

Has God Spoken?

Lesson #09

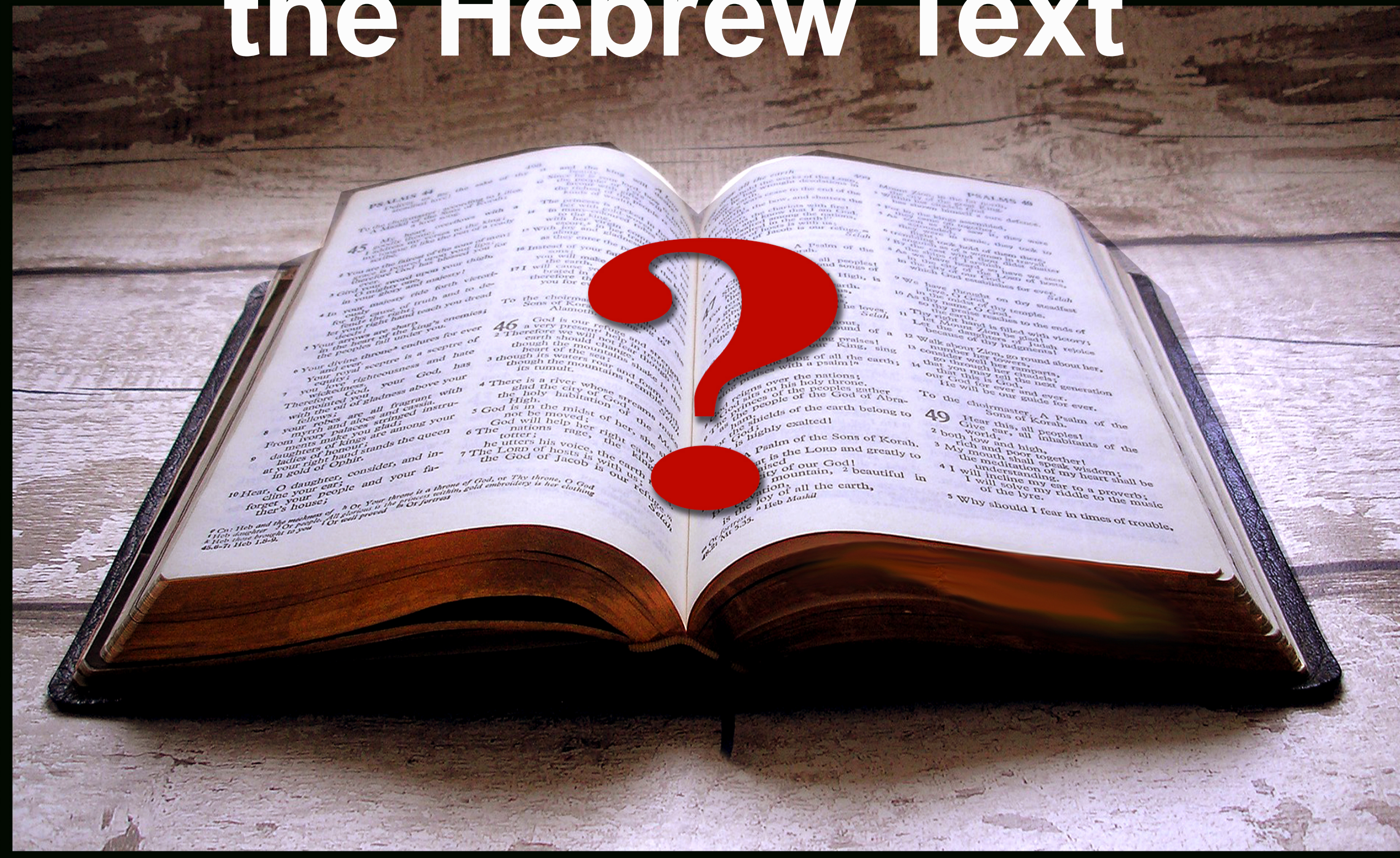
January 13, 2022

Dean Bible Ministries

www.deanbibleministries.org

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Trusting the Hebrew Text



Has God Spoken?

Gen. 3:1, “Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree of the garden”?’”

Gen. 3:2, “And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

Gen. 3:3, “ ‘but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.” ’ ”

Who is this GOD?

What Does the Bible Claim for Itself?



How Did we Get the Hebrew Scriptures?



How Did the Bible Get Written?



Is the Hebrew Bible Accurate?



Did Moses Really Write the Torah?



**How Can we be Sure
we Have the Old Testament—
No More and no Less?**



Can we Trust the Old Testament?



The Surviving Texts of the Bible

Witnesses to the Hebrew Bible

(adapted from R. Price, *Searching for the Original Bible*)

Primary Sources	Secondary Sources
Silver Amulet Nash Papyrus	Samaritan Pentateuch
Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) 202 mss Psalms (36 mss) Deuteronomy (29 mss) Isaiah (21 mss, Isa scroll)	Greek versions or recensions Septuagint (LXX), Aquila, Symmachus, Kaige-Theodotion, Origen's Hexapla, Hesychius, Lucian, Post-Hexapla revisions
Habakkuk Commentary <i>Tefilin</i> and <i>mezuzoth</i> from Judean Desert	Aramaic Targums Syriac versions (Peshitta, Syro-Hexapla)
Severus Scroll About 3,000 Masoretic Mss.	Coptic versions, Ethiopic version, Armenian version, Arabic versions

The New Testament is written over a period of less than 60 years, and we have recovered fragments dating within a couple of decades of the writing.

However, the Old Testament was written over a period longer than a thousand years, and the oldest manuscripts we now have date to around 250 BC.

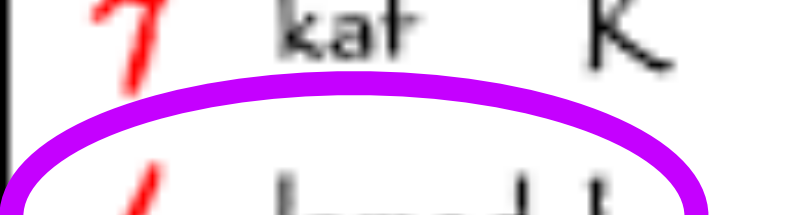
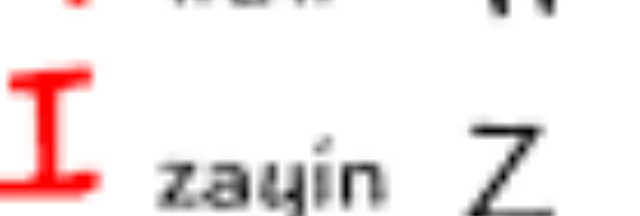
What is “Textual Criticism?”




























Textual criticism, sometimes called lower criticism, is the attempt to reconstruct the original manuscript which we no longer have, from the many copies or manuscripts which we do have. The process involves determining the date, quality, and provenance of a manuscript, but also sifting through manuscripts and fragments, evaluating the various differences between them, and determining how a variant reading might have come to be.

The vast majority of variant readings involve spelling errors, copiest errors (in Hebrew the *dālet* [ד] and the *rêš* [ר] are easily confused, as are a number of other letters), sometimes a word is added, sometimes doubled, sometimes letters are transposed). Updated spellings and names and grammar also occur.

Very few alter the meaning of a verse, and even fewer affect the meaning of a passage, and almost none impact a major teaching of Scripture.

Proto-Hebrew / Aramaic

 'alef '  het H  samek S
 beyt B  tet T  'ayin '  pe P
 gimel G  yod Y  kaf K  sadde S
 dalet D  lamed L  qop Q
 he H  mem M  resh R
 waw W  nun N  sin S
 zayin Z  taw T

<i>Cheth</i>	<i>Zain</i>	<i>Vau</i>	<i>He</i>	<i>Daleth</i>	<i>Gimel</i>	<i>Beth</i>	<i>Aleph</i>
							
<i>Ain</i>	<i>Samech</i>	<i>Nun</i>	<i>Mem</i>	<i>Lamed</i>	<i>Caph</i>	<i>Yod</i>	<i>Teth</i>
							
<i>Point</i>	<i>Tau</i>	<i>Shin</i>	<i>Resh</i>	<i>Koph</i>	<i>Tzade</i>	<i>Pe</i>	
							
<i>Extended forms of</i>							
<i>Tau</i>	<i>Mem</i>	<i>Lamed</i>	<i>He</i>	<i>Aleph</i>			
							

- 1. The various Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament:
These are called primary sources.**
- 2. Translations of the ancient Hebrew text: These are
secondary sources.**

The Masoretic Text

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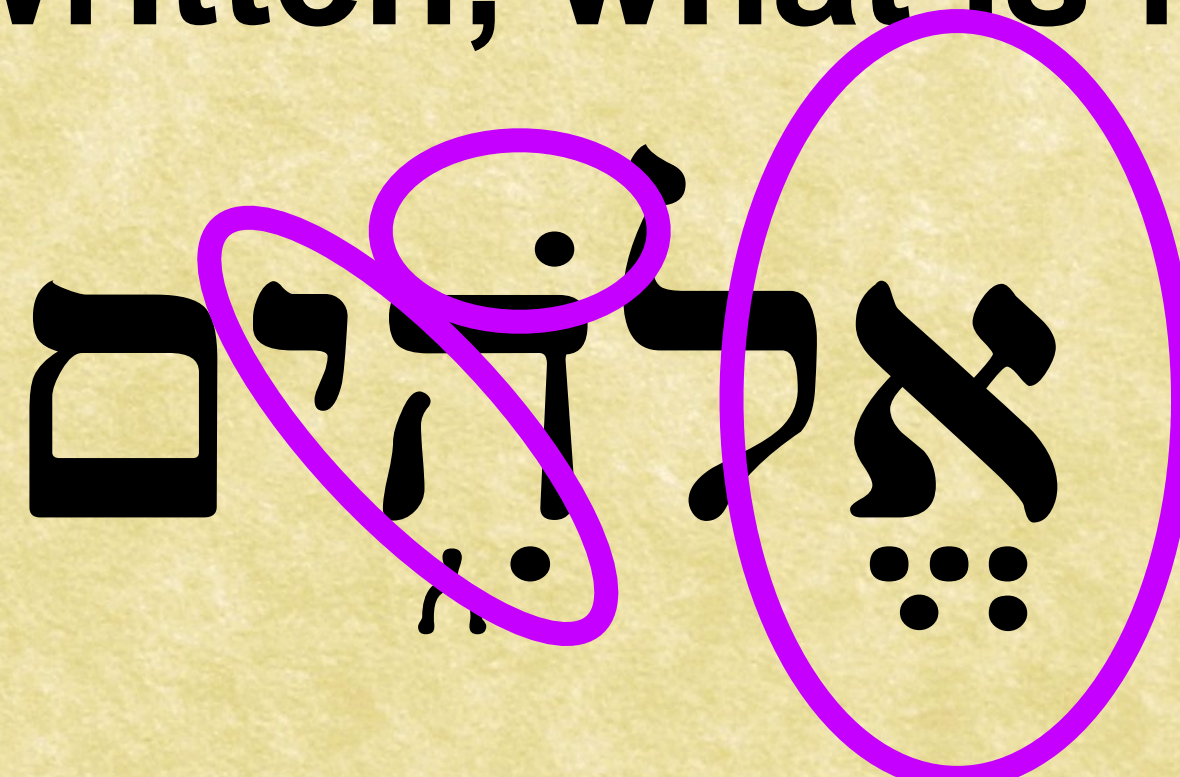
The term *Masorah*, refers to the transmission of a “tradition,” a structure of scribal notations (apparatus), which commented on everything from alternate readings to differing grammatical forms, in order to preserve the accuracy of the text.

ב ב כ ב
 וְיִשְׂאוּ אֶת-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל-כָּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׂאוּ
 אֶת-קוֹלָם וְיִבְכוּ: 5 וְיִקְרְאוּ שֵׁם-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא בְּכִים וְיִזְבְּחוּ-

20 Mm 311. 21 Mm 1396. 22 Mm 1395. 23 Mm 2135. 24 Mp contra textum, cf Mp sub loco. 25 Mm
 26 Mm 1397. 27 Mm 1356. 28 Mm 1893. Cp 2 1 Mm 389. 2 Mm 1586. 3 Mm 4205. 4 Mp
 5 Mm 1398.

30^a Ⓢ^{II} *Ev(v)ααλα*, Jos 19,15 21,35 לְ- || ^b ויהי Ⓢ || 31^a prp מַחֲלֵב cf Jos 19,20
^{b-b} dupl ad ואת-אחלב? prb dl || ^c mlt Mss אָפֶק vel אָפֶק (sic Jos 19,30) || 32^a
 Mss Ⓢ יושב || ^b Ⓢ *ἐδυνασθη (ἠδυνήθη) ἐξᾶραι αὐτόν*, 1 frt יכל להורישו || 33^a cf Jos
 34^a Ms Ⓢ* ⓈⓈ et Jos 19,47a Ⓢ נתנום || 35^{a-a} Jos 19,41 עיר שמש || ^b ins עליהם
 19,48a Ⓢ et ^c || ^c Ⓢ + *ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀμορραῖον* || ^d Ⓢ* + *αὐτῶ*, Ⓢ^B et Jos 19,48
αὐτοῖς || 36^a Ⓢ^{AOL} ⓈⓈ Syh (sub ob) + *ὁ Ἰδουμαῖος*, 1 הַאֲדָמִי || ^b Ⓢ* *ἐπὶ τῆς*
 dl מ (dttg) || Cp 2,1^a LC al Mss Ⓢ interv || ^b hic frt nonn vb exc cf ^a et Ⓢ +
αὐτοὺς (Ⓢ^B *τάδε λέγει*) *κύριος* || ^c prp 'וְ || 3^a Ⓢ* *προσθήσω τοῦ μετοικιστοῦ*
λαόν, ὃν εἶπα τοῦ ἐξολεθρεῦσαι αὐτούς || ^b nonn Mss מְלֶפֶת || ^c Ⓢ(ⓈⓈ) *εἰς συνοχῆς*
 לְצָרִים; prp וְ a *צַד cf akk *šaddu*.

***Masora* refers to the transmission of a “tradition.” The root can mean either “to hand down,” which would suggest passing on a tradition, or “to bind,” which could be applied to protecting the Scriptures. As part of their work they developed a system of dots and lines to place under or next to the consonants to indicate the vowels and preserve the pronunciation. They were extremely protective of the consonantal text, never altering the consonants. They would also place notes in the margin called the Kethiv-Qere, what is written, what is read.**

 *'elohim*

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אֱלֹהִים *'elohim*

The Masoretic Families

in Palestine

The Ben Asher family

The Ben Naphtali family

Asher



Moses ben Asher

Codex Cairensis (A.D. 895)



Aaron ben Moses ben Asher

Aleppo Codex

wrote the notes and all the vowels;
Entire OT partially destroyed in the
anti-Jewish riots of 1947

Important Surviving MSS from the Ben Asher Family

- 1. *Codex Cairensis* (AD 895), former and latter prophets**
- 2. *Aleppo Codex* (AD 930), once complete, but ¼ destroyed by fire**
- 3. *Oriental 4445* (AD 950, 1540) most of the Pentateuch (Gen. 39:20–Deuteronomy 1:33)**
- 4. *Codex Leningradensis* or *Leningrad B19a* (AD 1008–1009) basis for the most current edition, the BHS (1984)**
- 5. *Leningrad (Petersburg) Codes of the Prophets* (AD 916)**
- 6. *Damascus Pentateuch* (late ninth or tenth century AD) most of the Pentateuch**

What Are the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS)?

- **Collection of 931 documents**
- **Oldest copies of the Old Testament**
- **Jewish sectarian writings**
- **Composed in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek**
- **Produced between 250 B.C. and A.D. 68**
- **Hidden in Judean desert caves before A.D. 68**

Weston Fields: “With the discovery of the DSS we are brought back almost within a generation of the writing of the last book of the Bible. If the oldest Scroll is conservatively dated at 250 BC and some would date the oldest ones as early as 300 BC, there is probably only 25 years or less between the time the last book was written and our earliest copies of the Hebrew Old Testament. This gives us a great deal more confidence about the text and the way it was passed along because we are able to compare what has been passed to us, which are later copies, but present a very early text, with what we have in the Scrolls, however fragmentary they might be.”

Further Evidence of Old Testament Canonicity from Qumran

- 1. 175 of 500 manuscripts are biblical texts.**
- 2. All Old Testament books are represented except Esther.**
- 3. Commentaries deal only with the biblical canon; no commentaries are written on apocrypha, disputed, or non-canonical books.**
- 4. 20 of the 39 Old Testament books are quoted as Scripture.**
- 5. Conclusion: No evidence existed among the Essenes to classify apocryphal books as Scripture.**

Evidence the Canon was Closed Before the Incarnation.

In the Diaspora, Jews were divided into three communities with little communication between them: Babylonian, Palestinian, and Egyptian. Each of these groups had their own approach to the Scriptures, yet each group affirmed the same 22 or 24 books as the Scripture. In fact, the very term “The Scripture”, “The Law”, “The Writings”, implied a limited selection of literature that was considered more authoritative than others.

The Nash Papyrus

- **Acquired by W. L. Nash in 1902, donated to Cambridge University Library.**
- **Contains a damaged copy of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2–17), part of Deuteronomy 5:6–21, and the *Shema* (Deut 6:4ff).**
- **Dated to between 150 BC and AD 68.**

The Cairo *Geniza* Fragments

- **Discovered in an old synagogue in Cairo, Egypt which had been St. Michael's Church until AD 882.**
- **Many fragments dated to between the 6th and 8th century AD were found in a *geniza*, a hidden storage area for old, damaged manuscripts.**
- **Over 200,000 fragments discovered.**
- **Helpful in understanding the development of the Masoretic Text.**

The Septuagint (LXX) Latin for “Seventy”

The *Letter of Aristeas* records a request from Ptolemy II of Egypt (285–246 BC) to the High Priest Eleazar for 6 elders from each of the 12 tribes (approximately 70) to make a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible for the Alexandrian Library.

- **The most important of the translations, a witness to the proto-Masoretic Hebrew.**
- **The oldest, centuries before the Masoretic Text.**
- **Was used extensively by the New Testament authors (frequently quoted by NT authors).**
- **The authoritative text for the early church.**
- **Quoted by Jewish writers Flavius Josephus, Philo.**

Sources for the Critical Text of the Hebrew Bible

Hebrew Texts

Early Hebrew texts

Silver amulets
Nash Papyrus
Dead Sea
Scrolls
Severus Scroll

Original Text

Medieval manuscripts

Codex Leningradensis
Aleppo Codex
Codex Cairensis
Oriental 4445 (British
Museum)

Ancient Translations or Recensions

Translations/ Recensions

LXX
Samaritan Pentateuch
Old Latin mss
Latin Vulgate
Syriac Peshitta
Targums (Aramaic)

Samaritan Pentateuch

- **A Hebrew version of the Torah written in consonantal pre-Exilic paleo-Hebrew script.**
- **Some 6,000 variants from the Masoretic Text.**
- **Some 1,600 agree with the Septuagint (LXX).**
- **Most differences are in spelling and a smoothed over text.**
- **Actual date of writing is between the fifth and second century BC.**

Aramaic Targums

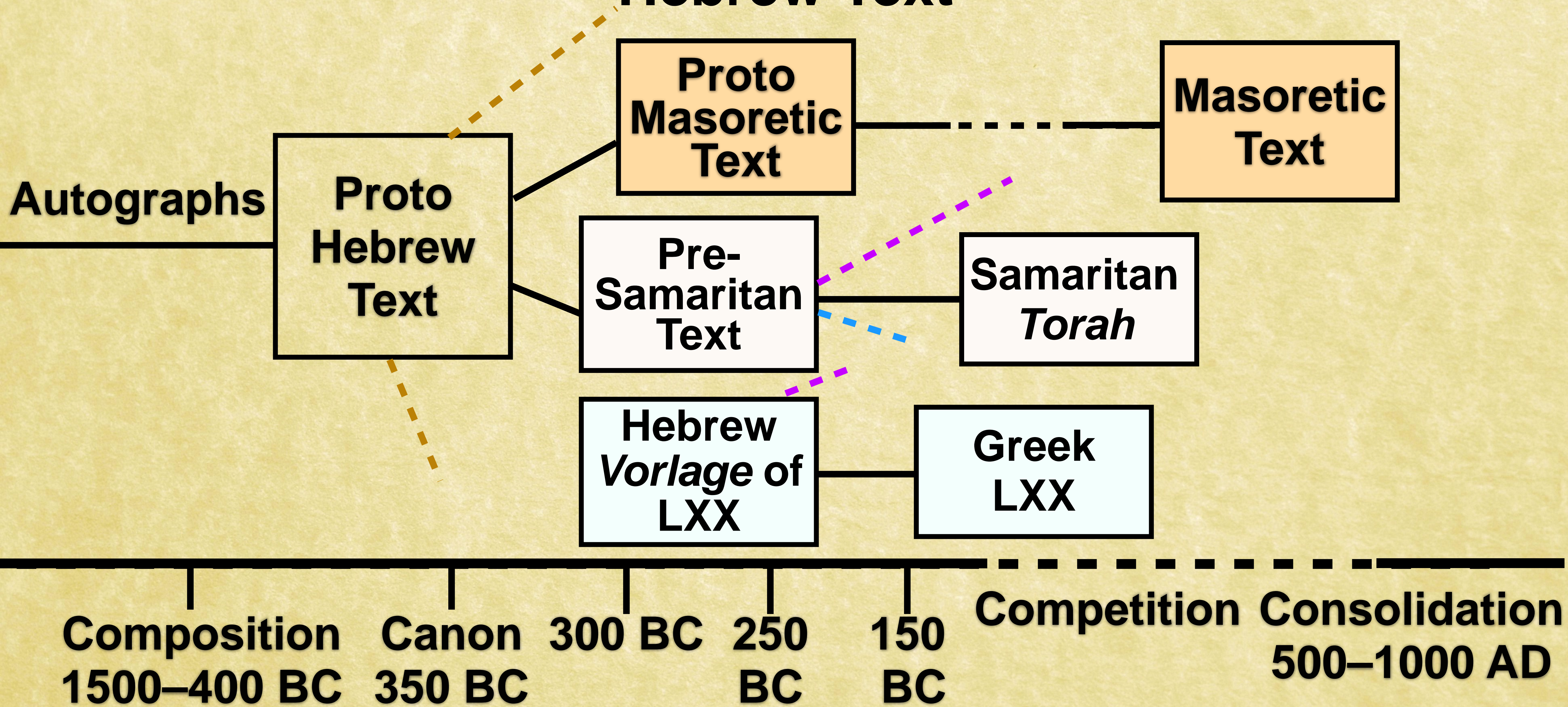
- **Aramaic was the common language of most of the Ancient Near East (modern Middle East).**
- **During the Babylonian Exile Jews adopted Aramaic. Many translations with commentary were in Aramaic. These were called the Targum (singular), Targumim (plural) meaning “explanations” or “commentary.”**
- **Included almost every book of the Bible except Ezra–Nehemiah and Daniel.**

Syriac Peshitta (“Common Version”)

- **Syriac Old Testament translated ca. 1st–2nd century AD in either Christian or Jewish context.**
- **Official Bible of the Syriac Church.**
- **Useful in comparison with DSS.**

The Origin of the Hebrew Bible

The History of the Hebrew Text



(Adapted from R. Price, *Searching for the Original Bible*)

Another Look

Proto-Masoretic Text

Palestine Examples

Samaritan Pentateuch
Masoretic Text of
Chronicles, several
Qumran texts

Babylon Example

Masoretic
Text

Egypt Example

Septuagint

**Standardized Text
1st Century AD**