

Cambridge International AS & A Level

BIBLICAL STUDIES**9484/32**

Paper 3 Prophets of the Old Testament

May/June 2025

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

Cambridge International is publishing the mark schemes for the May/June 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **18** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Annotations guidance for centres

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

Annotations

Annotation	Meaning
Highlighter	Highlighting areas of text
Off-page comment	Allows comments to be entered at the bottom of the RM marking window and then displayed when the associated question item is navigated to.
	Indicates that the point has been noted, but no credit has been given.

Guidance on using levels-based mark schemes

Marking of work should be positive, rewarding achievement where possible, but clearly differentiating across the whole range of marks, where appropriate.

The marker should look at the work and then make a judgement about which level statement is the best fit. In practice, work does not always match one level statement precisely so a judgement may need to be made between two or more level statements.

Once a best-fit level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:

- If the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, award the highest mark.
- If the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range (where middle marks are available).
- If the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, award the lowest mark.

Annotation:

- For levels of response marking, the level awarded should be annotated on the script.
- Ticks have no defined meaning for levels of response marking.
- Other annotations will be used by examiners as agreed during standardisation, and the meaning will be understood by all examiners who marked that paper.

Assessment objectives**AO1 Knowledge and understanding**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of specified texts and Christian teachings, beliefs and practices as recorded in the Bible.

AO2 Analysis and evaluation

Analyse, evaluate and discuss evidence, points of view and issues in Christianity.

Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks)

Use this table to give marks for each candidate response for **Questions 1, 2 and 3**.

Level	Description	Marks
Level 3	Accurate knowledge with good understanding • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the context, if relevant.	5
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Addresses some aspects of the question. • Attempts to engage with the context, if relevant.	3–4
Level 1	Limited knowledge and basic understanding • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the context, if relevant.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Table B: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks)

Use this table to give marks for each candidate response for **Questions 5 and 6**.

Level	Description	Marks
Level 4	Detailed accurate knowledge with good understanding • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the context, if relevant.	9–10
Level 3	Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding • Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a developed response. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the context, if relevant.	6–8
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Attempts to address the question. • Attempts to engage with the context, if relevant.	3–5
Level 1	Limited knowledge and basic understanding • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the context, if relevant.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 marks)

Use this table to give marks for each candidate response for **Questions 4, 5 and 6**.

Level	Description	Marks
Level 5	Effective conclusion with analysis of points of view - Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view in detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support a sustained and well-structured discussion. - Effective conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.	13–15
Level 4	Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view - Discusses different points of view in some detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. - Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.	10–12
Level 3	Satisfactory conclusion with different points of view - Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support discussion. - Satisfactory conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.	7–9
Level 2	Basic conclusion with a supported point of view - Discusses one point of view. - Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant points. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. - Attempted conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.	4–6
Level 1	Limited interpretation with a point of view - States a point of view. - Little or no supporting evidence. - Attempted interpretation which may not directly address the question.	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Section AAnswer **two** questions.

Question	Answer	Marks
1	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. <u>Isaiah 9:6-7, NRSVA</u> For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 5 marks. Indicative content Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all relevant material must be credited. The context: • This is part of a set of oracles referring to Israel's expectation of a messianic king who will restore the fortunes of Israel. The phrasing emphasises this: 'a child has been born for us ... a son given to us' ... The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.' The content: • The content and its language relates throughout to the theme of the ideal Davidic monarchy. A main point of difficulty is finding the proper context for it. The phrasing suggests to some scholars that this is in effect the text of the ritual of the accession to the throne of one of the kings of Judah. Some suggest that this referred at the time to Hezekiah, of whom great things might have been expected. • Some might comment that these lines have been believed to apply prophetically to Jesus as the ideal Davidic king. Such comments are valid in pointing out that belief, but they should not assume that Isaiah refers to Jesus, this would amount to the Christianising of a Jewish text. • Some might point out that the language of Isaiah 9:6–7 reflects that of the enthronement Psalms (e.g. Psalms 95–100). The king is enthroned as God's representative on earth, hence in Isaiah 9:6 the incoming human king is enthroned with God's attributes as 'Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.' • The new king in Isaiah 9:7 will have an 'increase of his government' (i.e. an increase of his authority), and so will have the ability to bring about unending peace, which in Isaiah's time would have been a great benefit in the face of the power of Assyria.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
1	• ‘Justice’ and ‘righteousness’ (verse 7) are qualities of the ideal human king as well as being requirements for the conduct of a nation’s affairs. • The ‘zeal’ of the Lord of hosts refers to the belief that God will pursue any desired aim without allowing anything to change his mind or actions. Some might point out that ‘Lord of Hosts’ is one of Yahweh’s titles, meaning that he is controller of the heavenly hosts – all beings and things are subservient to him.	

Question	Answer	Marks
2	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. <u>1 Samuel 9:1–3, NRSVA</u> There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish son of Abiel son of Zeror son of Becorath son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite, a man of wealth. He had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he; he stood head and shoulders above everyone else. Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, had strayed. So Kish said to his son Saul, 'Take one of the boys with you; go and look for the donkeys.' Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 5 marks. Indicative content Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all relevant material must be credited. The context: • This is the beginning of the narrative of the choice of Saul as the first king of Israel. The content: • Saul is noted as the son of a wealthy man, with servants and livestock. This can be seen as him being part of an aristocracy, from which a king would naturally be drawn. • The significance of the king being drawn from Benjamin, the smallest tribe, may be explored, as an example of divine authority rising up the smallest to be king. • In contrast, Saul is noted as being the tallest man in Israel by some margin, and this can be seen as him demonstrating natural, god given, physical authority over other people; the idea that he was born to rule. • This passage precedes his anointing by Samuel who they come across in their search for the donkeys.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. <u>1 Kings 18:17–19, NRSVA</u> When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, ‘Is it you, you troubler of Israel?’ He answered, ‘I have not troubled Israel; but you have, and your father’s house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals. Now therefore have all Israel assemble for me at Mount Carmel, with the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.’ Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 5 marks. Indicative content Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all relevant material must be credited. The context: • This comes during the drought which Elijah’s had proclaimed would last precisely as long as Yahweh ordains (1 Kings 17:1). The worshippers of Canaanite / Phoenician Baal held that Baal is the god of rain. The absence of rain over this period was itself an indirect challenge to Baal, and Elijah can be seen here making a direct challenge, part of the wide Mount Carmel narrative. (1 Kings 18:1–46). The content: • Ahab refers to Elijah as a ‘troubler of Israel’, but (verse 18) Elijah turns the accusation back on Ahab: the trouble has come from Ahab and Jezebel abandoning Yahweh’s commandments by following the Baals. ‘The Baals’ here refer to local versions of the sky-god Baal. • The passage describes Elijah’s challenge in the form of a proposed contest between Elijah on the one side, and 450 prophets of Baal together with 400 prophets of Asherah on the other, to show which god controls the rains. The accusation that these 850 prophets ‘eat at Jezebel’s table’ shows part of the problem – Ahab does not have control over Jezebel’s worship of Baal. This can also be argued to show that the prophets of Asherah and Baal are court prophets, in the same line as Pharaoh’s Magicians, capable of tricks but who are not roeh, whereas Elijah is a lone ‘true prophet’ • Some detail of the Carmel contest might be given, such as the failure of the Prophets of Baal to call down fire from heaven in spite of their energetic attempts, contrasted with the success Elijah had on calling down fire from Yahweh. Others may comment on whether Elijah’s mocking of the prophets of Baal should be seen as mockery of Ahab and/or Jezebel.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3	• After the proposed contest Elijah eventually says to Ahab that ‘there is a sound of rushing rain’ (18:41), so the narrative is brought back to the ending of the drought, showing the supremacy of Yahweh over Baal. • Some may discuss whether Elijah is suggesting that Ahab and his family have personally forsaken God’s commandments, or whether by Ahab’s father’s house Elijah is referring to Israel more broadly.	

Section B

Question	Answer	Marks
4	Read the following passage and then answer the question below: <u>Isaiah 6:1–5, NRSVA</u> In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’ Discuss the view that Isaiah’s prophetic call narrative is <u>not</u> literally true. Refer to the passage above and other passages you have studied in your answer. Use Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 15 marks. Indicative content Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. In favour of the claim - Isaiah’s call narrative (Isaiah 6:1–13) describes a vision of Yahweh in the Jerusalem Temple. Yahweh is described by using human imagery; for example he is wearing a robe, the hem of which fills the Temple (Isaiah 6:1). Similarly, Yahweh is ‘sitting’ on a throne, which implies that he has arms and legs like an ordinary human. The vision as a whole is of an anthropomorphic God with human qualities such as size, grandeur, power, benevolence and wisdom. Taken together, such qualities do not necessarily suggest that the call narrative is literally true: they are invitations to accept the writer’s beliefs. ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I; send me!’ Can be argued to be an attempt by Isaiah to justify his message, trying to claim divine authority for his words. - Some may argue that the fantastical elements of Isaiah’s vision, such as his description of the seraphim, are too extreme to be believable, and therefore the entire narrative should not be believed. - Some may argue that just because Isaiah may have believed he had a vision and a prophetic call, is no indication he actually did, and may present alternative arguments, such as mental illness.	15

Question	Answer	Marks
4	- Some may argue that the call narrative is true, but in a metaphorical sense, and the Isaiah felt that he was called to prophecy, rather than being directly divinely commanded. - Some may discuss the rationale behind non-literal interpretations of the Bible as a whole. Against the claim - There is good reason to suppose that Isaiah's call narrative (Isaiah 6:1–13), for example, is literally true, since an all-powerful God must be able to present any desired appearance or form. Further, such a God must be able to project an image that uses human sense experience, otherwise humans would again be unable to understand it. The language describing Yahweh's majesty and holiness is sufficiently powerful to make Isaiah see what it means to be called as a prophet and to understand how and why it is possible to accept such a call. - Moreover, in Isaiah 6:8, Isaiah accepts God's call because it does convince him of its truth: 'I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' ' The overwhelming power of such a question suggests that Isaiah was motivated to accept its call to be a prophet. - Some might argue that for a prophet to accept a call from God and to carry out God's wishes, the call experience must include a vision of God's transcendence – nothing can be compared with God. The comparative unworthiness of the one who is called in effect then leads to acceptance of the call. - The description of the angel touching a coal to his lips can be seen as an indwelling of the spirit of God, in a similar way to the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, that explains Isaiah's zeal. 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I; send me!' Indicates that Isaiah saw himself as a willing prophet of Yahweh, in contrast to other who were more reluctant. This point can be used in light of the suffering servant passages, when one interprets Isaiah as being the servant. - Some may argue that if Isaiah was to make up a vision, he would describe one that was less fantastical to be more believable. Therefore, this must be a true account. - Some may discuss the rationale behind literal interpretations of the Bible as a whole.	

Section C

Question	Answer	Marks
Either		
5	‘As a court prophet, Nathan was hostile to King David.’ Discuss this claim. Use Table B: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks) and Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 10 marks for AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Award up to 15 marks for AO2 Analysis and evaluation. Indicative content Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. • To be hostile towards someone means to be opposed or antagonistic to that person – to be in a frame of mind where aggressive actions follow from such thoughts. As a general principle, it is not unknown for prophets and kings to be hostile towards each other. For example, King Ahab complained that the prophet Micaiah never prophesied anything good about him (1 Kings 22:8). Hostility both from King David to Nathan and from Nathan to David is therefore possible. • Any identification of hostility can take place only from the biblical texts, where it cannot be shown what was in the writer/editor’s mind. • There are two main episodes where hostility between David and Nathan seems possible or likely: 2 Samuel 7:1–29 and 2 Samuel 11:2 – 12:25. • In 2 Samuel 7:1–29, Nathan, as David’s court prophet, is consulted by David concerning David’s wish to build a temple for Yahweh. This appears to show David’s unease that he should be living in a house of cedar while the ark of God stays in a mere tent (v.2). At first, Nathan appears to support David’s request, but after receiving an overnight revelation from God, Nathan tells David that instead of building a ‘temple’ for Yahweh, Yahweh will give David an everlasting ‘dynasty’ the word for these being the same in Hebrew). No hostility towards David is seen in the discussion. However, the fact that God’s first positive reaction is so soon changed (7:5) suggests to some scholars that the narrative has very little to do with the historical Nathan but instead is an editorial device explaining why David did not build the Jerusalem Temple. The building of the Temple was to be performed by David’s son Solomon. This kind of interpretation seems to be supported by the fact that the editor of 2 Samuel 7 seems to have forgotten the existence of the temple at Shiloh. • Given that Nathan (in 1 Samuel 7:1–29) says nothing derogatory to or about David, it seems that Nathan was not, in this instance, hostile to King David; rather, he was concerned to be helpful in showing that David’s ‘house’ would become an ongoing ‘dynasty’	25

Question	Answer	Marks
5	• The same does not appear to be true with the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:2 – 12:25. In this account, David carries out a string of actions which clearly do arouse the prophet Nathan's hostility towards him: David looks lustfully at the wife of Uriah the Hittite and subsequently makes her pregnant; he then arranges to have Uriah killed in battle, completely ignoring Uriah's devotion to Bathsheba, to the war and to himself; next, he takes Bathsheba to be his own wife, and she bears him a son. • In ch.12, Nathan's reaction to all of this is to tell David the parable of the ewe lamb, through which David is forced to admit his own guilt. Nathan concludes by telling David, 'You are the man' (2 Samuel 12:7). In saying this so bluntly, Nathan ran the risk of being put to death, so it would appear that at this point Nathan was indeed hostile to King David. • Nathan's judgement is emphatic: 'Why have you despised the word of the Lord?' (2 Samuel 12:9). Further, the penalty is that the sword shall never depart from David's house (verse 10). David does repent, whereupon Nathan tells him that he will not die, but instead, the first-born son of David and Bathsheba will die. Since Nathan's words and actions are prompted by those of David, Nathan's hostility seems clear. Nathan knows that David could kill him for his criticisms, nevertheless he refuses to back down. • In the end, Nathan does appear to drop his hostility towards David. He and Bathsheba have another child, and God sends a message through Nathan that the child was 'Jedidiah' – 'beloved of the Lord' (2 Samuel 12:25). A conclusion to be drawn from this is that Nathan was hostile to David's actions concerning Bathsheba, not hostile towards David himself.	

Question	Answer	Marks
Or		
6	‘Elijah was important only as a miracle-worker.’ Assess this claim. Use Table B: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks) and Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 10 marks for AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Award up to 15 marks for AO2 Analysis and evaluation. Indicative content Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited In favour of the claim - Some might argue that above all, Elijah was the great prophetic miracle-worker, the importance of this being that he demonstrated Yahweh’s power over the world and its people and kept Israel loyal to Yahweh rather than Baal. Some of the following points are likely to be referred to, for example: - In 1 Kings 17:8–16, Elijah miraculously multiplied meal and oil, promising the widow of Zarephath that the meal and oil would not cease their miraculous multiplication until the day that God decided to bring rain on the earth. - In 1 Kings 18:41–46, Yahweh alone has the power to bring the life-giving rain that ends the drought. - In 1 Kings 17:17–24, by raising a child from death Elijah showed that only God has power over life and death. Miracles such as these are not presented as the feats of magicians: rather, they are shown to be acts of divine providence from God. - In 1 Kings 18:17–40, during the contest on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Phoenician Baal, Elijah demonstrates the power of Yahweh by annihilating the prophets of Baal and bringing the fire of God who answers through fire to light a sacrifice. - The number and extent of his miracles show that Yahweh is Lord of creation and demands worship from all beings. Elijah is therefore likely to be remembered only as a miracle-worker. In 2 Kings 2:1–8, Elijah is given the power to divide the waters of the Jordan, which would have been a reminder to the Israelites of Moses’ greatest miracle in freeing the Hebrew slaves from captivity in Egypt. To think ‘miracles’ is to think ‘Elijah’. Against the claim - Some might argue that Elijah had other important functions aside from miracle-working. For example, he is renowned as a prophet of social justice, as in the story of Naboth’s vineyard (1 Kings 21:1–29). In this instance, Elijah confronts Ahab and Jezebel over the stoning of Naboth. His interference is so important that Ahab repents, and God says that he will delay the threatened punishment to the days of Ahab’s son.	25

Question	Answer	Marks
6	• In connection with the threat to Yahweh worship from worship of Baal, Elijah is credited with the survival of Yahweh worship. This is not simply from Elijah's power as a miracle worker but also from his involvement in power politics. Israel's survival was perhaps the result of Elijah's competence as a politician. • Elijah is also described as leading a prophetic school – 'the sons of the prophets', thus increasing the power and influence of Yahweh prophets during a time when Yahweh-worship was not common. • For some, Elijah's most important characteristic is the example he showed in dealing with his own religious doubts. 1 Kings 19 records a theophany on Mt Horeb, where God reveals himself to Elijah not through wind, earthquake or fire, but through 'a sound of sheer silence' (verse 12). • Some might argue that the difference between miracle-working and Elijah's other characteristics is not great, and that it is best not to detach Elijah's miracle-working from all his other functions as a Yahweh-prophet.	