

Cambridge International AS & A Level

BIBLICAL STUDIES

9484/42

Paper 4 Christian Understandings of God, Life and the Universe

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 **11** printed pages.

PUBLISHED**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.

PUBLISHED**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.
SEEN	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 (10 marks)

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

Level	Description	Marks
Level 4	<p>Detailed accurate knowledge with good understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>Limited knowledge and basic understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 marks)

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

Level	Description	Marks
Level 5	<p>Effective conclusion with analysis of points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<p>Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<p>Satisfactory conclusion with different points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<p>Basic conclusion with a supported point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<p>Limited interpretation with a point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

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Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p>Analyse what the Bible teaches about the immortality of the soul.</p> <p>Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks) and Table B: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 Marks) to mark candidate responses to this question.</p> <p>Award up to 10 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Award up to 15 marks AO2 Analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Indicative content</p> <p>Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates' responses are likely to focus on the three passages set for study in relation to this topic: 1 Corinthians 15, 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:10 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:3. Material from any other Bible passage can be credited but is not necessary.</p> <p><u>1 Corinthians</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates may discuss how in 1 Corinthians Jesus is presented as the primary example of resurrection, and the significance of his resurrection in particular is established as a fundamental doctrine of Christianity, to the extent that Paul says that without it there is no point to Christianity. • Candidates may discuss how 1 Corinthians states that the resurrection of the dead is part of the last judgement, when the kingdom is handed over to the father, and the different interpretations of these teachings. • Some may discuss the analogy with sowing and the sun and stars, to highlight that it makes the case that the earthly bodies and heavenly bodies will be different. The earthly body is stated to be perishable, dishonourable, weak and natural. The heavenly body is stated to be imperishable, glorious, powerful and spiritual. • 1 Corinthians 15 focuses primarily on how things will change between life at present and eternal life; it is also the longest narrative on the topic in the epistles. <p><u>2 Corinthians</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates may discuss how 2 Corinthians uses the analogy that humans are 'treasures in jars of clay', and the significance of this phrase. • Some may discuss the tent and house analogy in 2 Corinthians 5, and how this suggests moving from a temporary to a permanent habitation. Some may make links to the Israelite Exodus to highlight the significance of this analogy. • The phrase 'living by faith, not by sight' might be analysed with reference to the concept of the immortality of the soul, something which is unseen. 	25

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Question	Answer	Marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some candidates may discuss how the letter seems to have been written during a period of persecution, and the view that the teachings on immortality of the soul were written to encourage Christians to persevere. <p><u>2 Thessalonians</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates may discuss the idea that the dead will rise with Christ suggests that though people’s physical bodies have perished, there is an immortal soul that exists after death, that will rise. Where the soul exists in the intervening period may be discussed, and candidates may link to ideas on Sheol. • Some candidates may discuss the significance of describing those who have died as being those who ‘sleep in death’ rather than simply being dead, and how this links to the idea of the immortality of the soul. • How the teachings on the immortality of the soul were likely to have been written as part of a broader theme for believers to rededicate themselves to their faith during a difficult time within the letter. 	

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	<p>To what extent does the problem of evil present a challenge to the idea of an omnibenevolent (all-loving) God?</p> <p>Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks) and Table B: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 Marks) to mark candidate responses to this question.</p> <p>Award up to 10 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Award up to 15 marks AO2 Analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Indicative content</p> <p>Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <p><u>The problem of evil does present a significant challenge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates may focus on either/both of the logical or the evidential problem of evil, or some other formulation. • Some candidates may argue, as Mackie did, that omnipotence, omnibenevolence and evil are mutually incoherent, and that at most only two of the qualities may exist simultaneously, evil seeming to plainly exist from observing the world. • Candidates may argue that it demonstrates that if God were a loving God, he would utilise his potency to prevent the suffering caused by evil. • Candidates may argue that any argument that evil is necessary fails, as individual suffering is inherently unjustifiable for an omnibenevolent being to formulate as any part of a divine plan. • Some candidates may use examples of evil and suffering, such as in the Book of Job (or some other example) to highlight that evil presents a personal challenge to individuals who experience such suffering. <p><u>The problem of evil does not present a significant challenge</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some may argue that whilst Mackie’s inconsistent triad does present an argument against the concept of a loving God, that argument is not insurmountable, but rather fragmentary in nature. • Some may argue that whilst Mackie’s inconsistent triad may discredit the idea of an omnibenevolent God, it does not sufficiently argue against the existence of a benevolent God. Some candidates may use examples such as the ten plagues suffered by the Egyptians to evidence that God may be better understood as benevolent than omnibenevolent. • Some candidates may argue rather that whilst God is omnibenevolent, that God may be seen as not being Omnipotent or omniscient, thus leaving possible the concept of a loving God. Though such an argument would then pose its own problems. • Some candidates may argue, through use of the Augustinian theodicy, that evil does not exist, but is merely a privation, and therefore the problem of evil, whilst presenting a challenge, is one that has been sufficiently addressed 	25

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Question	Answer	Marks
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other Candidates may argue, through the use of the Irenaean theodicy, that suffering is part of the process of soul forging of individuals, and that evil is therefore actually beneficial when viewed eschatologically, and therefore the problem of evil, whilst presenting a challenge, is one that has been sufficiently addressed. Some may argue from the perspective that belief in a loving God has continued long after philosophical critiques became widespread, therefore they cannot have prevented an unsurmountable argument. 	

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p>Analyse the significance of the dialogues between Yahweh and Satan (the accuser) regarding Job.</p> <p>Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks) and Table B: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 Marks) to mark candidate responses to this question.</p> <p>Award up to 10 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Award up to 15 marks AO2 Analysis and evaluation.</p> <p>Indicative content</p> <p>Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates are likely to identify that the dialogues serve as a framing device to the narrative of the Book of Job, to explain why Job has suffered the calamities he has. In particular, they may serve to outline to the reader that Job's suffering is undeserved and is not a divine punishment. Some candidates may discuss why during the first dialogue those close to Job are permitted to be killed, but Job must be unharmed, whilst in the second dialogue, Job is permitted to be harmed but not killed. Candidates are likely to discuss whether the dialogues should be seen as literal divine conversations, or as a theological abstraction to permit the philosophical discussions within the Book of Job. Candidates may analyse what is meant by the 'heavenly beings' that Yahweh appears to be holding court before. Some candidates may discuss whether the dialogues exist primarily to set up Yahweh's rebuke of Job later in the book. Candidates' may analyse who the Satan (<i>ha-satan</i>) / the accuser is, and whether the figure should be linked to later depictions of a malevolent Devil, or whether the Satan should be seen as a legalistic but non malevolent antagonist. Candidates' may discuss the significance of what these dialogues would have taught their original Jewish audience about suffering and the nature of God. 	25