

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

TRS 201 SUPPLEMENTARY EXAM, JULY 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 Studies in the Old Testament II, (S) July 2012

Question 1

Analyse the following text focusing your analysis on the information the text provides about conception and practice of prophecy in the broader Ancient Near Eastern region and in the covenant community of ancient Palestine. [25]

Amos 7:10-17

7 This is what he showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. ⁸And the LORD said to me, 'Amos, what do you see?' And I said, 'A plumb-line.' Then the Lord said,

'See, I am setting a plumb-line

in the midst of my people Israel;

I will never again pass them by;

⁹ the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,

and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,

and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.'

10 Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying,

'Amos has conspired against you in the very centre of the house of Israel; the

land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹For thus Amos has said,

"Jeroboam shall die by the sword,

and Israel must go into exile

away from his land." '

¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, 'O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn

your bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it

is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.'

14 Then Amos answered Amaziah, 'I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I*

am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, ¹⁵and the LORD took me from*

following the flock, and the LORD said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

¹⁶ Now therefore hear the word of the LORD.

You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel,

and do not preach against the house of Isaac."

¹⁷ Therefore, thus says the LORD:

"Your wife shall become a prostitute 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." '

Question 2

Discuss the two elements of prophetic condemnation levelled against the Jewish community by the prophets of the pre-exilic period. [25]

Question 3

With relevant examples from their respective texts, explain Second Isaiah and Ezekiel's use of exaggeration in their prophetic messages. [25]

Question 4

Analyse the following text from Isaiah 56 in the context of the Second Temple period.
[25]

*Thus says the LORD:
Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come,
and my deliverance be revealed.*

² *Happy is the mortal who does this,
the one who holds it fast,
who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it,
and refrains from doing any evil.*

³ *Do not let the foreigner joined to the LORD say,
'The LORD will surely separate me from his people';
and do not let the eunuch say,
'I am just a dry tree.'*

⁴ *For thus says the LORD:
To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths,
who choose the things that please me
and hold fast my covenant,*

⁵ *I will give, in my house and within my walls,
a monument and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that shall not be cut off.*

⁶ *And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,*

*and to be his servants,
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—*

*⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.*

*⁸ Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.**

*⁹ All you wild animals,
all you wild animals in the forest, come to devour!*

¹⁰ Israel's sentinels are blind,
they are all without knowledge;
they are all silent dogs
that cannot bark;
dreaming, lying down,
loving to slumber.*

*¹¹ The dogs have a mighty appetite;
they never have enough.
The shepherds also have no understanding;
they have all turned to their own way,
to their own gain, one and all.*

¹² 'Come,' they say, 'let us get wine;
let us fill ourselves with strong drink.
And tomorrow will be like today,
great beyond measure.'*

Question 5

Jews use the book of *Lamentations* for reading on the ninth of Av which is a day of mourning not only the destruction of the Temples but all other tragedies that are known to have transpired in Jewish history. In connection with this canonical usage of *Lamentations*, discuss the importance of ritual practice in religious faith.

Question 6

The Jewish and Christian canonical readings of *Song of Songs* follow allegorical method of interpretation. How would a shift to a literal reading of this biblical text be justified in the current context of Swaziland? [25]

Question 7

Identify and discuss the various tensions that run through the following Psalm and how these can provide clues to form analysis of the given Psalm. [25]

Psalm 73

A Psalm of Asaph.

- ¹ *Truly God is good to the upright,*
to those who are pure in heart.*
- ² *But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
my steps had nearly slipped.*
- ³ *For I was envious of the arrogant;
I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*
- ⁴ *For they have no pain;
their bodies are sound and sleek.*
- ⁵ *They are not in trouble as others are;
they are not plagued like other people.*
- ⁶ *Therefore pride is their necklace;
violence covers them like a garment.*
- ⁷ *Their eyes swell out with fatness;
their hearts overflow with follies.*
- ⁸ *They scoff and speak with malice;
loftily they threaten oppression.*
- ⁹ *They set their mouths against heaven,
and their tongues range over the earth.*
- ¹⁰ *Therefore the people turn and praise them,*
and find no fault in them.**
- ¹¹ *And they say, 'How can God know?
Is there knowledge in the Most High?'*
- ¹² *Such are the wicked;
always at ease, they increase in riches.*
- ¹³ *All in vain I have kept my heart clean*

and washed my hands in innocence.

¹⁴ *For all day long I have been plagued,
and am punished every morning.*

¹⁵ *If I had said, 'I will talk on in this way',
I would have been untrue to the circle of your children.*

¹⁶ *But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,*

¹⁷ *until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I perceived their end.*

¹⁸ *Truly you set them in slippery places;
you make them fall to ruin.*

¹⁹ *How they are destroyed in a moment,
swept away utterly by terrors!*

²⁰ *They are* like a dream when one awakes;
on awaking you despise their phantoms.*

²¹ *When my soul was embittered,
when I was pricked in heart,*

²² *I was stupid and ignorant;*

I was like a brute beast towards you.

²³ *Nevertheless I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.*

²⁴ *You guide me with your counsel,
and afterwards you will receive me with honour.**

²⁵ *Whom have I in heaven but you?*

And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you.

²⁶ *My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength* of my heart and my portion for ever.*

²⁷ *Indeed, those who are far from you will perish;
you put an end to those who are false to you.*

²⁸ *But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
to tell of all your works.*

Question 8

Analyse the portrayal of the character of Job's wife in the book of Job. [25]

Question 9

Choose any literary approach and apply it in a reading of any one of the books of Ruth, Esther and Jonah. [25]

Question 10

Explain the interpretative issues that have traditionally preoccupied studies of the book of Daniel. [25]