

Religious Studies

Advanced GCE

Unit **G583**: Jewish Scriptures

Mark Scheme for June 2011

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1 How far are the visions in Amos essential to his message? [35]

AO1 Candidates might attempt to place Amos in his appropriate historical context as an eighth century prophet and might include a summary of the message of Amos that G-d is just and requires his people to be just.

Candidates might also make reference to the catalogue of sins which is relevant to the theme of the inevitability of judgement if the people do not repent.

To address the question, responses are likely to keep the focus of the response on the visions and candidates are likely to show familiarity with the text.

Amos chapters 7 & 8 are the chapters that contain the doom-laden visions of the locusts, the fire, the plumbline and the basket of ripe fruits. The vision of G-d standing beside the altar is in 9:1-4. These visions are told in the first person.

Candidates might include also the call of Amos and some of his oracles of destruction as they have a visionary element eg predictions about Amaziah's future and about 'that day'.

AO2 The first person style of the texts might be used, implicitly or explicitly, to argue that the visions were very important in the personal experience of Amos and essential to his passion for justice.

Possibly, candidates might define the term 'prophet' and discuss the balance and the necessary interrelationship of the role of forthteller and foreteller.

Candidates might focus on the message of Amos to explore how far these visions of judgement were essential in that they gave impact to the warnings about the Last Day. The visions emphasised the need for the chosen people not to be complacent but to repent of the sins prevalent in eighth century Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II.

Some might consider how far the fact that a prophet spoke the word(s) of G-d implies that true prophets experienced ecstatic trances somewhat similar to the ecstatic frenzy of other 'prophets' and how far this phenomenon might be related to the essential nature of a prophet's role and message.

2 To what extent is the book of Ruth no more than a story of ordinary life at the time of the Judges? [35]

AO1 The book of Ruth is in the Ketuvim of the Tenakh but in the historical books in Christian Bibles of all denominations.

Some candidates might use material about types of literature from their A/S studies as an introduction. The book might have been written c.800 BCE or at the time of David (c.1,000 BCE) or, possibly, some time later with an earlier history of oral transmission.

Inevitably there will be some telling of the story of Ruth, Mahlon, Chilion, Orpah and Naomi etc. Many candidates are likely to identify some key factors. Ruth was a Moabite convert to Judaism who came to Israel with her widowed mother-in-law Naomi and showed enormous loyalty in looking after the elderly woman. Ruth gleanes in the field of Boaz, a near kinsman, whom she eventually marries. Candidates might explain a little about Levirate law.

Note that Boaz may be identified with Ibzan, one of the Judges of Israel. The child of Ruth and Boaz was Obed who was the father of Jesse and grandfather of King David. The book of Ruth is read at Shavuot.

AO2 Candidates are likely to comment, as in some resources, that the story, set at the time of the Judges, is inspiring and heart-warming. They might identify themes, probably concerning triumph over adversity, the loyalty of Ruth, the generosity of Boaz and the fact that the love story overcame the differences of race, rank, wealth, background and age.

Some may question whether 'ordinary life' is an appropriate term since it is an extraordinary story and is in the Tenakh and used at Shavuot. The fact that the progeny of Ruth and Boaz included royalty and ultimately the Messiah might be used to support this case.

Some might consider that the teaching of the book points to a very significant truth: that, though the scriptures are written and sealed, the good deeds of believers are never forgotten and everyone can be used by G-d as part of his plan.

Others might argue that the purpose of the writer or editor (c. 4th century BCE) was to counter the stern ruling of Ezra about separatism and marriage with foreign women. If this were the case, the inclusion of the book in the Jewish Scriptures had and has great religious, historical, political and social significance.

3 'The Servant is not a Messianic figure.' Discuss with reference to the texts you have studied in Isaiah. [35]

AO1 Isaiah 40-43 and 53 are the texts from the Servant songs in the specification. Candidates might refer to the Servant in Isaiah 53 as the Suffering Servant and might use Isaiah 52 where the prophecy begins though this is not one of the set texts.

Candidates may make cross-references to any teaching about messianic figures from their studies. The specification includes Micah with reference to the messianic hope.

Micah includes prophecies about the messianic kingdom so this topic is relevant though not essential for good responses.

Responses are likely to show familiarity with the set texts and might show knowledge and understanding of the views of commentaries and scholars about the identity and role of the Servant in the specification selection from the Servant songs as well as explaining concepts associated with messianic figures.

AO2 Candidates might cite similarities and/or differences between the Servant and a messianic figure in either or both specified texts.

Candidates are free to support or reject the given statement but valid arguments are likely to be based on the set texts and to demonstrate the ability to place the figure(s) in the context of the writer(s) and of the possible contemporary hopes and fears.

Candidates might also evaluate the views of scholars and investigate debates of any relevant matters such as date, authorship, purpose and historicity.

Responses may reflect any religious persuasion or none.

4 To what extent do the texts you have studied on reward and punishment apply only to the Jewish nation? [35]

AO1 The texts concerning reward and punishment in the specification are: Isaiah 53, Jeremiah 7, Ezekiel 18, Daniel 12, Psalm 1 and 2 Maccabees 7. References to other material, particularly from elsewhere in the specification, might be made and credited if they throw light on the exegesis of these set texts.

Candidates are likely to show knowledge of and explain the main concepts in most of the set passages:

e.g vicarious suffering in Isaiah 53, individual responsibility (ditto), the sins catalogued in Jeremiah's Temple Sermon which led him to prophesy punishment on Jerusalem; visions of the End time Judgement and the developing hope of afterlife in times of persecution and martyrdom.

Note that the last verse of Psalm 1 might be interpreted that G-d attends the way of the righteous, protecting and rewarding it, but the way of the wicked, lacking G-d's care, brings destruction on itself.

Responses are likely to explain that all or most of the writers or editors of these texts lived during or after the Exile which had forced prophets like Jeremiah, as well as the Deuteronomic editors, to consider why this catastrophe had happened. The chosen people had no King, no land, no Jerusalem and no Temple but they still experienced G-d with them in foreign lands.

Candidates might refer back to their AS studies with new insight into the internalising of the Jewish religion in Jeremiah's covenant and the purposes of the covenants and the role of the nation of priests according to the Mosaic Law.

AO2 Any sensible interpretation of the question is acceptable. Some candidates might refer to the content of the texts as they explain each one and consider any Gentile characters who appear (usually as persecutors in these texts) and the extent to which their fate is relevant.

Some responses in addressing the question might consider the purpose of G-d in making the Jews the chosen people. Some candidates might refer back to the covenants of G-d with Adam and Noah. Credit cross references to Gentiles in the book of Jonah.

Some candidates might discuss Christian interpretations of, for example, Isaiah 53, which is acceptable if they are identified as such; most candidates are likely also to show some understanding of the set passages in the context of the Jewish background of the Tenakh.

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