

# Cambridge O Level

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

Paper 2 The Portrayal of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels

**May/June 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 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 **15** printed pages.

**Generic Marking Principles**

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptions for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:**

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:**

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:**

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:**

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:**

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

**GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:**

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

**Annotations guidance for centres**

Examiners use a system of annotations as a shorthand for communicating their marking decisions to one another. Examiners are trained during the standardisation process on how and when to use annotations. The purpose of annotations is to inform the standardisation and monitoring processes and guide the supervising examiners when they are checking the work of examiners within their team. The meaning of annotations and how they are used is specific to each component and is understood by all examiners who mark the component.

We publish annotations in our mark schemes to help centres understand the annotations they may see on copies of scripts. Note that there may not be a direct correlation between the number of annotations on a script and the mark awarded. Similarly, the use of an annotation may not be an indication of the quality of the response.

The annotations listed below were available to examiners marking this component in this series.

**Annotations**

Annotation	Meaning
	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	<b>Clear and well-reasoned evaluation in response to the question</b> <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>	7–8
Level 3	<b>Clear evaluation in response to the question</b> <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>	5–6
Level 2	<b>An evaluation in response to the question</b> <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>	3–4
Level 1	<b>Limited evaluation in response to the question</b> <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>	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)(i)	<p><b><u>Mark 2:23–24, NRSVA</u></b></p> <p>One sabbath he [Jesus] was going through the cornfields; as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, 'Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?'</p> <p><b>State the reasons why the Pharisees were angry at the disciples.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was viewed as work</li> <li>• They were breaking the Sabbath (one of the 10 Commandments)</li> <li>• They were doing what was not lawful openly / without shame</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each response up to a maximum of two marks.</p>	2
1(a)(ii)	<p><b>Identify how Jesus responded to the Pharisees.</b></p> <p>Any four from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminded them of the actions of David</li> <li>• David and his companions were hungry</li> <li>• He entered the house of God</li> <li>• He ate the bread of the Presence</li> <li>• He gave some to his companions</li> <li>• Only the priests were meant to eat this bread</li> <li>• Stated that David also technically broke a Jewish law</li> <li>• David's men being allowed to eat when hungry is more important than obeying a rule</li> <li>• Stated that the Sabbath was made for people</li> <li>• Stated that people were not made for the Sabbath</li> <li>• Reminded them that he is Lord of the Sabbath</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each correct answer up to a maximum of 4 marks.</p>	4

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	<p><b>Explain how Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath differs from that of the Pharisees.</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 one of the key differences between Jesus and the Pharisees is that Jesus seems to be more interested in the spirit or principle behind the Sabbath whereas the Pharisees are presented as being more focused on the letter of the law. Jesus is more focused on using the Sabbath to bring about good, such as in carrying out healings, whereas the Pharisees are more intent on avoiding evil, by ensuring that nothing takes place that may be viewed as work.</p> <p>Candidates may explain that the Pharisees are held to be hypocritical by Jesus. Their teachings might suggest that no work at all should be done but they would tend to the needs of their animals on the Sabbath. The gospels present the Pharisees as not really caring about the Sabbath but using its rules as a way of attempting to trap Jesus.</p>	6
1(c)	<p><b>'The Christian Sabbath (Sunday) is not relevant for Christians today.' 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 disagree with this statement. They may note that observing the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments and should be kept in the same way that Christians are careful not to murder or lie. They may argue that the principle of a day of rest comes from the creation accounts and that there are well documented benefits that human beings gain from a time of rest.</p> <p>Other candidates may disagree with this statement. Jesus' teachings seem to oppose the type of legalism that would insist on keeping a strict Sabbath, particularly if more good can be achieved through working. They may also argue that some Christians may have to work on Sundays or live in societies where they are in a minority and it is not possible to observe the Sabbath.</p> <p>Some candidates may reflect on different understandings of how to observe the Sabbath and suggest that whether the practice is relevant might in some way depend on how it is understood.</p>	8

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(i)	<p><b>Luke 19:36–38, NRSVA</b></p> <p>As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power they had seen, saying,</p> <p>‘Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!’</p> <p><b>Identify the event being described in this passage.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus' entry into Jerusalem / triumphal entry / Palm Sunday.</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for a correct response.</p>	1
2(a)(ii)	<p><b>Describe how the Pharisees reacted to this event.</b></p> <p>Any two from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spoke to Jesus</li> <li>• Asked him to stop / restrain his disciples</li> <li>• Tried to prevent people praising Jesus</li> <li>• They were angry</li> <li>• Plotted to kill Jesus</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each correct response up to a maximum of two marks</p>	2
2(a)(iii)	<p><b>State what this event might show about the person of Jesus.</b></p> <p>Any three from these or similar points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He is being seen as Messiah</li> <li>• He is fulfilling prophecy</li> <li>• He is popular with the people</li> <li>• He is being worshipped – Son of God</li> <li>• He is humble – rides on a donkey</li> </ul> <p>Award one mark for each correct response up to a maximum of three marks.</p> <p>Marks may be given for any point or exemplification of a point.</p>	3

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p><b>Explain why belief in the ascension of Jesus is important to Christians.</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 by ascending into heaven, Jesus confirms his victory over death, he does not remain on earth to die again. Jesus is no longer physically with his disciples, but he will send his Holy Spirit and his victory over death will be their victory also.</p> <p>Candidates may link the ascension to the second coming of Jesus, that Jesus will return to earth at the end of time in the same way as he was taken up during the ascension. Candidates may also note that the ascension accounts show the significance of the person of Jesus. Only Moses and Elijah are taken up to heaven in a similar way.</p>	6
2(c)	<p><b>'God's overall plan for humanity cannot be understood without Jesus' resurrection.' 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 as without the resurrection of Jesus, his death on the cross cannot really be seen as a victory over sin. The resurrection of Jesus is also described as a first-fruit, so Jesus' resurrection is for Christians a proof of the promise that they too will live on after death and be united with God in heaven.</p> <p>Some candidates may disagree and argue that the death of Jesus is the key to salvation as his death is seen by Christians as paying the price for their sins. Candidates may also disagree and argue that God's plan for humanity is not dependent on the resurrection of Jesus as the life and teaching of Jesus are sufficient in showing humanity how God expects them to live.</p>	8

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	<p><b>Describe what happened when the boy Jesus visited 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>Luke 2:41–52</u></p> <p>Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him, Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety. He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.</p>	6
3(b)	<p><b>Explain the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.</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>The Pharisees came to prominence after the Maccabean revolt in the mid-second century BCE. Their main focus was on adherence to and interpretation of the Torah. They were devout and exclusive; the gospels presents them as legalistic. The Pharisees were interested in the spiritual realm and in eschatology; they had a strong belief in the coming of the Messiah, a belief in angels and a belief in the resurrection of the dead. It is suggested that some of these ideas were as the result of embracing some Hellenistic ideas.</p> <p>The Sadducees, who came to prominence at a similar time, were more mixed religiously: whilst some were priests, others were laymen. A significant number of their group seemed to be wealthy and may have held important civic positions. The Sadducees were more interested in temple worship and preserving the status quo – so were not focused on the idea of a messiah. The Sadducees were also less interested in ideas such as angels and resurrection, which seemed to be additions to the written Torah. The gospels pick up this opposition to resurrection.</p>	6

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	<p><b>Assess the view that the portrayal of Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel is very different to that in Luke’s Gospel.</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 this statement and draw out some of the contrasts between the two gospels. They may note that Matthew is particularly concerned to show the Jewishness of Jesus and to present Jesus as both Messiah and King. Luke seems to be writing for a non-Jewish audience and is often concerned to show Jesus’ humanity and concern for the outsiders and marginalised. This would include the Gentiles.</p> <p>Other candidates may disagree and suggest that whilst there are some differences in presentation the key elements of the portrayal of Jesus are the same. The virgin birth, miracles, the crucifixion and resurrection are all featured in both accounts. The sections of teaching which Matthew largely provides in chapters 5–7 are also found in Luke. Both Gospels show Jesus as offering a radical challenge to follow him and to live to different ethical standards.</p>	8
4(a)	<p><b>Give an account of the parable of the lost sheep.</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 15:3–7</u>  ‘Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.” Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.</p>	6

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	<p><b>Explain what the parables about receiving the kingdom might teach Christians.</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 gospels present human beings as lost outside of the Kingdom of God. The parables in Luke 15 show that God takes the initiative in seeking out those who are lost, yet the parable of the lost son also shows the element of human choice to receive the Kingdom. Not all humans are able to receive the Kingdom of God. Jesus explains this when talking about why he uses parables; the parable of the sower also suggests that the Kingdom may not be received by all, and even if received may not produce fruit in all lives.</p> <p>Candidates may also explain each member of God's Kingdom receives talents in different measures, which they are responsible for putting to good use. Again, this shows both the grace of God in giving the undeserving gifts, and also the will of God in terms of the differing amounts given to each person. The parable of the good Samaritan shows that God's Kingdom may be wider than we realise and the response of the older brother in the parable of the lost son provides a warning against being offended at those receiving God's grace.</p>	6
4(c)	<p><b>'Jesus understands the kingdom of God as something that will come in the future.' 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 as parables such as the great dinner and the 10 bridesmaids seem to point forward to a coming age. Even though actions now are important the main message seems to be that they are important in the context of judgement and reward in the afterlife. This is shown in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus</p> <p>Other candidates may disagree and note that many of Jesus' parables and teaching regarding the Kingdom of God are focused on the here and now. The story of the good Samaritan is a call to treat others well in this age that contains no reference to eternal rewards. Jesus, at one point in the gospels explicitly says that the Kingdom of God is amongst them.</p> <p>Candidates may note that it is possible to understand the Kingdom of God as something that is present in this age but will be more fully realised in the age to come. In the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, they are hired and enter Kingdom work even if their full reward is only given at the end of the day.</p>	8

Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)	<p><b>Outline what Jesus teaches about the importance of perseverance in prayer in Matthew's Gospel.</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 7:7–11</u></p> <p>Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!</p>	6
5(b)	<p><b>Explain what the Sermon on the Mount teaches about almsgiving.</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 note that almsgiving is a key part of the Sermon on the Mount. It comes before the teaching on prayer and fasting and the passage uses the word when rather than if in describing the giving of alms. Jesus teaches that the motive of giving is important; it is not to be done to earn the respect of others, which is hypocritical. It is to be done in secret and with a pure motive. Righteousness should not be done before others – your left hand should not know what your right hand is doing.</p> <p>Although God will reward such a deed, this should not be the main concern when giving to others.</p> <p>Candidates may also link the teaching on not storing up treasure on earth and the importance of treating others as you wish to be treated, which are also found in the Sermon on the Mount, to the subject of almsgiving.</p>	6

Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	<p><b>'The Sermon on the Mount teaches that the Old Testament laws were wrong.' 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 the statement and state that Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount seems to be changing understandings of ethical action. On several occasions he uses the phrase 'you heard it said...but I say...' to convey his thoughts about the Old Testament law. Candidates may also note that there are a number of Old Testament laws that are not widely kept today outside of strict Orthodox Judaism.</p> <p>Other candidates may note that Jesus states that he has come to fulfil the law and the prophets and that not the smallest part of the law will be changed. This suggests that it may be the understanding and interpretation of the law that is the problem rather than the law itself. Hence the Sermon on the Mount is a restatement or reinterpretation of the law rather than a replacement.</p>	8