THE BIBLE



GENERAL INFORMATION

SCHOLARLY METHODS IN BIBLICAL STUDIES

Modern scholars use the following methods in their study of the Bible in order to better understand the meaning of the text, the history of its composition, its relationship to the wider world of the ancient Near East and the way that the text has functioned in various faith communities

CANONICAL CRITICISM

- Study of the final, received (canonical) text rather than the smaller, individual traditions and sources that were joined together over time to make up the text, (Contrast with Form Criticism helow)
- Because the Bible, like most religious texts, is the sacred scripture of an actual religious community (or communities), canonical criticism often focuses on the relationship between the ideas in the text and the theological and religious issues of the community.

FORM CRITICISM

- Assumes the Bible is composed from older, often oral, literary units, and attempts to isolate those units.
- Units that make up the final text include prayers and psalms, aphorisms and proverbs, genealogies, narratives about ancient heroes, and legal codes.
- Tries to place these units into a specific Sitz in Leben ("setting-in-life") in order to understand how they might originally have functioned.

HISTORICAL CRITICISM

- Considered by many the standard methodology of scholarly biblical studies.
- Attempts to recover the original setting and meaning of texts, using methods of historical inquiry common to other academic fields. Methods include study of questions such as
- "Who wrote the text?", "When was the text writ-ten?", and "What does the text reveal about the society in which it was written?"

LITERARY CRITICISM

Applies many of the standard tools of modern literary studies to the Bible, such as studies of plot, narrative devices, and character development.

REDACTION CRITICISM

Attempts to uncover the work of the final editors (redactors) responsible for arranging the different sources into a single work in order to learn about their interests.

SOURCE CRITICISM

Attempts to separate and analyze the different sources that were brought together to create

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

- Attempts to establish the most reliable and **logical biblical text** by consulting different manuscripts and accounting for (and sometimes correcting) intentional and unintentional mistakes and obscurities.
- Sometimes called "lower criticism" to distinguish it from the "higher criticism" of interpreting the

TRADITION CRITICISM

Attempts to analyze the smaller textual units that have been grouped together in order to understand traditions about important places or people such as those about holy sites, great leaders, and ancestors.

IMPORTANT PLACES

Ammon

- The region east of the Jordan River (modern-day Jordan)
- The Bible connects it with the incestuous offspring of Lot (Gen. 19)
- A traditional enemy of Israel (see Judg. 11: 1 Sam. 11)
- Conquered by David (2 Sam. 10-12)

Antioch (Pisidian)

- City in southwestern Asia Minor (modernday Turkey)
- Site of Paul's preaching (Acts 13:13-52)

Antioch (Syrian)

- One of the pre-eminent cities in the Roman Empire, with a good location along trade routes (modern-day Syria)
- Was a center for Paul's missionary work Here the word "Christian" was first applied to Jesus' followers (Acts 11:26).

Bethlehem

- City just south of Jerusalem
- After her husband died, Ruth the Moabite came here with her mother-in-law.
- David's hometown and the site of his anointing by Samuel (1 Sam. 16)
- Site of Jesus' birth in Matthew (2:1) and Luke (2:4). This tradition confirms the promise made by the prophet Micah (5:2) that a ruler was to emerge in Bethlehem though John records an entirely differtradition (7:42), casting doubt on Bethlehem as Jesus' birthplace, and may be more authentic

Colossae

- An inland city in Asia Minor, located near larger, more important cities such as
- Though Paul may have written the letter addressed to the church in Colossae, he never visited the city, and it was probably the mission of others.

Corinth

- A large and economically important Greek city, on the Peloponnesus in Greece Paul founded the Corinthian church.
- Decapolis (Greek for "ten cities")
- Group of ten Greco-Roman cities visited by Jesus in the region south and east of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 5:20; 7:31)
- Includes Scythopolis, Pella, Hippo, Dion, Gerasa, Philadelphia, Raphana, Canatha, Gadara, and Damascus (though some ancient authors' lists differ slightly)

- The region bordering Judah on the southeast
- The Bible connects it with Jacob's brother Esau (Gen. 25:30).
- A traditional enemy of Israel
- Also called Idumea in Greek

A large, wealthy city in western Asia Minor A near-riot breaks out when Ephesian artisans feel their business is threatened by the arrival of Paul and other Christian missionaries, who deny that God can be physically represented (Acts 19).

Ephraim

- An alternate name (along with Samaria) for the northern kingdom of Israel
- A region in the central hill country north of Jerusalem
- Contains the important cities of Shechem. Shiloh, and Bethel

Galatia

- A Roman province in Central Asia Minor
- It is not clear which part of this province (north or south) Paul addressed in his
- · The Galatian church was founded by Paul

Galilee

- Northern region of Israel
- Site of much of Jesus' early career
- Location of Jesus' hometown, Nazareth (Luke 4:16; John 7:41)

- Garden plot at the foot of the Mount of Olives, just east of Jerusalem
- Site where Jesus prayed prior to his arrest (Matt. 26: Mark 14)

Hebron

- City in Judah, south of Jerusalem
- Burial site of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah
- David's first capital (2 Sam. 2)

Israel

- 1. The northern kingdom of the 10 tribes,
- which was destroyed by Assyria in 722 BCE 2. The name God gives Jacob (Gen. 32:28)
- 3 The entire community—from both kingdoms-of those descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (i.e., Israelites) (Exod. 1:1)

Jericho

- Ancient city just west of the Jordan River and north of the Dead Sea
- Conquered by Joshua (Josh. 6) Visited by Flijah and Flisha (2 Kings 2)

- The political economic and religious center of ancient Israel
- The capital of ancient Israel starting with David, around 1000 BCE (2 Sam. 5)
- Site of both Temples
- First Temple built under Solomon (mid-10th c. BCE) (1 Kings 5)
- · Second Temple rebuilt by returning exiles (late 6th c. BCE); it was continu ally expanded, especially under king Herod (late 1st c. BCE)
- Site of the final events of Jesus' life (John 2:13 says Jesus also visited it earlier) Destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE

- The major river in Israel
- Runs from the Sea of Galilee (a.k.a. the Kinneret) in the north to the Dead Sea in the south
- Crossed by the invading Israelites under Joshua
- Site where John baptized Jesus (Matt. 3 / Mark 1 / Luke 3 / John 1)

Judah

- · The southern kingdom, containing the
- tribes Judah and Benjamin Conquered by the Babylonians in the
- early 6th c. BCE During the Second Temple Period, the only all-Jewish region

Macedonia

- An important land route between Asia Minor and Europe, traversed by Paul (see Acts 16)
- On the Balkan peninsula, in modern-day northern Greece

Megiddo

- Hill-city near the Mediterranean coast
- Lies at the intersection of important trade routes between Syria and Egypt Because of its strategic location, it was
- the site of many battles. Josiah killed in conflict with Pharaoh Neco here (2 Kings 23)
- The site of the great eschatological battle in Revelation 16:16, called "Harmagedon" (from the Hebrew "Har Megiddo." or Mt. Megiddo)

- The region east of the Jordan River, north
- The Rible connects it with the incestuous offspring of Lot (Gen. 19).
- Occasionally an enemy of Israel Site where Moses is buried (Deut. 34)

Moab (continued)

- Conquered by David (2 Sam. 8)
- Ruth's homeland (Ruth 1), where Elimelech and his family went during a famine in Judah

- A small island in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Asia Minor
- John is said to have written Revelation here (Rev. 1).

Philippi

City in Macedonia (modern-day Greece) Site of the first European church founded

by Paul (see Acts 16)

- · Capital of the Roman empire
- Christian missionaries arrived here within a few decades of Jesus' death, presumably going first to the local synagogues.

Samaria (residents called "Samaritans")

- An alternate name (along with Ephraim) for the northern kingdom of Israel and an important northern city
- The city was appointed the northern capital under Omri (early 9th c. BCE) (1 Kings 16).
- Destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BCF (2 Kings 17); its leading citizens were exiled and foreigners from Syria and Mesopotamia resettled there
- After 722, always seen as separate from Judah, and the two kingdoms' relations were alternately friendly and hostile for
- centuries Because Samaria was only marginally Jewish, the decision of early Christians to preach there represents an early step in the movement of the Gospel beyond the Jewish world (see Acts 8; John 4).

Shechem

- An Israelite city in Ephraim, north of
- Shiloh Its non-Israelite inhabitants were killed by Jacob's sons Simeon and Levi after their sister Dinah was raped by Shechem,
- son of Hamor (Gen. 34). Site of Joshua's covenant renewal cer-
- emony (Josh. 24) Capital of the northern kingdom after the split between Israel and Judah in 922 BCE

(1 Kings 12)

- Shiloh · An Israelite city in Ephraim, north of
- Jerusalem The scene of an assembly under Joshua (Josh. 18)
- An important northern cult site, where Samuel grew up (1 Sam 1)

Housed the Ark of the Covenant at the time of Samuel (1 Sam. 4)

- Singi peninsula & Mount Singi / Horeb Triangular peninsula between Israel and
- Egypt
- Crossed by the freed slaves Mount Sinai, alternately called Horeb in the E and D sources, is the site of the revelation of the Ten Commandments to

Moses (its actual location is unknown).

- Thessalonica Coastal city in Macedonia (in modern-day
- Paul founded a church here, presumably composed only of Gentiles.



THE BIBLE

THE HEBREW BIBLE / OLD TESTAMENT

OVERALL CONTENT

JEWISH CANON

In the Jewish tradition, the Bible is referred to as the "Hebrew Bible" or the "Tanach" (see Glossary), not the "Old Testament," because "Old Testament" logically assumes there is a "New Testament," which is absent from the Jewish tradition.

The Jewish canon divides the books of the Hebrew Bible into the following three groups.

Law

Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy

Prophets Former prophets

Joshua Judges 1 and 2 Samuel 1 and 2 Kings

Later prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel "The Twelve"

(Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi)

Writings

Psalms
Job
Proverbs
Ruth
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes
Lamentations
Esther
Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah
1 and 2 Chronicles

CHRISTIAN CANON

In the Christian tradition, the first part of the Bible is referred to as the "Old Testament," though many contemporary Christians also use the term "Hebrew Bible."

There remains some disagreement among Christian denominations about which books are included. Books considered canonical by Roman Catholics are printed in italics. They were removed from the Protestant Bible during the Reformation and placed at the end, in a section called "The Apocrypha" (see Glossary).

Genesis Esther Additions to Esther Exodus Leviticus Job Psalms Numbers Deuteronomy Proverbs Joshua Ecclesiastes Judges Song of Solomon Wisdom of Solomon 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings

Wisdom of Solomon
Ecclesiasticus /
Wisdom of Ben
Sirach
Isaidh
Jeremidh
Lamentations
Baruch and Letter of
Jeremiah
Ezekiel

Danie

Additions to Daniel, including Susanna, Song of the Young Men, Bel and the Dragon

Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah

Joel

Zechariah Malachi 1 and 2 Maccabees

GLOSSARY

apocalyptic (from the Greek for "revelation"): a literary genre of ancient writings that disclose secret or hidden information about the future (especially the end-times). It often includes promises of imminent judgment of, and divine intervention into, a sinful world on behalf of the elect. It may also include visions or heavenly ascents, guided by angelic mediators. Sometimes the actual author is not known, such as when a text is said to derive from an earlier biblical hero. (Examples: Daniel 7-12 and Revelation; from the Pseudepigrapha, see 1 Enoch)

2 Kings

1 Chronicles

2 Chronicles

Nehemiah

Tobit

Judith

Apocrypha (from the Greek for "hidden writings"): Jewish texts originally found in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Septuagint). The translations were made in the third to first centuries BCE. While they are canonical for Roman Catholics, Protestants place them at end of the Old Testament, and they are not canonical for Jews. (Examples: Toblit; Judith)

apodictic law: a form of biblical law that states general principles ("You shall / shall not..."), does not specify punishments, and is not designed for use in court. This is the opposite of casuistic law. (Example: Exod. 20:2–17)

BCE and CE: non-Christian abbreviations for "before the common era" (BC) and "during the common era" (AD), respectively

canon: a collection of books that a religious tradition judges authoritative or inspired (Example: the Hebrew Bible in Judaism)

casuistic law: a form of biblical "case law" that deals with specific circumstances, often with the use of the conditional phrase ("if...then"). This is the opposite of apodictic law. (Example: Exod. 21:1–22:17)

Decalogue: the Ten Commandments, in Exod. 20; Deut. 5

diaspora: Jewish communities outside Israel

eschatology: concerns about the end-times, especially when coupled with an expectation of a final judgment or dramatic reversal of the present unjust world order

exile: the period of roughly 50 years between Babylonia's conquest of the southern kingdom of Judah in the early 6th c. BCE and Persia's defeat of Babylonia in 538 BCE when a few thousand of the elite class were sent to live in Babylonia in order to pacify the conquered country

First Temple Period: the period in Jewish history between the building of the Jerusalem Temple under King Solomon (10th century BCE) and the destruction of the first Temple by the Babylonians, in 586 BCE

Masoretic text: the text of the Hebrew Bible edited by Jewish scholars during the first millennium CE and used as the standard text today

monotheism: the belief that only one God exists. Differs from monolatry, the worship of one God without denying the existence of other gods (Compare Gen. 31:53, "the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor," and Isa. 45:5: "I am the Lord, there is no other; besides me there is no god.")

Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the forefathers of the people of Israel, who are prominent in the book of Genesis

Pentateuch (from the Greek for "five books"): the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Torah (Hebrew for "law" or "teaching")
Pseudepigrapha (from the Greek for "false writings"): diverse Jewish texts originally written in Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic from the third to the first centuries BCE. Like the Apocrypha, many of these texts are said to be the work of biblical heroes. They are not canonical for Jews, Protestants, or Roman Catholics, but their status varies among the Eastern Orthodox churches. (Examples: 1 Enoch; Jubilees; Letter of Aristeas; Sibylline Oracles; 3 and 4 Maccabees)

redactor: an editor responsible for collecting, organizing, and sometimes correcting earlier texts

Second Temple Period: the period in Jewish history between the rebuilding of the second Jerusalem Temple after some Jews returned from exile in Babylonia (late sixth century BCE) and the destruction of the second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE

Septuagint (from the Greek for "seventy," for 70 translators; abbreviated LXX): the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible created between the third and first centuries BCE. It was the primary translation for diaspora Jews and early Christians.

Sheol: the Hebrew name for the abode of the dead. A place cut off from life and God, though without any punishment or suffering (see Jacob in Gen. 37:35; Samuel in 1 Sam. 28:7–20). However, during the Second Temple Period it became increasingly connected to the torment of the wicked.

Syro-Ephraimite war (734–732 BCE): the conflict that a coalition of the northern kingdom, under Pekah, and Arameans, under Rezin, initiated against the southern kingdom, under Jotham and later his son Ahaz, in order to force the south to form a united front against the threatening Assyrians (2 Kings 16; Isa. 7). Ahaz sought protection by becoming a vassal to the Assyrians, who eventually destroyed first the Arameans and finally the northern kingdom (in 722).

Tanach or Tanak: a Hebrew acronym for the Hebrew Bible, from the three parts of the Hebrew Bible (T=Torah / Law, Instruction; N=Nevi'im / Prophets; CH / K=Ketuvim / Writings).

Tetragrammaton (from the Greek for "four letters"): the unvocalized name of God in the Hebrew Bible, sometimes written as "YHWH" or "Lord." **wisdom**: a literary genre of writings (such as proverbs and riddles) found throughout the ancient Near East. Wisdom writings contain guidance for a rational or moral life and explain the ways of the world, especially the issues of reward and punishment. They were possibly used in antiquity in the education of the elite. Few elements are distinctly Israelite or Jewish, and the writings reveal connections to neighboring peoples' wisdom traditions. (*Examples*: Proverbs; Job; Ecclesiastes; also Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon)

THE BIBLE AND THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

RELEVANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

- Merneptah Stele (13th c. BCE)
 An inscription recording the Egyptian Pharaoh's conquest of Israel, in the earliest non-biblical mention of Israel
- Mesha Stele / Moabite Stone (9th c. BCE)
 An inscription commemorating the Moabite king Mesha's victory over the Israelite king Omri; the mass slaughter mentioned in the inscription, committed as an offering to the Moabite god Chemosh, may be similar to the slaughter of all people and even animals in the conquests in the book of Joshua (see 2 kings 3; Josh. 6–10).
- Gezer Calendar (10th c. BCE)
 An inscription of an agricultural calendar, preserving a very old form of Hebrew
- Samaria Ostraca (8th c. BCE)
 Potsherds (pottery fragments) providing an important example of very early
 Hebrew writing. They contain short lists
 of names and places, and of goods to be
 delivered to the northern kingdom.
- Siloam Inscription (late 8th / early 7th c BCF)

An inscription in a water tunnel built under Jerusalem during the time of Hezeklah commemorating the occasion when diggers working from two directions finally met underground (confirms the account in 2 Kings 20:20).

- Sennacherib's prism (late 8th c. BCE)
 An account of the Assyrian king's battle against neighboring peoples and lands, including an attack on Jerusalem (see the accounts in 2 Kings 18–19).
- Black obelisk of Shalmaneser III, King of Assyria (9th c. BCE)

A victory monument that depicts king Jehu of Israel bowing before Shalmaneser and bringing him tribute (see 2 Kings 9–10).

 Lachish Ostraca (early 6th c. BCE)
 Short reports from the town of Lachish before it was destroyed by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar

RELATED LITERARY EVIDENCE

- Gilgamesh Epic (2nd Millennium BCE)
 A Sumerian story of a king seeking immortality in which the theme is the limitations of humanity. The epic contains parallels to the biblical flood account (Gen. 6–9).
- Hammurabi's Code (18th c. BCE)
 An extensive Babylonian legal code containing parallels to the Covenant Code (Exod. 20–23)
- Amorna letters (14th c. BCE)
 Diplomatic notes between Egypt and the small cities of the region that will later be called Israel. The notes contain requests for help against marauding "habiru" (which might refer to the "Hebrews," another name for the Israelites) (see Gen. 14:13; 40:15)
- Ugarit texts (14th or 13th c. BCE)
 Thousands of ancient Canaanite cuneiform tablets containing many different texts (some with parallel stories to those in the Bible), revealing a previously unknown form of writing.
- Enuma Elish (possibly 12th c. BCE)
 A Babylonian creation epic, the focus of which is warring gods and the conflict between chaos and order; it contains parallels to P's creation account (Gen. 1). (See Hypothetical Sources in the Pentateuch, page 4.)

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

JACOB'S TWELVE SONS

Jacob's sons are the forefathers of the twelve tribes. Here they are listed by mother and in birth order (Gen. 29-30;

- · Leah (wife): Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah
- Bilhah (servant of Rachel): Dan, Naphtali
- Zilpah (servant of Leah): Gad, Asher
- Leah (again): Isaachar, Zebulun (and
- daughter Dinah)
- · Rachel (wife): Joseph, Benjamin

Note: Later lists do not fully agree with the birth narrative (see Gen. 49; Num. 1; Deut 33). It is likely that these differences can be explained by later events, such as the replacement of Joseph with his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh: the disappearance of Simeon; and the emergence of the Levites as a class of priests rather than, strictly speaking, a tribe.

JUDGES

The judges were mostly local rulers: they did not rule consecutively An asterisk (*) denotes the most important judges.

- Othniel (the first judge; Judg. 3:7-11)*
- Ehud (killed the king Eglon and defeated the Moabites; Judg. 3:12-20)*
- Shamgar (Judg. 3:31)
- Deborah (charismatic leader and prophet; ruled with Barak; defeated Sisera; Judg. 4:1-5:31)*
- Gideon (also called Jerubbaal; defeated Midianites with a tiny army in order to demonstrate God's power; rejected kingship; Judg. 6:1-8:32)*
- Abimelech (defeated Shechem, but failed in his attempt to be made king; Judg. 8: 33-9:57)*
- Tolah (Judg. 10:1–2)
- Jair (Judg. 10:3-5)
- Jephthah (defeated the Ammonites, but had to sacrifice his daughter after rashly taking a vow in hopes of securing God's favor; Judg. 10:6–12:7)* Ibzan (Judg. 12:8–10)
- Elon (Judg. 12:11-12)
- Abdon (Judg. 12:13-15)
- Samson (vowed to the Lord as a Nazirite by his mother; powerful and impulsive oppo nent of the Philistines; Judg. 13:1-16:31)*

KINGS

All Israelite kings and all but three Judean kings (Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah) were denounced by the Deuteronomistic Historian (see below) for their unfaithfulness to YHWH. There is often a discrepancy of a few years between various lists of the kings

Israel (northern kingdom) • Jeroboam I (922–901 BCE)

- Nadab (901-900)
- Baasha (900-877)

Israel (continued)

- Elah (877-876) Zimri (876)
- Omri (876-869) Ahab (869-850)
- Ahaziah (850-849)
- Jehoram (849-842) Jehu (842-815)
- Jehoahaz (815–802)
- Jehoash (802–786) Jeroboam II (786–746)
- Zechariah (746–745) Shallum (745)
- Menahem (745-737)
- Pekahiah (737–736)
- Pekah (736-732) Hoshea (732-722)

Judah (southern kinadom)

- Rehoboam (922-915)
- Abijam (915-913) Asa (913-873)
- Jehoshaphat (873-849)
- Jehoram (849-842) Ahaziah (842)
- Athaliah (queen-mother; 842-837) Jehoash (837-800)
- Amaziah (800-783)
- Uzziah, also called Azariah (783-742) Jotham (742-732)
- Ahaz (732-715)
- Hezekiah (715-686)
- Manasseh (686-642) Amon (642-640)
- Josiah (640–609)
- Jehoahaz (609) Jehoiakim (609–598)
- Jehoiachin (598-597)
- Zedekiah (597-586)

THE PROPHETS

Isaiah (likely composed of three different works from three different times)

- Isa. 1-39 / First Isaiah (8th c. BCE; Judah):
- · Preaches about the Assyrian threat
- Harshly denounces moral failures and idolatrous practices, particularly the lack of faith in God.
- Offers promises of hope for the future, including an entirely transformed, Edenic world.
- Isa. 40-55 / Second Isaiah (mid to late 6th c. BCE; Babylonia):
- Announces an imminent end to exile with the victory over the Babylonians of the Persian king Cyrus II
- Offers consolation, and hope for a new return to the land of Israel
- Isa. 56-66 / Third Isaiah (late 6th c. BCE; Judah):
- · Highly critical of post-exilic society. reflecting tensions between returnees and those who never left (as well as the descendants of both groups).
- Describes conflicts over control of society, especially over Temple ritual.

Isaiah (continued)

Is proto-sectarian, referring to emerging social divisions within Israel that would become exacerbated in future centuries.

Jeremiah (late 7th and early 6th c. BCE;

- . He preaches submission to God's will (in this case, submission to Babylonia) rather than active resistance
- He often complains of priests and rulers widespread hostility to his message of destruction and his demand for submission to what he perceived as God's will for a sinful people.
- The book's similarities to Deuteronomy suggest a later editor may have added material that fit with the Deuteronomistic theology of the conquest and destruction
- A complicated work, likely composed of multiple sources, covering the periods both before and after the exile (though current order is not chronological)
- Contains sections of autobiography, biography, and sermons
- Different versions in the Hebrew and Greek (Septuagint) editions

Ezekiel (early 6th c. BCE; prophesied from

- Babylonia during the exile) From a priestly family, he was taken into exile in Babylonia.
- Performed symbolic acts to indict the people for their sinfulness and to warn of the coming disaster.
- Received enigmatic visions of God's presence among the exilic community, and of the end-times and restoration of both Israel and Judah
- His lengthy concluding vision of a rebuilt Jerusalem Temple symbolizes God's return to a purified, Edenic Jerusalem.

Hosea (8th c. BCE; Israel)

- Undertakes a symbolic marriage to the prostitute Gomer to symbolize Israel's . unfaithfulness to God.
- His vivid laments provide evidence for God's abiding faithfulness to Israel in spite of Israel's disobedience.

Joel (possibly post-exilic: location unknown, presumably Judah)

Warns of the coming "day of the Lord" and the eventual return to Israel of God's

Amos (8th c. BCF: from Judah, but preached in Israel)

- Condemns both the surrounding nations and Israel (especially the leadership).
- Critical of hollow ritualism as a substitute for just behavior (though not opposed to religious ritualism in itself).
- Final vision of the restoration of the Davidic dynasty in Judah may have been added later.

Obadiah (early 6th c. BCF: Judah)

Angrily condemns the Edomites for attacking and looting Judah during the Babylonian assault.

Jonah (post-exilic period; Judah)

- A disobedient prophet sent to rebuke a foreign people (the Ninevites)
- The humorous and ironic story of Jonah is possibly meant to satirize Israelite prophets and to illustrate that the God of Israel is even concerned with the Gentiles.

Micah (8th c. BCE; Judah)

Contemporary of First Isaiah. A harsh critic of both Judah and Israel ("Samaria") especially the leadership, for social injustice. Also, he reaffirms God's promises to bless Jerusalem and the people, and offers visions of an entirely transformed future

Nahum (late 7th c. BCE; Judah)

Presents oracles of doom against the Assyrians on the occasion of the Babylonian assault on Nineveh.

Habakkuk (late 7th or early 6th c. BCE; Judah)

Against backdrop of Babylonian assault, complains to God because of the seemingly unjust suffering of his chosen people.

Zephaniah (late 7th c. BCE; Judah, during rule of Josiah)

- Warns of judgment on Israel and the nations of the world on the "day of the Lord" and exhorts Israel to repent.
- In what is possibly a late addition, concludes with reassurance that despite the people's suffering God will eventually restore Jerusalem and show favor to his

Haggai (late 6th c. BCE; Judah)

- Demands the appointment of God's chosen Davidic ruler Zerubbabel.
- Encourages renewal of religious life (especially Temple worship).

Zechariah (likely composed of two different works)

- Zech. 1-8 (late 6th c. BCE; Judah)
- · Offers symbolic and enigmatic visions
- Concerned with renewed Temple wor-Zech. 9-14 (date unknown, likely from
- Second Temple period; Judah):
- Presents imagery of God as deliverer and warrior on behalf of Israel. Envisions radically transformed world.

Malachi (5th c. BCF: Judah)

- Critical of failure to uphold proper ritual practices at Temple
- Ends on note of eschatological hope.

NEIGHBORING PEOPLES

- Assyrians (region of modern-day Syria and territory to the east) Began to gain strength in the 10th c. BCE Presented a serious threat to Israel and Judah in the 8th
- and 7th c. BCE Conquered Israel in 722 BCE, and instituted a policy of
- mass deportations of the people they conquered

Defeated by the Babylonians in 612 BCE

- Babylonians (modern-day Iraq) A culturally advanced civilization, famous for scholarship
- and architecture Most militarily powerful during the 7th and 6th c. BCE,
- when they attacked and conquered Judah Defeated by the Persians in 539 BCE

- The earliest inhabitants of the land of Israel (see Gen. 12:
- · Exercised a powerful religious and cultural influence on · Israelite religion adopted many Canaanite influences, such as names and imagery for God

- Because of the Canaanites' similarity and proximity to the Israelites, their practices and beliefs were seen as constant threat to the Israelite religion (see Deut. 20:16-20).
- Their land was traditionally divided into two regions, upper (southern) and lower (northern) Egypt. Maintained a mostly stable empire for many centuries, and frequently asserted their power over other parts of
- the ancient Near East Struggled for control of the region against other empires. such as the Babylonian and the Assyrian
- Enslaved the descendants of Joseph after they had lived there for generations (Exod. 1) Traditionally, scholars believed that Ramses II, who ruled

Egypt in the 13th c. BCE) was the pharaoh of Exodus.

- Extended their power west to Israel by the 7th c. BCF
- Under Cyrus II ("the Great"), defeated the Babylonians The Bible presents him as a ruler anointed by God (a "messiah," meaning simply "the anointed one") to bring exiled Jews back from Babylonia (Isa. 44–45).

- He was generally benevolent ruler, who encouraged conquered peoples to preserve their native cultures. The Persian dualistic religion Zoroastrianism may have
- influenced Jewish apocalypticism. Defeated by Alexander the Great in 333 BCE

- Exercised a powerful cultural and economic influence throughout the region during the first millennium
- Israel was conquered by Alexander the Great (late 4th c. BCE), which brought it into the larger Hellenistic world of the ancient Near East and eastern Mediterranean. The result a mix of native and Greek social and political cul-

- The Philistines A foreign "sea people" who came from southeast Europe (Greece, Asia Minor, and Cyprus) and invaded and con-
- quered the Mediterranean coast around 1200 BCE Often in conflict with Israel (see 1 Sam. 4–7)

Knowledge of how to make iron gave them a powerful military advantage

CONTINUED ON OTHER SIDE

THE HEBREW BIBLE / OLD TESTAMENT (continued)

IMPORTANT PASSAGES

Creation / Garden of Eden (Gen. 1, 2-3)

Noah and the Flood (Gen. 6-9)

Call of Abraham (Gen. 12)

Promise to Abraham (Gen. 15, 17) Binding of Isaac (Gen. 22)

The Joseph novella (Gen. 37.

39-47, 50)

The burning bush (Exod. 3-4) The 10 Plagues (Exod. 7-12)

Crossing the Red Sea (Exod. 14) The Decalogue / Ten

Commandments (Exod. 20: Deut. 5)

The Golden Calf (Exod. 32) The sending of the spies

(Num. 13-14) The shema / declaration of God's

oneness (Deut. 6)

Moses' death (Deut. 34) Conquest of Jericho (Josh. 6)

Theological explanation of Israel's success and failure (Judg. 2-3)

Deborah (Judg. 4-5); Samson (Judg. 13-16)

Birth and call of Samuel (1 Sam. 1-3)

Ascension of Saul (1 Sam. 10-11)

David defeats Goliath (1 Sam. 17)

Ascension of David (2 Sam. 1–2) David and Batsheba (2 Sam. 11)

Ascension of Solomon (1 Kings 1–2)

Israel and Judah separate; end to united kingdom (1 Kings 12)

Conquest of the north by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17)

Destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (2 Kings 25)

Vision of Edenic future (Isa. 2) Servant songs of Isaiah (Isa. 42:

49; 50; 52-53) Vision of God's chariot going into

exile (Ezek. 1) "Dry bones" vision of Ezekiel (Ezek. 37)

Divine Shepherd psalm (Ps. 23)

Lament over Jerusalem (Ps. 137)

In praise of a capable wife (Prov. 31)

God answers Job out of the whirlwind (Job 38-41)

"Everything has its time" (Eccles. 3)

Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 6)

Ezra denounces mixed marriages (Ezra 9-10; also Neh. 13)

TOPICS IN MODERN BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

HYPOTHETICAL SOURCES IN THE **PENTATEUCH**

The "Documentary Hypothesis" posits that the Bible is a composition of earlier texts (or sources). It is associated above all with the 19th c. German scholar Julius Wellhausen. E, and P are in Gen. through Num. D is in Deut. Some scholars no longer differentiate between E and J, labelling both "non-P."

J (for Yahwist, with "YHWH" as the name of God)

- Possible date: Mid 10th c. BCE
- Likely arose during the successful period of the united kingdom, when promises to earlier generations of land and numerous descendants were believed to be fulfilled
- Glorifies Davidic and Solomonic rule
- A southern source, with a special focus on Judah Interested in promise and fulfillment
- Interested in conflicts between brothers and triumph of the younger brother over the older brother (Cain and Abel; Jacob and Esau; David and his brothers: Solomon and David's other sons who competed for the throne)
- God is often anthropomorphic (walks in Garden in Gen. 3: negotiates with Abraham, etc.)

E (for Elohist, with "Elohim" as the name of God)

- Possible date: 9th or 8th c. BCF
- Not clear whether E ever existed as an independent source or only as a series of additions and changes to the J narrative.
- Likely arose following dissolution of united kingdom
- A northern source
- Emphasis on divine communication through dreams and prophecy; God is distant

Emphasis on "the fear of God" (see Gen. 20)

P (for Priestly)

- Widespread scholarly agreement that it is from the 6th c. BCE, either during the period of exile or shortly afterward
- Presents vision of an orderly world under God's complete control
- Reflects concerns with onging relationship between Israel and God (especially the theme of the covenant), despite disaster and even exile Strong interest in defining ritual and cultic prac-
- tices, such as sacrifice and Temple worship, that represent God's continuing concern for Israel
- Focus on religious activities that can preserve the identity of a community in exile, such as the Sabbath and circumcision (see Gen. 1; 17) Inclusion of genealogies is an effort to establish a sense of multi-generational stability
- during tumultuous times (see Gen. 5: 11) Emphasis on legitimate Aaronic priesthood

D (for Deuteronomy)

- Probably the book found by Josiah's priest in the Temple (2 Kings 22)
- Likely date: late 7th c BCE
- Legitimates Josiah's religious reforms Strongly demands obedience to God alone
- Emphasizes God's covenant with Israel
 - Israel's history is explained theologically: fidelity to the laws of the covenant leads to reward, while disobedience is punished (see Deut 27-28)

D (continued)

- Frequently uses certain phrases (such as "statutes and ordinances"; "this day"; "your heart")
- Identifies Jerusalem alone as the legitimate place of worship ("place where God will choose to put his name" [see Deut, 12])
- Contains diverse laws covering all facets of Israelite life (such as agricultural practice priestly rituals, criminal justice statutes, rules of war, and family law)
- Repeats (with small alterations) many of the laws found elsewhere in the Pentateuch
- Places a high value on separation from idolatrous neighboring peoples

OTHER HYPOTHETICAL SOURCES Legal codes

- Covenant Code (Exod. 20-23)
- Laws suited for small-scale, intimate village life. Focus on agricultural practices family law, torts and other conflicts, communal rituals, rules for slavery Holiness Code (Lev. 17–26)
- Strong interest in proper social behavior (such as respect for elders and appropriate
- sexual behavior) and precise ritual activity Repeated refrain, "You shall be holy as I [God] am holy" (see Lev. 19:2; 20:26), connects biblical law observance with sanctification of daily life and imitation of God's holiness

Decaloque

- Ethical Decalogue (Exod. 20; Deut. 5)
- Ritual Decalogue (Exod. 34)

PARALLEL PASSAGES / DOUBLETS

- Creation account (Gen. 1-2 / 3)
- Wife / sister ruse (Gen. 12 / 20 / 26) Promise to Abraham (Gen. 15 / 17)
- Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28 / 35)
- Call of Moses (Exod. 3-4 / 6)
- Decalogue (Exod. 20 / Deut. 5) Moses striking the rock (Exod. 17 / Num. 20)
- Two different views on kingship: Pro-kingship (1 Sam. 9:1–10:16; 11:1–15) and anti-kingship (1 Sam. 8:1-22; 10:17-27; 12:1-25)
- Chronicler and Deuteronomic History from Saul to the fall of Judah (1 Sam 31-2 Kings 25 / 1 Chron. 9-2 Chron. 36)

DEUTERONOMISTIC HISTORY

Includes narrative of the death of Moses through the fall of the southern kingdom in 586 BCE (Josh., Judg., 1 & 2 Sam., 1 & 2 Kings)

Written from a Deuteronomist theological erspective

- Israel and God have a covenantal relationship that God originally initiated in his promises of land and descendants to the Patriarchs.
- God upholds his side of the covenant by main taining his love and care for the people and providing them with lives of security and safety in the promised land.
- The people of Israel uphold their side of the covenant by remaining faithful to God alone avoiding worship of other gods, and carrying out all the commandments of the Law
- Misfortune results above all from the people's failure to be faithful to God.

- Reflects a southern (Davidic) bias by demanding that all worship take place at one central location, understood as the Temple in Jerusalem
- Judean kings Hezekiah (2 Kings 18-20) and Josiah (2 Kings 22-23) are heroes to the Deuteronomic Historian for their attempts to ban worship of other gods and eliminate sacrificial sites other than the Jerusalem Temple.

Two theories of redaction:

- The "Single-Redactor" theory: Argument (associated with Martin Noth, among others) that the theological and literary consistencies in the Deuteronomistic History reveal the work of an exilic, 6th c. BCE historian who shaped the received narratives into a single account, provided transitions, and added connecting speeches (such as Josh. 24) in order to explain the entire history of Israel up to the
- destruction by Babylonia.

 The "Double-Redactor" Theory: Argument (associated with Frank Moore Cross, among others) which accepts some of Noth's views about the 6th c. exilic redactor who sought to shape narrative materials in order to explain the eventual destruction of the southern kingdom, but posits an earlier redactor responsible for collecting traditions during the time of Josiah (late 7th c. BCE). This first redactor, just before the exile, narrates the Deuteronomistic History in order to support the religious innovations of Josiah, one of the great southern kings, who was responsible for centralizing Israelite worship in Jerusalem and tried to eliminate worship of gods other than YHWH.

THEORIES OF THE CONQUEST

There are three theories to explain how the Israelites came to occupy the land of Israel, in light of the divergent accounts in Joshua (in which the Israelites rapidly enter the land, defeat the local peoples, and divide the land among the tribes) and Judges (in which the Israelites have some success conquering small areas of land but also co-exist with many of the native peoples; the land remains far from unified under Israelite rule)

- External conquest: This traditional theo ry largely relies upon the book of Joshua.
- Scholars argue that the narrative of a rapid destruction of important cities such as Jericho, Ai, and Bethel represent a successful military campaign against the inhabitants of the land. However, the archaeological evidence is highly contested.
- Migration: This theory holds that the entry took place over a long period, mostly peacefully, as different peoples moved into the land in different regions and only slowly joined up to form a political structure of twelve tribes
- Internal Uprising: This theory (associated with Mendenhall and Gottwald), building upon work in modern anthropology and sociology, proposes that a large group of poor, rural peasants, possibly joined by a small number of outsiders who may have been escaping slavery in Egypt, rose up against a wealthy minority that controlled much of the land.

NEW TESTAMENT

OVERALL CONTENT

CHRISTIAN CANON Gospels

(Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the "synoptic gospels." See Topics in Modern Biblical Scholarship: Sources.)

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke John
- Acts of the Apostles (written by the author of Luke)
- Letters or epistles
 - Pauline letters (Scholars think that not all were actually written by Paul.)
 - Romans
 - 1 Corinthians
 - · 2 Corinthians

- Galatians
- Ephesians Philippians
- Colossians 1 Thessalonian
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy 2 Timothy
- Titus Philemon
- Hebrews
- James 2 Peter
- 1 John 2 John
- 3 John lude **Apocalyptic** Literature
- Revelation

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca): a Jewish husband and wife who worked as missionaries in Corinth and hosted Paul during his time there (Acts 18; 1 Cor. 16:19)

- 1 A Christian in Jerusalem struck dead with his wife Sannhira after offering only part of his property to the Apostles (Acts 5)
- 2. A Christian who met and cared for Paul in Damascus after Paul's vision of Jesus on the road, and was present at Paul's baptism (Acts 9)
- 3. The Jewish high priest who presided over a council in Jerusalem before which Paul is brought (Acts 23)

Apollos: a Christian missionary in Alexandria and Corinth, where he had a sizable following (see 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4-22). According to Acts, until Priscilla and Aquila instructed Apollos, all he knew about Jesus was the story of Jesus' baptism by John (Acts 18:24-28).

Barnabas: an important early missionary who worked with Paul in Antioch (Acts 11), Cyprus (Acts 13), and Iconium (Acts 14), until they separated after a dispute over the role of John Mark (Acts

- "Beloved disciple" A nameless follower of Jesus in John's Gospel who appears in the Passion narrative. Also called "the disciple Jesus loved" or
- "the other disciple" (John 19–20).
- Traditionally associated with John, son of Zebedee There was an apparent rivalry between the beloved disciple and Peter over who first witnessed the risen Christ (John 20).

Cornelius: Roman military officer in Caesarea (Palestine) who was one of the first and most important Gentile converts to the Church (Acts 10-11)

- 1. The son of Zebedee and one of Jesus' earliest followers (along
- with his brother John) (Matt. 4:21 / Mark 1:19)

 2. The brother of Jesus and a leader of the Jerusalem community Assumed a position of leadership only after the crucifixion
 - (see Acts 15:13; 21:18) Connected with the more Jewishly conservative wing of the early Church, whose followers apparently sought to disrupt Paul's Jewish law-free mission to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:12)
- Traditional author of letter in his name, though many scholars doubt this attribution because the letter shows no evidence of its writer having been an observant Jew.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE (continued)

John the Baptist

- Charismatic and ascetic religious leader, who sought to reinvigorate God's covenant with the Jews through the ritual of baptism for the remission of sins, performed at the Jordan River
- Seen by Jesus' followers as a forerunner of the Messiah, though emphasis on John's lowliness (Matt. 3:11 / Mark 1:7 / Luke 3:16) may conceal a lively rivalry between the followers of the two men
- According to Luke, Jesus' mother Mary and John's mother Flizabeth were relatives (Luke 1)

Judas Iscariot

- One of Jesus' 12 disciples, responsible for handling the group's money (John 12, 13)
- Betrayed Jesus with a kiss to the Jewish authorities for 30 pieces of silver (Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18)
- Different accounts of his death in Matt. 27; Acts 1

Lazarus

- 1. Brother of Mary and Martha who lived in Bethany and hosted Jesus several times (Luke 10; John 12). Raised from the dead by Jesus following confessions of faith by his sisters (John 11).
- 2. Poor beggar in a parable who is raised to heaven while the miserly rich man is sent to Hell (Luke 16)

Mary Magdalene: member of the inner circle of Jesus' followers, present at the Crucifixion and Resurrection (details vary between the Gospels; see Matt. 27-28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20

Mary, mother of Jesus: Present at a few important scenes, such as the wedding at Cana (John 2) and the Crucifixion (John 19:25-27). Most detailed biography given in Luke 1-2

- Originally, a Pharisaic Jew who persecuted the earliest Christians (Gal. 1; Phil. 3; see also Acts 7-9)
- According to Acts (where he is also named Saul), he becomes an advocate of faith in Christ following an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus (Acts 9, 22, 26).
- As a missionary, founded churches composed mainly of Gentile believers throughout the eastern Mediterranean (Acts 7-28)
- A Roman citizen: tradition holds that he was martyred in Rome after appealing his condemnation by Jewish authorities to the emperor (Acts 21-28).

Peter (also known as Simeon [Simon] and Cephas ["rock"])

- One of the most prominent of Jesus' disciples
- Famous for affirming that Jesus was the messiah of Israel, and assigned a position of future leadership (Matt. 16:16-23)
- Sometimes presented unfavorably, as when he denies Jesus three times before the crucifixion (Matt. 26:69-75 / Mark 14: 66-72 / Luke 22:54-62 / John 18:25-27)
- Leader of the early Jerusalem church
- Made public missionary speeches to the Jews (Acts 2-4) Initiated the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10)
- One of the leaders at the Jerusalem meeting who formulated a policy for proselytizing among Gentiles (Acts 15)

Peter (continued)

- Traditional author of 1 and 2 Peter, though many scholars doubt this attribution because the Greek is more elevated than would be expected from a Galilean fisherman and the conflicts he discusses are more characteristic of those in the later church
- Regarded as the first pope by Catholics

Pilate: Roman-appointed governor of Judea, represented as brutal in Josephus and even in the New Testament (see Luke 13: 1), but otherwise in the New Testament depicted as only reluctantly agreeing with the Jews' demand to execute Jesus

Stephen: first Christian martyr (after Jesus), killed by a mob in Jerusalem (Acts 7)

Thomas: an apostle, present in all four gospels but prominent only in John, where he challenges the resurrected Jesus to provide proof of his physical presence (John 20:24-29)

- · Son of a gentile father and Jewish mother; circumcised by Paul to appease Jewish Christians (Acts 16:3)
- A companion to Paul on his missionary travels and the traditional recipient of the epistles to Timothy (Acts 16–20; 1 & 2 Tim.)

Titus: Paul's Gentile missionary companion (see 2 Cor. 7-8;

PAUL'S AUTHENTIC LETTERS

The following Letters are listed in chronological order (though dates are uncertain)

1 Thessalonians

- Because Paul praises the recipients for having "turned to God from idols" (1:9) and makes no explicit references to the Bible, it seems likely that the congregation was composed entirely of Gentiles (unlike other churches, where it was more likely that members were drawn from among Jews and Gentiles)
- Some scholars doubt that Paul wrote the harsh indictment of the Jews in 2:14-16, which seems out of place both in this letter and in light of Paul's other letters.
- As evidence of the community's intense expecta tion of the end-times, they appear concerned that some members have died before Jesus returned, and Paul therefore reassures them with a vivid description of the parousia (4:14-17).

Philippians (This letter may actually have been written later in Paul's career)

- The abrupt transition between 3:1 and 3:2, when Paul's rhetoric becomes far more hostile, may suggest that two letters were joined in one
- One of the few instances in which Paul provides autobiographical information, in 3:4-6
- Christ hymn in 2:6-11 is likely pre-Pauline, and incorporated (and possibly edited) by Paul into his letter. Paul's opponents in 3:2 are likely to have been "Judaizers" (see Glossary), who, unlike Paul, did not

expect Gentiles to observe Jewish law.

In this letter, Paul is at his most diplomatic, asking freedom for a runaway Christian slave, Onesimus, from his owner, Philemon (who seems to have had good reason to resent the request).

- Paul harshly warns the Galatians against observing Jewish law, which itinerant Judaizing missionaries demanded
- The competing missionaries (who Paul calls "false believers," in 2:4) have the backing of some members of the church in Jerusalem (2:12), which serves as evidence of the widespread hostility many other followers of Jesus felt toward Paul because of his law-free mission.
- Paul is angered over Peter's withdrawal from eating with Gentiles. The visiting missionaries, who convinced Peter that, as a Jew, he ought to be more scrupulous in observing Jewish dietary laws, undermined Paul's belief in the equality of all believers—Jews and Gentiles alike—within the Christian community and introduced divisions into the church (see Gal. 3:28-29).
- Paul's failure to note that he convinced Peter may suggest that Paul lost the argument
- The meeting Paul says he attended in Jerusalem is also parrated in Acts 15, with some differences Paul provides helpful autobiographical information
- Paul's failure to mention that he spent time as a missionary to the Jews before becoming a missionary to the Gentiles (1:15-2:1) differs from the evidence in Acts (see Acts 13-14; 17-18; see also 1 Cor. 9:20).

in 1:11-24

Because strong personal conflicts appear to have divided the church, Paul's focus is on unity (see 3; 12).

1 Corinthians (continued)

- . The letter contains Paul's advice on many issues of morality, sexual ethics, participation in pagan religious rituals, management of conflict, and the role of women, probably in response to prior requests for his guidance.
- Paul's ethical views on topics such as slavery and abstinence are all informed by his expectation of an imminent end (see 7:1-40).
- Paul's lengthy discussion of the fate of the dead contains many affinities with contemporary Jewish beliefs about bodily resurrection, which many Greek philosophers rejected in favor of a belief that only the soul was resurrected (15).

- Likely composed of parts of other letters. Scholars note three main sections: 1-7; 8-9; 10-13.
- Paul's opponents in 10-13 are likely to have been Judaizers. In his opposition to their attempts to convince Gentile believers to observe lewish law Paul produces one of his harshest polemics against Judaism, arguing that only those who believe in Christ are able to understand the promises of the Bible, which remain hidden to unbelieving Israel (see also 3:4-4:6).
- Paul hoped that the contributions he collected from members of the mostly Gentile churches he founded would be accepted by the leaders in Jerusalem as a symbol of unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians (8-9; see also 1 Cor. 16). However, his concern that it would not be accepted (see Rom. 15: 25-31) and the absence of any mention of the collection in Acts' heroic portrait of Paul suggests that it was refused, possibly because of hostility to Paul and his law-free mission. This possibility receives further support in the strong opposition Paul frequently faced from other Christians, who suspected that he was undermining the observance of Jewish law by all believers (see also Acts 21:21).

- Widely considered Paul's last and most theologically
- Contains Paul's fullest treatment of his idea of justification by faith, in which faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus is alone sufficient for salvation (see 10:9). Paul says Jews and Gentiles alike are burdened by sin that is only overcome through faith.
- Paul's passionate and anguished discussion of the fate of non-believing Jews in 9-11 reveals a profoundly troubling issue in the early Church: the widespread reluctance of most Jews to accept Christian preaching about Jesus, which might lead some Christians to worry that if God's original choice of Israel as his chosen people could be canceled because of the Jews' failure to heed the Christian message, then God's promises to the Christians might also be untrustworthy.
- Disagreement and conflict between Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome threatened Church unity, and Paul advocates toleration of difference, especially of Jews ("the weak" in 15:1) who observe Jewish law.
- Paul's attitude toward the ruling authorities (13:1–7) is generally positive, though his expectation of an imminent end means that his advice may be based largely on expedience. (For other examples of this conservative attitude toward ruling authorities, see 1 Pet. 2:13-14; 1 Tim. 2:1-2.)

SOURCES

All of these sources are based on generally accepted scholarly hypotheses, unless otherwise indicated.

John's Prologue: an apparently self-contained poetic or hymnic source, which possibly existed independently and was later joined to John's gospel (1:1-18)

TOPICS IN MODERN BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

- Passion source: a possible early narrative of Jesus' suffering and death used in Matt. 26-27 / Mark 14-15 / Luke 22-23 / John 18-19
- Sayings source: the source of Jesus' speeches in John, though there is a dispute among scholars over whether this was a discrete, fixed source or just a collection of individual sayings (John 13–17)
- Signs source: the source of the seven miracle stories in the first half of John: see John 20:30-31: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples.
- Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke, which share many stories and often use nearly identical language (unlike John, which has significant dif-ferences in chronology and theology); from the Greek for "seen together," because when arranged in parallel columns the similarities can be seen

 Synoptic problem: Matthew, Mark, and Luke have both many similarities and
- significant differences, raising questions about the relationship between the three gospels. The lengthy verbatim passages suggest a common, written
- Two-source hypothesis (sometimes called the "four-source hypothesis") The attempt to solve the synoptic problem by hypothesizing that Mark, or an earlier form of Mark, and Q (the "two sources") were the earlier sources used by Matthew and Luke, which are both longer and appear to have supplemented their sources with their own unique material.



Mark: the earliest Synoptic Gospel and a source (whether in the present or an earlier form) for much of Matthew and Luke; in these three gospels, source material is presented in a similar order.

Proto-Matthew (M) and Proto-Luke (L): the material that was incorporated into Matthew and Mark, respectively, along with Mark and Q.

Q (for "Quelle," German for "source"): a reconstructed source, containing material present in Matthew and Luke but missing in Mark; dated a few decades after Jesus; almost entirely comprised of sayings with little narrative content (hence, no Passion or Crucifixion) and filled with eschatological arnings and parables; includes passages such as the temptations of the Devil, the Beatitudes, and warnings of the imminent end.

UTHORSHIP OF THE PAULINE LETTERS

Letters most scholars believe were written by Paul

The topics of these letters are those debated in the mid-first century CE, when Paul was active as a missionary. The topics include: the relationship between Christian and non-Christian Jews; the importance of Jewish law; establishing church order at a time when formal offices did not yet exist, and an intense expectation of an imminent end.

- Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians
- Philippians
 - 1 Thessalonians Philemon
- Galatians

Letters scholars believe Paul may have authored These letters contain some similarities to the authentic letters, but also significant differences in both content and style.

- **Ephesians**
- Colossians

Letters most scholars believe were unlikely to have been written by Paul The topics of the letters reflect late 1st and early 2nd c. CE concerns, a few decades after Paul's death. The letters include almost no interest in the relationship between Christian and non-Christian Jews, and no evidence for continuing disputes over the importance of Jewish law. Jerusalem is no longer referred to as the center of the Church, which it was before 70 CE and the Jewish war against Rome. The letters do reveal an interest in establishing conventional social norms, especially regarding gender roles, and a concern for how Christians' behavior appears to outsiders. The vocabulary and meaning of important theological terms also differs significantly from the vocabulary in

- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus

TOPICS IN MODERN BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP (continued)

"HISTORICAL JESUS" STUDIES

There exists hardly any non-Christian information about Jesus, beyond a brief (possibly altered) notice in Josephus

Sources (of varying quality)

- New Testament documents (Gospels; small sections in Acts and Paul, such as 1 Cor. 11; 15)
- · Apocryphal gospels (Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Thomas)

Scholarly criteria for evaluating information about Jesus

- Criterion of dissimilarity: Evidence that contradicts later Christian teachings is more likely to be historical. (Example: Jesus endorses observance of Jewish law in Matt. 5:17 despite the later rejection of Jewish law by most Christians.)
- Criterion of similarity: Evidence that appears to fit within the world of 1st c. CE Palestinian Judaism is more likely to be historical. (Example: Jesus' denunciations of "the Jews" in John seem unlikely for one who was himself a Jew. More likely are passages that affirm Jesus' connections with Judaism, such as John 4:22: "...salvation is from the Jews.")
- Multiple attestations: Evidence that appears numerous times is more likely to be historical. (Example: The specific rituals of bread and wine at the Lord's Supper are found in the gospels and Paul's writings; see Matt. 26 / Mark 14 / Luke 22: 1 Cor. 11.)
- Early or late: Evidence that appears to be from an earlier rather than a later date is more likely to be historical. (Example in John: Jesus appears less human and more divine than in the synoptic Gospels. Jesus is unemotional and in complete control of all situations, and various divine epithets are applied to him. It seems likely that John's Jesus emerged after a period of theological speculation necessary to elevate Jesus' status above that of a regular human.)
- Embarrassment: Evidence that might embarrass later Christians is more likely to be historical. (Example: Both Jesus and Paul claim that the world would end in their lifetimes or those of their followers; see 1 Thess. 4:17; Matt. 16:28 / Mark 9:1 / Luke 9:27.)

IMPORTANT PASSAGES

GOSPELS

Birth of Jesus (Matt. 1 / Luke 2)

Preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. 3 / Mark 1 / Luke 3 / John 1)

Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) / Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6)

Dispute over plucking grain on the Sabbath (Matt. 12 / Mark 2 / Luke 6)

Jesus denounces the Galilean cities that refused him (Matt. 11 / Luke 10)

Feeding the five thousand (Matt. 14 / Mark 6 / Luke 9 / John 6)

Peter's confession of Jesus (Matt. 16 / Mark 8 / Luke 9 / John 6)

The Transfiguration (Matt. 17 / Mark 9 / Luke 9)

Jesus goes to Jerusalem (Matt. 19 / Mark 10 / Luke 9 / John 2)

Raising of Lazarus (John 11)

Jesus overturns the tables in the Temple courts (Matt. 21 / Mark 11 / Luke 19 / John 2)

Jesus denounces the Pharisees and scribes (Matt. 23 / Mark 12 / Luke 20)

Judas betrays Jesus (Matt. 26 / Mark 14 / Luke 22)

The Last Supper (Matt. 26 / Mark 14 / Luke 22; also, 1 Cor. 11)

The Crucifixion (Matt. 27 / Mark 15 / Luke 23 / John 19)

Appearances following the Resurrection (Matt. 28 / Luke 24 / John 20–21): see also 1 Cor. 15

"New command" of love (John 13; see also 1 John 2; 2 John)

ACTS

Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and believers speaking in tongues (Acts 2)

Paul / Saul as persecutor of Christians (Acts 7–8) Appearance of Jesus to Paul (Acts 9, 22, 26)

Conversion of Cornelius the centurion (Acts 10)

Debate in Jerusalem over admission of Gentiles (Acts 15) Paul speaks in the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17)

PAULINE LETTERS

The equality of Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 2–3)

Abraham as the father of all who believe (Rom. 4; see also Gal. 3)

On lack of response by the Jews (Rom. 9-11)

On submission to worldly authorities (Rom. 13)

Paul defends his missionary activity (1 Cor. 9)

On faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13)

Description of a mystical ascension to heaven (2 Cor. 12)
Paul's former persecution of Christians (Gal. 1; see also Phil. 3)

Conflict with Peter over food laws (Gal. 2)

laws (Gal. 2)
"There is no longer slave or

All previous gains are worthless compared to knowing Christ (Phil. 3)

free..." (Gal. 3)

Christ the image of the invisible God (Col. 1)

Imminent return of Jesus (1 Thess. 4–5)

OTHER DOCUMENTS

Biblical models of faith

There is no faith apart from works (James 2)

The difficulties in understanding Paul (2 Pet. 3)

The fallen whore of Babylon (Rev. 17)

GLOSSARY

apostle (from the Greek for "send"): an early Christian appointed to spread the faith; the word is typically associated with one of Jesus' closest followers (see Matt. 10:2 / Luke 6:13) though Paul applies it to himself as well; see Gal 1:1.

beatitudes (from the Latin for "blessings"): the term applied to the collection of Jesus' nine sayings of consolation and promises of justice delivered in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3–11, beginning with "Blessed are the..." (See also Luke 6:20f.)

Dead Sea Scrolls: the collection of Jewish religious texts written between the 2nd c. BCE and the 1st c. CE, providing evidence for a sectarian form of Judaism contemporary with the New Testament. Members were likely former priests who rejected the Temple and Jerusalem as impure and fled to the desert after losing their positions following the Maccabean victory over Antiochus IV, when illegitimate priests were appointed in their stead. Texts include both the community's own literature (sectarian texts covering subjects such as initiation into the group, religious law, prayer, and the end-time) and biblical and non-biblical texts previously known from other sources.

Gentile: one who is not a Jew

Gnosticism (from the Greek for "knowledge"): a modern designation for religious systems that connected knowledge (often secret) with salvation and freedom from a fallen and evil world. Such systems frequently included mythological accounts of creation and the appearance of evil, and a dualistic theology of two divine powers, usually a good god and a bad god. (The latter was sometimes even associated with the God of the Hebrew Bible.) Some Gnostics were Christian (and declared heretical by the Orthodox Christians), even though Gnosticism is not explicitly a Christian term. (Examples: the Gospel of Thomas; works by the second century gnostics such as Marcion and Valentinus).

Hell / Gehenna / Hades: the abode of the dead; often connected with punishment and suffering. Also known as "gehenna," (from Hebrew for "gei hinnom," or "Valley of Hinnom," a cult site outside Jerusalem thought to be the site of child sacrifice) (see Matt. 5:22: 10:28: 23:15. 33: James 3:6).

Josephus: a 1st c. CE historian who fought in the Jewish war against Rome in 66–70 and, though taken captive, was saved by the emperor and wrote the only full-length chronicle of the conflict, *The Jewish War*. He also wrote three other works: *The Jewish Antiquities*, *Against Apion*, and his autobiography. The *Antiquities* contains a very brief mention of Jesus, along with slightly longer accounts of John the Baptist and James.

Judaizer: a Christian missionary who was most likely born a Jew and expected Gentiles who chose to follow Jesus to observe Jewish laws, such as those for circumcision, holidays, and the preparation of food (see Gal. 2; Acts 15:1). Judaizers were frequent opponents of Paul.

kerygma (from the Greek for "proclamation"): the Christian missionary message preached by Jesus' followers

law: in discussions of the New Testament, this term usually refers to the Jewish laws derived from the Bible. Therefore, a "law-free mission" means missionary activity among Gentiles without the demand that they observe Jewish law.

messiah (from the Hebrew for "anointed"; in Greek, translated "Christos"): the word "messiah" originally designated a Jewish leader anointed with oil as a sign of legitimacy, especially descendants of King David. Later, the word became connected with hopes for a new ruler of Israel. Messianic expectations in the late Second Temple Period were diverse. For example, some Jews expected a military ruler, while others awaited a prophet or semi-divine messenger of God.

Mishnah & Tolmud: the Mishnah is the earliest Rabbinic document (edited in the 3rd c. CE), and the Talmud (two editions, edited in the 5th c. and the 6th c.; also known as the Gemara) is, formally, a commentary on the Mishnah. Both contain diverse Rabbinic traditions on topics such as biblical interpretation, law, philosophy, history, and folklore. These works were composed during the formative years of early Christianity and provide evidence for contemporary developments in Judaisva.

Nag Hammadi: a collection of previously unknown Christian documents discovered in the Egyptian desert in 1945. Most were gnostic texts, the Gospel of Thomas being the most important.

orthodoxy (from the Greek for "right belief"): a term used in order to support a group's claim that they alone correctly understand the divine revelation and legitimately transmitted (in this case, Christian) doctrine from the earliest period. It was used by the group of Christians who would eventually emerge as the dominant form of Christianity as a way of describing themselves.

Parousia (from the Greek for "presence"): the occasion of Jesus' expected return

Passion (from the Greek for "suffering"): the term for the narrative of Jesus' trial
and execution

Pharisees (possibly from the Hebrew for "separatists"): pious Jewish scribes in the Second Temple period dedicated to close study of the biblical text, especially in light of "oral law" (traditions of biblical interpretations) (see Mark 7:3). The Pharisees were forerunners of the Rabbis. The controversies between the Pharisees and Jesus, rather than reflecting great differences in their religious and social views, actually suggest significant similarities between the two sides. These types of conflicts often occur between groups that have many things in common and thus clash over the small issues that separate them (see Matt. 23).

Postorals Epistles: three letters attributed to Paul—1 and 2 Timothy, and Titusaddressing pastoral issues such as proper leadership and ethical responsibilities

rabbi (from the Hebrew for "my master"): a quasi-formal designation, after 70 CE, for a Jew well-versed in biblical interpretation. The Rabbis, who have their roots in the religious practices of the Pharisees, originally emerged as a small movement of religious scribes and teachers, especially in northern Israel (the region of the Galilee). Jesus is also addressed as "Rabbi" (see Matt. 26:49; Mark 9:5; John 1:38).

Sadducees: an elite Jewish group closely associated with the Temple and positions of leadership in the Second Temple Period. The Sadducees accepted only the Torah as authoritative and rejected the interpretations of the Pharisees.

Sanhedrin: a council of Jewish leaders (usually empowered by Rome) to make legal and administrative decisions

Sicarii (from the Latin for "dagger"): Jews who assassinated social and political leaders suspected of collaboration with Rome. Judging by his name, Judas Iscariot may be related to this group.

 ${\color{red} \textbf{Zealots:}} \ \textbf{fiercely nationalistic and religious Jews who violently resisted Roman rule}$

TIMELINE

Mid 13th c. BCE: suggested date for the Exodus

1200-1020: period of the Judges

1020-1000: rule of King Saul

1000–960: rule of King David

960–922: rule of King Solomon (son of David)

922–722: divided kingdom (north

and south ruled by separate kings)

722: Assyrians conquer northern kingdom; loss of the 10 northern tribes

Late 7th c. BCE: Josiah's religious

598, 586: Two Babylonian invasions under Nebuchadnezzar result in the conquest of the southern kingdom and the exile of the leite of the Jewish society to Babylonia; the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed in 586

538-333: the Persian period

538: The defeat of the Babylonians by the Persian king Cyrus II; some from the exilic community return to the southern kingdom

520–515: The Jerusalem Temple is rebuilt

5th c.: Ezra and Nehemiah come to Judah from Babylonia and inaugurate religious and political reform

333–323: Alexander the Great of Macedonia conquers much of the ancient Near East, beginning the Hellenistic period, which leads to the widespread diffusion of Greek culture

301: Following Alexander's death and the wars of succession, Alexander's general Ptolemy receives Judah

198: Judah passes into control of the Seleucids under Antiochus III

175: Antiochus IV takes over rule in Judah

167–164: The Jews successfully revolt against Antiochus IV, led by the Maccabees (of the family of the Hasmoneans); the Temple is rededicated after idolatrous profanation (likely impure sacrifices on the altar)

63 BCE: Romans under Pompey conquer Judah; the period of Jewish self-rule ends

27 BCE-14 CE: rule of Octavian (Augustus), first Roman emperor; the end of the Roman Republic

4 BCE: suggested birth date of Jesus

14 CE-37 CE: rule of Emperor Tiberius

ca. 30 CE: suggested date of Jesus' crucifixion

37–41 CE: rule of Emperor Caligula **41–54 CE**: rule of Emperor Claudius

c. 50-60 CE: Paul's letters written

54-68 CE: rule of Emperor Nero

Early 60s CE: Paul probably execut-

60–70 CE: suggested date for Gospel of Mark

ed in Rome

69-79 CE: rule of Emperor Vespasian

70 CE: destruction of Jerusalem Temple in war against Rome

79-81 CE: rule of Emperor Titus

c. 80–90 CE: suggested date for Gospels of Matthew and Luke

81-96 CE: rule of Emperor Domitian

c. 90–100: suggested date for Gospel of John

Writer: Adam Gregerman Design: Dan O. Williams Series Editor: Sarah Friedberg