

# Cambridge O Level

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**BIBLICAL STUDIES****2035/22**

Paper 2 The Portrayal of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels

**October/November 2025**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

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**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.

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This document consists of **13** 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**

<b>Annotation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
	Correct point
	Incorrect point
	Benefit of the doubt
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.
	No benefit of doubt given
	Omission mark
	Unclear
	Not answered question
	Example / reference
	Development
	Indicates that the point has been noted, but no credit has been given.
	Evaluation

**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:**

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.

**Level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding**

- Demonstrate knowledge of specified texts and corresponding Christian teachings, beliefs and practices.
- Demonstrate understanding of these texts, teachings, beliefs and practices in both biblical and modern contexts, including areas where there are different views within Christianity.

These level descriptions are used for **part (a)** questions in **Questions 3, 4 and 5** and all **part (b)** questions.

Level	Description	Marks
Level 3	<b>Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Answers the question, using detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates clear understanding through a well-developed and substantial response.</li> <li>• A well-structured format.</li> </ul>	5–6
Level 2	<b>Some accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partially answers the question, using some accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates some understanding through a partially developed response, covering some of the points.</li> <li>• Responds in a mostly structured format.</li> </ul>	3–4
Level 1	<b>Limited accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attempts to answer the question, using limited accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates limited understanding through an underdeveloped response through limited coverage of the points or a response in general terms.</li> <li>• Attempts to present the information in a structured format.</li> </ul>	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

**Level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation**

Use evidence and reasoned discussion of a range of points of view to make judgements about issues within Christianity arising from the texts.

These level descriptions are used for all **part (c)** questions.

Level	Description	Marks
Level 4	<p><b>Clear and well-reasoned evaluation in response to the question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers more than one point of view in detail.</li> <li>• Fully answers the question, using relevant evidence to support a well-structured discussion.</li> <li>• Concludes with a clear and well-reasoned judgement.</li> </ul>	<b>7–8</b>
Level 3	<p><b>Clear evaluation in response to the question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers more than one point of view.</li> <li>• Answers the question, using some relevant evidence to support a well-structured discussion.</li> <li>• Concludes with a clear judgement.</li> </ul>	<b>5–6</b>
Level 2	<p><b>An evaluation in response to the question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers one point of view; any other attempts to state a point of view are descriptive.</li> <li>• Partially answers the question, using partially relevant evidence to support a structured discussion.</li> <li>• Concludes with a judgement.</li> </ul>	<b>3–4</b>
Level 1	<p><b>Limited evaluation in response to the question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive response with an attempt to state a point of view, describing material linked to the question or topic.</li> <li>• Attempts to answer the question, using limited relevant evidence to support a discussion.</li> <li>• Limited or no judgement present.</li> </ul>	<b>1–2</b>
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	<b>0</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)(i)	<p><b>Matthew 17:1–2, NRSVA</b></p> <p>Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white.</p> <p><b>Identify the <u>two</u> people who appeared to Jesus and the disciples in this story.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moses</li> <li>• Elijah</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each response up to a maximum of two marks.</p>	<b>2</b>
1(a)(ii)	<p><b>Suggest what the transfiguration might show about the person and work of Jesus.</b></p> <p>Responses might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows Jesus' divinity</li> <li>• Shows Jesus to be Son of God</li> <li>• Shows Jesus to be a prophet</li> <li>• Shows Jesus to be the Messiah</li> <li>• Shows Jesus' significance within Judaism</li> <li>• Shows Jesus to be equal or greater to Moses and Elijah</li> <li>• Shows Jesus' mission as the fulfilment of the law and the prophets</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each correct response up to a maximum of four marks.</p>	<b>4</b>
1(b)	<p><b>Explain the importance of the ministry of John the Baptist.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may explain that John the Baptist's role is to prepare the way for the mission of Jesus. John the Baptist sees his own role in this context as one 'preparing the way of the Lord'. John preaches repentance and baptises people in water but points to one who will be greater than him and will baptise with the Holy Spirit and fire.</p> <p>Candidates may also mention that Jesus' view of John the Baptist is that there has been 'none greater than him' and that John is in effect the Elijah who signifies the end of the age. Candidates may also reference the fact that John would be important to Jesus as he was a cousin of Jesus. Jesus is shown in the gospels to be affected by the death of John; he attempts to withdraw to a quiet place.</p>	<b>6</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	<p><b>To what extent does the title Son of Man help Christians to understand the person and work of Jesus?</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Some candidates may agree that the title of Son of Man is helpful as this is the title that Jesus typically uses to describe himself in the gospels. He favours this title over the title of Messiah which those who interact with him try to bestow on him. The phrase when taken at face value may emphasise the humanity of Jesus but for Matthew's readers, who would mostly have a Jewish background, the phrase references the prophecy of Daniel 7 and would most likely be understood as messianic.</p> <p>Other candidates may argue that the phrase Son of Man is unhelpful due to the apocalyptic ideas that it may convey. To present Jesus as bringing the current age to an end risks readers misunderstanding the gospel and entering into conflict with Roman or Jewish authorities. Candidates may note that Jesus seems to be keen to correct this misconception as his use of the phrase Son of Man is often accompanied by predictions of his death and suffering.</p>	8

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(i)	<p><b>Mark 6:48–50, NRSVA</b></p> <p>he [Jesus] came towards them early in the morning, walking on the lake. He intended to pass them by. But when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'</p> <p><b>Identify the type of miracle described in this account.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A nature miracle</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for a correct response.</p>	1
2(a)(ii)	<p><b>State <u>two</u> things that happened immediately before this account took place.</b></p> <p>Any two from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Feeding of the 5000</li> <li>• He dismissed the crowd</li> <li>• Jesus went to pray</li> <li>• The disciples got into a boat</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each correct response up to a maximum of two marks.</p>	2

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(iii)	<p><b>State what this account shows about the person of Jesus.</b></p> <p>Any three from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus has power over nature</li> <li>• He can break physical laws/laws of nature do not apply to him</li> <li>• He has faith in God's power</li> <li>• He is divine/Son of God</li> <li>• He is loving/seeks to reassure the disciples</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each correct response up to a maximum of three marks.</p>	<b>3</b>
2(b)	<p><b>Explain how this miracle might be understood by Christians today.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Christians differ on whether the account is a description of a literal event or not. Candidates may explain that some Christians understand miracles in the Bible to be literally true and that Jesus, as Son of God, can break the laws of nature and thus demonstrate his authority over nature.</p> <p>Candidates may also explain that other Christians may see the miracle accounts as stories that are presented by the gospel authors to show the power of Jesus and encourage early Christians to trust him.</p> <p>Candidates may also note that regardless of whether the miracles actually happened, the theological truths that can be drawn from them are largely the same.</p>	<b>6</b>
2(c)	<p><b>'Miracles are the most important part of Jesus' ministry.' Discuss.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Some candidates may agree with the statement by arguing that the miracles demonstrate Jesus' power and confirm or validate his claims to be the Messiah and Son of God. Candidates may argue that this is particularly true of the resurrection which can be seen as the key belief in Christianity.</p> <p>Other candidates may disagree and argue that Jesus' teachings are more significant for Christians as these may affect the moral decisions they make on a day-to-day basis. They may note that Jesus himself is critical of those who follow him just because of the signs and wonders they experience. Candidates may also note that accounts ascribing miracles to historical figures are not unusual in ancient literature hence the miracles may not be a unique feature of the gospel writings.</p>	<b>8</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	<p><b>Give an account of Peter's denial of Jesus.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following in quotation or paraphrase, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p><u>Luke 22:54–62</u></p> <p>Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, 'This man also was with him.' But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know him.' A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, 'You also are one of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!' Then about an hour later yet another kept insisting, 'Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about!' At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.</p>	<b>6</b>
3(b)	<p><b>Explain why Peter may have denied Jesus.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may explain that Peter's denial of Jesus may have been motivated by fear as it seemed likely that the authorities' next move would be to arrest the followers of Jesus.</p> <p>Candidates may also suggest that the root of Peter's denial could be seen as a lack of faith and it may be that Peter, despite his declaration that Jesus was the Messiah, did not fully understand who Jesus was or what his mission involved.</p> <p>Some candidates may also make reference to the fact that Jesus predicted Peter's denial, so in one sense, his denial was inevitable and was part of God's plan.</p>	<b>6</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	<p><b>Assess the view that Jesus could have avoided his death on the cross.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may argue that Jesus makes a number of choices in his last days that lead to his death. He chooses to go to Jerusalem, to teach in a way that challenges the authorities, he does not resist arrest and declines to defend himself before Pilate. His predictions of his suffering and death given in the gospels show that this is a path that Jesus is deliberately choosing.</p> <p>Candidates may alternatively argue that the death of Jesus was part of God's plan and that, as such, it was inevitable, and Jesus could not escape this fate. Candidates may argue that whilst Jesus could have chosen to avoid his death, his obedience and submission to God's will meant that his death was inevitable.</p>	8

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	<p><b>Give an account of the parable of the ten bridesmaids.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following in quotation or paraphrase, but all valid material must be credited</p> <p><u>Matthew 25:1–13</u></p> <p>Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.</p>	6

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	<p><b>Explain the teaching of Jesus in this parable.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may explain that the main message of this parable seems to be to encourage the readers to be ready for the return of Jesus. This second coming may be delayed and will be unexpected when it occurs. Candidates may also draw a contrast between the wise and the foolish bridesmaids. The wise are prepared but the foolish are not ready. It may be that the author is drawing a contrast between genuine and committed followers of Jesus and those who merely profess to follow him. The oil may be faith, good works or the Holy Spirit within.</p> <p>Candidates may suggest that the bridegroom in the parable is Jesus and that the wedding feast seems to be a reference to the Messianic banquet at the end of time. The door being shut at the end of the parable serves as a reminder that the consequences for the foolish bridesmaids are eternal.</p>	<b>6</b>
4(c)	<p><b>To what extent are the parables of Jesus more about action than belief?</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may agree with the statement and note that parables such as the bridesmaids and the labourers in the vineyard carry an emphasis on action and working for the kingdom. This is also seen in Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan: Samaritans according to first-century Judaism, did not have correct beliefs. Candidates may also note that parables such as the Rich Fool show that it is possible through bad action to miss out on God's Kingdom.</p> <p>Candidates may disagree and note that in the parables of the lost coin and the lost sheep, these are found by the one who is searching without taking any action. Some candidates may also suggest that the distinction between action and belief is an unnecessary one, as the actions that the parables encourage arise out of belief.</p>	<b>8</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)	<p><b>Give an account of the cleansing of the Temple.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Responses might include some of the following in quotation or paraphrase, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p><u>Mark 11:15–17</u></p> <p>On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said, 'Is it not written: My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a den of robbers.'</p>	<b>6</b>
5(b)	<p><b>Explain why the Pharisees were opposed to Jesus.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may explain that the Pharisees were a group of Jewish religious scholars whose key concerns were around purity, strict adherence to the Law, and the resurrection of the dead. One of the Pharisees' concerns was around the teachings of Jesus which they rightly or wrongly perceived to be moving away from Old Testament Law. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus reinterprets the law by contrasting the standard interpretation with his own; 'You heard it said... but I say...'</p> <p>Candidates may also note that Jesus' reinterpretation of the Law to focus on motives rather than externals threatened to expose the Pharisees. Jesus explicitly makes this connection and condemns their hypocrisy on many occasions. Candidates may also note that the Pharisees were unhappy that Jesus chose to spend much of his time ministering to people that they considered to be sinners.</p> <p>It may also be noted the opposition of the Pharisees may also have been partly motivated a sense of feeling threatened by the success and popularity of Jesus.</p>	<b>6</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	<p><b>‘Jesus should have tried harder to avoid conflict with the authorities.’ Discuss.</b></p> <p>Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates’ response to this question.</p> <p>Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may agree with this statement by noting that some of Jesus’ harshest words were reserved for the religious leaders whom he perceives as being hypocrites keen to adhere to minor rules but ignoring the bigger principles being the law. They may note that in entering Jerusalem in the manner that he did, driving out the traders in the temple, and publicly criticising the leaders, Jesus is actively seeking conflict.</p> <p>Candidates may see this as a negative thing or a positive thing. They may argue that it is more important that Jesus obeys God rather than human beings.</p> <p>Candidates may also argue that whilst Jesus experiences conflict with religious leaders, he does not generally experience conflict with the Romans who were the main political authority. He encourages his followers to ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s’ and praises the faith of a centurion.</p> <p>Candidates may reflect that conflict is an unavoidable part of Jesus’ mission. Jesus himself seems to recognise this as he states that he comes to bring a sword rather than peace.</p>	<b>8</b>