

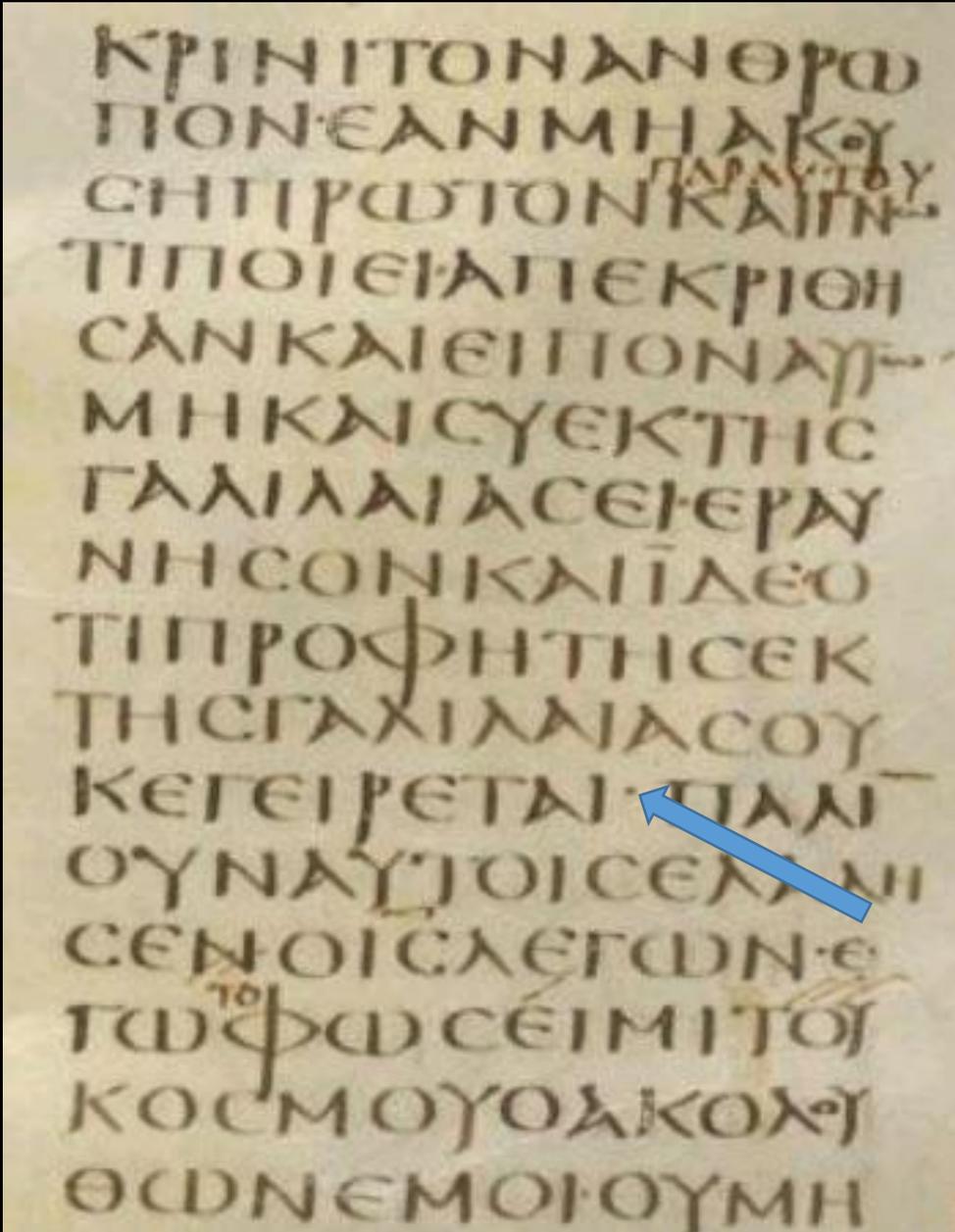
Getting the Big Picture of the Bible

Pastor Michael Wallace

September 9, 2018

Westminster Hall Sunday School Class

Selection from the Codex Sinaiticus, which does not contain the *pericope de adultera*, commonly found now in John 7:53—8:11



How should we understand the printed Bible?

- Do we have just one book?
- Is it more like a library or a compendium?
- Who wrote the books of the Bible? (Authorship)
 - Written by dozens of different authors
- When did they write? (Dating)
 - The books of the Bible were written over more than a 1,000 year time span (c. 1000 BC-100 AD)
- Where did they write? (Location and condition)
 - In the wilderness
 - In times of plenty and political/ cultural flourishing
 - In exile/ captivity/ prison
- To whom did they write? (Audience)
 - The children of Israel (who were familialy bound to the covenant)
 - To Jews who believed in Jesus or to Gentiles to believed in Jesus
- In what language did the authors write the Bible?

Shiv'im Panim I'Torah The Torah has 70 Faces

שבעים פנים לתורה

- This phrase is sometimes used to indicate different "levels" of interpretation of the Torah.
- "There are seventy faces to the Torah: Turn it around and around, for everything is in it" (Bamidbar Rabba 13:15).
- Like a gem, we can examine it from different angles.
- Even by holding it up to different lights, we can see it differently.



If you asked me, “Where do you live?,” how helpful would it be if...







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Many different approaches & questions: Going from the MACRO to the MICRO

All (Religious) Literature from the Ancient Near East

All (Religious) Literature contemporaneous with Hebrew Bible & New Testament Scripture (Apoc & Pseud)

Literature considered canonical/
authoritative by Protestants today

Genres/ Themes/ Eras

Individual Books

Narrative Arcs

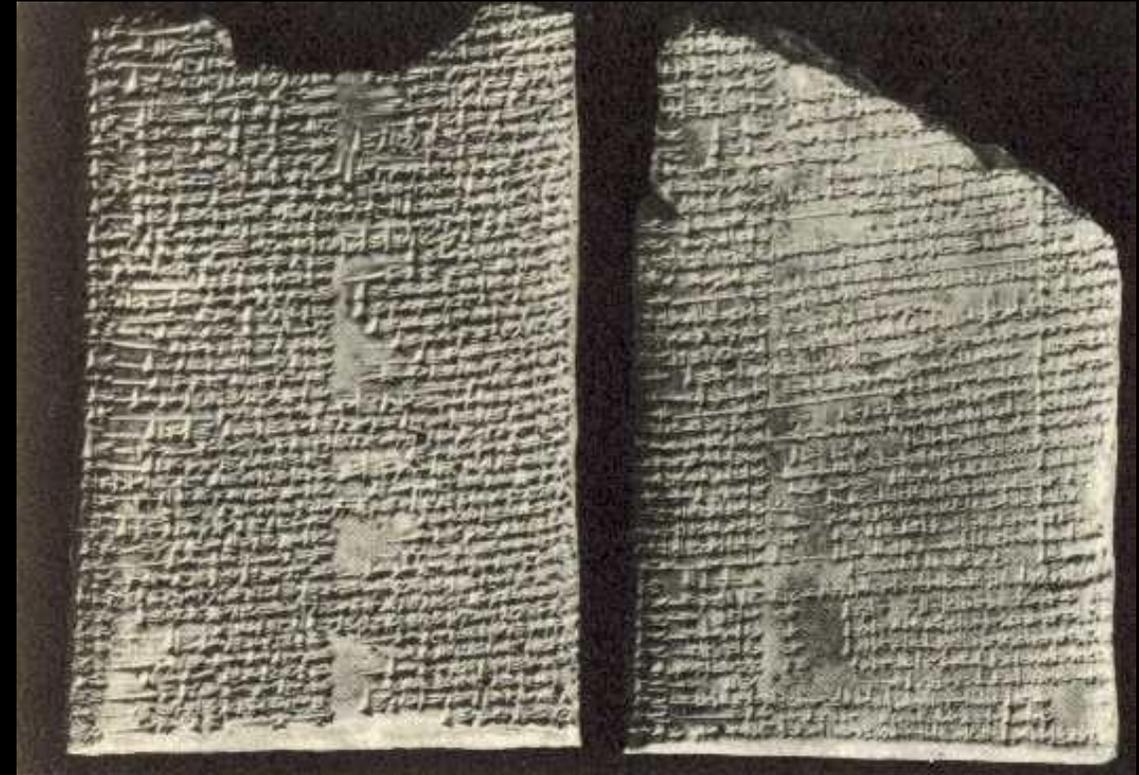
Phrases

Words

Religious Literature from the Ancient Near East

Comparing Genesis with the *Enûma Eliš*

- **A Babylonian creation story** where the god Marduk kills his nemesis Tiamat and then fillets her body in two, making the sky out of one half and the earth out of the other. Thus, Marduk claims the throne as the high god in the pantheon. Comparing it with the creation story in Genesis 1, we find some similarities:
 - Darkness precedes the creative acts.
 - In *Enuma Elish* the symbol of chaos is the goddess Tiamat who personifies the sea. Genesis refers to the “deep.” The Hebrew word is *tehom*, which is linguistically related to Tiamat.
 - **The sequence of creation is similar, including the division of waters, dry land, luminaries, and humanity, followed by rest.**
- **It is very clear that these stories share a common, ancient, way of speaking about the beginning of the cosmos.... Those similarities should not be exaggerated or minimized. But they are telling us something: even though Genesis is unique, and even though Genesis is Scripture, it is an ancient story that reflects ancient ways of thinking...The stories are not directly connected, but they share common ways of thinking about beginnings. They “breathe the same air.”**



Religious Literature from the Ancient Near East

Comparing Exodus Plagues with Egyptian Myths

Exodus Plagues (Ex 7—12)	Opposing Egyptian Dieties
Water into blood	Hapi (the god of the Nile)
Frogs	Heket, a goddess of childbirth who was represented as a frog
Lice	Geb, god of the Earth
Mixture of animals (Flies/Gnats?)	Khepri, depicted as having the head of a beetle
Diseased livestock	Hathor, who was depicted with the head of a cow.
Boils	Sekhmet and Isis, the gods of healing.
Thunderstorm of hail and fire	Seth, who manifests himself in winds and storms; Isis, goddess of life;
Locusts	or Min, god of fertility and vegetation and protector of crops
Darkness for three days	Amun-Re, the sun god”
Death of firstborn	Osiris, judge of the dead.

Excursus: The Formation of “the Canon”

The canon of scripture is a set of texts (or "books") which a particular religious community regards as authoritative scripture. The English word "canon" comes from the Greek κανών, meaning "rule" or "measuring stick".

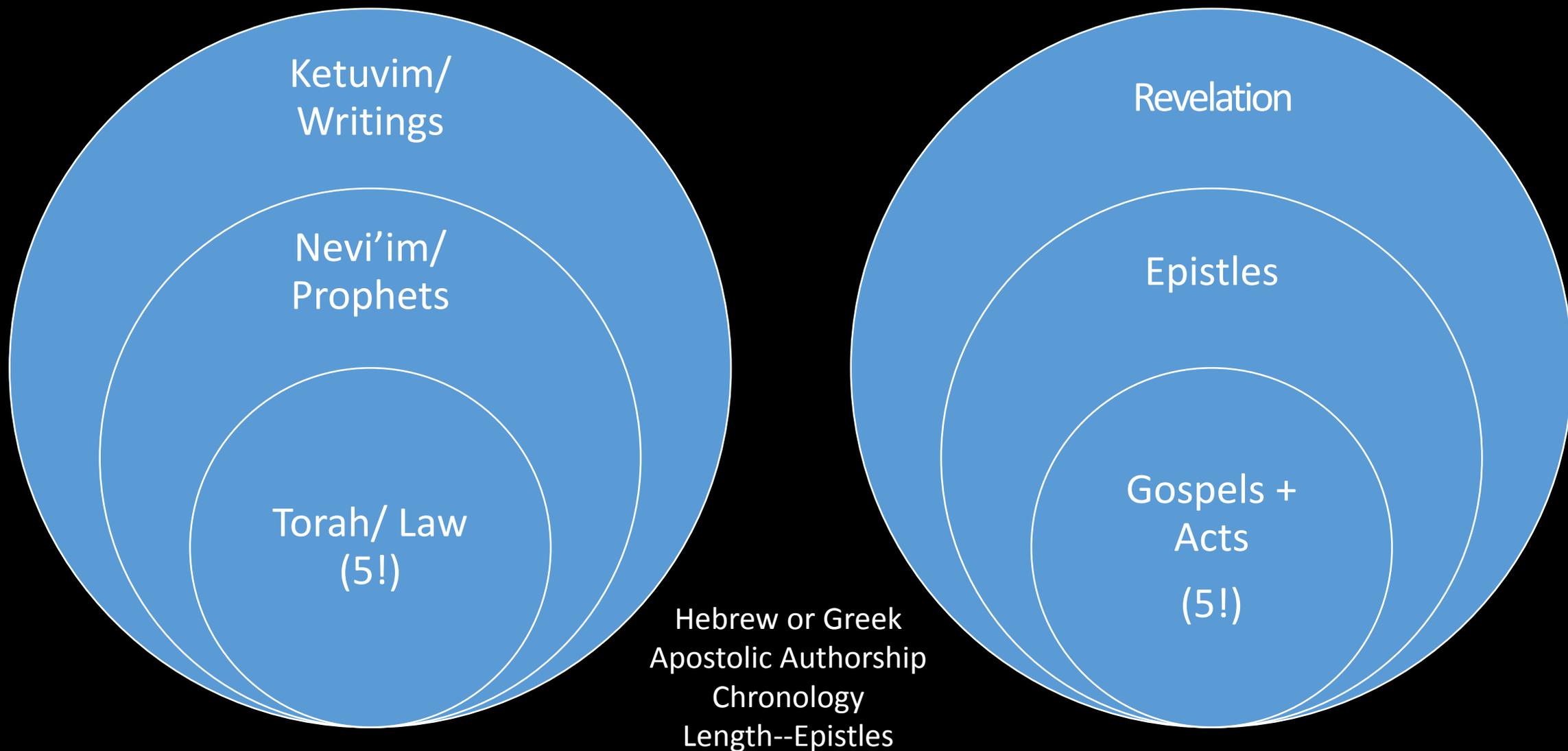
Scholar Bruce Metzger defines it as "an authoritative collection of books".

The first Christians accepted the HB as Scripture

Imagine if we were in Corinth...

“the limits of the NT canon as we know it were set forth for the first time in a Festal Letter written A.D. 367 by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. But, as evidence from subsequent writers reveals, not all in the Church were ready to accept precisely the canon as identified by Athanasius...” (Metzger, *Canon*, 7-8)

Excursus: The Formation of “the Canon”



Excursus: The Formation of “the Canon”

Deuterocanonical (AKA Apocrypha)

- Tobit
- Judith
- Additions to Esther
- 1 & 2 Maccabees
- Wisdom of Solomon
- Sirach
- Baruch
- Letter of Jeremiah
- Additions to Daniel (Bel & the Dragon, Susannah, Prayer The Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three)

Orthodox Only

- 1 & 2 Esdras
- Prayer of Manasseh
- Psalm 151
- 3 & 4 Maccabees
- Odes

Orthodox Tewahedo (Ethiopic/Eritrean) Only

- 1 Enoch
- Jubilees
- 1, 2, and 3 Meqabyan
- Paralipomena of Baruch

Excursus: The Formation of “the Canon”

Books almost included in the Canon:

Shepherd of Hermas

The Epistle of Barbabas (both of above in **κ**)

The Didache

Books almost excluded from the Canon:

Philemon, Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 3 John
and Jude (Irenaeus d. 202 didn't use them)

Revelation (last to be accepted)

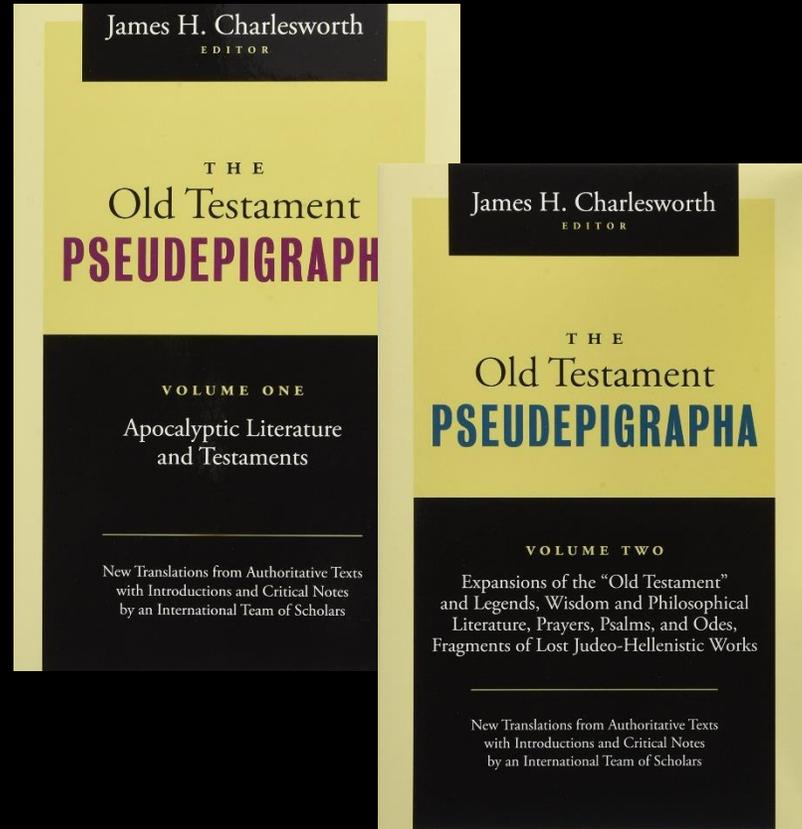
Luther questioned the value of Hebrews,
James, Jude, and Revelation (Antilegomena)

Books that are missing!!

- The Book of Jasher (mentioned in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18)
- Book of the Wars of the Lord (referenced at Numbers 21:14)
- Epistle to the Laodiceans (Colossians 4:16 "read the epistle from Laodicea")
- Another letter to the Corinthians?
 - In 2 Corinthians 7:8, Paul writes “I see that I hurt you with my letter”. Some, but definitely not all scholars believe that the letter he is referring to is not the one we have—ie. 1 Corinthians

Religious Lit. contemporaneous with Scripture (Pseudepigrapha)

1, 2, 3 Enoch
Sibylline Oracles
Treatise of Shem
Apocryphon of Ezekiel
Apocalypse of Zephaniah
4 Ezra
Gk. Apocalypse of Ezra
Vision of Ezra
Questions of Ezra
Revelation of Ezra
Apocalypse of Sedrach
2, 3 Baruch
Apocalypse of Abraham, Adam, Elijah, Daniel



Letter of Aristeas
Jubilees
Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah
Joseph and Aseneth
Life of Adam and Eve
Pseudo-Philo
The Lives of the Prophets
Ladder of Jacob
4 Baruch
Jannes and Jambres
History of the Rechabites
Eldad and Modad
History of Joseph

Religious Lit. contemporaneous with Scripture (Gnostic Writings—Nag Hammadi Library)

The Prayer of the Apostle Paul

The Apocryphon of James, John

The Treatise on the Resurrection

The Tripartite Tractate

The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Philip

The Hypostasis of the Archons

On the Origin of the World

The Exegesis on the Soul

The Book of Thomas the Contender

Eugnostos the Blessed

The Sophia of Jesus Christ

The Dialogue of the Savior

Eugnostos the Blessed

The Apocalypse of Paul

The First Apocalypse of James

The Second Apocalypse of James

The Apocalypse of Adam

The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles

The Paraphrase of Shem

The Second Treatise of the Great Seth

Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter

The Teachings of Silvanus

The Three Steles of Seth

Religious Lit. contemporaneous with Scripture (Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha)

Matthew 27: 41-42

In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’”

Wisdom 2:13, 17-20

He professes to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord... Let us see if his words are true, and let us test what will happen at the end of his life; for if the righteous man is God’s child, he will help him, and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries. Let us test him with insult and torture, so that we may find out how gentle he is, and make trial of his forbearance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to what he says, he will be protected.”

Religious Lit. contemporaneous with Scripture (Apocrypha & Pseudepigrapha)

Jude 1:14-15

It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

1 Enoch 1:9

And behold! He cometh with ten thousands of His Saints to execute judgment upon all, And to destroy all the ungodly: And to convict all flesh of all the works of their ungodliness which they have ungodly committed, And of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Does Jude’s quotation of 1 Enoch mean that he believed it to be authoritative?

Salient topics include: fallen angels (and their having children with women), first known usage of “Son of Man” (later used to describe Jesus), apocalyptic language, emphasis on eschatology

Literature considered canonical by Protestants

Hebrew Bible

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Hosea
- Joel

- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

New Testament

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

Genre Option 1

Hebrew Bible

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
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- Joel
- Amos
- Obadiah
- Jonah
- Micah
- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

New Testament

- Matthew
- Mark
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- John
- Acts
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Books, Prophets; Gospels & Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

Genre Option 2—The approach we will take!

Hebrew Bible

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel
- 1 Kings
- 2 Kings
- 1 Chronicles
- 2 Chronicles
- Ezra
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes
- Song of Songs
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
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- Jonah
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- Nahum
- Habakkuk
- Zephaniah
- Haggai
- Zechariah
- Malachi

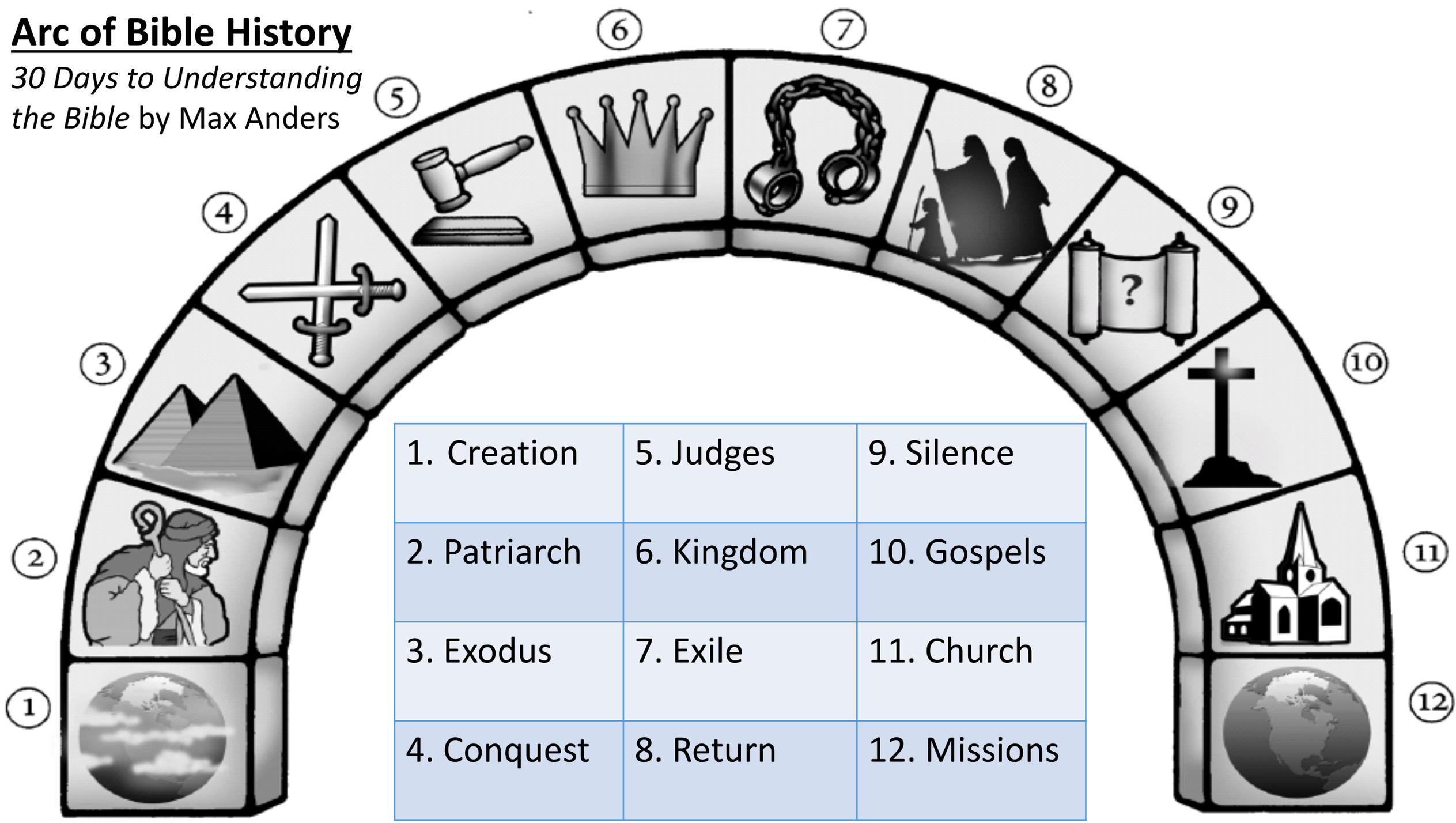
New Testament

- Matthew
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- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

Torah, Nevi'im, Kethuvim; Gospels & Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

Arc of Bible History

30 Days to Understanding
the Bible by Max Anders



1. Creation	5. Judges	9. Silence
2. Patriarch	6. Kingdom	10. Gospels
3. Exodus	7. Exile	11. Church
4. Conquest	8. Return	12. Missions

Phrases and Grammar

- Βίβλος γενέσεως (Matt 1)
- βίβλος γενέσεως (Gen 5:1--תּוֹלְדוֹת סֵפֶר הַיְּהוּדִים)
 - A book of generations, intertextual connections, parallels between Adam and Jesus
- πίστεως Ἰησοῦ (The faith OF or IN Christ?)

The issue can be illustrated by Gal 2:16, which contains two of the disputed readings. This is rendered by NRSV as: We know that a person is justified not by works of the law but *through faith in Jesus Christ* (δια πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). And we have come *to believe in Christ Jesus* (εἰς Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν ἐπίστευσάμεν) so that we might be justified by faith in Christ (ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ) and not by doing the works of the law. The question is whether the italicised phrases should be read as objective genitives, naming a faith of which Jesus Christ is the object ("faith in Jesus Christ") or as subjective genitives, naming a faith of which Jesus Christ is the subject ("faith of Jesus Christ"). (Dunnill: πίσσις χριστοῦ)

Words Worthy of Consideration

Hapax Legomena & dis legomenon

- עֵצֵי-גֹפֶר (Gopher wood?)—Appears in the instructions to Noah in Genesis 6:14 on how to build the ark. The literal meaning is lost. Gopher is simply a transliteration, although some scholars today tentatively suggest that the wood intended is cypress.
- ἐπιούσιος—Appears *only* in the Matthean and Lucan Lord's Prayers (normally translated as daily, but understood primarily through translations)

Words Worthy of Consideration

Hebrew

- Elohim • אֱלֹהִים
- YHWH • יהוה
- Shalom • שְׁלוֹמִים
- Chesed • חֶסֶד

Greek

- Christos • Χριστός
- Ekklesia • ἐκκλησία
- Skubalon • σκύβαλον
- Koinonia • κοινωνία

Philippians 3:8 (NRSV)

More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish [σκύβαλον], in order that I may gain Christ.

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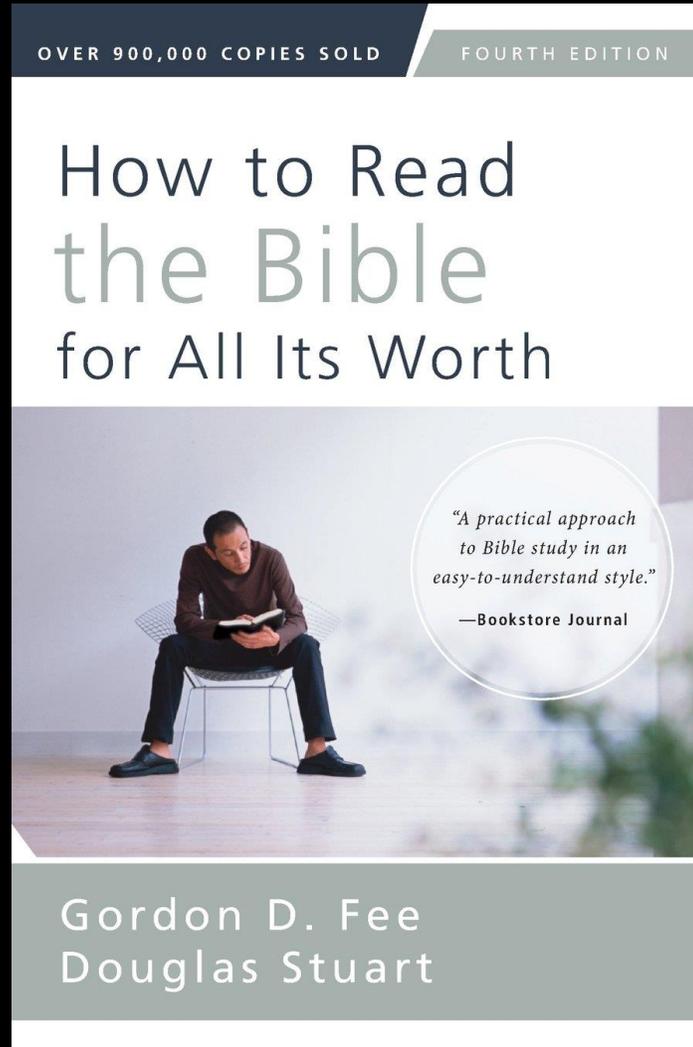
Shiv'im Panim I'Torah The Torah has 70 Faces

שבעים פנים לתורה

- Throughout this class, we will focus on genre; however, at various points, we will zoom out to the macro and zoom in to the micro.
- With every turn of the gem, we will have another opportunity to ask questions and to learn more about our holy book.
- This should encourage us that there is ALWAYS more that we can learn about the Bible.



Resource for your personal study



- Highly recommended for everyone in the class.
- Goes more in depth with many topics that we will cover
- Approaches the Scripture from the aspect of genre, like we will in class
- Available to all who will read it
- Suggested donation is \$10