

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

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Paper 2048/12

The portrayal of the life and teaching of  
Jesus

## General comments

It was encouraging to see that in this second year of the new style question paper, most Centres are continuing to build on their good preparation of their candidates to meet the new demands.

Exam technique has noticeably improved with very few candidates ignoring the rubric of answering four questions or copying out the question before they answer it. Some candidates still narrate material that goes beyond the scope of the question. Although there is no negative marking (i.e. no marks are deducted) the candidates penalise themselves by the time they spend writing material that is not relevant and therefore gains no credit.

Candidates should also be reminded that there is no cross credit. For example, material relevant to part (a) cannot be credited if it only appears in part (b) where it is not relevant.

As in previous papers, it is the part (c) questions that many candidates struggle to get beyond Level 3. Many candidates presented arguments for and arguments against but they were statements of arguments without any evaluation or weighing up of their relative strengths and weaknesses.

A few candidates continue to present arguments in bullet points rather than continuous prose. Answers need to be in continuous prose so that a reasoned argument can be presented.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a) This was generally well answered, though a significant number of candidates went beyond the demands of the question and included long accounts of events prior to the appearance of the angel. There were also a significant number of candidates who either only gave one account rather than two, or only included what was said by the angel and omitted Joseph's reaction. It is important that candidates read questions carefully.
- (b) There were indications that many Centres had not adequately prepared candidates for this topic. A large number of answers just gave summaries of the birth narratives rather than highlighting characteristics such as Old Testament fulfilment or Jesus presented as Messiah. The question also specified that the characteristics and illustrations were to be taken from the birth stories. A number of candidates used material from other parts of the Gospel and so those examples could not be credited.
- (c) This was generally well answered, with some good arguments being given. The weakness in answers was the often the lack of any evaluation of those arguments.

### Question 2

- (a) As expected, this was a very popular question. Surprisingly a number of candidates gave an account of the wrong parable. However, most candidates gained a Level 3 or 4. Some of the details about the seed that fell on rocky places was often omitted.

- (b) Again, this was generally well answered. The details about the cause of the falling away were sometimes either omitted or conflated.
- (c) Candidates clearly felt confident with giving the arguments, though only a few candidates adequately tackled the reference to the prophecy of Isaiah. Once again, evaluation requires more than just listing arguments. Candidates need to engage with the arguments.

### Question 3

- (a) This was well answered with candidates able to accurately recount most of the details of the event. The most common omission of detail was the reaction of the disciples as Jesus climbed into the boat.
- (b) Although candidates were able to refer to aspects such as Jesus' power and the role of faith, only a few candidates developed their answers to explain these aspects. Most tended just to state them without any further explanation or reference back to the text.
- (c) This question clearly caused some candidates difficulties. The difficulties seem to have arisen with the misreading of the question. A number of candidates read "explain" rather than "explain away". Although some marks could be salvaged it did result in those candidates not clearly addressing the focus of the question.

### Question 4

- (a) This question was the least popular. Although candidates were confident about part (i), they clearly struggled with part (ii). Only a few candidates managed to identify the correct text in (ii).
- (b) This seemed an area of the syllabus that few candidates were prepared for. Often candidates omitted answering this part of **Question 4** or they briefly made some reference to the Messiah or synonym for man. Few seemed aware of the background to the title in Daniel and to the apocalyptic judge. The question was focused on what the Jews might have understood rather than how Jesus used the title.
- (c) Again, some candidates did not read the question carefully and only addressed the threat aspect, omitting the accusation of blasphemer. However, many candidates showed good knowledge of the text with their examples. The focus of "It is not surprising" was unfortunately often ignored.

### Question 5

- (a) This was generally well answered. The most common omission in detail was the fact that the man died without having children and that Jesus comments that God is not God of the dead but of the living.
- (b) This was generally well answered, with most candidates accurately identifying the text from Matthew 5. Some candidates omitted the teaching found in Matthew 19:8–9.
- (c) Again, most candidates tended to list points for and against rather than discuss their strengths and weaknesses as arguments. However, a number of good arguments were stated on both sides of the argument though they lacked evaluation.

### Question 6

- (a) A common problem was the conflation of accounts from Luke's Gospel. However, there were also some very detailed accurate answers where candidates showed good knowledge of the text.
- (b) A number of candidates failed to read the question carefully and only addressed the issue of why the guards were put at Jesus' tomb. Details tended to be brief with only a few candidates knowing that Pilate told them to put a guard on the tomb and that the chief priests and Pharisees were concerned that the deception of rising from the dead would be worse than the first. A significant number of candidates stated that the soldiers were given money to make sure that they would do their job properly.

- (c) Many candidates did not seem clear as to the difference between literal and symbolic. They often confused the two which led to confusing arguments. Those that were clear often gave good arguments though the symbolic case was often the weaker in its presentation.

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Paper 2048/13

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

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Paper 2048/22

The portrayal of the birth of the early church

## General comments

It was encouraging to see that in this second year of the new style question paper, most Centres are continuing to build on their good preparation of their candidates to meet the new demands.

As in previous years, candidates generally struggle more with answering questions on the Acts of the Apostles than they do answering questions on a Gospel. The sequence and events of Paul's missionary journeys including what Paul said continue to cause candidates some confusion. This sometimes results in candidates narrating the wrong event in the part (a) questions. For instance in **Question 4, 5 and 6**.

As noted in previous Examiner's reports, many candidates struggle to understand the distinction between synagogue and church.

It should be noted that there is no cross credit. For example, material relevant to part (b) cannot be credited if it only appears in part (a) where it is not relevant. This was a particular problem on **Question 3**.

It was encouraging to see many candidates engage in more evaluative responses to part (c) questions. There were more candidates who rather than just presenting arguments for and arguments against demonstrated evidence of the weighing up of the relative strengths and weaknesses of those arguments and so progressed to Level 4 and Level 5.

In contrast, there were a few candidates who presented the arguments in bullet points rather than continuous prose. Answers need to be in continuous prose so that a reasoned argument can be presented.

Although there is no negative marking, candidates should remember that they penalise themselves in spending time writing material that is not relevant.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

- (a) This was generally well answered with most candidates making reference to Theophilus and to the continuation of Acts of the Apostles from Luke's Gospel. However, only a few candidates seemed aware of any external evidence that named the author as Luke for both writings.

One common error was the argument that the 'we' passages were in both Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, and cited this as evidence that the two writings had the same author.

- (b) Again this was generally well answered with most candidates aware of the 'we' passages and their significance. Some candidates did not develop their answers to fully explain but just gave a brief reference to the 'we' passages.
- (c) This was well answered with strong arguments being given for both titles and also for alternative titles, such as the Acts of the Holy Spirit. It was encouraging to see many candidates engage in some evaluation such that they produced a clearly reasoned conclusion.

## Question 2

(a) This question produced some good answers that showed detailed knowledge of the text. The stronger candidates went beyond just the text of Acts 2:42–47 and referred to difficulties such as persecutions and also the need for developing organisational structures such as deacons, elders and the seven.

(b) This was an area that candidates knew well and most who attempted this question gained high marks. The weakest aspect was addressing the issue of what the dispute was about. Many just gave a one line response saying it was about circumcision but not explaining further.

Some candidates confused the Council of Jerusalem with the Sanhedrin.

(c) Candidates seemed confident in answering this question. There were good examples from the text to support miracles producing followers. The alternative argument appealed to the preaching or to the work of the Holy Spirit. Again, the stronger candidate engaged in evaluation rather than just stating arguments for and against.

## Question 3

(a) This was a popular question with most candidates able to cover the details of the choosing of the Seven. A few candidates confused the choosing of the Seven with the choosing of Matthias. However, most candidates gained Level 3 or 4. The details on the how they were chosen was probably the weakest aspect with a significant number of candidates omitting the detail that the Seven were people full of the Holy spirit and that the apostles prayed and laid hands on the Seven.

(b) Most candidates were able to detail Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch but very little else. The full range of material was rarely covered so most candidates tended to gain only Level 2.

(c) This question clearly posed a difficulty for some candidates. Often they struggled to debate whether there were differences or not. Some made good arguments linking the work of Stephen and Philip to that of the apostles, but few drew attention to things such as that only the apostles baptised with the Spirit and had authority.

## Question 4

(a) Those candidates who identified the correct events tended to know the details and gained the top level for marks. Some confused the event with Paul's visit to other places during his first missionary journey. Whilst most recounted the details of events at Paphos few referred to preaching in the Jewish synagogues at Salamis.

(b) Most candidates struggled to answer this question. Many were not aware of what the strategy was and those who were aware of the strategy tended to give inadequate accounts/examples to illustrate it.

(c) The majority of candidates who answered this question were able to give examples to support their argument. However, a significant number of candidates ignored the reference in the question to Paul's first missionary journey and so used material from Paul's other journeys which could not therefore be credited. Although there is no negative marking, candidates penalise themselves by spending time on material that will not gain credit.

## Question 5

(a) This event was generally well known. However, many candidates did not read the question carefully enough and spent a considerable amount of time describing what happened when Paul and Silas were in the prison. This material could not be credited.

(b) Most candidates gained the full three marks when writing about Lydia but struggled more when writing about Timothy. Most knew he had been circumcised but not the reason why. Candidates also tended to confuse the background of his parents. Some candidates confused Timothy with Silas or Barnabas.



- (c) There was generally well answered with a number of good arguments being debated. There was good illustration from the text to support the arguments.

**Question 6**

- (a) Although the event was known, a significant number of candidates gave only brief accounts of the cause of the riot. Few referred to the discrediting of the temple of Artemis or of the charge of robbing her of her divine majesty.
- (b) Surprisingly this was generally poorly answered. Few candidates seemed to be aware of the events that caused the sorcerers to burn their scrolls.
- (c) Again, this produced a poor response. The difficulty for some candidates seemed to be in the understanding of the phrase 'natural explanations'. The stronger candidates were able to draw on the text to support their arguments.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

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