resist Assyrian military power, in the face of which even the Egyptian military were comparatively useless.
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- (k) Very few answered (k), and most of those who did found it difficult to write anything that could be credited. The context is Jeremiah's first 'confession', or 'lament', where Jeremiah uses language similar to that found in the Book of Job to express his disbelief that Yahweh should allow wicked people to prosper while ignoring Jeremiah's misery. There are six such laments in Jeremiah, which should provide a springboard for a discussion of their meaning and purpose.

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Paper 9011/22
The Four Gospels

Key messages

When answering these questions, candidates should adhere closely to the content of the question and identify what the main thrust of the question is. A question will not just ask candidates to recall information but there will always be a need to either make an assessment, an analysis, an evaluation, or a comparison. Candidates need to identify this and then arrange their answer around this task, so the question is clearly addressed. Whilst access to further reading material may vary, it is necessary to show a good grasp of any relevant scholarly trends and developments available and candidates should know how to use this information within their answers.

General comments

Candidates were able to write essays which clearly reflected their level of understanding, their research, their level of scholarly reading and their individual access to resources within their own centre.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was a popular choice amongst the candidates and those who did attempt this generally did so well. There were a small minority of candidates who did not follow the instructions and so did not fully answer the question. They chose to write about only two or three of the gobbets. A few candidates mistook **Question 1**, with its four parts, as being an alternative to answering 4 essays from the entire paper.

- (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 were good comments on the person of Herod and his role within the birth narrative and on the situation in Jerusalem at the time.
- (b) A lot of candidates commented on this gobbet. It was correctly identified by most and brought good comments on the tension between Jesus and the religious authorities. Many wrote about Jesus' radical view of the Sabbath and linked the incident to the Old Testament mention of David eating the consecrated bread.
- (c) This was a very popular choice of gobbet and most candidates answered this very well. The role of John the Baptist was commented on, as was his life style and ministry.
- (d) This was clearly identified by most as a passage from Jesus' preaching ministry in Judea. There were a lot of good comments on the humanity of Jesus, displaying his feeling of indignation. There was also comment on the lack of understanding of the disciples and the place of humility and innocence in the Kingdom of God as shown by the children. This gobbet was very well answered by most candidates.
- (e) This was a less popular choice of gobbet. Some candidates knew who this passage referred to and gave some very good answers. It was important to know that the passage was referring to the parents of John the Baptist.
- (f) This was a less popular choice but those who were able to recognise the context, gave detailed and relevant answers. It was set after the cleansing of the Temple therefore candidates spoke about the last week of Jesus' life and his foretelling of his pending rejection.

- (g) This gobbet was confused with the incident when Jesus asked his disciples to say who he was, leading up to Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. If candidates had taken note of where this gobbet came from, they would have seen its context was relating to John the Baptist. Some more observant candidates placed it accurately and made very relevant and detailed comments.
- (h) This passage is found in John's Gospel and takes place at the house of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Some candidates mistakenly identified this passage as the one when the sinful woman came to Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke's Gospel). Candidates need to take note of the Gospel reference as opposed to just looking at the incident revealed.

Question 2

This was a popular choice of question, with many candidates giving full and detailed answers. It gave candidates the opportunity to present their knowledge of the didactic nature of Jesus in Matthew. Good candidates drew on their understanding of the situation for the early church after Jesus' death and resurrection. Most candidates concentrated their comments on the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, but there was plenty more material available, for example, through the parables.

Question 3

This was another popular question with a lot of candidates commenting upon Jesus as the new Moses. The good answers included more information regarding Jesus' application of the Mosaic Law. Again, there was plenty of information to be gained from the Sermon on the Mount but also through Jesus' own actions and example. Good discussion around Jesus' claim to be 'perfecting the law' was included in the better answers.

Question 4

For those candidates who had studied Mark in detail this was a popular choice. Many candidates, who chose this question, knew which miracles were necessary to draw from. There needed to be some discussion of other themes in Mark for the question to be considered regarding the prominence of the Messianic secret. Many candidates were able to refer to the work of scholars in this field.

Question 5

Some candidates used this question as an opportunity to write solely about the role of Peter within Mark's Gospel and this limited their answers. Some information about the role and character of Peter is necessary but this needs to be linked to the need to have had an eyewitness account for the author to use. There are also references to external sources which would add to the discussion of this question.

Question 6

Although Luke's Gospel is always a popular choice, this question could have been answered better. Candidates needed to develop the idea of historical accuracy. A few candidates referred to the names and dates contained in Luke's Gospel and the background information which evidences its historicity. There was a lot of material to draw from, but this was not used. Candidates also needed to look at both sides of the discussion to show they understood the main issues.

Question 7

A few candidates attempted this question. There was a lot of material to draw from the parables, miracles and Jesus' actions. Many used the parable of the Prodigal Son as the basis for their essay. Answers needed to give a more detailed discussion of the many references from the Gospel surrounding forgiveness.

Question 8

Few candidates answered this question. Eternal life, in John, is a spiritual life which begins on earth and continues through into death. It is not just life after death. The Synoptics do not use this idea but speak of the kingdom instead. Candidates needed to grasp this idea within their essays.

Question 9

This was not a popular choice of question. Candidates needed to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the passion narrative in John's Gospel and how John links this all in with the Passover and the shedding of the blood of the Paschal lamb. The title 'Lamb of God' is used early on by John the Baptist and then developed throughout the Gospel.

Question 10

Candidates were able to show their wider knowledge and understanding around the Jewish expectation of messiahship. Most candidates discussed whether Jesus' actions can be described as being in line with this expectation or not. An overview of Jesus' ministry was necessary to make the comparison with the popular idea of the time.

Question 11

This question gave a lot of scope for candidates to write about the role of the different women mentioned in any or all of the Gospels. There is a lot of material to use with the various encounters Jesus had: foreign women, 'unclean' women, widows, prostitutes, for example. Many spent a lot of their essays writing about Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Elizabeth, from the birth narratives therefore their answers were narrower in scope. Their role was of huge significance for the time, but little was written about this.

Question 12

The question asked for the candidate to show how the various parables reflected the various interests and purpose of the individual gospel writers. It did not ask for a list of the different parables and their retelling. There needed to be a balance in candidates' answers between the message of the parable and why it was selected by the author. A link between the parable and the various themes needed to be shown. Although this was a popular question, many answers did not make this link.

Question 13

This was a very popular question and overall, it was very well answered. Candidates wrote about the other possible people or groups who played their part in the betrayal, trial and eventual death of Jesus. A lot was written about Judas, Herod, the Jews and religious authorities. Pilate was portrayed as a reluctant participant in the event with mention of his wife's dream and the washing of his hands in public. Essays seemed to be well argued, detailed and concluded.

Question 14

This was a popular question and those who answered it did so very well. The two and four source hypotheses were discussed and illustrated, and mention was made of the relevant scholars behind these ideas. This is always a popular topic to write about and candidates produce very capable answers in response to it.

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General comments

Candidates were able to write essays which clearly reflected their level of understanding, their research, their level of scholarly reading and their individual access to resources within their own centre. Overall the standard for this paper was good. The standard of vocabulary and written work was also very good.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was a popular choice amongst the candidates and those who did attempt this generally did so well. Most candidates clearly set out the context of each gobbet and followed it with relevant comment on the points of interest.

- (a) This was a popular gobbet to comment on. It was easily identifiable and therefore candidates were able to set this in the correct context. There was a lot of comment on the significance of Herod and his role within the birth narratives.
- (b) This was answered well with relevant comments made about the Pharisees in Jewish society. Candidates made note of the different conflict stories between Jesus and the religious authorities. It was a popular choice of gobbet.
- (c) This was another popular choice of gobbet with a lot written about the ministry of John the Baptist. Also, relevant comment was made about the Kingdom of God and its requirements.
- (d) A gobbet about the cost of discipleship. Candidates wrote about the call and role of the disciples and showed a lot of knowledge around this topic.
- (e) This was not as popular as other passages but those candidates who identified the gobbet correctly gave good relevant answers about the role of Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, on hearing the announcement of his wife's pregnancy.
- (f) This was a question about paying taxes to Caesar which was an attempt by the Pharisees to trap Jesus into speaking against the state. Candidates were able to talk about the last week of Jesus' life and the conflicts which arose with the authorities.
- (g) Few candidates chose this gobbet but those who did were well acquainted with the opening chapter of John's Gospel and the references made to John the Baptist. Candidates wrote about the prophecy from Isaiah, this was very well addressed.

- (h) This was another popular gobbet. Answers were detailed, and a lot was written about Judas as the one who would betray Jesus. There was a lot of comment on the Last Supper and speculation surrounding Satan.

Question 2

This question was a popular choice and allowed candidates to show their clear knowledge of the role of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. They clearly addressed the whole idea of Matthew being a gospel designed to show Jesus as the expected Messiah. Links were made to the genealogy and the references used by the author to the Old Testament. It allowed candidates to show that they had a good grasp of why Matthew wrote his gospel and who his target audience was.

Question 3

This question gave candidates the opportunity to write about the parables found in Matthew. Some candidates did not confine their material to Matthew but used parables from Luke (the parables of the lost coin, son and sheep from Luke 15). Candidates needed to write about how their chosen parables show the different characteristic.

Question 4

Many candidates wrote very detailed answers on the theme of suffering in Mark's Gospel. Many wrote about the context in which the Gospel was written i.e. during the Roman persecutions. There were a lot of good references to the different types of suffering Jesus went through; physical, mental and emotional.

Question 5

This question was not popular with the candidates. It is a question about the sense of urgency created by Mark in his Gospel with the use of language like 'immediately', and the emphasis the author places on the need to follow Jesus now. There is a lot of material which could be used but few candidates were confident in their choice.

Question 6

This was another question which was not as popular as others. It was looking at the divinity of Jesus in Luke's Gospel.

Question 7

A few candidates attempted this question. There are a lot of references to prayer in Luke's Gospel, and there are many prominent people in Luke who use prayer: Mary, Zechariah, Anna during the birth narrative; Jesus, at varying times of his ministry.

Question 8

A few candidates selected this question to answer. The question asked candidates to look at the concept of 'betrayal' in John's Gospel as there are many examples of incidents of this. Not only is there a lot of material around Judas' actions but there are examples of Jesus' feelings of betrayal through rejection and misunderstanding.

Question 9

This was not a popular choice of question with few candidates attempting it. Truth is a popular theme within John's Gospel and it can be traced through from chapter 1 to the end, but this idea was not developed adequately by candidates in their answers.

Question 10

Many candidates answered this question with detail and understanding about the Kingdom of God. Good answers looked at the present/future aspects of the Kingdom and they selected relevant passages and parables to substantiate their answers.

Question 11

This was a popular question. Candidates who chose this one generally gave good, detailed answers about the work and support, or lack of it, which the disciples gave to Jesus. A lot of material was available which meant that their essays were detailed and varied.

Question 12

This was a popular choice, which allowed candidates the opportunity to show their knowledge and understanding of the religious tensions of the time. It was very well done with candidates recounting a lot of relevant material.

Question 13

This question was not chosen by many candidates. Jesus' teaching on material things is a common theme within the Gospels. The question asked for a comparison between the Gospels which does demand gospel-specific knowledge on this topic. When this has appeared as a Lukan question only it has been very popular.

Question 14

John the Baptist is always a popular figure for candidates to write about and this was no exception. A popular question which covered the life and ministry of John the Baptist and, overall, answers were detailed and relevant.

DIVINITY

Paper 9011/31
The Apostolic Age

Key messages

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General comments

Very few rubric errors were encountered. There was a clear distinction between answers that considered the general topic, whereas better answers considered the specifics of the question asked. The lack of named scholars prevented some well-argued and supported answers from accessing the higher bands on the mark scheme. Across the range of questions the best responses focused directly on the question.

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Section A

Question 1

- (a) Candidates linked this gobbet well to the idea of the second coming. Some candidates explored the positive nature of the judgement alluded to in this passage. There was some exploration of the purposes of the heart. Better responses linked into the wider theme of light and darkness, to contextualise this passage.
- (b) Candidates were well aware of the context of this passage, and most were able to give a detailed synopsis of its place in a wider discourse on marriage. Better candidates discussed the nature of consecration (sanctification in the NIV), and how the theme fits into wider Christians teachings.
- (c) Many candidates focused on simply exploring the analogy of the body in many parts, and how it was relatable to the audience it was written for. Higher level responses explored the significance of teaching that they were one body, either theologically, or in relation to the social division of the day.
- (d) Most candidates understood that this was a reference to glossolalia, and many linked it to the need for an interpreter. A few focused on the initial part of the gobbet, and the significance of Paul thanking God for speaking in tongues, yet glossolalia not being useful for instruction.
- (e) Candidates explored the significance of the teaching being from God, and linked this gobbet to a number of other similar teachings to express it as a theme of the New Testament in general, as well as I Thessalonians. Most candidates who attempted this question displayed a holistic understanding of the apostolic age.
- (f) Most candidates used this passage as an opportunity to state things they knew about Parousia. Better answers placed this gobbet within the wider context of teachings on Parousia, and I Thessalonians treatment of the issue.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to correctly identify the divisions within the Church in Corinth, with the divisions between adherents of teachers being the most common theme, though some expanded to look at other areas of division, such as at the Lord's Supper. Better answers addressed the main thrust of question, by focusing on Paul's responses to the divisions in Corinthians. The very best assessed the responses.

Question 3

A number of candidates give long descriptions of the pagan practices in Corinth that Paul was tackling in I Corinthians, clearly demonstrating wider reading. Unfortunately, a number of candidates only linked Paul's teachings on the practices, and their knowledge of the practices, in a tangential fashion, missing the crux of the question. Better responses examined Paul's response critically, with reference to effectiveness and wider teachings. Some responses addressed with Paul's teachings on pagan practices were focused specifically on what was occurring in Corinth, or were a more general point he wished to make, highlighting practices in Corinth, that were likely common elsewhere.

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Most candidates tended to focus on instances in Thessalonians that could be described as joyful, with little explicit link to the converts behaviour. Better responses addressed joy as theme of the letter, and examined how it can be said to be an accurate summary of the letter, as well as examining other ways of summarising the letter.

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DIVINITY

Paper 9011/32
The Apostolic Age

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