

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
DIVINITY	2
GCE Advanced Level	2
Paper 9011/01 Prophets of the Old Testament	2
Paper 9011/02 The Four Gospels	5
Paper 9011/03 The Apostolic Age	7

FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

DIVINITY

GCE Advanced Level

Paper 9011/01
Prophets of the Old Testament

IMPORTANT NOTICE: It has been decided that Divinity AS and A Level will continue until at least 2007.

General comments

Many Centres were clearly very well prepared indeed for the examination. Depth of knowledge of the specification was very impressive, and the trend towards analysis and evaluation as opposed to simple knowledge of the text has continued. Most candidates answered four good questions, and time management was generally good; on the occasions when time management was weak, this was usually at the expense of the 'gobbet' questions. The best scripts were well structured, and did not feel forced to reach a conclusion supporting the wording of the question. The weakest scripts were often unelaborated statements of faith which pictured the Old Testament as little more than a Christian footnote.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

'Prophecy in ancient Israel was no different from prophecy in the surrounding nations.' Discuss.

This question arguably produced the best answers of all. Candidates were very well informed about the various theories concerning the origins of Israelite prophecy, and used the material well, generally to say that the evidence is so ambiguous that it is not possible to make an unequivocal case for similarity or difference.

Question 2

Discuss the importance of symbolic actions in conveying the prophet's message.

Weaker scripts tended to include some rather questionable definitions of symbolic acts. With ingenuity, it is possible to describe many of the prophetic words and deeds as symbolic, but some answers dispensed with justification of any kind, assuming that whatever they referred to was symbolic. A common (and rather more effective) approach was to give a detailed analysis of the symbolic acts of selected prophets – mainly Hosea and Jeremiah – although sometimes too much historical detail was given in the process. The best answers were those which concentrated on the word "importance" in the question.

Question 3

Examine critically the prophets' criticisms of the cult in Israel.

This was not a popular question. Weaker responses simply listed all the nasty things that the prophets said about the cult, whereas stronger responses at least acknowledged that many of the Old Testament prophets had obvious and indissoluble links with the cult. In this respect, some of the material on Samuel was used well, and some interesting observations were made about Amos' confrontation with Amaziah.

Question 4

'True prophets never told kings or queens what they wanted to hear.' Discuss this statement in connection with both Nathan and Elijah.

Some candidates ignored the request to discuss the statement in the question in connection with Nathan and Elijah, although nearly all the extraneous material was credited, since candidates made valid comparisons between the Nathan/Elijah material and the story in 1 Kings 22 in particular. Some essays simply told the stories about Naboth and David and Bathsheba, although most candidates made a reasonable job of the question. The general consensus of opinion was that true prophets simply relayed God's message, so whether or not kings and queens wanted to hear it made little difference.

Question 5

'Samuel was a prophet but more than a prophet.' Discuss.

This was a popular question, and was answered well by the majority of candidates. A few simply told the story of Samuel, usually giving undue prominence to his call story, and some put a disproportionate emphasis on the post-mortem meeting between Samuel and Saul, possibly because the story had been suggested to candidates' thoughts by gobbet **(b)**. Most candidates reviewed the evidence for Samuel's roles as seer, judge, priest, prophet, war leader, and so on, and most concluded that these roles in combination entitled Samuel to be judged as "more than a prophet". A few made a very intelligent case for the view that whatever Samuel did was by definition part of his role as a prophet. Some made interesting comparisons with the role of Moses in this respect.

Question 6

Compare and contrast the message of Amos with that of Hosea.

This was the most frequently answered question, and was done well by the majority, and superlatively well by many. Some inevitably gave a basic overview of the life of Amos, followed by an overview of the life of Hosea, trusting to the Examiner to see the comparisons and contrasts. The best answers were those which made the comparisons and the contrasts an integral and ongoing focus of the essay, including details such as: the possible personal backgrounds to each prophet; the difference of emphasis from Hosea as a northerner; the personal emphasis in Hosea; Amos' universalism; Amos' prophetic status; the irrevocable nature of the doom predicted in Amos by contrast with the emphasis on mercy and forgiveness in Hosea (both those points being commendably challenged by some); Amos' emphasis on social sins, and so on.

Question 7

Assess whether Jeremiah should be called a prophet of doom or a prophet of hope.

Some judged Jeremiah to be a prophet of doom, although the majority opinion was that he brought a message of doom tempered by hope. Many based the doom/hope balance on the wording of Jeremiah's call, and traced it through to his comments on good and bad figs. Most referred to his personal circumstances and to his doom-laden symbolic acts. Some referred to his mitigating words in the Temple sermon.

Frequent mention was made of the hopeful aspects of his land-purchase in Anathoth, and of his teaching about a new covenant. A few built a strong case that calling him a prophet of doom or a prophet of hope were both inaccurate descriptions, since Jeremiah was simply imparting a message: i.e. the message was a mixed one of both doom and hope, but such descriptors could be seen as irrelevant to the man himself.

Question 8

'Isaiah's call cannot be separated from his work and message.' Discuss.

It was gratifying to see that several candidates challenged this statement, whereas in previous years the trend has been to agree to it without reservation. A few candidates got no further than describing the call narrative itself, although the majority referred to the Jerusalem theology, and to the themes of the holiness, power and universal sovereignty of Yahweh. Those who challenged the statement did so by qualifying it: arguing that some of Isaiah's themes were obviously inseparable from his call, whereas some of his poetry bears the mark of extended introspection, and some of his actions are those of a clever politician dealing with the twists and turns of a complicated political situation.

Question 9

'The pre-exilic writing prophets intended to shock those who heard them.' Discuss.

Some candidates simply told stories about the prophets, neglecting to say why they might have been considered shocking to those who heard them. Most candidates referred to the shocking nature of events such as: Amos' announcement of complete and irrevocable doom on the elected nation; Amos' intemperate language in the royal shrine at Bethel; Hosea's relationship with a cultic prostitute; Isaiah walking naked and barefoot; Jeremiah's apparently traitorous actions in advocating submission to Babylonian power; and so on. A few candidates mentioned that not all prophetic words and deeds were as distinctive as these; and some (as in **Question 7**) pointed out that the shocking intention was that of God, not of the prophets.

Question 10

- (a) *And the LORD said to Moses, "Is the LORD's hand shortened? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not." So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and placed them round about the tent.*
(Num. 11:23-24)

Weaker responses just told the story of Moses' desire to lighten his burden of leadership. Most commented on the narrative about quails; on the metaphor of shortening the arm; on the tent of meeting; and on Eldad and Medad prophesying although they stayed in the camp. Only a few commented on ecstasy and Canaanite influence, and on the possibility that the story is an anachronistic vindication of later ecstatic prophecy.

- (b) *Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Saul answered, "I am in great distress; for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams ..."*
(1 Samuel 28:15a)

Most identified this as the narrative where Saul consults Samuel through the witch of Endor. Background knowledge of this episode was good – for example: the Philistine threat at Shunem; Saul's promise of immunity from prosecution despite his own removal of mediums and wizards from the land; and Samuel's confirmation that Yahweh has withdrawn support from Saul in favour of David. Interestingly, there was little comment on Samuel's appearance as a being from another world.

- (c) *"And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever". In accordance with all these words, and in accordance with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.*
(2 Samuel 7:16-17)

Most were able to identify the background to this in God's response to David's desire to build a Temple. Most commented also on the various meanings of the word "house", and on why David was not chosen to build the Temple. Nathan and David were sometimes conflated with Elijah and Saul (et al.), and there were several interesting variations on what Nathan did or did not say to David, although for the most part candidates got it right.

- (d) *And the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria ..."*
(1 Kings 19:15)

Nearly all were able to place this gobblet in the context of the background narrative of the revelation to Elijah on Horeb, Elijah's destruction of the Baal prophets, and Elijah's fear of Jezebel's counter-measures. Weaker responses tended simply to tell the story of the contest on Carmel, or to go into great detail about still, small voices.

- (e) *And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise, and eat bread, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."*
(1 Kings 21:7)

About half of the responses to this gobblet gave the background information about inheritance tradition, where by legal and religious custom, ancestral property must remain in the family for perpetuity. Jezebel appears as a woman who had no respect for law or custom in Israel, and who was also contemptuous of the authority of Ahab. Some candidates went in for character-assassination in a big way, dwelling with gory appreciation on the nature of Jezebel's 'reward'.

- (f) *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.*
(Amos 3:2)

Nearly all candidates identified this oracle correctly as part of Amos' announcement of doom to Israel for breaking the election promises: greater responsibility brings greater punishment, etc. Most candidates gave a summary of the nature of that punishment – God appearing as the avenging/roaring lion, and so on.

There was some intelligent comment on the extent of the doom forecast by Amos in relation to breaking the conditions of the Mosaic covenant.

- (g) *She shall pursue her lovers, but not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them. Then she shall say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me than than now.'*
(Hosea 2:7)

A few candidates answered gobbets (g) and (h) with a lot of general comment on Hosea that was not particularly relevant to either text. Hosea 2:7 is the prophet's statement that Israel will suffer the shame and punishment of a prostitute for abandoning Yahwism for worship of Baal. The best comment was on the nature of the symbolism in relation to Hosea's message as a whole.

- (h) *What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away.*
(Hosea 6:4)

Some knew that the general context of this passage in verses 4-6 is Yahweh's demand for love, not sacrifice. Most commented on Ephraim and Judah, not always accurately. Most commented on hesed-love, and most compared this graphically with the metaphor of love which evaporates like morning dew.

- (i) *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.*
(Isaiah 11:1)

Comment on this extract was sometimes rather generalised, although most identified it correctly as part of the prophecy about the ideal Davidic king. Few pointed out the relationship between Jesse and David. Some suggested that the background event may have been the accession of Hezekiah. One or two answers emphasised the Christian interpretation of the oracle to the exclusion of any more immediate context.

- (j) *And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests, and the people of the land. They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the LORD, to deliver you.*
(Jeremiah 1:18-19)

The weakest responses took this as an oracle addressed to Judah, although most identified it as part of Jeremiah's call narrative, and gave accurate and useful information of the surrounding text, particularly the material on the enemy from the north. Most commented on the implications for Jeremiah's life in relation to his opposition to the authorities in Judah.

- (k) *Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me: Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you and say, 'Buy my field which is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.'"*
(Jeremiah 32:6-7)

This was not a very popular gobbet, but was generally done well, being read against the background of the siege, in chapter 37. Most of the comment dealt with the possibility that Jeremiah's purchase reflected his confidence in the future of Judah, and with the nature of that purchase, therefore, as a symbolic act (although he questions Yahweh about the wisdom of it when the country is beset by invaders).

Paper 9011/02

The Four Gospels

IMPORTANT NOTICE: It has been decided that Divinity AS and A Level will continue until at least 2007.

General comments

The overall performance of the candidates this year was good. However, there did not seem to be many candidates scoring high marks. Quite a few failed to understand the requirement of four questions and just answered **Question 1**, the gobbets.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Quite a large number of candidates chose this question.

- (a) Very popular and done well.

- (b) Again a popular choice.
- (c) This was not usually answered well – many did not know the correct context.
- (d) A popular choice.
- (e) A popular choice and well answered.
- (f) Also popular and well answered.
- (g)(h) Popular choices.

Question 2

This was a popular choice, with a lot of recounting of the Sermon on the Mount; some did this well but a few failed to show how Matthew used this to present Jesus in his gospel.

Question 3

This question on Matthew as ‘the Gospel for the Church’ was not a popular choice. It was answered with a lot of misunderstanding.

Question 4

This question on the authorship of Mark’s gospel was a popular choice. It was reasonably well answered with a lot of good information about Peter.

Question 5

This was the most popular question, with some good answers. The best answers showed how these two incidents – Peter’s confession at Caesarea Philippi and Jesus’ transfiguration – were important for the whole of Mark’s gospel.

Question 6

This question was not always answered well. A lot of candidates muddled up their understanding of who was meant by the Gentiles – several included the Pharisees as Gentiles.

Question 7

This was a very popular choice and well done. There were a lot of good answers with detailed information about John the Baptist, not just the birth narratives.

Question 8

This question was not well answered – many candidates tended to ramble about the Johannine themes *without* emphasising *why* the gospel was written.

Question 9

Not many candidates chose this question on the teaching about the Spirit in John’s gospel. Those who did attempt it did not do it very well.

Question 10

This was a popular choice, but all the accounts of the Last Supper were lumped together as one, without making much distinct comment.

Question 11

There were some good answers to this question on miracles and ‘active parables’.

Question 12

This question on the teaching of Jesus on discipleship and commitment was a popular choice. It brought a variety of answers of varying standards.

Question 13

Very few candidates attempted this question on the historical accuracy of the resurrection accounts, and it was not answered well.

Question 14

Only a few candidates attempted this question on the politics of Palestine in the first century AD, but with quite good answers.

Paper 9011/03
The Apostolic Age

IMPORTANT NOTICE: It has been decided that Divinity AS and A Level will continue until at least 2007.

General comments

The entry for this paper increased this year. Overall, there was a significant improvement in the quality of the work submitted, with candidates from several Centres attaining good grades, which reflected credit on themselves and the excellent teaching they had received. These candidates showed a sound knowledge of the text of the New Testament books studied in this syllabus, as well as an understanding of the critical issues requiring discussion. At the other end of the scale, however, there were candidates, though fewer in number this year, who showed little knowledge of the text and no awareness of the points requiring discussion in the questions they were endeavouring to answer.

Previous reports had referred to the problem of many candidates writing long introductions to all their answers, including the gobbets, giving detailed background information – for example, the history of Corinth, and its economic, political and religious background. While a small amount of information of this nature may be useful, much of it is irrelevant to the actual question asked. Candidates who approach a question in this way invariably leave insufficient time for their third and fourth answers, thereby losing a significant number of marks. It was pleasing to note that at last this often repeated comment has had its desired effect, since there were no examples of this happening in this paper in the 2004 examination.

However, this year, there was a significant increase in the occurrence of another common error, which has been highlighted on numerous occasions in the past. This concerns the meaning and use of the term ‘Judaiser’. This term is *not* another name for a Jew, whether Christian or not. It is a term which is used to describe those Christians who believed that Gentiles should become Jews – i.e. be circumcised and undertake the full observance of the Jewish ritual and ceremonial law – in order to become full members of the Church. The term owes its origin to the verb used by Paul in Galatians 2:14 to describe the activities of those who were opposing the gospel of freedom from the Law, which he had preached in his missionary work among Gentiles.

Another common error was the use of the term ‘Jewish Church’ to describe the Jews, especially the Jewish leadership in Jerusalem, who did not join the Christian Church. If this term is used at all, it should only be used of the Church in its earliest days, before any Gentiles were accepted into its membership.

The right understanding of both these terms is essential for the understanding of the development of the early Church as described in Acts and the Pauline epistles. The failure to understand them, and to use them correctly, often leads to some very confused answers.

There were excellent answers to all the questions, including each of the gobbets. **Question 1** was by far the most popular, with about two-thirds of the candidates answering it, followed by **Question 2** (just under a half of candidates) and **Question 9** (just under a third of candidates). With the exception of **Question 7 (a)**, which was the least popular question in the paper, there were a similar number of answers to each of the remaining questions.

As has been stated regularly in recent reports, it cannot be emphasised too strongly that candidates should study the whole of the syllabus using reliable text books, commentaries and study guides, which cover the critical issues that arise in this field of study. Furthermore, candidates need to be aware that, if they do not cover the whole syllabus, they may well find themselves in difficulty answering questions in both sections of the paper. A good answer to questions set on the books prescribed for special study in **Section A** may also require some knowledge of the material studied in **Section B**.

In the case of the books prescribed for special study, candidates should be aware of any critical problems relating to their authorship, purpose, etc. Far too many candidates assumed that Paul wrote Hebrews, as stated in the Authorised (King James) Version of the Bible, and showed no knowledge of the solid arguments against Pauline authorship.

Comments on specific questions

In this part of the report, some detailed notes are given of the points which candidates were expected to cover in their answers, in the hope that this will be especially useful to teachers.

Section A

Question 1

N.B. RSV only given below.

- (a) *These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigour of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body, but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh.*
 (Colossians 2:23)

This was one of the most popular of the gobbets. Context very important; 'these' = 2:20-22. Candidates were expected to discuss the things Paul refers to in these verses in relation to the Colossian 'heresy'. Some knowledge of the context or Colossian heresy usually gained a pass mark. More able candidates discussed 'elemental spirits of the universe' and the regulations Paul refers to, which in conjunction with 2:16 etc. may indicate a Jewish origin of this false asceticism. There were some outstanding answers to this gobblet which covered all the points mentioned above.

- (b) *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas...and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.*
 (Colossians 4:10-11)

Context: Final chapter of letter, where Paul sends greetings and gives messages, injunctions, etc. Paul in prison, but where and why? Rome, Ephesus or Caesarea? (Although Colossians is regarded as one of the captivity epistles, some scholars, for example, Moule, believe that 'fellow prisoner' is probably a metaphor meaning that, like Paul, Aristarchus had been 'taken prisoner by' Jesus. This is a minority view. Candidates were not expected to be aware of this interpretation of 'prisoner' and none referred to it.) Aristarchus mentioned in Acts as Paul's companion at Ephesus. Mark generally presumed to be the John Mark of Acts 15:37-40, and author of the Gospel. If so, evidence that Paul and Mark had been reconciled after their differences in Acts 15. Jesus Justus – nothing further known about him. 'Of the circumcision' – RSV, i.e. Jews, c.f. NIV. 'Kingdom of God' – credit given for discussion of meaning, and Paul's occasional use of this term.

N.B. This passage is very interesting in that it provides evidence that Mark and Luke knew each other since they were both with Paul on this occasion. This is of some significance in relation to gospel criticism. Credit was given to candidates who mentioned this.

In view of the numerous points of interest, candidates were not expected to discuss in detail everything mentioned above for a high mark.

- (c) *And again, when he brings the first-born into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Of the angels he says, "Who makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire." But of the Son he says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever..."*
 (Hebrews 1:6-8a)

This was the second most popular of the gobbets, but the standard of answers was disappointing with few candidates gaining a high mark. Context: part of the author's argument on the supremacy of Christ in Heb. 1. His use of the Old Testament, Ps. 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14; here quoting Ps. 104:4 and Ps. 45:6-7. Few candidates were aware of the origin of these quotations. Candidates were expected to comment on the author's reasons for taking this line, i.e. to prove the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, in his efforts to persuade the Hebrews to stand firm and not revert to Judaism. Unfortunately not many candidates were aware of this. Other points for discussion: 'firstborn'; 'he says', i.e. God, and the implications of this for the author's understanding of the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament.

- (d) *He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever.* (Hebrews 7:3)

This was the most popular of the gobbets, and generally quite well answered, though several candidates thought that this verse referred to Jesus. 'He' = Melchizedek; most candidates were able to explain the author's use of the story in Genesis 14:17-20 of Melchizedek's blessing of Abraham, Abraham's payment of tithes to Melchizedek, etc., and his argument concerning the supremacy of the priesthood of Christ as compared with the Levitical priesthood. As in the case of the previous gobbet, a few more able candidates commented on the author's understanding and interpretation of the Old Testament implicit in this passage.

- (e) *For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.* (Hebrews 9:24)

This was a popular gobbet, and on the whole quite well answered.

Candidates were expected to comment on the importance of this part of Hebrews, and especially this verse, in the author's doctrine of atonement. Other points for comment: Old Testament background, and the atonement ritual of the Levitical priesthood; the contrast the author draws between the superiority of the heavenly sanctuary as opposed to the earthly, and possible influence of Philo and Neo-Platonist ideas, etc; the author's views on the high priesthood of Christ, and his reasons for emphasising it; 'for us'/'on our behalf', c.f. 1 (c) above.

- (f) *"...but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls.* (Hebrews 10:38-39)

Context: part of the passage leading up to the author's chapter on the importance of faith and the example of the Old Testament 'heroes of faith'. Points for comment: what he means by 'faith', and his reasons for taking this line, i.e. encouragement in the face of persecution and the danger of apostasy; v37 taken from Isaiah 6:20 and introduces free quotation from Habakkuk. 2:3-4 (LXX), interpreted as a prophecy of the parousia; quoted also by Paul in Romans 1:17 and Galatians 3:11, though there is little doubt that Paul is using the word faith in a somewhat difference sense from the author of Habakkuk, possibly also true of author of Hebrews – one of the key 'testimonia' of the early church. This passage indicates that like Paul the author had a doctrine of justification by faith, though his emphasis is more on 'enduring faith'.

Like (b), this was a 'meaty' gobbet, so candidates were not expected to discuss in detail everything mentioned above.

Question 2

How far can it be argued that the main purpose of Colossians was to counter heresy and false teaching in the church at Colosse?

This was by far the most popular of the essay questions in **Section A**. It produced several excellent answers and comparatively few poor ones.

Candidates were expected to cover the following ground: nature of Colossian heresy: identification with Gnosticism once used as evidence to support post Pauline date, but evidence now of existence of Gnostic and syncretistic groups, especially in Asia Minor, at time of Paul. Purpose of Colossians is obviously to combat serious error (see especially 2:8-23), but the contrast in tone with Galatians may indicate it had not yet seriously affected the church at Colosse, c.f. Morna Hooker. Probably heresy of professing Christians who worshipped angels, and followed certain dietary rules and ascetic practices, without any noticeable improvement in morals (2:23). Christ's supremacy and all inclusive position in God's plan of salvation denied or undermined. Incipient Gnosticism?

As well as drawing relevant material from 2:28-23 to support and illustrate their argument, stronger candidates were able to refer to other relevant material (by implication) such as 1:15ff.

How far? While it was clearly written as a warning against heresy, and this may have been its main purpose, Colossians also contains a considerable amount of ethical teaching, c.f. 3.1ff. (based on the primitive Christian catechism, c.f. Carrington, and Selwyn, and the appendix in his commentary on 1 Peter.)

Question 3

Assess the strength of the arguments for and against the Pauline authorship of Hebrews.

For: evidence supporting Pauline authorship almost wholly external. Clement c.180 C.E. reports tradition that Luke translated it from a letter by Paul written in Hebrew or Aramaic. P(apyrus)⁴⁶ includes it among Pauline epistles after Romans; in majority of early Greek manuscripts placed after 2 Thessalonians and before personal letters of Paul. While accepted in East, ascription to Paul resisted in West as late as C4, but others, for example, Pelagius, Jerome and Augustine treat it as Pauline.

Against: quoted by Clement of Rome c95 C.E., but gives no hint of authorship; usually invokes Paul's authority when quoting accepted Pauline letters. Internal evidence very convincing: different beginning from Paul's letters; 2:3 implies second generation Christian; Hebrews is anonymous in contrast to accepted Pauline letters; rhetorical style different from that of Paul – more Greek, more orderly argument, few digressions. Different theological outlook with emphasis on exaltation of Christ, rather than resurrection, and sanctification rather than redemption. No explicit mention of justification, (but implied, c.f. 10:39?), and other noted Pauline doctrines receive less emphasis, for example, Holy Spirit.

Different approach to Law, but most significant difference emphasis on High Priesthood of Christ. The author's familiarity with the LXX may indicate that he was a Hellenistic Jew.

This question is not primarily about the authorship of Hebrews, but credit was given to candidates who discussed the question of authorship in a manner relevant to the question; the same also applied to the dating of Hebrews. Both these points are covered below for the guidance of teachers, but they were not an integral part of the mark scheme.

Possible authors: Barnabas, (Tertullian et al.). A Levite and would be familiar with Temple ritual; Luke. Literary affinities with Luke/Acts; Apollos. Use of LXX, 'eloquent', Alexandrian background. Other suggestions include Clement, Silvanus, Philip, Priscilla and Aquila, but little positive evidence to support any of these.

Date: Before 95 C.E., since quoted by Clement of Rome. Author does not refer to destruction of Temple, which would have been a conclusive argument for the cessation of the pattern of worship and ritual of the Old Covenant. Seen by many scholars as the surest evidence of a date pre 70 C.E. Other 'primitive' elements, which also support earlier date, for example, primitive ecclesiastical situation, no church officials mentioned, other than leaders (13:7, 17). Evidence concerning date, therefore, does not rule out the possibility of Paul having been its author, but ch.13 thought by some to indicate Paul dead. Not impossible to find a context for this letter in Paul's ministry, but internal evidence makes it very difficult to ascribe the letter to Paul in spite of early tradition.

Question 4

Discuss the ways in which the Old Testament is used in Hebrews in its teaching about the person and work of Christ. Comment briefly on the images and ideas the author uses from other sources.

There were some excellent answers to this question.

1:1-2:9 particularly important for teaching on the person of Christ. Superiority of 'the Son' to angels, etc., supported by catena of Old Testament quotations, especially from Psalms. N.B. Son as creator in 1:1. Humanity of Jesus also supported by Old Testament quotations, for example, 2:10-18, and comparison/contrast with Old Testament figures like Moses in ch. 3.

Old Testament ideas and images which Hebrews uses to explain the work of Christ include Sabbath rest (4:1ff.), Old Testament sacrificial system, including blood, covenant, high priest (N.B. reference to Melchizedek 6:20ff.) earthly 'tabernacle' >< heavenly sanctuary, and rituals performed therein, etc., all used to expound the superiority and finality of the sacrifice of Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Very strong emphasis on the importance of the shedding of blood, purification, etc., c.f. 9:6-10:29.

Images and ideas from other sources. Some drawn from ordinary life, for example, 'builder of house' 3:3, captain/pioneer of salvation 2:10, will/testator 9:16ff. But the second part of the question also looked for comment on Alexandrine influences, especially the marked affinities in thought and language which can be traced between the author and Philo, Platonism, etc., e.g. 'ideal' sanctuary.

Section B

Question 5

Assess the value of Acts as a history of the early church.

While this was one of the most popular questions in **Section B**, it was not well answered, probably because it attracted a high proportion of candidates who did little more than summarise the contents of Acts. Candidates were expected to cover the following: the prologue to Acts and the author's claims; the only account we have of the early church and its growth; 'we' passages imply an eyewitness account of certain events; the difficulty in reconciling Acts with the Pauline epistles – Council of Jerusalem, apostolic decree not mentioned by Paul; portrait of Paul in Acts, and his attitude to the Law; conflict with historical evidence of Josephus, and other sources, for example, were Roman troops stationed at Caesarea? The possible motives for Luke's painting an idealised picture of the early church. Luke's historical accuracy has, however, been vindicated by archaeological discoveries in respect of points once doubted, c.f. Gallio, 'asiarchs', etc. – Ramsay, et al.

Some credit was given to candidates who used material from Luke's gospel to support their case, also to candidates who discussed whether it was in fact his purpose to write a history of the early church, provided they handled their material in a manner relevant to the question.

Full credit was given to a well-argued case for or against Luke's historical accuracy.

Question 6

'To Paul, Abraham was a figure of greater significance than Moses.' Discuss.

For Paul, Moses tends to represent the old covenant, whereas Abraham, as father of the faithful, represents the new. Candidates were expected to cover material in Romans 4, and Galatians 3 and 4. Romans 9:6ff. is also relevant. Paul does, however, link baptism into Moses with Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1ff.). Other references to Moses in the Pauline epistles in the syllabus are Romans 5:14, 9:15, 10:5, 19.

For a high mark, some discussion, or awareness on the part of the candidate, was expected of the reasons why Paul attached such importance to Abraham and used his example, i.e.: to counter false teaching from Judaisers (and others?) who opposed his teaching on justification by grace through faith; to show that this doctrine has its roots in the Old Testament prior to the giving of the Law and was the basis of God's relationship with Abraham, the founder of the Jewish nation; indirectly in Romans, but much more directly in Galatians, to defend himself against attacks on his authority as an apostle.

As always in this paper, weaker candidates confused Paul's use of the example of Abraham with that of James, for example, 2:21. Nowhere does Paul refer to Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac as proof of his faith.

Question 7

(a) *'In Adam', 'in Christ'. How, and why, does Paul use these phrases and ideas in his teaching about the person and work of Christ?*

There was a very wide range in the standard of answers to this question, which was the least popular in the paper.

How? Discussion and exposition of Romans 5.12ff. and 1 Corinthians 15.45ff. was expected. Idea of solidarity (Jewish) and two levels of existence, c.f. flesh and spirit. Phrase 'in Adam' may be constructed by backward analogy and reference to the early chapters of Genesis. 'In Christ' often 'shorthand' for what God has done/does through Christ, also what Christians do in and through Christ. Close spiritual relationship/union – Romans 8.1ff., 2 Corinthians 5.14ff., especially 17. A reference to the church – Col. 1.

Why? In 1 Corinthians, Paul emphasises the importance of the body of Christ, and being 'in Christ', in his efforts to counter disunity within the church. May also be a reason for his use of the same ideas in Romans, though the need for such an emphasis in this letter is less obvious. Paul had a profound awareness of the church as the New Israel and people of God – the 'saints', etc.

- (b) *'If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.'* (1 Corinthians 15:14) Why, according to Paul, is the resurrection central to Christian belief, and what led him to give this teaching?

While there were several excellent answers to this question, some weak candidates did little more than summarise the Christian belief in the resurrection of Christ and of Christians as expressed in the creeds, the Church's liturgy and hymns, with no reference to material in any of Paul's letters.

1 Corinthians 15, especially 1-22, was obviously a key passage for discussion, but there are also other passages which are relevant such as Romans 6:3ff., 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 and, (if by Paul), Colossians 3:1ff., where our future resurrection with Christ is anticipated in our rising with Christ in this life, as in Romans 6. More able candidates attempted a definition of 'resurrection', and were aware of the distinction between the Pauline (and Christian) doctrine of 'bodily' resurrection, and the Greek or Gnostic doctrine of the immortality of soul or spirit.

Central to Christian belief: the resurrection is God's vindication of Jesus and the demonstration that he is the Christ, the assurance of the forgiveness of sins (1 Corinthians 15:17), the proof that evil will never triumph over good (15:54ff.), and the demonstration of the truth and reality of the hope and promise of eternal life for the faithful, since Christ's resurrection is the first fruits of the harvest to come (15:20). If the resurrection of Jesus did not occur, then the Christian faith is empty and meaningless (15:13ff.).

'What led him to give this teaching': his encounter with the risen Christ at the time of his conversion. The difficulty many Greeks found, especially at Corinth and Athens, in believing in Paul's teaching on the resurrection of the body, in contrast to the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul. There may also have been some who claimed that the resurrection had already taken place. While Sadducees denied it, many Jews believed in the possibility of resurrection, but some found the resurrection of a crucified Messiah difficult to accept, c.f. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.

Question 8

What may be learnt from a study of the Epistle of James concerning the beliefs and circumstances of those to whom it was addressed?

While this question produced some excellent answers, weaker candidates tended to summarise the contents of James without focusing on the question.

The question required discussion and analysis of the contents of the epistle. 1:1 is obviously important, but are the twelve tribes in the Dispersion Jewish Christians, (or Jews?), or the Church as the New Israel in Dispersion? James' use of Old Testament figures such as Abraham, Rahab and Elijah is almost certainly evidence that the letter was addressed to Jews or Christian converts from Judaism.

The beliefs and circumstances of the addressees may be deduced from the teaching James gives. 1:2ff. would seem to indicate that the recipients were facing persecution of some kind. 2:18ff. raises the question whether James was written to counter Paul's teaching on justification, or to correct misunderstanding of it, and the tendency towards antinomianism which might have followed. 1:22ff. and chapter 2, especially 2:14ff., indicate that 'respect of persons' was a problem in (some of?) the churches to which the letter is addressed. A basic problem is whether James was giving ethical teaching and guidance on problems and issues Christians might have to face, or dealing with situations which he knew had arisen. 2:1ff. indicates the latter. The Christian life is a call to a life of holiness and of love, which expresses itself in good works and concern for one's neighbour, for example, 1:27, also to endure suffering, 1:12. The 'perfect law' gives freedom, 1:25. There is a strong emphasis in James on the importance of prayer, also the ministry of healing. Like Paul, James believes that Christians should live as those who are accountable to God as Judge, c.f. 5:9 and Romans 14:10. N.B also his teaching on the tongue (3:1ff.), oaths, wisdom (1:5 and 3:13ff.), riches (4:13 ff.), 'the coming of the Lord' (5:7).

It is possible to argue that the almost complete lack of reference in James to distinctively Christian beliefs, for example, the Holy Spirit, resurrection, etc., indicates that the recipients were Jews not Christians. On the other hand, there are striking parallels with the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, for example, 2:13 and Matthew 5:7, 3:12 and Matthew 7:16.

Question 9

Which features of the faith and life of the early church attracted new converts, and which features aroused opposition and hostility?

As with **Question 5**, weaker candidates tended to summarise the contents of Acts without focusing on the question.

In answering this question, it is obviously helpful to distinguish between Jews and Gentiles. Acts and the Epistles studied for this paper provide a considerable amount of relevant material, when studied against the background and the environment in which the early church embarked on its mission:

Jews: The attractiveness of the Christian faith to Jews has to be seen against the spiritual barrenness of the Judaism of that era, c.f. the attitude of the Qumran community and their comments on the contemporary Jewish religious establishment, for example, the political time-serving of the Sadducees who controlled the Temple, also to a large extent the economy; their subservience to Rome; also the legalism of the Pharisees, and the dangerous and violent nationalism of the Zealots. Christianity fulfilment of Judaism and Old Testament hopes – Jesus not only Messiah, but also the Deuteronomic prophet, the new Moses and the Servant in Isaiah. The teaching of Jesus, the evidence of his (Messianic) miracles and resurrection – the ‘power of God was with him’, so also with the Apostles after Pentecost, c.f. Acts 3:1ff., also the Samaritan and Gentile Pentecosts. The warmth of fellowship within the early church and the attraction of its worship; the concern for the poor and needy, c.f. Acts 6; also ministry of healing. The apostolic kerygma with its hope and promise of eternal life, also the note of warning of the impending judgement of God/return of Jesus. Christianity a faith that ‘worked’ and met human need.

On the other hand, conservative Jews found great difficulty in believing in a crucified Messiah, and also in accepting Gentiles into the membership of the church without circumcision and the observance of the Law; they also found it difficult to accept the low moral standards of Gentiles, the effects of their pagan background, etc. The church was seen as a threat not only by the religious establishment in Jerusalem; clashes with various vested interests.

Gentiles: Much of the above is also relevant. The decadence of contemporary Greek and Roman religion of that era, with its ‘incredible’ system of a multiplicity of gods and goddesses, some of them local; the barrenness of current philosophies and their inability to meet human need, also true of gnosticism and the mystery religions of Asia Minor with their often bizarre beliefs and practices. The attractiveness of the monotheism and high moral and ethical teaching of both Judaism and Christianity. N.B. examples such as the Centurion in Luke 7 and Cornelius in Acts. The universality of the Gospel with its message of God’s love for the individual as well as for the human race; the willingness of the church to welcome ‘sinners and outcasts’.

Hostility and opposition: clash with vested interests as at Philippi and Ephesus; church inevitably linked to some extent with Judaism; secrecy of Christian meetings, rituals, healing ministry, the incredible claims of Christians, c.f. Paul at Athens, aroused suspicion, hostility, c.f. also Acts 14:8 ff. In view of the wealth of relevant material, candidates were not expected to cover everything mentioned above for a high mark.