

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

TRS 403 MAIN EXAMINATION, MAY 2016

**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.**

**TRS 403 GOSPEL TRADITION II, (M) May 2016**

**Question 1**

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days Herod the king, behold wise men from the East came to Jerusalem saying, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and we have come to worship him.” (Matthew 2: 1 -2, RSV).

What exactly was this star of Bethlehem? Briefly explain, but in detail, difficulties interpreters face in each of the suggested proposals. [20]

**Question 2**

Outline the key beliefs of Ebionites – Jewish-Christian adoptionists – pertaining to the person of Jesus. To what extent do their beliefs resonate with those embraced by “proto-orthodox” Christians, the first group that became mainstream Christianity in later centuries? [20]

**Question 3**

Discuss, in some detail, possible factors that could have necessitated the invention of traditions about Jesus by those who followed him. [20]

**Question 4**

High Priest: “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the blessed one?”

Jesus: “I am, you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

High priest: “Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?”

Mark: “They all condemned him as deserving death” (Mark 14: 61-64).

What was Jesus blasphemous for and what is Mark putting across to the reader with regard to the subsequent verdict passed against Jesus by the Jewish supreme council? [20]

**Question 5**

Discuss the meaning of the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross according to the gospel writers. [20]

**Question 6**

Discuss with illustrations stories of Jesus' youth as reported in the Infancy Gospel of Thomas written around the early second century C.E. [20]