Introduction

- **Hebrew Bible**: Law, Prophets, Writings (Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim = TANAK
- **Protestant Old Testament**: same books, different order
- **Catholic Old Testament**: includes deuterocanonical or apocryphal books.
- **Septuagint (LXX)**: Greek Bible.
- **Vulgate**: Latin Bible, translated by Jerome.
- **Gradual development of canon.**
- **Dead Sea Scrolls**, discovered 1947-56: oldest biblical manuscripts
- **Biblical chronology**:
  
  Adam to the Flood: 1,656 years, 10 generations (Genesis 5).
  The Flood to Abraham, 290 years, 10 generations (Genesis 11).
  Abraham to the descent of Jacob and his family to Egypt: 290 years, 3 generations
  (Genesis 12-50).
  The sojourn in Egypt: 430 years, 3 generations (Exodus 12:40)
  The conquest of Canaan: 5 years.
  The Judges: 470 years
  David and Solomon.
  Divided Kingdom:
  Israel (northern kingdom) survived 200 years;
  Judah (southern kingdom survived 335.
  Babylonian Exile,
  The Postexilic or Second Temple period.
  - **Modern chronology**:
    1250 BCE: Exodus
    950: Solomon
    722: Destruction of northern kingdom
    586: Destruction of Jerusalem. Babylonian exile
    539: Restoration.

Methods in Biblical Study

- **Source Criticism**
- **Form Criticism**
- **Redaction Criticism**
- **Archaeology**
- **Literary Criticism**
- **Sociological approaches**

Chapter 1

- **Canaan** between **Egypt** and **Mesopotamia** (Assyria and Babylon),
- **Hittites** to the north.

Mesopotamian myths about creation and early humanity are:
  - **Atrahasis**, an account of creation and the flood sharing many points of contact with the biblical story of Noah
- Gilgamesh, the story of a legendary hero, including a version of the flood story;
- Enuma Elish, the creation of the world following the defeat of the primordial sea-monster.

- The gods of Near Eastern myth are anthropomorphic
- Canaanite myths known from Ugaritic texts.
- Canaanite gods: El (whose name is the Hebrew word “god”) and Baal. The major work recounting their deeds is known as the Baal Cycle.
- Egyptian creation stories have far less emphasis on conflict among gods than do those of Canaan and Mesopotamia
- An important event in Egyptian religion was the focus of worship on one god alone, the sun-god Re (or Aten), instituted by Pharoah Akhenaten.

Chapter 2

- The first five books of the Bible, the Torah or Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; (books of Moses).
- The Documentary Hypothesis, Pentateuch a combination of four major sources:
  - the Yahwist, or J includes many of the well known tales of Genesis and Exodus (including the story of Adam and Eve) and is associated with Judah and the south; it is possibly as early as the 9th century BCE
  - the Elohist, or E is dated slightly later than J, this source has particular associations with the northern tribes of Israel
  - the Deuteronomist, or D: basically Deuteronomy. Connected to the reforms of King Josiah of Judah in the 7th century BCE.
  - the Priestly source, or P: an exilic of post-exilic composition largely concerned with issues of ritual practice; it is easy to identify by its dry, formulaic style. Includes a distinct source H, the Holiness Code, in Lev 17-26
- J refers to the God of Israel by the divine name Yahweh, (German Jahweh) in Genesis. E and P refer to him by the Hebrew word Elohim, meaning “God,” until the Exodus.
- Julius Welhausen formulated the classic form of the Documentary Hypothesis at the end of the 19th century.
- Recent critics of Documentary Hypothesis: Rendtorff, Blum.
- Final editing of Pentateuch no earlier than the postexilic period.

Chapter 3

- Genesis 1-11: creation through the flood = the Primeval History.
- Adam and Even in Genesis 2-3: J source.
- “Adam” = the generic Hebrew word for “human.”
• Transition to a state of self-consciousness, and consciousness of death is paralleled in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.
• **Eve is not the primary culprit in the Hebrew story.**
• **The P creation account** in Genesis 1 supplements the J account.
• Genesis 6:1-4: the **Sons of God** who descended to earth.
• **The P flood story:** exact numbers, measurements, and calculations.
• **Covenant with Noah, or Noahide laws:** applies to all humanity.

<4>Chapter 4

• **No independent, non-biblical evidence** for Abraham and the other patriarchs.
• **Hermann Gunkel**, a German scholar of the late 19th and early 20th century, identified several types of stories or legends contained in the patriarchal narratives:
  o **Etiological legends** claim to explain the cause or origin of a phenomenon (e.g., the story of Lot's wife explains the origin of a pillar of salt).
  o **Ethnological legends** explain the origin of a people or of their customs (the story of Cain explains why Kenites are itinerant).
  o **Etymological legends** explain the origin of names (there are two accounts of the origin of the name of Beersheba: Gen 21:31; 26:33).
  o **Ceremonial legends** explain the origin of a ritual (the story of the Passover; the origin of circumcision).
• The association of certain patriarchs with specific holy places gave legitimacy to **shrines at those locations later on** (e.g., Abraham’s association with Hebron and Jerusalem; Jacob with Bethel).
• Both J and P cast God’s promise to Abraham in the form of a **covenant**.
• **Trickery and deception** appears as a theme throughout the narratives, particularly in the narratives about Jacob and in the story of Judah and Tamar.
• Genesis closes with the story of **Joseph** (J and partly E). Not composed as early as older scholarship suggests.
• In literary terms, the Joseph story is most like the books of Ruth and Esther, or the court narratives in the book of Daniel.

<5>Chapter 5

• J and E more difficult to distinguish in Exodus from Egypt than in Genesis.
• There is **no archaeological or other non-biblical evidence** supporting the story of the Exodus; however, it is likely that **some historical memory** of peoples enslaved in Egypt underlies the tale.
• Two major themes:
  o **The revelation of YHWH**;
  o **Liberation from slavery**.
• **P: Passover** prior to leaving Egypt.
• Oldest account of crossing of the sea is **poetic** and **mythological** (Exodus 15). Later supplemented by **prose narrative** (Exodus 14).
Exodus story became the **founding myth** of Israel (especially in the northern kingdom) and of later Judaism.

<6>Chapter 6

- **Sinai and Exodus originally distinct.**
- The **covenant at Sinai** bears important similarities to **treaties** between unequal partners in the ancient Near East. In these treaties, the more powerful party is the *suzerain*, the less powerful party is the *vassal*
- **exclusive allegiance** to one and only one God is reminiscent of Near Eastern suzerainty treaties.
- There are two main types of laws:
  - Apodictic laws—direct commandments or prohibitions e.g., “do not steal.”
  - Casuistic laws—in the form “if x, then y.”
- The **Decalogue**, or **Ten Commandments**, in Exodus 20: usually attributed to E.
  - The first four commandments deal with the relationship with God.
  - The last six commandments deal with human society.
- The **Book of the Covenant**: primarily casuistic laws similar to ancient law codes from other Near Eastern societies.
- A second formulation of the laws given at Sinai is found in Exodus 34, especially in vv. 17-26. This passage is sometimes called the **J Decalogue**, or the **ritual decalogue**.

<7>Chapter 7

- The **core of the Priestly source** is found in Exodus 25-40, Leviticus, and Numbers 1-10.
- P legislates the building of a tent shrine (**the tabernacle**) for God, similar to tent shrines known from elsewhere in the Near East; it provides a way of imagining a central sanctuary even while Israel was wandering in the wilderness.
- Leviticus 1-7: the **sacrificial system**.
- Leviticus 16: the rituals for the **Day of Atonement**, which include the ritual of the scapegoat.
- **Aaron’s sons** form the priesthood according to Leviticus; they are distinguished from the subordinate class of **Levites**, who also perform ritual duties.
- Leviticus 17-26: the **Holiness Code** (or H).
- Leviticus 23: **calendar of cultic festivals**.
- The narratives in the book of Numbers underscore the authority of Moses.
- The **story of Balaam** traditionally ascribed to the J source.

<8>Chapter 8
Deuteronomy’s structure:
  - 1. Motivational speeches (1–11)
  - 2. The laws (12–26)
  - 3. Curses and blessings (27–28)

- Composed with Near Eastern suzerainty treaties in mind.
- The analogies with Assyrian suzerainty treaties and the associations with the reforms of King Josiah point to the 7th century BCE.
- As in E. mountain of God is called Horeb, not Sinai.
- Limits sacrifice to one location only; allows slaughter of animals for food in a non-sacrificial manner.
- Deuteronomy is typified by a concern for the poor and marginalized.
- Passover celebrated in Jerusalem, as pilgrimage feast, as in the account of Passover during King Josiah’s reign in 2 Kgs 23.
- Primary authors of Jerusalem scribes, initially in the service of Josiah. The editing went on long after Josiah’s reign.
- Similarities to wisdom literature.

Chapter 9

- The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (known traditionally as the Former Prophets) form, together with Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomistic History (Martin Noth).
- The Book of Joshua: occupation of the land of Canaan.
- Models to understand the occupation:
  - The immigration model: Israelites came from outside, first settling the central highlands, and only later the coastal plains
  - The conquest model: violent conquering of indigenous cities and peoples; this model is largely refuted by archeological evidence.
  - The revolt model: the incoming Israelites allied with disaffected Canaanites against oppressive urban centers.
  - The gradual emergence model: differs from the revolt model mainly in that it does not ascribe Israel’s emergence to ideology and an egalitarian drive.

- The stories of conquest in Joshua are most likely fictions, underpinned by the Deuteronomic claim that the land had been granted to Israel by God.
- The second half of Joshua is concerned with the territorial allotments to the various tribes.
- The book concludes with a covenant ceremony at Shechem (chap. 24), which is highly deuteronomistic in character.

Chapter 10
- **Judges** consists of *folkloristic stories* about local heroes who distinguished themselves in battle with Canaanites, Midianites, or Philistines, at a time when “there was no king in Israel.”
- The portrait of the Israelite “conquest” in Judges 1 differs from that in Joshua, and is more historically plausible in many respects.
- The “judges” described were primarily *charismatic* military leaders against neighboring groups such as the Midianites and Philistines.
- The story of Jephthah’s vow, like the story of Abraham’s near sacrifice of Isaac, serves not to disparage the practice of child sacrifice, but tacitly attests it as an accepted practice.
- The last four stories in the book are framed in such a way to suggest that the lack of a king led society to become unstable and to disintegrate.

<11>Chapter 11

- 1 and 2 Samuel incorporate *extensive source documents* that have been only lightly edited by the Deuteronomist.
- 1 Samuel is replete with *duplicate accounts* and *various tensions*.
- Samuel: *last judge and first prophet*.
- **Capture and recover of the Ark** (1 Sam 4:1b-7:1).
- **Two accounts of election of Saul**
- The story of David’s rise: an historical novel, composed to defend David against various charges of wrong-doing.
- **Picture of David not uniform**: loyal servant, an outlaw, a mercenary, etc.

<12>Chapter 12

- **Consolidation of David’s power.**
- **Capture of Jerusalem**
- **2 Sam 7: Nathan’s oracle** in which David is promised an enduring dynasty (the **Davidic Covenant**);
  - David’s heirs are sons to God.
  - Individual kings may be punished, but the lineage will continue.
- **Royal ideology of Judah**: the king is son of God, seated at his right hand.
- 2 Samuel closes with two psalms ascribed to David:
  - The longer poem, 2 Sam 22, appears again in the Bible as Psalm 18
  - The shorter composition, called the “last words of David” revisits the material in 2 Sam 7, and also alludes to David’s prophetic gifts.

<13>Chapter 13
Succession of Solomon: Realpolitik.
Reign of Solomon:
Historical questions about its grandeur
Solomon and wisdom
The temple
Temple piety in the Psalms.
The division of the kingdom.
The Omri dynasty in the north.

Chapter 14

Stories about prophets in the books of Kings
Micaiah ben Imlah and the normal situation of prophecy
Elijah and the prophets of Baal.
Elijah and social justice: Naboth’s Vineyard.
Jehu’s coup: religion and violence.
The Assyrian destruction of Israel.
Hezekiah and Sennacherib: miraculous deliverance or abject surrender?
The Babylonian conquest of Judah.

Chapter 15

Prophecy in the ancient Near East.
Mari
Assyria
Amos: “I am no prophet.”
Structure of the book:
Oracles against various nations, concluding with Israel (1:3 –2:16)
Short oracles (chaps. 3-6)
Vision reports (chaps. 7-9).
Israel and the nations: no special privilege.
The Day of the Lord as a day of judgment.
Social justice is more important than the sacrificial cult.
An end is coming on Israel.
Are you not like the Ethiopians to me?
The Judean edition of Amos.
Hosea: 2 main sections:
Chaps 1-3: the marriage metaphor for a covenantal relationship.
Chaps 4-14: religion and politics in the last years of Israel.
Critique of the cult
Critique of royal politics
When Israel was a child: human analogies for God.
The Judean redaction of Hosea.
Chapter 16

Isaiah: complex book. Compiled over several hundred years.
Chaps. 1-39: First Isaiah
Chaps. 40-55: Second Isaiah
Chaps. 56-66: Third Isaiah.
- Only part of First Isaiah is likely to derive from the 8th century prophet.
- Chaps. 24-27 = the so-called “Apocalypse of Isaiah” (postexilic)
- Chaps. 34-35 are like Second Isaiah.
- The Isaianic Memoir: chaps. 6-8.

Call vision in Isaiah 6
Prophecy of Immanuel in chap. 7.
- Prophecies of an ideal king
  - Isa 9:1-7: an enthronement oracle?
- Isaiah and social justice: Isaiah 5.
- Isaiah and Sennacherib

Chapter 17

Jeremiah
- The Greek text is shorter. Shorter Hebrew text in Dead Sea Scrolls.
- 4 kinds of material:
  A. poetic
  B. prose narratives about Jeremiah
  C. sermonic prose (Deuteronomistic)
  D. oracles against nations.
- Call of Jeremiah. More like Moses than Isaiah.
- Early preaching, like Hosea (Jer 2-3)
- Criticism of scribes: (chap. 8)
- Critique of kingship: no descendant of Jehoiachin would rule again in Jerusalem.
- Messianic oracles in chaps. 23 and 33. At least chap. 33 is a later addition.
- Critique of prophets, and criteria for true prophecy (chap. 28)
- Submission to Babylonians as God’s instruments.
- Later prophecies of hope (chaps. 31-33).
- The confessions of Jeremiah: no reward, but fire in the bones.
- Lamentations: between guilt and horror.

Chapter 18

Ezekiel
- Chaps. 1-24 mostly judgment, ending in destruction of Jerusalem
- Chaps. 1-11 framed by visions of the glory of the Lord.
- Chaps 25-32: oracles against nations
- Chaps 33-48: consolation and restoration.
Frequent use of date formulae.
Call vision and Jewish mysticism
Symbolic actions. How the prophet bears the sin of his people, to get their attention.
The vision of destruction. Justifying the wrath of God.
Jerusalem as a promiscuous woman (chap. 16).
Individual Responsibility (chap. 18)
The valley of dry bones. Restoration as resurrection.
The eschatological enemy: Gog.
The new Jerusalem: main concerns for cult, hierarchy and purity. The king or “prince” is subordinated to the priests.

Chapter 19

Second Isaiah
presupposes defeat of Babylon by Cyrus of Persia, who is called “my anointed one.”
Return to Judah seen as a new Exodus
Polemic against idolatry, deriding gods of Babylonians.
True God has been hidden, but is now revealed.
These poems must be seen in the broader context of Second Isaiah.
The Servant of the Lord is identified as Jacob/Israel in several passages.
Isa 49:1-6 is confusing, because the servant seems to have a message to Israel, and so must be either a remnant, or the true/ideal Israel.
The servant is a light to the nations. Second Isaiah believed that the exile and restoration of Judah would get the attention of the nations and convince them that Yahweh is the true God.
Isa 50:4-9 does not mention the servant, and probably refers to the prophet.
The most important servant poem is 52:13-53:12, which describes the suffering and death of the Servant. The nations confess that the Servant bore the sins of others and suffered their punishment.
The suffering of the Servant is supposed to have an effect on others by having them realize what they deserve, and changing their lives.
The death and apparent resurrection of the Servant reflects the destruction and restoration of Israel/Judah in the Exile.
Early Christians understood the death of Jesus in light of these poems.
These poems open up the possibility that suffering may not be just punishment for sin, but may have another purpose.
The Servant was not understood as the messiah in ancient Judaism before the Christian period. The promise to David is transferred to the whole people in chap. 55.
Third Isaiah ( Isa 56-66) reflects sharp division in the postexilic community. It questions the importance of the temple, and hopes for a new creation.
- The so-called Apocalypse of Isaiah (Isa 24-27) describes cosmic collapse. It cannot now be related to any one specific historical crisis.
- Isa 24-27 resembles later apocalyptic literature (Daniel) in using highly mythological imagery to describe a radical cosmic transformation, including the defeat of Death.
- The book of Isaiah as a whole moves attention away from the prophet to the message of judgment and hope for restoration.

<20>Chapter 20

- Haggai: prophesied in 520 BCE, some 18 years after first exiles returned. Lack of prosperity was due to the failure to rebuild the temple. When the foundation did not bring about a change of fortune, it would come “in a little while.” Zerubbabel was God’s signet ring. Probably expected to restore the kingship.
- Zechariah: set of 8 visions in chaps. 1-6.
- High Priest Joshua absolved of all guilt. His accusers are cast as Satan in a heavenly trial.
- Zerubabbel is the Branch of David, predicted by Jeremiah.
- The restored cult will be supported by “two sons of oil” (Zerubbabel and Joshua).
- In Zech 6 the prophet mentions “crowns,” apparently for Zerubbabel and Joshua. In the end he is told to crown Joshua alone. It seems that Zerubbabel has been erased from the text at this point.
- Malachi: sharp critique of the priesthood.
- Also seems to reject divorce.
- Epilogues to Malachi, which conclude the Minor Prophets, affirm the teaching of Moses, and the hope for the return of Elijah.
- Joel: Day of the Lord as day of general judgment on foreign nations.
- Prominence of eschatology and Day of the Lord is a unifying theme in the Book of the Twelve.

<21>Chapter 21

- Ezra-Nehemiah: originally one book. Sometimes thought to be by the same author as Chronicles, but probably not.
- Ezra 1-6: return of exiles and building of the temple. Described on the basis of documents. Ezra 4:8-6:18 is in Aramaic. Deals with return from exile and building of temple. Material is out of chronological order.
- The Ezra memoir: Ezra 7-10 + Neh 8-9.
- The Nehemiah memoir: Neh 1:1-7:73a. Neh 11-13 also relates to this.
- Ezra was a priest, skilled in the law of Moses. Sent by Persian king.
- Law corresponds substantially to Torah (including both D and P) but
- Festivals listed in Neh 8-9 do not correspond exactly to the calendar in Leviticus 23.
Major incident over internmarriage. Ezra forced divorce of foreign wives. No biblical law requires that.
Nehemiah was concerned with security of Jerusalem, and justice.
Also concerned for Judean identity (Sabbath, language).

<22>Chapter 22

- Alternative account of the history of the kingdoms.
- 1 Chron 10-2 Chron 9: David and Solomon
- 2 Chron 10-36: History of Judah after separation from Israel.
- Concludes with restoration from Exile.
- David greatly concerned with cult.
- Moral problems in David’s career are glossed over.
- Solomon also idealized. Model of piety.
- Construction of temple emphasized. No forced labor.
- Kings prosper when they follow the Law, and fail when they do not.
- Jehoshaphat receives more attention than in 1 Kings.
- Hezekiah surpasses even Josiah. Keeps Passover in Jerusalem.
- Date later than 400 BCE.

<23>Chapter 23

- Greek Psalter has one more psalm. Divides some differently.
- Superscriptions mention David in 73 psalms. Added later by editors. Eventually all psalms were ascribed to David.
- 5 books in the Psalms:
  1-41;
  42-72;
  73-89;
  90-106;
  107-50.
  Each ends with a hymn of praise.
  Psalms 42-83= the Elohistic psalter. (God is called Elohim more often than Yahweh).
- Psalms Scroll from Qumran has different arrangement for last third of Psalter.
- Gunkel: Different types of Psalms:
  Hymns
  Psalms of Yahweh’s Enthronement
  Individual and Communal Complaints
  Individual and Communal Thanksgiving
  Psalms of Ascent
  Royal Psalms
  Wisdom Psalms
- Biblical Poetry and Parallelism: repetition with slight variation.
Human destiny is Sheol, the dreary underworld.
Yet, trust in God. Life is in God’s presence, especially in temple.
Kingship of God, as creator.
Davidic kings as sons of God.
God merciful but also vengeful.
Moral problem of vengeance.
Song of Songs: love poetry. Several changes of speaker.
Envisions sexual love outside marriage.

No references to history of Israel
Nature and extent of wisdom literature.
Association with Solomon. More plausible association of scribal schools with Hezekiah.
Wisdom Instructions in Egypt.
Composition of Proverbs: 7 collections with superscriptions:
1:1-9:18: proverbs of Solomon
24:23-34: These also belong to the wise
25:1-29:17: Other proverbs of Solomon that the men of Hezekiah collected.
30:1-14: The words of Agur
31:1-9: The words of King Lemuel.
Different order in LXX.
Proverbial wisdom:
Observations
Analogies
Chain of cause and effect
Highly pragmatic
Occasional idealism: concern for the poor.
Proverbs 1-9: 2 contrasting figures
The strange woman leads to death
Lady Wisdom leads to “life,” but not immortality.
The good wife in Proverbs 31.

Job: prologue, poetic dialogues, epilogue.
Elihu a secondary addition.
Tension between the frame and the dialogues. Dialogues set the prose story in an ironic light.
Dialogues:
Friends: Does God pervert justice? Job must have sinned.
Job: would you lie for God? Show me wherein I have sinned.
Job’s self-justification in chaps. 29-31.
The speeches from the whirlwind: Where were you when I created the earth?
Job’s submission.
The relative appraisal of Job and the friends.
What has Job learned?
Qoheleth: testing by experience.
Rabbinic tradition: Solomon in his old age. But the Hebrew is late. Persian loanwords.
Date in Hellenistic period.
Vanity of vanities.
A time for everything
Same fate for humans and animals.
Therefore, enjoy life in the present.
Concluding allegory of old age.
Editorial epilogue: Enough of this. Fear God and keep the commandments.

Chapter 26
The Hebrew short story.
Ruth: the good Moabite
Practical decency and loyalty.
Uncertain date.
Jonah: the anti-prophet. Ironic view of prophetic righteousness.
Esther: No explicit mention of God. Loyalty to her people.
Trials and dangers of Diaspora life.
Violence and vengeance.
Additions in Greek translation.

Chapter 27
Daniel: part Aramaic. Greek translation has additional chapters.
Latest book in Hebrew Bible.
Pseudonymity as a literary device.
Tales and Visions.
Court tales: life in Diaspora, under foreign kings.
Historical problems: Belshazzar and Darius the Mede.
Theology of history in Daniel 2: 4 kingdoms.
Visions: apocalyptic, from time of Maccabees (168-164 BCE).
The genre apocalypse
Mythic imagery in Daniel 7. Echoes of old creation myths.
Human figure on clouds: recalls Baal. Here probably the archangel Michael.
Holy ones = angels. People of holy ones = Israel.
The ideal of martyrdom in chaps. 10-12.
First biblical reference to individual resurrection.
Afterlife with the angels.
Change in worldview entailed by hope for afterlife.
The calculation of the end.
1 Maccabees: Reactions to persecution.
Choice between martyrdom and militancy.
2 Maccabees: fuller account of Hellenistic reform.
Glorification of the martyrs.
Hope for bodily resurrection.

<28>Chapter 28
Ben Sira: early second century BCE. Before Daniel, but written in his own name.
Evidence for emerging canon.
Practical instructions in chaps. 1-23, punctuated by praise of wisdom
Hymn to wisdom in chap. 24
Hymns to creator in 39-43.
Praise of the fathers in 44-50.
Negative view of women.
Wisdom identified with Torah. But use of Torah is still allusive.
Rejects judgment after death.
Problem of Theodicy: affirms omnipotent creator.
Role of Scribe.
Affirms immortality of soul, as solution for theodicy.
Wisdom modeled on Stoic Logos: spirit that holds all things together.
Affirms possibility of knowledge of God from observation of nature.

<29>Chapter 29
The nature of this collection
How would we recognize inspiration?
Revelation?
What is meant by a canon?
Gradual formation of authoritative collection.
Enduring value of biblical literature.
Passion for justice
Prose fiction
Abuse of Bible in modern world.