

Cambridge International AS & A Level

BIBLICAL STUDIES**9484/32**

Paper 3 Prophets of the Old Testament

May/June 2026**MARK SCHEME**Maximum Mark: 50

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.

This document consists of **13** printed pages.

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.

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
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.
SEEN	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 (5 marks)

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

Level	Description	Marks
Level 3	Accurate knowledge with good understanding • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the context, if relevant.	5
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Addresses some aspects of the question. • Attempts to engage with the context, if relevant.	3–4
Level 1	Limited knowledge and basic understanding • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the context, if relevant.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Table B: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks)

Use this table to give marks for each candidate response for **Questions 5 and 6**.

Level	Description	Marks
Level 4	Detailed accurate knowledge with good understanding • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Fully addresses the question. • Good understanding of the context, if relevant.	9–10
Level 3	Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding • Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a developed response. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the context, if relevant.	6–8
Level 2	Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding • Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate. • Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response. • Attempts to address the question. • Attempts to engage with the context, if relevant.	3–5
Level 1	Limited knowledge and basic understanding • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little or no reference to the context, if relevant.	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 marks)

Use this table to give marks for each candidate response for **Questions 4, 5 and 6**.

Level	Description	Marks
Level 5	Effective conclusion with analysis of points of view - Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view in detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support a sustained and well-structured discussion. - Effective conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.	13–15
Level 4	Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view - Discusses different points of view in some detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. - Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.	10–12
Level 3	Satisfactory conclusion with different points of view - Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. - Uses accurate evidence to support discussion. - Satisfactory conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.	7–9
Level 2	Basic conclusion with a supported point of view - Discusses one point of view. - Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant points. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. - Attempted conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.	4–6
Level 1	Limited interpretation with a point of view - States a point of view. - Little or no supporting evidence. - Attempted interpretation which may not directly address the question.	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. 2 Samuel 24:2, NRSVA So the king said to Joab and the commanders of the army, who were with him, ‘Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, and take a census of the people, so that I may know how many there are.’ Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) Award up to 5 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Indicative content Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all relevant material must be credited. • This forms part of the narrative around David conducting a census of the nation, and God punishing Israel for this. • The phrase ‘from Dan to Beer-sheba’ indicates the northernmost and southernmost parts of David’s territory; from end-to-end. • The significance of David using the army to conduct the census, rather than public administrators, can be argued to suggest that David had conscription in mind with this census, or that he was judging the military might of his nation, prior to some unmentioned planned conquest. • Others may suggest that the census was conducted out of hubris, or that David wished to measure his own greatness as a king. • Some may mention that in the preceding verse God incited David to conduct this census, and that he then judged David for doing so. Whether God incited David to uncover his desire or hubris or caused it may be discussed.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
2	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. Numbers 11:24–25, NRSVA So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) Award up to 5 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Indicative content Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all relevant material must be credited. • This passage forms part of the narrative around the people of Israel being fed manna and quail during the Exodus and becoming discontented with it. • Because the gathering of the seventy elders is narrated, this prophetic episode has a more corporate nature than those encountered previously. • Some may discuss the time-limited nature of the seventies' prophecy. • Some may point out similarities between God speaking to Moses in a cloud here, compared to the means and methods used at other times when God spoke to Moses. • Some may discuss the role this element plays in rebuking those in Exodus for not trusting in God, nor appreciating his blessings.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3	Outline points of interest or difficulty in the following passage. 2 Kings 2:3, NRSVA The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, ‘Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?’ And he said, ‘Yes, I know; keep silent.’ Use Table A: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (5 marks) Award up to 5 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Indicative content Answers may include some of the following ideas, but all relevant material must be credited. • This is part of the wider narrative of Elijah being taken up to heaven. • This follows directly the first of three times when Elisha is told to wait behind by Elijah. • The role and function of the company of the prophets may be discussed; whether they should be considered prophets in their own right who have banded together for some aim, or whether they are best understood as disciples of a prophet. • The extent of Elisha’s knowledge may be discussed, as well as more broadly the idea of whether or not he was a prophet prior to Elijah being taken up. • Reasons why the company are told to keep silent may be explored.	5

Question	Answer	Marks
4	Read the following passage and then answer the question: 1 Samuel 1:17–20, NRSVA Then Eli answered, ‘Go in peace; the God of Israel grant the petition you have made to him.’ And she said, ‘Let your servant find favour in your sight.’ Then the woman went to her quarters, ate and drank with her husband, and her countenance was sad no longer. They rose early in the morning and worshipped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, ‘I have asked him of the LORD.’ Discuss the claim that Samuel's birth narrative is critical to his role as a prophet. Refer to this passage and other passages you have studied in your answer. Use Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 Marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 15 marks AO2 Analysis and evaluation. Indicative content Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. <u>Samuel's birth narrative is critical</u> • Candidates may suggest Samuel's birth narrative sets him out as chosen by God from his birth, partially establishing his prophetic credentials • Candidates may suggest Samuel's birth narrative also identifies him with the high priest, a role he is selected for rather than inheriting, which again establishes his prophetic authority. • Some may highlight the significance of Samuel being identified as a Nazirite dedicated to God, in addition to the other elements of his narrative. <u>Samuel's birth narrative is not critical</u> • Candidates may suggest that what Samuel did, rather than his birth narrative is what is critical about Samuel; that the birth narrative is only background material to what he actually did. • Candidates may suggest that a particular event was more critical to his role as a prophet, such as the anointing of Saul or/and David. • Some may suggest that his role as prophet was God-given, and as such no one single element of his life was critical to his role.	15

Question	Answer	Marks
5	‘The main role of prophets was to intercede between God and his people.’ Discuss Use Table B: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks) and Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 Marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 10 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Award up to 15 marks AO2 Analysis and evaluation. Indicative content Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. <u>Interceding was their main role</u> • Candidates are likely to suggest that as prophets were selected by and to greater or lesser degree communed with God, they were the only ones who could intercede with God. • Some may discuss examples such as Moses in Exodus 32, or Amos in Amos 7, successfully interceding with God, to mitigate his wrath upon the Israelites. • Some may instead discuss the example of 1 Samuel 12, where Samuel intercedes with God through prayer on behalf of the people, and in doing so he demonstrates God’s exemplary authority as greater than that of kings. This act brings the people back to serving God. • Some may discuss the nature of prophets as both forthtelling and foretelling, and that both serve an interceding function. <u>Interceding was not their main role</u> • Candidates are likely to suggest another role of prophets should be considered their main role, such as telling parables, performing miracles or reporting visions. • Some may suggest that there is no main role for all prophets overall, but that different prophets may have had different main roles. Some, such as Amos, may have primarily been an intercessor, whereas Elijah was primarily a miracle worker. • Some candidates may suggest that many prophets were primarily political figures, and their role in that sphere was more significant than their role as a prophet. • Some may argue that prophets were not intercessors for God, and instead served a social function in their societies, for example Samuel’s role in anointing kings. • Some may argue that prophets such as Jeremiah served as a moral conscience for the nation, rather than as an intercessor.	25

Question	Answer	Marks
6	Evaluate the significance of Elijah's use of miracles in demonstrating that Yahweh was the True King (Lord). Use Table B: AO1 Knowledge and understanding (10 marks) and Table C: AO2 Analysis and evaluation (15 Marks) to mark candidate responses to this question. Award up to 10 marks AO1 Knowledge and understanding. Award up to 15 marks AO2 Analysis and evaluation. Indicative content Candidates may propose, analyse and evaluate some of the following arguments. All relevant arguments must be credited. <u>Significant</u> • Candidates may suggest Elijah performed or participated in 12 miracles; this repeated use of miracles can be used as evidence for their significance in his prophetic work. • Some may suggest that Elijah's miracles specifically present God as being greater than other deities. This is most clearly seen in the contest at Mount Carmel against the prophets of Baal. • Some may suggest that Elijah's miracles specifically present God's authority as being greater than that of earthly kings, particularly Ahab. • Some may suggest that the miracles associated with the widow of Zarephath demonstrate Yahweh as lord over all the earth, as the miracles here were performed outside of the lands of Israel. <u>Not significant</u> • Candidates may argue that Elijah's prophecies were more significant than his miracles, as they demonstrate the authority of Yahweh, and Elijah's role as a pronouncer of divine judgement. • Some may suggest that Elijah's actions must be viewed as a whole, and the significance of any one element cannot be judged separately from any other. • Some may discuss how other prophets managed to make the same point about Yahweh being Lord, without the use of any miracles, such as Jeremiah repeatedly identifying Yahweh as the Lord of Hosts. • Candidates may argue that the miracles that are recorded may instead be best understood as metaphors, and as such do not demonstrate the power of Yahweh.	25