OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

RPH 110
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Syllabus

- Requirements
- Educator

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The Problem of Interpretation

- “Are you the father of one of my children?”
  - Why does the man misunderstand the woman?
  - Other than drinking Minute Maid, how could he have come up with a correct interpretation of her question?

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One problem with interpretation of Bible is anachronism.

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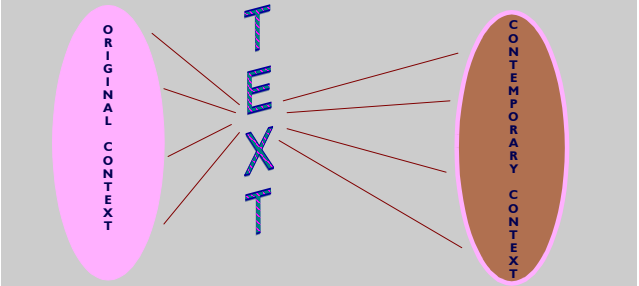
Interpretation



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Understanding Context: Three Worlds of the Bible

- Literary World - form, structure, style, theme
- Historical World - the historical context referred to in the text and the historical context during which the text was written
- Contemporary World - the application of the text to our lives and situations

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BASICS IN STUDYING THE BIBLE

Bible - from Biblia meaning "books"

Books - Chapters - Verses

(artificial system created in the 13th & 16th centuries)

Genesis 8:10-14

Book Chapter Verses

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Textual Criticism - the study of ancient manuscripts

- Where are the original manuscripts of the Old Testament?
- Reconstucting manuscripts:

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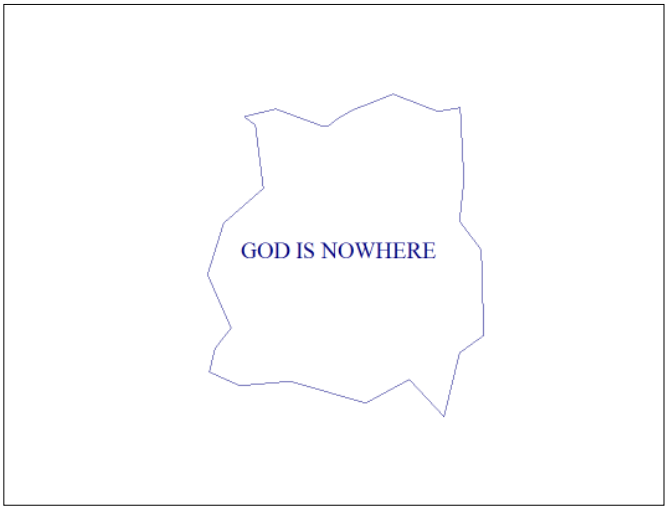

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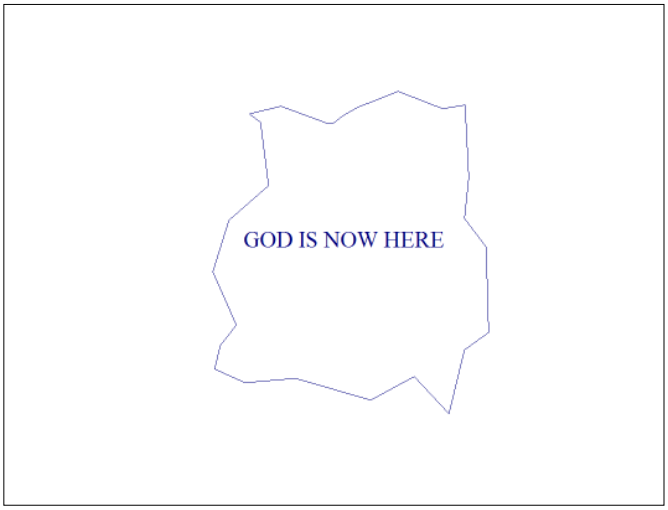

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Example of How to Punctuate

- There's the story of the English professor who wrote "a woman without her man is nothing" on the blackboard and directed the students to punctuate it correctly.
- The men wrote: "A woman, without her man, is nothing."
- The women wrote: "A woman: without her, man is nothing."
- Point: even punctuation is affected by our preconceptions

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TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

LITERAL TRANSLATIONS	DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY
from Septuagint to Vulgate	Good News(Today's English Version>
Luther's German Translation	Jerusalem Bible
King James (Authorized Version)	New International Bible
American Standard Version	New English Bible
Revised Standard Version	Contemporary Version
New Revised Standard Version	New Living Translation
	Living Bible???

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Tanak

Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures

- Torah — law, teaching
  - Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- Nevi'm — prophets (ones who are called, ones called forth)
  - FORMER PROPHETS: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
  - LATTER PROPHETS: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel ("major" prophets), Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi (Book of the Twelve or "minor" prophets)
- Ketuvim — writings ("all the rest")
  - Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, 1&2 Chronicles

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Formation of Canon

- Canon — "measuring rod" refers to books of Bible seen as authoritative for faith
  - **400 BCE — Torah generally accepted throughout Judaism**
  - **200 BCE — Prophets widely accepted**
  - **100 BCE-100 CE — Writings gaining acceptance**
  - **85-90 CE — Hebrew Scriptures settled at Council of Jamnia**

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Protestant vs. Catholic Old Testament

- All of books of Jewish Tanak are in Protestant and Roman Catholic Old Testaments, but in differing order
- Roman Catholic Bible includes “deutero-canonical” [second canon] books and additions that date back to early church:
  - Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Baruch and the Letter or Jeremiah, I & 2 Maccabees, additions to Esther & Daniel

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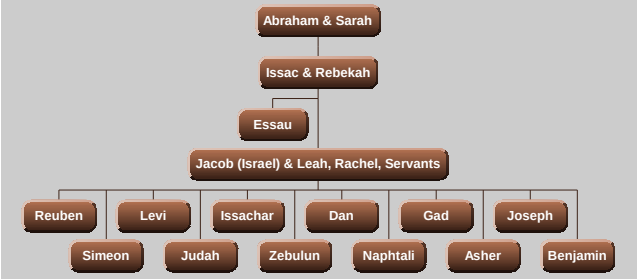
Ancestral Period (2000-1550 BCE?)



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Time line

- 13th cent. BCE — Exodus: Moses & Covenant in Wilderness
- 13th-11 cent. BCE — Joshua: conquest & settlement
- 11th cent.-922 BCE — Saul, David, Solomon and the United Kingdom
- 922-721 BCE — Northern Kingdom of Israel
- 931-598/87 BCE — Southern Kingdom of Judah
- 587-539 BCE — Babylonian Exile/Diaspora
- 539-400 BCE — Return from Exile/Persian Period
- 400 BCE-70 CE — Hellenistic Period to destruction of Temple

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Critical Methods

Prologue to the Torah

- Source Criticism — what written sources made up the text we now have?
- Traditions Criticism — what oral traditions lie behind the written sources?
  - Traditions criticism is analysis of the traditions that have influenced the biblical text in order to understand the influence of those traditions and how the biblical tradition has shaped the traditions in new ways
- Literary Criticism — how does structure, form, etc., shape the theme of the text?
- Feminist Criticism — how has the translation and interpretation of this text been affected by *patriarchy*?