

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Paper 2048/12

The portrayal of the life and teaching of
Jesus

Key messages

There were some very good scripts received among a full range of responses showing better appreciation of the demands of **(c)** questions. There were several less effective responses to **(b)** questions and some **(a)** questions were descriptive accounts of the text.

General comments

The transition to Luke's Gospel was successful. The best answers showed an understanding of how to explain and evaluate for the **(b)** and **(c)** questions. Very few answers muddled up the different Gospels' accounts of passages. More focus on the specific wording of a question would improve answers further.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** This question posed few problems for those who attempted it, although most preferred four of the five other questions. Some candidates knew only one or two points (generally, that Luke also wrote Acts and that he was a companion of Paul).
- (b)** The best responses explored some of Luke's themes, such as Gentiles and women. Many referred to the opening prologue of the Gospel. Some responses did not focus on the reasons why Luke's Gospel was written and wrote general comments about the style of the Gospel.
- (c)** There were several good responses to this question. The best responses evaluated both sides of the argument; for example, suggesting that Luke's Gospel is not relevant to non-Christians because they do not hold the prior knowledge that might help them use the Gospel to its fullest. Most candidates gave arguments agreeing with the statement. There were some well-argued and heartfelt responses that explored the message of salvation that is central to Christian belief and can be found in the Gospel.

Question 2

- (a)** Many responses gave an accurate account of the angels visiting the shepherds. Weaker responses often picked out the initial visit from the angel and the shepherds visiting the manger without further detail. Some candidates mistook the shepherds for the wise men in Matthew's Gospel.
- (b)** Where candidates had identified the key elements of the story in **(a)**, there were few difficulties. The best responses explored the nature of the shepherds as being on the fringes of society in some detail. Some candidates made links to Jesus being a shepherd, with varying success.
- (c)** There was a good range of arguments both for and against the statement in this question. Some argued that the core of the Gospel is in the ministry and sacrifice of Jesus; others that the incarnation is an integral part of the Christ-event. The best answers, as with all **(c)** questions, weighed up both sides of the argument and offered a clear personal response.

Question 3

- (a) Most candidates knew this passage in very good detail, although some missed the idea that Jesus had commanded (rebuked) the storm. A few candidates mixed up the story with that of Jesus walking on water.
- (b) Answers generally gave a quick explanation of why this is a nature miracle and then moved on to the identity of Jesus with some success, making good links to the story. For example, Jesus' humanity as he was asleep was contrasted with the divinity shown by the miracle.
- (c) Many candidates used the passage in this question as a 'way in' to the discussion, while most were able to draw on a wider range of miracles. Some discussed the stimulus statement more generally and to good extent, exploring the idea of science and alternative explanations for nature miracles. Some candidates focused too heavily on discussing natural disasters. A few candidates compared nature miracles to other types of miracle, which was not necessary but was credited where relevant to the question.

Question 4

- (a) Most responses correctly identified the passage and gave a good account of the story, although some missed the significance of the disciples having first failed to cast out the demon. Some responses confused this passage with other exorcisms, most notably the exorcism of Legion.
- (b) Candidates were generally able to make links between miracles and faith. Some candidates did not concentrate on the miracle in (a), as demanded by the question, but those who did were able to discuss the faith of the father. Few candidates understood the lack of faith of the disciples to be a key teaching point of the miracle.
- (c) The best answers included a range of examples to back up their arguments. Some candidates were able to speak from modern experience while others stayed close to the Gospels, and both were acceptable approaches. Other candidates were muddled in trying to reconcile faith and medicine.

Question 5

- (a) This question attracted many responses and was well answered for the most part. Some responses missed some details of the story and some focused too much on the preamble to the parable.
- (b) The best responses linked the idea of love for neighbour to the call for universality in this way of life. Some candidates struggled to answer the question either through missing the word 'prejudice' or from not knowing what prejudice is. General responses that explored the nature of love did not achieve high marks. Some candidates thought that the Good Samaritan was prejudiced.
- (c) There were some very good responses that drew on a range of parables to answer the question. Others simply narrated some parables and received few marks. There were some sophisticated arguments that linked faith and action to excellent effect.

Question 6

- (a) Many responses covered the whole of the evening of the arrest or the whole of the lead up to Judas's betrayal. There was some confusion over the detail of who cut off whose ear and whether it was healed, reflecting the disparity in the three Gospel accounts, but not reflecting accurate knowledge of the set text.
- (b) Most candidates responded well to this question, looking either at the big picture of Jesus' ministry or else at the days prior to his arrest.
- (c) There were some excellent responses to this question, drawing both from personal experience and current context. Some talked about how a Christian should act in extreme circumstances. The best responses clearly talked about arguments for the statement, then arguments against it and then came to a clearly-expressed personal conclusion.

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RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Paper 2048/22

The portrayal of the birth of the early church

Key messages

There were many excellent responses to the questions which showed some detailed knowledge. Candidates tended to be less effective in the part (c) questions where their responses were often not very evaluative in approach, tending to be more descriptive instead and not really engaging with the personal response aspect of the question.

General comments

Recall of the passages was generally good, although there was some confusion over the chronology of chapters 3 to 5. Candidates with an overarching understanding of the main characters in Acts performed more successfully when knowledge needed to be applied or understood.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates simply wrote out some facts about Acts, rather than focusing on the question, which required points that suggest Acts is 'a reliable account'. Others referred to the 'we' passages and historical arguments to support the reliability of the book.
- (b) The best responses questioned some of the internal evidence or showed contradictions with Paul's letters. Some candidates simply wrote out some passages from Acts.
- (c) There were some good responses to this question which balanced the continuity of Luke through to Acts, against the regular summaries of Jesus' ministry through the speeches of Peter and Paul. The best responses looked at both sides of the argument clearly before concluding separately.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates knew this story in good detail. A few responses lost marks where there were imprecisions, such as in the content of the scroll the Eunuch was reading.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explore Philip's work in Samaria. The best responses identified Philip as one of the Seven and gave a holistic picture of his role in the work of the early church.
- (c) There were some good responses that gave balanced answers to this question. Some candidates argued that the early church had a fundamental need to expand and spread. Others talked about the concern in the church for the welfare of its current members, citing the appointment of the Seven as a good example to back this up.

Question 3

- (a) Candidates generally knew why the letter was sent and the four prescriptions within it. Few candidates were able to discuss the early part of the letter; for example, giving the authority with which it was sent.

- (b) Some candidates were able to explore the relationship between the two men in good detail, understanding their common purpose becoming broken by disagreement. The best responses moved beyond simple narration of different passages that mentioned them both.
- (c) There were some excellent responses to this question that successfully applied a depth of knowledge and understanding of Acts to a balanced argument, before reaching a fully supported personal opinion. Most candidates wrote clearly about circumcision, whether using material in favour or against the statement. Some candidates were not clear about what might have been other obstacles to the growth of the early church.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates successfully identified the passage. There was some confusion over the detail of the passage, as well as whether it had been a miracle of Peter or Paul. Some candidates omitted answering this question.
- (b) There were some excellent responses that made it clear that for the early church the resurrection was what set the church apart from other sects. Most candidates understood the importance of the resurrection for Christianity, although some did not link this, as required by the question, to the early church.
- (c) Many responses discussed the debate in terms of faith against science or medicine or reason. The best responses explored their arguments in turn before reaching a personal conclusion.

Question 5

- (a) Most candidates were familiar with the passage and therefore produced good answers. Some did not recount both what was said and what was done, as required by the question.
- (b) Many candidates knew the passage where ‘the Seven’ were appointed but their answers were often limited when discussing the contrast with the apostles. The best answers to this question described the apostles’ special gift of the Holy Spirit.
- (c) There were some very good responses to this question that looked at the feasibility of casting lots or simple appointment as a means of choosing leaders, although most focused on the former as suggested by the stimulus of the question. The best responses focused on whether trusting the Holy Spirit is conducive to good appointments, often contrasting it with the need for faith in the working of the Spirit.

Question 6

- (a) Those candidates that described the correct portion of the text did so with varying success, some summarising Peter’s speech very well. However, many candidates recounted the healing of the beggar, rather than what happened afterwards.
- (b) Several candidates knew the details of the discussion among the religious authorities well, though few understood what had been so aggravating about Peter’s speech. Some candidates confused this passage with the intervention of Gamaliel in chapter 5. Some candidates understood the intricacies of why Peter and John were released, especially the fact that the authorities could not deny the miracle, much as they might have liked to.
- (c) Some candidates produced useful arguments, while weighing up opposing views and clearly stating their personal viewpoint. Many talked about the way in which persecution acted as a vehicle for the spread of the church; or simply as a means of the early Christians explaining their actions or words.

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