



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)
January 2011**

Religious Studies

RSS06

(Specification 2060)

Unit F Old Testament

Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Although the entry was small, a wide range of ability was seen in the scripts. A few candidates answered only one question or ran out of time before completing the paper, which had a significant effect on their total marks. Most, however, attempted both and, in contrast to previous sessions, no question was significantly more or less popular than the others.

As in past examination sessions, some candidates failed to include exemplification from the text in their answers to AO1 questions. This meant that they could be awarded no more than level 4. There was, however, a pleasing improvement in the use of reference to scholars. In the past, candidates had clearly learned a number of quotations which they then included in their answer, regardless of relevance to the question. In this session, there were fewer references to scholars, but most of those were highly appropriate, enhancing the quality of the responses. This was particularly the case in question 2 (03). Another improvement on previous sessions was that apart from question 2 (03), there was less evidence of pre-prepared responses. Answers were for the most part focussed on the question; this was particularly the case with AO2 responses.

The quality of written communication was sound, and there were no problems in this session with legibility.

Question 1

- 01** A few candidates wrote largely narrative answers, relying very heavily on the text, but most made sensible use of their Bibles, giving brief but useful quotations to support the points they were making. The majority of candidates covered most of Exodus 15 and 16, referring to themes such as salvation, the faith of Moses, Israel's lack of faith and disobedience and God's providential care and omnipotence. A number of candidates wrote about the Sabbath in connection with manna, but none commented on it as a possible anachronism, though one or two saw it as an anticipation of the Decalogue.
- 02** There were some competent and thoughtful responses. In previous years, this kind of question has encouraged rather superficial answers that said it all depended on whether or not people were theists. Most candidates in this session had clearly been prepared well for this question, re-interpreting some of the themes in ways that seemed to them more meaningful for the 21st century, e.g. understanding salvation in the sense of release from personal states of anxiety or guilt. Other candidates referred to Pesach as an indication of the continuing significance for Jews of the theme of deliverance.

Question 2

- 03** This question was looking for a comparison and contrast of the Mosaic covenant with vassal treaties of the Ancient Near East. Those candidates who read the question carefully and understand its requirements wrote quite competent answers, but overall this question was not well answered. A number of candidates did not read it with care; they produced what might have been learned responses based on a question set in a previous examination session on the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. These responses missed the point of the question and were marked accordingly. Others showed very limited knowledge of vassal treaties. Centres might wish to remind their candidates of the specification content for this Old Testament topic. In addition to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants it requires also a study of 'ideas of covenant in the political life of the Ancient Near East' and '20th century critical views about the making of the covenant'.
- 04** This part of the question was well answered. There were many thoughtful and detailed responses with effective textual support.

Question 3

- 05** Although a very straightforward question, the quality of answers varied considerably. A number of candidates confused seers with ecstasies. Some who clearly did know the difference failed to include exemplification in their answers and one or two candidates wrote about Amos as an example of 9th century prophecy. There were, however, some detailed and well-informed responses.
- 06** This part of the question elicited some very good responses. It was not restricted to the 10th and 9th centuries, so the many arguments that included reference to Amos were creditable. There were some very thoughtful comments on Elijah, referring on the one hand to his stand against Ahab and on the other to his panic-stricken flight from Jezebel.

Question 4

- 07** Although some responses lacked focus on the question, many saw what was required, including both positive and negative aspects of the relationship. On the positive side, most candidates referred to the Exodus as a sign of Israel's election as God's chosen people and on the negative side, to Israel's breach of the covenant resulting in the end of that relationship. Many candidates also commented on the hints of hope to be found in several passages and to the restoration oracle of Amos 9.
- 08** Most candidates made an attempt to give both sides of the argument. Better answers saw the relevance to the debate of the dating of Amos 9. There was, however, no awareness of the ambiguity of Amos, which was seen by all candidates as evidence of God's loving nature, or of the views of some modern scholars that later editors were responsible.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.