

# DIVINITY

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| <p><b>Paper 9011/12</b><br/><b>Prophets of the Old Testament</b></p> |
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## Key messages

There are two key messages this year. The first is that the **subject knowledge of many candidates is very detailed**. For many of the questions, answers displayed a detailed knowledge of the relevant texts of the Old Testament and showed a knowledge of the views of various scholars on the passages and themes set for study. In this respect, achievement has developed year on year.

Second, **time-management is an issue for many candidates**, in that answers to the first three questions attempted were often so detailed that not enough time was left to give full attention to a fourth question. Although writing detailed answers can be a good thing, where essays become over-lengthy, they can include material that is irrelevant and/or not thought through clearly.

## General comments

For **Question 10**, many candidates identified passages (particularly the ‘gobbets’) as having been the work of the editors/redactors of J, E, D and P sources; however, source theory was developed in connection with the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), whereas some candidates apply it to all or most of the prophetic books they refer to. Some candidates insisted (for example) that every use of the divine name Yahweh must refer to the J (Yahwistic) source, but this is not true. Most candidates could achieve higher levels by concentrating on the context and meaning of each passage.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### **Question 1 Discuss Moses’ achievements as a prophet.**

This was a very popular question, but it raises an issue of some importance, candidates need to address the question. Some saw the name ‘Moses’ and wrote everything they knew about him without addressing what he achieved as a prophet. Some of the best answers argued that Moses’ prophetic achievements centred around receiving the Law on Sinai then becoming the model for future prophets, particularly those who took their stand on Israel’s obedience to the Mosaic covenant. Some suggested that Moses’ achievements were in fact the views of later editors making exaggerated claims about him. A few suggested that the story of Moses is an anachronistic invention, and that Samuel was actually the first prophet, whose prime function was to anoint the first two kings of Israel, thus empowering future prophets to act as advisers to kings. Most discussed the importance of Moses’ call, his victorious conflict with the Pharaoh, his ability to work miracles, his leadership qualities. Discussion about the achievements of prophets other than Moses was not relevant to the question.

#### **Question 2 ‘The origins of Israelite prophecy are clear.’ Evaluate this claim.**

This was also a very popular question, and candidates used a number of different and relevant sources of information. For example, the general approach was first to explore the evidence in the Old Testament sources in support of the view that Samuel, or Moses, or Elijah clearly mark the origins of Israelite prophecy; and second to compare this with references to Egyptian, Phoenician and other external sources suggesting that Israel clearly ‘borrowed’ prophecy from older cultures to which it had access. The source material used was detailed and extensive, but many candidates stopped at detailing the evidence and sources, making little or no attempt to analyse them and to supply a reasoned conclusion answering the wording of the question.

**Question 3** 'Prophets were clever politicians.' Discuss.

Answers to this question often went hand-in-hand with answers to **Question 1** on Moses' achievements as a prophet. This was in part unfortunate in that some candidates used the same criteria to show that Moses was a clever politician as they had used to show Moses' achievements in **Question 1**, and in doing so, little attempt was made to show precisely how and why particular actions (for example Moses' call) were political in the first place. The best responses defined their terms first, for example in arguing that the prophet Nathan showed himself to be an able politician in his dealings with King David.

**Question 4** Examine the nature and role of prophetic ecstasy.

Most discussions started by defining prophetic ecstasy as abnormal behaviour showing different states of consciousness. Most referred to ecstatic behaviour shown by Elijah in a number of circumstances, for example in running at normally-impossible speed in front of Ahab's chariot. Most referred also to the 'self-induced' frenzy of the Baal prophets at Mount Carmel. The role of prophetic ecstasy was explained mainly as interpreting revelation from Yahweh or other gods. Most referred to the ecstatic behaviour of the 70 elders referred to in Numbers 11. The role of ecstasy was generally defined as enabling people to understand God's word, irrespective of which god was concerned, although some defined Baal-ecstasy as false and Yahweh-ecstasy as true. Most candidates made a good attempt to answer the question.

**Question 5** Discuss the importance of the prophetic call in the work of the prophets.

Answers to this varied significantly in quality. Weaker responses simply described the call narratives of Moses, Samuel, Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Isaiah with little or no discussion of their importance for the work of the prophets. Stronger responses tended to focus on Moses, Jeremiah and Isaiah, where there was much to say, particularly with the ambiguity in the call of Jeremiah, where he is called to 'destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant'. Similarly, the importance of Isaiah's call was seen in the prophet's involvement with the Assyrian crisis.

**Question 6** 'The life and teachings of Amos as a prophet were different from those of any other prophet.' Assess this view.

Many of the answers to this question were to some degree not relevant to the question, since a significant number of candidates wrote about Amos' concern for the social sins of the people, and these were sometimes given in great detail but without any reference to the question, namely: 'Were they different from those seen in other prophets?' Those who answered the question as it was set found much to write about, such as the nature of his call / his confrontation with Amaziah, priest of the Bethel sanctuary / the scale of his confrontation with authority generally / his lack of salvation oracles (the closing oracle in 9:11–15 being seen as the work of a later editor) / the fact that he did employ oracles of doom and salvation / his potential rejection of being a prophet or the son of a prophet.

**Question 7** Examine the main ideas in the Book of Hosea.

Answers to this question were generally coherent and diverse. Most focused on the material in the early chapters – Hosea's marriage to Gomer, Gomer's infidelity, Hosea's children, and the parallels with Israel's 'infidelity' by adopting Baal worship. The best answers tended to be those which touched also on issues from chapters 4–14, such as Yahweh's rejection of the Northern Kingdom, and the language of the Father-son relationship. Some made very good use of the theme of Yahweh's *chesed* ('steadfast love') as an overarching theme in the book, together with the salvation oracle in chapter 14.

**Question 8** 'The most important theme for the prophet Isaiah is God's holiness.' Discuss.

Very few candidates answered this question, so comment would be inappropriate.

**Question 9** Examine the part played by symbolic acts in Jeremiah's prophecies.

Again, few candidates answered this question, so comment would be inappropriate.

## Question 10

### (a) Numbers 11:14–16a

This was a popular choice. Most referred correctly to the context in the murmurs of complaint made by the people in the wilderness, and to Moses' corresponding anger that Yahweh had put this burden upon him. Some made a convincing case for Yahweh's anger, whereas others supported Moses' incredulity in being made to suffer the burden of unjustified complaints about food. Comment on the gathering of the 70 elders was sometimes omitted entirely, with some candidates limiting their answers to the phenomenon of prophetic ecstasy. Most of the comment was robust.

### (b) Deuteronomy 18:17–18

Comment on this was prolific, although in some cases the analysis had little to do with the context in the prohibition of/against superstition and magical practices. Most spent some time discussing the identity of the 'prophet like Moses'. Most concluded that this was Joshua, although some opted for Samuel or Elijah. The best answers tended to be those which referred to Moses' warnings about divinatory practices, soothsaying, augury, sorcery, necromancy and the like, because all such practices are an affront to Yahweh.

### (c) 1 Samuel 28:20–21

This was a popular choice, although a number of candidates chose to relate the story of Saul and the Witch of Endor in unnecessary detail. There was some confusion between the parts played by Samuel and Saul and their dealings with the Witch of Endor. Some knew a great deal about Saul's psychology and actions but were unclear about the identity, location and function of the witch in the story. Some answers to this section were superb in detail and analysis; others tended to be repetitious variations on the story.

### (d) 2 Samuel 7:16–17

Most candidates were aware of the general thrust of chapter 7 as a whole, commenting, for example, on the accompanying view that a Davidic 'house' could last for ever. Most were aware also that 'house' here refers to the possibility of an (endless) Davidic dynasty, although as a matter of fact the Davidic dynasty fell in 587. There was some comment on the dynamics of the conversation between David and Nathan. For example, some suggested that this was a political discussion in which Nathan wanted to unite his own ambitions with those of David.

### (e) 1 Kings 22:29–30

Some knew the background to this very well, commenting in detail on Ahab's wish to recapture Ramoth-gilead from Syria, and on the tension between Ahab's four-hundred court prophets and Zedekiah ben Chenaanah. More so than in previous papers, many candidates were aware of the sub-narrative concerning the 'lying spirit of prophecy' who stands in God's heavenly council and volunteers to mislead Ahab and bring about his death. The explanation of this appears to be that even false prophecy is controlled by God. Very few commented on the implications of this.

### (f) Amos 2:1–3

Most candidates did reasonably well with this extract, explaining the authentic oracular formula ('Thus says the Lord') and the stylistic formula ('For three transgressions and for four'). The transgressions of the kings of Judah and Israel come in parallel with those of Moab and Edom and indicate that the 'election' of God's chosen people has been revoked, and points to overwhelming punishment for a catalogue of religious and social sins. For example, the crime of Moab in burning the bones of the Edomite king to lime would result in a devouring fire overtaking Moab itself.

### (g) Hosea 1:3–5

This gobbet was not done well generally, primarily because some answers tended to generalise the text so that they did not clearly show a response to the passage set. The context is the introductory narrative of God's instructions to Hosea concerning his family life, and answers beginning with those instructions therefore tended to do well.

**(h) Isaiah 1:2–4**

Very few candidates answered this question, so detailed comment is inappropriate. It should be noted that comment on God as ‘the Holy One of Israel’ produced some well-thought-out ideas in connection with Isaiah’s call narrative in 6:1–13.

**(i) Isaiah 11:10–11**

As with **(h)** above, this gobbet was not a popular choice, although some referred to it competently in connection with Isaiah’s theme of the messianic king, referring, for example, to Isaiah 9:2–7; 11:1–16. Most identified the language as referring to the Davidic monarchy, relating to the accession of Hezekiah.

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| <p><b>Paper 9011/22</b><br/><b>The Four Gospels</b></p> |
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## General comments

This was a popular paper which allowed candidates to choose four questions out of fourteen and write essays which clearly reflected their level of understanding, their research, their level of scholarly reading and their individual access to resources within their own centre. Overall, the standard of marks for this paper was very good with many candidates scoring the higher end of the mark range.

## Key messages

To do well when answering these questions, candidates must stick closely to the content of the question and identify what the main thrust of the question is. A question will never be about merely retelling information; there will always be a need to either make an assessment, an analysis, an evaluation, a comparison, etc. Candidates need to identify this and then arrange their answer around this task, so the question is clearly addressed. While access to further reading material may vary according to different centres, it is necessary to show that candidates have a good grasp of any relevant scholarly trends and developments available to them and that they know how to use this information within their answers. Marks are awarded for what the candidate produces in their answer and the quality of their response.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

#### The Gobbets

As always, this was a popular question with approximately 75 per cent of candidates opting for it. Almost all those that did, answered the correct number of questions; a few attempted more than four. Most were reasonably well done, although some lacked contextual detail, i.e. the gobbet's chronology and context in a particular Gospel, and other features of the text such as place detail or its relation to other significant events. A number of responses confused the context of **(a)** and **(h)**.

- (a)** Context: Jesus had travelled by boat to his hometown. He had a paralytic brought to him on a mat and Jesus pronounced that his sins were forgiven, and the man was healed. Not all candidates recognised this was the healing of the paralytic, but did recognise a healing took place.
- (b)** Context: Jesus and his disciples were in the region of Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asks his disciples the question, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" This is part of the answer the disciples give before Jesus asks them who they think he is. It occurs before the Transfiguration story. This was generally correctly identified with plenty of comment surrounding Peter.
- (c)** Context: Jesus and his disciples had crossed the lake to the Gerasene region and met a demon-possessed man. He was an outcast, indicated by the fact that he was living among the tombs. The man comes to Jesus and Jesus seeks to exorcise the evil spirits by casting them out of the man. There was much good comment on this gobbet and it was correctly identified.
- (d)** Context: Jesus had been arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane and taken before the Sanhedrin. All Jesus' followers deserted him, but Peter followed at a distance. This was very well written about and good answers were given to this gobbet.

- (e) Context: Jesus is twelve years old and with his parents visiting Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. This incident comes after the birth narrative in Luke and is the only story concerning the boyhood of Jesus. Jesus disappears for three days and is found in the temple speaking with the teachers. This gobbet was correctly identified as part of Jesus' childhood except for a few who muddled it with later in his ministry.
- (f) Context: Jesus had been invited for a meal at Simon the Pharisee's house. While there, a sinful woman washed his feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. Jesus was challenged about this action and told the parable of the two debtors in response to the challenge. This was well done by most candidates.
- (g) Context: This was at the start of Jesus' ministry in John. Jesus had done signs including the changing of water into wine. He was in Jerusalem when Nicodemus came to verify who he was and his mission. It was correctly commented on by most candidates.
- (h) Context: Part of John's Farewell Discourse. Jesus has been speaking with the disciples and preparing them for what is to come. It is following Jesus' prediction of his death, when he tells the disciples they will leave him, but to take heart as he has overcome the world. Not all candidates identified this as part of the Farewell Discourse. There were some confused comments on this gobbet.

## Question 2

**Discuss the difference between the Pharisees' understanding of righteousness and that of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. (25)**

This was a popular question. Some did it very well, not only making good textual references to illustrate the differences in theology and approach between Jesus and the Pharisees, but also exploring the broader historical, political, and social context that may have influenced Matthew's portrayal of this conflicting approach.

## Question 3

**Examine the understanding of the kingdom of heaven in Matthew's Gospel. (25)**

This was a very popular question and was mostly well answered, with appropriate textual references. Responses referred to several relevant texts, including from the Sermon on the Mount. However, sometimes this was simply descriptive, with insufficient reference to how the themes were developed into an understanding of the kingdom of heaven. A few responses did this very well, however, and gave a detailed explanation of the nature of the kingdom, including its future and spiritual dimensions.

## Question 4

**'There are more miracles than messages in Mark's Gospel.' Discuss. (25)**

A popular question and reasonably well answered for the most part, with appropriate textual references. Some responses merely listed a series of miracles in illustration of the question and then commented that the teachings were also important in Mark. Better responses referred to the context and literary features of Mark, such as its immediacy and brevity and the desire to get across a message through action/miracle, rather than through detailed teaching. Some considered scholarly views of the intended readership of the Gospels to support this.

## Question 5

**'Mark's Gospel shows Jesus as a man of action.' Assess this claim. (25)**

The scope of this question allowed for much of the same material applied to **Question 4** to be utilised in this question as well, and some responses answered both **Question 4** and **Question 5** with varying degrees of success. Better responses were able to select and deploy textual examples of healing, exorcism and nature miracles, as well as other examples of action by Jesus, such as clearing out the Temple, as well as conveying the sense of limited time and urgency in Mark's Gospel as pointing to 'action'. Some responses referred to the theme of the Suffering Servant/Messiah as possible evidence of inaction.

### Question 6

**Examine what the parables in Luke teach about the nature of God. (25)**

This question, which was popular and mostly well answered, prompted many straightforward, thorough responses which made good use of textual examples to illustrate many aspects of God's nature – compassion for the poor and suffering, judgement, mercy and forgiveness, recovering the 'lost', uplifting the humble, etc..

### Question 7

**Rejection is the key theme in Luke's Gospel. Discuss. (25)**

Some responses were able to explore this theme in detail with appropriate textual evidence, citing rejection of Jesus in Nazareth, by religious authorities, in his trial and crucifixion, as well as examples of the rejection of others in society – poor, women, sick people – and successfully argued that it was an important theme in Luke. Many made reference to other Lukan themes, such as the preference for the poor, outcasts, and women, thus attempting to address the question of whether rejection was really *key* or merely one among a number of important themes.

### Question 8

**Consider how the encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus reflects themes which appear elsewhere in John's Gospel. (25)**

**Question 8** (and **Question 9**) were less popular, with few candidates attempting them. Responses tended either to be very good and able to draw out themes such as re-birth, water, holy spirit, light and darkness, etc., linking these themes of the encounter with Nicodemus to signs and teachings in John's Gospel quite effectively. Others could refer to the encounter itself, but not get much beyond that.

### Question 9

**Examine the role of John the Baptist in John's Gospel. (25)**

A slightly more popular question than **Question 8**, however, not generally very well done. Some conflation with the portrayal of John the Baptist in the Synoptic Gospels was evident in many responses. However, better responses were able explain the distinct features of the Johannine presentation of John – his role mentioned in the Prologue, the absence of familial connection, John's role as a witness to Jesus, his use of the title Lamb of God for Jesus, baptism in the Holy Spirit.

### Question 10

**Assess the importance of the Jewish authorities at the time of Jesus. (25)**

Some analysed the historical context, i.e. the status and role of the Pharisees, Sadducees, High Priest, the Sanhedrin, and the ruling Herods in Jewish culture and society in the Roman period. They were then able to build on this and point to the significance of some of the actions of these groups, from the opposition to Jesus by many of the Pharisees and the procurement of Jesus' death by the chief priests. Weaker responses were mostly confined to a generalised descriptive list of the deeds of 'the Jewish authorities' in the Gospels, with insufficient attempt to distinguish the groups or their specific actions.

### Question 11

**Compare the account of Jesus' trial in John's Gospel with those in the Synoptic Gospels. (25)**

Very few answered this question. One excellent response was seen which really knew the accounts in detail and was able to describe accurately differences and distinctive features of the Synoptic accounts in contrast with John. Others, however, answered the question either as a last resort, or attempted it before realising the potential difficulty of accurately separating and relating the information required. One or two were determined to give their pre-prepared answer to the Synoptic Problem.

### Question 12

**Discuss how Judas is portrayed in the gospels. (25)**

Responses approached this in several ways. Some cited instances of Judas' behaviour and his association with greed, as the keeper of the money, as well as other possible motives, such as jealousy and disappointment. Some focused on his state of mind and subsequent regret and suicide, while others reflected on how Judas' actions fulfil a purpose within the story of Jesus, that his betrayal is the mechanism by which God's will is achieved.

### Question 13

**Consider why Jesus was called 'the King of the Jews'. (25)**

There were many responses to this question. Some linked it to the background, aims of and intended readership of the authors. For example, many considered the Jewish cultural background references of Matthew, linking Jesus to Jewish history and King David and the fulfilment of prophecy. Some referred to the mocking way in which it was used to describe Jesus at the Crucifixion.

### Question 14

**Explain how Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration are significant in the gospels. (25)**

A number of candidates attempted this question. Those who did were generally able to handle it reasonably well, bringing out key themes of these events marking turning points in the Gospels, the emergence of Peter as leader as a key figure, and both his lack of understanding and his confession. Explanation was also given of the significance of the mention of Moses and Elijah in the Transfiguration.

### **Rubric Errors**

There were few rubric errors this year, but the main one was a misunderstanding when answering the Gobbet questions. Four passages need to be commented on and these four passages form ONE question. If a candidate chooses to answer the gobbets, then they must also select THREE other essay questions as well. This was not always the case.

Generally, most candidates timed their examination well and managed to answer four questions, but a minority of candidates misjudged their timings and did not answer enough questions.

# DIVINITY

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| <p><b>Paper 9011/23</b><br/><b>The Four Gospels</b></p> |
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## General comments

This was a popular paper which allowed candidates to choose four questions out of fourteen and write essays which clearly reflected their level of understanding, their research, their level of scholarly reading and their individual access to resources within their own centre. Overall, the standard of marks for this paper was satisfactory but the number of candidates taking this examination was lower than in previous years.

## Key messages

To do well when answering these questions, candidates must stick closely to the content of the question and identify what the main thrust of the question is. A question will never be about merely retelling information; there will always be a need to either make an assessment, an analysis, an evaluation, a comparison, etc. Candidates need to identify this and then arrange their answer around this task, so the question is clearly addressed. While access to further reading material may vary according to different centres, it is necessary to show that candidates have a good grasp of any relevant scholarly trends and developments available to them and that they know how to use this information within their answers. Marks are awarded for what the candidate produces in their answer and the quality of their response.

## Comments on specific questions

### Question 1

#### The Gobbets

As always, this was a popular question with most candidates opting for it. A few attempted more than four gobbets. Most were reasonably well done, although some lacked contextual detail, i.e. the gobbet's chronology and context in a particular Gospel, and other features of the text such as place detail or its relation to other significant events. A number of responses confused the context.

- (a) Context: This happened at the start of Jesus' ministry, following the temptations. It is part of the call of the first disciples. Jesus had just called Simon and Andrew to follow him as he was walking by the Sea of Galilee. It was popular and correctly identified.
- (b) Context: This comes after Jesus had taught a large crowd from a boat. It follows the teaching of the parable of the Sower. It comes in immediate response to the disciples' question asking why Jesus speaks to the people in parables. This question was not popular, and candidates found difficulty identifying the context correctly. A lot of material was available but little was given.
- (c) Context: Following the calming of the storm incident on the lake, Jesus and the disciples encounter a 'demon possessed' man in the Gerasene region. He has a conversation with the demons who refer to themselves as Legion. There were many good comments on this gobbet, and it was correctly identified.
- (d) Context: Following the burial of Jesus. The women visit the tomb of Jesus, and he is not there. The start of the resurrection account in Mark. This was well answered by those who chose this gobbet.
- (e) Context: Jesus visits the town of Nazareth where he was brought up and goes into the synagogue. He stood up and read from the scroll of Isaiah. This text proved inflammatory so that Jesus was

nearly stoned. This was not correctly identified by candidates, and some of the answers were muddled.

- (f) Context: Jesus is eating a meal at the house of a prominent Pharisee on the sabbath. He healed a man with dropsy and questioned the Pharisees and law experts present about the lawfulness of healing on the sabbath. Jesus went on to tell the parable of the great banquet to the guests present. This was not a popular question.
- (g) Context: Jesus was travelling through Samaria when he stopped at Jacob's Well. He met a Samaritan woman drawing water there. This verse comes after Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. Some good answers were given.
- (h) Context: The arrest of Jesus following the betrayal by Judas Iscariot. Simon Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant to defend Jesus. This was not a popular question.

#### Question 2

**'... store up for yourself treasure in heaven ... for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'** (Matthew 6:20a–21) **How far does Matthew's Gospel provide guidance for this command? (25)**

This was not a popular choice of questions. Few candidates chose this one and it was not developed to its full potential.

#### Question 3

**Discuss the date, authorship, context, and purpose of Matthew's Gospel. (25)**

Although the content of this question is straightforward, very few candidates chose to answer it which suggests there was not enough familiarity with the background to the origins of the gospels.

#### Question 4

**Examine Mark's use of sources in the writing of his gospel. (25)**

This is another question regarding the background to the gospels, but it was not selected as a question to answer. This is a familiar topic on this paper; therefore it was surprising that candidates did not choose it.

#### Question 5

**Examine how Mark's Gospel portrays Jesus as one who serves rather than one who rules. (25)**

This was not a popular question and few candidates answered it.

#### Question 6

**'There is more history than theology in Luke's Gospel.' Discuss. (25)**

Few candidates selected this question. It demands a good understanding of the purpose and writing of Luke.

#### Question 7

**'In Luke's Gospel Jesus' teachings are for everyone.' How far do you agree? (25)**

This is a question about the universal nature of the gospel. There was a lot of evidence in the material peculiar to Luke, and for those who answered this question it was mainly well done.

### Question 8

**'John's Gospel portrays women as active participants in the ministry of Jesus.' Evaluate this claim. (25)**

Several candidates selected this question and wrote about a number of stories relating to women, but answers lacked detail and were very general in approach rather than story specific.

### Question 9

**Consider the arguments for and against the theory that the author of the Gospel of John was an apostle. (25)**

This was not a popular question and very few candidates attempted it.

### Question 10

**Assess the role of John the Baptist in the gospel traditions. (25)**

This is a good question with a lot of material available. The better candidates handled the material well and identified its origins. Many candidates merely wrote everything they knew about John the Baptist without identifying its source.

### Question 11

**'The Jewish title 'Rabbi' adequately reflects the role of Jesus.' Discuss. (25)**

Very few candidates chose this question and those who did answered it briefly and without depth.

### Question 12

**Examine the significance of Peter, James and John being set apart from the other disciples. (25)**

This was a popular question and was well answered. Most candidates were well equipped to answer a question about the disciples but for some, the answers were very superficial and lacked detail.

### Question 13

**'The Roman authorities were solely responsible for the death of Jesus.' Discuss. (25)**

This question was not popular, and the answers given lacked detail and substance.

### Question 14

**'The mission of Jesus was to the Jewish people only.' In response to this, consider the teaching found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. (25)**

Generally, this was answered with a good choice of material and was well handled.

### **Rubric Errors**

There were several rubric errors this year, but the main one was a misunderstanding when answering the Gobbet questions. Four passages need to be commented on and these four passages form ONE question. If a candidate chooses to answer the gobbets, then they must also select THREE other essay questions as well. This was not always the case.

Candidates did not appear to time their examination well and did not manage to answer four questions in total. This needs careful practice as it is an important part of examination technique to be able to complete the paper in its entirety.

# DIVINITY

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| <p><b>Paper 9011/32</b><br/><b>The Apostolic Age</b></p> |
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## Key messages

Candidates should be aware that they do not need to write out the question. This refers particularly to those who attempted **Question 1**, as a number of candidates spent a significant amount of time copying out the gobbets in full.

## General comments

The general standard of responses was similar to that of previous series, with many candidates displaying a sound knowledge of the events and teachings of the Apostolic Age. Some candidates could have gained higher marks by focusing on critical analysis of the question set, as opposed to the narrative approach some candidates took. A small but significant number of rubric errors were encountered this series, in particular a number of candidates who attempted **Question 1** and answered all six gobbets rather than the four required. This would necessarily have impacted on the time they had available to attempt their other questions.

## Comments on specific questions

### *Section A*

#### **Question 1**

- (a) Candidates were able to identify that the text was referring to Jesus, and were able to draw out a number of nuanced points. Some of the better responses focused on the significance of the phrase 'first-born of all creation', and were able to bring in different scholarly views on whether the phrase is best interpreted as Jesus being the first amongst the created, and the pre-incarnate Trinitarian ideas associated with such, or if it should be read that Jesus is the primary heir of creation.
- (b) Candidates who attempted this gobbet seemed to enjoy exploring the debate around who or what the principalities and powers in question were. Some explored the concept of them being spiritual/ethereal opposition to Jesus, whereas others suggested it referred to the Sadducees or the Pharisees. The best responses compared those two ideas. Some candidates also explored the significance of the triumphal imagery in the gobbet.
- (c) Candidates engaged well with nature of the Laodicean letter, and were able to briefly explain different theories around the identity and significance of the Laodiceans. Better responses compared those theories, rather than presenting them in parallel.
- (d) Some candidates who attempted this gobbet struggled, as rather than engaging with the text, they wrote about angels in general, and in doing so struggled to make telling, creditworthy points. Other responses tended to focus on the idea that rather than angels, it was to Jesus that God subjected the world to come, and tied this idea into wider themes in Hebrews.
- (e) Most candidates who attempted this gobbet were able to contextually place it into the Epistle's discussion of Jesus as a new High Priest, and into the wider discussion of the superiority of Jesus to that which came before. Some drew out points related to Jesus being both the one offering the sacrifice and that being sacrificed.
- (f) Many candidates used this passage as an opportunity to discuss people that they knew had been mentioned amongst the cloud of witnesses, often to limited effect as some answers did little more



than list names. Other candidates focused on the call to perseverance, and suggested examples of how the cloud of witnesses had given examples of perseverance, and whether their examples should be seen as exemplars.

## Question 2

This was the most popular question. The majority of candidates were able to engage with the arguments around the dating of Colossians and discuss a range of potential dates, with the arguments for and against each position either put or discussed. Some of the better responses came to reasoned conclusions about which date they felt was more likely to be based on the evidence discussed, whereas others left the question open. Some responses were very heavily focused on addressing the issue of date, and gave only token coverage of the context and/or purpose of Colossians, whereas the best responses gave roughly equal weighting to discussing all three.

## Question 3

Most candidates who attempted this question handled the material very well, showing an awareness of the arguments around the significance of the discussion of angels, both in how it related to the broader discussion of Jesus and in their significance as divine messengers. The best responses focused on how angels are discussed in Hebrews, whereas some weaker responses referred to ideas about angels more generally, often critiquing ideas that were not in Hebrews and that seemed to have more to do with Milton or Dante than Hebrews.

## Question 4

Candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the teachings in Colossians, with a number of them being directly quoted and expanded upon. Candidates tended to show a slightly weaker understanding and handling of the teachings in Hebrews. The best responses demonstrated a clear understanding of the teachings on salvation in both books, and were able to make a number of insightful comparisons, such as how each letter's teachings appear to be targeted at their specific audiences. Weaker responses tended to simply present teachings from the two books without overtly drawing out clear comparisons between them. The best responses referenced and explored specific scholarly comparisons.

## Section B

### Question 5

Candidates tended to take one of two approaches in addressing this question, both of which were equally valid. The most popular approach was for candidates to examine the role played by some of the specific prayers in their specific contexts, such as in the raising of Dorcas from the dead. The less popular approach was to examine the significance of prayer in the Early Church in general, discussing specific themes that repeat, such as thankfulness. Neither approach tended to significantly outperform the other. Some weaker responses discussed prayer in general, rather than its significance in Acts and the Epistles.

### Question 6

Most candidates engaged with the authorship and date of James as interlinked questions, with each potential author necessitating particular dates. Some candidates considered them as two separate points for discussion, though they tended to be weaker and more formulaic responses. Candidates were able to discuss eloquently the relative merits of the claims of authorship of various Jameses, as well as some discussing the idea that the epistle is pseudepigraphic in nature. Almost all candidates were able to explain in detail the issues with asserting authorship by James, son of Zebedee.

### Question 7

Candidates were able to address the substance of the question. Some weaker responses focused too heavily on explaining what the Jerusalem Council was and not enough on its role in the development of the early church. Stronger responses were able to contrast the Council's relative role in the development of the early church without drifting away from the question. Some candidates discussed the idea of whether Acts 15 and Galatians 2 discuss two separate councils, rather than the usual idea that they are both referring to the same event. Some better responses discussed whether the decree rendered by James should be seen as a new teaching on the issue of gentile converts or a codification of views already held.

### Question 8

Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the role of Paul and Stephen in the spread of Christianity. Weaker responses tended to give a narrative account of Paul and Stephen's actions, while better responses tended towards analysing the importance of their actions. The best responses made clear comparisons between Stephen and Paul, whereas in weaker responses the comparison tended to be more implicit.

### Question 9

This was the least popular question. While only a small minority of candidates attempted it, those who did were well able to handle the material necessary to address the question. Most responses focused on the dual nature of the state during the time of Rome, that while being nominally a subject of the emperor, authority was delegated down to governors and ethnarchs and lesser functionaries. There was also considerable discussion of when the state is to be opposed or when it is submitted to, with reference to relevant teachings. Some candidates reached conclusions about whether the state helped or hindered the spread of the early church. These conclusions were often only tangentially related to the question or the material they had covered, seemingly giving a prepared conclusion to an anticipated question that did not in actuality occur.

### Question 10

A common error amongst many who attempted this question was that they confused the Agape (the love feast) with the general idea of agape (Christian love). This necessarily impacted the relevance of a significant proportion of their responses. For those who did not make this error, candidates were able to discuss the role of both acts as part of the worship of the early church, and often set both in the context of worship in the early church in general.

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| <p><b>Paper 9011/33</b><br/><b>The Apostolic Age</b></p> |
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## Key messages

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## General comments

The general standard of responses was similar to that of previous series, with many candidates displaying a sound knowledge of the events and teachings of the Apostolic Age. Some candidates could have gained higher marks by focusing on critical analysis of the question set, as opposed to the narrative approach some candidates took. A small but significant number of rubric errors were encountered this series, in particular a number of candidates who attempted **Question 1** and answered all six gobbets rather than the four required. This would necessarily have impacted on the time they had available to attempt their other questions.

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