



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCE

In Religious Studies (9RS0)

Paper 3: New Testament Studies

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Summer 2025

Question Paper Log Number P78592

Publications Code 9RS0/03 2506_MS

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Paper 3: New Testament Studies – Mark scheme

Question number	Answer
1	8 marks AO1 AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question. If candidates explore only one healing, they cannot proceed beyond level 2. Candidates may refer to the following. • The Healing of the Official's son took place in Cana and this second sign continued the replacement theme and symbolism pointing to Jesus' death already introduced in the first sign. • The Healing of the Official's son addresses the place of Gentiles in the Kingdom of God and how salvation is given to all who have faith in the Word of Jesus. • The Official's son was healed exactly when Jesus spoke the words 'Your son will live' and this was done at a distance to show that Jesus' powers were not limited by the laws of nature. • The Healing at the pool of Bethesda of a crippled man is another example of replacement theology where Jesus is shown to replace Judaism. Water as a healing medium is replaced by Jesus through his words and actions. • The Healing of the crippled man at the pool demonstrates true healing is spiritual not physical. Jesus offers spiritual healing here and now and this is known as realised eschatology.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–2	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Provides a superficial understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).
Level 2	3–5	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1). • Develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).

Level 3	6–8	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1). • Comprehensively develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).
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Question number	Answer
2	4 marks AO1, 8 marks AO2 AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. If candidates assess only one form of biblical criticism, they cannot proceed beyond level 2. If candidates assess three forms of biblical criticism, credit the best two responses. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • Form criticism classifies different types of writings into different forms and considers, through links to their <i>Sitz in Leben</i>, how each is adapted to fit the needs of the early Church. • Redaction criticism analyses the distinctive theological emphases different authors bring to their material and regards gospel writers as redactors or editors of the material they use. • Source criticism aims to uncover the earliest stages of development in the text and regards the gospels as composed from different sources. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • Form criticism's significance lies within its emphasis on oral tradition and <i>Sitz in Leben</i> which together bring us closer to the original words of Jesus and the sociological setting of the early Church or Jesus' ministry from which material might have originated. • Redaction criticism clarifies gaps in the gospels or passages that do not make sense by looking at the historical context for authorship and the intended audience; arguably, this provides the best way of accessing the 'historical Jesus' behind the Christ of faith and is very significant for understanding the relationship between the synoptic gospels. • If we accept that Matthew and Luke adapt Mark, Q and their own special sources, then an obvious significance for redaction criticism is that it becomes an increasingly useful tool for understanding why the evangelists edit (redact) their gospel material in the way they do. • Source criticism offers different lines of enquiry such as the two-source and four-source hypothesis but no conclusive solution to the synoptic problem. Its strength lies in its significant focus on the literary relationship between the synoptic gospels, but scholars differ in which 'solution' remains the most convincing.

	Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.
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Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Information/issues are identified (AO2). • Judgements are supported by generalised arguments (AO2).
Level 2	5–8	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2).

Question number	Indicative content
3(a)	10 marks AO1 AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question. Candidates may refer to the following. • Jesus' ministry in Luke's gospel begins and ends with the call to repentance. The parable of the Lost son concludes a trio of parables which support this theme: the Kingdom of God is open to anyone who repents. • The parable teaches about unconditional love; the father in the parable did not qualify his love and compassion for his younger son whose sins were utterly forgiven, and his return home celebrated. • The parable of the Lost son explores two sons who were lost in their own way: the youngest was lost in sin and the oldest was lost in self-righteousness. Their story is an allegory for the relationship between God and humanity. • Recent scholarship suggests the older brother is at least as important to the underlying narrative as the younger son -Jesus explores the implications of repentance in greater depth by considering the other son who stayed at home and did his duty. • The parable does not offer a final resolution to the older son's resentment and Jesus offers the mixed crowd of followers, tax collectors and sinners this reflection on their own moral arrogance, repentance and the non-judgemental love evident within the father's relationship with his two sons. • Jesus universalises the Mosaic ethical code by teaching general principles such as love of neighbour rather than specific commands thus setting out universal moral qualities that are prerequisite for entering the kingdom of God.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is superficial (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies that are not directly linked to the extract (AO1).
Level 2	4–6	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed, however it is not fully developed (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs and are linked in most cases to reference from the extract (AO1).

Level 3	7–10	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed and fully developed (AO1). • Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs and are fully linked to references from the extract (AO1).
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Question number	Indicative content
3(b)	5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2 AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • Jesus issues a warning against the dangers of not following God's law in this parable. • The parable illustrates ethical teachings from the Sermon on the Plain. • Jesus' ethical code was building upon Jewish Law. AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • The reversal of fortunes illustrated in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus challenged the Jewish audience's understanding of wealth and poverty: As a result, it would be shocking for them to rethink their existing belief that Lazarus' state of poverty meant he was a sinner being punished by God. • The Jewish audience considered the wealth of the rich man a material blessing from God and this parable contributed to a real shake up of their beliefs because of the reversal of fortunes for the rich man and Lazarus. • When the dead rich man asked Abraham to warn his brothers he was told 'They have Moses and the Prophets'. This reference to Moses helps listeners to recognise and understand that Jesus' ethical teaching, regarding how to care for the poor and use wealth, was already enshrined in Jewish Law. Therefore, Jesus builds upon an existing Jewish code in his ethical teachings. • Following Jesus' ethical teaching involves valuing the poor and needy who are a reality in society. The parable makes a significant contribution by emphasising the value of each person - especially the poor. The poor person is not anonymised like the rich man - he is named whilst the rich man is not named. Therefore, despite the worldly status of the rich man we do not know who he is. • The parable contributes to our understanding of Jesus' ethical teachings because showing compassion to the needy and using wealth to alleviate suffering is clearly taught. As a result, Jesus points out the dangers of not following God's law if the rich ignore the poor. • Jesus' teachings are arguably rooted in first century Judaism, but Jesus also universalises and simplifies the Mosaic ethical code by setting out general principles such as 'love your neighbour'. Therefore, followers can embrace Jesus' ethical teachings by understanding the agapeistic basis of the parable which involves compassion to others and knowing the importance of following God's law. Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Information/issues are selected (AO2). • Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2).
Level 2	5–8	• A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). • Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simple chain of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made, which are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 4	13–16	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question, which are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2).
Level 5	17–20	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question, which are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2).

Question number	Indicative content
4	5 marks AO1, 25 marks AO2 AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1. • Jesus challenged the prevailing teachings of Judaism. • Sabbath Law was central in first century Judaism and Jesus challenged this. • For the Jews, Jesus committed the ultimate blasphemy by saying: 'I and the Father are one' (John 10:30). AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding. Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2. • Challenges to Judaism could be perceived in relation to Christological claims, accusations of blasphemy, threat to religious power or of political expediency under Roman rule; therefore, as Jesus became more popular the weight of these challenges were taken very seriously by religious leaders. • Disputes over blasphemy and issues of Christology were more significant than the issue of power because these religious ideas defined Judaism and therefore Jesus was seen as a threat because he challenged this. • Arguably political expediency/conflict is of more significance because Jesus' claims of 'kingship' could be perceived not as a challenge to Judaism but to the occupying power of Rome. • The death of Jesus was politically expedient for religious leaders because removing his perceived challenge to Judaism could strengthen their own position and power over the Jews whilst under the occupying power. • Jesus was challenging the basis of the covenantal relationship with God; the Law; the Healing of the crippled man on the Sabbath broke the Law of Moses which cites 39 activities prohibited on the Sabbath. Therefore, a public challenge to traditional teachings is very unwelcome to religious leaders who considered intentionally breaking the Sabbath a capital offence. • The challenge of Jesus to the prevailing teachings of Judaism regarding the Sabbath undermined the Law of Moses that those religious teachers held as central and therefore, this was seen as a threat to their power. However, the basis of any such religious claims would not be seen as a challenge by supporters of logical positivism because religious language is meaningless when it cannot be verified as the source of the Law of Moses is non empirical. (This shows links to Philosophy of Religion). • Normative ethics offers different models for judging whether Jesus' actions were ethical, and the clearing of the temple could be viewed as unethical unless appeal is made to one of Kant's maxims that the end justifies the means. Therefore, if one looks beyond the action of attacking the temple itself to the reasons why Jesus did this it is arguably not about attacking rituals fundamental to Jewish worship but about preserving a greater good which is the purpose of the temple for worshipping God. (This shows links to Religion and Ethics). • Different religions affirm different truths and the perceived challenges to Judaism might not arise for adherents of other faiths in the same way. On the other hand, other religions would not welcome harsh criticism of their religious traditions when a legitimate response could be that Jesus is a false prophet and therefore should not be taken seriously or should be punished for attacking religious beliefs. (This shows links to Study of a Religion).

	Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1. Candidates who do not show links with another area of their course of study will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 4.
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Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). • Information/issues are identified (AO2). • Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2). • Judgements made with no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). • Conclusions are provided but are simplistic and/or generic (AO2).
Level 2	7–12	• A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). • Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2). • Judgements made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). • Conclusions are provided, which loosely draw together ideas but with little or no attempt to justify (AO2).
Level 3	13–18	• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). • Judgements of some of the elements in the question are made (AO2). • Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). • Conclusions are provided, which logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).
Level 4	19–24	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). • Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question (AO2). • Reasoned judgements are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2). • Convincing conclusions are provided which fully and logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).

Level 5	25–30	• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). • Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). • Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2). • Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2). • Reasoned judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2).
		• Convincing conclusions are provided which fully and logically draw together ideas and are fully justified (AO2).