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Paper 9011/01

Prophets of the Old Testament

General comments

Candidates were generally well prepared, with a good knowledge of appropriate texts and of different scholastic views about them. Time management was generally good, although some candidates either wrote far too much on the 'gobbets' in comparison with the essay questions, or they did not write enough. Most candidates were able to construct a case in answer to the questions attempted. The best candidates were able to interact with the questions, picking out different aspects of them for extended treatment. Weaker scripts sometimes had a sermon-like quality about them which was often very edifying, but, for the most part, irrelevant.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

'Moses was a miracle-worker and a leader, not a prophet.' Discuss.

This was a popular question in which most candidates concluded that Moses was miracle-worker, leader and prophet. Some of the more astute answers suggested that it all depends on how one defines a prophet. A few took the useful line that he was *more* than a prophet. Most at least acknowledged that Moses' candidature as a prophet could be questioned, either by comparison with his status as a leader, or (more rarely) because there was a strong case to be made for the later Israelite adoption of prophecy from the Canaanites. Some referred to Samuel's role in this respect. Most did an inventory of prophetic roles, such as intercessory functions, use of prophetic formulae, call, and so on, and weighed up the question from that point of view. There were very few weak answers, and a lot of really perceptive comment.

Question 2

Assess which was the most important of the many roles played by Samuel in ancient Israel.

As with Question 1, some of the more astute candidates asked, 'Important for whom?' The general response to that gambit was to suggest that Samuel was important to the people as the one who instituted the monarchy they desired. Others put the emphasis on Samuel's role in the transition from seership to prophecy. A few decided that the question was unanswerable, owing to the amount of editorial activity in the Samuel traditions. A fairly popular approach was to list the bulk of Samuel's achievements, and to suggest that all of his roles were important, or else that they were all subsumed under prophecy. Again, there were very few weak answers.

Question 3

Discuss the view that 'No other early prophet compares with Elijah in effectiveness, or in his readiness for complete involvement in Yahweh's cause'.

The best answers tended to be those which discussed Elijah's effectiveness in connection with that of other prophets. Elijah's virtues were identified as: his ability to work spectacular miracles (usually evidenced through the Carmel episode), his miraculous translation to heaven, his messianic importance in later tradition, and his drive to restore Yahwism. These were compared, for example, with Moses' formative role in prophecy and in leading the nation, and Samuel's influence over the monarchy. One of the cleverest approaches was to suggest that, like all the early prophets, Elijah was supremely effective *for his time*, since (like the others) he was selected because he had the virtues needed at the time. The weakest answers got little further than extended accounts of the contest on Mount Carmel.

Question 4

Assess critically the relationship between prophecy and cult in pre-exilic Israel.

Very few candidates attempted this question, so comment would not be appropriate.

Question 5

How and why did prophets use symbolic actions?

The most popular approach was to give a long list of symbolic acts, accompanied by an exhaustive explanation of their importance, in the general expectation that this would say something about how and why prophets used them. For the most part this worked well enough. Others concentrated more profitably on the *how* and *why* giving a variety of explanations of both. For the *how* element, candidates selected examples from Hosea and Jeremiah in particular, although the explanation of Hosea was often overworked. For the *why* element, reasons included: because God commanded them; they were visible as well as audible aspects of prophecy; they were emphatic and effective; they were traditional, and so on.

Question 6

'The Book of Amos is all about God's judgement. The Book of Hosea is all about God's love.' Discuss.

This was usually done well. No particular balance of material was specified in the question or expected in the answer, although in practice most candidates appeared more at home illustrating judgement in Hosea than love in Hosea; although that could have been because it was natural to deal with Amos first, so that Hosea was covered more perfunctorily. Most agreed with the statement in the question, in so far as most described the closing material in Amos as an editorial expansion, and thus as not detracting from the overall judgemental tone of the prophecy. The best answers debated the issue in more depth, looking, for example, at Amos' intercession as an appeal to God's love, and emphasising the correlative theme of punishment in Hosea. One candidate said that Amos describes God's love through judgement, whereas Hosea describes God's judgement through love.

Question 7

Assess Isaiah's use of the concepts of God's power and holiness.

This question did not receive the attention it has attracted in previous years. Most answers looked at power and holiness in connection with the historical events described in Isaiah: Yahweh displays ultimate power through ultimate kingship, and his holiness provides the moral background to the judgement that he is incomparable. Most candidates referred to the call narrative as an example of God's holiness, manifested in Isaiah's account of that vision, and of God's power, seen in the message to Isaiah personally.

Question 8

'Everything that Jeremiah said and did was intended to shock his hearers.' Discuss.

Some candidates over-emphasised the word *shock*, repeating it as a kind of self-fulfilling mantra. Quite a few candidates agreed with the statement unreservedly, basing their example on such episodes as the conflict with Hananiah, the withdrawal of Jeremiah from merrymaking, and his Temple Sermon. His symbolic actions were described graphically: the waistcloth, the potter and the pot, the yoke, etc., as were his conflicts with and comments about false prophets in general. Most referred to his apparently shocking activities during the siege of Jerusalem, through his appearing to advocate pro-Babylonian policies. The best essays examined a variety of evidence, including the nature of the confessional material, the fact that Jeremiah was operating under prophetic compulsion as opposed to personal volition, his comments on the new covenant, and so on. There was some good analysis here.

Question 9

'The pre-exilic writing prophets had the same role as the prophets who came before them. The only difference was that their sayings were written down.' Discuss.

This question has clearly received useful attention by teachers during recent years, in so far as the candidates who attempted it offered a wide range of viewpoints. Some took a thematic approach to illustrate common ground between the pre-exilic writing prophets and those who came before them, looking for example at: the common ability to work wonders; devotion to Yahweh's word; criticism of kings, priests and prophets; the absence (or presence) of ecstasy, and so on. One productive approach argued that the early prophets were formative in what they did and said, and that the pre-exilic writing prophets consolidated that earlier work.

Question 10

(NB Revised Standard Version only given below)

- (a) And the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you."

(Numbers 11:16)

The context of this passage was correctly identified by the vast majority of candidates as the narrative of choosing seventy elders to lighten Moses' burden of leadership. Some referred to the potentially anachronistic nature of the story, although most simply analysed it in terms of what the episode might be supposed to mean in terms of Moses' influence on prophecy, for example. Most answered in detail and scored high marks.

- (b) When you depart from me today you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, "The asses which you went to seek are found ..."

(1 Samuel 10:2a)

This was not a particularly popular extract, although it was generally answered competently by those who did attempt it. One or two referred to the possible location of Rachel's tomb. Most of the description and comment was reserved for the events leading up to Saul's selection as king, and to a lesser extent with the issue of the location of the lost asses.

- (c) Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" He said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

(1 Samuel 28:11)

This extract seemed to exercise a fascination for many candidates. The events surrounding it were described in meticulous detail. The background material was also well known, for example: the nature of the Philistine threat, and the discrepancy between Saul's attempt to remove necromancy and his attempt to make use of it as a response to his own distress. Saul received a lot of written chastisement for not being as bloodthirsty as Samuel wanted him to be, and on the whole, received little sympathy from candidates, in so far as most cast him (metaphorically) to the flames in favour of the superior merits of David.

- (d) But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling.'

(2 Samuel 7:4-6)

Weaker candidates got themselves tied up in theological knots as to who wanted to build the Temple, why this person wanted it built, the precise meaning of "moving about in a tent", and other such interesting issues. Some represented Yahweh as either demanding a new tent or a new temple. The word play on 'house' as 'palace', 'temple', 'dynasty', was largely ignored.

- (e) And all the prophets prophesied so, and said, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."
(1 Kings 22:12)

Of all the extracts, this attracted the most astute comment, although the simple fact that the lying spirit is commanded by Yahweh himself was almost universally ignored. The background in the Aramean wars was particularly well described, as was the interplay between Ahab and Jehoshaphat. There was much good work here.

- (f) Thus the Lord GOD showed me: behold, a basket of summer fruit. And he said, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A basket of summer fruit." Then the LORD said to me,
"The end has come upon my people Israel;
I will never again pass by them."
(Amos 8:1-2)

The focus of this extract is on the word-play between *kets* meaning 'summer fruit' and *kets* meaning 'end', the point being that the 'end' has come: doom is inevitable. To balance this, most candidates located the passage very firmly into its general context within the book, and some of the comment was very poetic.

- (g) "In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches,
and raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old;
that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations who are called by my name,"
says the LORD who does this.
(Amos 9:11-12)

Weaker candidates simply described the earthly paradise of the reconstructed Davidic kingdom. Most identified the important issue as the question of how far the Book of Amos in particular (and the *Book of the Twelve* in general) has undergone editorial revision to counterbalance the harshness of its message. Comment on Edom was, for the most part, conspicuous by its absence.

- (h) And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins." So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley.
(Hosea 3:1-2)

It was good to see that much comment centred on the identity of the woman - the issue being highlighted by the problematic nature of the word "again". Nearly all identified her as Gomer, and there was much useful comment on the nature of Hosea's supposed liaison with a cultic prostitute. Against expectation, candidates were well-versed in the nature of "cakes of raisins", and one or two candidates were even able to educate the examiners on the nature of the various weights and measures in vogue at the time. Most candidates did well on this extract.

- (i) The Egyptians are men, and not God;
and their horses are flesh, and not spirit.
When the LORD stretches out his hand,
the helper will stumble, and he who is helped will fall,
and they will all perish together.
(Isaiah 31:3)

Most of the comment looked at the issue of Yahweh's support for Judah in military terms, although few located any part of the context in the need to defend Jerusalem against Assyrian (rather than against Egyptian) power. Most made useful comparisons between Isaiah's imagery and the Exodus event. Some candidates referred back coherently to Isaiah's call, and to the assurances of Yahweh's ultimate power.

- (j) Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,
"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

(Jeremiah 1:4-5)

Comment centred around the general nature of Jeremiah's call experience, and on his election to be a prophet to the nations even before he was born. The very best responses looked at what it meant, in Jeremiah's case, to be appointed as "a prophet to the nations", referring, for example, to: his announcement of Yahweh's will for the foreign nations, as well as to Israel/Judah; Jeremiah's role in the conflict between the different national powers involved; Yahweh's control of human and national destiny, and so on. Some, with equal validity, put the emphasis on Jeremiah's protest that he was a youth, and did not know how to prophesy, together with Yahweh's reassurances.

- (k) The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: "Stand in the gate of the LORD'S house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you men of Judah who enter these gates to worship the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your doings, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.'"

(Jeremiah 7:1-4)

A few of the very weakest responses assumed that the repetition of the phrase, 'This is the temple of the LORD' was an example of Jeremiah making himself deeply unpopular with the atheistic masses by demanding their presence at church. The level of comment on this gobbet was not generally inspiring, although there were exceptions, particularly where candidates linked Jeremiah's invective to his call for moral change, which he outlines in verses 5-7. The subsequent reference to Shiloh was largely ignored, as was Jeremiah's arrest for daring to say the things he said.

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Paper 9011/02 The Four Gospels
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General comments

Once again **Question 1**, the gobbets, seemed extremely popular with a lot of candidates. The most popular choices were **(a)** **(b)** and **(c)**. These tended to be well answered even though they were challenging. Gobbet **(d)** saw a lot of candidates confusing the Resurrection story.

The overall performance of the candidates was satisfactory to good but not all centres had prepared the candidates to read the questions and think carefully about their significance. High scoring candidates made good use of scholarly reading.

The general length of essays was a lot shorter than usual with some candidates writing only one side of A4 for their answers. Generally candidates made good use of the time available. The shorter length of some essays did not appear to be due to lack of time. Several candidates made the rubric error of only answering four gobbets (**Question 1**) and not four full questions. Candidates are reminded of the need to read rubric instructions carefully.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a)** A popular choice which many candidates selected because they were familiar with the story, but some did not comment on significant points. Instead they used the opportunity to retell the temptations of Jesus.
- (b)** As above, this was a popular choice and often well done. Many candidates commented on the significance of Pilate washing his hands and successfully expanded on this.
- (c)** This gobbet was also popular but some candidates confused the relationship with Herodias' daughter and Herod. Some very good comments were made to set the gobbet in context and explain why the request was made for John's Head.
- (d)** A lot of candidates muddled this with other Resurrection accounts and mentioned two angels in the story. Some did comment on the possibility of this being the probable ending of Mark.
- (e)** Few candidates chose this gobbet but those who did tended to answer it very well with good comment and contextual points.
- (f)** Again few candidates answered this gobbet but those who did clearly knew the story well. They talked about the place of 'joy' in the Lukan themes and a lot was made of the place of Satan in the ministry of Jesus and his followers.
- (g)** For this gobbet good comment was made on the Trinity relationship, and good comment on the Father/Son relationship. Some candidates made a link with Jesus' baptism.
- (h)** There were some solid answers to the question, including good contextual comment and attempts to identify the 'other disciple'.

Question 2

Those who chose this question tended to do it justice and knew the links between Moses and Jesus and drew them out well, but it was not a popular choice. Some talked too much about who Moses was and not enough about the significance of his role in connection with Jesus. This question tended to be chosen by candidates from the same centre, suggesting that they had been well prepared for such a question.

Question 3

Many candidates latched on to the person of Peter and selected material from other Gospels as well as Matthew. Some candidates did not tackle the importance of the portrait of Peter but wrote all they knew about his character and stories surrounding him. Disappointingly few made comment on the significance of the Confession and Transfiguration. The length of this answers was often short except from centres which had clearly addressed Peter's significance.

Question 4

This was a very popular question which had some candidates producing excellent answers. Often material was drawn from their wider reading and there was a lot of coverage of *when* and *where* it was written, with accurate quotation from the scholars. Well prepared centres did this question very well indeed.

Question 5

A popular choice, but many candidates' answers dealt with the humanity of Jesus and not the significance of the title 'Son of Man'. Few made mention of the theological/christological ideas in the Markan themes or the different types of Son of Man sayings (present, future and suffering). An interesting comment by one or two candidates was Markan's use of this title to cover the lack of birth narratives and so show His human side.

Question 6

Universalism was picked up in the parables and links were made to other Lukan themes. Answers were sound but some candidates resorted to just re-telling the stories with no significant comment on their distinctive features.

Question 7

The temptation for many was to write out the main Lukan themes without an attempt to answer why. Those who clearly prepared for this question covered the main ideas of the dedication to Theophilus and the defending of Christianity to Rome competently. Many covered the Gentile question in the Early Church very well also.

Question 8

Most candidates who attempted this question knew the 'I Am' sayings but not all referred to the stories or occasions in which Jesus said them. Some made reference to Moses and the burning bush with God's declaration of 'I Am'. This question tended to lead to shorter answers. As usual, Johannine questions were less popular than those referring to the Synoptics but one or two made a good attempt at it, giving more of an overview with illustration and example. For those who merely listed the sayings and failed to comment, the highest grades could not be awarded.

Question 9

This question was not popular and poorly answered by those candidates who attempted it. It demanded detailed knowledge of John's presentation of the Passion of Jesus but some candidates merely wrote about Passion points from all gospels or other gospels which led to muddled and confused essays. The length of some answers was shorter than expected for AS/A Level candidates.

Question 10

A popular question bringing out some very knowledgable answers. Most candidates handled the stories separately but maintained a good balanced essay in the end. For those who had been well prepared, excellent answers were produced.

Question 11

Again a popular choice of question, with attempts to explain why Jesus came into conflict with the Pharisees. A lot of candidates spoke about the Pharisees in negative tones and did not consider Jesus' relationship with them which was not entirely hostile but He recognised their authority. This question produced a good length of essay mainly because of the candidates' ability to identify the areas of conflict and explain their significance.

Question 12

Not many candidates chose this question but those who did adequately talked about the occasions when Jesus urged his followers to give up all their possessions. There was a good knowledge of the relevant stories but the most popular were the Call of the Disciples and the Rich Young Ruler. No candidates covered the Sermon on the Mount in any detail. Relevant parables were mentioned. On the whole, this question was handled well.

Question 13

This was a very popular question with a lot of comment on the instances when women are mentioned in the Gospels. The best candidates made a genuine attempt to discuss and examine the contribution made by women to the life of Jesus. Mention was also made of the treatment of women in society at that time with good analysis. The question urged the candidates to come to their own conclusion and the better answers clearly included good discussion of the relevant material.

Question 14

An unpopular choice only attempted by a very few candidates. The question demands a balanced answer covering both theology and history but this was rarely produced. Responses should have included the purposes and situations of the authors as well as comment on Jesus as Christ and Saviour.

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Paper 9011/03
The Apostolic Age

General comments

There was a decline in the number of candidates taking the paper this year compared with 2005 which makes useful comment on the overall performance of candidates more difficult than usual. Nonetheless, there were some excellent answers to nearly all the questions in the paper and, at the other end of the scale, there were few very weak scripts this year.

In past years, attention has been drawn regularly to the problem of candidates writing long introductions to their answers, including the gobbets, giving detailed background information which is not strictly relevant to the actual question set. It seemed that this comment had had the desired effect for two or three years since there were no examples of this happening in the 2004 examination. This year, however, possibly because one of the set texts in **Section A** was 1 Corinthians, there were several examples of this happening. In one case a candidate repeated the same introduction to three of the gobbets from 1 Corinthians. While a small amount of information of this nature may be useful, candidates who write unnecessarily long introductions to each of their questions inevitably run short of time when answering their third and fourth questions. Candidates are advised to allocate an equal amount of time to each question and focus on the main point of each question in their first paragraph.

In the case of questions on 1 Corinthians there is often a tendency for candidates to write long introductions on the immorality which was rife at Corinth, and the activities of the priestesses of the temple of Aphrodite. Some material of this nature was relevant to **Question 2** in this paper, but such introductions often appeared when they were of no relevance to the question asked.

All candidates should be aware of the fundamental distinction New Testament scholars have drawn for a century or more between *didache* and *kerygma*. *Didache* is a Greek word meaning 'teaching', and is used to describe the doctrinal and ethical teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. Galatians 5:13-26 is an example of Paul's ethical teaching, while Galatians 3:6ff is an example of his doctrinal teaching on justification by faith as opposed to justification through the observance of the Law of Moses. It is impossible to make a rigid distinction between the two since they are often interwoven, with ethical teaching following as the logical consequence of certain doctrines.

Kerygma, on the other hand, means 'proclamation' and is used to refer to the preaching of Jesus and the Apostles, and also the content of the gospel message, the 'good news', they proclaimed. 1 Corinthians 1:17-2:5 and 1 Corinthians 15:1ff are examples of passages in which Paul writes of the content of the gospel he preached. They illustrate clearly the fact that to the early Christians 'teaching' (*didache*) and 'preaching' (*kerygma*) were quite distinct activities, teaching being directed to those who were already members of the church and preaching being directed to those outside the Church (whether Jew or Gentile) to lead them to faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Questions in this paper often reflect this distinction as did **Question 3** this year. Some candidates who were unaware of this distinction attempted this question, and, as a result, misunderstood it.

Candidates should also be made aware of the fact that in English translations of the New Testament the word 'preach' invariably has this narrower meaning than it has today, where, if a minister or clergyman 'preaches' a sermon, it may include either *didache* or *kerygma*, or both.

Question 1 was the most popular question in the paper followed closely by **Question 2**. In **Section B** **Question 5** was the most popular; followed closely by **Question 8(a)**. The least popular choices were **Questions 7** and **8(b)**. A higher proportion of candidates than usual answered three questions from **Section A** and only one from **Section B**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Up to six marks were awarded for each of the gobbets with one additional mark available for overall performance. In each case, correct identification of the context in 1 Corinthians or 1 Thessalonians secured a pass mark. This question was answered fairly well, most candidates showing knowledge of the context and the points of interest or difficulty requiring comment, except in the case of **1(b)** - see comments below.

N.B. RSV version only given.

Comment on points of interest or difficulty in *four* of the following, with brief reference to the general context:

- (a) What I mean is each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ".**

(1 Corinthians 1:12)

This was by far the most popular of the gobbets, being answered by almost all candidates who attempted **Question 1**. Candidates were expected to comment on the following: report of Chloe's people; factions and possible views and beliefs of different groups, including 'Christ' party; Apollos, c.f. 3:21-23 and references in Acts, e.g. 18:22-28; Cephas, Aramaic name of Peter, this reference being possible evidence for a visit of Peter to Corinth. Paul's answer 1:13ff.

- (b) Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?**

(1 Corinthians 3:16)

This was the least well answered of the gobbets, although it was second in popularity. The context was particularly important since here Paul uses the metaphor of the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' corporately of the church, c.f. 1 Corinthians 12:12ff, where he also uses the 'body' metaphor corporately of the Church. Unfortunately, the majority of candidates confused this verse with 6:19 where Paul uses the metaphor of the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' of the physical body of the individual Christian in a different context. Comment was expected on the following: Paul's teaching on the importance of the unity of the Church as the temple of the Holy Spirit, also of the dangers which threatened the unity of the Church at Corinth. Other possible points for comment: the judgement of God implied in v17; the Church as the (holy) people of God. Credit was given to candidates who commented that this metaphor may possibly be traced back to the teaching of Jesus, c.f. John 2:12 ff, especially verse 19.

Some credit was given to candidates who confused this verse with 6:19, but wrote sensibly about the meaning of this metaphor and Paul's use of it.

- (c) Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my workmanship in the Lord?**

(1 Corinthians 9:1)

A fairly popular gobblet and generally quite well answered. Points requiring comment or explanation: Paul's defence of his apostleship; the reasons why he had been attacked; 'Am I not free?'; 'apostle' - the qualifications required; his meeting with the 'risen Christ' on the Damascus road and the importance he attached to it, c.f. 15:8 and Galatians 1. His converts as 'the seal', i.e. the proof, of his apostleship.

- (d) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven.**

(1 Corinthians 15:47-48)

One of the least popular of the gobbets, but generally quite well answered. Context: Paul's teaching on the fundamental importance of the resurrection of Christ and of Christians, the nature of the resurrection body, etc. Further points for comment: Paul's first Adam/second (new) Adam typology, c.f. Romans 5:12-14, and reference to Genesis 2.7; Paul's understanding and exposition of the Christian hope; the reasons why he gave this teaching.

- (e) **For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent that I might know your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labour would be in vain.**
(1 Thessalonians 3:5)

The general context here was important i.e. 3:1-10. Paul's visit to Thessalonica and founding of a church there as recounted in Acts 17:1ff.; the circumstances alluded to in chapters 1 and 2, e.g. 'these trials'. 'Our' probably Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. Paul's concern for the newly founded church at Thessalonica and the opposition they had encountered, c.f. 1:6ff.; the reasons for his hasty departure, and the consequences; Paul also concerned about attacks on his authority 2:3ff.; 'the tempter'.

Few candidates were aware of the difficulty of reconciling what Paul writes here with Acts 18. Paul and Silvanus are prominent in the account in Acts, whereas there is no mention of Timothy actually having been at Thessalonica, although he is with them at Berea. Did Paul send Timothy because he was not known at Thessalonica, or because he had been in the background during Paul's ministry there? But N.B. Acts 18:5, Silvanus and Timothy arrive together from Macedonia

- (f) **Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophesying, but test everything; hold fast what is good, abstain from every form of evil.**
(1 Thessalonians 5:19-22)

The least popular of the gobbets. Part of a catechetical section of the letter in which Paul gives instruction to the new converts at Thessalonica. Points to be discussed: (i) was there a problem at Thessalonica similar to that Corinth, which leads Paul to restrain excessive interest in certain spiritual gifts, or is he seeking greater freedom for the exercise of these gifts, though desiring also their control? (ii) Spirit: the gifts of Spirit, especially prophecy. Some credit was given for comment on the role of the Spirit in the life of believers and of the Church, c.f. 1:4 and 4:8. (iii) why is/ was it necessary to test prophetic utterances?

[Note different interpretations of last part of gobblet in R.S.V. and N.I.V. R.S.V. treats 'hold fast what is good' as a general ethical injunction, whereas N.I.V., like the New English Bible, would seem to relate 'the good' to the content of prophecy. Credit was given for either interpretation.]

Question 2

How serious were the problems concerning Christian conduct which Paul had to deal with in the church at Corinth?

A very popular question with some very good answers. Candidates were expected to cover the following: 1:10ff. - dissensions and party spirit, and their consequences. 1:18ff. - folly of pursuing worldly wisdom, a prominent theme also in chapter 2. 5:1ff. - immorality within the church, including incest. 5:9ff. - relationships with those outside the church. 6:1ff. - lawsuits between members of the church. 6:9ff. - influence of pagan background. 7:1ff. - sexual relationships, marriage, celibacy, etc. 8:1ff. - food offered to idols, and worship of idols (10:14). 11:2ff. - dress of women in church, etc. 11:17ff. - party spirit, divisions and drunkenness(?) in celebration of the Eucharist. 12:1ff. - problems arising from the abuse of the gifts of the Spirit, especially in public worship.

Paul clearly saw several of these problems as a serious threat to the unity and fellowship of the church, and its corporate ministry and witness. Candidates were expected to show why, in Paul's view, they were such a threat to the church.

In view of the considerable amount of relevant material, candidates were not expected to cover all the points noted above for a high mark. Some candidates failed to distinguish between problems of conduct and problems of doctrine and belief, such as the doubts about the resurrection of Jesus, which are dealt with in ch.15.

Question 3

How far is it possible to reconstruct the main points of the gospel Paul preached from 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians?

The least popular question in **Section A**. See paragraphs four to six in the General Comments above for an explanation of the way in which some candidates misinterpreted this question.

Candidates were expected to discuss relevant passages such as 1 Corinthians 1:17 ff., 15:1ff., 1 Thessalonians 1:4-10. Brighter candidates were also expected to be able to point to aspects of the Pauline *kerygma* which are implicit in several other passages in both letters. Credit was given for brief reference to other aspects of the Pauline *kerygma* which are mentioned, or receive greater emphasis, in other epistles, also in Acts, e.g. the teaching on 'justification by faith' in Galatians and Romans, and on the supremacy of Christ in Colossians, Paul's sermon at Athens (Acts 17:16ff.), where candidates made the point that not all aspects of the gospel Paul preached are covered in 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians.

Question 4

Discuss the authorship, date and purpose of 1 Thessalonians.

Although this was not the most popular question in this section, it attracted as many candidates as the most popular question in **Section B**, and was generally answered fairly well.

Candidates were expected to discuss the following points:

- (i) Authorship: 1:1 - Paul, Silvanus and Timothy. 1:2 'We give thanks', etc. Paul is the real author, though he associates himself with his two colleagues, who had shared his missionary work in Thessalonica. 2:18 Paul refers to himself by name in first person, and refers to Timothy in the third person, 3:2,6. Was Silvanus Paul's amanuensis on this occasion, as he was Peter's many years later, (1 Peter 5:12), assuming same Silvanus? Pauline authorship never seriously doubted by great majority of scholars.
- (ii) Date: Written probably in Corinth, not long after Paul's hasty departure from Thessalonica, in 50 C.E. Acts 17:1-10, c.f. also Acts 18:5 and return of Silvanus and Timothy from Macedonia. One of Paul's earliest epistles – the earliest if North Galatian theory is correct, in which case Galatians would have been written in 52 C.E.
- (iii) Purpose: (a) To encourage the Thessalonians in their faith following opposition and persecution, c.f. 1:6ff., 2:14-16. (b) To answer criticisms of Paul's commitment to the church at Thessalonica following his hasty departure, 2:1-12, etc. (c) To give pastoral and ethical instruction concerning problems arising from their pagan environment and background, 3:1ff. (d) To give eschatological teaching concerning resurrection and the parousia, possibly as a result of the misunderstanding of the teaching he had originally given, 4:13 - 5:11. Hint of problem of people giving up work because of the imminence of the parousia 4:9, c.f. 2 Thessalonians. (e) 5:20-22 may indicate incipient problems in the church concerning the use of spiritual gifts, similar to those at Corinth, which Paul felt he had to deal with as a precautionary measure.

Section B

Question 5

How far do the contents of Acts reveal the distinctive interests and purpose of the author?

The most popular question in this section, which produced some good answers and very few poor ones.

Many different approaches were possible in answering this question. Some candidates discussed Luke's distinctive interests first, and then the purpose of Acts. Others worked their way through Acts, commenting on material which was relevant to each part of the question, recognising that his distinctive interests and purpose(s) are inevitably closely linked. The following is a summary of the main points candidates were expected to discuss, though obviously in view of the considerable amount of relevant material, they were not expected to cover all of them in detail for a high mark.

Distinctive interests: historical - events dated; geographical – Paul's missionary journeys and eventual arrival of gospel at Rome, (though outside syllabus); theological, e.g. emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit – Jewish, Gentile and Samaritan Pentecosts, etc., and importance of 1:8 in setting the agenda for the mission of the early church; universal scope of the gospel and the church, seen in the response of a wide variety of individuals and communities to Paul's missionary preaching; draws deliberate parallel between the ministries of Peter and Paul; women prominent in Acts, (though not to same extent as in Luke's gospel) – Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla, Philip's four prophetess daughters; apologetic interests, though probably best dealt with in next section.

Purpose: Acts 1:1-5 of obvious importance, and the relationship of Acts to Luke's gospel required discussion. Luke's purpose in writing Acts has been much debated by modern scholars, and the following is a summary of the main ideas which have been put forward: (a) to tell the story, 'to instruct (evangelise?) Theophilus'; (b) political apologetic directed to Romans - Christianity not dangerous; (c) theological explanation to Jews - Christianity an authentic continuation of Old Testament, though separate; (d) Tübingen theory, 'paper over cracks inside Christianity, heal old wounds'; (e) defence brief for Paul or to defend his memory; (f) to show fulfilment of Acts 1:8; (g) Acts of the Holy Spirit, etc. - what 'Jesus continued to do...'; (h) a theological document 'to show the triumph of Christianity in a hostile world', (R.R. Williams); (i) an attempt to demonstrate the catholicity and harmony of the Church; (j) to provide a sequel to, or continuation of, his gospel.

Candidates who presented a well argued case for any of the above, supported by relevant material drawn from Acts, gained a high mark. Credit was also given for material drawn from the later chapters of Acts, and from Luke's gospel, provided it was used in a manner relevant to the question, but no candidate was penalised for omitting such material.

Question 6

Compare Paul's attitude to the Law as described in Acts with his teaching about the Law in Galatians.

This question was only answered by a few candidates but it did produce some fairly good answers. It required exposition of Paul's teaching on the Law and discussion of his attitude to the Law as seen in Galatians 3 and 4, and comparison with relevant passages in Acts, e.g. 13:38ff., his (implied?) contribution to the debate at the Council of Jerusalem, and especially passages such as 16:3, which are difficult to reconcile with Paul's attitude to the Law in Galatians. Credit was given to candidates who referred to 21:20-27, though it is just outside the prescribed chapters of Acts. Credit was also given to candidates who discussed the problem of the reliability/historicity of Luke's accounts in Acts, and how it may have affected the portrait of Paul given in Acts.

In the past, when questions have been asked about 'the Law', there have been a number of weak candidates who have interpreted it as referring to the civic/secular authorities. Fortunately, this did not happen this year. Candidates who have studied the syllabus should know about the Law of Moses and its importance for Judaism.

Question 7

Assess the strength of the arguments against the Pauline authorship of Colossians.

Not enough candidates answered this question for any meaningful general comments to be made. Candidates were expected to cover the following ground:

As with Ephesians, Paul's authorship disputed, and for similar reasons: language and style differ from other accepted Pauline epistles, e.g. 33 *hapax legomena*, i.e. words only used once in the N.T., and 15 words appear elsewhere in N.T., but not in Paul. Piling up of synonyms e.g. 1:9, 1:22. Several important Pauline concepts missing, e.g. justification by faith, righteousness, salvation, revelation, law, etc. Cosmic theology, Christ head of the Church, but both may be found at least in embryonic form in accepted Pauline letters, e.g. Romans 8:18, 1 Corinthians 2:8, 8:6, 12:12, 14ff., Philippians. 2:10, Galatians 3:28. Nature of Colossian heresy: identification with Gnosticism once used to support post-Pauline date, but evidence now of existence of Gnostic and syncretistic groups, especially in Asia Minor, at time of Paul. Believed by some to be a reworking of genuine letter of Paul with interpolations, possibly by author of Ephesians. But also strong arguments for Pauline authorship: language and style, in spite of points noted, still shows Pauline characteristics, so also theological outlook. Link with Philemon, the Pauline authorship of which is seldom disputed - N.B. reference to Epaphras, Aristarchus, and Mark in both.

Question 8

Either

8(a) Compare the teaching on faith and works in Romans and James. What light, if any, does this comparison throw on the reasons why James was written?

One of the more popular questions in this Section, with some good answers and very few poor ones. Relevant material in the following passages required discussion and comparison: James chapters 1 and 2, Romans chapters 2–5, and later passages in Romans such as 6:12ff. and 12:1ff., which show Paul's understanding of the ethical implications of the Christian faith. Candidates were also expected to comment on the different meaning of 'faith' and 'works' in James and Paul. (N.B. weaker candidates often confuse the different use of the example of Abraham by Paul and James. Paul never refers to Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.)

Why was the Epistle of James written? Was he writing to correct Paul's teaching on justification by faith, or the misunderstanding of it by those with antinomian tendencies? A good answer to the second part of the question required some discussion of the likely date of both letters, though the epistle of James could have been written long before Romans or even Galatians - N.B. Galatians. 2:12. The question of the identity of the James who wrote the letter is also relevant.

Or

8(b) Compare the meaning and importance of faith in Hebrews and James.

Too few candidates answered this question for any meaningful general comments to be made. Candidates were expected to discuss and compare the following passages:

James 1:2-8, 1:22-2:26; Hebrews 3:1-4:2, 11:1-12:2. The question required the analysis of the meaning and importance of faith in James and Hebrews. Clearly they are close to each other in seeing faith as not only intellectual assent to the existence of God, c.f. James 2:19, but also as whole hearted confidence in God and an active obedience and commitment to the will of God, which in James's case involves the fulfilment of the 'royal law', 2:8. Some credit was given for reference to Paul's understanding of faith, and his teaching on it, provided the candidate handled the material in a manner which was relevant to this question, and also knew that it is most unlikely that Paul wrote Hebrews.

Question 9

How is the universal and cosmic significance of the work of Christ presented in the epistles studied for this paper?

Not many candidates attempted this question, but it did produce some reasonably good answers.

Candidates were expected to discuss the following passages:

- (i) Universal - Paul: Romans 1:16ff., 2:6-8, 3:19-26; Adam/New Adam typology in Romans and 1 Corinthians; Paul's use of the figure of Abraham, especially in Galatians; Colossians 1:26-28. Relevant material also in Hebrews, e.g. 2:9.
- (ii) Cosmic - Clearly there is some overlap between 'universal' and 'cosmic', and the passages mentioned above are relevant here also. Paul: Romans 8:18ff. especially important; Colossians 1 and 2 and Hebrews: 1 and 2. Credit was also given to candidates who showed how Hebrews presents the universal and cosmic significance of Christ's death against the background of the O.T. sacrificial system.

In view of the considerable amount of relevant material, candidates were not expected to cover in great detail all the passages listed above in order to gain a high mark.