

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

TRS 403 MAIN EXAMINATION, MAY 2014

TITLE OF PAPER : Gospel Tradition II
COURSE CODE : TRS 403
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 **three (3) 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

“That stories about Jesus were changed (or made up) in the process or retelling is not just a wild idea dreamt up by university professors with too much time in their hands. In fact, there is good evidence for it, evidence that can be found in the stories themselves as they have come down to us in the Gospels” (Bart D. Ehrman 2008: 62-63). What is there evidence to substantiate this claim? How best can historians develop criteria to judge the trustworthy and untrustworthy of sources? Illustrate your answer with examples from the gospel tradition. [20]

Question 2

Critically discuss Luke or Matthew’s attitude towards women. In your view, what does the presentation of women in any one of these gospels inform you of the status of women in the Ancient Mediterranean World? [20]

Question 3

Explore the place of Philip’s Gospel and any one more non-canonical gospel in the context of early Christian claims about the marital status of Jesus. To what extent do you agree or disagree with those claims? [20]

Question 4

“ ... the precise date [of the death of Jesus] can no longer be discovered. All we can claim with any degree of historical certainty is that Jesus died some time around Passover (perhaps a week or so before the feast) between 29 and 34 CE” (Elen K. Bond 2013). In light of memory and religious imagination, why is it difficult to establish the exact date of the death of Jesus? Support your answer with concrete evidence from the gospel tradition. [20]

Question 5

Do you think the death of Jesus was inevitable? Do you find reasons given by the gospel writers convincing? Support your argument with evidence elsewhere and selected scriptural passages. [20]

Question 6

From the two passages below, explain ways in which the author uses audience inclusion and exclusion as a rhetorical strategy. [20]

Passage A: Mark 1: 4 -11, RSV

And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with^[a] water, but he will baptize you with^[b] the Holy Spirit."
⁹ At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.
¹⁰ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹ And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Passage B: Mark 3: 13 – 19

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. **14** He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach **15** and to have authority to drive out demons. **16** These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); **17** James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); **18** Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot **19** and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.