

Everything You Wanted to Know About Judaism But Didn't Have Time to Ask

Mar 26; March 31; April 2; 12:00 pm

<https://zoom.us/j/453537080>

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Meeting ID: 453 537 080

Hebrew Bible (Jewish)	Greek Septuagint (Greek Orthodox)	Latin Vulgate (Roman Catholic)	Protestant Bibles
<p>TORAH</p> <p>1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers 5) Deuteronomy</p> <p>NEVIIM: THE PROPHETS</p> <p>6) Joshua 7) Judges 8) 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel 9) 1 Kings and 2 Kings 10) Isaiah 11) Jeremiah 12) Ezekiel 13) The Twelve: Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p> <p>KETUVIM: THE WRITINGS</p> <p>14) Psalms 15) Proverbs 16) Job 17) Song of Songs 18) Ruth</p>	<p>THE LAW</p> <p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p>HISTORIES</p> <p>Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles [Prayer of Manasseh] 1 Esdras Ezra Nehemiah Tobit Judith Esther (with insertions) 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees [3 Maccabees] [4 Maccabees]</p> <p>WISDOM/ POETRY</p> <p>Job Psalms [Psalm no. 151] [Odes] Proverbs</p>	<p>THE LAW</p> <p>Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy</p> <p>HISTORIES</p> <p>Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Prayer of Manasseh 1 Esdras 2 Esdras Ezra Nehemiah Tobit Judith Esther (with insertions) 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees</p> <p>WISDOM/ POETRY</p> <p>Job Psalms</p> <p>Proverbs</p>	<p>THE LAW</p> <p>1) Genesis 2) Exodus 3) Leviticus 4) Numbers 5) Deuteronomy</p> <p>HISTORIES</p> <p>6) Joshua 7) Judges 8) Ruth 9) 1 Samuel 10) 2 Samuel 11) 1 Kings 12) 2 Kings 13) 1 Chronicles 14) 2 Chronicles 15) Ezra 16) Nehemiah 17) Esther</p> <p>WISDOM/ POETRY</p> <p>18) Job 19) Psalms 20) Proverbs 21) Ecclesiastes 22) Song of Songs</p>
<p>19) Lamentations 20) Ecclesiastes 21) Esther 22) Daniel 23) Ezra and Nehemiah 24) 1 Chronicles and 2 Chronicles</p>	<p>Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus [Psalms of Solomon]</p> <p>PROPHECY</p> <p>Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Ezekiel Daniel (with insertions) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p>	<p>Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus</p> <p>PROPHECY</p> <p>Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Ezekiel Daniel (with insertions) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi</p>	<p>PROPHECY</p> <p>23) Isaiah 24) Jeremiah 25) Lamentations 26) Ezekiel 27) Daniel 28) Hosea 29) Joel 30) Amos 31) Obadiah 32) Jonah 33) Micah 34) Nahum 35) Habakkuk 36) Zephaniah 37) Haggai 38) Zechariah 39) Malachi</p> <p>APOCRYPHA</p> <p>1 Esdras 2 Esdras Tobit Judith Additions to Esther Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus Baruch Epistle of Jeremiah Song of the Three Children Story of Susanna Bel and the Dragon Prayer of Manasseh 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees</p>

- 1) -The Hebrew Bible (*Tanach*) is an anthology with four main types of books:
  - History (narrative) (which in the Torah includes law)
  - Prophecy
  - Wisdom (advice on how to live a good life; or books reflecting on the ways of the world)
  - Hymns (the book of Psalms)
  
- 2) -The Hebrew Biblical books derive from different groups/classes:
  - Priests (teach Torah); institutional home of priests was temple; cult of sacrifices.
  - Prophets (speak the word of the Lord); not institutional; warning figures and social critics.
  - Scribes (or sages) (give sage advice).

-The tripartite arrangement (Torah; Prophets; Writings) of the Original Jewish Hebrew Bible reflects these sources.
  
- 3) -The Hebrew Bible was canonized no later than the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.
  - This dating is either the cause or the consequence of the idea that prophecy had ceased.
  - Books that explicitly declare that they derive from a time later than the fifth century BCE (e.g. Ben Sira, the books of the Maccabees) are not in the Jewish Hebrew Bible.
  - Jewish Bibles also do not contain the apocrypha or apocryphal books

4) -Traditionally, the Biblical books are seen as unitary compositions from single authors.

- Modern scholars: most of the books have a long period of gestation and derive from many sources; the latest books derive from long after c. 450 BCE, perhaps even as late as the mid second century BCE.

5) Major themes of the biblical books:

- God is the universal God who created the world and established a universal moral order.
- This God is the God of both nature and history.
- God stands in a special relationship with the people of Israel through a covenant and revealed law.
- God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked, both individually and collectively, both of Israel and of the nations.

6) -What is Judaism?

-The Jewish “Trinity”: God, Torah, and Israel.

- God (Many different ways of perceiving the **One** God.)
- Torah (Law, Tradition, Custom)
- Israel (Land and People)

7) The Bible and all classical Jewish texts are suffused with a belief in God.

- Belief-in = trust, confidence

8) -In classical texts, Jewish identity centered on the study and observance of the Torah.

9) -Maimonides (1138- 1204) re-interpreted Judaism as a series of truth claims, a series of propositions about God, Prophecy, and Providence. (Belief-that statements)

-Maimonides was not the first to do this but he certainly was the most important and the most influential.

-For Maimonides the thirteen principles of belief, or articles of faith (or at least the first five) were not really dogmas; they could be demonstrated by philosophical logic – they were rational. (The rationality of Judaism’s articles of faith will have a long career in Jewish thought.)

- God exists
- God is a unity
- God has no body
- God is eternal
- God alone is to be worshipped.

-Virtually all post-Maimonidean Jewish theology is in dialogue with Maimonides.

10) Why did Maimonides redefine Judaism as a series of truth claims?

- To respond to Christianity and Islam.
- To demonstrate his own fidelity to traditional Judaism vs. his philosophic pursuits

11) -Torah (“instruction”) is the collective title for the first five books of the Bible (Chumash/5 Books of Moses); in Jewish tradition these are the most important books of the Bible.

-The “Written” Torah consist of narratives and laws (commandments).

-The “Ten Commandments” are famous but there are many more than that.  
(Rabbinic tradition = 613 commandments)

12) Greek-speaking Jews in antiquity called the Torah “the Law.”

-These laws treat diverse areas:

- Theology (e.g. You shall have no other God beside me; prohibition of image worship)
- Ethics (e.g. Love your neighbor as yourself; do not bear a grudge; do not covet)
- Ritual (e.g. Sabbath and festivals)
- Sacred (e.g. animal sacrifices at the central shrine; purity rules)
- Civil (e.g. goring oxen; torts; buying/selling land and houses; inheritance)
- Criminal (e.g. murder, theft)
- Public (e.g. king, judges, prophet)
- Marriage (and sexual relations)

13) -Rabbinic texts distinguish the “Written” Torah from the “Oral” Torah.

-The Oral Torah is an idea, a theory, and a belief, according to which Moses at Mount Sinai received two Torahs from God, one written, and the other oral.

- (c. 200CE) The Mishnah, the first rabbinic book, came to be viewed as the earliest written expression of the Oral Torah.

-The Torah gives commandments briefly, sometimes cryptically, the Oral Torah spells out the details.

-The normative expansions, elaborations, specifications of the commandments of the Torah constitute the halakhah.

14) Torah as book, Torah as law, Torah as rabbinic tradition and customary practice -- the word Torah is sometimes a synonym for Judaism.

15) Israel:

- The Bible is by and for the most part about the people of Israel
- The God of the Bible is at one and the same time the creator and upholder of the universe and also the national God of the people of Israel.
- Thus in Genesis 1-11 God creates the world and all the people therein
- in Genesis 12 God begins a special relationship with Abraham, patriarch of the people of Israel.

16) Jews have long had a strong sense of peoplehood (Am Yisrael; Klal Yisrael) -- sociologists call it “familism” – And in spite of the fact that sincere gentile converts are accepted, Jewishness is an ethnicity.

17) This special relationship of Israel with God (“The Chosen People”) has been understood in various ways over the centuries: a product of either essentialism (Jews are inherently different from other people) or functionalism (Jewish difference is a function of the observance of the Torah).

- 18) Privilege vs. Obligation
- 19) Chosen People vs. Choosing People
- 20) Chosen Land vs. Promised Land
- 21) Jewish reflections on God-Torah-Israel show both continuity and discontinuity between the Bible and Judaism.
- 22) Maimonides' elevation of truth claims is not biblical, nor are his ideas about God's unity, incorporeality and eternity.
- 23) Idea of oral Torah, tradition, halakha, authoritative books beyond the Torah itself -  
- all these are unknown to the Torah.
- 24) Israel – the chosen people idea is biblical, although medieval and modern philosophers develop it in non-biblical ways.
- 25) Israelite vs. Jew