

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit F (RSS06) *Old Testament*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate B



2009 (June) Unit F Old Testament

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Candidate B

- 2 (a) With reference to the Old Testament passages you have studied, examine the concept of covenant.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

2a In the Old Testament, Yahweh makes covenants with Abraham and with Moses but directed at all of the Hebrews. The Covenant with Abraham recorded in Genesis 17 is intimate; the God speaks directly with Abraham 'this is my covenant with you, you are to be the father of many nations' (Chapter 4) This is a covenant exclusive to Abraham, it is promisory. The meaning of covenant is an agreement between two parties, one dominant, one submissive, that set out the terms of relationship between the two parties. In this case, Yahweh is dominant and sets out that gives blessings, descendants and land to Abraham in ~~the~~ as a reward for following his covenant.

The concept of covenant in this passage is one that is made in flesh, 'every male among you must be circumcised' (Genesis 17: 12) This is the beginning of the development of the Hebrews as a nation, they are now ~~the males~~ (the males) are physically different to other religions. Therefore covenant is setting a way for God to set apart his chosen

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people and give them favour in return. The concept of covenant here, therefore, is for Yahweh to begin to establish his people and give them something in return.

The fact that Abraham is willing to leave his family and homeland for a relatively unknown God means that a strong element of faith on the submissive party's part is crucial. In Genesis 22, Abraham is willing to sacrifice his son, Isaac, for Yahweh, which emphasises how much faith is required for the covenant to be followed

through. Commitment is also indispensable in the covenant as Abraham ~~does~~ must believe Yahweh is benevolent and doing the right thing in making him sacrifice Isaac.

The concept of the covenant in Exodus is much on a larger scale. It is the fulfilment of God's covenant with Abraham. God summons Moses to the summit of Mount Sinai and gives ~~ten~~ the Decalogue and 613 mitzvot to him. These are the terms that the Hebrews must abide by. If they follow Yahweh's commands He will 'keep faith' (Exodus 20:5) with them and they will become a 'kingdom of priests', the Hebrews will be role models for other nations, again ~~set~~ this shows favour and setting apart by Yahweh, who is grateful, like He was with Abraham, for when His

people keep his covenant. Yahuweh gives
 the Hebrews and Abraham responsibility
~~to~~ to keep the covenant, which
 underlines its importance, and that it's
 the way in which it Yahuweh's
 followers must worship and show
 their love for him for him.
 and knowledge of the two covenants

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The candidate displayed a sound knowledge and understanding of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, making good use of the texts. The call of Abraham and the story relating to the near sacrifice of Isaac were used to illustrate further the commitment and faith that were at the heart of Old Testament covenant making. This response gave more than mere description, and the relationship between the two covenants was also considered. Both covenants were related to the concept of covenant as an agreement between unequal parties. Much more might have been said, however, about the concept itself. The candidate might have discussed in more depth the structure of vassal treaties of the Ancient Near East and the extent to which this was reflected in the Old Testament covenants studied. This would have helped put the script more securely into the A grade that this candidate was awarded.

The candidate's communication skills were of a high order. Progression of thought could be seen in the use of paragraphing and spelling, punctuation and grammatical construction were all sound.

Level 5 (22 marks)

(b) 'The idea of covenant suggests an impersonal relationship with God.'

Assess this view.

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

2b The idea that the covenant suggests an impersonal relationship with God can be agreed with by the fact that God made a covenant with a whole nation in Exodus, and although He chose Moses as a messenger to ~~the~~ to give the message of the covenant to His people, He was in fact addressing a whole nation.

On the other hand ~~can not believe~~ For the covenant to be personal, God would have to establish some level of common ground with ~~the~~ the covenant's submissive party which He in no way does when giving the Decalogue. At the very least are commands, eight of which are prohibition laws, forbidding the Hebrews from doing certain things. These ~~apodictic~~ laws make Yahweh seem severe, and being given straight after the Theophany in which 'Smoke rose... people trembled vidently... the trumpet grew louder and louder' (Exodus 19:18) highlights God's authority, and emphasises that He is an omnipotent being and they, collectively, are His people.

On the other hand, the idea of making a covenant, God chose and set apart a people, and is therefore personal with that nation as opposed to the whole world. Also, Yahweh's covenant with

Abraham seems, in Genesis 22, seems entirely personal, He asks Abraham and only Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son. However the fact that Abraham is willing to do this for his God can underline Abraham's submissiveness to God, thereby highlighting God's authority, giving ~~him~~ an Abraham and God great distance between the two of them, therefore the idea of the covenant is impersonal.

The very nature of covenant is to set out terms of relationship, and by Yahweh doing so, He is commanding to his people what he wants them to do, whether this be as a nation or individually, this impersonalises God by making Him seem higher than his people and instructing them on how He wants their relationship to be like.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

The candidate created a reasoned and persuasive argument in support of the viewpoint stated in the question. A variety of points were made to support the argument: the legalist nature of the Mosaic covenant and the stress on God's transcendence and holiness in the description of the theophany. The candidate commented also on the sense of distance created by the submissiveness of Abraham, as seen in his willingness to sacrifice his son. The candidate came to the conclusion that the very nature of a covenant led to an impersonal relationship.

On the other side of the debate, the candidate briefly pointed out that the idea of election implied a personal relationship with Israel, and also referred to God's covenant with Abraham as personal. Much more might have been said, however. The candidate might, for instance, have referred to the highly personal language used in Exodus 19⁴⁻⁵.

Again, the candidate displayed sound communication skills, giving clear and coherent organisation of information'.

Level 6 (12 marks)

- 3 (a) Examine the types of prophecy found in the 10th and 9th centuries BCE.
(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

3a In 1 Kings we see Samuel, who is a seer, a judge.

In 1 Samuel we see the prophet Samuel as a seer, a king maker, a judge, a priest and a Nabi. Although an official definition is never of a ~~established~~ prophet is never established, and Samuel is never actually called a 'prophet' he in the ~~the~~ book of Samuel, he is declared a prophet with kind-sight.

The ~~idea~~ purpose of a prophet is to bring the Hebrews back to the covenant. This is what Samuel tries to do. By appointing a King of Israel under God's instruction, Samuel can help make Israel a unified nation and then the people can follow Yahweh again rather than be syncretic and follow both Yahweh and the Baalim from Canaanite religion.

Samuel is ~~see~~ is a seer, meaning what he predicts / sees will happen one the future does come true. Samuel uses his powers as a seer to anoint Saul, the future King of Israel, who can bring

Samuel took a... oil and put poured it over Saul's head' (1 Samuel 10) As a prophet Samuel had the abilities to see who was the King Yahweh intended for Israel and ~~to~~ could ~~an~~ physically anoint

him as king. Samuel prophesies that that the right man will be king and can give him to Israel, and to bring the Hebrews back to the covenant, fulfilling his role as a prophet.

In 1 Kings we see the prophet Elijah who is a ~~pr~~ holds so much faith in God Yahweh that he makes his job harder in the Baal Epic when he poured water ~~of~~ over the bull that Yahweh eventually set fire to, proving himself stronger than Baal. This ~~made many~~ made many Hebrews realise Yahweh is omnipotent and the God they should be following and brings them back to the covenant.

We see Canaanite prophets in 1 Kings who are ecstatic they 'danced wildly, cried ... cried ... gashed themselves ... raved ... ranted' (~~1 Kings 18: 26-30~~) (1 Kings 18: 26-30) This shows prophecy as taking over people, the Baal worshippers were almost in a trance, hoping, at most desperate that Baal would set fire to their bull and bring them rain.

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The response to this question concentrated on two particular incidents: the anointing of Saul in 1 Samuel 10 and the competition on Mt. Carmel. After stating that the main role of a prophet was to bring the people back to the covenant, the candidate illustrated this with reference to Samuel creating a unified nation through making Saul king and to the people's acknowledgement of God's omnipotence through what Elijah did on the mountain. The candidate also referred to Samuel as a seer, using the anointing narrative as an example of his powers of prediction. In the final paragraph, there was a brief examination of ecstatic prophecy as illustrated by the actions of the Baal prophets on Mt. Carmel.

This answer would have been improved with reference to other types of prophets, e.g. court prophets, and with the use of a wider range of textual material. Using 1 Samuel 9, the candidate might have considered other features of the seer, and reference to 1 Samuel 10 would have led to more detailed comment on ecstatic prophecy. The answer might also have included a consideration of Elijah as showing a transitional stage in prophecy, with reference not only to the Carmel narrative but also to the incidents recorded in 1 Kings 19 and 21.

Again, the candidate showed good organisation of material through paragraphing and a 'high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar'.

Level 4 (16 marks)

- (b) Assess the view that Samuel was a more important prophet than Elijah in the development of prophecy.

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

3b. Samuel may be considered the more important prophet than Elijah because he gave Israel a king, Saul, who helped the Israel become a stronger nation, improved trade relationships with other nations and helped Israel defend itself from Philistine attack. He tried to bring the Hebrews back to the covenant and to some extent he succeeded, he brought together the Hebrews and fulfilled his God appointed role as king maker. However I believe that Elijah was more important in his role as prophet. In terms of the development of prophecy, Samuel was key; as the first prophet he helped bring some Hebrews' worship of Canaanite religion escalated to far, he also he also had the challenge in making the idea of a prophet and prophecy be established to the Israel Hebrews.

By the time Elijah came along a prophecy was no longer a new concept. I would certainly argue that Elijah was a more important

and more successful prophet which aids the development of prophecy because the Hebrews now took what the prophets had to say to do according to God more literally.

When Elijah was told Jezebel that she had to be fed to the dogs (1 Kings) and Ahab was forgiven for repenting, the Hebrews could see the severity of the ~~co~~ not keeping the covenant, and that God was a forgiving God and therefore there was the ~~possibility~~ ^{choice} possibility of the Hebrews going back to the covenant and properly worshipping Yahweh and being forgiven.

Overall I believe that Elijah developed prophecy further by ~~also~~ confirming the covenant's importance and the fact that ~~he~~ a prophet was sent after Elijah. Samuel showed the Hebrews that Yahweh was serious about His Covenant being kept.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

The candidate made an attempt to focus on the question and to give more than one viewpoint, but came up with very limited arguments. The answer centred, as in (a), with the prophetic task of bringing Israel back to the covenant.

In support of the statement, the following arguments might have been considered:

- Samuel's involvement with Saul raised prophecy to a new level; he was not just a seer, being paid for a service given.
- He promoted a type of prophecy that was not given to the excesses of the ecstatic prophets; Elijah's behaviour in the Carmel narrative could be said to represent a more primitive type of prophet.

- The two strands of tradition in 1 Samuel 8-10 reveal a type of prophet that had connections with the king, but was not a 'yes' man and in this he paved the way for Elijah and the later classical prophets.

Against the statement:

- Elijah's ethical monotheism marked a significance development in the type of message delivered by prophets.
- His ministry came from a sense of vocation and inner conviction rather than from being a paid professional.
- The Horeb incident reveals both the close relationship with God and the political significance that were seen in the classical prophets.

Again, sensible paragraphing and sound spelling etc. were reflected throughout this answer.

Level 4 (8 marks)