

**UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
&  
INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**TRS 201 MAIN EXAM, MAY 2012**

**TITLE OF PAPER : Studies in the Old Testament II  
COURSE CODE : TRS 201  
DURATION : 3 Hours**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** 1. Choose and answer **four (4)** questions in all.  
2. Write in clear, grammatically correct sentences.

All questions are worth 25 marks.

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PERMISSION TO DO SO.**

**TRS 201 (M) Studies in the Old Testament II, May 2012**

**Question 1**

Discuss the integration of prediction and proclamation in prophecy with reference to the message of a prophetic book of your choice. You may choose from the selection of books we studied in this course (Amos, Hosea, Isaiah of Jerusalem, Jeremiah, Second Isaiah, Micah, Haggai, Zechariah, Joel and Malachi). [25]

**Question 2**

Identify and describe with fitting examples from prophetic literature, five forms of prophetic speech. [25]

**Question 3**

Choose any prophetic book and identify within it examples of prophetic condemnation of religious formalism. [25]

**Question 4**

Explain with relevant illustrations why the tone of the post-exilic prophetic books is of a mixed nature. [25]

**Question 5**

Analyse Chapter 3 of the book of Lamentations with a focus on the theological views expressed by the author of the poem. [25]

- 1 I am one who has seen affliction  
under the rod of God's wrath;
- 2 he has driven and brought me  
into darkness without any light;
- 3 against me alone he turns his hand,  
again and again, all day long.
  
- 4 He has made my flesh and my skin waste away,  
and broken my bones;
- 5 he has besieged and enveloped me  
with bitterness and tribulation;
- 6 he has made me sit in darkness  
like the dead of long ago.
  
- 7 He has walled me about so that I cannot escape;  
he has put heavy chains on me;
- 8 though I call and cry for help,  
he shuts out my prayer;
- 9 he has blocked my ways with hewn stones,  
he has made my paths crooked.

10 He is a bear lying in wait for me,  
a lion in hiding;  
11 he led me off my way and tore me to pieces;  
he has made me desolate;  
12 he bent his bow and set me  
as a mark for his arrow.

13 He shot into my vitals  
the arrows of his quiver;  
14 I have become the laughingstock of all my people,  
the object of their taunt-songs all day long.  
15 He has filled me with bitterness,  
he has sated me with wormwood.

16 He has made my teeth grind on gravel,  
and made me cower in ashes;  
17 my soul is bereft of peace;  
I have forgotten what happiness is;  
18 so I say, "Gone is my glory,  
and all that I had hoped for from the LORD."  
19 The thought of my affliction and my homelessness  
is wormwood and gall!  
20 My soul continually thinks of it  
and is bowed down within me.  
21 But this I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:

22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
23 they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul,  
"therefore I will hope in him."

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for him,  
to the soul that seeks him.  
26 It is good that one should wait quietly  
for the salvation of the LORD.  
27 It is good for one to bear  
the yoke in youth,  
28 to sit alone in silence  
when the Lord has imposed it,  
29 to put one's mouth to the dust  
(there may yet be hope),  
30 to give one's cheek to the smiter,

and be filled with insults.

- 31 For the Lord will not  
reject forever.
- 32 Although he causes grief, he will have compassion  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;
- 33 for he does not willingly afflict  
or grieve anyone.
- 34 When all the prisoners of the land  
are crushed under foot,  
35 when human rights are perverted  
in the presence of the Most High,  
36 when one's case is subverted  
— does the Lord not see it?
- 37 Who can command and have it done,  
if the Lord has not ordained it?
- 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High  
that good and bad come?
- 39 Why should any who draw breath complain  
about the punishment of their sins?
- 40 Let us test and examine our ways,  
and return to the LORD.
- 41 Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands  
to God in heaven.
- 42 We have transgressed and rebelled,  
and you have not forgiven.
- 43 You have wrapped yourself with anger and pursued us,  
killing without pity;
- 44 you have wrapped yourself with a cloud  
so that no prayer can pass through.
- 45 You have made us filth and rubbish  
among the peoples.
- 46 All our enemies  
have opened their mouths against us;
- 47 panic and pitfall have come upon us,  
devastation and destruction.
- 48 My eyes flow with rivers of tears  
because of the destruction of my people.
- 49 My eyes will flow without ceasing,  
without respite,

50 until the LORD from heaven  
looks down and sees.  
51 My eyes cause me grief  
at the fate of all the young women in my city.

52 Those who were my enemies without cause  
have hunted me like a bird;  
53 they flung me alive into a pit  
and hurled stones on me;  
54 water closed over my head;  
I said, "I am lost."

55 I called on your name, O LORD,  
from the depths of the pit;  
56 you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear  
to my cry for help, but give me relief!"  
57 You came near when I called on you;  
you said, "Do not fear!"  
58 You have taken up my cause, O Lord,  
you have redeemed my life.  
59 You have seen the wrong done to me, O LORD;  
judge my cause.  
60 You have seen all their malice,  
all their plots against me.

61 You have heard their taunts, O LORD,  
all their plots against me.  
62 The whispers and murmurs of my assailants  
are against me all day long.  
63 Whether they sit or rise — see,  
I am the object of their taunt-songs.

64 Pay them back for their deeds, O LORD,  
according to the work of their hands!  
65 Give them anguish of heart;  
your curse be on them!  
66 Pursue them in anger and destroy them  
from under the LORD's heavens.

### **Question 6**

Write a critique on the following extract of a feminist reading of *Song of Songs* by Phyllis Trible. [25]

*Love's Lyrics Redeemed* by Phyllis Trible (1978)

Using Genesis 2-3 as a key for understanding the Song of Songs, we have participated in a symphony of love. Born to mutuality and harmony, a man and a woman live in a garden where nature and history unite to celebrate the one flesh of sexuality. Naked without shame or fear (cf. Gen. 2:25; 3:10), this couple treat each other with tenderness and respect. Neither escaping nor exploiting sex, they embrace and enjoy it. Their love is truly bone of bone and flesh of flesh, and this image of God male and female is indeed very good (cf. Gen. 1:27, 31). Testifying to the goodness of creation, then, eroticism becomes worship in the context of grace.

In this setting there is no male dominance, no female subordination, and no stereotyping of either sex. Specifically, the portrayal of the woman defies the connotations of "second sex." She works, keeping vineyards and pasturing flocks. Throughout the Song she is independent, fully the equal of the man. Although at times he approaches her, more often she initiates their meetings. Her movements are bold and open: at night in the streets and squares she seeks the one whom her *nephesh* loves (3:14). No secrecy hides her yearnings. Moreover, she dares to describe love with revealing metaphors:

*My lover put his hand to the latch,  
and my womb trembled within me. (5:4)*

Never is this woman called a wife, nor is she required to bear children. In fact, to the issues of marriage and procreation the Song does not speak. Love for the sake of love is its message, and the portrayal of the female delineates this message best.

Though love is fulfilled when the woman and the man close the circle of intimacy to all but themselves, my imagination posits a postlude to the poetry. In this fantasy "the cherubim and the flaming sword" appear to guard the entrance to the garden of the Song (cf. Gen. 3:24). They keep out those who lust, moralize, legislate, or exploit. They also turn away literalists. But at all times they welcome lovers to romp and roam in the joys of eroticism:

*Arise, my love my fair one,  
and come away;*

### **Question 7**

With the use of appropriate examples demonstrate the apparent tension between official belief and personal spirituality in the Psalter. [25]

**Question 8**

Drawing supporting critical evidence from the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job discuss the claim that “... *wisdom literature is designed to minister to the whole person – to the intellect, emotions and heart*”. [25]

**Question 9**

Historically analyse and comment on the Jewish attitudes reflected in the books of Ruth, Esther and Jonah towards those outside of the covenant community. [25]

**Question 10**

How can the book of Daniel be seen as an indication of the intersection of religion and politics? [25]