

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (BIBLE KNOWLEDGE)

GCE Ordinary Level (2017)

(Syllabus 2049)

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INTRODUCTION

This syllabus focuses on Christian origins. It encourages a thoughtful approach to the study of the life and teaching of Jesus, as contained in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke, and the birth and development of the early church, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 1 to 21, verse 15. It is open to candidates of any religious persuasion or none.

Please note that in 2015, 2016 and 2017, Paper 1 will be based on Matthew's Gospel.

AIMS

The aims of the syllabus are to enable candidates:

1. To develop knowledge of the life and teaching of Jesus, and the development of the early Christian church.
2. To develop an enquiring and critical approach to the study of biblical texts, the ideas they contain, and the ways in which they may be interpreted.
3. To help candidates identify and explore the religious, ethical and historical questions raised in the texts they have studied.
4. To attempt an informed response to issues arising out of their study.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Candidates should be able to demonstrate that they have made a close study of the prescribed texts.

Candidates are tested on their ability to satisfy two general Assessment Objectives (AOs):

AO1: To describe and explain using knowledge and understanding. Thus, AO1 is primarily concerned with knowledge, and assesses candidates' ability to:

1. Recall, select and present relevant points from the text and background information.
2. Use knowledge of stories and traditions contained in the texts to explain them with understanding.

AO2: Use evidence and reasoned argument to express and evaluate personal responses, informed insights and differing viewpoints. Thus, AO2 is concerned with understanding and evaluation of the material, and assesses candidates' ability to:

1. Use knowledge of the religious background of the Old and/or New Testaments, as appropriate, to show the significance for the author of the major themes in his writings.
2. Identify and explain the particular interests and purpose(s) of the author of Matthew and the author of the Acts of the Apostles.
3. Identify and explain the use of symbolism, parable, allegory, etc, in the texts studied.
4. Evaluate the significance of major themes in the Matthean and Lukan writings for religious and moral understanding.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment will be by written examination. Candidates will be required to take **two** papers. To be awarded a final grade in the examination, candidates **must** take both papers.

Components	Weighting
<p>Paper 1 The portrayal of the life and teaching of Jesus 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>Candidates answer any four questions from a choice of six. Each question will have three parts. 80 marks Externally assessed</p>	50%
<p>Paper 2 The portrayal of the birth of the early church 1 hour 30 minutes</p> <p>Candidates answer any four questions from a choice of six. Each question will have three parts. 80 marks Externally assessed</p>	50%

Marks are awarded based on levels of response for each AO. There are four levels of response for each AO. A descriptor and the marks available for each level are detailed in the specimen material.

VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE

Both the New International Version (NIV) and the Revised Standard Version (RSV) will be used for quotations included in question papers. There is, however, no wish or intention to dictate to schools what version should be used in the teaching and preparation of candidates for this examination. Schools are at liberty to use whichever version they prefer. It should, however, be remembered that the majority of modern translations are based on a much more accurate version of the text than the King James Bible, also known as the Authorised Version (1611).

Examiners have been instructed not to set questions in which the answer depends on a rendering peculiar to a particular version of the Bible.

SYLLABUS CONTENT

Paper 1: The portrayal of the life and teaching of Jesus

Please note that in 2015, 2016 and 2017, Paper 1 will be based on Matthew's Gospel.

Candidates will learn about the life and teaching of Jesus, as portrayed in Matthew's Gospel. Teachers must ensure that this content is understood in the context of the whole of the Gospel of Matthew.

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more topics. The sequence in which the topics are listed is not intended to indicate either the order in which the topics should be studied or its relative importance.

Background to Matthew's Gospel

- the setting of the Gospel
 - the Roman occupation and government
 - the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians
 - the idea of 'the Messiah'
- the traditional view of Matthew as author
 - arguments to support Matthew as author
 - arguments challenging Matthew as author
- possible reasons why Matthew's Gospel was written
 - possible purposes including Jewish Christians as readership
- the nature of Matthew's Gospel
 - idea of 'good news'
 - main characteristics (e.g. Old Testament fulfilment, and teaching about the church)

Key events in Jesus' life

- the events and what they reveal about the person, teaching and work of Jesus
- issues raised by the events
 - meaning (e.g. what is the meaning of Jesus' death?)
 - historical (e.g. are the accounts historically reliable or are they symbolic?)
 - significance (e.g. why was Bethlehem significant as a place of birth?)

Miracles

- the miracles and what they reveal about the person, teaching and work of Jesus
- different types of miracles
 - healing miracles (e.g. the paralytic)
 - exorcisms (e.g. the dumb demoniac)
 - raising from the dead (e.g. the ruler's daughter)
 - nature miracles (e.g. stilling of the storm)
- issues raised by the accounts
 - purpose (e.g. why did Jesus perform miracles?)
 - historical (e.g. did the miracles happen as recorded?)

Parables

- the parables and what they reveal about the person, teaching and work of Jesus
- issues raised by the accounts
 - purpose (e.g. why did Jesus teach using parables?)
 - meaning (e.g. how are they to be interpreted?)

People connected to Jesus

- how different people were connected with the life of Jesus
- what these encounters reveal about the person, teaching and work of Jesus
 - the significance of these encounters (e.g. John the Baptist)

Teaching

- Jesus' teaching
- issues raised by this teaching
 - applying this teaching to the 21st century (e.g. the Sabbath)

Conflict and opposition to Jesus

- how and why there was opposition to Jesus
- issues raised by the accounts
 - could Jesus' death have been avoided?
 - Jesus' attitude towards this opposition

Titles of Jesus

- the titles used of, and by, Jesus
- the meaning of the titles (e.g. Son of God)

Paper 2: The portrayal of the birth of the early church

Please note Paper 2 will always be based on the Acts of the Apostles (Ch 1:1–21:15)

Candidates will learn about the birth of the early church as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles (Ch 1:1–21:15). Teachers must ensure that this content is understood in the context of the whole of the Acts of the Apostles.

The divisions of the subject content are not rigid and questions may be set which span two or more topics. The sequence in which the topics are listed is not intended to indicate either the order in which the topics should be studied or its relative importance.

Background to the Acts of the Apostles

- the traditional view of Luke as author
 - arguments to support Luke as author
 - connection between Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles
- possible date for the writing of the Acts of the Apostles
 - argument for date before 64 CE
 - argument for date between 70 and 85 CE

The specific work of the Holy Spirit

- the events and what they reveal about the Holy Spirit
- comparison of occasions when people received the Holy Spirit
- the work of the Holy Spirit (e.g. how it changed people and affected events)
- the importance of the Holy Spirit (e.g. the church comes into being at Pentecost)

The spread of the church through Peter

- the role and work of Peter in the early church
- Peter's importance and success
 - the spread of the church through Peter (e.g. healing at Lydda)
 - significance of Cornelius' conversion

The spread of the church through Philip

- the role and work of Philip in the early church
- Philip's importance and success
 - the spread of the church through Philip (e.g. the Ethiopian)

The spread of the church through Paul

- the role and work of Paul in the early church
- Paul's importance and success
 - the spread of the church through Paul (e.g. missionary journeys)
 - Paul's strategies in his missionary work and in his preaching (e.g. his speech at Athens)
 - Paul's relationship with Barnabas (e.g. initially Barnabas was leader over Paul)

Preaching and speeches

- the content of the preaching of the early church
- the success of the preaching
 - the different responses (e.g. the Athenians)
- the content of the speeches of the early church
 - the different purposes (e.g. to the Ephesian elders at Miletus)

The life of the church

- the life of the early church
 - its organisation (e.g. apostles and elders)
 - its tensions (e.g. The Council of Jerusalem)
 - its development (e.g. the Gentile church)
- issues raised by the accounts
 - supernatural happenings (e.g. angels, visions, miracles and evil spirits)

Persecution of the church

- why the early church was persecuted
- the response to those persecutions

TEACHING TIME

The syllabus is based upon the assumption that no fewer than three teaching periods or two hours per week, over the course of two years, will be allocated to the subject.

TEACHING THE SYLLABUS

1. Please check which Gospel is being examined in the year in which you intend to make entries.
2. Candidates should be given the opportunity to discuss what they learn and to appreciate the views of others, even when these views differ from their own. In religious studies, tolerance of others and their views is fundamental. Candidates should look at the teaching of Jesus and how his teaching applied to his own time and to the time of the early church (particularly as it spread to the Gentile world).
3. Candidates should study topics and relate material from different parts of the text. One suggestion is that, initially, candidates should read through the complete text of the Gospel of Matthew and Acts for an overview. Then a detailed and critical reading and study of the text should be made. Often, in studying a section of the text, reference to another passage is helpful.
4. Work should be planned so that candidates can review themes which are spread throughout the book – for example, Jesus' teaching on prayer, riches, forgiveness, etc. In the Acts of the Apostles, the whole of the set text needs to be reviewed to see how the church evolved, from grappling with the entry of the Gentiles into a Jewish-based community, to becoming independent from Judaism, to adapting its patterns of ministry and worship to meet the needs of Gentile converts.
5. A list of textbooks and resources is provided. No particular book is singled out. The books listed are those which should be available and have proved helpful in the past. Teachers will also find reputable concordances to be of value – for example, Cruden's Concordance.
6. The educational process is not intended solely for an examination. The examination is a natural outcome of a successful teaching process. Teachers should use a variety of educational practices and techniques to enable candidates to enjoy learning, to think and draw conclusions for themselves.
7. Candidates should be allowed to practise answering questions under timed, examination conditions and to discuss their work afterwards. A good technique is helpful in examinations but needs to be worked out and practised.

TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCES

The Life and Teaching of Jesus as Contained in the Gospel of St Matthew

William Barclay; The Gospel of Matthew (New Daily Study Bible); 2009; St Andrew's Press, Edinburgh; ISBN 071520890X

R T Frome; Matthew (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries); 2008; Inter-Varsity Press; ISBN 1844742679

Tom Wright; For Everyone Bible Study Guides: Matthew (New Testament Guides for Everyone); 2009; Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK); ISBN 0281061793

A W Argyle; The Gospel According to Matthew (Cambridge Bible Commentaries on the New Testament); 1963; Cambridge University Press; ISBN 0521091985

The Acts of the Apostles 1–21.15

William Barclay; The Acts of the Apostles (New Daily Study Bible): Acts; 2003; St Andrews Press, Edinburgh, ISBN 0715207865

F F Bruce; Men and Movements in the Primitive Church; 1980; Paternoster Press; ISBN 1842274457

F F Bruce; The Book of Acts (New International Commentary on the New Testament); 1995; William B Eerdmans Publishing Co; ISBN 0802825052

I Howard Marshall; Acts: An Introduction and Survey (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries); 2008; Inter-Varsity Press; ISBN 1844742717

J W Packer; The Acts of the Apostles (Cambridge Bible Commentaries on the New Testament); 1966; Cambridge University Press; ISBN 052109383X

Out of print textbooks that are still suitable:

C K Barrett; Paul: An Introduction to His Thought (Outstanding Christian Thinkers); 1994; Geoffrey Chapman; ISBN 022566688X

John Charles Fenton; The Gospel of St Matthew (Pelican Gospel Commentary); 1963; Penguin; ASIN B000OCLY6E

David Hill; The Gospel of Matthew (The New Century Bible Commentary Series); 1996; William B Eerdmans Publishing Co; ISBN 0802818862

F S Hewitt; Genesis of the Christian Church: A Study of Acts and the Epistles; 1964; Edward Arnold; ISBN 713112131

Floyd V Filson; Gospel According to Matthew (Black's New Testament Commentaries); 1971; A & C Black Publishers Ltd; ISBN 0713612312

William Neil; The Acts of the Apostles (The New Century Bible Commentary Series); 1996; William B Eerdmans Publishing Co; ISBN 0802819048

Teachers' reference books

Peake's Commentary on the Bible; edited by Matthew Black and H H Rowley; 2001; Routledge, Taylor and Francis Books; ISBN 0415263557

The Oxford Bible Commentary; edited by John Barton and John Muddiman; 2007; Oxford University Press; ISBN 0199277184

Material on computer for teacher use

For those who have access to a computer, the Inter-Varsity Press *The Essential Reference Collection* on CD ROM, which is part of the Logos Library System, is outstanding as a resource for teachers at every level. As well as containing versions of the Bible, which can be accessed by the payment of a small fee, it also contains the following books which may be accessed without further payment:

- New Bible Atlas
- Dictionary of Biblical Imagery
- Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels
- Dictionary of New Testament Background
- Dictionary of Paul and his Letters
- Dictionary of the Later New Testament
- The New Bible Dictionary
- The New Bible Commentary
- The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology
- Hard Sayings of the Bible