CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge O Level

BIBLICAL STUDIES **2035/12**

Paper 1 The Portrayal of God in the Bible **May/June 2026**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme contains the instructions and marking guidance that our examiners used to mark candidate responses for this component.

Before they start marking, examiners complete a standardisation process. They review a range of candidate responses and discuss the mark scheme in detail to agree which answers can and cannot be accepted. Examiners award marks where it is clear that candidate responses have met the requirements of the mark scheme. These requirements may vary between different components or different versions of the same component, depending on the exact requirements of the question and the candidate responses seen during the standardisation process.

Sometimes, our mark schemes may allow marks to be awarded to responses which contain elements that are factually incorrect or for content not covered by the syllabus. We do this in response to the demands of a specific question to support candidates and make sure that our assessments are fair. However, these allowances should not be used as a guide for teaching and learning.

We cannot discuss the mark scheme with schools, and we recommend that schools read the mark scheme together with the assessment material and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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General marking principles

All examiners must apply these marking principles when marking candidate responses.

1	Examiners must award marks for each response in line with: • the specific **content** defined in the mark scheme • the specific **skills** defined in the mark scheme or in the level descriptions • the **standard of response** required as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.
2	Examiners must award **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).
3	Examiners must award marks **positively**. This means that: • marks are not deducted for errors or omissions • marks are awarded for correct/valid answers as defined in the mark scheme and also for **other valid answers** which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme referring to your team leader as appropriate • the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are judged **only** when the mark scheme indicates that these features are **specifically assessed** in the question. However, the meaning of all responses must be unambiguous.
4	Examiners must **consistently** apply the requirements of the mark scheme and any rules for what to do when candidates have not followed instructions correctly.
5	Examiners must use the **full range of marks** defined in the mark scheme, unless limited by the quality of the candidate responses seen.
6	Examiners must award marks according to the mark scheme and **must not** award marks with grade thresholds or grade descriptions in mind.

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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
BOD	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.
NBOD	No benefit of doubt given
^	Omission mark
?	Unclear
NAQ	Not answered question
EG	Example / reference
DEV	Development
SEEN	Indicates that the point has been noted, but no credit has been given.
EVAL	Evaluation

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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.

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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	**Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding** • Answers the question, using detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates clear understanding through a well-developed and substantial response. • A well-structured format.	5-6
Level 2	**Some accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding** • Partially answers the question, using some accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates some understanding through a partially developed response, covering some of the points. • Responds in a mostly structured format.	3–4
Level 1	**Limited accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding** • Attempts to answer the question, using limited accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates limited understanding through an underdeveloped response through limited coverage of the points or a response in general terms. • Attempts to present the information in a structured format.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

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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	**Clear and well-reasoned evaluation in response to the question** • Considers more than one point of view in detail. • Fully answers the question, using relevant evidence to support a well-structured discussion. • Concludes with a clear and well-reasoned judgement.	7–8
Level 3	**Clear evaluation in response to the question** • Considers more than one point of view. • Answers the question, using some relevant evidence to support a well-structured discussion. • Concludes with a clear judgement.	5–6
Level 2	**An evaluation in response to the question** • Considers one point of view; any other attempts to state a point of view are descriptive. • Partially answers the question, using partially relevant evidence to support a structured discussion. • Concludes with a judgement.	3–4
Level 1	**Limited evaluation in response to the question** • Descriptive response with an attempt to state a point of view, describing material linked to the question or topic. • Attempts to answer the question, using limited relevant evidence to support a discussion. • Limited or no judgement present.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)(i)	**<u>Acts 4:8–10</u>** **Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders, if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.'** **Identify why Peter and John had been put in prison.** • They had annoyed the priests / captain of the Temple / Sadducees / authorities. • They had healed a crippled beggar. • They were teaching the people. • They were proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead. • It was already evening when they were arrested so they were put in custody for the next day. • Award one mark for each response up to a maximum of two marks.	**2**
1(a)(ii)	**State how many people had heard the word proclaimed by Peter and John and had believed.** • (about) 5000 / five thousand. Award one mark for a correct response.	**1**
1(a)(iii)	**Suggest <u>three</u> reasons why the message of Peter to the rulers and elders might have been difficult for the Jewish leaders to receive.** • It questioned their authority. • It accused them of being responsible for the death of Jesus. • It suggested that Jesus had been raised from the dead, which was against their beliefs about the afterlife. • It suggested that their religion might be replaced or changed. • It suggested that Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament / was the Messiah. • It suggested that Jesus will save others, which might have threatened them / went against their beliefs. • It suggested that God/Jesus gives power to perform miracles to his followers / Peter and John / the apostles/disciples. • They could not deny the miracle but wanted to stop the news spreading any further. Award one mark for each response up to a maximum of three marks.	**3**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	**Explain what this passage might teach Christians about God's overall plan for humanity.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. Candidates might focus on the passage quoted in **part (a)** or on the whole passage from Acts 4:1–12 – either approach is equally valid. The shorter passage might suggest to Christians that goodness is the most important thing to focus on. People should not be held to account for good deeds. This suggests that God wishes humanity to be morally perfect. It also shows the centrality of Jesus in God's plan. Not only was he a human but he had a special relationship with God. His death achieved something significant for the world, and he overcame death through his resurrection. This altogether demonstrates something significant about God's overall plan for humanity. Candidates might explore the nature of Peter's leadership, the role of the apostles or of missionaries in general and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The longer passage might lead candidates to talk about God's plan being one of salvation, about Jesus being foretold in the Scriptures and all focus being on Jesus the Messiah now that he has come to earth. Candidates might also reflect on the relationship between the early church and the Jewish authorities and the need for God's people sometimes to be challenged or suffer persecution.	**6**

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Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	'**Peter and John are excellent role models for Christians today.**' **Discuss.** Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. Some candidates might agree with this statement because Peter and John have shown faith in God/the Holy Spirit, loyalty to Jesus and through their faith miracles have happened. They have been prepared to be persecuted for their faith, which many Christians today might avoid, and they have explained their faith clearly for their audience. In particular, they have made sure their message is suitable for the Jewish leaders, referring to their part in the crucifixion of Jesus and perhaps making reference to their focus on religious practices, rather than good deeds, which is a theme of Jesus' teaching in the gospels. Candidates might speak more broadly about what one can try to emulate from the lives of the apostles or make reference in particular to Peter's leadership. Some candidates might argue, to disagree, that Peter and John are two rather unique figures. Firstly, they lived in a time where miracles were performed by Jesus' followers; they had known Jesus personally and Christianity was in no way established. For these reasons, they should not be held to be role models for modern-day Christians. They might speak of how much society has changed. Some candidates might try to find a mid-point between these two points of view and, in reaching a judgement, might reflect on elements of Peter and John's work that Christians can learn from today while suggesting that Christians do not need to be entirely like one person or another when selecting a role model.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)(i)	**<u>Galatians 5:17–18, NRSVA</u>** **For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law.** **State <u>three</u> of the works of the flesh, according to Paul.** • Fornication • Impurity • Licentiousness • Idolatry • Sorcery • Enmities • Strife • Jealousy • Anger • Quarrels • Dissentions • Factions • Envy • Drunkenness • Carousing Award one mark for each response up to a maximum of three marks.	**3**
2(a)(ii)	**Explain Paul's teaching about freedom in Galatians 5.** • Freedom is something to which Christians have been called. • Freedom is found in Christ. • It should not be used as an opportunity for self-indulgence / it is not a licence to sin. • Freedom means living by the Spirit. • Freedom involves actively rejecting sinful desires. • Through love, freedom makes people become slaves to one another. • Freedom comes through following the single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. • If you use freedom to bite and devour one another, one must be careful not to be consumed by one another. Award one mark for each response up to a maximum of three marks.	**3**

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Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	**Explain Paul's teaching about the Spirit in Galatians.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. Paul is teaching that the Spirit is what Christians should live by. To live by the Spirit is to put spiritual things first and not to put matters of the flesh first because the two exist in opposition to each other and, indeed, the flesh tries to pull you away from goodness. Paul's point about not being subject to the law is that the higher way of being is to follow God's Spirit and not any earthly law – this distinguishes Christianity from Judaism. Paul lists some works of the flesh. These are examples, for Paul, of times when a person has allowed their flesh to take control. He contrasts these with the fruit of the Spirit. These are what you can see in a person if they have overcome the flesh and human desires and if you follow spiritual ways. Paul emphasises this further by using the image of Christ Jesus. As he put spiritual things ahead of earthly things in allowing himself to be crucified, so too can Christians, guided by the Spirit, put God first.	**6**

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	**Discuss the view that this teaching is not helpful for modern-day Christians.** Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. Candidates might agree with the suggestion in the question that the teaching in Galatians 5 is not relevant to modern-day Christians. Paul lived in a very different age and the desires of the flesh would have been very different. For example, sexual morality might have been more dangerous because of different healthcare, sorcery was much more common and so on. Candidates might explore ways in which modern life is very different and very much focused on what seem to be matters of the flesh (e.g. obsession with mobile phones, materialism) and so Christians might fall foul of matters of the flesh because of how society is. However, candidates are likely to observe that the desires of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit are universal. Paul says of the fruits: 'there is no law against such things.' There is nothing time-specific about the list and all can be applied to different circumstances. Equally, Paul's list of works of the flesh includes many issues that can be seen today, and Paul ends his list by saying 'things like these' to indicate that it is not exhaustive. The key teaching that the flesh is in opposition to the Spirit (verse 17) can be applied widely today and could affect a person's salvation (verse 21). Some candidates may question whether or not it is possible for the list of the fruit of the Spirit to be helpful for modern-day Christians because it is possible to be kind and take two very different views on a situation.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	**Describe the event in Genesis where original sin came into the world, up until God first speaks.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answer may include some of the following ideas in quotation or paraphrase, but all valid material must be credited. <u>Genesis 3:1–9</u> The serpent asked the woman if God had really said that they must not eat of any tree of the garden and the woman replied that they could eat from any tree except the tree in the middle of the garden, which if they touched or ate fruit of it, they would die. The serpent responded that they would not die and their eyes would be opened and they will be like God, knowing good and evil. The woman ate of the tree and gave some to her husband who ate it. Their eyes were both opened, and they realised they were naked, so they covered themselves with fig leaves that they sewed together. God was walking among the trees of the garden, and he called to the man, 'Where are you?'	**6**
3(b)	**Explain how the relationship between God and humanity changed as a result of original sin.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. Before the fall, the relationship between God and humanity was one of perfect friendship. This is illustrated in the nearness of God and people, such as through God walking in the garden. God makes man as a companion for him, not as a servant of him. The trust and friendship between God and humanity allowed man and woman to live peacefully in the garden. At the moment of disobedience, the relationship changed. Because of the disobedience, there was a loss of trust and God became distant from humanity. The garden, the place of harmony was shut off from humanity, and they needed to work to survive, rather than rely on God; childbirth was to be painful, and death would become a reality for them. Humans had to make their own decisions about right and wrong (good and evil) because they did not keep the one rule God made for them.	**6**

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Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	**Assess the view that original sin has no relevance to Christians today.** Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. Some candidates might suggest that it is true that original sin has no relevance to Christians today. They might observe that the story of the fall is very old and relates to a world or lifestyle with which we have nothing in common. They might point out that many Christians understand the early chapters of Genesis to be mythological in nature; it is equally possible that original sin can be understood in other ways, such as use of free will or the way human nature 'just is'. Candidates might, however, suggest that there is relevance to Christians today. Original sin, whether literally or symbolically true, is a sign that all turn away from God and also that there is a significant difference between God and humanity – one that needs to be understood to live an effective Christian life. Candidates might point out that without some understanding of original sin, there can be no understanding of grace or the salvation of Jesus Christ. Original sin has a central role to play in God's overall plan for humanity. Some candidates might observe that for many modern-day Christians, baptism is the point at which a new Christian is cleansed in some way from original sin.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	**Describe what happened after David killed Goliath, including when David was taken to meet Saul.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. <u>1 Samuel 17:51–58</u> After David had killed Goliath, he cut off his head with Goliath's sword and the Philistines fled. The troops of Israel and Judah rose up with a shout and pursued the Philistines to Gath and to the gates of Ekron. The Israelites returned and plundered the Philistine camp. David took Goliath's head and brought it to Jerusalem. King Saul watched David and asked Abner, commander of the army who he was. Abner didn't know and was asked to find out. After David had killed Goliath, Abner took David to Saul, while David was still holding the Philistine's head. Saul asked him whose son he was and David replied that he is the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite.	**6**
4(b)	**Explain the significance of David to Christians today.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. David is remembered as one of the great kings and an example and role model for many people. He was not what was expected of a king and so he begins to demonstrate that God's way is not the way that people expect. Humility, in particular, is something that Christians believe they can learn from David. David's role in God's overall plan for humanity is significant. He brought an increased understanding of kingship that helps Christians to understand what Jesus as King and the kingly aspects of Jesus the Messiah signify. David also was part of the ultimate royal line that stretched from Abraham through to Jesus. With David came the hope of a king in the future who would exemplify all God's kindness, and this promise is echoed through the prophets up to the time of Jesus. David's anointing was humble, not a grand, royal occasion. He is outwardly not what was expected of a king, he would not force his way into power over Saul and came from Bethlehem – through an understanding of David, Christians gain an understanding of Jesus.	**6**

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Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	**To what extent are the stories from the Bible about war relevant to modern-day Christians?** Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. Candidates might suggest that Christians do not need to pay attention to stories in the Bible about war because the peaceful message of Jesus rejects the need for war. In the Old Testament, stories about war show God fighting for his people and they seem to make war seem normal, which is contrary to mainstream Christian beliefs today. There is a sense that a good warrior is a good follower of God and Jesus showed that warriors do not need to be fighters. Some candidates might observe that these stories are historically accurate and therefore Christians must read them – as with everything else in the Bible – with appropriate explanation given to them about the context. Christians can pay attention to the stories without trying to copy them in their lives. They might also observe that, as in the case of David, Christians can learn key messages such as humility in the midst of a culturally different situation. Some candidates might observe that in one sense, Christians are participating in a war between good and evil. Some might suggest that war is occasionally an unfortunate necessity, and so Christians should understand about war, even if they hope it might never happen. Some of the imagery in Revelation shows war in the future and Christians might well be able to learn from aspects of the stories in the Old Testament.	**8**

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Question	Answer	Marks
5(a)	**Outline how Isaiah's suffering servant is said to save people from sin.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. <u>Isaiah 52:13–53:12</u> There is a range of different ways candidates might approach this question - they might paraphrase the text or summarise it to show knowledge. Candidates might state that the suffering servant lives through wisdom, is raised up and exalted through his disfigurement, which startles many nations. They might make reference to Isaiah's exploration of the suffering servant bearing 'our infirmities', being 'wounded for our transgressions' – 'by his wounds we are healed'. Isaiah 53:6–7 notes that people have gone astray like sheep and then the servant is referred to as a lamb – one of us. In 53:10, the servant's life is said to be an offering for sin, in verse 11 that his suffering will make many righteous. Verse 12 ends with 'he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors'.	**6**
5(b)	**Compare the suffering servant to Christian beliefs about Jesus.** Use the level descriptions for AO1 Knowledge and understanding to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. In many ways the suffering servant is a prophecy of Jesus: he was rejected both by the authorities and the people; his suffering was both physical and mental. Jesus' suffering and death is one of the main reasons Jesus came to earth and so he is naturally seen as a fulfilment of the prophecies in this passage. Neither the servant nor Jesus opposed those who were persecuting him. There is an emphasis in both the life of Jesus and that of the servant that the death of the servant is for the sins of other people – in some ways as both a priest and victim. The future vindication or victory of the Messiah is also seen in the passage about the servant. However, there are also differences. Jesus does not seem to have come exclusively to die, whereas this is all that is mentioned about the servant (depending on the reading of the word 'exalted' in 52:13). Jesus came to teach (although the wisdom of the servant is mentioned), he came to bring justice (which Isaiah covers elsewhere in the set texts for this section) and Jesus came as a king and prophet in his own right.	**6**

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Question	Answer	Marks
5(c)	'**Christians need more than just faith in Jesus to be saved from sin.**' **Discuss.** Use the level descriptions for AO2 Evaluation to mark candidates' response to this question. Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all valid material must be credited. For many Christians, the death of Jesus on the cross (alongside the triumph of the resurrection) was a one-time moment of salvation for all who believe in Jesus and accept him into their lives. For these Christians, it could be argued that to be saved from sin, people must only rely on Jesus. God's grace is so overwhelming that Jesus is all that is needed. However, for other Christians, the death of Jesus gives access to that salvation, but it is important for Christians to live lives that 'buy in' to that access. For some Christians, this is achieved through acts of faith; however, for other Christians, this is through good works. Some Christians believe that their own sins need to be repented of individually – either through prayer or through confession. For most Christians, there is a balance between Jesus saving the world and each individual's need to find salvation. Candidates might give specific examples to illustrate their responses or else might talk in more general terms to discuss the statement in this question.	**8**

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