

Origin and Organization of the Bible

Who wrote what? When? Why? How?

Session 1: Old Testament / Tanakh

Modern Chronology of Biblical Events

Early
Biblical
Period/
First
Temple

- 1250 BCE: Exodus
- 950 BCE: Temple construction under King Solomon
 - J Source (oldest in the Bible)
 - E Source
 - some Psalms, Proverbs
 - Amos
 - Hosea
- 722 BCE: Destruction of northern kingdom
 - Isaiah
- 623 BCE: Reform under Josiah
 - D source
 - Jeremiah
 - Isaiah

Late
Biblical
Period/
Second
Temple

- 586 BCE: Destruction of Jerusalem
 - P source
 - Deuteronomistic History (Josh, Jud, Sam, Kings)
 - Ezekiel
 - Lamentations
- 539 BCE: Restoration, Beginning of 2nd Temple period
- 538 – 332 BCE: Persian rule (Ezra in 458; Nehemiah in 435)
 - Job
 - Esther
 - Chronicles
 - Nehemiah
 - Ezra
 - Ruth (polemic against Ezra/Nehemiah)
 - Isaiah
 - Jonah
 - Malachi
- 332 – 63 BCE: Hellenistic rule (Maccabean revolt in 167 BCE)
- 63 BCE: beginning of Roman rule

The Law/Torah (Also called the Pentateuch: “Five Books”)

- **Includes:** Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- **Overview:** The Pentateuch is the story of God’s promises to God’s people. It tells us who God is and who God’s followers are meant to be. The Pentateuch provides the origin and definition of the people of Israel – a people who have formed a covenant relationship with God and who live within that covenant.
- **Development:** compilation of various sources over time beginning in the 9th century BCE and reaching its current state in the 6th century BCE

History

- **Includes:** Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings (Former Prophets / Deuteronomistic History), 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra & Nehemiah
- **Overview:** the establishment (conquest, settlement, reestablishment) of the people of Israel in the land of Israel.
- **Development:** The works of Deuteronomistic history works were compiled and redacted by a single editor or team of editors no earlier than the late 7th century BCE; perhaps in the period of Babylonian exile. Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah came later at the end of the 5th century and turn of the 4th century. (Low 500s to high 400s BCE)

Prophets/Nevi’im

- **Includes:** Isaiah, Jeremiah, & Ezekiel (Major Prophets) and Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi (Minor Prophets)
- **Overview:** stop bad behavior, keep your priorities in order, love and serve God, act with justice and mercy
- **Development:** Amos may be the earliest prophetic book, dating from the 8th century BCE, before the fall of the Northern Kingdom. Malachi is likely the newest, dating from the 4th century BCE.

The Writings/Ketuvim (could also be known as “Miscellaneous” or “Other”)

- **Includes:** Psalms, Song of Songs, Lamentations (poetry); Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (wisdom or philosophy); Ruth, Esther (short stories); Daniel (apocalyptic literature); and sometimes Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah (history)
- **Authorship**
 - Psalms and Proverbs are composed of bits and pieces from various times (some considered very old, others after the fall of Judah.)
 - The other writings are all from the Late Biblical period.
- **Overview:** The “Writings” are different from one another, so their purposes are diverse. They are art. Like other art, they attempt to tell a truth and/or make a point in ways that entertain and inspire.

Collectively, The Hebrew Scriptures are called the Tanakh (or Tanak)

- Torah, Nevi’im, Ketuvim. TNK = TaNaK