

Rediscovering the Story of the Old Testament, Session 2, Lesson 1

Summary and Transcript

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Summary

Quick recap

Chuck provided an in-depth explanation of the Jewish Tanakh's structure and historical development, including its divisions into Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and how Jesus referenced these sections in his teachings. The discussion concluded with an exploration of how the Bible was compiled and transmitted over time, emphasizing the role of editors and compilers in shaping the text, while noting that many people encountered Scripture through hearing rather than reading.

Jewish Tanakh Structure Overview

Chuck explained the structure of the Jewish Tanakh, which consists of the Torah (first five books), the Prophets (divided into Former and Latter), and the Writings. He described how scrolls were used historically and how the concept of a codex developed over time, particularly among Christians. Chuck also clarified that the terms "major" and "minor" prophets refer to the size of the books, not their importance.

Jesus and the Tanakh Structure

Chuck explained the structure of the Tanakh, which includes the Torah, Nevi'IM (prophets), and Ketuvim (writings), and discussed how Jesus referred to this structure in his teachings. He highlighted that Jesus mentioned the blood of Abel and Zechariah, connecting them as the first and last prophets killed, respectively, within the Tanakh. Chuck also shared quotes from Matthew and Luke where Jesus spoke about not abolishing but fulfilling the law and prophets.

Tanakh Structure and Prophetic Connections

Chuck discussed the structure and divisions of the Tanakh, explaining how the Torah, Prophets, and Writings are organized. He highlighted the conceptual connections between different sections of the Bible, using terminology from The Bible Project about "seams" that tie the text together. Chuck also pointed out how the end of the Torah anticipates a future prophet like Moses, while the end of the Prophets looks back to Moses and forecasts a prophet who will turn hearts, both of which have not yet been fulfilled.

Preservation of Old Testament Texts

Chuck discussed the intentional structure and preservation of the Old Testament, also known as the Tanakh, by a group of people who maintained and edited the texts over centuries. He highlighted examples of prophets like Moses and Isaiah instructing others to write down their messages and pass them on, indicating a deliberate process of transmission and editing. Chuck also mentioned that the Bible Project refers to this group as the "Minority Report" due to the unflattering nature of the texts they preserved.

Bible Compilation and Transmission Process

Chuck discussed the process of how the Bible was compiled and transmitted over time, highlighting the role of unknown editors and compilers in shaping the text. He emphasized that while the Bible is considered the inspired Word of God, it went through various layers of editing and transmission, with many people involved in its compilation. Chuck also noted that in ancient times, most people heard

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Scripture rather than read it, and many key figures like Mary, Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna were familiar with biblical texts due to repeated hearing rather than direct access to written copies. The group discussed how the Holy Spirit was at work in these processes, and Chuck mentioned that Session 1, Lesson 8 materials and Session 2 were available on the Transcendent Touch website.

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I have a picture of a couple different kinds of scrolls.

The scroll that you see above me, that's how normally that they would be storing it in a Jewish synagogue. They would roll the things together, then there's a special cover they would put around them. And that's how books were made originally. And we wonder why they didn't have one in every family. Plus, you had to make them all copied by hand, so I didn't really reduce so much output could be.

Yeah, so you'd have a scroll for each book of the Bible. So they wouldn't be on a particular physical order. They had... they did have a conceptual order, but they didn't have any physical order, because there's no place where you could just store them all in a row nicely, neatly with each other.

So the ones that are in the synagogues, modern-day synagogues, are what we would call the whole Old Testament. And that is our main point of discussion.

So what we're seeing here is there's a particular structure, a conceptual structure that the Jews had. Everything was stored like the scrolls you see up there. So they didn't have a physical book, like we have nowadays.

And when you see in the New Testament, you see some references that are made in there to what usually gets translated as law, but that should be the Torah. And the Torah would be the first 5 books of the Bible. And then there would be the prophets, which in Hebrew would mean a nevi'im, and then you would have the writings called the Ketuvim. And so, the initials for that are T, N, and K, TNK, and they would usually pronounce that Tanakh.

So, the Jews had the Tanakh. It would be the writings of Moses, which were called the Torah, and the other writings put together, they would call that the Tanakh. In the chart above you can see the Torah, and the books which would be what we call an English Genesis Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These are the names in Hebrew

Compare Hebrew Bible to Protestant Bible

Division		Hebrew Canon	Protestant OT
Torah	Bereshith	Genesis	
	Sh'mot	Exodus	
	Vayikra	Leviticus	
	Bamidbar	Numbers	
	D'verim	Deuteronomy	
Nevi'im (Prophets)	Y'hoshua	Joshua	
	Shoftim	Judges	
	Sh'muel	1 Samuel	
		2 Samuel	
	M'lakhim	1 Kings	
		2 Kings	
	Y'shayahu	Isaiah	
	Yir'mi'ahu	Jeremiah	
	Y'khezqel	Ezekiel	
	The Twelve – Trei Assar (are combine into one scroll)	Hoshea Yo'el Amos Ovadyah Yonah Mikhah Nakhum Havakuk Ts'phanyah Khagai Z'kharyah Mal'akhi	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahm Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi
Ketuvim	Sefrei Emet (Books of Truth)	Tehillim	Psalms
		Mishlei	Proverbs
		Iyov	Job
		Chomeish Megillot (Five Scrolls)	Shir Hashirim Song of Songs
		Rut	Ruth
		Elkhah	Lamentations
		Kohelet	Ecclesiastes
		Esther	Esther

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here. And then the prophets ... they broke those into two groups, the former prophets, and then the latter prophets.

The former prophets would be this first set of books here, starting with Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. In the traditional Christian Bibles we call them history, But the Jews are saying, there's not just history. This is God interacting in history, so, it's prophecy. So these are prophetic books. So it's a little different perspective than we have.

And then you get into what's called a latter prophets, which were the prophets that, happened after the formation of the kingdom, and that's when you see, books like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel. And then we have, the 12th - on scrolls they'd all be put in a single scroll called the 12. You can see the word in Hebrew there, the Trei Assar.

And then you would have the writings, called the Ketuvim.

The first few books of that, which we call Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. In Hebrew they call those the Books of Truth, or the Sefrei Emet. Then they have a set of books that they brought out for various times, for various holidays that they had - and those 5 books are the Song of Songs. Ruth's Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Esther. In Hebrew, they would call that the megillot, or the Chomeish Megillot, the Five Scrolls. And then they have other writings for which there's not a neat classification: they would be Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah which is a single book. - By the way, they would put Samuel, 1 and 2 Samuel as a single book, and 1 and 2 Kings as a single book. - Okay, so Ezra and Nehemiah would have been a single scroll. And then you have the Chronicles.

So, the Chronicles belong in this other section, they don't belong in the former prophets. Chronicles was written, afterwards, and it's sort of like a... particular kind of reflection on what happened there. So you can see a lot of stuff, events are repeated, but you'll see different kinds of details being brought out.

So since those are written later, they got put into these... this little category, it's called The Other Writings. So, that's the conceptual order.

The thing that looks like a book, the academic name for that is a Codex. It's really a book. They use the term codex to refer to these old books that were put together like this. Those weren't generated until about the time of Jesus, and they were not very popular until the Christians started to use them, because they were carrying them around everywhere for one of the reasons, so it made a much easier way to bring the whole collection of writings around.

Codex has sort of started to get popularized around the 2nd century and the 3rd century, and then by the 4th century, that was, like, pretty much standard form within the Christian realm, anyhow. Other parts of the Roman Empire picked it up eventually, but they didn't get popularized like they were early on, like they were among the Christians.

So that talks a little bit about the physical form of what we call the Tanakh.

The 12 refer to the prophets who created smaller writings we call them the minor prophets. And the other ones, like Isaiah and Jeremiah, are called more major prophets. Simply because of their size. That wasn't a term that the Jews would use, they would just call them the 12, and they're quite together because they're all smaller transcripts so they can all go together in one scroll.

In the Christian world, we don't use the word Torah as much, although that is actually, my preference, because of what it means. In our normal Christian nomenclature, we call the first five books the Pentateuch, which basically means the five books of the law, and then we have what's called the history books.

Again, the Jews don't think there's just history. But we just say, well, it's history, because these are things that happened. And then those writings like the Psalms and Proverbs we call those the books of wisdom.

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The prophets starting with Isaiah and Jeremiah and then we have the minor ones. So that's the way that we normally break things up.

So the church has a slightly different. The Tanakh order is different than the traditional order within the church.

So Jesus himself made references that make sense once we know this structure, We can look at what Jesus said and said, aha, he is referring to this kind of structure. So he did refer to the Torah, which normally gets translated as law.

Torah itself actually has a much broader meaning. It can't have some of that meaning, but it more broadly means something like instructions, plus other nuances, so my preference is to say Torah rather than the Pentateuch.

The Tanakh starts with the Torah, and then the prophets, which are called a Nevi'im and then the writings, and we call the collect the TNK.

So here are a few quotes from Jesus.

Matthew 23 says, Therefore, behold, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of them. You will kill and crucify. Some of them you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from city to city. So that she will fall upon the guilt of all the religious bloodshed on earth, From the blood of the righteous Abel, to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

Notice two names here, Abel and Zechariah. In the Jewish conception, Abel was considered like a prophet Jesus is referring to him as the first prophet that was killed. And in the construction of the TNK, where the Tanakh is the last book of the Bible, what we call 2 Chronicles, about chapter 24, Zechariah is being killed. So, so he is the last of the prophets that was killed, and the last book of the Tanakh.

So when Jesus says, from the blood of evil to the blood of Zechariah, this is a conception he has in his head. So we see that Tanakh construction right there.

Christians don't normally call Abel a prophet. But then we don't call Joshua and the other books the prophets.

And then here's another quote from Matthew 5.

Do not presume that I come to abolish the law or the prophets. I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill them.

And then, in Luke, he says,

now he said to them, these are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you. That all the things that are written about me in the Law of Moses (which would have been written "Torah of Moses" if we transliterated rather than translated it, we would read a Torah of Moses), and the prophets, and the Psalms.

The Psalms are the first of the books of the writings. And so the Psalms is that reference to that section.

So these are just some of the hints that we can find that Jesus Himself made reference to this construction of the Tanakh. Again, a conceptual construction. So the Jews divided up the writing some different ways there, like, as Ezra and Nehemiah is a single book. And there we can see the Torah Nevi'im Kativim,

I prefer to interpret Torah as instructions. And we think about that, calling the first five books of the Bible, the law, well we can point to, like, the section of, like, the commandments and to Leviticus, which has a lot of, like, ceremonial laws. But, you know, Genesis is all stories. Exodus is all stories except for the little section there with the commandments. Leviticus has a lot of laws in there, but Numbers is about the wilderness journeys, and Deuteronomy is sort of, like, summarizing everything up at the end of this

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journey. So we look at all that and say, well, it's not all didactic laws that are in there. But we can say, that these are interactions of God interacting with His people that is instructive for us.

I don't know if you're familiar with the website The Bible Project. This is kind of a terminology I picked up from them. Where he talks there about the seams of the Tanakh. It seems what we'll see here in a second, they actually have references to one another, so we can tie these things together.

So, his terminology for this is seams. So, let's take a look at this construction here.



At the end of Torah - Moses could have written the last book of the Bible, because it talks about Moses going up on the mountaintop, and we can't find him again so, obviously, he couldn't have written that piece of the of the Torah. There's other sections herein Deuteronomy 34, verses 10 through 12, Which point to the end of the latter prophets. Malachi being the end of the latter prophets. So those can be tied together.

Similarly, we can take the beginning of Joshua and tie that to the beginning of the writings, where there's a reference that in Psalms, that can tie tie them conceptually together.

The end of Deuteronomy anticipates the coming of a Moses-like prophet and the final sentences of the prophets look back at Moses and foretells the coming of a prophet who will turn to hearts of the parents and the children ... and he hasn't shown up yet. So I get to the end of the prophets, and one that was supposed to be like Moses, we're looking through them all through the Old Testament, and we don't see him. So that's what we see at the end of Malachi, at the end of the latter prophets.

Then going back to Seam 1, the beginning of Joshua, where he was chosen to lead the people, and we're told here he's going to meditate on God day and night. And if you look at Psalm 1, it talks just about people who should be meditating on the law day and night. So, the way that these things are put together, is kind of interesting.

So the Tanakh has this very clear structure, it was very intentional. And the people who assembled it were very deliberate in how that they did this. We don't know who those people were, but we can find hints of this group in various spots as we look through the writings of the Tanakh.

We can see that there's this group of people hanging around the prophets, We can see, for instance, Isaiah handing off some of his material to his group to be distributed to somebody else later on.

Here's a couple other statements here from Jesus here.

So this is what I told you I was still with you, everything fulfilled must be written about me as Torah of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. And then the quote we referred to from Luke

So, one of the things that's interesting is we take a look at how did the writings of this Tanakh get handed down to us through the years. They were written over a course of a thousand years. If you start with Moses - We don't know the precise time, 12 to 400... 1400 BC - all the way up to the writings of Malachi, which is, like, about 400 BC. So in that 1,000-year period, these writings got passed along, and we can see how the later prophets refer to earlier prophets in their writings. So we can follow how things got transmitted from prophet to prophet that way.

There's also seemed to be this group of people around the Prophet that sort of took care of these materials, they seem to have done some kind of editing. If we look back at the book of Genesis, for instance, we can see some hints there where scholars would say, "you know, that word there is not used until later on, so,

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Moses couldn't have put that in there, that someone must have edited that to make... to clarify it for us later.

So this group of people that were doing that, the Bible Project calls the Minority Report. Because if you take a look at what the writings of the Tanakh were, It had bad things to say about everybody. There's not a king that didn't have a problem that didn't get told about, you know. The people always had problems there. You look at the book of Judges, and they just kept on going their old way. These things was not flattering to anybody.

So, who is going to maintain this material that wasn't flattering to anybody? So that's why we call this a Minority Project. So, some group of people was maintaining this, and preserving it despite the fact that, in a normal course of events, people who didn't like something that was written, they would destroy it. But that obviously didn't happen, these things kept on being preserved through the years.

So here's a couple of little hints here.

In Exodus 17, we can see that “the Lord said to Moses, write this on a scroll as something to be remembered, and make sure that Joshua hears it! because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven.

Okay, and then another thing next to this,

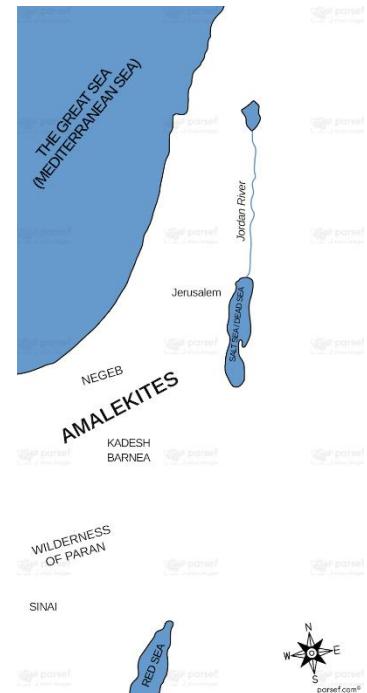
Then the Lord said to Moses, Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, and Nabab, and Abihu, and 70 of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance. But Moses alone is to approach the Lord. The others must not come near, And the people may not come up with him. And when Moses went and told people all the lords' words and laws, they responded with one voice, Everything that the Lord has said we will do. Then, Moses wrote down everything the Lord had said. And I got up early the next morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and set up 12 stone pillars representing the 12 tribes of Israel.

So here we can see a couple of things referring to Moses being particularly told to write some things down.

[[The Amalekites were the descendants of Amalek, (who was a descendant of Esau) an ancient biblical nation living near the land of Canaan. Amalek grew up in Esau's household, imbibing Esau's pathological hatred of Jacob's descendants along the way. His offspring became the nation of Amalek, and they lived to the south of the Land of Israel, in what is now known as the Negev Desert. They were the first nation to attack the Jewish people after the Exodus from Egypt, and they are seen as the archetypal enemy of the Jews.]]

And then, towards the end of Deuteronomy, we have here Moses summoning Joshua, saying in the presence of all Israel, be strong and courageous, which gets repeated at the front of the book of Joshua, be strong and courageous. Be strong and courageous, for you must go with his people into the land that the Lord swore to the ancestors to give them, and he was divide it among them as the inheritance. The Lord Himself goes before you and will be with you, so He'll never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged. So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests.

So here we can see Moses himself handing this stuff off to a group, in this case here, the Levitical priests. And we can see later on where some of the other prophets were doing the same kind of thing giving it to the group that was around them.



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And then, later on in Deuteronomy, you can see several references here. Write down this song, And then towards the end of that passage, after Moses finished writing in a book the words of the law from beginning to end.

So, so here we can see, within the Torah, we can see evidences here of Moses being told to write down things.

And then, here's this little hint there, this is not what Moses wrote. This is right towards the end of Deuteronomy here. Joshua, the son of Nun is filled with the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him - so this is after Moses had died - So it is right to listen to him, and did what the Lord had commanded Moses. Since then, no profit has risen in Israel like Moses.

So this had to be written in some period of time - we don't know exactly when, but some period of time after Moses had died. So if the perspective could be, we were looking for someone like Moses, and we didn't see him all this time.

So this is obvious editing at the end of the Torah there, Moses and started writing it, but the last couple of things - after he died, obviously, he didn't write some things, but some people did.

And here's something from Isaiah.

where he says, Many of them will stumble, and they will fall and be broken, they will be sneered and captured.

And then Isaiah says bind up this testimony of warning, and see of God's instructions among my disciples.

There's Isaiah instructing his disciples to take this stuff, bind it up, so it can be passed on.

Other things we can see if you look at the book of Psalms, you notice that there's all these little headings over to different sections? Obviously, someone had compiled all these things and assembled them in the order that we have them presented. So, we collected the books of David, you actually see them in a couple of spots, the sons of Korah, we see that section. Then we see other little headings all over the place. These are obviously not part of the original Psalms. Someone's doing this work for our benefit, so we understand this better. So this is, you know, all examples of editing that was done after the originals were written.

So if we do a close examination of these writings, we can see these different layers of things here where there was an original writings in here, got transferred on to some people seem to have done some kind of editing in the process as they went along and got transmitted.

Oh. So, if we think about the Bible being the inspired Word of God, we have to keep a broader perspective on what we mean by that. It's not like, oh, we have these very particular prophets that we know who they are, we trust that they were inspired by God. We have a bunch of unknown people who were assembled around the people we call the prophets, and they were doing some of this work. We don't know who their names are.

So we just have to keep a broader perspective about, oh, this is inspired Word of God. Well, obviously He's working through a lot of no-name people. Oh, he knows their name, but we don't.

When we get to the New Testament, we see people like Mary and Zechariah and Simeon and Anna. As we look at what was written about them, we see them saying things that were obviously... they knew some pieces of this scripture, because they are able to just repeat them.

When the angel Gabriel went to see Mary, and then later Zechariah, we see them saying things that are straight out of the Tanakh. And we see things like Simeon and Anna - they're waiting for this Messiah to come. They knew about this Messiah character, this person who was going to be like Moses. They knew about this, so they were familiar with that part of the Tanakh. So they must have been part of this group that just knew this stuff.

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Compared to, like, the group that was assembled around King Herod, and then when the Magi came, And they said, Uh, where is this guy? And then these folks had to go and look things up and figure out, oh, where was this carrot supposed to be going? Well, let's go check that one out.

So obviously, they were not part of that group. So, it's just interesting to keep this in mind, but this is how things got passed along.

And having another concept in mind is that there is not a lot of stuff that was down in writing back in those days. Because everything had to be written by... copied by hand. So not a lot of people would have had access to direct-to-writings themselves. Most people heard Scripture rather than read it.

In the Bible Project, they talk about scripture being like, ancient Near East meditation literature. Because how do people learn this stuff? Well, they didn't get distracted by a lot of other stuff, like we get distracted these days. Uh, so they basically learn to memorize these things that they got heard over and over again.

Okay, and that's how people, like, see Simeon and Anna, Mary and Zechariah, they probably did not have, right, access to the writings, but they just heard this stuff. To the point where they could, just say these things that were straight out of the Tanakh.

So, that's a nice perception for us to keep in mind about how things got transmitted, For most people scripture was more heard than read. The people that read it, they had to do some things there to keep things transmitted clearly from one generation to the next over the course of a thousand years.

In the case of Mary, an angel gave her some information and she "kept this in her heart." But Zechariah and Mary said some other things that were not directly from the angel.

In the case of Simeon and Anna somehow the Spirit communicated to them. While the Spirit was not present in the way that he's available to us now, obviously, the spirit was at work among various people at that time. The Spirit was available to the prophets as they came along. And we could probably assume that the spirit was at work in these unknown groups that were assembled around the prophets that were at compiling and editing the stuff.

So it's a really, really just interesting just to try to open our minds to God working in that kind of a way.

I think that's the end there.

Again, this stuff is up on the website at TranscendentTouched, so you can look at all that stuff up there. This other thing that I shared, that was from Lesson 8 of, Session 1, and Session 2 is all up there already, too.

So, just one little thing there, I'm trying something else out with AI in the Zoom. You may get a summary sent to your email after we close this out. So, uh, just be on the lookout. You could get something sent to you in your email there.