

DIVINITY

Paper 8041/21
The Four Gospels

General comments

The candidate performance range was like last year but there were fewer candidates for this paper, possibly because of the pandemic. There were some very good responses.

The paper allowed candidates to choose four questions out of fourteen and 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. No scripts were illegible.

Key messages

To do well when answering these questions candidates must stick closely to the content of the question and identify what the main thrust of the question is. 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 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 that candidates have a good grasp of any relevant scholarly trends and developments available to them and that they know how to use this information within their answers. Marks are awarded for what the candidate produces in their answer and the quality of their response.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question remains a popular choice amongst the candidates and those who did attempt this generally scored high marks. There were a small minority of candidates who did not follow the instructions and so did not fully answer the question and select four gobbets to write about but only two or three instead. (Some candidates commented on all fourteen gobbets and failed to answer three other essay questions which significantly impacted on their final mark.) Each gobbet is marked out of 6, this meant that candidates could not gain the higher level if they did not answer the correct amount.

- (a) A popular gobbet to comment on. It was easily identifiable and therefore candidates were able to set this in the correct context and make significant comment based on the birth narrative.
- (b) This was answered well with relevant comments made about the mission of Jesus.
- (c) A popular choice of gobbet with a lot written about this miracle account and the controversy surrounding it.
- (d) Candidates clearly identified this as the passage where Jesus speaks about the children around him.
- (e) This was not as popular as other passages but those candidates who identified the gobbet correctly gave good relevant answers with plenty of information.
- (f) This was a popular gobbet easily recognisable. Particularly good comments were made on the healing of the lepers.
- (g) Extremely popular with a lot of comment about the baptism account of Jesus.

- (h) Another popular gobbet which attracted a lot of candidates. Answers were detailed about Jesus' departure and the gift of the spirit to remain.

Question 2

A popular question. Some responses made extensive reference to the Old Testament background in Matthew's Gospel. Some discussed, with textual references, the Jewish background to Matthew and its focus on Jesus as the promised Messiah. They made good use of the relevant quotations from the prophets.

Question 3

There were some detailed answers written with good reference to the whole of the Gospel. Many gave a basic attempt.

Question 4

A popular and generally well-answered question. Many candidates gave strong answers to this and looked at the issue from all sides.

Question 5

One of the most popular questions. Well-answered overall, with many responses displaying considerable knowledge of the miracles in Mark. There was a lot of material which was given in answer to this question and it was wisely handled.

Question 6

This was quite a popular question. A lot of themes were identified correctly and well developed from throughout the Gospel. Good marks were attained by many who attempted this question.

Question 7

This question was reasonably well-answered overall and the material which is identified as similar to Matthew and Mark was correctly identified.

Question 8

Only a handful of candidates attempted this question. There were a few detailed answers.

Question 9

More candidates attempted this question than **Question 8**. There were some strong responses which clearly understood the unique nature and purpose of John and the significance of the Prologue to this Gospel.

Question 10

There were a lot of responses to this question. The topic of suffering is at the heart of the four Gospels and there is a lot of material to choose from. Many candidates did justice to this by producing good, detailed responses.

Question 11

There were some limited responses which were quite general in scope, though many were able to draw on textual examples from across the Gospels to illustrate the significance of Jesus' teaching as a significant part of his ministry. There is a lot of material to use. Some were selective others gave mainly examples of parables as proof of Jesus' teaching ministry.

Question 12

Few candidates attempted this question. Of those that did, there were some good responses.

Question 13

A popular question, with some detailed responses about the life and work of John the Baptist. High marks were achieved for this question.

Question 14

Not many candidates attempted this question. It is not easy to consider a question about the ethical teaching of Jesus. A lot of candidates gave good analysis of the Sermon on the Mount and/or the Plain when they did attempt it. Answers were largely limited to the consideration of these two events. There was a lot of scope for further development and greater selection of relevant material.

Rubric Errors

Rubrics were mostly understood and followed correctly by candidates. A couple of candidates answered only **Question 1**; they did so by writing about all the parts and not just choosing four.



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