



ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2019

Religious Studies

Assessment Unit AS 3

assessing

An Introduction to Themes in the Old Testament

[SRE31]

THURSDAY 16 MAY, MORNING

MARK SCHEME

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of a mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for **GCE Religious Studies**

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including:
 - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching;
 - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies;
 - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice; and
 - approaches to the study of religion and belief (AO1); and
- analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study (AO2).

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement. The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Each of the two assessment objectives have been categorised into five levels of performance relating to the respective abilities of the candidates. Having identified, for each assessment objective, the band in which the candidate has performed, the examiner should then decide on the appropriate mark within the range for the band.

Other Aspects of Human Experience at AS Level

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, when required, to access Bands 3–5.

Synoptic Assessment at A2 Level

Candidates must support their answer with reference to at least one other unit of study to access Bands 4–5.

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience in their AO2 response to access Bands 3–5.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within levels of response as follows:

- Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.
- Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.
- Level 3: Quality of written communication is good.
- Level 4: Quality of written communication is very good.
- Level 5: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a basic selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material lacks clarity and coherence. There is little or no use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are basic and the intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Limited): The candidate makes a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is limited use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 3 (Good): The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Very Good): The candidate makes a very good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with clarity and coherence. There is very good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a very good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 5 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent response to the question asked • Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and knowledge • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A very high degree of relevant evidence and examples • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure • An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response to the question asked • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding and almost totally accurate knowledge • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A very good range of relevant evidence and examples • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good response to the question asked • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding and mainly accurate knowledge • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A good range of relevant evidence and examples • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response to the question asked • Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding • Demonstrates limited understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • A limited range of evidence and/or examples • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[6]–[10]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response to the question asked • Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding • Demonstrates minimal understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies • Little, if any, use of evidence and/or examples • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[0]–[5]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis • An excellent attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • An excellent attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • An excellent attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure • An extensive range of technical language and terminology with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis • A very good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A very good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • A very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis • A good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • A good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis • A limited attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A limited attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which struggle to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • A limited attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[6]–[10]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis • A basic attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A basic attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which fail to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[0]–[5]

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, where necessary, to access Bands 3–5.

Section A**AVAILABLE MARKS**Answer **one** question from this section

1 (a) With reference to the text, discuss the importance of “justice and righteousness” in the Book of Amos.

Answers may include:

- Note that the phrase “justice and righteousness” is important across all prophetic literature, aptly summarizing what the prophets sought for their societies; the prophecy of Amos fits into this pattern, underlining that “justice and righteousness” were very relevant to Amos’ vision of society.
- Mention of the concept of “ethical monotheism” i.e. how God ruled over all people, intending a just, moral purpose for the entire world; this intention may be related to the phrase “justice and righteousness.”
- How Amos uses the key words “justice” and “righteousness” three times (Amos 5:7; 5:24; 6:12) in passages which demonstrate that they encapsulate the primary prophetic concern; specific exploration of the importance of the quote “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24) as the decisive summons of all prophetic faith.
- Contextual background to the use of “justice and righteousness” in Amos, including details of the type of injustice in Israel: some were falling into poverty because of injustice, others had summer and winter homes (Amos 3:15), lived in stone mansions (Amos 5:11), and enjoyed lives of luxurious opulence (Amos 4:1; 6:1–6); a lack of “justice and righteousness” indicates the ruling elite have lost their moral compass and are blind to the violence and oppression by which their wealth is amassed.
- Discussion of how the lack of “justice and righteousness” forms the basis of Amos’ condemnation of society; because of the prevalence of injustice, God will obliterate this society; the theme of “justice and righteousness” is thus important as a way of indicating that punishment is unavoidable for Israel.
- Exploration of how the oracles against the nations relate to “justice and righteousness”: the nations are indicted for essentially obvious war crimes, but guided by Torah-Law instruction, Israel should have created a society of “justice and righteousness”; that Israel did not and is indicted for violation of Torah-Law ethics underlines that a lack of “justice and righteousness” in Israelite society is the equivalent of violent war crimes; this stresses the relevance and importance of “justice and righteousness.”

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance." (Isaiah 19:25)

AVAILABLE MARKS

With reference to this quotation, evaluate the view that God was not just concerned about Israel, but other nations as well. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Exploration of the Isaiah 19 quotation, noting that covenant terms normally applied exclusively to the election of Israel are used about Egypt and Assyria, Israel's enemies and the two super-powers of the 8th century BCE; the terms of the vision are arresting and graphically illustrate that God was concerned about other nations; Isaiah envisions peace across the region of the Fertile Crescent; it appears that the world is God's chosen people, not just Israel.
- Concern about other nations is not only found in this text; refer also to Isaiah 56:1–8, which at the deepest level indicates God's concern for foreigners; God intends God's holy mountain and house of prayer to be for all nations (Isa. 56:7); note also that God's concern is not only for foreigners, but also the marginalized in society as represented by eunuchs (Isa. 56:3).
- Discussion of how God's concern about other nations is reflected across a range of biblical passages, including: Amos 9:7, in which God acknowledges enacting exodus for Israel, but also for Philistines and Arameans; attention may also be paid to stories from the Elijah-Elisha cycle that illustrate God's healing and concern for those outside Israel (e.g. 1st Kings 17:7–24; 2nd Kings 5:1–19).
- Alternatively, it could be argued that for most of the time, the Bible presents God as primarily concerned about Israel; reference can be made to the exclusivity of the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants.
- Examination of the Ezra-Nehemiah hard-line covenant renewal movement, especially how it was exclusionary not only towards foreigners, but also towards other Jews, who were considered impure and inferior (Ezra 9:1–4); note the tension between Isaiah and Ezra-Nehemiah in the post-exilic era around the issue of who God is concerned about.
- Note that oracles against the nations (Amos 1:2–2:3), and condemnation of worship foreign to Israel (1st Kings 18:16–40) demonstrate that God can be highly critical of other nations; perhaps it may be argued that justice is God's primary concern, in Israel and other nations (Isa. 56:1).

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

2 (a) How did Samuel's warning about kingship contrast with the qualities that Israel demanded of an ideal king?

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Background to the rise of kingship in Israel, including: internal reasons, e.g. corruption; external factors, e.g. Israel was vulnerable to new enemies; pro and anti-monarchy sources, and how Samuel's warning is opposed to the establishment of a king; how Samuel's warning concerns the dangers of a centralized authority, with a concentration of power among urban elites.
- Discussion of Samuel's warning in 1st Samuel 8:1–22, including that: Israel's call for a king represents a rejection of God, following a pattern of disobedience since the Exodus (1st Samuel 8:7–8); the king will be a "taker" and examples of this (1 Samuel 8:11–18); the anti-monarchy source reflects a peasant consciousness, wary that a king will confiscate surplus wealth; the dispute about kingship is not only a religious matter, but also has implications related to power, economics and wealth distribution.
- Examination of Deuteronomy 17:14–20 for an appropriate model of kingship in Israel; central to this is the concept of the king studying Torah-Law; the institution of monarchy is thus presented as subordinate to Torah-Law, dependent on and responsive to the regulations of Moses (Deut. 17:18–20); the king must be an Israelite.
- Note that in this perspective, the ideal king: does not multiply horses (i.e. does not gain military power to reduce the people to slavery once again); does not multiply wives (i.e. does not cement alliances with other countries by marrying foreign wives, who may compromise his faith and ethics); does not multiply silver and gold (i.e. is not committed to royal opulence based on high taxation and exploitation) (Deut. 17:16–17).
- Exploration of Psalm 72 as a royal enthronement psalm, including: how it depicts the roles of the king as to bring justice, rain, fertility, prosperity, long life, concern for the poor, defeat of enemies and subjugation of other kings; the common idea in the ancient near east that rulers were the agency through whom the gods dealt with their people in matters of justice, warfare, and well-being; power flowed to the people from a deity through the king.
- The distinctive quality that made the ideal king in Israel was his commitment to justice and righteousness; these were not one item on a list but the foundation on which everything else rested; justice for the helpless was the definitive mark of the reign of God and the key priority for the king (Psalm 72: 1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 14).

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) Assess the claim that the promises made by God in the Davidic Covenant only became a problem when Jerusalem fell in 587 BCE. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Outline of the key issue: God makes an unconditional promise to David and his family/house/dynasty that God will establish David's kingdom forever (2nd Samuel 7:13); will never remove God's love from David's house (2nd Samuel 7:15); David's house and kingdom will endure forever and be established forever (2nd Samuel 7:16); but the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE ended David's dynasty; the problem is thus that eventually, after 400 years, God's unconditional promise was broken.
- Exploration of the relationship between Nathan's oracles in 2 Samuel 7:14–16 and 12:10: the first emphasizes that God's love will never be taken/removed from David, the second that the sword will never be taken/removed from David's house because of his affair with Bathsheba; despite the unconditional promise, there is a contest between God's deep commitment and the sinfulness that tests it; divine love sustained the dynasty for a long time, but the sword finally ended it, perhaps justifiably.
- Note the strong contrast between the conditional nature of the Sinai covenant and the unconditional nature of the Davidic covenant; note also the support the Davidic covenant finds in Psalm 132 (especially vv. 11–17), which parallels 2nd Samuel 7, and Psalm 78:67–72, which lays the basis for Davidic Zion theology; but in an astonishing claim Psalm 89 raises the problem that the unconditional promise of 2nd Samuel 7 did not endure (see vv. 38–52); there is tension in the Bible around the issue.
- Reference to the Deuteronomistic History, including how it: was proposed by Martin Noth; based on the covenantal theology of Deuteronomy, which promised blessings for obeying God's commands but curses for disobeying them; extended from Joshua through to 2nd Kings, and was written to explain the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BCE as punishment by God.
- Explanation that ultimately the promises made to David were incorporated into the Deuteronomistic History, which accounted for the historical reality of Jerusalem's destruction in 587 BCE; but noting that for all his faults, David is basically well-remembered, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite (1st Kings 15:1–5); thus, the Deuteronomist influences the story and fits in into the Deuteronomistic History.
- Discussion of how the unconditional promises were still important even after Jerusalem fell in 587 BCE, and became the source of messianic thought in the Old Testament, as people hoped for an ideal Davidic king still to come; in this way, the problem of the destruction of Jerusalem was overcome; even in exile, there was still a confidence in the promise of unfailing/unconditional divine love and Davidic renewal.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

Section B

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answer **one** question from this question

3 (a) “Elisha brought signs of hope and life in a harsh world.”

With reference to this quotation, explain the purpose of the Elisha narratives.

Answers may include:

- Note how: as the monarchy became established, and royal theology conceived the king as the source of all good and blessing, life became harsh for the peasant class through royal exploitation; the Elijah and Elisha cycle of stories question whether kings exercise a monopoly on power and bring hope to those disadvantaged by the royal system; these folk legends tell of spectacular wonders, which encourage and bring life to those who do not subscribe to the royal interpretation of reality.
- Discussion of how Elijah has remarkable powers to transform life, and how Elisha is his disciple and successor, including that: they are part of a prophetic movement (1st Kings 19:19–21; 2nd Kings 2:1–18); Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah’s spirit (2nd Kings 2:9–10); Elisha receives Elijah’s cloak, and is able to part the waters with it, recalling the Exodus (2nd Kings 2:13–14); thus, there is continuity as Elisha displays the same powers as Elijah; hope is not limited to one person; it is passed on.
- Exploration of Elisha’s pastoral activity towards needy people, as demonstrated in the story of the woman from Shunem, and how this brings signs of hope and life in the midst of difficult circumstances (2nd Kings 4:8–37); the events of the story invite astonishment and are designed to evoke amazement at Elisha’s capacity to turn despair to new life and hope; parallel to Elijah and the widow of Zarephath.
- Observe that the theme of Elisha’s power to invert circumstances is reiterated in the arena of international politics as Elisha deals with Naaman, a top-ranking Syrian general, who is not only an outsider to Israel but also a prominent agent of one of Israel’s constant enemies (2nd Kings 5:1–19); the story of Naaman shows that hope and healing can take place for opponents, even as war threatens.
- Examination of the remarkable story in 2nd Kings 6:8–23, including: the harsh reality of war, with potential for fear and killing; how Israel’s support is not just human and the enemy is mysteriously blinded; that the impulse for vengeance and violence is replaced by a shared meal as a sign of life and hope; the contrast with how Elijah slaughtered the priests of Baal.
- These are serious narratives that at the deepest level depict an epistemological alternative to royal theology and the powerful role of the king in it.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, comment on the claim that from a religious point of view monarchy is the best form of government. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- An open-ended response citing relevant contemporary and/or historical examples.
- The search for the best form of government goes back far into history: in the Ancient Near East, monarchy was widespread, and the king represented God (and was often thought of as a god); this form of government created hierarchical societies, in which power and wealth accrued to the ruling elites and the priesthoods that supported them; when Israel adopted monarchy, it participated in this common thinking of the region and risked losing its distinctive ethical character.
- In the medieval era, arguments were presented for monarchy as beneficial and biblical: James I explicated the idea of the “Divine Right of Kings” and of the king as “Basilikon Doron” (or Royal Gift); the view that monarchy creates a stable society, with a place for everyone and everyone in their place; some people feel comfortable with this understanding of society, especially if it is believed to be ordained by God; respect and reverence of royal figures like the Queen and Princess Diana.
- It may be observed that while monarchy remains attractive to some as a way of ensuring national cohesion and continuity with the past, the nature of monarchy has changed: from forms of absolutism based on the concept of royal prerogative to various types of constitutional monarchy (the U.K.); few absolute monarchies exist today and few subscribe to the idea, given the example of places like Saudi Arabia.
- While the Bible provides some evidence favourable to monarchy, overall it is ambiguous on the matter; but the idea of the perfect king remained important, and it is from this monarchical tradition that belief in a messiah emerged; perhaps today, monarchy is attractive because it is still associated with an ideal ruler, in the minds of some; but note how theocracy is still a positive concept to some, even in N. Ireland.
- Alternatively, it may be argued that monarchy is anti-democratic and outdated, with no place in a meritocracy or society of equals; the rise of Republicanism in the U.S. and French Revolutions, influencing the United Irishmen; the importance of monarchy and republicanism in the political, social, and religious life of contemporary N. Ireland.
- Discussion of how other valid forms of government are very different to monarchy but also have deep roots in historical thought and experience; e.g. in Plato’s “Republic”, with its exploration of the best form of government, and in the Roman Republic, which may have been at its best before the Emperors (who assumed monarchical powers); the view that the U.S. has declined from Republic to Empire in recent years.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[25]

50

4 (a) Examine the importance of the Mosaic Covenant in the life of ancient Israel.

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Contextual information, including how the Mosaic Covenant is: part of the Exodus narrative and creates the basis for an egalitarian society, free from slavery and so very different from Egypt (Exodus 20:2); constituted by God's utterance to Moses alone in the context of a theophany on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:9, 16–22); a bilateral covenant that binds God to a chosen people and makes requirements of them (Exodus 19:5), on the understanding that obedience to God's commands is vital.
- Discussion of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17) as central to the Mosaic Covenant, including that: they were absolute and sought to bring every part of Israel's life under God's rule and into conformity with God's will; clarified the nature of Israel's relationship to God religiously and sociologically, incorporating the personal, public, civic, and cultic; constituted the foundation and reference point for all Old Testament thinking about ethics.
- Note of relevant details about the Ten Commandments, including that they: are mainly apodictic, expressed as "Thou shalt not"; absolute and completely non-negotiable; preclude idolatry (Exodus 20:3–6) and guard the well-being of the neighbour against exploitation (Exodus 20:13–17); provide for a covenantal relationship between neighbours and act as a barrier against social chaos.
- Explanation that the founding Mosaic Covenant was so important that: there was the idea of covenantal renewal; in part, this would have been done to introduce each new generation of children to an understanding of the covenant; ultimately, the Mosaic Covenant was key to the great prophets of Israel, such as Amos, Hosea, and Jeremiah, as they tried to call Israel back to covenantal faithfulness.
- Theological comments, including that: the Mosaic Covenant affirms that the God of all creation has made an abiding commitment of fidelity to an elect people; this commitment is grounded in divine resolve to be in relationship; thus, the Bible is about a God in relationship, not a God in splendid isolation.
- That while the Mosaic Covenant tradition is complex and was developed over a long period of time, its importance cannot be underestimated: it forms the core of Judaism, which is based on God's Torah/Law; all other covenants may be seen as a subset of the Mosaic Covenant.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess the view that all religions lead to the same God. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- An open-ended response citing relevant contemporary and/or historical examples.
- Biblically, there are inclusive texts, which underline that God relates positively to different religions; theologically, there is the concept of the incomparability of God, which stresses that God's ways are not our ways, and that therefore God could use all religions to lead people to God; this may be associated with the Reformation emphasis on the doctrine of the sovereignty of God.
- Related to this, it may be argued that all human religious systems and perspectives are necessarily limited, and that all provide an authentic but partial encounter with the divine; the story of the blind men and the elephant, illustrative of the pluralist thinking of John Hick; the thinking of Joseph Campbell that many of the world's religions essentially share the same mythological outlook.
- Notice how Pope Francis says that humanity needs religion, and that religion guides people towards good; the idea that if any religion shapes morality, resulting in ethical living, it is ultimately leading to God; Karl Rahner's concept of the "anonymous Christian", in which people may be saved by how they live, even though they have never heard the Christian Gospel.
- Exploration of: the term "Missio Dei" (the Mission of God), particularly how it understands that God wills the creation of a just world, in which all religions can play a part if they conform to the standards of the Kingdom of God; how, conversely, all religions can fall short (e.g. the violence of the Crusader and ISIS); the need for ecumenism (especially among the monotheistic/Abrahamic faiths), working together on what they share in common to lead people to God in an increasingly atheistic age.
- Alternatively, from a more exclusivist perspective, many will argue for the uniqueness of specific religious truths as the key to knowing God (e.g. in Christianity that Jesus Christ is the only valid way to God); the biblical and theological reasons for this (e.g. as in the work of Alister McGrath); the role of revelation, and the significance of faith, not leading a good life, as the route to God; without faith, nothing leads to God.
- Philosophically, in terms of formal logic, the argument that it cannot be true that all religions are valid and lead to the same God if they hold contradictory positions; e.g. Judaism and Islam deny the possibility of God becoming incarnate, but Christianity believes it, and may be said to be based on it; both positions cannot be true.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[25]

50

Total

100