

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Paper 2048/12

The portrayal of the life and teaching of Jesus

General comments

In this first year of the new syllabus, there were a number of scripts that reflected very good knowledge and understanding of the text. It was the part (c) questions which candidates generally found more challenging. Often candidates listed arguments “for” under the heading “Agree” and arguments “against” under the heading “Disagree”. Although this does give two different points of view and so can access Level 3 of the mark scheme, it does not allow for weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of arguments. In order to access the higher marks, candidates need to provide a response to the persuasiveness of the argument that leads to a justified conclusion. It is important to develop this skill as 40% of the total marks for a question are awarded to part (c).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Candidates had good knowledge of both fasting and prayer with many candidates gaining full marks. A few candidates selected material from other parts of the Gospel which could not therefore be credited.
- (b) Candidates struggled with this and often gave a description of what happened and what was said rather than attempting to explain the meaning. A few candidates gave an account of Jesus’ arrest. Candidates are reminded of the importance of reading the question carefully rather than just focusing on one or two of the key words.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give arguments both for and against but many of the arguments about fasting were not related to religious fasting. They often centred more on the dangers of fasting, losing weight and feeling hungry.

Question 2

- (a) This question was the most popular and also the question where candidates gained the highest overall marks on the paper. However, there was often confusion about the details with most candidates giving Luke’s Gospel account and omitting the additional material about subjects being thrown outside into darkness.
- (b) This was generally well answered although many candidates limited their discussion to faith and the power of Jesus over diseases.
- (c) Candidates seemed confident in answering this part question and many gave examples from the Gospel where compassion was mentioned. As referred to in the general comments, some candidates could only achieve Level 3 as they did not evaluate the arguments, but merely listed them.

Question 3

- (a) This was the least popular question and a significant number of candidates omitted answering at least one part of the whole question. Also some candidates confused the events at Caesarea with the Transfiguration. Those that did identify the correct event often struggled with some of the details.

- (b) This part question was the least well answered on the whole paper. Candidates did not appear to be fully familiar with this area of the syllabus.
- (c) There were some good answers to this part question which suggested that some candidates were well prepared. However, many candidates struggled to give support to more than one view.

Question 4

- (a) The difficulty for candidates who attempted this question was remembering the events that happened after Jesus had thrown out the traders and money changers, namely the healings and the children shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David". Relatively few candidates gained full marks for this part.
- (b) A number of candidates confused the information with that which referred to the Pharisees, whilst others ignored the two areas to be covered, namely who the Sadducees were AND what they believed.
- (c) Candidates were more confident on this part and produced some good discussions though again the actual evaluation was often weak or missing.

Question 5

- (a) A number of candidates gave a full account of the parable rather than just focussing on the return of the master to the servant who had been given only one talent.
- (b) Although there were various discussions about the talents, only a few related the parable to the Second Coming with the master returning.
- (c) This produced some good answers and many candidates gave views on both sides, though very few alluded to Matthew 13:10-17.

Question 6

- (a) Although most candidates knew the basic outline of the events, they struggled over the details as to who exactly asked Peter questions and what answer he then gave to them.
- (b) The question required some explanation rather than just quoting text. Most candidates centred on the text about leaving your father and mother – almost to the exclusion of any other text.
- (c) This was generally well answered with some candidates suggesting alternatives such as Judas or arguing that Peter was the strongest rather than the weakest.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Paper 2048/13

The portrayal of the life and teaching of Jesus

General comments

A significant number of candidates demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of the text, which was very encouraging in this first year of the new syllabus. It was the part (c) questions which candidates found more challenging. Often candidates listed arguments “for” under the heading “Agree” and arguments “against” under the heading “Disagree”. Although this does give two different points of view and so can access Level 3 of the mark scheme, it does not allow for weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of arguments. In order to access the higher marks, candidates need to provide a response to the persuasiveness of the argument that leads to a justified conclusion. It is important to develop this skill as 40% of the total marks for a question are awarded to part (c).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This question was the most popular and generally well answered with most candidates able to give details of Jesus' three temptations. There was some confusion between the locations of the second and third temptations. Also candidates often omitted part of Jesus' reply in the third temptation.
- (b) Again, there were some good answers showing sound understanding. Some candidates did not read the question carefully enough and wrote about all three temptations.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give arguments both for and against but did not comment on the relative strengths or weaknesses of those arguments.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates were confident in answering this question and correctly identified two events.
- (b) Answers tended to be a little limited with most focussing on only one or two differences. However, there were some candidates who had clearly studied the background to the New Testament and gave very full answers. Only a very few candidates confused the two groups.
- (c) Some candidates struggled with this question whilst others just omitted it. Those that did complete it tended to give a reason supporting and disagreeing with the statement but there was no attempt to weigh the strengths or weaknesses of those reasons.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates who attempted this question clearly knew the details of the rich man's encounter with Jesus.
- (b) The question asked candidates to explain Jesus' answer. However most candidates tended to simply state what Jesus had said. Others included material from other parts of the New Testament or gave general comments about wealth.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give views on both sides, though the views were often stated without evaluation. Nevertheless, this part (c) produced better answers overall, possibly because candidates provided a more personal response from their own experiences and thoughts.

Question 4

- (a) Although this was the least popular question, it produced some good answers with some candidates showing strong knowledge of the details of the parable.
- (b) Again, there were some good answers, though some candidates only gave a basic explanation about helping people in need.
- (c) Answers tended to be limited in discussion and only the strongest candidates were able to refer to other parables to support their arguments.

Question 5

- (a) Some candidates gave detailed accounts of the arrest and some even continued further. The details of events in the Garden of Gethsemane tended to be rather brief, though a few candidates showed detailed knowledge.
- (b) Those that knew the details of the events in part (a) were able to give good answers to this part (b). Other candidates struggled and spoke more about the arrest itself and Judas, which was not the focus of this part question.
- (c) This part (c) produced the weakest answers from across the whole paper. It seemed that many candidates had not studied this area and wrote about other titles of Jesus.

Question 6

- (a) This question led to many candidates giving answers that contained material from other gospel accounts. Only material found in Matthew's Gospel could be credited.
- (b) This part question proved challenging and produced a high number of blank responses.
- (c) Candidates tended to give statements under the headings "agree" and "disagree". As mentioned in the general comments, limiting responses to this structure does not allow for evaluation and a weighing up of the arguments.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Paper 2048/22

The portrayal of the birth of the early church

General comments

In this first year of the new syllabus, there were a number of scripts that reflected very good knowledge and understanding of the text. As with paper 2048/12, it was the part **(c)** questions which candidates generally found more challenging. The structure of answering by listing arguments *for* and then arguments *against* does not lend itself to evaluating the arguments, since it does not allow for weighing up the relative strengths and weaknesses of the arguments. In order to access the higher marks, candidates need to provide a response to the persuasiveness of the argument that leads to a justified conclusion. It is important to develop this skill as 40% of the total marks for a question are awarded to part **(c)**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This was the most popular question and was answered by just over 90% of the candidates. The details about Herod were less known and some candidates confused him with Herod the Great in the Gospels.
- (b) This was generally well attempted but not all candidates noted the two tasks of *how* and *why*. Often candidates included material in **(a)** that was relevant to **(b)** but not included in **(b)** and vice versa.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give arguments both for and against. The better responses gave support for their argument using events from the Acts of the Apostles.

Question 2

- (a) The details were generally known and accurately recounted. Some candidates conflated what Stephen said.
- (b) In contrast to part **(a)**, this part question saw candidates struggling to recall the details and some of the material relevant to part **(a)** appeared here. A significant number of candidates thought that Stephen's teaching about Jesus and his resurrection was the reason for Stephen being stoned to death.
- (c) Many candidates struggled to argue either for or against this statement. Very few mentioned elders or the Council of Jerusalem.

Question 3

- (a) This was generally well answered although a few candidates confused the events with those involving Paul and Barnabas on Cyprus.
- (b) Candidates clearly knew the two events but often only a limited number of differences were stated. The question required that the differences were identified and therefore it was not sufficient just to recount the details of the two events without actively drawing out the differences.
- (c) This was generally well answered with two views given, though very few actually evaluated their arguments by commenting on their relative strengths and weaknesses. Stronger candidates were able to produce a reasoned and justified conclusion.

Question 4

- (a) Many candidates who attempted this question were unable to demonstrate knowledge of the speech and so struggled with this part question.
- (b) This part question proved the most challenging across the whole paper. Candidates often gave rather vague and general comments about the reaction of the Jews rather than recounting accurate details.
- (c) Some candidates struggled to give any evidence from the Acts of the Apostles and, like part (b), tended to be a little vague in their answers. Those that did cite support from Paul's missionary journeys, often got the places confused.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates produced some high scoring answers to this part question. A few candidates confused the account with that of Peter's imprisonment and escape in Jerusalem. The one detail that candidates tended to omit was the manner of their release from prison connected with their Roman citizenship.
- (b) The only detail most candidates referred to concerned Paul's breakup with Barnabas at the start of Paul's second missionary journey.
- (c) There were a number of blank responses to this question.

Question 6

- (a) This question was generally well answered. Many candidates who answered this question gave no responses to at least one of the part questions. There was sometimes confusion between the exact role of Alexander and that of the town clerk.
- (b) Some candidates gave information in (a) that was relevant here.
- (c) This was generally well answered with some candidates giving good discussions on both viewpoints. However, very few achieved Level 4 because most candidates did not evaluate the arguments and so the conclusions reached rarely included justification.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Paper 2048/23

The portrayal of the birth of the early church

General comments

There were a significant number of scripts that reflected very good knowledge and understanding of the text, which was very encouraging in this first year of the new syllabus.

It was the part (c) questions which candidates found more challenging. Often candidates listed arguments “for” under the heading “Agree” and arguments “against” under the heading “Disagree”. Although this does give two different points of view and so is just into a Level 3, it does not allow for weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of arguments. In order to access the higher marks, candidates need to provide a response to the persuasiveness of the argument that leads to a justified conclusion. It is important to develop this skill as 40% of the total marks for a question are awarded to part (c).

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) **Question 1** was the least popular question and candidates found part (a) be challenging. Answers tended to be quite general and did not really refer to the specifics of the question.
- (b) Some candidates gave a no response to this part of **Question 1**. A number of candidates gave answers to part (a) in part (b).
- (c) Most candidates were able to give arguments both for and against but did not comment on the relative strengths or weaknesses of those arguments.

Question 2

- (a) Nearly all candidates attempted this question. However, there was often confusion about the details with some candidates confusing it with material from the last part of Matthew’s Gospel.
- (b) In their answers, many candidates limited their discussion to the apostles doing miracles and preaching. This limited the marks that could be awarded. There is a large amount of material that candidates could have referred to and stronger responses were able to reference this.
- (c) Candidates performed well in this part question. Both Peter and James were often argued for as alternatives and many candidates supported their answers with evidence from the events in Acts of the Apostles.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates who attempted this question clearly knew the basic outline of events but often lacked some of the details. Candidates need to read the question carefully as some responses only covered the events on the Damascus Road.
- (b) This question was generally well answered with candidates discussing a number of differences between the two accounts.
- (c) Most candidates were able to give views on both sides, though the views were often stated rather than evaluated.

Question 4

- (a) This was a popular question. However, some candidates confused the account with that of Paul and Silas being imprisoned.
- (b) Those that knew the details of the events gained good marks though often candidates recounted the reactions rather than explained them.
- (c) Some candidates gave only one view point and struggled to allude to any events involving the Roman authorities. Other candidates referred to the Gospels and the birth and death of Jesus. However, this material could not be credited as the question was about the early church and events recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

Question 5

- (a) Candidates were usually able to give an outline of the main events. However, the details were often omitted, especially the reactions of the Jews and Greeks to the events.
- (b) This was generally well answered with most discussion centred on the events in Ephesus. Stronger candidates were able to give reference to other texts in the Acts of the Apostles that featured evil spirits.
- (c) This produced some good answers and many candidates gave views on both sides. Few candidates picked up on the word "impossible" in the statement but there were some interesting discussions overall.

Question 6

- (a) This was not a popular question. A significant number of those attempting this question gave no responses to one or more parts of the question
- (b) Some candidates attempting this question did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of Paul's missionary strategy to complete this part question well and so did not score highly.
- (c) Candidates tended to give only one view or only make brief comment on an alternative view. A number of candidates gave no response.