

# [ACTS] OLDT 5020: Introduction to the Old Testament

ACTS - Spring 2025 - Fr Eugen Pentiu

- [OLDT 5020: Video Lectures](#)
  - [Lecture 1: Two Covenants, One Bible](#)
  - [Lecture 2: Revelation and Inspiration](#)
  - [Lecture 3: Text of the Old Testament](#)
  - [Lecture 4: The Canon](#)
  - [Lecture 5: Scripture and Tradition](#)
  - [Lecture 6: Biblical History](#)
  - [Lecture 7a: Pentateuch - Documentary Hypothesis](#)
  - [Lecture 7b: Pentateuch Selected Texts](#)
  - [Lecture 8a: Deuteronomistic History - Introduction to the Historical Books](#)
  - [Lecture 8b: Deuteronomistic History - Selected Texts](#)
  - [Lecture 9a: The Latter Prophets](#)
  - [Lecture 9b: The Latter Prophets](#)
  - [Lecture 9c: The Latter Prophets](#)
  - [Lecture 10a: The Writings](#)
  - [Lecture 10b: The Writings](#)
  - [Lecture 10c: The Writings](#)
- [OLDT 5020: Discussion Posts](#)

# OLDT 5020: Video Lectures

Lectures by Professor Eugen Pentiu

# Lecture 1: Two Covenants, One Bible

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/mdq998o25jm2iouupqkpl/Video-Lecture-1-Two-Covenants-One-Bible.mp4?rlkey=fv5axrxg30f766jm0mi3uqf47&dl=1>

## What is the Hebrew Bible?

- Collection of writings written and edited by members of Hebrew/Jewish community between 1250 BC (time of Moses) and the Christian era
- Contains prose, poetry and prophetic (elevated prose) genres
- Mostly written in Hebrew, some parts in Aramaic
- "The Old Testament" is a Christian term designating the first scriptural collection as opposed to the New Testament

## One Bible, Two Covenants

- "The Church unites in one volume the Law and the Prophets with the writings of the evangelists and apostles, from which she drinks in her faith" - Tertullian
- The Hebrew Bible is unique because it belongs to two distinct religious systems: Judaism and Christianity
- The Old and New Testament Scriptures are held in unity by the unique Jesus-event
- Unity in diversity due to the continuities and discontinuities between the two testaments

## Early Usage of Hebrew Scripture

- Jesus-Event (His incarnation, upbringing, ministry, death and resurrection)
- Kerygma: Proclamation of the Gospel of Salvation
- Inscripturation (Mark, Matthew, Luke, John)
- Use of Hebrew Scriptures in Greek Translation (Septuagint) as "proof" of Jesus' Messiahship (Disciples of Emmaus, St Justin the Martyr)
- Use of the Old Testament in defining dogmas (Christology, Trinitarian Theology, Mariology, etc.)
- Use of the Old Testament Liturgically (e.g. Psalms)

## Unity in Diversity: Continuities and Discontinuities

## Continuities

- Monotheism (One God)
- Creatio ex nihilo ("creation out of nothing")
  - From beginning to the end of OT (e.g. Genesis 1, 2 Maccabees 7)
- Centrality of humanity within God's creation
- Bodily resurrection
  - Unique to ANE
  - Daniel 12
  - Christ raises

## Discontinuities

These should be taken in a relative way

- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Logos Incarnate
- Trinity
- Disregard of the Law
  - Starting with the Apostolic Council

## Early Attitudes toward the Old Testament

- Rejection and Underestimation: Marcionites, Gnostics, Manichaeans
  - God of the Old Testament is the "lesser" God of the Jews and the creation of the world
  - Old Testament proclaims violence and should be rejected
- Overestimation: Judaizers (Jewish Christians), Ebionites, Pelagians
  - Imposing Circumcision (and the whole Jewish Law) to Gentiles embracing Christianity
- Supersessionism
  - The middle way of holding the two Testaments in "one volume" as the early Christian Church in her wisdom considered appropriate
  - Marcionite tendencies that underestimate the relevance of the OT for Christians
    - "OT is a piece of history with no substance, served the purpose to pre-announce the events of the NT and to offer the background for where Christ would be born, live and die" - disguised Marcionism
    - "If the OT has value, it lies exclusively with the messianic prophecies"
      - This reduces the complex relationship between OT and NT as a hermeneutical scheme: "Prophecy-Fulfillment"

## The Old Testament's Relevance to Christians Today

### Theology

- Creatio ex nihilo (Genesis 1:1, 2 Macc 7:28)
- Humanity is created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27)

- Unlike the other ANE stories of creation of mankind to be subject to the gods, here humanity is created as a "god" itself (e.g. having dominion) and being a representative of the Highest
- Revelation of God's Personal Name (YHWH) (Exodus 3)
  - Revealing your name in ancient times meant vulnerability; other ANE gods would never reveal their real name to their believers
- Prophetic Monotheism (Isaiah 45:5, Exodus 20:3)
  - "I am the Lord, and there is no other god." (Isaiah 45:5)

## Liturgy and Spirituality

- Psalter
  - Reciting the psalter is central to our Liturgical mechanism
- Old Testament Lectionary
- Old Testament themes in hymnography and iconography

## Ethics

- The Decalogue (Exod 20:1-17)
- The Shema (Deut 6:4-9)
- "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18)
- Steadfast love and knowledge of God are better than all sacrifices (Hosea 6:6)

## Messianism

- "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14 NRS)
  - The etymology of the Hebrew word for "young woman" is derived from a verb meaning "to be strong" or another verb "to hide, conceal"
  - The New Testament supports this etymology in calling Mary "betrothed" (hence, concealed, veiled) at the time of Jesus' conception
  - If this etymology is correct, then the Septuagint "virgin" does not contradict, but complements it with more information... the "betrothed" one was a "virgin"
  - The Hebrew and Septuagint are complementary readings

# Lecture 2: Revelation and Inspiration

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## Inspiration

### Definition

### Revelation

- Revelation is the self-disclosure of God through various means
- It can be natural (e.g. through the cosmic order)
  - "The Creation proclaims the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1)
- It can be supernatural (in Scripture and Tradition through Inspiration)

### Notion of Inspiration

- The Church considers the books of the Bible **sacred** and **canonical**. Having been written under the **inspiration** of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author.
- The word "inspiration" in general comes from the act of Creation of humanity when God "breathed" into humanity's nostrils the "breath of life" or the "living breath." He "**inspired**"
- Supernatural inspiration remains a mystery; a divine-human process

### New Testament Definition

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture is God-breathed (inspired by God) and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."
  - "all Scripture" → refers to the Jewish Scriptures
  - "God-breathed" → Scriptures are inspired by God, or God breathes through the Scriptures and also through those who "muse day and night over" them (Ps 1:3)

- 2 Peter 1:19-21: "We have the prophetic word made more sure... First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
  - "prophetic word" → Law, Prophets, Writings (TaNaKh) all three divisions of Jewish Scripture
  - "men moved by the Holy Spirit" → sacred writers were "carried" by the Holy Spirit during the writing process

## Judaism Definition

- Old Testament
  - Old Testament does not have a clear teaching on the inspiration of Scripture
  - Some books record God telling the author to write (Exodus 17:14, Isaiah 30:8, Jeremiah 30:2, 36:2, Habakkuk 2:2)
  - Isaiah calls his prophecy "the book of the Lord" (Isaiah 34:16)
  - The belief that the origin of the Scripture's books is Divine Inspiration is reflected in later terminology (1 Maccabees 12:9 - "sacred books")
  - In 2 Kings 23, King Josiah adopted the Scripture as "the book of the covenant" - indicating that it is inspired by God, and later on in Nehemiah 8, Ezra read to the people from "the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded to Israel."
- Graeco-Roman Definition
  - Doctrine of divine origin of sacred books continued into the Graeco-Roman times
  - Philo of Alexandria
    - Philo adopted the Greek word for "inspire" to express the divine origin of Scripture
    - Quis rerum 259
  - Josephus Flavius
    - Prophets "who have learned [the accounts of things] from God himself by inspiration"
    - Refers to 5 Books of Moses, 13 Books of Prophets, 4 Books of Hymns
      - He uses the 22 books to symbolically link them to the 22 Hebrew characters
    - Against Apion (1:37-40)
- Babylonian Talmud
  - Rabbis interpreted Numbers 15:31 ("Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off") to apply to someone who "maintains that the Torah is not from heaven" (b.Sanh. 99a)
  - The "heavenly" Torah was revealed to Moses by "dictation" at Mt Sinai

## Church Fathers

- Clement of Alexandria: "sacred writings" written by "divine authors"
- Origen: "sacred book" derived "from inspiration"
- Theophilus of Antioch: "holy Scriptures" whose authors are considered "bearers of the spirit"

- Irenaeus of Lyons: Scriptures are perfect because they have been given by the word of God and the Spirit
- Gregory of Nazianzus: the care of the Spirit is seen even in the shortest scriptural texts

## Formulae for Inspiration

### Dictation

- Justin Martyr: "Do not think that the prophecies were spoken by the inspired prophets of their own accord, but by the word of God that prompts them"
- Augustine
- Jerome
- Council of Trent: "The truth and rule are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions which have come down to us, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted as it were from hand to hand."
- Reformers: Verbal inspiration; God is the author of the Bible
- John Calvin: The Scriptures were "dictated" to human authors who were simple "scribes"

### "God, the Author"

- Manicheans
- Augustine: "God, the author of both Testaments"
- Ambrose: unity of OT and NT and one author of knowledge
- Decree of the Jacobites (15th Century): links God as author with inspiration - but not literary authorship to him

### Divine Condescension

- Origen: "Accommodation"
- John Chrysostom: "Condescension" - the incarnation of the Word of God, the Logos, is used as an analogy to explain inspiration. Scriptures are written by human authors who occasionally expressed their thoughts in metaphors. Writers are called "co-writers" along with God, the primary author
- The Biblical author hears the murmurs of the Lord (as Elijah did in 1 Kings 19:11-12) and interprets them and writes them
  - 1 Kings 19:11-12 - "Then He said, "Go out, and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, *but* the Lord *was* not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the Lord *was* not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."

## Conclusion

- Inspiration is a synergic process, a divine-human reality through which God the Holy Spirit descends at the level of understanding of the human author. God prepares the human author to become his co-author
- The influence of divine inspiration upon the sacred writer begins with the origin of his life (Jeremiah 1:5)
- Divine Inspiration influences all faculties of the writer: speculative intellect (what to communicate) and practical intellect (how to communicate it)
- From the time of Origen, the sacred writer was moved by God to write, but write on his own free decision. He chose and selected words, utilized images, proposed analogies, but all done with inspiration
- It is not just the ideas of the Scripture that are inspired (under God's direction) but the words themselves as well (without dictation)

# Lecture 3: Text of the Old Testament

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## Text of the Old Testament

### Language of the Old Testament

- Biblical Hebrew Language
  - The Hebrew Bible is the result of a multiple-century process of editing, collecting, copying, translating texts
  - Old Testament books are mostly in Hebrew (some small parts in Aramaic)
  - Hebrew and Aramaic are in the NW group of Semitic languages
  - Exodus 15 (Moses' song) is considered one of the oldest passages, going back to the time of Moses
  - Older texts of OT (e.g. Exodus 15) are written and copied in Paleo-Hebrew script which is later replaced by Aramaic [Square] Script
  - For centuries, Hebrew Scripture was transmitted only consonantically
    - DBR could be DABAR (word) or DEBER (plague)
  - Vowels were inserted by Masoretes (Jewish Scholars ca. 6th Century AD)

There are no autographs (original texts). Only later copies.

### Hebrew Text

- Pre-Masoretic Texts (Dead Sea Scrolls)
  - 2nd Century BC - 70 AD
  - Complete Scroll of Isaiah (1QIsa) - supports the Masoretic Text with some variations; dates back to 100 BC
  - The Habakkuk Commentary (1QpHab) - commentary on Habakkuk 1-2; dates back to 40 BC
- Masoretic Text (MT)
  - One of the most important textual witnesses
  - Codex Aleppo (10th Century AD) is the oldest Masoretic manuscript; only has 60% of the Old Testament

- Codex Leningradiensis (1008 AD); oldest complete Masoretic Text
- Second Rabbinic Bible of Jacob ben Chayyim (1525 AD): first printed edition of the MT
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) (1967-1977): critical edition of the Masoretic Text, based on Codex Leningradiensis

## The Greek Text

- Septuagint (LXX)
  - Oldest large-scale translation of a Semitic corpus of sacred texts into an Indo-European language
  - First written translation of the Jewish Bible
  - The appropriation of the Septuagint was done gradually, along with the proclamation of the gospel outside of Palestine and the outnumbering of Jews by Gentiles in the apostolic Church. It was not the Scripture that Jesus and His immediate disciples were using in their daily life
  - Septuagint comes from Latin Septuaginta meaning "seventy" - "translation by the seventy men"
  - Letter of Aristeas
    - Oldest source of information on the making of the Septuagint (Late 2nd Century BC); Preserved by Josephus
    - Demetrius Phalereus, director of the Library at Alexandria, informed King Ptolemy II Philadelphus that the Jewish Law (Torah/Pentateuch) was worthy of a place in the library. A delegation (including Aristeas) was sent to the high priest Eleazer in Jerusalem with the request that he provide learned people for the translation of the Torah. Eleazer sends 72 people to Alexandria, and they were brought to the island of Pharos where they translated the Law to Greek in 72 days. The complete translation was read to the Jewish people in Alexandria and they loved it. The King ordered production of the translation and the translators were sent back to Jerusalem with gifts
    - Philo of Alexandria added some embellishments to the letter (e.g. that the Jewish translators, working separately, managed to come up with exactly the same literal rendition by divine dictation)
    - Babylonian Talmud compares the 70 translators with the 70 elders who accompany Moses to Mt Sinai who shared with Moses the same "spirit of prophecy"
  - Purpose
    - Practical Purpose: most Jews in Alexandria no longer spoke Hebrew
      - Similar reason the Aramaic translations (targumim) were done in Palestine
    - Academic Purpose: for use by Jewish students and scholars
  - "The" Septuagint is a misnomer. LXX as a Greek translation of the entire OT was done by many translators over 200 years. Only the Torah was rendered by the seventy.
  - The idea that the Septuagint itself was inspired has its origins in Christian sources. Gentile Christians had to rely only on the Greek Version of the Scripture

- In the Church Fathers view, the Septuagint was a "praeparatio evangelica" - an act by God to prepare Gentiles to receive Jesus as the Lord.
  - Justin Martyr was the first one to call "Septuagint" the Greek translation of the entire Jewish Bible
  - Justin Martyr claims he saw the cells where the translators worked separately
  - Augustine writes that the same Spirit who was present in the prophets "was also in the 70 men."
  - Irenaeus says the Septuagint preserved the messianic prophecies much better than other versions
- Use of LXX in the New Testament
  - Closest quotations in John, Luke & Acts, and the Catholic Epistles
  - Commonly accepted that Matthew and Paul quoted extensively from the proto-Theodotion (1st Century. BC) and other revisions of LXX
- Manuscripts
  - Codex Vaticanus (4th Century AD)
  - Codex Sinaiticus (4th Century AD)
  - Codex Alexandrinus (5th Century AD)
- Printed Editions:
  - A. Rahlph's (1935)
  - Gottingen Septuagint (Septuaginta)
- Later Greek Translations
  - The extensive use of Septuagint by Christians to support messianic claims, determined for the Jews to discard it and produce new translations for the synagogue
  - Aquila (ca. 130 AD): a literal rendition
  - Symmachus (ca. 170 AD): literal translation while showing a good control of Greek idioms
  - Theodotion (ca. end of 2nd Century AD): revision of an older Greek Translation (i.e. proto-Theodotion which is LXX) in parallel with Hebrew Text
    - Theodotion version of the Book of Daniel is important because it supplanted that of the LXX in almost all manuscripts

## Other Textual Witnesses

See book *"The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition"*

- Peshitta (Syriac)
- Vulgate (Latin)
- Targumim (Aramaic)

## Origen's Hexapla

See book *"The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition"*

# Lecture 4: The Canon

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/6wbknj7pcnsly8fpglmvz/Video-Lecture-4-The-Canon-of-the-Old-Testament.mp4?rlkey=xnstsvon4ima8czok0d0w3un6&dl=0>

The Canon of the Old Testament

# Lecture 5: Scripture and Tradition

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/3ghbkfdml7srl84a7qzbb/Video-Lecture-5-Scripture-and-Tradition.mp4?rlkey=w6y6wyrobnanzfxyj0rf9rqki&dl=1>

## Scripture and Tradition

St Gregory of Nyssa: "Let the inspired Scriptures be our umpire [arbiter], and the vote of truth will be given those whose dogmas are found to agree with the divine words" - On the Holy Trinity and of the Godhead of the Holy Spirit

Three distinct ways of looking at Scripture and Tradition:

1. Scripture and Tradition - two sources or means of God's revelation. Roman Catholic sources
2. Scripture alone - Protestant view
3. Scripture within Tradition - old patristic view, well anchored in the apostolic tradition and emblematic of Orthodox Tradition

In Orthodoxy, **Tradition** is conceived as the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church. **Scripture** is the Church's pulsating heart, always radiating life and sustenance to the members of the body, challenging it to dialogue with the living Word of God. **Scripture within Tradition**

**Formed and Informed:** The Church has been formed and informed by Scripture since inception. It is the Church's responsibility to interact with the Scripture to keep the Tradition alive. Scripture has an ecclesial character: Jews and Christians preserved their foundational memories and gradually turned them into liturgical acts.

Traditionalist Readers place a text in the traditional context of their community of faith. Historical critics attempt to analyze a text based on original historical, cultural, religious context. Context is unavoidable, and thus assumptions are unavoidable. There is no fully objective interpretation of Scripture.

Two important events triggered the transition from oral proclamation to written documentation

1. Death of the first apostles (James, Peter and Paul) in 60s AD

## 2. Destruction of the Temple in 70AD

In the 1st Century, the apostles and their disciples are the interpreters of Scripture. Beginning in the 2nd Century, the bishops are "presiding in the place of God" (Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr). "Be careful, therefore, O bishop, to study the word, that you may be able to explain everything exactly, and that you may copiously nourish your people with much doctrine, and enlighten them with the light of the Law" (Constitutions 2.2.5)

To defend the faith against various forms of Gnosticism, the Orthodox Church appealed to verifiable episcopal succession. It is the bishops' unique role to teach definitively on behalf of the whole Church. It is the entire Church (people of God) that are the tradents of authentic apostolic tradition.

The Church is the only authentic depositary of the apostolic proclamation, so it is the Church that has both the mandate and authority to interpret the Scripture.

The proclamation of the Word of God in Church generates the Tradition that is the life of the Church in the Spirit.

## Tradition as Life and Journey of the Church

The two words related to Tradition primarily designate the action of handing over or transmitting the Tradition:

- Paradosis - Greek "to hand over"
- Traditio - Latin "to deliver"

Tradition is a fluid reality, easier to describe than to define. A dynamic process that is still unfolding.

Tradition is the rich, never exhausted life of the Triune God experienced by believers within the Church through:

- Sacraments
- Hymns
- Readings
- Interpretations
- Icons
- Ascetism
- Social Involvement

## Phases of Tradition Development

1. Oral Proclamation (kerygma) of the Word of God made flesh
2. Rule of Faith - more normative and better contoured in its content
3. Codification of the Tradition
  - Conciliar statements codified by Justinian in the mid-sixth century AD

- Process of screening, filtering and compartmentalization of the entire Tradition at various times culminating in the 17th Century

**Kerygma**: Proclamation or Tradition of the Apostles.

- Apostolic Tradition is earlier than the New Testament. 1 Cor 15 is the first fresh impression handed over both orally and in written form.
- Papias (end of 1st Century AD): "If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the elders, - what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip or by Thomas or by James or by John or by Matthew or by any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice." - Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius

**Rule of Faith**: Statements of faith or creeds that became the norm of right interpretation of the Scripture

- Born in the 2nd Century disputes with Gnostics and other heretics
- The idea of orthodoxy vs Judaizers came about to set a boundary between orthodoxy and heresy
- 2nd Century represents the parting of the ways - Christianity and Judaism

**Codification of the Tradition**

- Qualifications of Church Tradition cannot be separated
  - Apostolic
  - Patristic or Ecclesiastical
- Transition from apostolic to patristic is from kerygma to dogma - done by necessity of the Church to better articulate the faith of the apostles
  - "Indeed, the teaching of the fathers, and the dogma of the Church, are still the same 'simple message' which has been once delivered and deposited, once for ever, by the apostles..." - Georges Florovsky
- "Not everything within the Church dates from apostolic times. This does not mean that something has been revealed which was 'unknown' to the apostles; nor does it mean that what is of later date is less important and convincing. Everything was given and revealed fully from the beginning. On the day of Pentecost Revelation was completed, and will admit of no further completion till the Day of Judgment and its last fulfillment. Revelation has not been widened, and even knowledge has not increased. The Church knows Christ now no more than it knew Him at the time of the apostles. But it testifies of greater things."

**Scripture-Tradition Relationship**

- Textbook-Handout Analogy
  - Scripture is like a textbook, with Tradition being a set of explanatory handouts.

- Scripture (and especially the Old Testament) is an untamable textbook. Holy Tradition in all its avatars - conciliar statements, writings of the Church Fathers, liturgy, iconography, ascetic teaching, etc. functions as its guiding handouts.
- Handouts summarize and explain the salient points of a textbook. The handouts will never be able to exhaustively elucidate all angles of scriptural trove or provide an all-encompassing summary. The handouts depend on a textbook.
- Centrality of Scripture within Tradition

# Lecture 6: Biblical History

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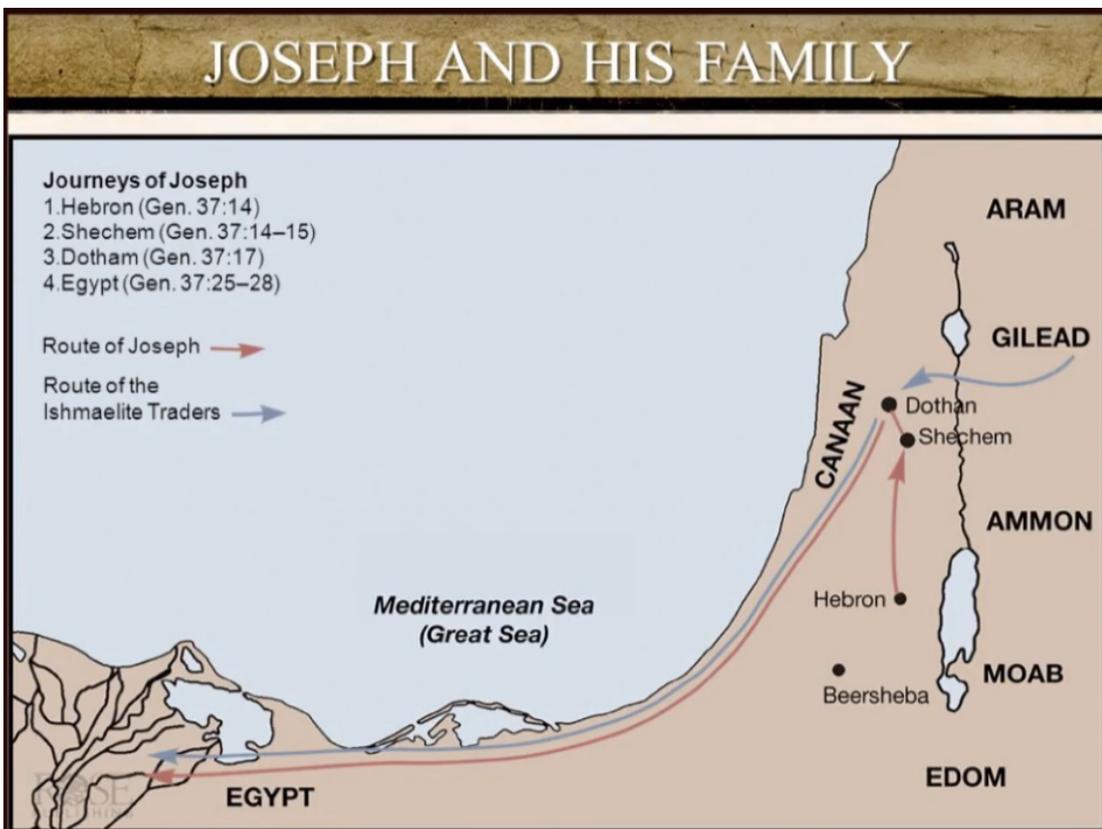
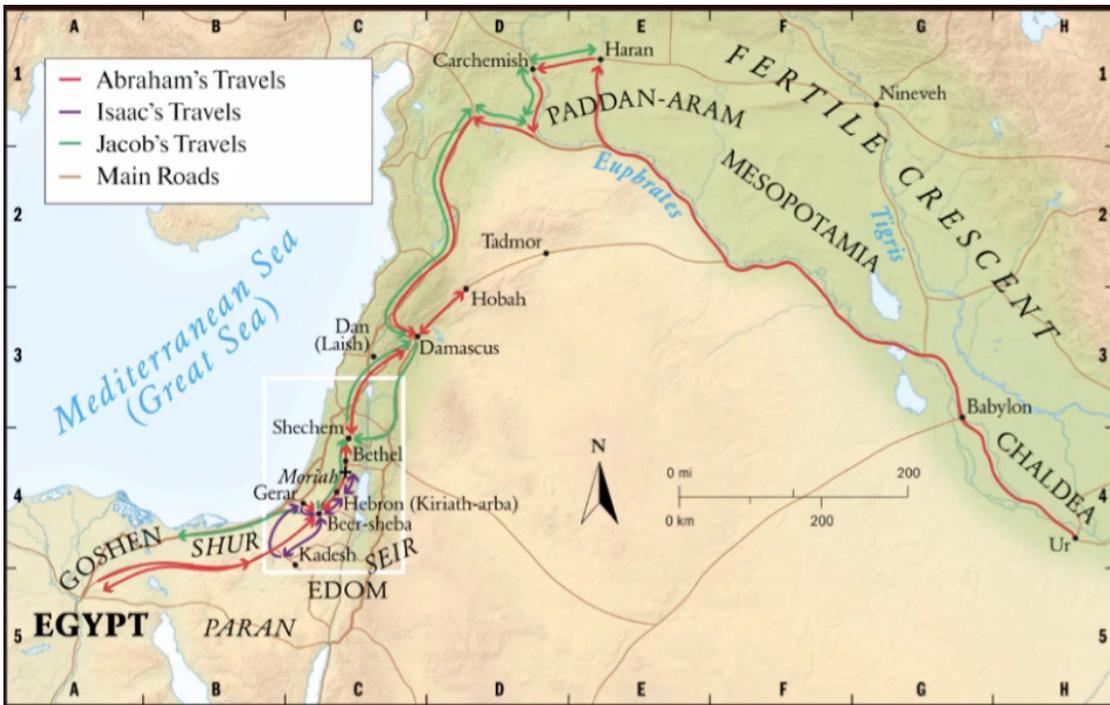
## Biblical History

### Pre-History

- Noah's Three Sons
  - Ham - Founder of Hamitic tribes found in Africa
  - Shem - Founder of Semites (Eastern Semites like Akkadians and Western Semites like Hebrews)
  - Japheth - Founder of Indo-Europeans

### Middle Bronze Age (2000-1550 BC)

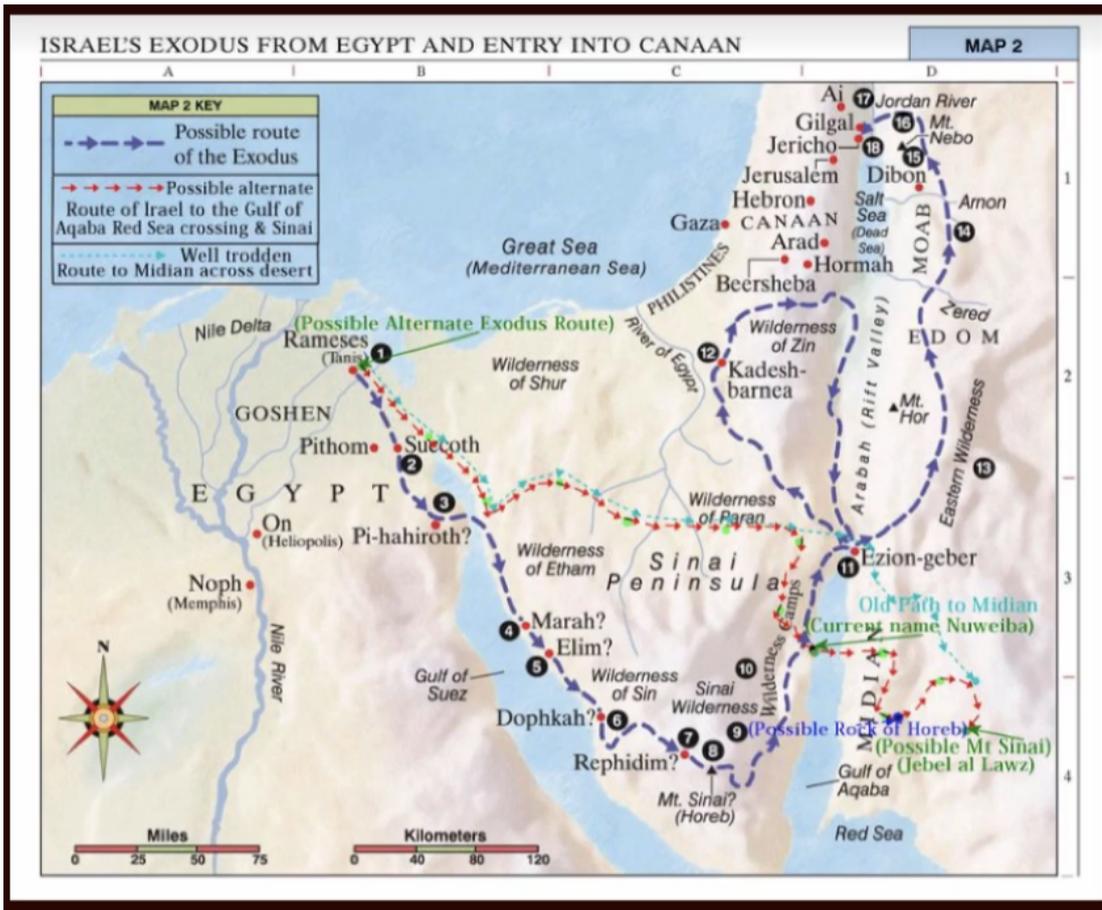
- Biblical History begins in the Middle Bronze Age with the time of Abraham (Genesis 12) around 1800 BC when he is living in Ur of Chaldea which is the southern point of Mesopotamia (modern day Iraq and the Persian Gulf).
- He is a little before, or just contemporaneous with the reign of King Hammurabi of Babylon (1750 BC).
  - King Hammurabi commissioned a stele to be erected with the code of Laws - oldest written code of laws. 282 Paragraphs.
  - Casuistic Law ("if... then...")
    - e.g. "If a man steals an egg, his hand should be cut off"
  - Contrast with the apodictic law of the Decalogue (e.g. "You should not commit murder") because God is more than a simple lawgiver - He is an Instructor, a Father who tells His children what is good for them to do.
  - Both Hammurabi and Abraham are from Western Semitic Cultures
- Joseph went to Egypt as a slave and later as Pharaoh's vizier
  - Before 1700 BC, Egypt was ruled by Hamites (African tribes)
  - From 1700-1550 BC, Egypt is dominated by the Hyksos (Semites)
    - It makes sense considering Joseph's ascension to vizier in Egypt. If Egypt was being ruled by Hamitic tribes, it would have been difficult.



## Late Bronze Age (1550-1200BC)

- 1550-1200 BC
- 14th Century BC: Amarna Letters on clay tablets - correspondence between pharaoh and various kings of the city-states of Syria-Palestine (e.g. Salem, Megiddo, Hazor)
- 1250 BC: The Exodus Event - Moses and the Decalogue; crossing the Red Sea, etc.
- 1210 BC: Beginning of the Israelite Conquest, led by Joshua, and the settlement in Canaan

- 1209 BC: Merneptah Stele - From Egypt, first extra-biblical mention of Israel ("Israel is laid waste, her seed is not")



### Early Iron Age (1200-900 BC)

- 1200 BC: Invasion of the Indo-European "Sea Peoples" (e.g. Philistines) settling on the coastal plain
- 1200-1050 BC: Period of the Judges - Judges are not legal persons, but military charismatic individuals called on by God
- 12th Century BC: The "Emar Tablets" which mention high priestesses and prophetesses which witness to a "matriarchal phase" in Syria-Palestine (e.g. Miriam, Deborah)



- 1050-930: The United Kingdom
  - 1050-1010 BC: King Saul - first king of Israel; chosen by prophet Samuel and public proclamation; central shrine and Ark of Covenant was at Shiloh, Saul fought against the Philistines
  - 1010-970 BC: King David - centralized politics and religion; Jerusalem is captured and becomes the capital of the United Kingdom
  - 970-930 BC: King Solomon - marries Pharaoh's daughter, builds the Temple
  - 930 BC: The assembly at Shechem and schism; Rehoboam and Jeroboam I



## Middle Iron Age (900-586 BC)

- Divided Monarchy
- Israel: 930-722 BC
  - Jeroboam I is the first king
  - Capital: Samaria
  - Tribes: 10 (all but Judah and Benjamin)
  - The Assyrians under King Sargon II destroy the capital and take Israelites to different parts of the empire

- Prophets: Elijah, Elisha (9th Century BC), Hosea (8th Century BC; only writing prophet from the North). Amos prophesied in the Northern Kingdom but is originally from Judah
- Judah: 930-586 BC
  - Rehoboam is the first king
  - Capital: Jerusalem
  - Tribes: 2 (Judah and Benjamin)
  - The Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar destroy Jerusalem and its temple (586 BC) and deport the population to Babylon
  - Prophets: Isaiah, Micah, Amos (8th Century BC), Ezekiel, Jeremiah, etc.
  - Babylonian Exile: 596-539 BC

## Persian Period (539-330 BC)

- 539 BC: The edict of King Cyrus of Persia allows the Hebrews to return to their homeland
- 520-515 BC: The Second Temple is built
  - High commissioner: Zerubbabel
  - High priest: Joshua
  - Prophets: Haggai, Zechariah
- 458 BC: Ezra's mission: Religious Reform
- 445 BC: The 1st Mission of Nehemiah - Restoration of the walls of Jerusalem
  - Prophets: Malachi, Obadiah



## Hellenistic Period (330 BC-63 BC)

- 336-323 BC: Alexander the Great, prophet Jonah, book of Tobit
- 250 BC: The Septuagint (starting with the Pentateuch)
- 180 BC: Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Sirach) - one of the earliest anaginoskomena books of the OT (not part of the Jewish canon)
- 170 BC: Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the pillage of the Temple (2 Macc)
- 167-164 BC: The Great Persecution started by Antiochus Epiphanes and the desecration of the Temple (sacrifices offered to Zeus, pig slaughtered on the altar, etc.); The Maccabean revolt; the Book of Daniel is written; Purification of the Temple and its dedication (1 Macc)
- 150 BC: Foundation of the Essene community at Qumran near the Dead Sea



## Roman Period (63 BC - 323 AD)

- 63 BC: Pompey takes Jerusalem, names Hyrcanus as high priest
- 37-4 BC: Herod the Great is King
- 20-19 BC: Rebuilding and renovation of the Temple
- 6-4 BC: The Birth of Christ

# Lecture 7a: Pentateuch - Documentary Hypothesis

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/5dwp6f5e5pg5mffpz3or0/Video-Lecture-7a-The-Documentary-Hypothesis.mp4?rlkey=qtto7cacee24j8otbzc9ley4&dl=0>

Pentateuch

Documentary Hypothesis

# Lecture 7b: Pentateuch Selected Texts

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ifq1yyor6pbg60ofwczrz/Video-Lecture-7b-Pentateuch-Selected-Texts.mp4?rlkey=vdbh2thifvavwxppiw7pvwafj&dl=0>

## Genesis

- Genesis 1-11: Primordial History
  - Creation of the universe
  - The shape of the first human beings
  - The story of the first human beings in the Garden of Eden and the Temptation
  - Cain and Abel
  - The Flood
  - The Tower of Babel
- Genesis 12-50: The History and the Patriarchs
  - The Patriarchs are the founders of the Nation of Israel (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob)
  - Jacob's Twelve Children, among which is Joseph

## Genesis 1-3: Creation, Adam and Eve

- Two accounts of Creation
  - Genesis 1: The Priestly Account (ca. 5th Century BC)
  - Genesis 2: The Yahwistic Account (represents the oldest account ca. 8th Century BC)
- Differences:
  - Genesis 1, God is a powerful King in Heaven ordering things to come into creation. He created ex nihilo (out of nothing) and does it by the power of His Word. He doesn't move from heaven or descend on earth, but He commands and everything appears.
  - Genesis 2, God takes dust from the ground, makes man, breathes to make him a living being.
  - In Genesis 1, God is transcendent (transcends the material universe) and in Genesis 2, God is imminent (working inside the material universe)
  - In Genesis 1, God is a deliberator ("Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness") - according to Jewish interpretation, God is talking to His angels. In Genesis 2, God is like a potter Who shapes humanity from the ground. He is not deliberating, He is doing.

- Each account gives us something about God and they complement each other
- The Creation of Humanity in Three Steps
  - God took dust out of the ground and created humanity (Adam - not specifically a man or a woman)
  - God takes this humanity and places it in the Garden of Eden (Garden of Delight)
  - God fashions Eve (woman) and brings her to the humanity (Adam) - This is a woman, taken from a man. And there is a unity between them - marriage.
- Genesis 3 - The Fall of Man
  - God planted many trees including the Tree of Life, and in the middle of the garden, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (knowing everything) and He commanded Adam and Eve not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
  - They were not tempted to eat from the Tree of Life (immortality and living forever) but rather in the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (power and control - even at the expense of transgressing the commandment of God)
  - God takes them out of the garden so that they do not eat from the Tree of Life and live forever in this depravity. He gives them an opportunity to have a limited number of years (mortality)
  - Death has entered into the world

## Genesis 4:1-16: Cain and Abel

- God looks favorably at the offering of Abel, but not that of Cain. Cain becomes angry and God tells him "if you did something good, be happy" but Cain goes and kills his brother

## Genesis 12: Call of Abraham

- Abraham living in Ur of Chaldea and with his family is journeying north toward Syria and establish themselves in the region of Haran
- God calls Abraham to follow Him in a different country; Abraham left everything and followed God
- Follow God to Canaan (modern day Israel/Palestine)
- He received from God a threefold promise: the first Covenant between God and Israel - represented by Abraham.
  - Abraham will become the father of a great nation
  - Abraham's offspring will inherit the land of Canaan
  - In Abraham, all the nations will be blessed by God
    - Interpreted by Christian interpreters as the Gentiles embracing Christ and His teachings, and becoming His disciples.

## Genesis 18: The Three Heavenly Visitors

- In one of the days Abraham spent in Canaan, he receives the visit of three heavenly visitors whom he identifies one with the noun: Adonai (my Lord)
- The three visitors were God (Yahweh) and two angels

## Genesis 22: The Sacrifice of Isaac

- God puts Abraham to the test, to see if he is an obedient servant.
- Abraham does not contest God or fight back - he takes Isaac and two servants and sets off for a long journey (3 days) to a mountain called Moriah. At the mountain, Abraham is ready to sacrifice his son, Isaac, but when he is about to kill him, God stops him from heaven and tells him to sacrifice a ram instead.
- It is a story about a father who loved his son, who is obedient to God, and a story about God who tests his servants
- Theological Story: Explicative story to show us why Ancient Israelites didn't offer human beings as sacrifices - all the other Canaanite nations were sacrificing human sacrifices to their gods, except for Israel (because of this episode with Abraham).

## Genesis 28: Jacob's Dream at Bethel

- Between Abraham and Jacob, we have the patriarch Isaac who had two sons - Jacob and Esau.
- Jacob stole the birthright from Esau for a soup... Esau is trying to kill Jacob because he felt humiliated.
- Jacob's mother asks him to leave the Promised Land (Canaan) and to go to her relatives in Haran (northern part of Mesopotamia).
- During this journey, Jacob stops at a place called Bethel (house of God) and had a dream. He saw something raised (i.e. ladder) uniting earth to heaven. On top of that raised ladder, Jacob saw God Himself.
- This ladder means that God will provide an intermediary between heaven and earth, between God and man.
  - Ancient Christian interpreters saw in this ladder a symbol of Christ who is human and divine at the same time, and he is the true intermediary between God and man.
  - Another interpretation is that the ladder is the Theotokos St Mary. Some icons show St Mary at the top of the ladder representing the ladder as being the unity between heaven and earth.

## Genesis 37, 39: Joseph and His Brothers; Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

- Joseph is one of the 12 sons of the patriarch Jacob. Joseph is smart and wise, but his brothers sell him to some Ishmaelites going to Egypt, and they sold him to Potiphar. Joseph becomes slave in Potiphar's house for a number of days.
- Potiphar's wife comes to Joseph and asks him to sleep with her - he refused. Because of this, she accuses him in front of Potiphar for bringing shame on his house. Joseph is sold in a dungeon/prison.
- Joseph meets the baker and cupbearer of Pharaoh in prison. He prophesies about the fates of these two, and for this he was released later on.
- Pharaoh makes him vizier because he is wise.
- Joseph's brothers came to Egypt, but could not recognize him. But he was not vindictive or seeking revenge, but he held them, gave them food to survive.

- The lesson of this story is that God provided - God made everything possible for the people of Israel to survive and become the people of the Messiah.

## Exodus

### Exodus 1-3: Moses

- Birth of Moses, Moses growing up and having the revelation of God at the burning bush
- After the death of Jacob and Joseph, and the death of the Pharaoh who knew Joseph, another Pharaoh came who did not know them and did not like the rate at which the Israelites were growing as a people. So he ordered the killing of newborn Hebrew babies. Moses was born during this time.
- Moses' mother put him in a basket in the Nile, and he was found by the daughter of Pharaoh who had mercy on him and kept him as her own
- When Moses grew up, he took sides in an argument with a Hebrew and killed the Egyptian oppressor, and from then he had to flee.
- He went to Midian where he encountered his wife, Zipporah, the daughter of the priest Reul.
- Moses reached a place called the Mountain of God and had a vision of a burning bush that was burning constantly without being consumed by fire. He approached it and heard the revelation of God.
- God told him to go back to Egypt, talk to Pharaoh to liberate the people of Israel. Moses asked what God "if they ask who sent you, what do they say?" and God tells him His name: I AM - Yahweh - The One Who Is.

### Exodus 12: Passover

- Moses went to Pharaoh, Pharaoh is reluctant, and God has to bring over Egypt ten plagues. The last one is the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians.
- Moses received a commandment from God to take a lamb, slay the lamb, and put the blood on the Hebrew doorposts. That way, when the angel of death came through, he would pass over the houses with the blood of the lamb. Ancient Christian interpreters said that the doorposts and lintel were in the shape of the Cross

### Exodus 14-15: Crossing the Red Sea

- The biggest miracle of all time in the Old Testament
- After plague 10, the Israelites left Egypt, but the Egyptians followed them
- When they got to the Red Sea, God performed a miracle for them and split the Red Sea, so that the Israelites could cross on dry ground.
- When the Israelites tried to follow them, the Red Sea was brought back down on them and they die
- This miracle is comparable to the Resurrection in the New Testament (in terms of impact, significance)
- Exodus 15 is the Song of Moses, representing one of the oldest texts in the Hebrew Bible

## Exodus 19-20, 24: The Sinai Covenant

- God made a covenant with Abraham which was a one-way covenant - God is promising good things to Abraham without asking Abraham to do anything. This Covenant with the Israelites is the real one - two-way covenant.
- The intermediary is Moses, and the Covenant is done on Mt Sinai
  - Fire, smoke, mountain is shaking, voices being heard, etc. was a sign that God descended on Mt Sinai
- God gives to Moses the two stones with the ten commandments.
- The elders go up with Moses on Mt Sinai and they saw the celestial and luminous body of God (Exodus 24)

## Exodus 33: Moses' Intercession and God's Face/Glory

- The apex of Moses' life, near the end of his life, he had one big wish that he expressed to God - please show me Your face/glory. God said no one can see My face and live. But He put Moses in a rock and passed by him and let Moses see His back.
- We will never know God in His essence - it will always be a mystery to us. But we will see Him in His characteristics, and in the face of His Son.

## Exodus 34: Yahweh's Self-Introduction

- "5 Now the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, 7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."
- God is, on the one hand, merciful. And on the other hand, He hates sin and does not want sin to persist and live.

## Leviticus

### Leviticus 8-10: Priesthood

- There are some similarities between Ancient Israelite priesthood and the Christian priesthood

### Leviticus 16: Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

- Sometimes called the Day of Reconciliation, or Day of Becoming One; the appropriate English name would be: Day of Concealment/Day of Hiding
- Parallels Good Friday in Christianity
- Israelites are called by the priests of the temple to bring two goats - one to be sacrificed, and the blood was taken by the High Priest into the Holy of Holies (the only day of the year that it can be entered), and the High Priest takes the blood to purify with it the Ark of

Covenant.

- The Ark preserved three items:
  - Manna
  - Ten Commandments on Stone Tablets
  - The Rod of Aaron
- The second goat was not killed, but the High Priest lays his hands on the head of the living goat and confessing all the sins of the people of Israel committed that year. Then a man was sent with the living goat to the wilderness to bring the defiled goat (i.e. carrying all the sins of the people) to Azazel (scapegoat)
- The sins are not forgiven or deleted, they are only removed from inhabited places like Jerusalem and the cities.
  - In the New Testament, one of the first miracles Jesus performs is the healing of the paralytic in Capernaum. And instead of saying "arise from your mattress" He says: "Your sins are forgiven." - and the Jews started to bicker about it because only God has the power to eradicate or delete or forgive sins.
  - The Jewish belief is that one day, the Messiah would have the power to delete sin
  - When Jesus then says "rise, take up your bed and walk" then they have no choice to believe that He has power to forgive sins

## Leviticus 23: Appointed Festivals

## Numbers

### Numbers 6: Priestly Benediction

- And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>23</sup> "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:  
<sup>24</sup> "The Lord bless you and keep you;  
<sup>25</sup> The Lord make His face shine upon you,  
And be gracious to you;  
<sup>26</sup> The Lord <sup>[e]</sup>lift up His countenance upon you,  
And give you peace." '  
<sup>27</sup> "So they shall <sup>[f]</sup>put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."

### Numbers 21: The Bronze Serpent

- Israelites during the 40 year-sojourn toward the Promised Land started to bicker towards Moses - "You brought us out of Egypt, we had food enough and drink enough, and now in this desert we hunger and thirst."
- God sent serpents to bite the Israelites and they started to die - Moses went to God and asked what to do.
- God told him to take his staff, and put on it a Bronze Serpent... and those who look at the Bronze Serpent will be healed and will not die and this is what happened.
- The staff is seen in Christian interpretation as the Cross, and the Bronze Serpent as the Lord Jesus Christ (a good serpent) bringing salvation and healing.

## Numbers 22-24: Prophet Balaam

- Balaam is a prophet originally from Mesopotamia (not Israelite). He is called by a king from Canaan to curse the people of Israel - they have ended their long journey and are about to enter Canaan. This king, Balak, feared them and called Balaam and offered to pay him to curse them
- Balaam, when he came to curse them, he was approached by God. And God told Balaam to bless them - and he did.
- Balaam is delivering a promise: "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel" - a Messianic Prophecy.

## Deuteronomy

### Deuteronomy 6: The Great Commandment (Shema Israel "Hear, O Israel")

- Jesus was asked by one of the scribes "what is the greatest commandment?"
  - Jesus said: "Love your God with all your soul, mind and heart and the second one like it, love your neighbor as yourself."
  - Both commandments are found in the Old Testament, and encompass the entirety of the Laws and commandments
  - Loving our creator | vertical relation  
Loving our neighbor --- horizontal relation  
Makes a Cross
- <sup>4</sup> "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one! <sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.
  - For Jews, it is as important as the Lord's prayer is for Christians
- Even until today, the Christian Creed (Nicene Creed): "We believe in one God"

### Deuteronomy 7: A Chosen People

### Deuteronomy 29: Covenant Renewed in Moab

### Deuteronomy 33-34: Moses' Blessings and Death

# Lecture 8a: Deuteronomistic History - Introduction to the Historical Books

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/kaiv1z0uddja13p5apqen/Video-Lecture-8a-Deuteronomistic-History.mp4?rlkey=nrfvu4pd0qvvaultld1e16247&dl=0>

## Deuteronomistic History (DtrH)

- We discussed the Torah (five books of Moses) and now move on to the Neviim (Prophets).
  - Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings
  - Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah ("Major Prophets") and The Twelve ("Minor Prophets")
- The Former Prophets are called by modern biblical scholars "Deuteronomic History" or "Deuteronomistic History"
- Composition
  - During the Babylonian exile (586-538 BC), Jeremiah and Deuteronomy exercised a great influence on Hebrew Literature
  - Toward the end of the exile, some priests and scribes, inspired by Jeremiah and Deuteronomy, put together the "Deuteronomic History", covering a long period of time, from Moses (1250 BC) until the time of exile (ca. 550 BC)
  - Deuteronomic History is marked by the "theology" of Deuteronomy and the "prophetic spirit" of Jeremiah
    - Deuteronomy's Theology
      - Fidelity to the Law attracts God's blessing
      - "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I

have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." (Deut. 30:15-20)

- Jeremiah's Prophetic Spirit
  - God will destroy the Temple because people sinned against Him
  - God will bring the people into exile, so you should not seek other alliances (e.g. Egypt) against the Babylonians, because God already decided this punishment.
  - People should take it seriously, live in exile in Babylon and repent from their sins, that God may have mercy on them and return them to their homeland.
- The main purpose of this history is to explain the exile, which was not meaningless: exile was God's punishment for people's neglect of the Law. Same explanation can be detected in Jeremiah and Deuteronomy, but the editors of DtrH applied this explanation to the entire history of Israel in the promised land.
- Structurally and Thematically, the Deuteronomistic History covers 5 periods/themes
  - Joshua: Conquest of land under Joshua; a time of obedience and blessing, God's power to defeat all of Israel's enemies
  - Judges: A troubled period of time with ups and downs (sin, punishment by foreign invasion, God raises a judge (i.e. military leader) to defend Israel). Samuel was the last judge and the first prophet.
  - King David: God's blessing of the land; high point of fidelity to the covenant, emphases placed on God protecting David (e.g. against Saul, against Absalom).  
Personal Covenant that Yahweh made with David's family to reign forever
    - Covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12 was a one-street covenant
    - Covenant with Israel in Exodus 19 was a two-street covenant (He blesses the people of Israel, they follow the commandments)
    - Covenant with David and his offspring in 2 Samuel 7 is a "personal" covenant - the Davidic Dynasty
      - The Northern Kingdom had at least ten separate Dynasties, but in the Southern Kingdom, only one - Dynasty of David. From the time of King David until the Babylonian Exile.
  - Period of Kings
    - Beginning with Solomon and continuing through the divided monarchy until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC
    - The Southern Kingdom is meant to look better with 3 good kings (Asa, Hezekiah, Josiah) and Israel's kings all being evil
    - The emphasis falls on the prophets (especially Elijah) - to take the soft sound of stillness of the Lord and translate it to human language
  - The Fall of Judah/Jerusalem and the Exile
    - The exile was brought about on the people by themselves through their kings - kings are considered to be shepherds. Their responsibility is to tend their people like a shepherd tends his sheep. Instead, they accumulated property

and power and neglected their responsibilities as caretakers of Israel.

- The return of the people is conditioned on their repentance - God will help His people to embrace repentance (Deuteronomy 4:27-30, 30:1-10)
- Jeremiah 31:31-34 - "new covenant" written by God in the hearts of His devotees. Theology of a "divine grace" foreshadows the Pauline theology emphasizing "grace"
- Final redaction of the Deuteronomistic History and editorial additions to the Book of Deuteronomy happened around 500 BC.
- The Deuteronomistic History is the history of the "victory of God's word" made known through prophets who delivered both warnings and promises
- They depict Israel at their best and worst moments of their history
- The "land" is a central theme throughout the Deuteronomistic History

# Lecture 8b: Deuteronomistic History - Selected Texts

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/3ehuqogmg4fsdx5h7m4ui/Video-Lecture-8b-Deuteronomistic-History-Selected-Texts.mp4?rlkey=cptikxqvomh3tqp76ryncf8o8&dl=0>

## Joshua

- Joshua was the disciple, servant, and successor of Moses. Under his leadership, the Israelites succeeded to conquest Canaan (the Promised Land). He is called in Sirach a "prophet according to the model of Moses"

## Joshua 2 - Spies Sent to Jericho & Rahab

- Now on the Eastern side of the Jordan River
- From around Nebo, where Moses died, Joshua sent two spies to see if Jericho was well defended
- The spies arrived in Jericho and were welcomed by Rahab (a prostitute). She shelters them on the roof of her house. Rahab denies having them when the king of Jericho finds out there are two Israelites in the city.
- The spies escape using a scarlet robe out of the window. Rahab asks them to take mercy on her and her family when they come and conquer Jericho - the sign will be the scarlet robe. In Joshua 6, the siege of Jericho, Rahab and her family will be spared
  - The scarlet robe is considered by the Fathers to be a foreshadow of the redeeming and saving power of the Blood of Christ shed on the Cross
  - Rahab, a Gentile prostitute, is one of the ancestors of the Lord in His genealogy (besides Ruth, a Moabite woman)
  - Jesus came for the entire fallen humanity, not just for the Jews
  - God is merciful that even a prostitute would be in the genealogy
- They inform Joshua about Jericho

## Joshua 5:13-15 - Joshua's Vision

- Joshua's Vision of the Angel of the Lord
- <sup>13</sup> And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

<sup>14</sup> So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

<sup>15</sup> Then the Commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

- Two questions and two answers
  - Are you for us or for our adversaries?
    - Are you for Israel or for Jericho? Instead, the answer is "No" - I am with neither one. "But as Commander of the army of the Lord" - He identifies Himself. "I have now come."
    - Joshua detects someone not of this world, so he worships Him. People don't worship regular angels in the Old Testament, but on this occasion, Joshua saw Someone different. He saw a Divine Character. So he worshipped Him
  - What does my Lord say to His servant?
    - Instead of a straight answer like a military command... but He tells him "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy"
    - The place of His appearance is now holy
    - Similar to Exodus 3 when Moses encounters God in a burning bush, hears the voice of God telling him to take off his shoes, for the ground on which he stands is holy
- God's interventions in time and space turn time and space into a holy entity

## Joshua 6 - The Siege of Jericho

## Joshua 23 - Joshua Exhorts the People

## Judges

## 1 Samuel

## 2 Samuel

## 1 Kings

## 2 Kings

OLDT 5020: Video Lectures

# Lecture 9a: The Latter Prophets

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/f7wymzax2s48kp4r6ke4e/Video-Lecture-9a-The-Latter-Prophets.mp4?rlkey=6e5addfg2qh6utffin0n8qxhv&dl=0>

The Latter Prophets

# Lecture 9b: The Latter Prophets

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/b8cbagucspvcme87s03ne/Video-Lecture-9b-The-Latter-Prophets.mp4?rlkey=ryubggmy2eiw483tofgu9p4q0&dl=0>

# Lecture 9c: The Latter Prophets

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/qxab0ua0zcdjmlxug4oto/Video-Lecture-9c-The-Latter-Prophets.mp4?rlkey=8962u4k4metc1mbnpywtywt20&dl=0>

# Lecture 10a: The Writings

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/mti71751vsv688nju6wtg/Video-Lecture-10a-The-Writings.mp4?rlkey=reh5uqz7arijbvq6un39pugcl&dl=0>

# Lecture 10b: The Writings

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/yldgvj8ggvjftmknpu2v/Video-Lecture-10b-The-Writings.mp4?rlkey=lw68ic7xiayar4w2op5ysnzsd&dl=0>

# Lecture 10c: The Writings

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/nlivzavrqm9ucmfi5gg9i/Video-Lecture-10c-The-Writings.mp4?rlkey=9qa3dquwrlnx5hazrv3jju6ny&dl=0>

# OLDT 5020: Discussion Posts

## Week 2 Discussion

Briefly talk about the relevance of the Old Testament for Christians today.

The importance of the Old Testament for Christians today is commonly understated. In my experience, many Christians quote the word of the Lord: "I did not come to destroy [the Law or the Prophets] but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17) and then struggle to clearly define what is meant by "fulfill" making it instead, a practical "abolishment." Those who wish to combat the teachings about homosexuality, tattooing, customary impurity, 40/80-day period after birth, etc. simply say "that's from the OT" as if it is null. But the OT is the inspired Word of God; relevant, applicable and profitable, to modern Christians in more than one way. I will illustrate the below points using Genesis, though any book can be used.

**Theology:** God reveals Himself in His Creation. He reveals Himself as the Lover of Mankind when He gives opportunities for repentance to Adam, Eve, Cain, Judah, Abraham, Jacob, Esau, the brothers of Joseph, etc. (some who accepted, some who did not). He reveals Himself as Almighty in the Flood of Noah. He reveals Himself as good in the story of Joseph (when the evil action of his brothers is used by God for good). And much more.

**Ethics:** Besides the actual Law of Moses (including the Ten Commandments, the Statutes, etc.) which provided an ethical foundation that is still applicable for us, the OT is full of ethical examples. St Gregory of Nyssa writes "On the Life of Moses" to explain the verse "be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." We can learn obedience from Noah, hospitality from Abraham, humility from Jacob (who bowed before his brother Esau upon returning from Laban), repentance from Judah, and forgiveness from Joseph.

**Messianism:** From the "Seed of the woman" in Genesis 3 to the sacrifice of Isaac in Genesis 22 to the "Scepter departing from Judah when Shiloh comes" in Genesis 49, Messianism is clear through prophecy, typology, and other foreshadowing.

**Liturgy:** The whole economy of our salvation starts in Genesis as the father the priest proclaims: "Holy O Lord our God who formed us, created us, and placed us in the Paradise of joy; when we disobeyed Your commandment by the deception of the serpent, we fell from eternal life and were exiled from the Paradise of joy." (Liturgy of St Basil). Our Liturgical life is tied to our salvation which is tied to the OT.

## Week 3 Discussion

In 250-350 words, please summarize the information provided by the video lecture with respect to the two notions “revelation” and “inspiration.”

Revelation is God’s disclosure of Himself through various means. One way is through natural means: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalms 19:1) and “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead” (Romans 1:20). The other way, which is the focus of our material, is the supernatural; of which one example is Inspiration.

The notion of Inspiration is that the Books of the Bible are sacred and canonical, written by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, authored by God. The word “inspire” itself comes from “the breathing into.” The Scripture are the breath of God.

Regarding the Inspiration of the Old Testament, it is a belief that is supported first and foremost by the apostles who authored the New Testament (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:19-21). It is also supported internally in certain books and passages where the author records God telling him to write (cf. Exodus 17:14, Isaiah 30:8, Jeremiah, Habakkuk), and by the late Old Testament terminology (cf. 1 Maccabees 12:9). It is supported by the early Jewish historians Philo and Josephus in their writings (Philo having adopted the Greek word for “inspire” very early on) and by the Babylonian Talmud. Finally, it is supported by the Church Fathers including St Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St Gregory the Theologian and others.

There are three formulae for inspiration. On the one hand, some supported Dictation – that God dictated the specific words to be written down in the Scripture. On the other hand, some support a more liberal “God, the Author” – that God is the sole author of the Scripture without any human intervention save for the pen to the page. A more balanced view is one first championed by St John Chrysostom – “Condescension.” That the Scriptures are written by human authors who heard the murmurs of the Lord (as Elijah did in 1 Kings 19), interpreted them and wrote them down. They expressed their thoughts and experiences in text, metaphors, images, analogies, and symbols, being guided by the Holy Spirit. It is a synergetic process in which God and man co-author the Scripture.

## Week 4 Discussion

In 250-350 words, how would you describe briefly the relationship between Scripture and Tradition from an Orthodox perspective?

There are three distinct ways of looking at Scripture and Tradition across Christendom: The more Catholic view of "Scripture and Tradition" as two sources of God's Revelation; the Protestant view of "Scripture alone"; and the more traditional, patristic and apostolic view of "Scripture within Tradition" which is representative of the Orthodox perspective.

To me, it seems appropriate to describe the relationship between Scripture and Tradition as a Symbiotic Relationship. The Church Tradition has been formed and informed by the Scripture since

the beginning, And the Scripture breathes life into the Church and Her members to keep the Tradition alive.

The Tradition of the Church includes the Scripture and its Interpretation, the Liturgies and Sacraments; the Iconography, art, music and hymnology; the Councils and Canons; the Patristic tradition and the Ascetic tradition; and other modes of grace. All of these are rooted in the teachings first proclaimed by the Apostles, and later codified by the Church.

We can consider the Scripture and Tradition relationship as a textbook-handout analogy, or as is more relatable to this course, an analogy of our course textbook to the video lectures. The textbook for this course ("The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition") contains quotes, references, academic jargon, arguments and discussions in each chapter. The video lecture is much shorter, serving to explain and outline the material in the relevant chapter. The lecture cannot stand alone, but depends on the textbook.

How much more for the Holy Scripture which is an "untamable" textbook, that can never be exhaustively elucidated from all angles?

## Week 5 Discussion

In 250-350 words, write a brief summary of the biblical history concentrating on Iron Age (i.e., the period of monarchy in Israel—united and then divided).

Biblical History covers everything from pre-history, through the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, the Iron Ages, the Persian and Hellenistic Period, and (with the New Testament), the Roman Period. The history of the Genesis patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) and Joseph takes place during the Middle Bronze Age. Continuing into the history of the Exodus event and the Israelite conquest by Joshua takes place during the Late Bronze Age. A majority of the Biblical History of the Old Testament takes place during the Iron Age beginning with the period of the Judges and continuing through the periods of the Unified Kingdom of Israel, and the Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

In the days before Israel had a king, "everyone did what was right in their own eyes." And as Israel would fall into sin, they would be taken captive or find themselves in battle. Then, the Lord would send them Judges - not in a legal sense, but charismatic individuals who acted as military leaders to deliver Israel from their hardship. When delivered, Israel would return to the Lord - for a time; and after the time, revert to their sinful ways and the cycle would repeat.

In the time of the Prophet Samuel, the people requested of him that God provide them with a king. King Saul was chosen by God (through Samuel) and by the people and was anointed as King. He led the people through battle and conquest, but did not honor the Lord. The Lord chose one to replace him - King David.

King David is described by the Lord as "a man after My own heart." He continued to lead Israel as a Unified Kingdom and established systems for the priests and the government. He desired to build the Temple, but the Lord left this for his son Solomon. King Solomon built the Temple of the Lord,

and brought the Unified Kingdom to the height of wealth and glory. He reigned with wisdom until he was seduced by foreign women and their idols.

After his death, a struggle for the Kingdom ensued; his son Rehoboam, who opted for a more aggressive and oppressive leadership style did not find support, whereas Jeroboam (who was one of Solomon's officials) won the support for the people. The Kingdom was split in two, with the ten northern tribes following Jeroboam and becoming the Kingdom of Israel, and the two southern tribes following Rehoboam and becoming the Kingdom of Judah. Jeroboam, fearing that the people would return to Jerusalem (in Judah) to worship at the Temple, built idols in the Northern Kingdom and compelled the Israelites to worship them. This was the beginning of the tumultuous history of the kings.

All of the Northern Kings "did evil in the sight of the Lord." This culminated in the captivity of the North by Assyria under King Sargon II in the Middle Iron Age. Most of the Southern Kings also "did evil in the sight of the Lord," although some were likened to King David. This culminated in the captivity of the South by Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar in the Middle Iron Age. The Babylonian captivity lasted about 70 years until the Persian empire conquered Babylon and King Cyrus of Persia issued an edict allowing the Jews to return to their homeland (which takes us out of the Iron Age, and into the Persian Period).

## Week 6 Discussion

In 250-350 words, briefly summarize the "Documentary Hypothesis" (Wellhausen) with regard to the making of the Pentateuch.

The Documentary Hypotheses put forth by Wellhausen makes a compelling argument about the authorship and compilation of the Pentateuch. It hypothesizes that the Pentateuch is a document that compiles and edits four other documents, abbreviated as J, E, D and P. Those four sources were authored at various times and places, with various motivations and authors, reflecting various traditions, stories and messages.

J - the Yahwist source - is named after its use of Yahweh for the name of God. This source sees God as walking and talking with humanity, stresses blessings, supports leadership and the person and tribe of Judah. It is also distinguished from the Elohist source by using the name "Sinai" for the mountain on which God speaks to Moses, and "Canaanites" for the natives of the Promised Land. The theory is that the Yahwist source was authored some time during Solomon's reign as king, or shortly after, in an attempt to glorify the monarchy created by David and Solomon.

E - the Elohist source - is named after its use of Elohim for the name of God (at least prior to God revealing His name as Yahweh in Exodus). In the Elohist source, God speaks through dreams and visions rather than "face-to-face." The fear of the Lord is stressed rather than blessings. Northern Israel is stressed as opposed to Judah (e.g. Reuben advocating for Joseph rather than Judah in the J source). It is also distinguished from J by using the terms "Horeb" and "Amorites". The theory is that the Elohist source was authored after the split of the kingdom as a sort of "response to" (or refinement of) the J source.

When the Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria, the J and E sources were taken to the south and combined as one for the people living in Judah.

D - the Deuteronomistic source - is named after the book of Deuteronomy, as this document seems to be distinct in style from the rest of the Pentateuch. It was authored by priests, Levites and prophets in an effort to "reform" bad practice and faith in Judah (at the same time as the combined JE Source). This source stresses the importance of following the Law of Moses, and is written in a distinct style with long sermons.

P - the Priestly Source - is named after the supposed authors: priests from exile and post-exile. Those priests, hoping to preserve the various laws, regulations, statutes, commandments and traditions while in exile, assembled what we now call the end of Exodus, the Book of Leviticus, and the beginning of the Book of Numbers. This source contains various genealogies, Proper names of several places, and stresses obedience to God's word.

According to the Hypothesis, it was Ezra the Scribe who assembled and edited these sources into the Torah/Pentateuch. Although many scholars supported this hypothesis at the beginning of the 20th Century, the emergence of a Form Criticism cast shadows of reasonable doubt on several details of the hypothesis.

## Week 7 Discussion

In 250-350 words, choose from the Pentateuch two selected texts, discussed in the video lecture, and briefly summarize them.

Even as early as the Pentateuch, we start to see Messianic Prophecies and Typology in several stories - The Sacrifice of Isaac, the Person of Joseph, Moses the Prophet, the Passover, Yom Kippur, and the Bronze Serpent all come to mind.

In the Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22), God puts Abraham's obedience to the test. Abraham does not contest or fight back, but does as God commanded - he takes his only son, Isaac, and two servants, and sets off for a journey of three days to the mountain called Moriah. At the mountain, Abraham is ready to sacrifice Isaac, even raising the knife to slay him, but God prevents him and tells him to sacrifice a ram instead. It is a story about a father who loved his son, and was obedient even to the death of his son. "And as Isaac carried the wood for a burnt offering, so did Christ carry the Cross to Golgotha; and as Isaac came back alive, so too did Christ come back alive on the third day." (Coptic Covenant Thursday Fraction Prayer)

In the Bronze Serpent (Numbers 21), the Israelites complained to and about Moses, and looked back to their time in Egypt and compared it to their time in the wilderness. The Lord sent serpents to bite them and bring upon them death. Moses intercedes for them to God who instructs him to make a serpent of gold and put it on his staff, that whoever looks upon it would not die. Just as the Bronze Serpent brought salvation and healing, so too does the Cross bring healing. The serpents were bringing death, and a serpent brought life. So also did the Lord conquer death by His Death.

## Week 8 Discussion

In 250-350 words, briefly talk about the "Historical Books" (i.e., "Deuteronomistic History") emphasizing on theological themes of this section of the Old Testament.

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## Week 9 Discussion

In 250-350 words, briefly talk about the eighth century BC prophets and their theology.

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## Week 10 Discussion

In 250-350 words, briefly talk about the seventh-sixth century BC prophets and their theology.

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## Week 11 Discussion

In 250-350 words, briefly talk about the post-exilic prophets and their theology.

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## Week 12 Discussion

In 250-350 words, briefly talk about the "Wisdom Books."

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## Week 13 Discussion

In 250-350 words, briefly talk about the Septuagint additions (a.k.a. "deuterocanonical books" or anaginoskomena "readable").

T

## Week 14 Discussion

In 250-350 words, choose from the Wisdom Books two selected texts, discussed in the video lecture, and briefly summarize them.

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