

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Paper 2048/12

The Portrayal of the Life and Teaching of Jesus

Key messages

Candidates who performed better demonstrated in their answers that they had read the question carefully and understood the question because they wrote answers that responded to each of the command words or phrases. Weaker responses did not address all of the parts of the question, suggesting that candidates had not read the question carefully, or did not fully understand the question.

General comments

There was a wide spread of responses across all questions. However, many candidates did not give a clear personal response in **part (c)** questions and so did not access the full range of marks for these questions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) The vast majority of candidates successfully identified the passage, though many did not answer this question in as much detail as they answered questions on other passages in the Gospel. Better answers mentioned Elizabeth and the phrasing of Mary's consent given to the angel/God.
- (b) There were a range of very strong responses to this question. Some questions focused on the need for Luke to give an orderly account – and thus to start from the beginning, others explored the importance of the emphasis on the special circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth.
- (c) Most candidates answered this question coherently. Some interpreted 'orderly' to refer to chronology and others to completeness. Some candidates used comparisons with other Gospels to good effect. Some candidates focused only on the fact that Luke wrote two of the books of the New Testament; these more limited answers could not gain full marks. Some candidates limited their answers to describing the passages; these responses were weaker.

Question 2

- (a) There were many weak answers to this question; many answers did not demonstrate good knowledge of the passage. Some candidates recounted other incidents from the Gospel, such as the cleansing of the Temple, which were not directly relevant to the question. A few candidates recounted stories that are not in any Gospel. Some candidates added information from Matthew's Gospel, which could not be taken into consideration.
- (b) Where (a) had been properly identified, almost all candidates successfully gained marks for this part-question. However, even where (a) had not been understood, a demonstration of good knowledge of the background to the Gospel led to some candidates attaining some credit.
- (c) Arguments made by candidates in answers to this question often centred around Jesus' miracles and the fulfilment of prophecies. Some candidates mentioned false prophets and prophecies in modern times. The strongest answers understood the effect of the Gospels on the world today.

Question 3

- (a) Some candidates' answers to this question were not strong because they merged **parts (i) and (ii)** and wrote long narrations of the passage. Stronger answers addressed each of the two questions separately. Some candidates did not demonstrate in **part (ii)** a clear understanding of the idea of Jesus comparing the woman's actions to those of Simon, which required a holistic understanding of the passage.
- (b) Most responses to this question focused successfully on outcasts, the universality of Luke and the status of women, although many of these responses that needed more development to attain Level 4. Some candidates made a link between the anointing of Jesus and his death and burial, although some candidates attained full marks with a range of other points.
- (c) Some candidates compared the number of accounts about women to those that feature men, but this was not the main focus of the question. Stronger answers explored why women seem so important to Luke's narrative. Some excellent answers looked at other key themes of the Gospel of Luke, such as the Holy Spirit or outcasts by way of comparison.

Question 4

- (a) Some candidates wrote very short responses to this question. However, most candidates selected information appropriately. Some answers achieved lower marks because they omitted the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan leper.
- (b) Some answers to this question focused too much on general comments about Jesus' personality rather than on his work and ministry. In stronger answers, candidates used the passage as a starting point to some useful insights into the Jesus of Luke's Gospel. Some answers could have been improved had there been more discussion about the idea of compassion.
- (c) Many responses to this question featured an excessive amount of content, but also gave a range of arguments both for and against. Some candidates focused exclusively on the Gospel and others on healing today: either approach is valid.

Question 5

- (a) Responses to this question often distorted the passage significantly. In some answers, candidates recounted the whole parable; others only gave a short account of the servant's words when he admitted his actions to his master.
- (b) Responses to this question demonstrated a range of possible meanings of the parable. Most focused on the idea of the mina/pound being a talent, although others looked at the possible teaching on the parable about judgement.
- (c) Candidates' own personal opinions (where given) in this question varied. Those who achieved better marks did so by justifying their own and others' opinions. Most explored the possibility that it was inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus elsewhere and concluded it teaches about the true nature of God's justice.

Question 6

- (a) Most candidates gave good detail in answer to this question. Weaker answers only identified the part played by at least one of those crucified with Jesus. A small minority of responses identified the wrong passage and described words from the watchers.
- (b) Most candidates were able to give a range of responses to the question, with more marks being available for those who explained, rather than just stated, possible reasons.
- (c) Although some in some response 'why' and 'how' were mixed up, there were also a good range of balanced responses to this question. Where candidates gave a final personal opinion, most stated that the 'why' was usually deemed more important because of its relationship with the mission of Jesus on earth.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

Paper 2048/22

The Portrayal of the Birth of the Early Church

Key messages

Many candidates wrote very long answers to **part (a)** questions but did not write complete answers to **part (b)** and **(c)** questions or to the fourth question that they selected. This suggests that candidates could have achieved higher marks had they managed their time in the examination more efficiently.

General comments

A significant number of candidates answered **Questions 1–4**, rather than **5** or **6**. A number of candidates restricted answering using only using bullet points. These responses generally did not feature enough development to achieve higher marks.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) Some responses to this question did not pinpoint the area required by the question, which was to explore what happened in Damascus after Saul's encounter with Ananias was over. In some answers, candidates gave accounts of the wrong teaching.
- (b) Many weaker answers to this question listed of points about Barnabas but did not direct these points to the importance of Barnabas to Paul's ministry. Better answers moved away from the initial passages about Paul to consider Acts in a more holistic way.
- (c) Many successful responses to this question examined why having had a significant experience in his life made Paul's ministry successful, contrasting this with Paul's natural skills and abilities that mean that his conversion simply made him a Christian, rather than a successful apostle.

Question 2

- (a) In stronger answers, candidates identified the passage being tested, although others recounted the original vision before Peter went to Cornelius. The passage was best recounted specifically, rather than in general terms.
- (b) In answers to this question, candidates identified that the question asked why the church was located in different places around the world and responded accordingly. The notion of the 'mission to Gentiles' was not always written about accurately. Most responses addressed circumcision or the perception of uncleanness by the Jewish Christian community. Some responses suggested that the candidate thought that the question required an explanation of why Gentile and Jewish communities were divided, rather than the divisions within the Jewish Christian community.
- (c) Some responses did not accurately characterise what was meant by a Gentile. Stronger responses looked at the impact of the Holy Spirit after the Pentecost event and whether that impacted most on Jewish or Gentile communities.

Question 3

- (a) Some weaker responses included accounts of the first time Peter was in prison, rather than addressing the passage being tested, and often did not refer to an angel. However, most candidates successfully responded to the question, giving accounts of the preamble to the passage (when Herod arrested Peter) and the end of the passage, when the angel visited Peter.
- (b) Some weaker answers to this question did not acknowledge what happened immediately after the passage when Peter went to the house of Mary. There were some good responses that identified the role of women, the nature of a household with a servant and/or the organisation of the early church.
- (c) Some excellent answers established clearly the difference between a history book and either a reference book or an inspirational/theological book.

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates were able to identify two passages to give accounts of successfully. Most candidates recounted the Ethiopian Eunuch and Lydia. Some responses included a large amount of additional narrative material that did not attract credit.
- (b) Some responses addressed only what baptism is, rather than its importance. Other responses were about its importance in general terms, but stronger answers addressed its role in the early church or Acts. Most candidates identified in their responses the idea that baptism is the entry rite of Christianity.
- (c) Answers gave a wide range of arguments for and against the proposition. Candidates who gave personal opinions that well-justified (rather than just stated in passing) gained the highest marks.

Question 5

- (a) Most responses in which the passage and the characters being tested were included gave accurate accounts. In some weaker answers, candidates suggested that Timothy was one of the Seven. In some answers, responses to **part (ii)** were too limited in content to achieve higher marks.
- (b) Many answers included good explanations, although some received low marks because they only *described* what happened in Philippi, which would have been a **part (a)** question. Stronger answers went beyond description.
- (c) Many responses focused simply on the idea of transport today being different from in Paul's time. However, some portrayals of people today were over-simplified. The best responses were clear on what Paul's strategy was: the techniques used and the idea of planting Christian communities or, occasionally, the idea that his journeys expanded each time.

Question 6

- (a) Responses to this question were generally either very weak or very strong. Stronger answers accurately addressed the passage; weaker responses of gained no marks, because they described something that happened later on in the Ephesus trip.
- (b) In stronger answers, some candidates were able to recall the warning Paul gave the Ephesian elders and from there to explain the significance or importance of this warning. In some weaker responses, candidates mistakenly focused on the idea of worshipping idols.
- (c) Responses to this part of the question demonstrated very limited explanation about what happened in Ephesus. Some answers successfully explored whether or not a longer stay would have impeded the spread of the early church in some way.