

MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2013 series

8041 DIVINITY

8041/02

Paper 2 (The Four Gospels), maximum raw mark 100

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge is publishing the mark schemes for the October/November 2013 series for most IGCSE, GCE Advanced Level and Advanced Subsidiary Level components and some Ordinary Level components.

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Candidates are expected to show ‘ability to organise and present information, ideas, descriptions, arguments clearly and logically’ and to write their answers ‘in continuous prose’. A good answer answers the question holistically; the interpretation and comparison of issues will be demonstrated in the course of explanation and analysis of the relevant material, and thus evidence of the fulfilment of the assessment objectives will be inextricably interwoven. Marks are always awarded for the two assessment objectives which, when combined, produce a mark which is appropriate for the overall grade descriptions.

NB. Any response which is appropriate (i.e. a response to a reasonable interpretation of the question) is assessed according to the extent to which it meets the syllabus requirements and fulfils the objectives, conforming to the mark band descriptions.

The Examiner’s task is to assess the ability of each answer according to the descriptions provided. The marks are an intermediate stage on the route to assessment of attainment, which is ultimately reported as a grade. The mark for an answer is a true reflection of the candidate’s level of attainment in the assessment objectives for the syllabus according to their weightings, bearing in mind the Syllabus Aims and what may reasonably be expected of an 18-year-old who has studied the syllabus for two years.

The descriptions are cumulative, i.e. a description at one band builds on or improves the description at lower bands. Not *all* the qualities listed in a band may be demonstrated in an answer for it to fall within that band (some of the qualities are alternatives and therefore mutually exclusive).

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ASSESSMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The examination will assess the candidate's ability:

- To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main approaches to the aspects of religion specified in their chosen area through the selection, explanation and interpretation of relevant material (60%).**

0	none evident
1–2	very limited/serious inaccuracies and/or relevance/completely unacceptable quality of language
3–4	some significant omissions/some knowledge but no attempt at explanation of interpretation/very poor quality of language
5	knowledge and understanding partial and insufficient/any explanation attempted betrays poor understanding/interpretation incorrect/definite evidence of a serious error which outweighs otherwise acceptable demonstration of knowledge and understanding/poor quality of language.
6	[E] (minimum acceptable for A level pass) some irrelevance but sufficient material present/quality of explanation basic/interpretation limited but attempted/significant error(s) of fact but otherwise promising/quality of language fair.
7–8	mostly accurate and relevant/evidence that knowledge and understanding are wider than merely basic/competent handling of material/reasonable quality of language
9–10	accurate, comprehensive, apposite, largely coherent/good quality of language
11–12	[A] selection of material is wide and detailed and is restricted to the relevant/explanation shows full understanding/interpretative skills well evidenced/excellent quality of language
13–15	sophisticated in explanation and interpretation of scholarship; outstandingly mature in approach.

[N.B. 'relevant material' includes both objective evidence (usually original texts/ writings by protagonists/contemporary observers, but could include archaeology, tradition etc.) and 'recent [19th and 20th C] mainstream academic study' (see NB to AO2).]

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2. To analyse and evaluate the issues that arise from a consideration of a mainstream academic study in their chosen area, using an appropriate quality of language (40%),

Evaluative ability will be assessed on the quality of the reasoning and evidence used to arrive at a position rather than the position itself. It is thus impracticable to include likely responses in this area in the outlines

0	none evident
1	only vestigial evidence/largely incoherent/completely unacceptable quality of language
2	very little evidence/serious misapprehensions and inaccuracies/poorly structured /very poor quality of language
3	very limited and largely unsuccessful/analysis very restricted/judgement not supported by evidence/poor quality of language
4	[E] (minimum accepts quality for A level pass) attempted, but limited or only partially successful/a few glimpses of genuine ability/ quality of language fair
5	some evidence of ability/reasonable attempt to analyse and evaluate/fairly well-structured/some skill at communication /reasonable quality of language
6	having identified them, analyses and evaluates the main relevant opinions competently/logically structured/good quality of language
7	[A] some well grounded insights and judgements/coherently and systematically constructed/excellent quality of language
8+	personal insights and independent thought/sophistication and elegance in expression, construction and quality of language

[NB 'mainstream academic study' is intended to exclude GCSE level textbooks and material that is not widely accepted in the academic community (e.g. *The Holy Blood* and *The Holy Grail*; anything to do with the Egyptian pyramids, Stonehenge, astrology etc. in a pseudo religion context; material such as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, *The Satanic Verses* etc. which is offensive and /or libellous)].

3. To organise and present information, ideas, descriptions and arguments clearly and logically, taking into account the use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

In essay answers, the organisation and presentation is inherent in the quality of the coherence and progression of the exposition; grammar, punctuation and spelling make a slightly less direct contribution to it but must be taken into account. Overall adjustment to the final mark for an essay [out of 25] is unlikely to be more than one mark in either direction, and is best carried out as part of the final judgement according to the overall descriptions. Examiners should refer to the Level exemplars of quality of language for SCAA.

The overall mark for a question (all are allotted 25 marks) reflects the descriptions below, which are cumulative, with due allowance being made for variation between the levels achieved in the two objectives, and reflecting their weightings:

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0	Answer absent/gibberish/completely irrelevant
1 – 4	Largely irrelevant/very short/in note form making very few significant points/completely unacceptable quality of language
5 – 7	Unfinished and without much potential/high level of inaccuracy outweighing accurate material/high level of irrelevance but makes some creditable points/in note form which might have been developed into an acceptable essay of moderate quality/very poor quality of language
8 – 9	Does not quite meet the standard required for an A level pass/too short/immature/limited knowledge/unable to create a coherent argument/poor quality of language
10–11	Grade E /minimum acceptable quality for A level pass/basic factual knowledge accurate and sufficient/largely relevant/analysis, critical ability, reasoning limited but occasionally attempted/has seen the main point of the question/a promising start but finished in note form/quality of language fair but limited
12–13	Accurate factual knowledge slightly wider than just basic/in general sticks to the point/fairly complete coverage of the expected material/competent handling of main technical vocabulary/some evidence of reading/glimpses of analytical ability/fairly well-structured/moderate quality of language
14–15	Good and accurate factual knowledge/coherently constructed/some telling points made/definite evidence of reading/displays analytical ability/includes all the expected main points/competent handling of technical vocabulary/shows some knowledge of critical scholarship/understands what the question is looking for/reasonable quality of language
16–17	Grade B /evidence of wide reading/quotes scholars' views fairly accurately/addresses the substance of the question confidently/is familiar with different schools of religious thought/good quality of language
18–19	Grade A /up-to-date, accurate and comprehensively demonstrated knowledge of reputable schools of scholarly and religious thought/coherently and systematically constructed/well-informed evaluative judgements/in complete control of the material/excellent quality of language
20+	Grade A(1)/can compare, contrast and evaluate the views of scholars and schools of religious thought/personal insights and independent thought evident/outstanding maturity of thought and approach [for an 18-year-old]/sophistication and elegance in expression, construction and quality of language

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Question 1 – Gobbets

Each gobbet is marked out of 6. An extra mark can be awarded at the end for the overall quality of the performance. Examiners are reminded that without this ‘extra mark’ this question is only being marked out of 24.

Half marks may be awarded for each part of this question, but the final total must be rounded up. Remember that in the marking of individual gobbets a $\frac{1}{2}$ mark represents a whole grade difference, i.e. $4 \times 2\frac{1}{2} = 10 = E$; $4 \times 3 = 12 = D$. If a candidate’s mark is rounded up, the additional mark for overall performance should *not* be awarded as well. If an examiner thinks it necessary both to round up the mark *and also* award the extra mark, this probably indicates that some of the individual gobbets are being under marked.

The points provided below are not exclusive.

- (a) **"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind; when it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into vessels but threw away the bad."** (Matthew 13:47–48)

Context: From the third section of teaching (in which Jesus is addressing the crowds from a boat); this is one of a number of parables on the theme of the kingdom of heaven.

Points:

- Only in Matthew, but comparisons could be made with the miracles in Luke 5:44^{ff} and/or John 21:4^{ff}.
- Each parable starts with a typically Matthean introductory formula.
- Reference to Matthew’s use of the kingdom ‘of heaven’ rather than ‘of God’.
- Comment possible on the use of fish and analogies concerning ‘fishing’ in much of Jesus’ ministry and teaching.
- ‘*fish of every kind*’ could refer forwards to *all nations* in 25:32 (it was believed that there were 153 different kinds of fish); alternatively, and more probably, it could refer to *the evil and the righteous* which links in with versed 49.
- Overall, the parable seems to refer to the time leading to the last judgment (another Matthean theme, both in the parables of chapter 13 and elsewhere). Thus,
- ‘*when it was full...*’ refers to the last judgment and the sorting of good from bad (cf verse 30 and 25:31–46).

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- (b) I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)**

Context: From the revelation to the disciples that Jesus was the Christ at Caesarea Philippi, otherwise known as the confession of Peter. Peter has declared Jesus to be 'the Christ' and Jesus has informed Peter that he is the rock upon whom he will build his church.

Points:

- The saying in the gobbet is only in Matthew, though the overall story of the confession of Peter is also found in Mark and Luke.
- Note that the kingdom here is pictured as a place to be entered as in 7:21.
- It seems to refer to the community of those who are waiting for the kingdom (as in 6:10), but the link with the Church in the previous verse (16:18) is the obvious one. Peter is being given authority to permit or refuse entrance.
- This authority seems also to be the power to make exceptions or forgive (cf 9:6).
- Candidates can be credited (1 mark) for putting these verses in the wider context of the Christian Church and the issue of Petrine authority.

- (c) Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Tal'itha cu'mi"; which means, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." And immediately the girl got up and walked (she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. (Mark 5:41–42)**

Context: From the raising of Jairus' daughter which itself is just after the healing of the woman with 'a flow of blood'.

Points:

- The story is also found in Luke more briefly and in Matthew, even more briefly.
- Mark's miracle, like some others in his gospel, seems to show Jesus acting more as a shamanistic wonder-worker than a divine one. (In the ancient world, wonder-workers often used special formulas.) Both Matthew and Luke omit the Aramaic, and, though they do include Jesus helping her by the hand, they leave out some of the Markan details.
- That said, though the Markan story bears the traits of others in the ancient world, Jesus is very much in full control of 'his power', and that power is a 'divine' one. Here, Jesus is shown raising a child who was considered to be dead. The only other comparison being the raising of Lazarus in John 11.
- Comment can be made upon Mark's use of Aramaic: also found elsewhere in his gospel.
- Comment also on the amazement of the crowds – typical of the way Mark is building Jesus up at this stage in his gospel.

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- (d) **Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.** (Mark 16:9)

Context: From the 'post-resurrection' section of the gospel: 16:9–20 is generally considered to be a second century appendix to the original gospel.

Points:

- Comment upon the problem of the ending of Mark's gospel should be credited: manuscript evidence, changes in vocabulary, etc.
- These verses on the appearance to Mary seem to reflect Luke 24 and Matt 28:9^{ff}, though possibly there could be influence from John 20:11^{ff}.
- Other areas for comment:
 - 'the first day of the week'
 - Mary Magdalene and 'the casting out of seven demons'
 - 'those that had been with him'

- (e) **...it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theoph'ilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.** (Luke 1:3–4)

Context: From the Lukan Prologue.

Points:

- Written in classical style, as a literary dedication (usually such dedications were linked to patronage, but there is no suggestion that this is the case here).
- Identity of Theophilus – Acts also dedicated to him – 'beloved of God' which could be a pseudonym or it could be a generic term. However, the title 'most excellent' (worth a comment in its own right) suggests a particular individual, a convert or sympathiser.
- Reference to what Luke means by 'the truth'; room for short discussion here on the difference between theological truth and what we might see as historical truth. But, is Luke implying that other writings (gospels) contains 'untruth'?
- What has Theophilus been informed of? Some room for comment here.
- Comment possible on what Luke means by 'having followed all things closely for some time past' – reference perhaps to Luke in Acts.

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- (f) **And they went on to another village. As they were going along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."** (Luke 9:57–58)

Context: From early in the Lukan section on the road to Jerusalem – the teaching section of his gospel. This saying occurs just after Jesus had rebuked some disciples for wanting to 'bid fire come down and consume' the inhospitable Samaritan villages they were passing through (the Samaritans had not welcomed Jesus).

Points:

- The saying is also found in Matthew but in a different context. Not in Mark.
- Identity of the 'man' in this saying; Matthew has him as a scribe, but this is unlikely in Luke's context.
- Comment upon the journey – they are heading towards Jerusalem.
- Comment on the village: is this another Samaritan village?
- Following the Samaritan rejection, Jesus is pointing out the commitment and dedication needed from his disciples – room for comment on this, and on...
- the Lukan view of possessions generally – other references can be used to show that for Luke anyway the gospel comes before family life. This is a radical message.

- (g) **Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathan'a-el said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."** (John 1:45–46)

Context: From the passages about the calling of the disciples, just after the calling and naming of Simon Peter, the calling of Philip.

Points:

- No parallel in synoptics.
- Identity of Philip (mentioned in all list of the 12 in synoptics but only John gives him a role, e.g. 6:5–7, 12:21–22, 14:8–9) and Nathanael (known only to John, has symbolic function here of 'Israel coming to God').
- Discussion concerning the difficulty of Philip's claim that *Moses in the law and the prophets wrote...* Did they write about the same figure?
- Nazareth mentioned for the first time here in the gospel.
- *...the son of Joseph* – the normal way of distinguishing someone from others of the same name) – implications of this: no virgin birth, Davidic line...
- Room for sensible comment (and speculation) on Nathaniel's disparagement of Nazareth.

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- (h) And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor, to be with you even, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

(John 14:16–17)

Context: Farewell discourse ... in discussion with the disciples following the 'last supper'

Points:

- There is a danger that this could become an essay on the Counsellor/ Paraclete; candidates cannot, of course, be penalised for writing a lot but it is possible to score highly with fairly brief and precise answers.
- Something on the Farewell Discourse can be relevant if it refers to the general theme of this verse.
- Jesus 'praying to the Father' – there are interesting questions that can be raised here.
- Counsellor/Paraclete ...identity and function worthy of discussion.
- The implication that Jesus has been the Counsellor/Paraclete, but is about to be replaced by 'another'.

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Essays: each marked out of 25 as per previously recorded instructions (see the pream mark scheme). Essays must deal with the question asked and some of the points outlined below be expected but they are not definitive or exclusive.

2 How far was Matthew's gospel intended to be a book of instruction for early Christians?

This question employs much of the same material giving plenty of scope for candidates to construct a detailed discussion of the didactic material in Matthew, but doesn't focus upon the messianic aspect. Good candidates will probably know of the work of Stendahl, Minear, and others on this theme, as well as being able to criticise and present alternative views. But, even without reference to specific scholarly views, it should still be possible to obtain a reasonable level so long as the didactic material is brought out in the essay. Candidates need not agree with the theory (*that Matthew's gospel was intended to be a book of instruction for early Christians*) and may present other theories but they must base their essay upon the question that is asked. Good essays should also make every attempt to answer the question '*to what extent...*' and not simply present a list of points. Among the points that could be raised and examined are:

- The arrangement of the gospel with its five 'sermons'...
- Some discussion of the major areas of content of these 'sermons', especially 4:23–7–28 and 18:1–19:2. There is a great deal of material that can be used here to illustrate an answer and this will probably be the main part of the essay.
- The possible link with the Mosaic tradition that occurs throughout.
- More concerned with early ecclesiastical matters than 'conversion' (comparison with the main recognised themes and intentions of the other gospels is useful here).
- Discussion of the 'setting' of the gospel, e.g. provenance, readership, etc.

3 'Matthew's presentation of the parables of Jesus is distinctive.' Discuss.

The Matthean parables are not often the subject of a question. It is possible that candidates will confuse Matthean parables with those of Mark and Luke. No credit can be given for parables that are not distinctively Matthean, except where they are used in order to compare with the Matthean. It is hoped that the question will encourage genuine discussion about *what is distinctive* rather than a straight reproduction of lists of the relevant parables. Matthean themes and characteristics should be brought out in the discussion. Examiners must allow for different interpretations of the Matthean parables.

- The parables relevant to the question are those found in 13:44, the Treasure; 13:45f, the Pearl; 13:47f, the Drag Net; 18:23–25, the Unmerciful Servant; 20:1–16, the Labourers in the Vineyard; 21:28–32, the Two Sons; 22:11–14, the Guest Without the Wedding Garment (appendix to the Great Supper shared with Luke); 25: 1–13, the Ten Virgins; 25:14–30, the Last Judgement.

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4 "The account of Jesus' life in Mark's gospel is dominated by the need to explain suffering and death." Discuss.

There may well be some prepared answers on suffering in Mark in which the statement is verified almost without question. However, it is hoped that some of the best answers will show knowledge of 'other' themes and make some comparison. (These 'other' themes may include the emphasis upon Jesus as a teacher and/or prophet, his human side together with the contrasting 'high' christology as 'Son of God', the prominence of faith, etc.) That said, top quality essays could certainly be written on the suffering theme in the Gospel. Essays should draw on material from throughout the Gospel, not just from the Passion Narrative. Some of the main points concerning the suffering theme include:

- Dominance of the Passion Narrative itself – i.e. the amount of space given to it.
- Importance of the Passion predictions; (note that the "suffering" Son of Man sayings in the synoptic gospels all emanate from the Markan source – they do not occur specifically in M, L and Q material).
- References to the suffering of the disciples.
- Even in the early ministry, Mark seems to be building the tension which is to lead to Jesus' eventual rejection, suffering and death – the 'delivering up' of John the baptist (1:14), the fate of John the baptist (6:14–29), the 'conflict stories' of chs. 2 and 3, Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (6:1–6), the misunderstanding of the disciples...
- The likely date and provenance of the gospel – i.e. in the Roman community, just post the Neronian persecutions.

5 Examine the view that Mark's gospel was written by someone who knew Peter.

This is likely to be a popular question. This question is asking something slightly different and more specific. Only limited credit can be given for candidates who use this essay as an opportunity to write out the 'Synoptic Problem'. Top answers should deal with the view stated in the title and make references to what should be quite familiar material:

- The Papias tradition and other Patristic evidence which points to Peter.
- The identity of John Mark (connection with Paul) and the evidence for his connection with Peter (I Peter 5:13).
- The passages in Mark which suggest that Peter might have given them to him, i.e. those which suggest a definite eye-witness (e.g. 7:34, 9:36) and those which seem to imply criticism of Peter (e.g. 8:27ff, 9:5–6, 10:28ff).

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6 To what extent does Luke's gospel provide distinctive teaching about the of God?

This question focuses upon familiar material but asks for a comparison with other gospels. Answers should make use of the Lukan parables and of the Lukan theme of 'universal salvation' in particular. Much of this will be relevant and will be given credit but it is hoped that the best responses will also refer to deeper questions of gospel eschatology. There is certainly room here for a fairly wide range of answers. Examiners should make sure that *only* Lukan material is used, except by way of comparison. As well as the universality of the kingdom, the specific Lukan point is that of the closeness or immediacy. Although the future element remains, there are many passages in Luke which refer to the kingdom 'having arrived', the miracles providing the demonstration of its power:

- The Magnificat, the Benedictus and the Nunc Dimittis in chapters 1 and 2.
- 7:22 to the disciples of John the Baptist.
- The Kingdom longed for by the prophets and kings (10:23), looked for by the crowds (11:29) was all present in the work of Jesus.
- Satan was falling like lightning (10:17).
- But the signs of the times were not being recognised (11:29–32, 12:54–56).

7 Examine Luke's portrayal of the different roles of women in his gospel.

It is hoped that the best responses will pass some comment upon attitudes towards women in the first century in addition to, or alongside, an examination of the main references:

- The part played by Mary.
- The prostitute (7:36–50).
- The woman with a spirit of infirmity (13:10–17).
- Martha and Mary (10:38–42).
- The widow of Nain (7:11–17).
- The cure of Mary Magdalene (8:2) and the women who provided for Jesus (8:1–3).
- The lament (27–31).

As these incidents and passages are examined, the best answers will make specific reference to the roles of women and their significance in the gospel account.

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8 Assess the various arguments for the authorship of John's gospel.

Examiners should expect good, solid answers in which the main arguments concerning authorship are genuinely 'examined and assessed', not just stated. The title allows scope for some discussion as to audience, provenance and date, but the main emphasis should be upon the identity of John himself. Some points:

- John 20: 30–31.
- The Beloved Disciple – specific arguments for and against John the son of Zebedee – alternative suggestions.
- Recognition in the early church – despite Irenaeus, there was no immediate or total acceptance of apostolic authorship – really only becoming recognised early in 3rd century; the problem of Papias' 'presbyter' John is an interesting addition.
- Discussion as to whether the gospel bears evidence of personal testimony, reminiscences, etc.
- The problem of language – Gnostic language? – high christology?
- The question of dating with awareness of theories which put John prior to the synoptics – there is quite a lot that can be said on this so long as the candidate uses the arguments to refer to the matter of 'apostolic authorship' (if John is dependent upon the synoptics, does that necessarily deny apostolic authorship?). Was John written to replace the synoptics?
- Possible audience – Diaspora Jewish Christians?

9 Discuss the view that John presents his readers with a more spiritual gospel in which the deeper meanings lie beneath the surface of the story told.

This question reflects a much argued point about the Fourth Gospel and should allow candidates to include a good variety of well-known material. There are obvious links here with the claim that, although John does not specifically mention the sacraments, the Gospel is itself to be understood in a sacramental way. Among the points that might be discussed are:

- The depth of teaching in John and how the lengthy discourses emanate out of an act (e.g. the signs).
- The specific discussions with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman – rebirth and living water.
- Changing water into wine.
- The washing of the disciples' feet.
- The feeding of the multitude with bread and fishes – the discourse on the Bread of Life.
- The allegory of the True Vine.
- The blood and water issuing from Jesus' side.
- The post-resurrection meal of bread and fish.

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10 Assess the view that it is impossible to understand the gospels without a knowledge of their Jewish context.

There is a large amount of material that can be used to show that it is indeed *not* possible. Answers that support the idea that 'it *is* possible...' may be more difficult to argue academically but candidates who make a thoughtful attempt to do this must be credited. There should be reference to the gospel texts throughout.

- Arguing that it is *not* possible, essays may refer to:
 - the need to understand what the Jews of the time understood by 'Messiah'
 - the need to know the Mosaic tradition
 - all the gospels (even Luke) are very dependent on the Jewish scriptures
 - Jesus and the disciples were Jews
 - Mark and Matthew in particular employ many Jewish terms, phrases and ideas
- Arguing that it *is* possible, essays may refer to:
 - the universality of the gospel message – the success of Christianity throughout history bears witness to this
 - Luke, in particular, is addressed to a Gentile
 - Christianity had generally been divorced from Judaism by the time the gospels were written
 - Jesus' message has a timeless quality – e.g. even if you know nothing about the relationship between Samaritans and Jews at the time of Jesus, you could still understand the basic message of the parable of the Good Samaritan (the same could be said to be true of most of the parables)

11 To what extent can it be shown that the narratives of the baptism and transfiguration of Jesus should be treated together as key events in the gospel story?

A fairly familiar theme, but this question has a twist: candidates are asked to show that the narratives should be treated together, or not, as well as demonstrating their importance to the gospels. A good textual knowledge is essential but the stories should not be retold without attempting to *demonstrate the importance* and, ideally, an effort to show their similarities and *probably* their connection. Marks should, therefore, not be divided specifically 'half and half'. Among the points that might be made are:

- The position of these narratives in the gospel story;
- The baptism could be seen as the 'call' of Jesus; transfiguration being a reaffirmation of the 'call' to the reader and a reassurance to the disciples in the light of the previous Caesarea Philippi incident;
- The Divine voice confirms the above two points – some discussion of the content is necessary;
- Discussion as to why Jesus went to be baptised and why he went up the mountain at the time of his transfiguration;
- Discussion concerning the significance of the Moses and Elijah figures in the transfiguration;
- Explanation of some of the Exodus symbolism in both narratives.

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12 Using examples, explain why scholars find Jesus' ethical teaching very difficult to interpret.

There is often a tendency for candidates to include almost anything within the scope of ethics. To an extent, a case for a wide inclusion can be made, but there should be an attempt to do so. A second danger lies in the temptation to preach; answers should be academic and scholarly. The best answers may include:

- The historical/textual reliability of this teaching – does some of it represent the needs of the evangelists? – the original context of the teaching has been lost – Aramaic to Greek – Gospels written 30–40 years later – textual variants, etc.
- Linked to the above... the historical-religious setting of the life of Jesus is far removed from today – beliefs about the Messiah – the political situation and political-religious hopes – the early Christian (and perhaps Jesus') belief in the imminence of the *parousia* – neo-Platonic values and world-view...
- The main areas of ethical discussion are: Non-violence, non-retaliation; renunciation of possessions, wealth, family; divorce, adultery, lust; altruism – 'good samaritanism' – humility. Questions: Did Jesus intend his teaching to be followed by everyone? Much of this teaching seems excessively hard. Are there any common, general themes? Is Jesus acting like an OT prophet?
- What is striking about Jesus' interpretation is (a) its inconsistency (he seems at times to be very strict and at times to be rather liberal); (b) its contrast with much contemporary Pharisaic *halakhah*; and (c) his concentration upon 'intention' and 'motive' – and, as such, his interpretation is centred upon spiritual values rather than upon 'outward observance of ritual'. Here, he is not dissimilar to the OT 8th century prophets of 'religion without content'. For Jesus, actions seemed to matter as much as belief, and intentions mattered as much as actions.

13 To what extent can it be argued that there is a literary relationship between the gospels?

This question offers candidates the chance to comment upon whether or not there is a literary relationship with John. Diagrams and line-drawings are acceptable in the answer, but must contain explanation. The question will probably bring forth a large number of tidy and well-prepared answers, but the better responses will attempt to assess the material presented. Answers should certainly be more than 'lists' of points (probably passable but only at a low level) and diagrams (only passable if there is enough accompanying prosaic explanation). Candidates should be expected to show that they know clearly what the 'literary relationship' is and, therefore, refer to what is commonly meant by 'the synoptic problem'. The best essays are likely to be detailed with a good depth and range of examples and discussion.

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14 Explain the differences between the ways the gospel writers treat the crucifixion and burial of Jesus.

Examiners should watch out for confusion between the gospels and a discussion of Resurrection material (not requested in the title). Most candidates will deal with each gospel in turn and say what happened. However, a good mark can only be obtained if there is a genuine attempt to *explain the differences* with an attempt to bring out the particular leanings of each gospel.

- Matthew and Mark are very similar in their accounts, although Matthew makes freer use of the title 'Son of God'. They both have the cry of dereliction and the centurion's confession (although this is more significant in Mark) but Matthew, in adding to the tearing of the curtain in the temple, is distinctive in his description of the supernatural events which accompany Jesus' death. Matthew also adds the discussion between the Pharisees and Pilate resulting in the guard at the tomb.
- Luke includes the dialogue with the criminals, replaces the cry of dereliction with something much more positive and changes the centurion's confession.
- John's account is distinct in many places (not least in the dating of the crucifixion): Jesus bears his own cross; there is further discussion between the Jews and Pilate over the title on the cross; there is the reference to Jesus' mother and the Beloved Disciple and different words again at his death. The piercing of Jesus' side is also only found in John. John does not emphasise the agony of the cross, but its glory ... the whole gospel has led up to this moment: Jesus is to be 'lifted up'. Nicodemus joins and helps Joseph at the tomb.