

OT502 Old Testament Prophets and Writings

Semester 2 2017

FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE MASTER OF DIVINITY, GRADUATE DIPLOMA OF DIVINITY, AND
GRADUATE CERTIFICATE OF DIVINITY WITH THE AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF THEOLOGY

Time allowed: 2 Hours, plus 10 minutes perusal time.

An unmarked English Bible is allowed.

This examination counts for 60% of the total marks for this semester unit.

You must answer: THREE questions from Section A

TWO questions from Section B

Section A: (worth 33.3% of the marks on the exam paper)

Spend **40 minutes** on Section A.

You should write about **330** words for each question – about **13** minutes per question.

All questions in Section A are weighted equally.

1. How do Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs contribute to the Wisdom tradition?
2. What distinguishes the message of the post-exilic prophets from the pre-exilic prophets in the Book of the Twelve?
3. According to Longman and Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, the primary theological message of the book of Ruth concerns 'the hidden and continuous providence of God' and in this way it 'functions similarly to... the book of Esther.' Is this an accurate analysis of the book's message? Justify your answer.
4. What contribution does the Epilogue of Job (42:7-17) make to the theological message of the book?
5. Do the books of Daniel and Esther share similar expectations concerning the climax of Israel's history? Refer to relevant texts in support of your answer.

Please turn to the next page for further questions in Section A.

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Section A continued

6. In 539 B.C., the Persian king Cyrus issued a decree permitting the Jews in exile to return to Jerusalem. According to the book of Ezra-Nehemiah, was this restoration community the fulfillment of earlier prophecies concerning Israel's return from Babylonian exile? Defend your answer by reference to any relevant texts.
7. In their *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Longman and Dillard write that 'when one compares the account of a reign of a king of Judah in Kings with that in Chronicles, most of the differences are related to the Chronicler's theology of immediate retribution'. What do they mean by the phrase 'immediate retribution'? Illustrate this concept with reference to two passages.

Section B: (worth 66.6% of the marks on the exam paper)

Spend **one hour and 20 minutes** on Section B.

Students must answer **2** questions (about **1000** words for each – about **40** minutes per question).

All questions in Section B are weighted equally.

1. To what extent is it possible to speak of the message of the Major Prophets?
2. With reference to *either* Jeremiah *or* Ezekiel, discuss their understanding of the exile.
3. The themes of return from exile and the coming of the kingdom of God are central to the theology of the Writings.* Do you agree? If so, why? If not, why not?
4. Explain the significance of repentance for the theology of the Writings.* Support your answer by reference to relevant passages.

* The Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles.

Please turn to the next page for Question 5 of Section B.

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Section B continued

5. In his discussion of the 'canonical writings' employed in the 'Shape and Shaping' approach to Psalms interpretation, Gordon Wenham writes,

There is, I think, no doubt that this approach has led to a deeper and richer theological approach to reading the psalms, an approach that is especially congenial to the Christian interpreter. The earlier historically oriented and form-critical readings seem threadbare by comparison ('Toward a Canonical Reading of the Psalms' in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation*).

- (a) Summarize the main arguments in favour of the theory that the editors of the Psalter have produced a book that has been ordered in such a way as to present a single coherent and comprehensive message. (Feel free to offer counter-arguments as well.)
 - (b) Assuming that the Psalter does have a 'shape', evaluate Wenham's statement. You may illustrate your answer with reference to specific psalms.
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