Hebrew Bible

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*This article is about Hebrew and Aramaic texts that constitute Jewish scripture. For the Jewish*[*canon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon)*, see*[*Tanakh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh)*. For the major textual tradition, see*[*Masoretic Text*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text)*. For their use in the Christian Bible, see*[*Old Testament*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament)*. For the series of modern critical editions, see*[*Biblia Hebraica (Kittel)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblia_Hebraica_%28Kittel%29)*.*

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| Part of [a series](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category%3ABible) on the |
| [**Bible**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) |
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Page from an 11th-century [Aramaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_language) [*Targum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Targum) manuscript of the Hebrew Bible.

**Hebrew Bible** or **Hebrew Scriptures** ([Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): *Biblia Hebraica*) is the term used by [biblical scholars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_scholars) to refer to the [*Tanakh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh) ([Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language): תנ"ך‎‎; [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language): *Thanach*), the canonical collection of Jewish texts, which is the common textual source of several [canonical editions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Old_Testament_canon) of the [Christian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian) [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament). They are composed mainly in [Biblical Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Hebrew), with some passages in [Biblical Aramaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Aramaic) (in the books of [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel), [Ezra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezra) and a few others).

The content to which the [Protestant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism) [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) closely corresponds does not act as a source for the [deuterocanonical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deuterocanonical) portions of the [Roman Catholic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) or to the *Anagignoskomena* portions of the [Eastern Orthodox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox) Old Testaments. The term does not comment upon the naming, numbering or ordering of books, which varies with later [Christian biblical canons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_biblical_canons).

The term Hebrew Bible is an attempt to provide specificity with respect to contents but avoid allusion to any particular interpretative tradition or theological school of thought. It is widely used in academic writing and [interfaith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interfaith) discussion in relatively neutral contexts meant to include dialogue among all religious traditions but not widely in the inner discourse of the religions that use its text.

Usage

Hebrew Bible refers to the [Jewish biblical canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon#Jewish_canons). In its [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin) form, *Biblia Hebraica*, it traditionally serves as a title for printed editions of the [Masoretic Text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text). Many [biblical studies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_studies) scholars advocate use of the term "Hebrew Bible" (or "Hebrew Scriptures") as a neutral substitute to terms with religious connotations (e.g., the non-neutral term "Old Testament"). The [Society of Biblical Literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society_of_Biblical_Literature)'s *Handbook of Style*, which is the standard for major academic journals like the [*Harvard Theological Review*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Theological_Review) and conservative Protestant journals like the [*Bibliotheca Sacra*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliotheca_Sacra) and the [*Westminster Theological Journal*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Theological_Journal), suggests that authors "be aware of the connotations of alternative expressions such as... Hebrew Bible [and] Old Testament" without prescribing the use of either. McGrath points out that while the term emphasizes that it is largely written in Hebrew and "is sacred to the Hebrew people", it "fails to do justice to the way in which Christianity sees an essential continuity between the Old and New Testaments", arguing that there is "no generally accepted alternative to the traditional term "Old Testament." However, he accepts that there is no reason why non-Christians should feel obliged to refer to these books as the Old Testament, "apart from custom of use."

**Additional difficulties**

In terms of theology, Christianity has recognized the close relationship between the Old and New Testaments from its very beginnings, although there have sometimes been movements like [Marcionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcionism) (viewed as heretical by the early church), that have struggled with it. Modern Christian formulations of this tension include [Supersessionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supersessionism), [Covenant Theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_Theology), [New Covenant Theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Covenant_Theology), [Dispensationalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dispensationalism) and [Dual-covenant theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual-covenant_theology). All of these formulations, except some forms of Dual-covenant theology, are objectionable to mainstream Judaism and to many Jewish scholars and writers, for whom there is one eternal [covenant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Covenant_%28religion%29) between God and the [Israelites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israelites), and who therefore reject the term "Old Testament" as a form of [antinomianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antinomianism).

In terms of [canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Christian_Biblical_canon), Christian usage of "Old Testament" does not refer to a universally agreed upon set of books but, rather, [varies depending on denomination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canon_of_the_Old_Testament). Lutheranism and Protestant denominations that follow the [Westminster Confession of Faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith) accept the entire Jewish canon as the Old Testament without additions, however in translation they sometimes give preference to the [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint) rather than the Masoretic Text; for example, see [Isaiah 7:14](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaiah_7%3A14).

In terms of language, "Hebrew" refers to the original language of the books, but it may also be taken as referring to the Jews of the [Second Temple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Temple) era and [Jewish diaspora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_diaspora), and their descendants, who preserved the transmission of the Masoretic Text up to the present day. The Hebrew Bible includes small portions in [Aramaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Aramaic) (mostly in the books of [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel) and [Ezra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ezra)), written and printed in [Aramaic square-script](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_alphabet), which was adopted as the [Hebrew alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_alphabet) after the [Babylonian exile](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babylonian_exile).

Origins of the Hebrew Bible and its components

*Main articles:*[*Dating the Bible*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dating_the_Bible)*and*[*Development of the Hebrew Bible canon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Hebrew_Bible_canon)

The books that constitute the Hebrew Bible developed over roughly a millennium. The oldest texts seem to come from the 11th or 10th centuries BCE, whilst most of the other texts are somewhat later. They are edited works, being collections of various sources intricately and carefully woven together.

Since the 19th century, most [biblical scholars](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_scholar) have agreed that the Pentateuch (the first five books of Scriptures) consists of four sources which have been woven together. These four sources are J (Yahwist), D (Deuteronomist), E (Elohist) and P (Priestly) sources. They were combined to form the Pentateuch sometime in the 6th century BCE. This theory is now known as the [documentary hypothesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Documentary_hypothesis), and has been the dominant theory for the past two hundred years. The [Deuteronomist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deuteronomist) credited with the Pentateuch's book of Deuteronomy is also said to be the source of the books of [Joshua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Joshua), [Judges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judges), [Samuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Samuel), and [Kings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_Kings) (the Deuteronomistic history, or DtrH) and also in the [book of Jeremiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Jeremiah).

Scholarly editions

Several editions, all titled *Biblia Hebraica*, have been produced by various German publishers since 1906.

* Between 1906 and 1955, [Rudolf Kittel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Kittel) published [nine editions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblia_Hebraica_%28Kittel%29) of it.
* 1966, the [Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutsche_Bibelgesellschaft) published the renamed [Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblia_Hebraica_Stuttgartensia) in six editions until 1997.
* Since 2004 the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft has published the [Biblia Hebraica Quinta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblia_Hebraica_Quinta), including all variants of the [Qumran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran) manuscripts as well as the [Masorah Magna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text#Numerical_Masorah).

Other projects include:

* [Hebrew University Bible Project](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_University_Bible_Project)
* [Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_Hebrew_Bible)

See also[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hebrew_Bible&action=edit&section=5)]

* [***Judaism portal***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal%3AJudaism)

* [Biblical canon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon)
* [Books of the Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Bible)
* [Non-canonical books referenced in the Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-canonical_books_referenced_in_the_Bible)
* [Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah)

Further reading

* [*Brueggemann, Walter*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Brueggemann)*(1997).*[*An introduction to the Old Testament: the canon and Christian imagination*](https://books.google.com/books?id=WvX4ZlRUxwYC&pg=PR3&dq=isbn:0800637658&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=3#v=onepage&q=Hebrew%20bible&f=false)*. Westminster John Knox Press.*[*ISBN*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number)[*978-0-664-22412-7*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/978-0-664-22412-7)*.*
* [*Johnson, Paul*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Johnson_%28writer%29)*(1987). A History of the Jews (First, hardback ed.). London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.*[*ISBN*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number)[*0-297-79091-9*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0-297-79091-9)*.*
* [*Kugel, James L.*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Kugel)*(1997). The Bible as It Was. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.*[*ISBN*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number)[*0-674-06940-4*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0-674-06940-4)*.*
* Kuntz, John Kenneth. *The People of Ancient Israel: an introduction to Old Testament Literature, History, and Thought*, Harper and Row, 1974. [ISBN 0-06-043822-3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0060438223)
* Leiman, Sid. *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture*. (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1976).
* Levenson, Jon. *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible*. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1985).
* *Minkoff, Harvey.*[*"Searching for the Better Text"*](https://web.archive.org/web/20120314095848/http%3A/www.bib-arch.org/e-features/searching-for-better-text.asp)*. Biblical Archaeology Review (online). Archived from*[*the original*](http://www.bib-arch.org/e-features/searching-for-better-text.asp)*on 14 March 2012. Retrieved 9 June 2011.*
* [*Pritchard, James B.*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_B._Pritchard)*(1973). The Ancient Near East, Volume I. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.*[*ISBN*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number)[*0691035016*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/0691035016)*.* An abridgement of [Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Near_Eastern_Texts_Relating_to_the_Old_Testament)
* [Noth, Martin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Noth). *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*. (1948; trans. by Bernhard Anderson; Atlanta: Scholars, 1981).
* *Schniedewind, William M (2004).*[*How the Bible Became a Book*](https://books.google.com/books?id=tCTVc8_2vVQC&printsec=frontcover&dq=How+the+Bible+Became+a+Book#v=onepage&q&f=false)*. Cambridge.*[*ISBN*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Standard_Book_Number)[*9780521536226*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special%3ABookSources/9780521536226)*.*
* Schmid, Konrad. *The Old Testament: A Literary History*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012).

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