
DIVINITY**9011/11**

Paper 1 Prophets of the Old Testament

October/November 2016

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 100

Published

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Mark Bands and Grade Criteria

0	answer absent/completely irrelevant
1–4	largely irrelevant / very short
5–7	unfinished / lacking potential / more inaccurate than accurate some points, but very weak
8–9	immature / limited knowledge unable to create coherent argument
10–11	basic level of knowledge / limited reasoning largely relevant / sees the main point / fair quality of language but limited
12–13	level of knowledge just wider than basic / in general sticks to the point reasonable coverage / reasonable technical vocabulary has done a bit of reading / reasonable structure moderate to reasonable quality of language
14–15	fairly good knowledge / fair construction / has several of the main points clearly has read something / competent with technical vocabulary some analytical ability / sees what the question wants reasonable quality of language / some idea of critical scholarship
16–17	something more than factual regurgitation of just one book interacts with the question / quotes scholars' views fairly accurately addresses what the question is looking for good quality of language / good knowledge of the text
18–19	working with the text and books they have read, can apply them, and can compare arguments / very good knowledge of the text good knowledge of scholars / can identify important issues / well-constructed evaluates / good quality of language / interacts well with the question
20–25	outstanding / sophisticated expression for an 18-year-old very good detail / sustains fluency / well read

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Section A

Prophecy in general and Pre-canonical Prophets

1 'We know nothing about the real character and personality of Moses – all we know is what God told him to say and do.' How far do you agree?

The suggestion that all we know is what God told Moses to say and do can be rooted in the nature of Moses' call, for example:

- In Exod.3:11, Moses responds to God: 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh to bring Israel out of Egypt?', Yahweh replies simply, 'I will be with you' – in other words Moses is to be used as the instrument of Yahweh's purpose.
- Moses goes on to complain that he will not be believed (ch.4), because they will reject his claim to have been called by God. God then gives him a series of signs by which he can claim authority, e.g. the rod/serpent (v.4)
- In particular, Moses objects that he is slow of speech and tongue (4:10), after which God says to him, 'Who has made man's mouth – who makes him dumb, deaf, seeing or blind?' I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.'
- Moses is so reluctant that God gives him Aaron as a mouthpiece: i.e. Moses has no real personality.
- The whole sequence of events that then follows is orchestrated by God, e.g. the plagues, the departure from Egypt, the consecration of the first-born, Israel's deliverance, and the various wilderness experiences. In the Sinai theophany, Moses reports God's words to the people. God tells Moses that he is coming to him in a thick cloud so that the people will be able to hear when he speaks to Moses, and thus will believe Moses, all of which implies that Moses is the instrument rather than the player.

Alternatively, candidates might point to narratives in which Moses' personality does emerge, e.g.

- his spontaneous killing of the Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew (ch.2);
- the fact that Moses is not reluctant to express his own displeasure, e.g. the fourfold objection to his call is given in the face of the overwhelming power of Yahweh;
- similarly in Num.11 Moses is not afraid to show displeasure to Yahweh over the burden of governing the people, which evokes a response from Yahweh (the 70 elders);
- Moses marries a Cushite woman despite possible opposition;
- He argues against Yahweh's decision to kill the people, and his intercession succeeds (Num. 14:20).

Credit all attempts to create an appropriate argument and to use evidence in support of it.

2 Assess the view that Israelite prophecy began with Samuel.

This is primarily the position taken by, for example, F.M. Cross.

- Those who support this view generally do so because they believe that the need for prophets would arise only at a time when Israel had a monarchy, because prophecy is a political institution tied to the court (e.g. Gad and Nathan).
- Candidates might point specifically to the failure of Eli's leadership, and to the emergence of Samuel as a clever politician who developed a number of roles by which he consolidated his position.
- In particular, Samuel seems to have engineered the rise of the monarchy as the only kind of institution capable of dealing with the Philistine threat. A strong, centralised monarchy was needed in order to unite the different tribal factions and to build a military presence capable of dealing with the Philistines. Candidates might point to Samuel's success in eventually neutralizing the Philistines through the agency of Saul and David.

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- Candidates may also look at the role of Samuel as a seer; and the editorial note in 1 Samuel 9, which traces the development of prophecy in the person of Samuel, through seers, pointing out that the office of Samuel developed at this particular historical moment.
- Some may point to the influence of Samuel as a politician, war leader, priest, etc., which some may use to support the quotation; whereas others may use it to suggest that such a picture is a later editorial read-back in which Samuel becomes a man of all trades.

In opposition to the claim in the essay title:

- Some will argue the prior claims of Abraham and Moses, for example, particularly the latter on the basis that Moses was the yardstick by which later prophets were judged, in relation to their support for the Mosaic covenant.
- Some might discuss the word 'Israelite', since the term could be taken to mean 'in Israel' geographically, in which case some will argue for the derivation of Israelite prophecy from the Canaanite model.
- The derivation of Israelite prophecy from the practices of the surrounding nations, indicated through the records of Mari, Nuzu and elsewhere.
- The view that prophecy developed independently in different nations in response to their different perceptions about God/the gods, and so on.

3 'Elijah was different from other prophets.' Assess this claim.

A claim for 'difference about Elijah' might be built on a number of grounds, for example:

- his immediate confrontation with Ahab concerning the rain, which initiates a vicious conflict with the devotees of Canaanite or Phoenician Baal, who was held by them to control the rain;
- the miracle of the widow's cruse (1 Kings 17);
- his raising from death of the widow's son;
- his 'translation to heaven' (as opposed to a normal death);
- Narratives such as these marked Elijah as the greatest in the prophetic tradition, hence the veneration in which he was held in later times; e.g. his appearance representing prophecy at the transfiguration of Jesus; no other prophet had this collection of abilities and characteristics.
- In the same vein, he was seen as the forerunner of the Messiah.
- In the contest on Mount Carmel, Elijah's power is demonstrated through the elimination of Jezebel's prophets, the difference from the latter being made obvious by their slaughter. The consuming of the offering through fire comes after an invocation to God to show his power, as opposed (for example) to the way in which Yahweh controls Moses.
- In the revelation to Elijah on Horeb, the extremes of his character are shown: from having eliminated the Baal prophets, he now appears to be scared of Jezebel.
- If this revelation is Elijah's call, it is different from those of other prophets, e.g. the commission of Moses.

Candidates are likely to be able to show that Elijah nevertheless had many characteristics in common with other prophets, e.g.

- the fact that he does appear to have been called (1 Kings 19);
- his working in an ecstatic state (e.g. running ahead of Ahab's chariot (1 Kings 18);
- his defence of Yahwism against the influence of those who worshipped foreign deities;
- his demands for social justice, as in the story of Naboth's vineyard;
- the fact that other prophets were miracle workers, etc.

These and other points will be illustrated by comparison with the similar deeds and words of other prophets.

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4 The Old Testament prophets used many different methods to deliver their messages. In your view, which method was the most effective, and why?

Candidates are likely to refer to a number of different methods used by the prophets, e.g.

- the prophetic messenger formulae: *Thus says Yahweh / Oracle of Yahweh*, etc.
- the role of ecstasy;
- reference to visions and auditions, e.g. as in the call narratives;
- discussion of *nabi*, *roeh*, *hozeh*, and what these titles signify;
- prophets like Samuel who could deliver their messages whilst acting as priests, whilst delivering *urim & tummim*, or as cultic prophets (as in the Saul/Samuel narrative);
- symbolic acts and symbolic visions;
- prediction, as in the Samuel/Saul narrative of the lost asses;
- blessings and curses (e.g. Balak & Balaam);
- miracles, e.g. with the pre-canonical prophets.

Candidates might make a case for any one or more of these as being the most effective, e.g.

- miracle as most indicative of the use of divine power;
- ecstasy as the inherent prophetic state when delivering oracles;
- symbolic acts because of their graphic nature;
- visions, because of their dramatic power, e.g. Amos.

Credit any reasonable line of argument here.

5 Examine the claim that kings and prophets saw each other as necessary evils.

With regard to the viewpoint of kings, they might generally have held this view because for example:

- prophets anointed kings, so kings had to submit to this process;
- court prophets had specifically supportive functions within the king's court which could cause problems, as with the interplay between Ahab, Micaiah ben Imlah, and Zedekiah ben Chena'anah (1 Kings 22);
- some will focus on the uneasy relationship between Samuel and Saul, not least Samuel's condemnation and ultimate removal of Saul because of disobedience;
- Ahab evidently felt compelled to listen to Elijah, despite Elijah's condemnation of his wife's religious ideas and his own treatment of Naboth;
- Similarly, Nathan's criticisms of David (2 Samuel 11).

From the viewpoint of prophets, e.g.

- Samuel was probably compelled mainly by historical circumstance to engineer the election of Saul as king, since Saul had the military capability to cement an Israelite alliance against the Philistine threat; moreover there are clearly points in the narrative where Samuel sees Saul as an evil rather than as a good, not least in the matter the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15) and Saul's consultation of Samuel's spirit (1 Samuel 28);
- court prophets were employed by kings, so they would necessarily have had to be careful in what they said and did. Micaiah ben Imlah is an exception that confirms the rule, since the rest of the court prophets feared to tell the king the truth (1 Kings 22);
- by the time of prophets like Isaiah of Jerusalem and Jeremiah, kingship had become entrenched, so it would not have been possible for prophets to remove kings, but the dealings between these prophets and the kings of the time were not generally comfortable, as witness the lack of decision of Judean kings like Jeconiah and Zedekiah before the Babylonian invasions.

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Candidates are likely to give instances where kings and prophets got on well, and regarded each other with at least a measure of approval, e.g. David and Nathan, Ahijah and Jeroboam, Jeremiah and Josiah. Some might argue that the relationship between prophets and kings was probably like the relationship between any types of related functionaries – the OT only gives us a sample, and inevitably it tends to report the less favourable samples.

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Section B

Pre-exilic Prophets, with special reference to Amos, Hosea, Isaiah of Jerusalem and Jeremiah

6 Critically examine the use Amos makes of the concept of God's absolute power.

God's power is seen in the OT as incomparable. Candidates might refer to the picture of Yahweh as the divine warrior – as Lord of the heavenly armies. This is illustrated chiefly through the doom oracles in Amos, e.g.

- 1:2 - 2:16: introductory indictment of foreign nations, Israel and Judah, where the language is about destructive power, e.g. 1:5 – 'I will break the bar of Damascus'; 1:7 – 'I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza'; 2:13 – 'I will press you down in your place';
- the lion terminology, such as 3:8 – 'The lion has roared – who will not fear?'
- the punishment of Israel, e.g. 3:12 – the shepherd who rescues bits of animal from the lion's mouth/the similarly comprehensive punishment of Israel;
- ch.4: – rain/pestilence/mildew/blight;
- the 'fat cows of Bashan' being led away with hooks;
- 5:1ff. – 'Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel ...' – 'the Lord makes destruction flash forth against the strong';
- 'Woe to those who are at ease in Zion', etc. (6:1ff.)
- 7–9: The five visions of God's judgement and indictment, etc.

To examine themes such as these, candidates might put this catalogue of power into Amos' theme of the Day of the Lord, where instead of vindication, Israel will experience darkness and gloom; moreover the Israelites who feel themselves secure will be the first to be sent into exile to an unclean land (7:17). In the 5th vision, the destruction is complete, since no-one will escape, even if they flee to the depths of Sheol (9:2).

In the earlier chapters, candidates might refer specifically to Amos' portrayal of Yahweh's universalism. In terms of God's power and control over the nations, the comprehensive nature of the threats against all nations would have been new territory for those who heard him.

7 Consider the view that all of Hosea's prophecy was the result of Gomer's sexual immorality.

This is a strong claim which candidates are likely to reject in favour of the fact that Hosea develops a number of themes, not all of which are related to his experience of Gomer's immorality, although some may argue that this was the main catalyst for his messages of condemnation and doom:

- Hosea's issues with Israel are clearly expressed through the story of his relationship with Gomer, and candidates are likely to suggest that Hosea's marital relationship was the biggest influence on his prophecies, however this influence is to be understood, i.e. as a parable, a real-terms comparison, an allegory, and so on. Infidelity preyed on his mind to the extent that he used it as the prime metaphor for Israel's abandonment of God and for the possibility of future reconciliation.
- In the same connection, Hosea's children/his entire familial relationships are an extension of the marital metaphor, particularly in the naming and re-naming of the children.
- Another related influence here is the likely cultic background, i.e. Gomer's status as (possibly) a cultic prostitute, and (again, possibly) Hosea's cultic involvement.
- Hosea's major positive theme with regard to Yahweh is his *hesed* – his redeeming love, through which he allures Israel/Gomer into the wilderness in order to renew the relationship.
- Hosea also refers to God's love as that of a father for his son, which again might have been prompted by the metaphor of the family reunited.

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The key word in the question is ‘all’, so candidates are expected to investigate themes where the issue of sexual infidelity is *not* the main motivating force for Hosea, e.g.

- The nature of the covenant obligation. Hosea employs the ‘covenant lawsuit’ form (e.g. 4:1–3) to show that God’s judgement is upon Israel. Priests and prophets have rejected the knowledge and teachings of God, and have infected the people with the same malaise. The sins of which Israel stands accused are primarily a rejection of the Ten Commandments, which are the centre of covenant obligation. Israel has lost the purity of the wilderness period.
- Some might refer to the *compulsion* from Yahweh to prophesy: ‘Go, take to yourself ...’ (1:2) – in other words the main influence on Hosea was God’s command, which cannot be rejected.
- Alongside the idea of redemptive love, Hosea also emphasizes the theme of God’s punishment of Israel: punishment comes before restoration, and this theme was probably influenced by the *political* situation. This was obviously a major influence on Hosea, since Israel was suffering from the effects of war with Assyria, and was in a state of near-anarchy. After the conquest of 733–32, four Israelite kings were assassinated in 15 years (cf. 4:2 – ‘murder follows murder’), and Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 721.

8 ‘Symbolic acts were more important in the prophecies of Jeremiah than of Isaiah of Jerusalem.’ Discuss.

- For Isaiah: 7:1–9 – Isaiah’s delivery to Ahaz of the sign of Shear-Jashub in the Syro-Ephraimite war as an assurance to the king that in the worst case, a remnant shall return from captivity / 7:10–17: the second sign, of Immanuel – God is with us / 8:1–4 – Maher-shalal-hash-baz as a sign of assurance to Ahaz / 20:1–6 – Isaiah walking naked and barefoot as a warning to Egypt of approaching captivity.
- For Jeremiah: 13:1–11 – the linen belt, symbolizing the rotten state of Judah / 16:1–9 – Jeremiah forbidden to marry and have children – as an important reminder that the nation’s destruction was imminent / 18:1–12 – the potter’s house: God as the sovereign potter who works the clay of all nations and peoples / 19:1–15 – smashing the clay pot in Hinnom, symbolic of smashing Judah / 27:1–28:17 – Jeremiah and the yoke symbolizing unconditional surrender to Babylon / 32:1–15 – Jeremiah’s purchase of the field to symbolize an eventual return to normality / 43:8–13 – burying stones in the entrance to Pharaoh’s palace to symbolize the fate of the exiles in Egypt / 51:59–64 – throwing the scroll in the Euphrates, to symbolize Babylon’s destruction.

Candidates are at liberty to choose any criteria they like for establishing which set of symbolic acts are more important:

- For example some might argue that those associated with Jeremiah are more frequent in his prophecy, and are therefore more an integral part of his prophecy than those of Isaiah, where the main influence comes from his call and from the royal Davidic theology.
- Some might argue that there are no real grounds for viewing one set of symbolic acts as more important than another, since they are all part of God’s message.
- Some might argue that those acts associated with national destruction and restoration are more important than any others, and perhaps again reach the conclusion that both Isaiah and Jeremiah had much to say of equal importance.

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9 ‘The pre-exilic prophets added nothing new to the work and message of the pre-canonical prophets.’ How far do you agree?

Some might agree on the grounds that the pre-exilic and pre-canonical prophets exercised the same basic functions but in different historical periods, e.g.

- all prophets can be said to have possessed the ability and determination to deliver Yahweh’s word regardless of the consequences (expect examples, such as Elijah and Ahab, Amos and Jeroboam II);
- both pre-canonical and pre-exilic prophets appear to have had calls (e.g. Moses, Samuel & Elijah; Isaiah, Jeremiah);
- both groups exercised a check on the power of the king;
- both criticised priests and false prophets (as well as the king) for covenant disobedience;
- candidates might make various claims about ecstatic behaviour for both groups;
- both used oracular messenger formulae.

Some might argue that the work of the pre-canonical prophets was seminal for those who came later, so there was a difference of *importance*, for example:

- in so far as the pre-canonical prophets established the Sinai covenant, adherence to which became the hallmark of a true prophet, so nothing new was added by the pre-exilic prophets;
- some will claim that the pre-canonical prophets were miracle workers whereas the pre-exilic prophets generally were not, at least not to the same degree; so again, pre-exilic prophets had little or nothing to add here;
- equally, some will argue that prophets like Moses, Samuel and Elijah were multi-functional in a way that the pre-exilic prophets were not.

Conversely, some will argue that pre-exilic prophets certainly did add new dimensions to what the pre-canonical prophets did, e.g.

- primarily, they issued a scale of threat not seen in the words of the pre-canonical prophets, especially Amos, whose threat of doom was total, or close to it;
- in the political arena, the pre-exilic prophets dealt with a much greater level of military threat in terms of the relative powers of nations such as Assyria and Babylonia. The stakes were much higher in the pre-exilic period, as witness the fact that both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were eventually annexed;
- pre-exilic prophets were different by the very fact that their oracles became canonical in connection with the books that bear their name. Some might see this as a mere fact of developmental history
- pre-exilic prophets sometimes used salvation oracles in a way not seen in the pre-canonical prophets.

Some might argue that all prophets are unified in their being mouthpieces for the will of Yahweh. Accept any attempt to make a logical case in connection with the question.

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Section C

REVISED STANDARD VERSION

10 Comment on points of interest or difficulty in four of the following passages (wherever possible answers should refer to the context of the passage but should not retell the story from which the passage is taken):

(a) And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” (Numbers 11:27)

The general context is where Moses complains to God about the mutterings of the people in the wilderness concerning their lack of food, etc.. Yahweh’s response is the instruction to commission 70 elders to receive a share of Moses’ spirit in order to bear the burden with him, in the course of which the extract raises the question of prophetic ecstasy.

Candidates might comment on some of the following:

- credit details of the narrative in ch.11, although the main focus should be on the verses given;
- this extract refers to the phenomenon of contagious ecstasy, where two elders received the spirit even though they were outside the camp;
- comparison might be made with e.g. 1 Samuel 10; 1 Kings 22;
- it is assumed that the tent of meeting was outside the camp;
- Joshua’s suggestion that Moses should forbid Eldad & Medad and Moses’ reply: ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets.’
- arrival of the quails, etc..
- discussion of the nature of ecstasy, here apparently as an exilic phenomenon – used by some to argue in favour of a Mosaic origin for it during the wilderness period.

(b) And if you say in your heart, “How may we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?” – when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:21–22)

The context is a speech from Moses, confirming that the main criterion for distinguishing true from false prophets is whether or not the word comes to pass.

Candidates might comment on some of the following:

- Moses insists that there is an alternative to the divinatory methods that have been condemned – God will raise up prophetic spokesmen instead, to proclaim his will;
- these spokesmen will have the Mosaic qualities that made him archetypal as a prophet, such as his call, mission, miracle-working, intercessory function, leadership qualities, etc.
- the gobbet gives the distinguishing marks of true prophecy: it must be consistent with Mosaic Yahwism / must come from an Israelite, not a foreigner / must come to pass to be regarded as legitimate / death is threatened for false prophets who presume to speak in Yahweh’s name;
- fulfilment is given as the test of a true prophet in this extract in 20–22. Candidates should discuss the problems associated with such criteria, e.g. the fact that false prophets used the same oracular formulae as ‘true’ prophets / the people could not distinguish true from false / the case of Micaiah ben Imlah is a case in point;
- some might refer to the death of Hananiah in the Book of Jeremiah;

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- the overall portrait of Moses as the fountainhead of prophecy, and the prototype of the true prophet (34:10–11) is presumably read back into the narrative, and some candidates may comment on the possibility of anachronism.

- (c) **When he turned back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all these signs came to pass that day. When they came to Gibeah, behold, a band of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them. And when all who knew him before saw how he prophesied with the prophets, the people said to one another, “What has come over the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?”** (1 Samuel 10:9–11)

The context is the narrative of the secret choice of Saul as king (9:1 – 10:16).

Candidates might refer to some of the following points:

- the context begins with a description of Saul as being taller and more handsome than anybody else in Israel, which were clearly seen as hallmarks of a potential king!
- Saul meets Samuel through the loss of his father’s asses: Saul’s servant suggests paying the seer to divine the whereabouts of the animals, at the end of which Saul ate with Samuel, and the following day Samuel anointed Saul as prince over Israel. Samuel directs Saul towards the Philistine garrison in Gibeath-elohim (a reminder of Saul’s task), and predicts that he will meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with their musical instruments, and that Saul will join them, prophesy with them, and ‘become another man’;
- in the extract, this now comes to pass;
- ‘God gave him another heart’ literally means to make a new man of him, i.e. by prophesying ecstatically with the band of prophets;
- this seems to have been intended as an introductory religious experience to qualify Saul for kingship – i.e. he can relate to God;
- comment might be made on the band of prophets, i.e. the ‘sons of the prophets’, generally organised under the leadership of a prophetic ‘father’;
- ‘Is Saul also among the prophets?’ apparently became a byword/synonym for unusual or unexpected behaviour;
- shortly after, Saul is chosen as king by lot.

- (d) **And there he came to a cave, and lodged there; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the people of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword ...”** (1 Kings 19:9–10a)

The context is the revelation to Elijah on Horeb. Candidates might comment on some of the following:

- the background in the confrontation between Elijah on the one hand and Ahab / Jezebel on the other / the contest on Carmel and destruction of the Baal prophets;
- Elijah, afraid of Jezebel’s counter-measures, goes into the wilderness to sit under a broom tree, after which he encounters an angel who feeds him in order that he will be able to undertake a journey. Elijah suddenly finds himself 130 miles south of Jezreel, well within Judah; and subsequently arrives, with divine help, at Horeb;
- comment on the significance of Horeb / Sinai. Candidates might identify Horeb as northern tradition, Sinai as southern; comparison with the Moses narratives;
- the narrative continues with the theophany and the command to anoint Hazael, Jehu and Elisha;

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- the voice (described as ‘still’ and ‘small’ in v.12) is usually taken as approval of quieter (non-orgiastic) forms of ecstasy, and can be interpreted as Elijah’s call narrative;
- ‘What are you doing here?’ is rhetorical, and serves to introduce the subject of Elijah’s fear for his life;
- it is an open question of why Elijah should be afraid, having vanquished several hundreds of the Baal prophets;
- some may compare this / see it thematically, in connection with prophetic fear and reluctance in other situations;
- God commissions Elijah to return to the wilderness of Damascus to anoint Hazael and Jehu;
- comment likely on the transfer of Elijah’s prophetic status to Elisha.

(e) And Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside him on his right hand and on his left; and the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead?’ And one said one thing, and another said another. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ ” (1 Kings 22:19–21)

The general context is the death of Ahab in battle, the reign of Jehoshaphat in Judah, and the accession of Ahaziah in Israel. Verses 1–40 continue the story of the Aramean / Syrian wars from chapter 20. Syria and Israel had had three years of peace, during which Syria and Israel had made an alliance. The alliance had been successful, along with other allies, in resisting the invading Assyrians at the battle of Qarqar (853). Ahab now allies with Jehoshaphat of Judah, cementing the alliance with a marriage arrangement for his daughter.

Candidates might refer to some of the following points:

- Ahab persuades Jehoshaphat to recapture the disputed town of Ramoth-gilead, east of the Jordan;
- before the raid, they seek God’s approval through the prophets, so Ahab gathers together 400 court prophets, who approve the venture;
- Jehoshaphat thinks this too glib, so asks if there is another ‘prophet of the Lord’ from whom they can enquire. Micaiah ben Imlah arrives, predicts success, but on being pressed by Ahab admits that the venture will fail;
- he details a vision of the heavenly court in which Yahweh asks one of the court to “entice” Ahab so that he will die at Ramoth-gilead. A member of the court volunteers to be a spirit of lying prophecy, and succeeds in persuading the campaign to go ahead. Ahab dies while the battle is lost;
- comment might be made on why Yahweh wishes to deceive Ahab / the nature of the heavenly court / the fact that the editor is saying clearly that false prophecy comes from Yahweh.
- the passage might be an explanation of the phenomenon of false prophecy.

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(f) Now therefore hear the word of the LORD.

You say, “Do not prophesy against Israel,
and do not preach against the house of Isaac.”

Therefore thus says the LORD:

“Your wife shall be a harlot in the city,
and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword,
and your land shall be parcelled out by line;
you yourself shall die in an unclean land,
and Israel shall surely go into exile away from its land.”

(Amos 7:16–17)

The general context is the conversation between Amos and Amaziah at Bethel.

Candidates might comment on some of the following:

- Amaziah was the official priest of the royal sanctuary at Bethel, and had taken exception to Amos, so sent a message to Jeroboam saying that Amos had conspired against him, and had prophesied that Jeroboam would die by the sword and that Israel must go into exile in a foreign land (v.11);
 - the incident is recorded here perhaps because of the threat against the house of Jeroboam in v.9, and Amaziah warns him that Bethel is the king’s sanctuary (where threats against the royal shrine or house are not acceptable, especially from a southern prophet);
 - Amaziah’s instruction to Amos to go back to Judah and earn his keep (“eat bread”) there, which implies that Amos is a professional prophet;
 - Amos asserts that he is not a *nabi* nor one of the *bene hanebiim* (credit reference to the terminology and explanations of it) – by which he appears to mean that he is not a professional prophet or a member of a prophetic guild, but was taken by Yahweh as a layman – a herdsman / dresser of sycamore trees;
 - alternatively, the Hebrew can be translated in the past tense – I was no *nabi*, etc., but was a shepherd, etc. – which implies that Amos does now consider himself to be a professional prophet;
- Amos in this extract rejects Amaziah’s warnings, and counter-attacks with dire predictions of the fate of Amaziah and his family and the impending exile of Israel;
- the division of the land (‘parceled out by line’) means that Israel will be divided up and disposed of;
 - to die in an unclean land means that Amaziah will die in a land which does not obey the laws of Judaism, which for a priest would be anathema;
 - the predictions are concluded by a prediction of exile, which is taken to refer to the Northern Kingdom by Assyria in 722;
 - some argue that Amos was a functionary attached to Bethel, and that Amaziah told him to escape to Judah, since his life was forfeit for making threats against Jeroboam and his sanctuary.

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- (g) **And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days; you shall not play the harlot, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.”**
(Hosea 3:1–3)

The context is the unit Hosea 3:1–5, usually taken as the restoration of Gomer.

Candidates might refer to some of the following points:

- the general interpretation is that Hosea buys back his adulterous wife, disciplines her, and then confirms his continuing love for her;
- this is taken to be an allegory of Yahweh’s continuing love for Israel, which will end in Israel’s restoration after a period of isolation like that in the wilderness before the entry into Canaan;
- these verses encapsulate the essential message of the Book of Hosea: God’s love requires Israel’s (temporary) punishment before her eventual redemption;
- ‘cakes of raisins’ were used in pagan festivals (e.g. Isaiah 16:7; Jer. 7:18);
- a shekel is about 11 grams;
- a homer was about 6.5 bushels;
- a lethech was about 3 bushels;
- Hosea makes no mention of from whom or what he ‘bought her’;
- the implication is that redemption is costly (see Psalm 49.7f., 1 Cor. 6:19–20; 7:23), but Hosea redeemed his wife by love *and* for a price;
- the wife is to have no outside contact, which reflects the idealised isolation of the wilderness wanderings;
- the absence of sacrifice / pillar / ephod / teraphim (household gods) signifies that the wife / Israel will be cut off from her priestly offices; after which Israel will seek a return to the Davidic king (a strange comment which might be a later Judean addition).

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- (h) Hear the word of the LORD, O people of Israel;
 for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land.
 There is no faithfulness or kindness,
 and no knowledge of God in the land ...
 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;
 because you have rejected knowledge,
 I reject you from being a priest to me.
 And since you have forgotten the law of your God,
 I will also forget your children. (Hosea 4:1, 6)

The context is Yahweh's threat that because of constant rebellion, God's judgement is upon Israel.

Candidates might comment on some of the following:

- the use of the prophetic *rib* form – the 'covenant lawsuit' ('contend' ... 'accuse' – the Lord has a controversy/*rib* with the inhabitants of the land);
- verses 4–5 contain an invective against both priest and prophet. As those who represent the people to God, they have rejected true knowledge of God, so the people will be rejected alongside priests and prophets, whom they endorse;
- the real substance of the complaint is that the people have a 'lack of knowledge': 'knowledge' is *da'ath*, which here is a technical term meaning knowledge of the proper observance of the cult. Neither priest nor (presumably cultic) prophet has the required approach to God, since sacrifices are offered to God for the benefit of the cultic practitioners themselves rather than as a proper sacrifice to God;
- destruction of the mother (v.5) means destruction of the children (last line of the gobbet). This applies on an individual and a national level: the people are the children of Israel, so Israel will be destroyed
- this is repeated in the last line: 'I will also forget your children';
- rejection of true knowledge entails rejection of God;
- forgetting God's law means that God will forget them;
- The general context of the lawsuit uses traditional terminology: *faithfulness*, *kindness* (*hesed*), *knowledge of God*.

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- (i) In the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but they could not conquer it. When the house of David was told, “Syria is in league with Ephraim,” his heart and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. And the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go forth to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-jashub your son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool on the highway to the Fuller’s Field ...” (Isaiah 7:1–3)

The context is the involvement of Isaiah in the Syro-Ephraimite War (734–733 BCE), in which Syria and Israel joined in an offensive alliance against Judah.

Candidates might refer to some of the following points:

- Jerusalem was well defended, with a robust wall, and the alliance could not penetrate it;
- the real issue for Judah was the threat to the continuation of the Davidic monarchy (the ‘house of David’) – the alliance decided to ‘go up against Judah and terrify it’ (v.6) and set up the ‘Son of Tabeel’ as a puppet ruler;
- Ahaz is portrayed as a weak ruler whose terror at the prospect of the alliance against him transmitted itself to his subjects, who shake before the wind like trees in a forest;
- Shearjashub means, ‘a remnant shall return’, a symbolic name which acts as a threat and a promise: the threat being that *only* a remnant shall return from exile; the promise that a remnant *shall* indeed return. The emphasis is on God’s promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:8–16. For the remnant, see Isaiah 10:20–23;
- the ‘upper pool’ refers to a reservoir south of the Pool of Siloam;
- the following verses are not clear, but seem to promise a destruction of the alliance against Judah;
- these verses are followed by the sign of Immanuel (‘God with us’), which is a sign of assurance through Isaiah to the terrified Ahaz. The prophecy does not refer to a virgin birth but to a birth to a young woman of marriageable age. It is in turn followed by the sign of Maher-shalal-hash-baz, which predicts the overthrow of the alliance by Assyria.

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- (j) After Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon had taken into exile from Jerusalem Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, together with the princes of Judah, the craftsmen, and the smiths, and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me this vision: Behold, two baskets of figs placed before the temple of the LORD. One basket had very good figs, like first-ripe figs, but the other basket had very bad figs, so bad that they could not be eaten. (Jeremiah 24:1–2)

The context is Jeremiah's vision of the good and bad figs.

Candidates might refer to some of the following points:

- Jeconiah was the son of Jehoiakim, who died in 598 during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem. The city fell about 3 months later in 597. Jeconiah and all his craftsmen were deported to Babylon, and Jehoiakim's brother Zedekiah, a weak and vacillating king, was put on the throne by Babylon as a vassal;
- despite the opposition of Jeremiah and others, Zedekiah revolted against Babylon, and a second siege and destruction followed, so that by 586 much of Judah was devastated. This essentially marked the end of Judah as an independent kingdom;
- those who remained in Palestine and Egypt after the 597 deportation were the 'bad figs', since they appropriated the property of those who were deported to Babylon (the 'good figs'), a theme which is continued in 29:15ff.
- Jeremiah predicted that the exiles would return and become a nation faithful to God;
- Babylon was understood by Jeremiah to be the instrument of God's punishment of Judah, and the exile would last 70 years, so just about no-one alive would see the return.
- candidates might comment on Jeremiah's use of symbolic language in general.

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- (k) **Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are saying to you, “You shall not serve the king of Babylon,” for it is a lie which they are prophesying to you. I have not sent them, says the LORD, but they are prophesying falsely in my name, with the result that I will drive you out and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.**
(Jeremiah 27:14–15)

The context is Jeremiah’s warnings about the yoke of the king of Babylon (27:1–28:17).

Candidates might refer to some of the following points:

- Jeremiah’s main point is that the yoke of Babylon is imposed by God upon Judah and her neighbours, so their plans to rebel against Nebuchadrezzar are in fact against God’s will;
- being warned for rebelling against an enemy might sound bizarre, but Jeremiah is probably being pragmatic – Judea has no chance against the power of Babylon, so rebellion is futile and will lead to complete destruction (which was eventually the case in 586).
- the reason for the Judean conspiracy was the revolt in Nebuchadrezzar’s army (595–594) and the accession of an active Pharaoh in Egypt (Psammetichus II) in 594;
- it was perhaps in response to Jeremiah’s warnings that Zedekiah did not carry out the rebellion, and so was spared Nebuchadrezzar’s reprisals;
- in 27:13 Jeremiah is warning Zedekiah that any nation that does not serve the Babylonian king will die by famine, sword and pestilence;
- hence in this gobbet, Jeremiah repeats a previous warning that since God did not send those prophets who said that Judah would *not* serve the king of Babylon, they are prophesying lies, with the net result that the nation will perish;
- the Temple vessels had been taken to Babylon in the first deportations of 597, and the lying prophets were claiming that those vessels would shortly be returned, which was ludicrously unlikely;
- hence Jeremiah’s advice is (v.17) – Do not listen to them / serve the king of Babylon and stay alive / why should the city become a desolation?
- this extract is followed by Jeremiah’s dealings with one specific false prophet – Hananiah, whose message was the exact opposite. At the end of it, the text notes simply that according to Jeremiah’s prediction, Hananiah died;
- comment might be made on the political situation generally / on the theme of the inviolability of God’s Temple / on the problem Jeremiah had constantly with false prophets.