



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies (2060)

RSS06 Old Testament

Report on the Examination

2010 examination - January series

Further copies of this Report are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2010 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334). Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX
Dr Michael Cresswell Director General.

General Comments

There was a very small entry for this paper, though slightly more than for January 2009. There was a wide range of ability, reflecting different levels of maturity. A number of scripts displayed very uneven performance; the impression given was that some candidates were well prepared for the first topic they selected, but much less confident with the second. By far the most popular questions were 2 (almost all candidates choosing this) and 4. Question 1 was the least popular, though it was attempted by a number of candidates.

Many candidates still fail to make appropriate use of the Bibles that are available for use in the examination. Some simply paraphrase passages with a minimum of comment. Others are more selective, but the quotations are used more as add-ons rather than being integral parts of the answer. Effective use of the Bible in the examination is a skill that centres might wish to develop with their students.

Question 1

Part (a)

This question required an examination of the biblical account of the Exodus event, supported by exemplification from the set texts. The phrase, 'traditions of the Exodus', was taken from the specification. Some candidates who attempted this question, however, interpreted it as meaning 'traditions stemming from the Exodus' and wrote about Passover and the Sabbath. Credit was given to such answers, providing there was some link made to the Exodus event. Others interpreted the Exodus traditions very broadly, commenting on incidents prior and subsequent to the crossing of the Red Sea. Again, credit was given as appropriate. Although knowledge of the Exodus event was shown in part (b), very few referred to it in any detail in (a) or to Exodus 15.

Part (b)

Answers to this part were mostly much more successful. Almost all candidates made an attempt to argue from both sides of the debate. Most concentrated on problems relating to geography, dating, and the number of slaves said to have left. Two candidates referred to minimalist and maximalist approaches to the tradition, though with some confusion. There was also one comment on the inclusion of myth in Exodus 16.

Question 2

Part (a)

Most candidates were quite well prepared for this question. There was effective consideration of the Abrahamic covenant, though there was some confusion with his call. Knowledge of the Mosaic covenant was, as in previous examination sessions, much less secure. Most answers made no reference to the key verses in Exodus 19. Use of the Bibles might have helped candidates here.

Part (b)

The quality of responses varied considerably, though most candidates saw what was required and attempted to argue both sides. There were a few very mature and perceptive comments on the relationship between the two covenants. One candidate referred (albeit briefly) to the view of many scholars that the Abrahamic covenant was a much later creation than the Mosaic.

Question 3

Part (a)

As in previous examination sessions, a significant number of candidates who attempted this question showed only a limited knowledge of the set texts. All responses commented on the Mount Carmel incident, but only a few went further than this. Many answers also wrote generally about Elijah's role without relating it to the development of prophecy. In some answers that were focussed on the question, there was confusion about Elijah's links with the types of prophecy represented by seers and ecstasies. There were, however, some competent and confident answers that included a consideration of his prophetic ministry as an anticipation of 8th century prophecy.

Part (b)

Most candidates answered this question confidently, arguing from different viewpoints. The most successful responses came from candidates who referred to the full range of set texts, as this opened up more possible arguments.

Question 4

Part (a)

This was possibly the most straightforward question on the paper and it was very popular. Yet it elicited many very weak responses. The question required candidates to consider Amos' criticisms of Israelite society and was deliberately broad: candidates had a very wide range of material to choose from. Some, however, missed the point almost completely, concentrating on Amos' predictions of judgement and making creditable points almost by chance. Many appeared to think that Amos' denunciations of the surrounding nations were addressed to Israel. Of those answers that were relevant, some made general comments with no exemplification or quoted texts from Amos with little or no development.

Part (b)

Many candidates struggled to present more than one viewpoint in answering this question. Most were able to argue that the covenant was central to Amos' teaching, but very often the other viewpoint consisted of a bare statement that the word 'covenant' was not used by Amos. The possible implications of this were not considered and as a result, many answers reached no more than level 3. Candidates might have argued that other themes (e.g. the Day of the Lord) were more central, or considered the view that the concept of covenant developed at a later date.