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MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2014 series

9011 DIVINITY

9011/12

Paper 1 (Prophets of the Old Testament),
maximum raw mark 100

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Section A

Prophecy in general and Pre-canonical Prophets

1 'Prophecy in Israel was copied from prophecy in the surrounding nations.' How far do you agree?

In general terms, a good case can be made for the origins of prophecy in other civilisations that influenced ancient Israel, so that Israel copied or modified their practices, e.g.

- ecstasy was well-known elsewhere, e.g. with Wen Amon
- the mantic/*muhhum* prophets of the god Dagan, during the time of Hammurabi
- the Syrian weather-god Hadad, in the Mari texts, using a prophet as his mouthpiece
- payment of prophets is seen at Mari, for example
- similar organisational structures in Israel to those in the surrounding nations, e.g. prophets in relation to court and sanctuary, raising patriotic zeal, advising kings, giving advice about battles, etc.
- the general Canaanite background to the OT suggests an immediate influence from Baal prophets.

Some scholars maintain an Israelite origin for prophecy in Israel:

- e.g. based on the assumption that Israelite prophecy is unique
- and that Israel was supposedly forbidden to use the means of gaining information used by other nations (Deut. 18)
- prophecy allowed only in the name of Yahweh
- the association with ethical monotheism
- the view that prophecy began in Israel with Moses or Samuel, for example the latter in association with the adoption of kings in Israel
- some might maintain that prophecy began in the surrounding nations, and that prophecy in Israel inevitably shared some of their characteristics while maintaining its own unique identity.

2 Examine the use of miracles in the message of the pre-canonical prophets.

The focus of the question is on the use of miracles in the message of the pre-canonical prophets, so lists of miraculous acts/mere re-telling of the stories are not likely to score very highly. Candidates might refer to some of the following:

- Moses' use of miracles in freeing the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. Moses' various miracles function as demonstrations of the power of Yahweh, e.g. in Exodus 6, where Moses threatens the Pharaoh with Yahweh's *outstretched arm and great acts of judgement* (6:6). These range from the contest with Pharaoh's court magicians to the great miracles of the pass-over of the angel of death and the parting of the sea
- miracles have visual/auditory power, e.g. those of Moses, Elijah's contest with the Baal prophets on Carmel, and so on
- miracles are used as 'proof of divine intervention and favour, in support of election theology, etc.
- some miracles appear to be used simply for the 'awe' factor, e.g. Elisha ordered Joash to take bow and arrows and shoot east, with the prophet's hand on those of the king, to symbolise victory over the Syrians
- Elijah and Elisha raise people from the dead: miracles which are used to demonstrate the absolute power of Yahweh over life and death.

Again, whichever miracles are selected, essays should be marked on their attention to the 'use' of the miracle in the prophetic message.

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3 Consider the view that Moses and Elijah were ideal prophets rather than real prophets.

The focus of this question is on the view that editorial activity has built up prophetic traditions that the portrait of various prophets has an ideal as opposed to a real status. The multiple functions of some prophets illustrate this, particularly Moses and Samuel, as well as Elijah. How much of this is editorial read-back is impossible to tell, but candidates ought to be aware that editorial activity shapes the biblical material quite profoundly.

- for Moses, for example, his prophetic status includes a number of roles, from war-leader, to political leader, law-giver, and so on. Items such as the unlikely casting of the Book of Deuteronomy as a farewell speech by Moses, and the possibility that Deuteronomy was written during the reign of Josiah as a 'pious fraud' to bring about political, social and religious reform, show the ideal status of Moses as someone whose authority could legitimise later activity
- some might argue that these roles were forced on Moses by the difficulties of his situation, and that nobody else had the intellectual or inspirational stature to do what was necessary, so all his roles were 'real'
- for Elijah, his importance in the prophetic tradition in some ways exceeds that of Moses, so for example the tradition grew up among the Jews that Elijah would return as the herald of the Messiah. The tradition in 2 Kings 2 that he did not die, but was taken up by Yahweh on a whirlwind, illustrates the power of the Elijah legends, which are added to by his defeat of the Baal prophets on Carmel, his dealings with Ahab, and his raising from death of the widow of Zarephath's son. The possibility that these narratives present an ideal portrait of the prophet are shown by a number of features in the narratives, not least by the writer's portrayal of him as a second Moses, in his flight to Horeb
- as with Moses, some might argue that Elijah's different roles were historically inevitable (and therefore real) because he was the sole representative of Yahwism in an era when Jezebel had all but removed Yahwism from Israel
- for access to the higher levels, look for some attention to the wording of the question as opposed to the life histories of Moses and Elijah.

4 In your view, which of the many roles played by Samuel was the most important?

In explanation of Samuel's different roles, candidates might target some of the following:

- Samuel's role as a seer – 1 Sam. 9/his relationship to the prophetic bands, etc.
- his role in the institutional development of Israelite prophecy
- his functions as judge and priest
- his role in developing the prophetic version of ideal Yahwism
- his political activities, for example in anointing Saul as the first king of Israel, his ongoing function as adviser to Saul, and his rejection of Saul for the latter's alleged disobedience
- his role as a war leader

Candidates are at liberty to establish any of these roles as being the most important. Some are likely to target his role in the establishment of the monarchy as being the most important. In this connection, some might refer to F.M. Cross's thesis that prophecy in Israel began with Samuel.

Some might argue that all Samuel's roles were of equal importance, because they are each part of his prophetic mission, validated by his call in the sanctuary.

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5 Explain both how and why prophetic oracles were collected and preserved.

- Some hold that most messages were originally spoken, then written down by scribes, friends of the prophets themselves, or their disciples
- for disciples, candidates might refer to those of Isaiah or Jeremiah; in particular, for the latter, the narratives concerning Baruch
- candidates should be able to give some account of the processes of oral tradition and the transmission of prophetic oracles and prophetic books
- for example they might refer to redaction activity in the Book of the Twelve, where the redaction process seems to have included editorial activity which included salvation oracles at the end of the works of the 'minor prophets', as in the concluding salvation oracles in Amos
- some might refer to the appearance of oracles in more than one book, as with Jeremiah 52 and 2 Kings 24:18–25:30, showing how oracles were assimilated/edited/redacted into larger collections such as the Isaiah scroll and the Book of the Twelve
- the 'why?' might be answered by the weaknesses of oral tradition, where the spoken word might be seen as less reliable/more open to change than written traditions
- the 'why' might be answered more mundanely in the wish of disciples and others to preserve the words of the great prophets
- some might answer the 'why' in terms of the fulfilment of prophecies, or perhaps the reapplication of the prophet's words to later historical situations, as with the Dead Sea Scrolls, or the reapplication of Isaiah's Davidic prophecies to Jesus
- some might refer to scribal reverence for the text, as seen in the scribal devices used to indicate change or alternative readings, such as the Kethib and the Qere.

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Section B

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

6 'The message of Amos is about God's judgement and not about God's love.' Discuss.

The judgmental element in Amos is very evident, e.g.

- the opening section of the book, where God is said to 'roar from Zion', and pronounces an indictment of the neighbouring peoples as well as of Israel/Judah, listing a number of misdemeanours/sins
- these culminate in the indictment of Israel, whose responsibility is greater because the privileges of election require it
- Amos lists a string of religious and social evils committed by all levels of society. Candidates are likely to refer to a selection of these, and to show the finality of their judgement, such as the fate of the 'fat cows of Bashan'
- the passage in 5:1–6:14 details the horror and finality of Israel's punishment: 'Fallen, no more to rise, is the virgin Israel; forsaken on her land, with none to raise her up'
- also, Amos' visions of judgement, such as the locusts, fire, and summer fruit that is 'ripe' for destruction.

Balanced against that, candidates are likely to pick out elements of Yahweh's love visible in the book, such as:

- Amos' intercession in 7:1–3, where Yahweh repents of his destructive intentions: 'It shall not be'
- Amos' intercession in the subsequent vision of judgement by fire (7:4–6), where Yahweh again responds to that intercession
- some might wonder at the fact that God appears to repent (v.3 and v.6) of each decision, in which case both decisions appear to be acts of unwarranted judgement rather than divine love
- most are likely to refer to 9:11–15, the promise of restoration of the booth of David (the Davidic dynasty) and the glorious age to come
- some will see this as part of the process of redaction in the Book of the Twelve.

For the higher grades, candidates should make some judgement on the view stated in the question as opposed to simply listing what might be judgement and what might show love.

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7 'None of the details of Hosea's life as a prophet are clear.' How far do you agree?

There are many lines that candidates might take here. There are several ways in which scholars have interpreted the material in Hosea, and answers will depend on the credence given to each, e.g.

- some might argue that Hosea 1–3 should clearly be interpreted as an allegorical story representing Israel's relationship with God, in which the prophet applies his real marital experiences to that of the nation and God. Some might argue that the detail suggests reality; others that we are not sure of anything
- some might argue that the apparently biographical material is simply an arresting metaphor for the purposes of illustration. A further possibility would be that the detail of the marriage is the work of a later editor, or else that it combines elements of both fact and fiction
- another level of interpretation is added by the identity of the woman in 3:1 – *The Lord said to me again, 'Go, love a woman.* This may still be Gomer, or else a second woman intended to reinforce the pathos of the situation. For some, these details point clearly to the same woman, otherwise the impact of the references is lost
- most candidates will develop the view that Gomer's relationship with Hosea refers to Israel's relationship with Yahweh, Gomer's adultery expressing Israel's abrogation of the covenant. Hosea's rejection by Gomer represents Yahweh's rejection by Israel. Hosea's continuing love for Gomer represents Yahweh's continuing *hesed*/love for Israel, the love in both cases being unrequited, or sometimes forgotten. Given the extent of the parallels, some will again see a clear reference to the literal details of Hosea's life. For others, the thought that a prophet of God might ignore the Law and marry a prostitute would be a clear indication that the reality of these details is far from clear
- the theme of Yahweh's punishment being remedial and not irretrievable (Yahweh is *God, not man*) might also be seen as reality or metaphor/invention. Candidates might argue that the marriage material forms part of Hosea's call, possibly in the context that both he and Gomer functioned within the cult, in which case such a setting might well have produced what we read in the early chapters of the book, and, as such, may have been formative in his attitude and message, showing the balance of love against judgement.

For the higher levels, some judgement is expected on whether or not any of the details of Hosea's life are 'clear'. Candidates who simply repeat the allegorical or metaphorical interpretations are not likely to score highly.

8 Consider the importance of Isaiah's call for his work and message.

Candidates are likely to have a detailed knowledge of the call narrative in ch.6, where the link between his call and message is clearly expressed:

- e.g. in the timing of his call, when an effective king had died leaving no heir – a void which God himself fills
- in the Temple theophany, Isaiah experiences the real presence of Yahweh, and this persuades him of the holiness of the Temple, and by extension that of the city of Jerusalem
- this reinforces the Jerusalem theology linked to the Davidic dynasty
- the theophany brings Isaiah a conviction of the holiness, power and universal sovereignty of Yahweh, as well as his ultimate kingship over Israel
- details of how this was used in Isaiah's message, and in relation to the Davidic king
- the call itself gives Isaiah both authority and confidence
- the suggestion that his message will not be accepted, so the nation is moving towards disaster, which helps Isaiah to accept rejection and to look beyond it to a messianic age
- candidates are likely to show these influences in Isaiah's dealings with the historical situations of his day, in which Judah lived an uneasy existence as an Assyrian tributary.

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9 Discuss the view that Jeremiah’s message was an equal mixture of doom and hope.

For the doom aspect of his message, candidates might refer to some of the following:

- the doom aspect of the various symbolic actions/parables such as the waistcloth, the potter/pot, the wooden yoke, etc.
- the doom-laden content of the ‘confessional’ material
- the doom of his disastrous personal life, having no family and no friends, apart from ceremonial ritual
- his denunciation of the cult, especially the Temple sermon
- his prophecy of the destruction of the Temple
- his denunciation of false prophets, particularly on the grounds that no true prophet to date had spoken words of *shalom*, only of doom
- his dealings with Hananiah, and the latter’s death; the predictions of disaster to Pashhur, Zedekiah and others
- his actions during the siege of Jerusalem, where he was restrained because he was seen to be advocating pro-Babylonian policies.

For the hope aspect, e.g.

- the parable of the good (as well as the bad) figs
- his positive comments in his letter to the exiles – the ‘Booklet of Consolation’
- his gesture of hope for the future by buying the field
- his comments about the new covenant.

Weaker responses are likely to go no further than the kind of illustrations given above. Stronger answers will address the suggestion that doom and hope are an ‘equal mixture’ in his message. Some will point out, for example, that the call narrative at the start of the book balances doom with hope – e.g. in the juxtaposition of ‘pluck up’ and ‘build’, etc.

Some might suggest that Jeremiah was neither a prophet of doom nor of hope, but was simply a prophet of Yahweh, and as such had no option but to announce what he was told to announce. He was a man under prophetic compulsion, and as with other prophets, notably Amos, it could well be that function influences character.

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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 the LORD said to Moses, “Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with you. And I will come down and talk with you there...” (Numbers 11:16–17a)**

The context is Israel’s murmurings of discontent in the wilderness (11:1–35), in the context of which Moses addresses some strong language to Yahweh. The immediate context is the choosing of 70 elders to lighten Moses’ burden of leadership.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- the distribution of the ‘spirit’, the sign of which was that they prophesied, once only
- the phenomenon of ecstatic utterance, concerning which candidates might refer to Canaanite/other external influences
- the anachronistic appearance of the narrative, perhaps as a vindication of ecstatic prophecy put into the mouth of Moses in the face of later criticism of Israel’s ecstasies
- Medad and Eldad prophesying, although they stayed in the camp
- the phenomenon of ecstatic contagion
- the theophanic detail: Yahweh descending in the cloud
- the old tent of meeting (cf. Exod. 33:7–11)

- (b) Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim, so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. (1 Samuel 3:1–3)**

The context is God’s first revelation to Samuel, which continues the source in 2:26.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- Credit traditional references, e.g. that Samuel was twelve at the time; also, comparison with Jesus in his discussions in the Temple (Luke 12)
- expect a general review of the story, together with some assessment
- the lamp of God burning all night (Exod. 27:21) suggests that the time was just before dawn
- likely comment on the ark of the Lord as the portable shrine symbolising God’s presence and power. Its early form was simple, but later conceptions of it were more ornate, e.g. Exod. 25:10–22; 37:1–9. The ark plays an important role in the war with the Philistines, in the narrative that follows in ch.4.
- ‘word’ and ‘vision’ essentially mean the same thing – revelation from God through the prophets.

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- (c) Then at the break of dawn Samuel called to Saul upon the roof, “Up, that I may anoint you on your way.” So Saul arose, and both he and Samuel went out into the street. As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the servant to pass on before us, and when he has passed on stop here yourself for a while, that I may make known to you the word of God.” Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on his head... (1 Samuel 9:26–10:1a)

The general context in 9:1–10:16 is the secret choice of Saul as king. The immediate context is the prelude to Samuel’s anointing of Saul.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- Samuel is a comparatively modest figure in this narrative, He is not the ruler and judge of all Israel, but is a respected seer (v.11) who comes in contact with Saul’s father through the episode of the lost asses, in which Samuel acts as a paid clairvoyant
- in verses 15–16, God tells Samuel that on the next day he will send a Benjaminite for him to anoint as ‘prince over my people’. Saul’s function will be to rid Israel of the Philistine threat
- Samuel instructs Saul to go up to the high place, at which Saul is given a meal fitting to his future status. On coming down from the high place, a bed is spread for Saul on the roof. Most roofs would have been flat, with protecting parapets
- at the break of dawn, Samuel rouses Saul, and arranges it so that he gets Saul on his own, and there follows the anointing of Saul with a vial of oil
- olive oil was used for anointing kings
- the ceremony of anointing was done for high priests, for example, but was most appropriate for kings, which is why kings had the general title of *messiah/anointed one*.
- as Samuel anoints Saul, he repeats the comment that Saul’s vocation is defined by the task of saving the people from their enemies (the Philistines).

- (d) Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, “So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.” Then he was afraid, and he arose and went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. (1 Kings 19:1–3)

The general context is the revelation to Elijah on Mount Horeb (19:1–18). The immediate context is Jezebel’s threat to Elijah in the wake of his execution of her prophets.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- comment on Elijah’s killing of the Baal prophets (ch.18), which Ahab appears to accept, since it concludes with the onset of rain to end the drought
- Ahab then goes to Jezreel, a second place of residence near Mount Gilboa. Elijah ran about 17 miles in front of the chariot, in an ecstatic state, apparently to announce victory over the forces of Baal and Asherah
- his enthusiasm was short-lived, since when Ahab told Jezebel the results of the contest, Jezebel sent a promise to Elijah that she would do to him what he had done to her prophets, which she swore on oath to the gods
- Elijah was afraid for his life, so fled to Beersheba. Candidates might ask why Elijah should fear Jezebel, having just, without sign of fear, killed all of her prophets
- further, Beersheba was about 130 miles south of Jezreel, in Judah, so he appears to have arrived there miraculously
- this is followed by the theophany on Horeb, where he goes also with divine aid, in an apparent recollection of Moses’ receipt of the Law there. Further details are likely, but the focus should be on the verses given.

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- (e) Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, “Bring quickly Micaiah the Imlah.” Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron, and said, “Thus says the LORD, ‘With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed.’ ” (1 Kings 22:9–11)

The historical context is the Aramean wars and Ahab’s eventual death in battle. Syria and Israel had allied against the Assyrian threat; Ahab now allies with Jehoshaphat of Judah. He had quarrelled with the king of Syria over the possession of the town of Ramoth-Gilead, east of the Jordan. The immediate context is the individual and negative prophecy of Micaiah ben Imlah, in the common practice of inquiry made to God/the gods before battle, as with Saul in 1 Samuel 28.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- the decision of the 400 court prophets who were predicting Ahab’s success
- details of the conversation between Ahab and Jehoshaphat concerning Micaiah: Ahab’s suspicion of the accommodating judgement of the court prophets, and his comment that Micaiah never spoke *shalom* for him
- comments on the nature of false prophecy
- comments on the heavenly council and the lying spirit of prophecy, a device which appears to attribute false prophecy to Yahweh’s plans
- the likely evolution of the lying spirit into the figure of the *satan*
- Micaiah’s taunting/details of the actions of Zedekiah ben Chenaanah with the horns of iron, and the imprisonment of Micaiah
- Ahab’s attempt at disguise followed by death in battle.

- (f) Thus the LORD God showed me: behold, he was forming locusts in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth; and lo, it was the latter growth after the king’s mowings. When they had finished eating the grass of the land, I said, “Oh LORD God, forgive, I beseech thee! How can Jacob stand? He is so small!” (Amos 7:1–2)

The context is 7:1–9, and this is the first of five visions of God’s judgement.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- locusts are an obvious symbol of destruction in the ancient world, since there was little defence against them; see Joel 1–4, for example, and Exodus 10:12ff.
- the locusts are devouring the winter grass (January/February)
- this is the beginning of the dry season, so the rains have almost stopped
- the king’s first mowings have depleted the grass
- the arrival of the locusts is therefore the herald of famine
- candidates might comment on the second vision, which is fire. In a land ravaged by locusts, fire devours what is left, so the famine is intensified
- in both cases, Amos acts as an intercessor, pleading for mercy on Israel; intercession being part of the normal prophetic function
- he refers to the *smallness* of Jacob (Israel), contrasting it with the Israelites’ view of themselves as strong
- the fact that God repents is sometimes seen as odd, since it is an anthropomorphic comment, showing weakness. Others see the portrayal of God as having emotions as a crucial part of the *personal* understanding of God.

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- (g) **Come, let us return to the LORD;
for he has torn, that he may heal us;
he has stricken, and he will bind us up.
After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will raise us up,
that we may live before him. (Hosea 6:1–2)**

The general context in 5:15–6:3 is that if Israel will return to Yahweh, he will heal her sickness.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- historically, the preceding section refers to the period of the Syro-Ephraimite war (735–733) and its aftermath
- 5:8–15 describes the friction between Judah and Israel in the period after the war, and shows God’s judgement on both
- what then follows in 6:1–2 is the change of mood typical of Hosea
- having threatened sickness and death, Yahweh now predicts that Israel will “revive” (v.2) if Yahweh’s exhortation to repent is accepted and acted upon
- questions about the identity of the speaker(s) – possibly the Israelites, but they are insincere, or (more likely) these are Hosea’s words, as an exhortation to the people
- another question is whether the imagery is of resurrection from death or simply healing the sick. Death and resurrection are also images of exile and restoration, and perhaps Hosea appropriated this imagery from the dying and rising God Baal (see 13:1 – “he incurred guilt through Baal and died”)
- some see the language as applicable to the future situation of Jesus
- the rest of the imagery continues the theme of revival – the regrowth that comes from spring rain.

- (h) **How can I give you up, O Ephraim!
How can I hand you over, O Israel!
How can I make you like Admah!
How can I treat you like Zeboiim!
My heart recoils within me,
my compassion grows warm and tender.
I will not execute my fierce anger,
I will not again destroy Ephraim;
for I am God and not man,
the Holy One in your midst,
and I will not come to destroy. (Hosea 11:8–9)**

The general context, in Hos. 9:1–11:12, is the theme that Hosea has rejected Yahweh, and must therefore undergo punishment that will lead to the loss of king, children, sanctuaries and country. The immediate context is God’s chastisement of his son Israel (v.1: *Out of Egypt I called my son*), despite the care he took in teaching him how to walk.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- comments on ‘Ephraim’, which derives from ‘to be fruitful’ (Gen. 41:52)
- Admah and Zeboiim were cities destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19; Deut. 29:23)
- there is a mood swing in the oracle in verses 8–9 in which Yahweh suddenly says, *How can I give you up? ... How can I hand you over? ... my compassion grows warm and tender.*
- candidates might make theological comment on the ‘God, not man’ element in Hosea
- they could also comment on the tension between destruction and salvation in Hosea, perhaps relating it to Hosea’s life experiences.

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- (i) **Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. (Isaiah 7:14–16)**

The general/historical context is the Syro-Ephraimite War (734–733). The immediate context is the sign of Immanuel.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- the preceding sign is that of Shear Jashub: when the continuation of the Davidic monarchy was threatened, the promise that ‘a remnant shall return’ will preserve God’s promise to David (2 Samuel 7) in the event of catastrophe
- God speaks to Ahaz, suggesting that he should ask for a sign of God, ‘as deep as Sheol and as high as heaven’. Ahaz refuses to ‘put God to the test’.
- from the context, God’s word to Ahaz is through Isaiah, who becomes impatient with Ahaz
- a ‘sign’ (*ot*) is an event in history, so the sign would be a concrete event in history
- the ‘young woman’ does not refer to a virgin. The Hebrew for ‘young woman’ is *‘almah*, which refers to a *woman of marriageable age*, who would normally be a virgin, a point which is merely incidental to the story. The Hebrew for ‘virgin’ is a quite different word - *bethulah*. The quotation of Isaiah 7:14 in Matthew 1:23 is probably from the LXX, which uses the Greek *parthenos* to translate Hebrew *‘almah*. Since *parthenos* does mean ‘virgin’, the Greek is really a mistranslation which suggests that the tradition of Jesus’ virgin birth reads too much into the Hebrew text
- ‘Immanuel’ means ‘God with us’, which appears to refer to a future king, since the person of the king was seen as God’s representative on earth (as we see from the ‘enthronement’ psalms in Psalms 95–100, for example)
- in this case, the prophecy may have referred to Hezekiah

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(j) **The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Hear the words of this covenant which I made with your fathers, and you shall speak to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. You shall say to them, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Cursed be the man who does not heed the words of this covenant which I commanded your fathers when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace ...” (Jeremiah 11:1–4a)**

The general context is the narrative concerning Jeremiah and the covenant.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- Jeremiah was presumably a strong supporter of Josiah’s attempts to eradicate foreign worship (2 Kings 22–23)
- included in this support was a desire to return to the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant (‘this covenant’; also in God’s words, ‘my covenant’ in verse 10)
- prophetic preaching was based on this covenant
- some assume that the discovery of the law-book in 2 Kings 22 was the discovery (or the writing) of Deuteronomy, and that Josiah caused it to be found as a ‘pious fraud’ in order to use Deuteronomy as the basis for his reforms (627 BCE)
- ‘command’ is typical of Deuteronomic language for the covenant (Deut. 4:13 etc.)
- ‘cursed be the man’ – this phraseology is also typical of the Deuteronomic pattern of blessings and curses for those who keep or break the covenant
- verse 4 is also typical Deuteronomic phraseology: cf. Deut. 4:20: ‘But the Lord has taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt ...’
- the furnace metaphor reflects the sweat and pain of the Hebrews’ treatment in Egypt
- candidates might refer to the prophet’s proclamation of the ‘new covenant’, in Jer. 31:31

(k) **The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. (Jeremiah 18:1–4)**

The context is Jeremiah’s allegory of the potter, 18:1–12.

Candidates might refer also to some of the following points:

- the narrative begins with a simple instruction to the prophet, who obeys, and who then receives a divine oracle
- Jeremiah’s observation of the spoiled and remoulded pot then leads to the oracle in verses 6–12
- the basic point is that God can do to Israel whatever he likes, just as the potter can do whatever he likes with the clay: Israel is not independent from God: the relationship of sovereign and vassal is unavoidable
- hence Yahweh says that if he so desires, he can bring evil, and if he so desires, he can restore
- candidates might refer to 19:1ff., which continues the pottery metaphor with the purchase and destruction of the potter’s earthen flask