



*Rewarding Learning*

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)  
General Certificate of Education  
2023**

---

## **Religious Studies**

**Assessment Unit AS 3**

*assessing*

**An Introduction to Themes in the Old Testament**

**[SRE31]**

**FRIDAY 19 MAY, AFTERNOON**

---

**MARK  
SCHEME**

## **General Marking Instructions**

### ***Introduction***

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

### ***Assessment objectives***

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

Candidates 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 candidates' responses***

In marking the examination papers, examiners 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 candidates 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 candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

### ***Positive marking***

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners 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 candidates 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, examiners 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, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement. The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **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 candidates. Having identified, for each assessment objective, the band in which the candidate has performed, the examiner should then decide on the appropriate mark within the range for the band.

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

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

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

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

Candidates 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 candidates' 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, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

**Level 1 (Basic):** The candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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 candidate 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]

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

## Section A

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section A

- 1 (a) Explain how Amos uses the phrase “Day of the Lord” in his prophecy.

Answers may include:

- Background to the phrase, including how it was: a special part of Israel’s vocabulary that anticipated God’s decisive intervention to fully establish divine rule; eagerly looked forward to by Israel because Israel was God’s elect; understood as explaining how God would judge Israel’s rivals harshly prior to the establishment of good governance to Israel’s advantage.
- Examine how Amos: turns the Israelite interpretation of the phrase completely on its head through warning Israel that it will be a day of darkness and not of light for them (Amos 5:18, 20); reinforces this sense by describing it as like fleeing from a lion only to meet a bear or entering the safety of a house only to be bitten unexpectedly by a snake (Amos 5:19); deploys the phrase as part of his pronouncement of judgement and doom on Israel.
- An understanding that the “Day of the Lord” will be negative for Israel because it has not sought God’s standards (Amos 5:4, 6, 14), but has instead practiced injustice (Amos 5:7) by: corrupting the legal system (Amos 5:10, 12, 15); exploiting the poor (5:11); and creating an atmosphere of fear in society (Amos 5:13).
- Demonstrate how the powerful and wealthy have become complacent (Amos 6:1) and accustomed to their luxurious life-styles (Amos 6:3–6), so the reality of the “Day of the Lord” will come as an immense shock to them (Amos 6:7).
- Reference to the oracles against the nations (Amos 1:2–2:5), including how initially Israel would have enjoyed the condemnation of its neighbours, before it realized that it too was facing judgment; this prefigures, reinforces and is integrated with how Amos reinterprets the concept of the “Day of the Lord”.
- Note that while the “Day of the Lord” as used by Amos envisages the judgment of both the nations and Israel, it also envisages the well-being of both Israel (Amos 9:11–15) and the nations (Amos 9:7; cf. Isaiah 19:23–25) on the far side of punishment; the “Day of the Lord” is an important and interesting phrase in the prophecy of Amos.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) “But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream”. (Amos 5:24)

In relation to this quotation, consider how far justice was the main concern of biblical prophets. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Note how: Amos 5:24, with its strong focus on justice, may be viewed as the high point and climax of Amos’ prophetic activity; the word pair “justice and righteousness” arguably encapsulates the main concerns of biblical prophets, aptly summarizing the just social arrangements they envisioned and sought.
- Examination of how, in Amos: justice is presented as more important than religious observance (Amos 5:21), the sacrificial system (Amos 5:22), and the worship of the community (Amos 5:23); offerings were not required on the journey to the land of promise, when God was enacting liberation and justice (Amos 5:25); idolatry and lack of justice will bring about exile (Amos 5:27).
- Observe: that the opening of Isaiah follows a similar pattern to Amos, condemning the rituals of religion (Isaiah 1:11–15) and insisting on the primacy of justice for the oppressed, especially orphans and widows (Isaiah 1:17); details of Isaiah’s condemnation of Judaic society, including its opulence (Isaiah 3:16–26), land grabbing greed (Isaiah 5:8), and corruption (Isaiah 5:22–23), all of which point to the importance of justice in a disordered society (Isaiah 5:20).
- Develop the argument that justice, as the governing principle of society embodied in the 10 Commandments after the experience of oppression in Egypt (Exodus 20:1–17), was central both to the Mosaic Covenant, and to the monarchy when it emerged (see Psalm 72:1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 14).
- Alternatively, it may be argued that the prophets had other concerns, which were equally important, including: holiness (Exodus 19:5–6); purity (Isaiah 6:1–7); idolatry (Amos 5:26); syncretism (1st Kings 18:20–22); illicit sexual relations (1st Samuel 11:1–12:12); and moral shortcomings (Isaiah 5:11–15).
- Consideration of how far, on the evidence presented and arguments made, justice was the main concern of biblical prophets, including possible reference to the post-exilic tension between Ezra/Nehemiah and Isaiah, especially in light of Isaiah 5:16.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

- 2 (a) With reference to the Davidic narratives, give an account of the debate between maximalists and minimalists.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Observe that in terms of debates about the historical accuracy of the Bible, earlier critical scholarship believed that by the time of David the narratives were largely factual, accurate and reliable.
- Explore how currently a group known as the “minimalists” take a much more sceptical view of the Davidic narratives and argue that they contain little or no trustworthy, externally corroborated data; reference to minimalist scholars and their arguments, including Thomas Thompson, Philip Davies, Keith Whitelam, and Niels Peter Lemche.
- Discussion of the maximalist position, including: how maximalist scholars tend to accept the historical veracity of the Davidic material on its own terms and therefore put almost complete trust in its accuracy; the suggestion that in part at least “maximalists” defend the truth of the Davidic narratives on account of prior faith commitments rather than on the basis of scholarship alone.
- Reference and examination of the implications of the Tel Dan stela, including: that if the inscription “House of David” is accurate, it can be decisively argued to prove the existence of David; how the dating of the stela to the 9th century BCE by some archaeologists further corroborates the Davidic narratives and authenticates the biblical text in its presentation of David’s rise and reign.
- Note that the meaning of the inscription on the Tel Dan stela is unclear and disputed, as is the dating of the stela itself; further, consider how even an agreed and undisputed piece of archaeological evidence could provide no guaranteed verification of the details of the textual tradition, which remain irretrievable.
- How the narratives of David are highly literary in their form; appear to be composed of several independent sources combined; may have been edited and arranged to generate a particular perspective on the transition from tribal society to monarchy; likely contain historically accurate elements but cannot be proven to be completely or even substantially true; represent a means of exploring complex and subtle theological truth rather than historical fact.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) With reference to relevant biblical passages, assess the claim that the Bible is a complex collection of documents, which is difficult to interpret. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Consideration of the strength and popularity of the unitary/central/one voice “message of the Bible” approach, including hermeneutical issues such as: concordism (in the Catholic tradition); conservative fundamentalism (in the Reformed tradition); biblical inerrancy; literalism; the authority and inspiration of scripture.
- Observation that acceptance of the proposition that the Bible speaks with one voice: tends to be faith based rather than grounded in scholarship; overlooks tensions and apparent contradictions within the text; does not pay enough attention to the relationship between faith and scholarly criticism, i.e. whether the biblical text is best accepted in faith alone or whether a critical approach can deepen understanding and faith.
- Examination, with supporting evidence, of how the Bible speaks with one voice about, e.g. God’s determination to relate to creation and all people in it, reflected in the biblical covenants: the Noahic (God’s concern with all that exists); the Abrahamic (God’s will to bless all people); the Mosaic (as a model to the nations of a just and proper ordering of society); the Davidic (as a testimony of God’s enduring love beyond recalcitrance).
- Note that other examples of how the Bible speaks with one voice may be cited, e.g. the biblical narrative is all about how God deals with sin, including appropriate exemplification of this (in the Noah narrative, in the terms of the Mosaic Covenant; in the call of Isaiah; in the David/Bathsheba affair; in Amos’ confrontation with the religious establishment of the Northern Kingdom).
- Alternatively, the argument that the Bible does not speak with one voice but may be viewed as a contested space, containing considerable tension, different sources, contradictory positions, opposing traditions and examples of this related to: the themes of inclusion and exclusion; Psalm 89 as a challenge to the unconditional claims of the Davidic Covenant; attitudes to the monarchy.
- Consideration of whether the Bible speaks with one voice or several, and the implications that may flow from these positions, e.g. if it is thought, on balance, that the Bible speaks with one voice, consideration could be given to how other voices are dealt with.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

**Section B**

**AVAILABLE  
MARKS**

Answer **one** question from Section B

- 3 (a)** For what reasons did confrontation and conflict arise between Elijah and King Ahab?

Answers may include:

- Note that the Elijah stories may be viewed as folk legends articulating an older, alternative view of religion and reality rooted in a peasant perspective and Mosaic covenantal faith, including how this worldview was opposed to royal power and thus the root cause of conflict between Elijah and King Ahab.
- Discussion of religious conflict, including how: through the monarchy, apostasy and syncretism became embedded in Israelite life and practice; this happened as Ahab married foreign wives to cement alliances, and permitted them to build temples/shrines to their deities; the emergence of Canaanite religion and Baal worship, grounded in fertility cults.
- Exploration of Elijah's conflict with Ahab's religious system, including: his competition with the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel; his focus on Yahweh alone, forcing people to a decision (1st Kings 18:21b); comment on the drama of the scene, Elijah's attitude to his opponents and the use of violence; the significance of rain coming at the end of the story as an endorsement of Elijah as a prophetic representative.
- Observe that Elijah was opposed to Ahab and his exercise of royal power, understood as: centralizing and self-aggrandizing; urban and elite; international in outlook; exploitive and oppressive as demonstrated in the organization of forced labour; based on an economic model of tribute that took wealth and surplus from the peasantry at the periphery.
- Examination of the story of Naboth's Vineyard as a key example of conflict between Elijah and King Ahab, including: different attitudes to land (royal acquisition vs. land conceived as an "inheritance" from God); the corruption of the judicial system leading to injustice; the prophetic denunciation of Ahab and Jezebel.
- Discussion of Elijah's conflict with King Ahab as a literary-theological way of exploring where God's power for life is manifest; the subverting of the absolute and totalizing claims of monarchy; the idea that God's capacity to bring and maintain life does not depend on royal governance.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, comment on the view that, in a relativistic age, religious believers have to stand up for their ethical values. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- An open-ended response citing historical and/or contemporary exemplification.
- Exploration of: the roots of relativism, as located in secularism and pluralism; how western society is now very different from when it was largely mono-cultural and almost exclusively Christian; philosophical questions associated with relativity, including the issue of different perspectives, the role of revelation, implications of claims to be able to access absolute truth, the clash of different “truths”.
- Focus, with appropriate examples and exemplification, on: how there is a deep strain in Christianity to bearing witness to the truth, involving standing up and being counted; the evangelical dimensions of standing up and being counted; the relationship between martyrdom and standing up and being counted; the biblical imperative to stand up and be counted.
- Observations concerning: how, while standing up and being counted in one’s own faith tradition may be encouraged and approved of, when encountered in another, it may be experienced as aggressive and oppressive; perceived and actual persecution of Christians; how standing up and being counted can lead to extremism in all traditions, e.g. ISIS and the Westboro Baptist Church.
- Alternatively, an examination of: the strengths and benefits of ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue; what the major faiths hold in common; how different faiths can work together on issues of justice, global poverty and addressing potential climate chaos.
- Consideration of: the idea that people of faith are to exercise influence by being leaven, salt and light in society as an alternative model to standing up and being counted; how deeds of mercy and compassion may be more powerful and persuasive than apologetics and abstract arguments about truth.
- Possible reflection, including: balance, nuance and awareness of the complexity of the question; the argument for secularism or a division between church and state to guarantee religious freedom but avoid religious domination; the difficulty of finding fairness in the midst of competing truth claims.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access

Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

- 4 (a) “Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives.” (Ezra 10:11)

With reference to this quotation, discuss how Ezra and Nehemiah’s treatment of foreigners was different to Isaiah’s.

Answers may include:

- Outline to the background of the question, including: the post-exilic context; concern about the nature and make-up of the community after national trauma of the Babylonian exile; tension between those who had been left in Judah and those who had been taken to Babylon; serious disagreement between Ezra/Nehemiah, who sought to exclude people from the newly reconstituted people, and Isaiah, who was much more radically inclusive.
- Consideration of Ezra/Nehemiah’s covenant renewal, with reference to: how it was rooted in an interpretation of Torah/Law (Nehemiah 13:1–3); designed to preserve the “holy seed”; instigated by a small group of returnees known as the *golah*, and how they thought of themselves as the real, best qualified Jews, superior to those who had stayed in the land.
- Examination of the details of Ezra/Nehemiah’s reform programme and how it: required Jewish men to “send away” their foreign wives and children or lose their property (Ezra 9:12; 10:7–8); asked Jewish parents to promise not to allow their daughters or sons to marry foreigners (Nehemiah 10:30); set up a purity investigation panel (Nehemiah 10:16–17); resulted in violence (Nehemiah 13:25); was rooted in a sense of pollution (Ezra 9:11), guilt (Ezra 9:13–15), unfaithfulness and fear (Ezra 10:1–4).
- Discussion of how Isaiah 56:1-8 also dealt with the question of who should be included in the reconstituted community of Judaism, rooted in but a reinterpretation of Torah/Law, and how this included foreigners and those with mutilated sexual organs (e.g. eunuchs), in an explicit challenge to Deuteronomy 23:1–2.
- Observe how this was part of a radically inclusive dimension of the Isaiah tradition, with reference to Isaiah 19:18–25 and its vision of Egypt and Assyria being treated as part of God’s sphere of service and worship on an equal footing with Israel.
- Reflection that the positions of both Ezra/Nehemiah and Isaiah are scriptural, but in deep tension with each other: in a visionary way, Isaiah contravenes and subverts the Deuteronomic Torah/Law provision, whereas Ezra/Nehemiah make it more extreme and exclusionary than it had ever been.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, to what extent do you agree that wealth is often in conflict with social justice? Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- An open-ended response citing possible historical and/or contemporary exemplification.
- Observe how: the Old Testament in particular has a “this world” focus; God promises blessing, often envisaged in materialistic terms, especially in the Wisdom Tradition (e.g., Proverbs 3:9–10, 10:22, 16:3, 19:17; Psalm 37:4; noting also the importance of Malachi 3:10).
- Explanation of the origins of the Prosperity Gospel approach (a.k.a. the Health and Wealth Gospel), including its: emergence in the late 19th/ early 20th century at a time of consumer capitalist expansion in the U.S.A.; association with filling individualistic desires; strong connection to Pentecostalism and the rise of charismatic Christianity.
- Exploration of the theology underpinning wealth as a sign of blessing from God, with reference to the belief that: God wants people to be rich; confirms faith through financial abundance and physical well-being; rewards donations to tele-evangelists by promising personal financial increase.
- Alternatively, through discussion of prosperity gospel preachers such as Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, Oral Roberts, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Jimmy Swaggart and the Hillsong movement, note how this phenomenon: is often embroiled in scandal (e.g. sexual and financial); preys on the fears and inadequacies of people, potentially leaving them feeling like cursed religious failures if they do not become wealthy or if they experience serious illness; has no interest in social justice.
- Reflect on how it may be theologically argued that the Prosperity Gospel is a serious distortion of authentic Christianity in significant ways: it moves the central focus of faith from God and serving God to self and human appetites; in addition, it has no role for costly self-sacrifice and the biblical mandate to seek social justice, exemplified in the lives of Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Desmond Tutu.
- Possible consideration that those who see wealth as a sign of divine blessing do not meaningfully engage with what the Bible says about the poor/poor in spirit or the prophetic/liberationist tradition in its search for social justice.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[25]

50

**Total**

**100**

AVAILABLE  
MARKS