



Welcome to Block 3

Introduction to Working
with Biblical Myth

Dr Jessica M. Keady

j.keady@uwtsd.ac.uk

The Hebrew Bible / The Hebrew Scriptures

The Old Testament
Tanakh / Mikra





What is the Bible?

- A compilation or anthology of works written over a period of approx. 1000 years.
- One of the most influential ‘books’ in human history.
- 66 books in total: 39 in the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament) and 27 in the New Testament.

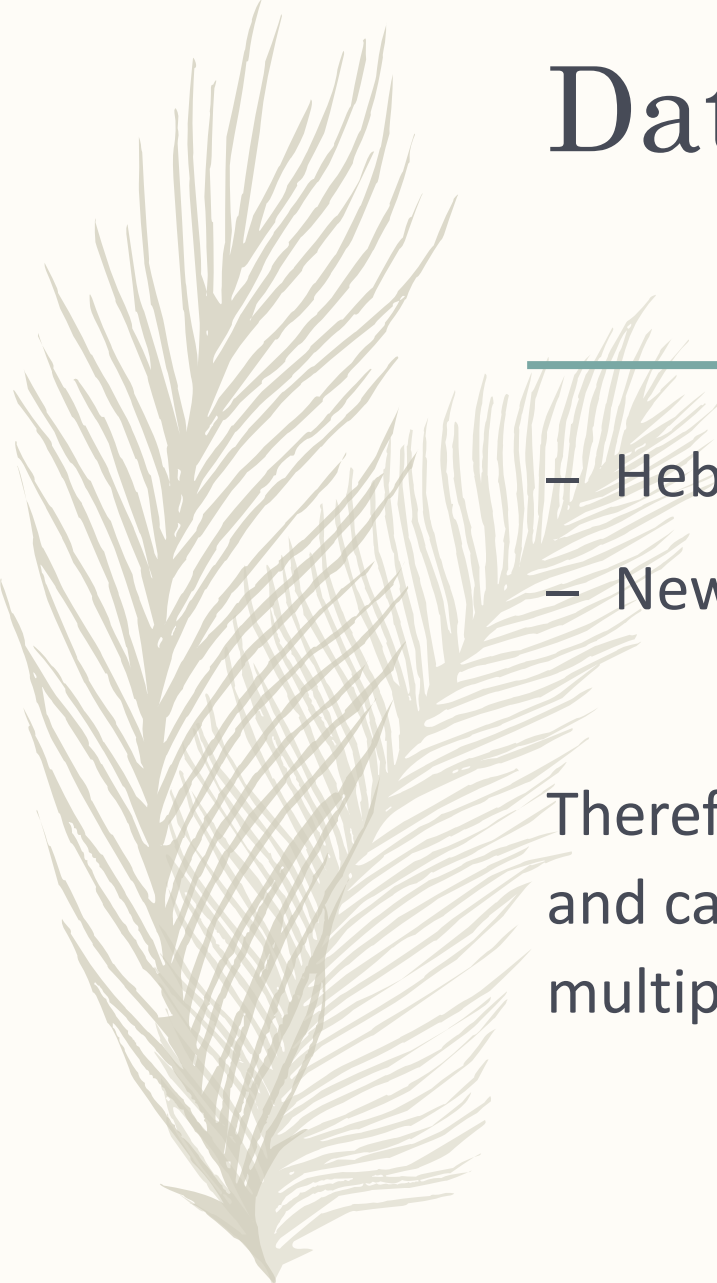


Which language is the Bible written in?

Ancient (original) languages

- Hebrew (most of the HB/OT)
- Greek (NT)
- Aramaic (parts of HB/OT and transliterated terms in the New Testament)

1. Ezra 4:8 – 6:18 and 7:12-26
2. Daniel 2:4-7:28
3. Jeremiah 10:11
4. Genesis 31:47



Date(s) and author(s)

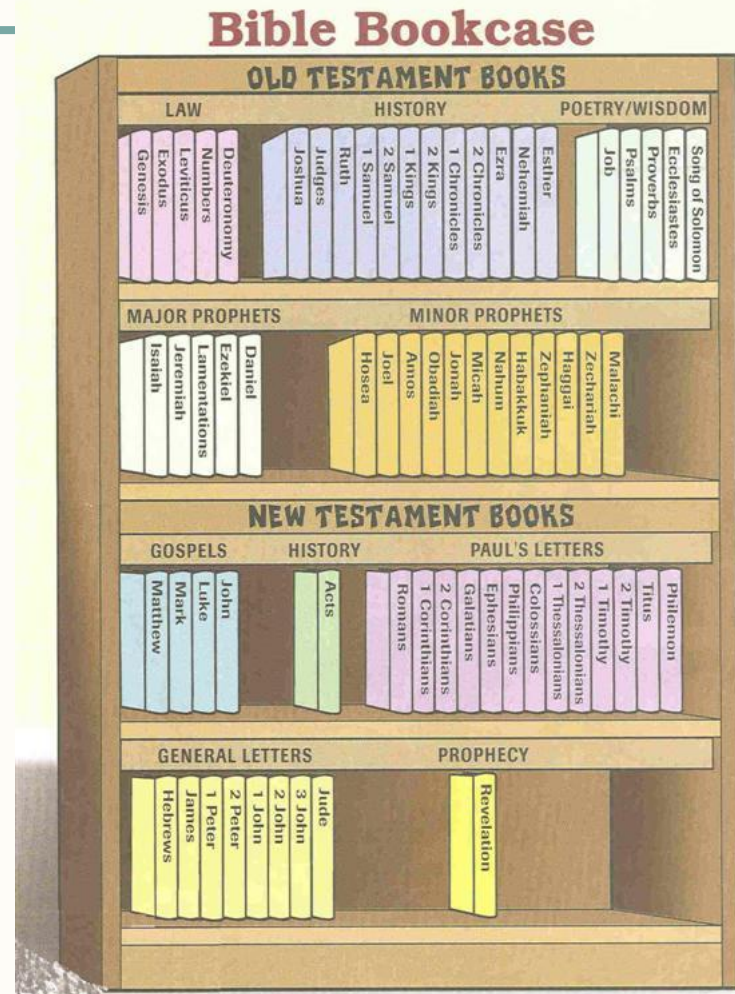
- Hebrew Bible / Old Testament writings: ca. 1000 BCE – 164 BCE
- New Testament writings: ca. 50 CE – 200 CE

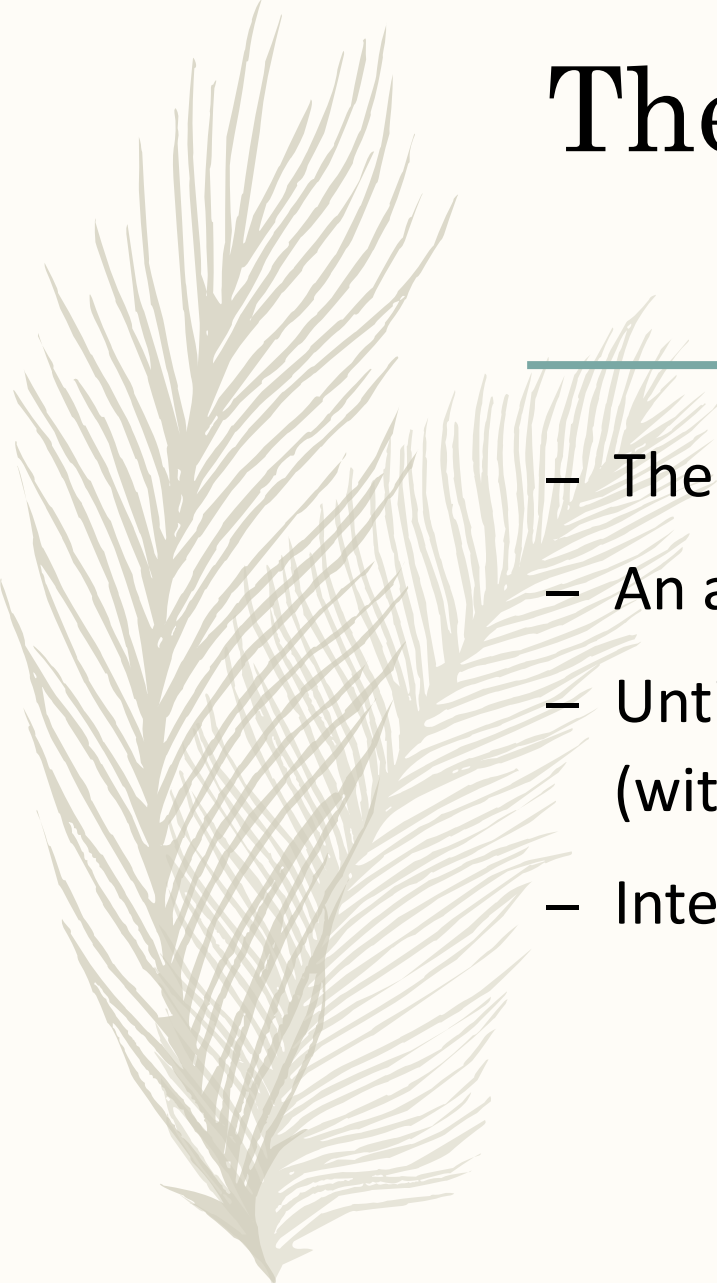
Therefore, the Bible contains writings spanning over 1,000 years and can be related to multiple dates, multiple authors and multiple contexts.

What is the Bible?

Genres

- Law
- Prophecy
- Prayer
- Poetry
- Wisdom
- Narrative





The Hebrew Bible

- The main foundation of Judaism: its body of sacred scriptures.
- An anthology of different writings.
- Until today recited from a handwritten scroll in Hebrew (without vowels).
- Intended to be read aloud (*mikra*)



The Hebrew Bible and Judaism

Markers of Judaism:

- Worship of a personal and transcendent God
- Code of laws and commandments
- Institutional and communal structures (Temple, shrine, synagogue)
- Revealed Scripture

TaNaKh

TaNaKh

Ta=Torah

Na=Nebium

Kh=Kethubim



ט	ח	ז	ו	ה	ד	ג	ב	א
Tet (T)	Chet (Ch)	Zayin (Z)	Vav (V/O/U)	He (H)	Dalet (D)	Gimel (G)	Bet (B/V)	Alef (Silent)
ס	נ	נ	מ	מ	ל	ך	כ	י
Samech (S)	Nun (N)	Nun (N)	Mem (M)	Mem (M)	Lamed (L)	Khaf (Kh)	Kaf (K/Kh)	Yod (Y)
ת	ש	ר	ק	ץ	צ	ף	פ	ע
Tav (T/S)	Shin (Sh/S)	Resh (R)	Qof (Q)	Tzade (Tz)	Tzade (Tx)	Fe (F)	Pe (P/F)	Ayin (Silent)



TaNaKh

- Torah / Law: Five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
- Nevi'im / Prophets: (8 books)
- Ketuvim / Writings: (11 books)

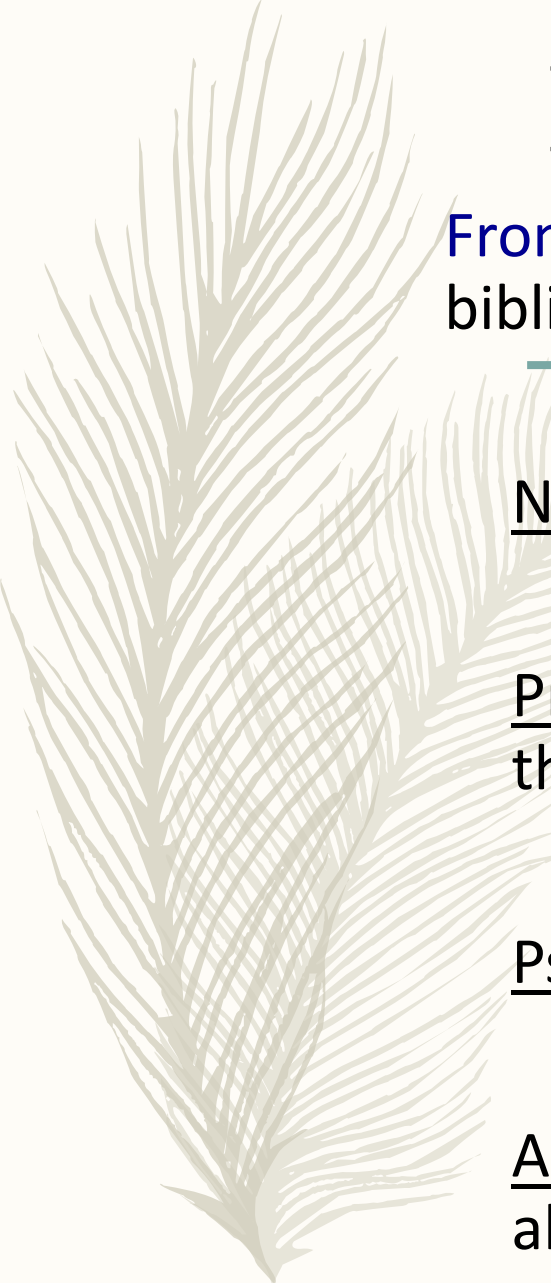


Books of the Law Pentateuch / Torah	Historical Books	Poetry and Wisdom Books / Ketuvim	Prophetic Books / Nevi'im
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations
Numbers	I Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel
Deuteronomy	II Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel
	I Kings		Hosea
	II Kings		Joel, Amos
	I Chronicles		Obadiah, Jonah
	II Chronicles		Micah, Nahum
	Ezra		Habakkuk
	Nehemiah		Zephaniah
	Esther		Haggai
			Zechariah
			Malachi



Interpreting the Hebrew Bible

- **From a historical perspective:** a collection of 39 writings composed by different authors from several historical periods (interest in historical, social, political and cultural issues)
- Texts composed in Hebrew and Aramaic.
- Various religious and social movements, cultural practices, political developments.
- Responses to specific circumstances.



Interpreting the Hebrew Bible

From a literary perspective: what are the literary features of the biblical texts?

Narrative: about humankind and the nation of Israel.

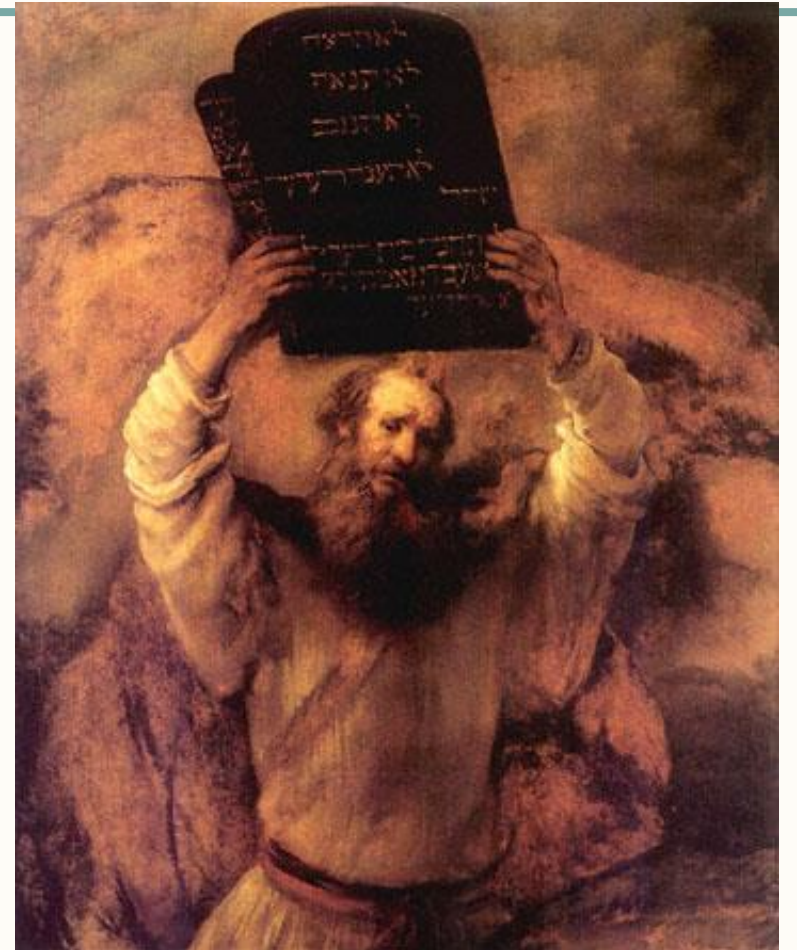
Prophecy: a revelation from God mediated through a prophet ('and the word of the Lord came to Isaiah/Jeremiah/Amos...').

Psalms: expression of praise/lament of a group/individual.

Apocalypse ('revelation'): disclosure of the heavenly mysteries about God and the world to come.

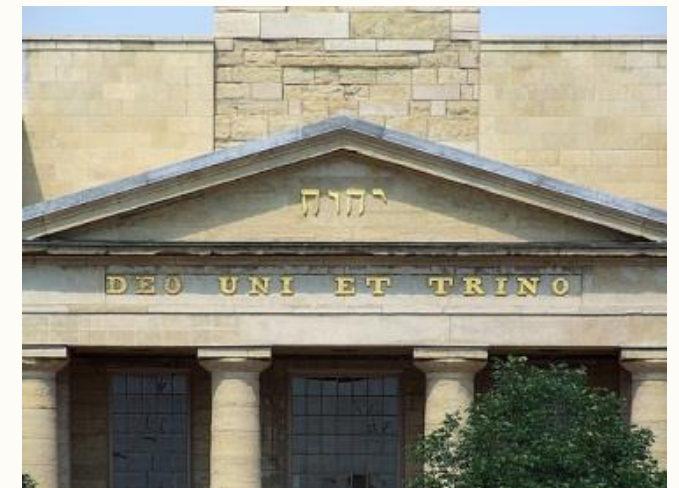
Interpreting the Hebrew Bible

- From a theological perspective: encourage readers/hearers to believe and understand the significance of Israel (origins, fall, restoration, and destiny).



The Tetragrammaton

- The tetragrammaton (“four letters”) יהוה is the personal name of God.
- Because it is considered too holy to pronounce, when יהוה is read, the word אֲדֹנָי (= “Lord”) is spoken instead.





Key Dates in the study of Judaism

- First Jewish Temple built in the 10th Century BCE by King Solomon (1 Kings 5-9)
- Babylonian Destruction and Exile of Jewish people
587 BCE
- Second Temple Judaism (**530 BCE – 70 CE**)



How to access the primary source material

- **Please note that the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version) is the recommended English translation for academic study of the Bible** The NRSV (as well as a host of other translations, should you wish to compare) can be accessed online at biblegateway.com



Useful secondary source material

The Oxford Companion to the Bible

An extremely useful alphabetical reference book with over 700 entries from more than 250 scholars. Access via UWTSD online library.

bibleodyssey.org

A SBL (Society of Biblical Literature) website designed to aid in biblical literacy and to promote the critical investigation of the Bible.

enterthebible.org

A website with helpful (albeit quite short) introductions to each of the biblical texts.



More Secondary Reading

– Hard copies of the following can be found in the library:

Alter, R., *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981)

Barton, J., *The Bible: The Basics* (New York: Routledge, 2010)

Collins, J. J., *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2004)

Coggins, R. J., *Introducing the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) – also available online via the library

Perdue, L. G. (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001) – also available online via the library

Rogerson, J. W., *An Introduction to the Bible* (London: Penguin, 1999)