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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

Note: *This syllabus will be examined for the last time in 2005.*

Paper 9011/01

Paper 1 - Prophets of the Old Testament

General comments

In so far as there were very few scripts for this examination, it would not be appropriate to comment in detail on questions answered by one or two candidates. The following comments therefore apply to those questions which were answered by a significant number of candidates. In general, candidates had a good knowledge of the text, and the level of critical ability in some Centres was equally impressive. A few candidates spent too much time on the text extracts in **Question 10**, and gave comparatively short answers to their other essay questions.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

'Prophecy in Israel began with Samuel'. Discuss.

This was the most popular question, and produced some carefully considered answers. The general opinion was that although it was fairly obvious that the Old Testament makes prophetic claims for Moses and others before Samuel, Samuel can be credited with beginning a new *phase* in prophecy (rather than the prophetic movement itself). Some referred to the connection between Samuel and the arrival of the monarchy, and made the point that the latter time would have been significant, with an increased need for prophetic authority to support the king.

Question 3

Assess the importance of Elijah in the history of Old Testament prophecy.

Most candidates had plenty to say on this question, although the majority wrote about Elijah's importance, without referring to the last seven words of the question. Too much time was wasted detailing the story of Elijah's encounter with the Baal prophets on Carmel. Typical comments included: the story of Naboth's vineyard, and Elijah's dealings with that king; his ability to work miracles; his miraculous translation to heaven; his appearance in the transfiguration narrative in the New Testament. Some candidates made the point that Elijah's importance might be questionable in some ways – for example, with his sense of failure and isolation which might be interpreted as a weakness.

Question 4

'The story of Micaiah ben Imlah (1 Kings 22) shows that there was really no difference between true and false prophets in ancient Israel.' Discuss.

A surprising number of candidates thought that they knew the story, but clearly did not. Very few got the point that the editor of this narrative seems to be suggesting that the phenomenon of false prophecy is in fact controlled by Yahweh, and is therefore in some ways as 'true' as 'true' prophecy, so to speak. Some pointed out the parallel between the story of the lying spirit and the character of the Satan in Job 1-2, 42. The majority simply listed the differences between true and false prophets.

Section B

Question 6

Consider the view that the whole of Amos' message was about social justice.

Some candidates made an excellent job of this question, comparing the emphasis on social justice with the weight given by Amos to themes such as election and covenant, and God as the judge of the nations. The most frequent technique was to list every instance of social injustice referred to by Amos as proof of the view that the whole of his message was taken up with it. On the whole, this worked reasonably well.

Question 7

Discuss the main influences on Hosea which inspired his prophecies.

This question produced some first class answers, referring for example to: the historical circumstances behind Hosea's prophecy; his emphasis on covenant theology; the derivation of some of his language from his (possible) occupation as a baker; the emotional distress occasioned by the infidelity of Gomer, and so on. These themes were generally explored quite cleverly, and showed a degree of critical analysis which was very pleasing.

Section C

Question 10

- (a) *I am not able to carry all these people alone, the burden is too heavy for me. If thou wilt deal thus with me, kill me at once, if I find favour in thy sight, that I may not see my wretchedness.*
(Numbers 11:14-15).

This was generally done well, with good recollection of the narrative background and of the critical issues concerning the emergence of ecstatic prophecy. Weaker candidates tended simply to tell the story. Some went for lengthy comparisons with the wretchedness of Elijah.

- (b) *There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish... (etc.)* (1 Samuel 9:1-2)

Most of the comment here was on the person of Saul – his height, good looks, military prowess, etc. A few commented on the fact that this is a source which is favourable to the monarchy, and sees it as the institution likely to save Israel from the Philistines.

- (d) *And he arose, and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God ... (etc.)* (1 Kings 19:8-9)

This was the most popular 'gobbet', and candidates were very detailed in their description of how Elijah got into this situation, and the nature of the comfort given to him by God. Some mentioned the command to anoint Hazael. Many made comparison with the forty days and nights spent by Jesus in the desert.

- (f) *Thus says the LORD: "As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the people of Israel who dwell in Samaria be rescued, with the corner of a couch and part of a bed."* (Amos 3:12)

Most suggested that it was not clear whether Amos intended this to mean the complete destruction of Israel or leniency during judgement; and most decided that the reference was to complete destruction, since two legs and a piece of an ear are worthless.

General comments

The overall performance of the candidates was satisfactory to good with most candidates making an informed and structured answer to each question attempted. Some Centres showed evidence of satisfactory preparation of their candidates and it was clear that attempts had been made to address past weaknesses and/or comments made in the Examiner's Report.

The standard of writing was very good indeed with a clear understanding of theological and specialist terms and phrases.

It appears that, at first glance, candidates assumed that **Question 2** was easy, therefore making it very popular. However a lot of candidates concentrated on the themes found in the Birth Narratives only and failed to make the link with the rest of the Gospel. **Questions 1 to 14** were all of the usual standard of difficulty which led to a balanced Paper in general.

Practically all candidates used their time to its full advantage. A couple of candidates did not understand the rubric and failed to answer four questions. One candidate only answered the gobbet question, possibly thinking this was four questions instead of four parts to the question.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Comment on points of interest or difficulty in four of the following passages (wherever possible answers should refer to the context of the passage but should not retell the story from which the passage is taken):

The Gobbets: Fewer candidates opted for this question this year. However, some Centres had clearly concentrated on preparing for this type of question and their candidates *all* tended to choose it. The standard of answers varied: many candidates tended to give a mere commentary surrounding the Gobbet rather than concentrating on the points of interest.

Question 1 (b) was the most popular gobbet and relevant comments were made.

- (a) This was popular. Most made very good reference to the role of John the Baptist and the need for Jesus to be baptised by him. A few realised it was only found in Matthew and a few made worthwhile comment on the meaning of 'righteousness'.
- (b) This was the most popular gobbet. All were correct in the context of this saying – some made reference to the role of baptism and all commented on the universality of the baptism and mission. One or two candidates confused this saying with the sending out of the twelve. A very few made comment on the Trinitarian formula, which was overlooked by several.
- (c) This was popular. Nearly all were correct on the context. No one picked up on the harshness of this saying in Mark, which was softened by Matthew and Luke. A few commented on the significance of Mary, which a lot of candidates overlooked. Little comment was made about the siblings of Jesus. This gobbet was poorly dealt with by some who just retold the story of rejection at Nazareth.
- (d) This was also popular. A lot was made of the disagreement between the Pharisees and Jesus which most candidates were knowledgeable about.
- (e) This was also popular. Most recognised the Lukan interest in women and the outcast and commented on the theme of Forgiveness. Only a few made comment on the significance of dining with Simon the Pharisee.

- (f) This gobbet was not as popular as the others were. No one commented on this being a saying from 'Q' Source – most concentrated on the need for more disciples to go as labourers. All made comment on the Idea of Mission.
- (g) This was also a less popular gobbet. For those who attempted this, the answers and comments made were very good. A lot of candidates made reference to it being Johanine only, and a lot of comment on the practices and rituals related to the Feast of Tabernacles. Similarly, a lot of comment was made on the symbolism of 'living water'.
- (h) This was very popular. All recognised it as belonging to the farewell discourse and commented on the Trinity and the significance of 'Father' and Counsellor. Most commented on 'forever'. All recognised this as belonging to John's Gospel only.

Question 2

To what extent do the Birth Narratives in Matthew (chapters 1–2) provide an introduction to the theology of the Gospel?

This was a very popular choice. Most candidates knew and recognised the themes found in Matthew's Birth Narratives – prophesy fulfillment; the genealogy; conflict with the authorities; the miraculous element of Jesus' life and ministry. However, candidates often did not balance their comments about the Birth stories with their comments on the continuation of these themes in the rest of the Gospels. Those candidates who did manage this balanced answer gained high marks and gave expert answers.

Question 3

Discuss the importance of the Kingdom in Matthew's gospel.

This was also very popular. The weakness of many answers was concentrating too much (and, in some cases, solely) on the Parable of the Sower. Some good candidates made reference to the importance of Kingdom in Matthew and went on to discuss the Kingdom present and future giving plenty of examples/references drawn from the Gospel.

Question 4

Examine and explain the use of miracles in the Gospel of Mark.

This was very popular. There was a lot of discussion of the 'Messianic Secret' and in some cases this was the main thrust of the essays. Good candidates referred to the human/divine elements of the Markan Jesus and that the miracles are used for teaching and illustrative purposes by the author – 'acted out parables'.

Question 5

Assess the role of the disciples in Mark's gospel.

This was popular. There was a lot of comment on the 'inner circle' disciples and how Jesus was misunderstood on occasions. Good candidates referred to the specific roles of Peter and Judas and showed how the disciples were far from perfect characters but that their importance was within the Markan message as a whole.

Question 6

Discuss the authorship and purpose(s) of Luke's gospel.

This question was also popular. The majority of essays dealt with the reasons for Luke writing his Gospel and his themes. Some attempted to discuss 'who was Luke?' The usual theories were given, such as Luke as the 'physician' writing the 'truth'. The dedication to Theophilus was discussed in the usual manner and the link between Luke and the Acts of the Apostles made.

Question 7

Luke's account of the death and resurrection of Jesus is different from the accounts in Matthew and Mark. Discuss the significance of these differences.

This was not as popular as the other questions but some good essays were produced by candidates who were familiar with the differences in the death and resurrection accounts and could discuss the significance of these. The main differences mentioned and commented on were:

- the trial scenes
- the introduction of Herod
- the penitent thief
- no charge of blasphemy made
- the words on the cross.

Candidates who did not know the relevant texts produced muddled answers lacking in detail.

Question 8

Explain the use and importance of the "I am" sayings in John's gospel.

Overall, this unpopular question brought a reasonable standard of essay with many commenting on the different 'I am' sayings. However, candidates who merely listed points relating to each saying failed to achieve high marks. Good candidates gave an overview with specific points being brought out.

Question 9

Discuss the attitude to Judaism in the Gospel of John.

This was not very popular either. A few candidates attempted this question, but their comments concentrated mainly on the role of Nicodemus and failed to note other key points: the theme of Jesus as the fulfilment of Judaism; the relationship with John the Baptist; the Samaritan Woman; Jesus as the replacement of the Jewish festivals; the Cleansing of the Temple and later Passion references.

Question 10

Examine and explain the teaching in the gospels about ethics.

Most candidates attempting this question gave good answers with a lot of discussion of the Sermon on the Mount and the importance of right behaviour and actions. The traditions of the Pharisees and Jesus' interpretation of the Torah are of significance and were discussed in detail by many.

Question 11

Show why scholars believe there to be a literary relationship between the first three gospels. How convincing are their arguments?

This was quite a popular question. This question brought the usual comments and analysis of the Synoptic Problem in a tidy and well prepared fashion. The best candidates attempted to assess the material offered in the light of the question asked. A clear knowledge of the 'literary relationship' between the gospels was expected.

Question 12

Explain the use and importance of the parables in the teaching of Jesus.

This was very popular, with a lot of material used in the answers. A few candidates merely narrated the parables with little comment on their significance. However, most showed a wide knowledge of the parables and produced a discussion as to why Jesus used parables as a method of teaching, referring to contrasts between the uses of parables by the different evangelists.

Question 13

Using examples from the gospels, discuss whether Jesus saw himself as the Jewish messiah.

Most answers assumed that Jesus did not see himself as Messiah and talked about how the title was misunderstood. Good candidates talked about what was meant by 'Messiah' at the time, its background and expectation. A good essay also included:- the temptations, the nature of Messiahship (Suffering Servant and Son of Man), the use of miracles, the Kingdom, defeat of Satan, the confession at Caesarea Philippi, baptism and transfiguration, and trial scenes.

Question 14

To what extent can the gospels be used as reliable historical sources for life and events in Palestine in the first century AD\CE?

This was not very popular. Most candidates highlighted the differences between the gospel accounts and stressed the influence of individual evangelists on the presentation of material. Several concentrated on the purpose of Luke and discussed the issue of reliability.

Paper 9011/03

Paper 3 - The Apostolic Age

General comments

Owing to the very small number of candidates entered for this Paper, it is difficult to write a report that gives an overall picture of candidates' work and highlights points which need the attention of Teachers. In spite of the small entry, some candidates produced work of a very high quality, which reflected credit on themselves and the excellence of the teaching they had received. While these candidates showed a sound knowledge of the text of the New Testament books studied in this syllabus, and an understanding of the critical issues requiring discussion, at the other end of the scale there were candidates who showed little knowledge of the text, and no awareness of the points requiring discussion in the questions they were endeavouring to answer.

More candidates than usual lost marks this year by not answering the question. This happened especially with **Questions 2, 3 and 10**. (See below.)

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**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This was one of the most popular questions in the Paper, and was generally quite well answered. In most cases, correct identification of the context in 1 Corinthians or 1 Thessalonians secured a pass mark.

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

(N.B. Only New International Version given in this report.)

- (a) *Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Corinthians 1:22-23)*

Context: important, i.e. 1:17ff.

Points for comment: Jews – signs/stumbling block; Greeks - wisdom/folly; ‘we preach Christ crucified’. For a high mark candidates were expected to explain why, according to Paul, to preach ‘Christ crucified’ is a stumbling block, etc., i.e. the contradiction of a crucified Messiah, c.f. Deut. 21:23/Galatians 3:13, and the difficulty many Greeks found with the concept of ‘resurrection’, e.g. Acts 17:31. More able candidates were also aware that in Paul’s thought the crucified Christ is inseparable from the risen Christ who has been vindicated by God.

- (b) *Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival (1 Corinthians 5:7-8a)*

Context: 5:1ff and judgement to be passed on offender.

Points for comment: significance of leaven/yeast; paschal lamb/passover; link with eucharist; Paul’s continued emphasis on the Christian life as a call to individual and corporate holiness, c.f. the church and the individual as the temple of the Holy Spirit, 3:16-7 and 6:19-20.

- (c) *For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. (1 Corinthians 11:29)*

N.B. RSV and NIV follow different manuscript traditions, i.e. RSV ‘the body’, NIV ‘the Lord’s body’.

Context: (general) divisions/disorder at the Eucharist described in 11:17ff.; earliest tradition in New Testament concerning Last Supper and institution of the Eucharist; (particular context) verse 28 – ‘Let a man examine himself and so eat of bread and drink of the cup. For...’

Points for comment: ‘discerning/recognising the body’. What does this mean? Possible interpretations – fails to distinguish the bread and wine from ordinary food; fails to distinguish the Lord’s body in the bread which he eats; fails to perceive and give due weight to the church, assembled at the Supper as the body of Christ. (Barrett); judgment.

- (d) *The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:47-48)*

Context: Paul’s discussion of the resurrection and the ‘resurrection body’ in 1 Corinthians 15.

Points for comment: Adam/Second (new) Adam typology, and reference to Gen. 2.7; ‘those who are of heaven’, i.e. those who have the Holy Spirit, c.f. 15:45-46; Paul’s understanding and exposition of the Christian hope; the reasons why he gave this teaching. Same typology used in Romans 5:12ff.

- (e) *For they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead – Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10)*

Context: part of Paul’s long introduction to 1 Thessalonians in which he thanks God for their enduring faith in the face of opposition. Paul’s letter is in part an apology for his failure to visit them. They = ‘believers in Macedonia and Achaia’ (1:8). (Very few candidates recognised this reference.)

Points for comment: idols/living and true God – converts from pagan background; Paul’s eschatology and expectation of an imminent or early *parousia*; ‘delivers us from the wrath to come’ – his understanding of judgment; the problems the Thessalonian church had with the *parousia*, c.f. 4:13ff, and 2 Thessalonians. Credit was given for discussion of the changes in Paul’s eschatological perspective in his later letters.

- (f) *And the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord for ever.* (1 Thessalonians 4:16b-17)

Context: Thessalonians' concern for fate of those who have died.

Points for comment: the *parousia* and Paul's apparent expectation at this time of the early return of Christ in his own life time, and subsequent modification of his views; clouds, etc. – literal or symbolic?; 'ever be with the Lord' – Paul's understanding of the Christian hope.

Question 2

Discuss the date and purpose of 1 Corinthians.

This was a popular question and on the whole was quite well answered, although most candidates handled the discussion of the purpose of 1 Corinthians far better than the discussion of its date. Weaker candidates tended to make a dogmatic assertion about the date, with little or no argument to support it.

General points: Pauline authorship not disputed; many Pauline characteristics, arguments, etc. Already known by Clement and Ignatius. Its integrity, however, together with that of 2 Corinthians much disputed. 1 Corinthians 5:9 and 2 Corinthians 2:4 mention a lost epistle and contradictions within 1 Corinthians have led some scholars to argue that it is made up out of two letters.

Date: impossible to be certain because of complicated historical background. 57CE widely held date, but 53, 55 and 56CE have support. How long is the interval between 1 and 2 Corinthians? (c.f. 2 Corinthians 8:10, 9:2 – 'A year ago', or could it be the equivalent of our 'last year'?) Paul had stayed in Corinth for 18 months around 50/51CE, (c.f. Gallio inscription). According to Acts 19:10, Paul was at Ephesus about two years; 19:22 returns to Ephesus again. Date really depends on length of Paul's journey and whether it was written during his first visit to Ephesus in Acts 19.

Purpose(s): A wealth of material to provide evidence of why Paul wrote this letter. Candidates were expected to cover 1:10, 5:1, 5:9, 7:1 and 8:1, as well as the implication of other passages such as 9:1, 11:18, 12:1 ff., etc.; N.B. also 16:1 and the collection for the saints.

Some very weak candidates made little or no attempt to answer the question, but merely gave a précis of its contents.

Question 3

Examine Paul's teaching on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian and the Church.

This question required discussion of the following passages: ch. 2, especially 10ff; 3:16, where the metaphor of the temple of the Spirit is used of the Church; 6:19, where it is used of the body of the individual Christian; chs.12–14 which contain material relevant to the second part of the question as well as the first, e.g. 12:4ff, 14:1ff, etc.

Individual: 2:4 – the Spirit at work in and through Paul, 2:10ff the Spirit reveals and searches, and enables the individual to understand and receive the gifts of the Spirit, and also gives the gift of discernment and the mind of Christ; the Spirit is the Spirit of holiness who sanctifies and cleanses the individual – 6:11,19-20; 12:3 the Spirit enables one to say 'Jesus is Lord'; 15:6 – Christ, the Second Adam a life-giving spirit, also relevant, since it implies that the Spirit gives life. Paul also clearly implies in 12:31-14:1 that love is the supreme gift of the Spirit.

The church: some candidates concentrated almost exclusively on chs.12-14, and the image of the church as the body of Christ. The material in this section needed careful handling since much of it refers to aspects of the work of the Spirit both in the individual and in the church, e.g. 12:7 – the gifts of the Spirit are given to the individual for the common good, also 12:13 the Spirit baptizes the individual into the body of Christ; c.f. also 12:27-30 by implication. Most candidates were able to explain the importance Paul attaches to the work of the Spirit in edifying and building up the church as the body of Christ, e.g. the gift of prophecy is superior to the gift of tongues, etc., and the role of the gifts of the Spirit in the life of the church.

Candidates were expected to base their answers on 1 Corinthians, since this question is in the section covering the prescribed texts. Credit was given for relevant material drawn from other Pauline epistles in the syllabus such as Romans and Galatians.

This was one of the most popular questions in the Paper. Some very weak candidates did not answer the question asked, but gave instead a description of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as described by Luke in Acts.

Question 4

Give a critical assessment of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians and 1 Thessalonians on marriage and relations between the sexes.

Candidates were expected to base their answers on the following key passages: 1 Corinthians 5:1ff, 7:1ff and 1 Thessalonians 4:1ff.

Points requiring discussion: marriage/celibacy, including difficulty of interpreting 7:25 ff; relations between husband and wife (N.B. the significance of 7:4 which is a radical statement on the rights of a woman within marriage, which not many contemporary Jewish men would share); divorce, unbelieving spouse, children, etc.; the distraction of marriage and the eschatological framework of Paul's teaching on this subject; 'not I but the Lord', etc.; roles of men and women in society and the church. N.B. the fundamental importance of 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 in Paul's ethical teaching on the body, sexual relations, etc., c.f. also 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8. 1 Corinthians 11:2ff also relevant.

More able candidates compared Paul's views with those current in Judaism, and in Greek and Roman society. The best answers also included some very perceptive comments on Paul's teaching on these topics, and showed how what Paul says in 1 Corinthians must be interpreted against the social and cultural background of the church at Corinth.

Section B

Question 5

Compare the contribution made by Stephen and James, the brother of Jesus, to the development of the doctrine and the mission of the early church.

Questions on the leading characters involved in the mission and ministry of the early church, as described in Acts, have usually been among the most popular in this Paper. Surprisingly, not many candidates answered this question. Candidates were expected to cover the following points:

- James: Well taught candidates knew that the probable author of the epistle of James is James, the brother of Jesus. James, the son of Zebedee was martyred almost certainly before Paul and Barnabas embarked on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:2), and nothing is heard of James, the son of Alphaeus, after Acts 1:13. Credit was therefore given for material drawn from the epistle of James, but candidates, who may have been wrongly taught that the epistle was written by another James, most likely the son of Zebedee, were not unduly penalised for failing to refer to the epistle. A high mark could still be obtained by discussion of the relevant material in Acts and Galatians.

Passages in which James appears: Acts 12:17 – implies James already in a position of leadership; Acts 15:13, and his important role at the Council of Jerusalem; (also Acts 21:18ff. but this is outside the syllabus, which ends at 21:15) Galatians 1:19 and 2:9 confirm the picture given in Acts of James as one of the leading figures among the apostles. Acts presents James as being open minded and fairly radical in his willingness to accept Paul's arguments over the question of the admission of Gentiles, Acts 15:19-21, in particular, showing him as a man who recognises the need for sensitivity on the part of Gentile converts towards those from a Jewish background, and is willing to compromise. Galatians 2:11ff. seems to imply that he was much more conservative in his attitude to the admission of Gentiles, but two important points must be recognised: Galatians may have been written before the Council of Jerusalem; the 'men who came from James' may not have represented his true position on this issue.

Points from the epistle: 1:1 implies James was a leader whose authority was respected over a wide area, especially by Jewish(?) converts; a pastor who was very concerned for the outworking of the Christian faith in daily life in warm and caring personal relationships, c.f. 1:22-26; also concerned to counter the harm done by those who misunderstood Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, ch.2:14ff, or was he writing directly in opposition to Paul, and opposing what he regarded as dangerous and heretical teaching? Much depends on the actual date of the epistle. (There were many other valid points which candidates could make on the basis of the material in this letter, e.g. James' concern to promote the ministry of healing – 5:13ff, but they were not expected to cover all the potentially relevant points.)

- Stephen: Probably from a 'Hellenist' background. Appointment as one of seven 'deacons' – their role in the early Church. Stephen soon develops a much wider and fuller ministry, preaching and teaching, and (Acts 6:8) 'performs great wonders and signs among the people'; opposition which arose to his ministry and reasons for it; the significance of his speech before the Sanhedrin in Acts 7, and the points he makes – Israel's stubborn refusal to fulfil its true calling, and theirs also; theophanies outside the Holy Land and his implied criticism of the status of the Temple, 7:47ff. The inevitable reaction of the Sanhedrin. Implications of Acts 6:11 and of Stephen's speech clearly show that he realised that Christianity must break free from the matrix of Judaism and be built on different foundations. Does his speech contain the seeds(?) of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, etc.? His martyrdom and the persecution (of Greek speaking Christians?) which followed, led to the spread of the gospel. The possible influence of Stephen's trial and death on Paul, as seemingly implied by Luke, Acts 8:1. A radical and courageous thinker who, in contrast to James, seems to show little sympathy for the religious 'establishment' in Jerusalem.

Question 6

Discuss the problems which arise when a comparison is made of the contents of Acts and the epistles you have studied for this paper.

No candidates attempted this question. A good answer would have covered the following points:

- Mainly Acts and Galatians – Council of Jerusalem, visits to Jerusalem, Paul's attitude to the Law (also Romans). But other material, e.g. why no reference to the Council of Jerusalem and its decrees by Paul, or anywhere else in New Testament? Also 1 Corinthians, and the difficulty in reconciling the account in Acts of Paul's visit to Thessalonica, and subsequent events, with the evidence of 1 Thessalonians.
- Date and destination (North or South Galatia) obviously relevant and require some discussion, but the question is not primarily about either. How is Galatians to be fitted into Luke's narrative? Paul's visits to Jerusalem – is Galatians 2:1-10 Council visit of Acts 15 or 11:30? But certain differences between Galatians 2 and Acts 15, if they refer to the same visit. Galatians 2 gives the impression of a private meeting, while Acts 15 clearly describes a formal discussion in Council. Omission of any reference to decisions of Council, not only in Galatians, but in the whole of the Pauline corpus. Dispute between Paul and Peter; Luke presenting an idealised picture of the early church, also a somewhat different picture of the character and teaching of Paul from that which is found in his epistles?? Paul's theology of justification by faith not so strongly presented in Acts, but N.B. Acts 13:38-39. Paul's attitude to the Law different in Acts (?), c.f. Acts 21:20ff., but N.B. outside prescribed chapters of Acts. Contents of Galatians clearly raise some important and insoluble questions concerning the historicity of Acts, even though archaeological evidence has proved Luke's accuracy, e.g. in relation to titles of local officials. Paul's own account of events must obviously be given greater credence. Was Acts written long after the events it records?

Question 7

Account for the apparent hostility of Paul to the Law of Moses.

This question was fairly popular. Weaker candidates tended to summarise Paul's attitude to the Law, but there were a few good answers from candidates who tackled the focal point of the question. There were a variety of possible starting points, and several valid approaches to answering this question, e.g: Paul's background as a Pharisee, and the impact of his conversion experience as described in Acts and Galatians 1; his recognition of the problem for Gentile converts raised especially by circumcision and the food laws; his hostility to James' supporters after their intervention in Antioch as described in Galatians 2, especially after his visits to Jerusalem; his sense of betrayal and rivalry from the visit of the Judaisers to Galatia and their apparent success there.

The question required some discussion of Paul's criticism of the Law, especially in Galatians 3 and Romans 4, as no longer providing a means of salvation, and impairing grace and freedom, and continuing to enslave those who seek salvation by its observance. If the ritual and ceremonial Torah is still valid, then Christ 'died to no purpose' – Galatians 2:21. Several candidates recognised that there is plenty of material both in Galatians and Romans to support the view that Paul was opposed, not so much to the Law, as to its continued (mis)use in an era, when it had fulfilled its purpose, and had been superseded.

Question 8

To what extent was the teaching on the person and work of Christ in Colossians and Hebrews prompted by the need to counter heresy and false doctrine?

Not many candidates attempted this question, but those who did produced some quite good answers. The question required discussion of the following points:

- Colossians: 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. 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 affected the church at Colossae, c.f. Morna Hooker, who, with others, argues that there is no evidence of heresy in the church at this time, but Paul had been made aware by Epaphras of the potential danger from Gnostic and syncretistic groups in the area. Probably a 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 material from 2:8-23 to support and illustrate their argument, more able candidates were able to refer to other relevant material (by implication) such as 1:15ff.
- Hebrews: Clearly the author's primary purpose was not so much to counter heresy as it is in the case of Colossians. The most widely held view is that the purpose of Hebrews was to warn Jewish Christians against apostasy and a return to Judaism, but a case has been made for others, e.g: to challenge conservative and inward looking Jews to embrace world mission; to announce the absolute character of Christianity to mainly Gentile Christians, but if this is so, why so much reference to the OT?; to counter an early type of Gnostic or Colossian heresy. The evidence for the latter is to be found in chapters 1 and 2, which has much in common with parts of Colossians 1 and 2, in its argument concerning the pre-existence and supremacy of Christ. The most reasonable explanation of the main purpose of Hebrews must surely be that it was written to warn Jewish Christians against apostasy. If so, then it can be argued that chs. 5-10 are a lengthy argument against false teaching based on the continuing validity and efficacy of the OT sacrificial system even after the death and resurrection of Christ.

Question 9

How far were Paul and James in agreement on the doctrinal foundations and the ethical ideals of the Christian faith?

Most candidates began by discussing the (apparent?) disagreement between Paul and James on justification, faith and works. A good answer required some analysis of what they mean by 'faith' and 'works'. Romans 12-14 and James 2, and especially Romans 13.8-10 and James 2.8-11, provide incontrovertible evidence of their agreement (in most respects?) on the ethical implications of the Christian faith. A few candidates recognised some of the wider issues which the question raises, such as the following: What evidence is there in the epistle of James that the author's faith is based on the same 'kerygmatic' foundation as that of Paul? The paucity of references to certain basic Christian doctrines has led some scholars to argue that it is a Jewish document with a few Christian interpolations. On the assumption that James, the brother of Jesus, is the author of the epistle, (the most widely held view), Galatians 2.12ff, and all that it implies' is also relevant; as the question is worded it does not confine its scope to the epistle of James. Material in Acts 15 is relevant. While James' comments, and the decision of the Council of Jerusalem, provide evidence of agreement on a number of basic issues between Paul and James, there are the problems caused by the fact that Paul never refers to the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem in his letters, and also by his apparent disagreement in certain matters, e.g. the question of food offered to idols.

Question10

How serious were the threats to the unity of the church in this period, and how successful were its leaders in dealing with them?

There was a considerable amount of relevant material, so candidates were not expected to cover all the points mentioned below. Most candidates concentrated on the first part of the question, but a high mark required some attempt to evaluate the success the leaders of the early church had in dealing with the problems and threats to the unity of the church which they faced. Several candidates failed to focus on the actual question, but instead summarised the accounts in Acts of the persecution and opposition which the early church experienced.

Candidates were expected to discuss some of the following:

- Acts: Ananias and Sapphira(?), Acts 6:1ff, persecution, leading to dispersion of many Christians (mainly those from a Hellenist background?); problems caused by admission of Gentiles leading to the Council of Jerusalem and its decisions; also theological development – Stephen’s radical views prepared the way for Paul (see 5(b) above). Danger at one stage of separate development of Jewish and Gentile churches.
- Paul’s letters: relevant material in 1 Corinthians, e.g. factions – 1:10ff, 3:1ff. (N.B. importance of image of temple of the Holy Spirit), chs. 12-14 – abuse of spiritual gifts. Also unity of church threatened by immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1), lawsuits (6:1ff.), food offered to idols (8:1ff.), disorder at Eucharist (11:17ff.) – how Paul dealt with these problems. Paul’s collection for the ‘saints in Jerusalem’, and why?
- Dangers from false teaching: e.g. Galatians and Judaisers, also Peter and Barnabas refusing to eat with Gentiles, antinomianism (Galatians and Romans). Influence of pagan background of Gentile converts, syncretism, heresy and false teaching, e.g. Colossians, 1 Corinthians (resurrection) 15.12ff, and misunderstanding of Paul’s teaching, c.f. James 2??
- James: faith without works, neglect of poor, social and class divisions, the temptations and divisions caused by wealth, etc. Hebrews: apostasy, regression to Judaism and the apparent security it offered.