

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
&  
INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**TRS 402 MAIN EXAMINATION, NOVEMBER 2013**

**TITLE OF PAPER : Gospel Tradition I  
COURSE CODE : TRS 402  
DURATION : 2 Hours**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Choose and answer three (3) questions in all.
2. Write in clear, grammatically correct sentences.
3. The paper consists of four (4) printed pages including the cover page.
4. All questions carry equal marks.

**DO NOT OPEN THIS PAPER UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR GRANTS YOU PERMISSION TO DO SO.**

**Question 1**

“Knowledge of the political, economic, religious and social world of Jesus is key in reading and understanding the Gospel tradition”. With the aid of examples and illustrations, assess the truth of this statement. [20]

**Question 2**

“We cannot know the full contents of Q, but this has rarely stopped scholars from trying. One popular and widespread view, for example, is that Q did not contain a Passion narrative but consisted entirely of saying of Jesus, and that it was therefore very similar to the *Gospel of Thomas*, a collection of 114 sayings of Jesus without any stories of his deeds or experiences and no references to his death and resurrection” (Ehrman, 2008:97). Is there any evidence supporting the existence of Q? What are its contents and is it possible to dispense with the Q source? [20]

**Question 3**

Name and describe each of the literary forms in extracts A – D. Explain their *sitz-im-leben* and function in meeting the primary needs of the early Christian communities.

<b>Extract A</b>	<b>Extract B</b>	<b>Extract C</b>	<b>Extract D</b>
<p><sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.  <sup>10</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him.</p>	<p><b>35</b> On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." <b>36</b> And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. <b>37</b> And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. <b>38</b> But he was in the</p>	<p><b>25</b> And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" <b>26</b> He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" <b>27</b> And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." <b>28</b> And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live." <b>29</b> But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" <b>30</b> Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among</p>	<p><sup>15</sup> And as he sat at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were sitting with Jesus and his disciples; for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> And the scribes of<sup>[a]</sup> the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, "Why does he eat<sup>[b]</sup> with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>17</sup> And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who</p>

<p><sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved;<sup>[a]</sup> with you I am well pleased." (Mark 1:9-11)</p>	<p>stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" <b>39</b> And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. <b>40</b> He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" <b>41</b> And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him. (Mark 4: 37-41)</p>	<p>robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. <b>31</b> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. <b>32</b> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <b>33</b> But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, <b>34</b> and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <b>35</b> And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' <b>36</b> Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" <b>37</b> He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)</p>	<p>are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."</p>
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**Question 4**

Explain how scholars attempt to establish the authentic sayings of Jesus. In your opinion, which of the criteria do you find most weighty and why? [20]

**Question 5**

"If my assessments are correct, historians are within their professional rights to give attention to miracle claims. Moreover, there are signs from the community of professional historians that the epistemological Ice Age of anti-supernaturalism appears to be coming to an end. Given this warming attitude toward miracles, those scholars who claim their rights to investigate miracle claims will find themselves in the company of a growing number of colleagues" (Michael R. Licona & Jan G. van der Watt, 2009). To what extent do you agree with the above assertion? [20]

## Question 6

Attempt a critical reading of the parable below. [20]

### **The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother**

<sup>11</sup> And he said, "There was a man who had two sons; <sup>12</sup> and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his living between them. <sup>13</sup> Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. <sup>14</sup> And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. <sup>15</sup> So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. <sup>16</sup> And he would gladly have fed on<sup>[a]</sup> the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup> But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! <sup>18</sup> I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup> I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.'" <sup>20</sup> And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup> And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; <sup>23</sup> and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; <sup>24</sup> for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to make merry.

<sup>25</sup> "Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup> And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. <sup>27</sup> And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup> But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, <sup>29</sup> but he answered his father, 'Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends. <sup>30</sup> But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!' <sup>31</sup> And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup> It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.' (Luke 15:11-32)