



*Rewarding Learning*

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)  
General Certificate of Education**

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## **Religious Studies**

**Assessment Unit AS 3**

*assessing*

An Introduction to Themes in the Old Testament

**[SRE31]**

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## **Assessment**

**MARK  
SCHEME**

## **General Marking Instructions**

### ***Introduction***

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

### ***Assessment objectives***

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

Students should be able to:

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

### ***Quality of students' responses***

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

### ***Flexibility in marking***

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which students may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, assessors are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers.

### ***Positive marking***

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

### ***Awarding zero marks***

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

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

### **Levels of response**

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

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

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

### **Other Aspects of Human Experience at AS Level**

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

### **Synoptic Assessment at A2 Level**

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

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

### **Quality of written communication**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Additional Marking Guidance

### Overview

- Additional Marking Guidance has been drawn up for all the AS and A2 units.
- The purpose of this Marking Guidance is to scaffold the application of the Mark Scheme for each unit by offering specific information on applying the Performance Descriptors for each of the two Assessment Objectives (AO1 and AO2).
- The Marking Guidance recognises that there are levels of response to any task and assists the process of deciding which mark within a band is to be awarded to the response.
- The approach leans on the guidance offered in the **General Marking Instructions** at the beginning of the Mark Scheme where Threshold, Intermediate and High performance levels are identified within a band.
- All assessors for GCE Religious Studies are asked to use this guidance in deciding on the appropriate mark within a band.
- Assessors are also asked to look for the “best fit” bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another.
- For most of this guidance the levels are starting at Band 3 as most of the responses normally start here.
- The description “limited” would be the defining characteristic of Band 2 answers.
- All AO2 questions are open-ended tasks with the quality of critical assessment offered determining the mark to be awarded.
- AS Section B AO2 tasks – here students must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5.
- A2 Synoptic Assessment AO2 – here students must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5 and offer real and meaningful critical assessment.
- Double Credit rule – students cannot be awarded double credit for the same material if used between AO1 and AO2 unless it is in an entirely different context.

### Guide to abbreviations used

- Abbreviations are used throughout to give the Marking Guidance material a user-friendly character for assessors.
- Examples of generic abbreviations used are – B (Band), HB4 (High Band 4), MB3 (Mid Band 3), KU (Knowledge and Understanding), CA (Critical Assessment), TC (Taught Course), NTC (Non Taught Course), SA (Synoptic Assessment).

## **AS 3 Marking Guidance S2021**

### **Q1a**

B1 Demonstrates minimal KU in relation to the Q,

B2 A limited range of evidence and/or examples.

B3 A reasonable degree of KU about the story of Micaiah ben Imlah and its background.

HB3 Good evidence and examples from the confrontation between Micaiah and King Ahab.

MB4 Beginning to focus on some of the issues raised by the role of Micaiah, as part of a very good range of relevant evidence and examples.

B5 Moving towards a comprehensive understanding of levels of meaning within the narrative, including some reference to context, confrontation and issues.

HB5 An excellent response, with some sophistication, including possible reference to implications for the character of God.

### **Q2a**

B1 Demonstrates minimal KU in relation to the Q.

B2 A limited range of evidence and/or examples.

B3 A reasonable understanding of the background to the rise of kingship in Israel, with some accurate knowledge of Saul and David.

B4 A very good range of information, evidence and example concerning the rise of kingship generally, and for both Saul and David specifically.

HB4 Demonstrating understanding of why Saul is a tragic figure and why David is praised.

B5 Comprehensive KU of kingship and the relationship between Saul and David, with some awareness of complex issues raised.

HB5 An excellent grasp of KU, including a degree of sophistication about how and why Saul is presented as a tragic figure while David is praised as an ideal, if flawed, king.

### **Q3a**

B1 Demonstrates minimal KU in relation to the Q.

B2 A limited range of evidence and/or examples.

MB3 Demonstrates a reasonable degree of KU about Psalm 72.

HB3 In addition to demonstrating a reasonable degree of KU, also contains examples and focus on roles the king played.

B4 Very good evidence of KU about Psalm 72, including a fuller discussion of the range of roles the king played, and some consideration of why the psalm was written.

B5 Comprehensive KU of Psalm 72, including its background and roles identified for the king to play, with reference to a number of reasons why it was written.

HB5 An excellent response, as above, with a degree of sophistication about the relationship between royal power and other covenant traditions.

#### **Q4a**

B1 Demonstrates minimal KU in relation to the Q.

B2 A limited range of evidence and/or examples.

B3 A good response, containing some accurate knowledge, mainly drawn from Psalm 96.

HB3 Fuller KU of Psalm 96, with some connection to the concept of God's reign.

MB4 A high degree of understanding of Psalm 96, with greater awareness of connections to examples of God's reign.

B5 An excellent response, relevantly using KU of Psalm 96 as a springboard for discussing how Israel understood God's reign, and examples of this.

HB5 A comprehensive approach to relevant evidence and examples, including some degree of sophistication, e.g., about types of eschatology, messianic theology and tensions between different conceptions of God's reign.

#### **AO2 AS 3 Marking Guidance S2021**

B1 Minimal relevant CA indicating a serious disconnect from the CA skill.

B2 Modest attempt at CA: limited use of evidence; limited reasoning; limited evidence of structure and coherence.

B3 Reasonable/good attempt at CA: clearly responds to the set task, producing a reasonably well sustained line of enquiry, attempting to employ relevant evidence, though could be largely one sided, with little scope given to competing views.

B4 Very good attempt at CA, indicating clear engagement with the set task, with some relevant evidence and reasoning employed in the attempt to provide a balanced response, though not necessarily 50/50.

HB4 Line of enquiry relatively easy to follow, enhanced by the quality of debate offered, with some maturity evident.

B5 High quality attempt at CA, with well-informed debate, reflected with clarity and coherence.

HB5 Response of consistently high quality CA, with some sophistication evident.

Students must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5 for Section B AO2 tasks.

**NB** Always look for the best fit bearing in mind weakness in one area may be compensated by strength in another.

## Section A

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section A

- 1 (a) Discuss the issues raised by the role of Micaiah in the death of King Ahab.

Answers may include:

- Outline of the presenting issue, including: Israel's ongoing war with Syria/Aram; Israel and Judah working together rather than fighting against each other, leading to a royal consultation in Samaria (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:1–14); how the narrative is part of the wider conflict between supporters of Yahwism (typified by Elijah) and the compromised faith of Ahab.
- Discussion of how: Jehoshaphat introduces seeking “the counsel of Yahweh” (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:5) rather than going along with Ahab's military pragmatism; his insistence on enquiring of a prophet of Yahweh sets the scene for the prophetic confrontation with Micaiah son of Imlah (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:7–9).
- Details of the contrast between the 400 pro-Ahab court prophets, with their strong message in favour of war (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:6, 11), and the message of Micaiah son of Imlah, noting how he initially appears supportive of the king's war policy, before he goes on to indicate what he has seen at the Divine Council (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:19–23).
- The core of Micaiah, son of Imlah's message: he saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:17) and the seriousness of this; it meant the death of the king, the termination of his dynasty, and ultimately, the end of Samaria; how this began to happen in the death of Ahab, even though he disguised himself in battle (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:29–37); note that when the dog's licked up Ahab's blood (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:38), the fulfilment of Micaiah's prophecy is merged with the fulfilment of Elijah's (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 21:19).
- Reflect on how the narrative raises issues of true and false prophecy, e.g. how the true prophet stands out and does not just facilitate royal propaganda (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:13); delivers the message entrusted to him and is prepared to suffer for it (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:24–27); and trusts that what has been said will come to pass (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 22:28).
- Perhaps the most interesting issue raised concerns the character of God: God subversively entices Ahab to his own destruction through a “lying spirit”; God may prohibit lying/bearing false witness in the Decalogue but is prepared to use a “lying spirit” (the same Hebrew word for lying is used in both contexts).

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) To what extent were biblical prophets only bearers of bad news? Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- It is hard to avoid the conclusion that prophets were bearers of bad news, with reference to: the importance of Moses as an advocate for covenantal faithfulness, and his language of “blessing” and “curse”; how this gave rise to the classical role of the prophet to warn Israel of dire consequences, especially when it violated the core commitments of the Mosaic Covenant.
- Exploration of this type of prophetic function as it is seen in: the “woe to” passages of Isaiah (Isa. 5:8–30); the idea of Amos as a prophet of doom, expressed in his five visions (7:1–3; 7:4–6; 7:7–9; 8:1–3; 9:1); noting the view that original prophetic oracles did not believe Israel could repent, and were therefore thoroughly condemnatory.
- Consideration should also be given to the scholarly opinion that in their final form prophetic books characteristically conform to a pattern of judgment and hope, and therefore also contain considerable elements of good news; this pattern arises from early prophetic oracles being edited/redacted as part of a developing tradition.
- This can be observed in both the final form of Amos and Isaiah: Amos’ vision of the return of the exiles to a super-abundant creation (Amos 9:11–15); Isaiah’s good news of the inclusion of foreigners and eunuchs into the people of God (Isa. 56:3–8).
- Discussion of how the prophet Nathan’s oracle announcing the basis of the Davidic Covenant (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:1–17) appears to be wholly positive: God’s love will never be removed from David or his house; but note also that neither will the sword on account of his illicit affair with Bathsheba and subsequent murder of Uriah (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 12:10).
- Conclusion: for all the judgment, condemnation and bad news delivered by the prophets, God never fully, finally or completely abandons God’s people; it is a relationship that survives even the trauma of exile.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

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2 (a) "Saul is presented as a tragic figure, whereas David is praised as Israel's ideal king."

With reference to this quotation, examine the relationship between Saul and David.

Answers may include:

- Explore the view that scholars believe different sources have been brought together to form 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel, including pro-monarchy and anti-monarchy sources (see 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 8:1–22); this forms the context to the establishment of kingship in Israel, and the relationship between Saul and David.
- It may be argued that: as the first king in a conflicted society, Saul inevitably faced difficulties; while he ultimately failed, he helped pave the way for David to consolidate the monarchical system and this should be acknowledged; primarily, however, Saul is presented as a foil to David.
- Note can be taken of the tragic elements in this presentation that may generate sympathy for Saul: how Samuel abandoned him and mourned for him (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15:35); how he is afflicted by an evil spirit from the Lord but finds relief when David plays the harp for him (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:14–23); the perplexing way Yahweh forgives David but not Saul.
- Discussion of how, in the power struggle between Saul and David, they share close family ties, including: David's marriage to Saul's daughter, Michal (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 6:16–23); his close friendship with Jonathan, Saul's son; in some ways this is a tragic intra-family drama.
- Observe how David is painted in a good light: when he has the opportunity to kill Saul, he refuses to take it (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 24:1–22); how this is traditionally interpreted as an act of noble magnanimity but may be much more self-interested in that David does not want to set a precedent for lifting a hand against the Lord's anointed, since that is actually his status (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 16:11–13).
- Concluding comments that: the relationship between Saul and David is subtle and complex, forged in a difficult time of transition in the life of Israel; in a sense Saul is an easily dismissed, tragic figure while David is on the rise, living under blessing and can do no wrong; he is well on the way to becoming an ideal (if flawed) king.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

(b) Evaluate the view that the Davidic Covenant was radically different from other covenants. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Observe that: the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai was theologically the most important in the Old Testament, the centrality of which cannot be underestimated; all other covenants can be viewed as sub-sets of it; therefore, no matter how different the Davidic Covenant was, it could not avoid the influence of the Mosaic Covenant, with its emphasis on even the king keeping the commandments and observing Torah/Law (Deut. 17:14–20).
- Discussion of the different types of covenant: how the Mosaic Covenant was bilateral/unconditional and dependent on Israel meeting its obligations (Exodus 19:3–6), whereas the covenants made with Noah, Abraham and David were all unilateral/unconditional and dependent solely on God's unqualified promises; it could therefore be argued that while different from the Mosaic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant was substantially similar to other major covenants.
- Consideration of the divine promises made to Noah, Abraham and David respectively that: God will never again destroy the earth and that this everlasting covenant is with all living creatures (Gen. 9:8–17); Abraham will have multiple descendants, who will always possess the land of Canaan (Gen. 17:1–8); David's dynasty will be established forever and God's love will never be removed from a Davidic king (2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel 7:8–16).
- The argument that the Davidic Covenant: represented a crucial theological innovation because it tied God so unambiguously to one family continuing to reign; stood in sharp tension with the conditionality of the Sinai Covenant and was a potential rival to it (Psa. 78:67–72), in a way that other covenants were not.
- Understand that: all covenants were threatened by the exile of 587 BCE, but this was especially so for the Davidic Covenant, which was based on the Zion theology of the Jerusalem temple; when the temple was destroyed and a Davidic king no longer reigned, it looked like the Davidic Covenant had utterly failed in a way that was more obvious and stark than with any other covenant.
- Reflect that what made the Davidic Covenant different was how it: gave rise to the concept of the Messiah; underlined that ultimately a covenant could not be broken, because it depended on God's faithfulness rather than Israel's obedience; was key to Israel's deepest affirmation of divine trustworthiness, made in the midst of Israel's greatest trauma (the Exile).

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

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## Section B

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section B

- 3 (a) Explain the role of the king in Psalm 72 and consider why it was written.

Answers may include:

- Discussion of how Psalm 72 is an Israelite adaptation of a type of royal theology common across the ancient Near East, with a strong focus on the importance of the king and an identification of his roles; it therefore arises from a time when kingship was being established and gaining prominence in Israel.
- Comprehension of some of the functions of the king, including: bringing rain and fertility (Psa. 72:6, 16); well-being and prosperity (Psa. 72:3, 7, 15); the defeat of enemies, subjugation of other kings, and the extension of Israelite territory (Psa. 72:8–11).
- Note how in this conception of monarchy, the king played a key mediatory role between the divine and the human worlds: power flowed from a deity through the king to the people, and how this understanding underlines the centrality of the office of king.
- Exploration of how in the Israelite construal of kingship, justice and righteousness were the foundation on which everything else rested (Psa. 72:1, 2), with particular emphasis on Israelite concern for the poor (Psa. 72:4, 12–14): justice for the helpless was supposed to be the king's key priority as this was a central characteristic of God in Israelite thought and theology; the king was the figure the disadvantaged could call on for help in the clear expectation of their need being met.
- Examination of possible reasons for the writing of Psalm 72, including as: an intercessory prayer to remind the king of his responsibilities; a psalm composed for the inauguration of a Davidic king, appropriate for use each time there was an enthronement ceremony; a piece of royal propaganda, written in an exaggerated style (Psa. 72:7, 17a).
- More comprehensive answers may understand that Psalm 72 was: a way to claim all power for the royal establishment against potential rival sources of power (e.g. charismatic prophetic figures such as Elijah and Elisha rooted in the older standards of the egalitarian Mosaic Covenant); an attempt to connect royal theology to the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (see Psa. 72:17b).

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, comment on the view that religious leaders often misuse religious texts. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- An open-ended response citing relevant contemporary and/or historical examples.
- It may be argued: that philosophically, it is impossible to get back to the original meaning of religious texts since they were produced in very different historical, social and political contexts, for purposes that are not always fully understood; that therefore “reading into” religious texts is unavoidable (i.e., the idea that all exegesis is eisegesis but not all eisegesis is exegesis); and the question of whether this constitutes an inherent and inevitable misuse of religious texts, including by religious leaders.
- The issue of hermeneutics (theories of interpretation), including how these can lead to different and often conflicting understandings of religious texts (e.g. a literalist-fundamentalist hermeneutic may condemn homosexuality, whereas an inclusive hermeneutic may be more accepting; a similar tension may be observed in the pro-life/pro-choice debate, and in issues related to leadership of women in church and society).
- Explore historical situations in which it may be argued that leaders have misused religious texts to justify, e.g. apartheid, aspects of colonialism, the destruction of native peoples, white supremacy, the actions of ISIS, including how nations or groups assume the role of God’s elect and base their behaviour on violent and exclusive aspects of ancient Israel.
- Alternatively, discussion of how inspirational religious leaders such as William Wilberforce, Martin Luther King, Jr., Pope Francis have reinterpreted religious texts in life-affirming ways to oppose perspectives and practices such as slavery, racism and homophobia, which had once been acceptable and apparently supported by scripture.
- Consider that religious leaders who take opposing views may be acting with integrity according to the presuppositions and assumptions they bring to the interpretative task (e.g. proponents of Liberation Theology may argue they are seeking justice based on their reading of the Bible, whereas those who oppose them may argue that support for violence and armed struggle is a misuse of religious texts; but neither is deliberately misusing the religious text).
- Reflect that: this is a complex issue, in which nuance and balance are necessary; it is possible for religious leaders to use/misuse religious texts in both positive/progressive and negative/reactionary ways in both church and wider society; for Christians it is perhaps better to follow the example of Jesus and make this the hermeneutical principle/centre rather than find proof-texts to support particular positions and opinions.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Students must engage with other aspects of human experience to access

Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[25]

50

- 4 (a) “God will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in truth.” (Psalm 96:13)

With reference to this quotation, explain how Israel understood God’s reign.

Answers may include:

- Discussion of Psalm 96, including how it: affirms the quotation (Psa. 96:10) and envisions God’s good reign for all creation (Psa. 96:11, 12); contrasts the power and capacity of Yahweh to rule with the ineffectiveness of the gods of the nations (Psa. 96:4–6); emphasizes God’s “marvellous deeds” (Psa. 96:3) as a reminder to Israel of God’s intervention at key points in the history of the nation (as in, e.g. the story of the Exodus and the return from Exile).
- Conceptually, Psalm 96 may be related to the idea of “The Day of the Lord” (Amos 5:18–20), which was grounded in Israel’s confident expectation of a time when God would judge the nations harshly before establishing a reign of good governance to Israel’s benefit; but noting how Amos subverts this concept because Israel does not practice the justice God requires (Amos 5:21–24).
- Reflection on the extent of God’s reign, considering, e.g. how Psalm 96 appears to include all people, perhaps on the basis of turning to God as a consequence of Israel proclaiming God’s salvation (Psa. 96:2); how Amos envisages God’s reign as involving Exodus for foreign nations (Amos 9:7); Isaiah’s post-exilic vision of peace and reconciliation (Isa. 19:18–25; cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 6:8–23).
- Exploration of whether Israel understood God’s reign as: a future eschatological event; a present reality witnessed in life transforming feeding (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17:7–16), healing (2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 5:1–19) and resurrection narratives (1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17:17–24; 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 4:8–37); or a combination of the two.
- Note can be taken of: how in one strand of biblical thought God’s reign was closely aligned with royal theology, which conceived of the king as the source of life and justice; and how through the Davidic Covenant this became the taproot of messianic theology, in which Israel looked forward to an ideal king to bring in God’s reign and put everything right.
- More sophisticated answers will: demonstrate knowledge of various aspects of how Israel understood and envisaged God’s reign; and be aware of tensions between different approaches.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, assess the claim that it is impossible to know God’s will. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- An open-ended response citing relevant contemporary and/or historical examples.
- Acknowledgement of the long history in biblical and theological traditions of the alterity or complete otherness of God, the *via negativa*, and apophatic theology, underlining the impossibility of humanity ever knowing God’s will; how this is reflected in Augustine’s comment “If you comprehend, it is not God” and much of the mystic tradition, e.g. Hildegard of Bingen, Meister Eckhart, *The Cloud of Unknowing*.
- The proposition that if it is impossible to have access to God’s will, all religions potentially may contain an element of truth; this suggests the need for religious humility and tolerance in the context of ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue expressed through organizations like the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for promoting Christian Unity, Corrymeela, the Inter-Faith Network, and the Inter-Faith Week.
- Conversely, it may be argued that, while impossible to know in its entirety, the concept of revelation has ensured that God’s will can be sufficiently understood for faith to be grasped and grow; Christianity, Islam and Hinduism are increasing in numbers globally, and this would be illogical if adherents did not believe they had a measure of access to God’s will.
- Exploration of what is understood as the unchanging core of God’s will: in a more liberal perspective this might be expressed in terms like love, peace, justice, treating others as one wishes to be treated; in a more conservative perspective, the emphasis might be on sin, guilt, repentance and personal salvation.
- Discussion of how God’s will is perceived to change, and issues of hermeneutics related to topics such as racism, same-sex attraction, and the role of women in society and the church; the dangers of fundamentalist claims to have access to the will of God; reason as an alternative to revelation if it is accepted that God’s will is inaccessible.
- Reflection on how God’s will is increasingly being understood in terms of private spirituality and the challenge to institutionalized religion with its doctrines and clerical interpreters.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Students must engage with other aspects of human experience to access

Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[25]

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**Total**

**100**

AVAILABLE  
MARKS