

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY & RELIGIOUS STUDIES
BED IV/BA HUMANITIES IV/ IDE BA HUMANITIES IV
MAIN EXAMINATION MAY 2012

COURSE TITLE : THE GOSPEL TRADITION

COURSE CODE : T4 P2

DURATION : THREE (3) HRS

INSTRUCTIONS :

- a. Choose and answer four (4) questions.
- b. Write in clear, grammatically correct sentences.
- c. All questions carry equal marks.

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PERMISSION TO DO SO**

Question 1

'A careful reading of the birth stories of Jesus reveals that so much of the celebrated Christmas story is myth.' To what extent do you agree with this thinking? [25]

Question 2

Specifically with regard to source criticism, what is the evidence that the synoptic writers had written sources at their disposal? Critically discuss. [25]

Question 3

Explore the ways in which models from the field of cultural anthropology might shed light in our reading of the following extract. In your answer, draw insights from your own social world. [25]

- 22 Then a blind and dumb demoniac was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw.
- 23 And all the people were amazed, and said, "Can this be the Son of David?"
- 24 But when the Pharisees heard it they said, "It is only by Be-el'zebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."
- 25 Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand;
- 26 and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?
- 27 And if I cast out demons by Be-el'zebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.
- 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- 29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.
- 30 He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.
- 31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.
- 32 And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.
- 33 "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit.

- 34 You brood of vipers! how can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
- 35 The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.
- 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter;
- 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Question 4

To what degree can we confidently reconstruct a chronology of the life of Jesus of Nazareth? To what extent can we not? What are the relatively fixed dates about his birth, ministry and death and how do you arrive at them? [25]

Question 5

Do you think the gospels present a fair picture of Judas Iscariot? Support your answer from the gospels and the recently discovered gospel of Judas. [25]

Question 6

Why was Jesus killed? Do you find the reasons given by the gospel writers are convincing? Critically discuss. [25]

Question 7

In what ways does the author of Matthew differ from the other gospels in his treatment of men and women? Support your answer with evidence from at least two gospels. [25]

Question 8

Do you think the resurrection of Jesus is fact or fiction? Critically discuss. [25]

END OF PAPER