

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Candidate Exemplar Work

Unit 3D: *Old Testament*

N.B. This example of candidate's work was taken from the 2004 examination. Two commentaries are provided, the first considers the quality of the work provided, and the second, in bold font, considers how the material links to the new Specification.



CANDIDATE EXEMPLAR WORK

GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION ADVANCED LEVEL



ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES UNIT 3D OLD TESTAMENT

RST3D

EXAMPLE OF CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE

For this paper you must have:

- an 8 page answer book.

You are permitted the use of a Bible, which may include the Apocrypha.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is **RST3D**.
- Answer **two** questions.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 100.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- In each question, part (a) tests your knowledge and understanding, while part (b) tests your skills of reasoning and evaluation.
- You will be marked on your ability to use English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

RST3D: Old Testament

- 2 (a) **Examine the understandings of the human condition which are found in the Wisdom literature you have studied.**

(20 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

Rogerson, in his discussion of Wisdom literature presents that the underlying theme of these books is the 'problem of life' and man's continual struggle to find an 'order' in the universe.

Beginning with the canonical wisdom, Proverbs presents a basic foundation for the later literature. It ~~can not~~ should not just be taken as a collection of saying but rather the cumulative effect should be noted. It puts forward a number of maxims where man is guided in how to live. Man has been given ~~the~~ the opportunity to live a good, respectable life and such text presents a form of 'instruction' of ~~how~~ how so man should chose right or wrong; this further suggests man is fallible and given free will can choose the way of the righteous or the fool. It teaches that we can find wisdom in the world, yet we must have an elevated sense of instinct in order to apply it to our lives. As well as this instinct alone is not enough, God ultimately bestows us with wisdom and so our human condition is inferior to his and we must 'fear the Lord'.

The book of Job puts much emphasis on the human condition; arguably focusing on it's defects. After being placed in the predicament Job finds himself in, he does not understand why he is being punished for he has not given up faith, righteousness etc. In his dialogue with Yahweh (in the form of a vision) He, who represents 'Everyman' is overwhelmed by Yahweh's greatness and our nothingness compared to him, as well as in the context of creation. Ultimately we can never understand the order or justice supposedly present in the world (therefore man can't have access to wisdom) since God is not limited by such laws, and by appealing to his creative powers of over chaotic aspects of creation e.g. monsters like Leviathan Job realises his lack of knowledge.

Similar to Job, Ecclesiastes (put forward by Koheleth) illustrates also how there is little point in man trying to find order in the world as all has a predestined time and we have control over this so should not participate in arts such as montic wisdom. He puts forward that there is even a time for death and stresses our frailty and the fact that this completes the hopeless picture of our existence. We are not God and therefore we are not immortal. However, putting aside his ~~pessim~~ pessimism, there is certainly a more positive and realist aspect to his works. He advises that we be merry and make the most of the opportunities that life presents us with; so ~~the~~ our 'human condition' though is worse than not existing at all should not mean we retreat to a suicidal nature but rather a condition we should exploit. He also shows that all humans have the same fate; the righteous can suffer equal amounts to the non-righteous, and this all ends with death.

Ecclesiasticus (in the Apocrypha) presents the idea of human's greatness in comparison to creation. We have dominion, we have potential to use the world for our benefits, being given the knowledge of both good and evil. We can enter a relationship with God – given illustration by the covenant. Yet this is contrasted by our nothingness to God we will never understand the order of the world like God and will die still 'puzzled'; our death and mortality is just the beginning. We have only compassion for our neighbours yet God has compassion for all. He also presents the idea the evil entered by no man but we are all now responsible for it and must resolve the situation.

Wisdom passages present the question of Immortality. Only the elected people will get it – does this involve body and soul? ~~They~~ It refers to a sub-group of humans – i.e. Israel.

To conclude, the human condition is ultimately understood to be of elevated superiority in comparison to the creation. Like in Genesis, we are the pinnacle of creation. Yet we are also not God and therefore we are limited in many and every sphere of life.

General Comments

This was a very competent script. There is a fluency of writing and the candidate appears to be at ease with theological language and concepts. The questions set are addressed. It appears that the candidate ran out of time on his / her second question. Had this not been the case, it is likely that he / she would have gained much higher marks.

Additional Comments

The answer starts with a useful introduction, which shows an awareness of the nature of Wisdom literature. This leads in well to the substantive answer to the question set. The candidate gives a good range of examples from various parts of the Wisdom literature showing good understanding of the ideas of the human condition found in this literature. With a slightly wider range of ideas and exemplification, this would have been a Level 5 answer.

Level 4 (16 marks)

(b) ***'Wisdom literature is totally secular in nature.'***

Examine the evidence for this claim and assess how far it is true.

(10 marks) AO1 & (20 marks) AO2

Candidate Response

Anybody who has familiarity with the OT will be aware of its theocentric focus. For example the law books are Yahweh's demands on the people of Israel to live ~~her~~ in accordance with his will; e.g. the ~~Deq~~ Decalogue. Wisdom, however, appears to be anthropocentric in its focus. We are all striving for the meaning of life and this can be found by observing the processes in nature; which ultimately is ~~the result of~~ Yahweh's cosmos. It asks how can the world help me? – the world ~~revele~~ revolves around the human problem and quest; for e.g Job and Ecclesiastes put forward Rogerson's category of 'Argument' towards God.

Proverbs in its collection of aphorisms and maxims puts forward commands, condemnations, comparisons etc. which are required in order that one lives a honest and respectable life. It is universal and applies to any person; e.g one proverb requires that we should prioritise our ~~nature~~ reputation over our wealth; this does not only apply to the chosen people. Yet one cannot ignore the underlying yet subtle reference to Yahweh in the background, one must be good in his eyes, one must 'Fear the Lord' to gain wisdom, acting in such manner will either adhere to or lead us astray from the covenant obligations.- Yahweh is judge. And unlike both Job and Ecclesiastes protest to God and at points appear to deny or doubt the very fact of his existence they still never fully deny it.

The fact that God is not presented as acting in history is unique – unlike the Exodus tradition etc – God can be found or 'revealed' through the cosmos. The Apocryphal literature appears to attempt to resolve this tension between the God of all to the God of Israel attempting to integrate the two together. Wisdom especially illustrates Israel as God's elected people; they have responsibility to him.

In addition to discussion on the nature of wisdom by secular versus sacred the 'nature' must be recognised also in wider terms. Wisdom is timeless, empiracal, attainable etc. as well. Wisdom helped God in creation as presented by the Wisdom psalms 'God's master craftsman'.

Commentary

The opening sentence shows that the candidate has a good awareness of the issues to be discussed. It is clear that the candidate not only understands the issue, but also that he / she is constructing the answer in which the AO1 and AO2 elements will be permeative and intertwined. This is perfectly acceptable, so long as candidates do address both elements. He / she gives a good range of examples of the anthropocentric approach of the Wisdom writers, although this could have been developed a little more fully by drawing out a few more explicit examples. These points are well used. He / she then proceeds to the counter argument 'yet one cannot ignore the underlying yet subtle references to God in the background.' Thus, both sides of the argument are considered, and some conclusion is suggested. Had fuller conclusions been drawn, the AO2 element would have been more securely into Level 4 and possibly into Level 5.

AO1 Level 4 (7 marks)

AO2 Level 4 (13 marks)

The first part of this question would now test the second section of the Specification, which is headed God and humanity, and would still be an appropriate question. The candidate's response, good as it is, would need to give a wider range of ideas and examples to reach the highest levels.

The second part of questions now tests AO2 skills of assessment only. Nevertheless the quotation would be appropriate to either the second or third section of the Specification, though the subsequent wording would need adaptation to take into account the removal of the AO1 element. The ability shown in this answer to move 'outside the box' and comment relevantly on other types of literature studied as part of the course is to be encouraged in more able students, but as indicated in the original commentary on this script, to reach the highest levels, responses to this question would need detailed consideration of a wider range of material than is given here, along with a fuller conclusion.

- 3 (a) **Examine the views on the nature of God which are found in the passages you have studied from the origin stories in Genesis (chapters 1 to 11).**
(20 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

The creation narratives in Genesis appear to present the most characteristics of God's nature. Ultimately God creates the world; he is put forward to be omnipotent and omniscient and the fact that he made all of his creation 'very good' (the P account) means he some would argue presents as benevolent God is also the ultimate ruler since he delegates power over man in the form of dominion over creation or as in 'J' the naming act. Genesis 3 (~~3 source~~) presents God in rather anthropomorphic terms typical of the J source 'They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze'. This is to illustrate his rather personal and 'loving' nature, and though transcendent and creator 'of' rather than 'in' world he actively part of it and desires a relationship with men.

However, this relationship is put under strain at the point of the fall. God being all-knowing knows the acts of the serpent and more importantly ~~ma~~ Eve and Adam. He is a just God so he punishes them eg eve will endure pain in child labour. God is also immortal and contains within him the knowledge of both good and evil; as demonstrated by the trees in the garden of Eden. In association with the ~~th~~ idea of a just God he is the ultimate judge. In the flood narrative he wishes to banish out of being all mankind who have done evil; with the exception of Noah. 'I have determined to make an end of all flesh'; he is ruler of time and predestines all.

Genesis 4 with the Cain and Abel account presents God as loving – even when man does the ultimate wrong (murder) he still cares for him, he possesses an unconditional love; he becomes Cain's 'god' and act as protector and redeemer.

To conclude, the nature of God in genesis presents the God of monotheism and classical theism. God is that of which there is no other.

Commentary

The answer gives a competent response to the question, although it could have been more fully developed. Although length is not everything, this would appear to be a little short. Nevertheless, several of the main ideas on the nature of God are outlined, with some exemplification. With a fuller range and further exemplification, the candidate would have gained higher marks.

Level 3 (12 marks)

- (b) ***Explain the view of the nature of God found in the Psalms you have studied, and assess the claim that these Psalms provide a much fuller idea of the nature of God than that found in the early chapters of Genesis. (10 marks) AO1 & (20 marks) AO2***

Candidate Response

Psalm 104 also presents God as the ultimate creator ‘You set the earth on its foundations.’ God is the provider to all – man and animal ‘You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to use’. We are asked to ‘Bless’ the Lord, we are to praise him as his is the ultimate ruler or ‘majesty’.

Alike to the creation in the Genesis accounts the created are made by God’s breath and will return to ‘their dust’ by his rule – he is judge. The order of creation, according to Drane, can be correlated very strongly with Genesis so God acts in a similar manner. Yet the Psalm puts more emphasis on the utter dependency of creation on God; he is not only the life-giver but sustainer; he is the everlasting. Davidson claims that the Psalms All God’s works were created with aid of ‘wisdom’; this comes from God and is ultimately part of his very nature. In Genesis God just brings forth, into being, at his command – no reference to wisdom is used. God is also not just the creator of familiar creatures; birds, man etc. He creates ‘creeping things’ such as Leviathan. We do not understand such creatures and this further presents the unknowability of God.

Psalm 8 however, not only praises God by examines how he has made men. God is a little higher than man, he is the ultimate ruler over creation but God rules over man as well ‘Lord is Sovereign’.

God’s nature can be seen and revealed in creation it is evident through the moon and stars.

Focus is in man and God and their relationship – God is provider and helps man.

Richardson claims the psalms obviously were inspired by Genesis creation; but grasp such ideas in a newer light.

Commentary

In this part, the candidate gives a range of appropriate exemplification from the Psalms, and uses these examples with understanding. His / her discussion, although probably constrained by time, showed that he / she understood the issues to be discussed. Unfortunately, the candidate was not able to develop this discussion.

AO1 Level 4 (7 marks)
AO2 Level 2 (8 marks)

The whole of this question fits into the second section of the Specification. In view of the marks available, a much fuller and more wide-ranging answer is required for the top levels.

As with Question 2, the wording of the second part would need adapting to take account of the omission of the AO1 element. This particular answer probably suffered from timing problems and, as the commentary pointed out, a much fuller answer is required. It would also be reasonable to expect the most able candidates to add depth to their arguments by utilising the insights of Biblical criticism, especially as these are now set for study in the first section of the specification, where the Creation and Flood stories are set texts.