

# Cambridge International AS & A Level

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**BIBLICAL STUDIES****9484/42**

Paper 4 Christian Understandings of God, Life and the Universe

**May/June 2025**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 50

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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 May/June 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 **11** 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>
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.
<b>SEEN</b>	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**.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Level 4	<p><b>Detailed accurate knowledge with good understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response.</li> <li>• Fully addresses the question.</li> <li>• Good understanding of the context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	<b>9–10</b>
Level 3	<p><b>Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through a developed response.</li> <li>• Addresses most aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Some engagement with the context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	<b>6–8</b>
Level 2	<p><b>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response.</li> <li>• Attempts to address the question.</li> <li>• Attempts to engage with the context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	<b>3–5</b>
Level 1	<p><b>Limited knowledge and basic understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response.</li> <li>• Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question.</li> <li>• Little or no reference to the context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	<b>1–2</b>
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	<b>0</b>

**Table B: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 marks)**

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

<b>Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Level 5	<p><b>Effective conclusion with analysis of points of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view in detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a sustained and well-structured discussion.</li> <li>Effective conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	<b>13–15</b>
Level 4	<p><b>Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses different points of view in some detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	<b>10–12</b>
Level 3	<p><b>Satisfactory conclusion with different points of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support discussion.</li> <li>Satisfactory conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	<b>7–9</b>
Level 2	<p><b>Basic conclusion with a supported point of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses one point of view.</li> <li>Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant points. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate.</li> <li>Attempted conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.</li> </ul>	<b>4–6</b>
Level 1	<p><b>Limited interpretation with a point of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States a point of view.</li> <li>Little or no supporting evidence.</li> <li>Attempted interpretation which may not directly address the question.</li> </ul>	<b>1–3</b>
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	<b>0</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
1	<p><b>‘The first priority of Christians should be to exercise stewardship of the Earth.’ Discuss.</b></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><b>Indicative content</b></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"> <li>• Candidates are likely to interpret the question as either a choice between stewardship and dominion, or between stewardship and other Christian priorities; either is a valid approach.</li> </ul> <p><u>Stewardship should be the first priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates may suggest that Christians first priority should be to exercise stewardship over the Earth, with reference to biblical teachings from the specification, or other relevant references.</li> <li>• Some may suggest that Christians should exercise stewardship over the Earth out of duty to preserve the earth for future generations.</li> <li>• Some may suggest that as the Earth is a gift from God, Christians should exercise stewardship over the Earth in appreciation for the gracious gift.</li> <li>• Some may suggest that without properly exercising stewardship of the environment, they will be unable to fulfil their other duties.</li> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that stewardship can be seen as part of a broader priority to love God and love one’s neighbour, and that caring for creation meets both these imperatives.</li> </ul> <p><u>Stewardship should not be the first priority</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates may suggest that Christians first priority should be to exercise dominion over the Earth, with reference to biblical teachings from the specification, or other relevant references.</li> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that Christians first priority should be towards another element of their beliefs or practices, such as salvation, and that ideas about how to behave towards the environment are of secondary concern.</li> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that Christians do not have any belief or practice that has primacy over any other, that all are of equal merit, and that all beliefs should be viewed as a whole rather than be separated.</li> <li>• Some candidates may argue that the priorities of Christians vary depending on circumstance, and that at various points stewardship may be more important than dominion, whereas at other times the significance may be reversed.</li> </ul>	25
	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	10
	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	15

Question	Answer	Marks
2	<p><b>‘Salvation is by faith alone.’ Discuss.</b></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><b>Indicative content</b></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"> <li>Some candidates may adopt the interpretation that salvation equates to life after death, whereas others may adopt the Johannine concept of salvation as eternal life that begins in this life. Either understanding is valid, as would be a composite understanding. The focus is on how salvation is obtained, not on what it is.</li> </ul> <p><u>Salvation is by faith alone</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some candidates may argue that the New Testament presents a clear view that salvation is achieved by faith and may use teachings such as those in Ephesians 2 as the basis for such an argument.</li> <li>Some candidates may suggest that absolute faith in Jesus is required to guarantee salvation and may discuss the nature of what absolute faith may entail, and what issues intermittent doubts may cause.</li> <li>Some candidates may suggest that whilst salvation is by faith, Christians are still required to do good works; they are likely to refer to and analyse the teachings contained within James 2.</li> <li>Some candidates may suggest that whilst salvation is by faith, it was grace that caused Jesus to sacrifice his life on the cross. Therefore, that salvation is obtained by faith, but available by grace.</li> </ul> <p><u>Salvation is not by faith alone</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some candidates may argue that the New Testament presents a clear view that salvation is achieved not by faith alone, but by faith and grace combined, and may use teachings such as those in Ephesians 2 as the basis for such an argument.</li> <li>Candidates may also put forward arguments that salvation is not achieved by faith, but by grace and/or law and/or works, and may use relevant teachings and passages to support such arguments.</li> <li>Some candidates may suggest that how salvation is obtained is essentially unknown, and that any definitive statements are essentially no better than guesses. Some may link this to ideas that leading a moral life should be of more concern to a Christian than esoteric arguments on the specific mode of salvation.</li> </ul>	25

Question	Answer	Marks
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some may suggest that salvation can be gained through many different combinations of factors in the Christian life, and that it is accessible to all, and therefore is not by faith alone.</li><li>• Some candidates may take an alternative position, that salvation does not exist, and therefore can never be obtained. Such a view must be argued, rather than merely asserted.</li></ul>	
	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	10
	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	15

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p><b>Evaluate the claim that Job provides an unsatisfactory response to the problem of suffering.</b></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><b>Indicative content</b></p> <p>Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited.</p> <p><u>Job does provide an unsatisfactory response to the problem of suffering</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that the conclusion of the Book of Job, where Job receives a double restitution for his deceased children of more children, is deeply unsatisfactory, as children are not simply replaceable in nature, and does not account for the anguish of grieving their loss. This makes Job’s acceptance of his lack of knowledge incomprehensible to some.</li> <li>• Some may suggest that Job lacking knowledge to understand the ways of God is an inherently unsatisfactory conclusion to make, as it does not actually reveal anything. The reader can reasonably say that there is no new knowledge revealed, as demonstrated by the rhetorical devices used in the speeches of Elihu and Yahweh.</li> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that the response to the problem of suffering is unsatisfactory, as it does not appear to justify the suffering Job experienced, only that it may have been necessary for Yahweh to make a point. This of itself may be seen as unsatisfactory.</li> <li>• Some may suggest that ponderings of the existence of suffering and suffering seemingly conflicting with the concept of omnipotent and omnibenevolent deity has existed for thousands of years, one can argue that the response within Job must be unsatisfactory, as the question has continued after Job was written and read broadly. Some may discuss the difference between a response and an answer in relation to the problem of suffering.</li> </ul> <p><u>Job does not provide an unsatisfactory response to the problem of suffering</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that the book of Job’s conclusion, does provide a satisfactory response to the problem of suffering, that knowing that there are things beyond human understanding and one must humbly submit to God’s will.</li> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that the book of Job is not trying to provide a response to the problem of suffering at all, and therefore it does not provide an unsatisfactory response, it does not provide one at all.</li> <li>• Some may suggest that the conclusions made within Job need to be viewed in the light of the cultural context of the time, and that whilst it might seem unsatisfactory to modern readers, it would have been valued as a more than satisfactory response to the problem for readers of its day.</li> </ul>	25

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some may discuss the nature of Job, and whether it is meant to be viewed as a literal account of an actual person, or a piece of ancient philosophy. If the view is taken that it is not a literal tale, the idea of replacing dead children with more children, becomes symbolic restitution, making Job's acceptance of events easier to reconcile.</li> <li>• Some candidates may suggest that in a culture that deals in land and livestock, children may have been considered as primarily an economic asset that were a gift from God. As such, replacing dead children with even more new children may have been seen as an acceptable restitution.</li> </ul>	
	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	10
	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	15