

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Paper 2048/12
The Portrayal of the Life and Teaching of Jesus

Key messages

Part (c) questions need to contain a conclusion (or judgement or evaluation) as well as two contrasting approaches to be able to access the highest levels.

General comments

Entries seemed to have more incomplete scripts than in previous sessions – not because candidates were running out of time but because they were omitting parts of questions. It is, of course, important to ‘have a go’ at questions but also important to note that if a candidate cannot correctly identify the passage required for **part (a)**, it might be harder to complete **parts (b)** and **(c)** successfully.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** Candidates often knew which passage to select but many only recalled the final prophecy and so were unable to access all the marks available. Most placed the escape to Egypt in the context of fear of Herod and recalled the return of Joseph, Mary and Jesus some time later. Some struggled with the concept of how long the time in Egypt may have lasted.
- (b)** There were some very good responses to this question with answers including both items included on the mark scheme as well as other ideas, such as Matthew’s use of the Kingdom of heaven (rather than the Kingdom of God) or the presence of the genealogy.
- (c)** Most candidates engaged well with this question, although some did not fully understand what the term ‘political background’ was referring to. All terms and words from the syllabus can be used in questions on examination papers.

Question 2

- (a)** Most candidates were able to draw on Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount on revenge and love for enemies. Some only focused on love for enemies. Some talked about Jesus’ teachings on forgiveness from other parts of the Gospel. Some gave some other of Jesus’ teachings from the Sermon on the Mount.
- (b)** While some candidates limited themselves simply by describing Jesus’ teachings from **part (a)** in their own words, there were some engaging responses that gave relevant examples that Christians today might encounter.
- (c)** Candidates were able to give balanced responses to this question. The best answers explored arguments in favour of and then against the statement, with examples and came to a reasoned conclusion.

Question 3

- (a) Those candidates that attempted this question generally understood Jesus' reply to have encouraged John's disciples to report back what they witnessed. Responses in **part (ii)** either paraphrased or wrote the text out in detail and both methods were able to achieve full marks.
- (b) Although some answers gave rather generic comments about Jesus that did not necessarily relate to the text, most candidates who attempted this question gave useful responses.
- (c) There were some insightful answers to this question that explored ways in which Jesus and John the Baptist were different and similar. Some explored their messages of repentance or the specific salvific nature of Jesus' ministry.

Question 4

- (a) A number of candidates told the wrong story for this question, either picking a different demoniac or a different miracle story. Those that were successful, however, were able to tell the story clearly, as well as the interactions that Jesus had with others in the passage.
- (b) Candidates were able to access this question however successfully they had recounted the passage in **part (a)**. The best responses gave a range of answers, rather than trying to focus on Jesus having power.
- (c) Many candidates focused solely on Jesus' miracles to answer this question. The best responses were able to do more than tell the stories of various miracles. Candidates were also able to be successful using modern-day miracles to illustrate their points. Some insightful answers suggested that God's needs from miracles were different in the time of Jesus where miracles were about teaching as much as anything else; nowadays, faith is a pre-requisite.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates knew which parable this was referring to and gave good accounts of it. Some recounted the wrong stories relating to weddings.
- (b) Candidates were able to explore the idea of universalism in this parable and the notion that it gives a sense of salvation history. Many candidates needed to give a better range of points to answer the question in sufficient depth to achieve the highest marks.
- (c) Candidates were able to give a range of points that explored this statement. Candidates were more successful when they went beyond simply narrating different parables and explored ideas such as Jesus' use of everyday symbols in his parables or the explanation that followed the parable of the sower.

Question 6

- (a) Most candidates knew that this passage was referring to Peter's three-fold denial of Jesus after Jesus' arrest. Some gave responses that conflated different Gospel accounts. Some misidentified the passage and gave an account of another event that mentioned Peter.
- (b) The best responses identified the word 'character' in the question and did not, therefore, simply narrate stories about Jesus. Some candidates talked about the role of Peter in Acts, rather than in Matthew's Gospel. The best responses traced the journey Peter went through from his call, through Jesus' ministry and into Jesus' arrest and death.
- (c) While some candidates limited themselves by discussing only Peter in this question, most were able to give good points for or against. The best answers gave points both for and against and came to a reasoned and justified conclusion to achieve Level 4.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Paper 2048/22

The Portrayal of the Birth of the Early Church

Key messages

Candidates were able to select passages appropriately and answer explain questions using their own words.

General comments

Candidates were able to reflect on the passages or themes being tested in both **part (b)** and **part (c)** questions and to use their own words.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates generally remembered Peter's role in this passage as well as the process of casting lots. Some candidates did not successfully explore Peter's speech at this event.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explore the idea that Peter showed leadership by taking charge of the moment and that this set the scene for the remainder of Acts. Some candidates wrote generally about Peter in Acts, rather than beginning with the incident in the question.
- (c) While some candidates gave general ideas about what it meant to be an apostle, the majority explored whether or not Judas needed to be replaced by someone from a specific group or whether it did not matter. The best answers explored whether Matthias was chosen by God himself.

Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates knew this story in detail and described it accurately. The best responses were able to give good summaries of the incident, rather than writing it out in too much detail.
- (b) Candidates successfully reflected on lessons that this passage might teach Christians today. The best responses gave a range of ideas, rather than focusing just on one (usually, the need to be truthful to God).
- (c) While most candidates were able to explore ideas surrounding what the tensions in the church were (for example, expanding to the issue of circumcision), some candidates seemed to be unclear on what 'tensions' meant, and this limited their range of points. There were some excellent reflective essays that showed a good understanding of the possible roles of Acts as a Biblical text.

Question 3

- (a) Fewer candidates successfully selected the passage being tested here but those that did gave generally specific accounts of Peter being left standing at a front door. However, some responses were not specific enough to achieve full marks.

- (b) Some candidates did not focus sufficiently on the word 'role' in the question and simply narrated events involving Herod, usually his death. Some candidates explored Herod's role in the gospels.
- (c) Most candidates were able to engage with this question, either from a textual perspective or from their own experiences. There were some interesting reflections on the roles of angels in the lives of modern believers.

Question 4

- (a) While candidates pinpointed the story readily, many began with the jailer waking up, rather than ending with it. As a result, fewer candidates were able to achieve the higher levels.
- (b) Most candidates knew about Silas, but some candidates did not try to explain his importance, instead relying on narration of passages.
- (c) Candidates gave a good range of ideas to support and to reject this statement. The role of the Holy Spirit was the most commonly explored counterargument. The role of other Christian leaders was also examined in detail.

Question 5

- (a) This question was not widely answered. Candidates either focused precisely on the question and achieved higher marks or else spoke in general about the farewell to the Ephesian elders and were awarded marks where possible.
- (b) Most answers to this question successfully reflected on the different need in this speech to others and went on to explore the personal nature of Paul's message, rather than the universalisable ideals otherwise covered in his ministry.
- (c) Some candidates linked this question to Paul's arrest and eventual death, but others explored his approach to his ministry and the motivations behind his movements from place to place. Whichever approach was chosen, the best responses were balanced and gave a clear, justified opinion in conclusion.

Question 6

- (a) Some candidates struggled with the word 'strategy' (taken from the syllabus) and some candidates simply chose a passage from Acts and narrated it, but the best answers came up with sensible approaches to explaining how the church expanded beyond Samaria, to the ends of the earth.
- (b) Candidates generally offered good ideas about how Christians might learn from the example set in Acts. Answers tended to focus on the notion of adapting the message for the needs of the audience.
- (c) Whereas some candidates did not fully explore the idea of division, instead narrating passages linked to Gentiles, most candidates were able to draw on a range of ideas covered in their study of Acts to come to a reasoned conclusion.