

Cambridge International AS & A Level

BIBLICAL STUDIES**9484/32**

Paper 3 Prophets of the Old Testament

October/November 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 October/November 2025 series for most Cambridge IGCSE, Cambridge International A and AS Level components, and some Cambridge O Level components.

This document consists of **14** 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 wider 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 wider context, if relevant.	3–4
Level 1	Basic 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 wider 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. - Coherent 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 some 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>Amos 2:1 NRSVA</u> Thus says the LORD: For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not revoke the punishment; because he burned to lime the bones of the king of Edom. Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) to mark candidate answers 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 The context is an indictment by Amos of neighbouring peoples, in this case particularly of Moab. The content • Moab was seen by Israel to be a deadly enemy of other nations in general, this being of particular concern for Israel as Moab occupied territory to the south-east of the River Jordan. • Some will note the legalistic style of the language, e.g. – ‘For three transgressions ... and for four, I will not revoke the punishment’ – is a style of language meaning that in each case, the crime is worthy of the maximum penalty and is irrevocable. • The phrase, ‘for three transgressions ... and for four’ means, ‘more than enough’, in which case it shows that the punishment is entirely appropriate for those who commit atrocities in war. • In this instance, the focus is on the barbarism practised by Moab in burning to lime the bones of the king of Edom, which shows complete ignorance of the ethics of warfare in general, since this would leave no trace of such an individual or of his deeds. • Some might comment on the stylistic / oracular language – ‘Thus says the LORD’ (v.1), which (here and elsewhere) acts as an assurance of the truth of God’s word given in the oracle and in other passages.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
2	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. <u>Isaiah 9:6–7(a), 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. Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) to mark candidate answers 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 a salvation oracle concerning the arrival of the messianic king: an individual who would restore the religious status and power of the kingdom. The content • The main point of interest is the view that the child/son refers to the accession of a messianic king, and it uses a number of phrases that refer to the monarchy of David. The child will be a 'Wonderful Counsellor', 'Mighty God', 'Everlasting Father', 'Prince of Peace' (9:6). The breadth of his rule and the peace that will come with it will be endless • Some commentators assume that the messianic king referred to here is Hezekiah. According to the Bible, Hezekiah brought about many religious reforms, particularly by imposing a law forbidding worship of any god other than Yahweh. • Some commentators suggest instead that the messianic king may be King Cyrus of Persia. • Some commentators suggest it was a future messianic king being referred to in the passage. • For some, then, these passages are held to be later insertions reiterating the requirements of ideal kingship. Similar material follows, for example in 11:1–9, where the delight of the prophesied 'shoot from the stump of Jesse', will be in the fear of the Lord (11:3). • The qualities of the ideal king are summarised in 9:6–7. In particular, he will be an ideal/wonderful counsellor (v.6) who receives counsel from God and who gives counsel to all his subjects.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. <u>Isaiah 40:1–2, NRSVA</u> Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins. Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) to mark candidate answers 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 passage marks the beginning of what many scholars see as a largely separate section of writings in what is collectively the Book of Isaiah, attributed to an unknown prophet generally called ‘Second Isaiah’, to distinguish it from the time, author(s) and content of chapters 1–39 and 56–66. The content • Deutero (second) Isaiah (Isaiah chapters 40–55) begins by giving a message of comfort to those carried into exile after the Babylonian invasion and deportations carried out by the armies of Babylon. • Deutero-Isaiah is generally considered to be a superb poet and is often described as being decisive for understanding the Christian faith, in so far as many of the themes in 40–55 are seen as building blocks for future Christian and Jewish faith. • Chapter 40 begins with a message of comfort for all those who have experienced hardship or worse in circumstances such as the Babylonian invasion of Judah, hence the poets, ‘speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that she has served her term, ... that her penalty is paid.’ • Linked to a double restitution also seen in Job. • The voice in Isaiah 40:2 is thus from God’s heavenly council: as God of all nations, all are now subservient to Yahweh (vv.1–2 and now 6ff.).	5

Section B

Question	Answer	Marks
4	Read the following passage and then answer the question: <u>1 Kings 18:36–40, NRSVA</u> At the time of the offering of the oblation, the prophet Elijah came near and said, ‘O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your bidding. Answer me, O LORD, answer me, so that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have turned their hearts back.’ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt-offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, ‘The LORD indeed is God; the LORD indeed is God.’ Elijah said to them, ‘Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape.’ Then they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon, and killed them there. Discuss the claim that Old Testament miracle stories are true accounts of the power of God’s prophets. 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 • In 1 Kings 18:36–40, Elijah asks God that it should be seen and known that Yahweh is God of Israel, and that all the things Elijah has done, including his miracles, have been done through Yahweh’s word (v.36). God then sends fire to consume a burnt offering on an altar, whereupon ‘the fire of the Lord’ consumes the burnt offering, the wood, the stones and the dust and even water that had been poured onto the wood and the altar. The reaction from the people is that they fall on their faces and proclaim that ‘Yahweh is God’. • Hundreds of the prophets of Baal and Asherah were slaughtered, after which the drought that had consumed Israel is lifted. These actions are clearly intended to reflect God’s factual and unbreakable power shown through miracles. • Some candidates might say that this miracle is set up as a competition between Baal and Yahweh, to demonstrate the power of Yahweh rather than Baal. • The miracle of Elijah demonstrates divine power as it recalls the actions of Moses in parting the waters of the sea. Moses’ miracle serves as a prototype for those of both Elijah and Elisha, making all such miracles demonstrations of divine power. • God is seen as being all-powerful / all-knowing etc., so God must have the power to carry out these actions.	15

Question	Answer	Marks
4	Against the claim • Those against the claim generally would argue that all such stories are unreliable because they would argue religious literature is not factual. • Equally, to assert that God has divine power to perform miracles through the prophets is nothing more than saying that ‘If God existed, God would be the most powerful being.’ • The sheer number of miracle stories in the Old Testament is not a proof that they show the power of God. • Miracles in the Bible do not necessarily demonstrate God’s power and could instead be viewed as allegory and/or metaphor. • Equally, Elijah’s murder of the prophets of Baal puts a question mark over the goodness of God’s power and that of his prophets. • There are no obvious criteria which show that miracle stories are demonstrations of divine power. Such issues appear to be matters of belief rather than of proof.	

Section C

Question	Answer	Marks
5	Analyse the significance of Jeremiah's symbolic acts. 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. Indicative content • Candidates may discuss the significance of individual symbolic acts or discuss the significance of symbolic acts as a whole; either is valid. • Some candidates may suggest that the symbolic acts were a key element of Jeremiah explaining his prophecies in a manner in which his audience could understand. Each symbolic act was linked to a following prophecy, and it gave them meaning. In some ways they are a form of literal parable. • Some candidates may suggest that the symbolic acts served to demonstrate that Jeremiah actually believed in what he was saying. • Some may suggest that the story of the waistcloth symbolised that God would allow his people to be taken into exile in Babylon, but that in a future time he would bring them back, as Jeremiah did with the burying and uncovering it. • Others may highlight the significance of the item being a waistcloth, and going from being clean to being spoiled, suggesting that though God made his people clean, they have spoiled themselves with things of this earth. • Some may discuss the act of the purchase and breaking of the potter's jug, as symbolising God building up Israel, having taken them out of exile, and now destroying the kingdom of Judah by sending them into exile. The significance of this act being committed in front of the elders and following their admonishment may be raised as significant elements. • Some may discuss the yoke of the King of Babylon, and how it symbolised the dominion of Nebuchadnezzar being extend over Judah's neighbours. • Others may discuss the significance of Jeremiah submitting to the yoke, as it was God's will that it be thus, and that the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar is similarly willed to extend over all the people of the region. • Some may suggest rather than individual symbolic acts, Jeremiah 16 states that Jeremiah's whole life is to serve as symbol of the approaching doom of Judah. • Some may suggest that the symbolic acts were not that significant, as the words that accompanied the acts were more significant than the acts themselves. • Others may suggest other elements of Jeremiah's prophecy were more significant, such as his visions, or description of false prophets.	25

Question	Answer	Marks
6	Assess the importance of Samuel in the development of the Israelite monarchy. 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. - Samuel's role as the last Judge of the tribes of Israel, and that in many way his anointing of Saul was symbolic of Israel moving from a tribal confederation who only had unified leader (Judge) in times of crisis where unity was required, to a kingdom. - Some candidates may discuss Samuel's role as prophet of Yahweh, and that his role transforms from political to spiritual leadership of the nation. - Some may suggest that Samuel's argument against kings shows that he was disapproving of the development of the Israelite monarchy, but that his own position was not secure enough to prevent its establishment. His accepting to the role of anointer can be seen as accepting the political realities of the time to retain some authority, or divine will. - Some may suggest that Samuel's role in the anointing of Saul, as the demonstration of Yahweh's favour on Saul, shows Samuel's importance in the development of the monarchy. - Some may comment on Samuel's ability to safely rebuke Saul as an indicator that the monarchy's power was not absolute at that time, and that Samuel has his own authority. This is also seen when Saul utilises Samuel's authority when summoning the nation to arms, as an indicator that Samuel is supporting the developing monarchy, rather than subject to it. - Candidates may suggest Samuel's role as the anointer of David to succeed Saul demonstrates that Samuel is the key figure in the development of the monarchy, as he has the power to both give and take away kingship. Some may suggest this authority instead lies with Yahweh. - Some may suggest that it was Samuel's failure as a parent to raise his sons to be suitable successors to him that led to the development of the Israelite monarchy. - Some may suggest that Samuel's most important role was not related to the monarchy, such as that of being a priest. Some may discuss whether 1 Samuel suggests that Samuel became the high priest of Yahweh, a priest, or merely a priest's servant. - Some may suggest that the key factor in the development of the monarchy was the geo-political situation at the time, and that therefore Samuel was not important. The Philistines were apparently at that time in regional ascendancy, and Saul as a charismatic handsome tall man was a useful figurehead to unite the people, become king of Israel and vanquish the Philistines.	25