

The “Old Testament” in Different Textual Traditions

Luke 24:44

As we study the gap of time between Malachi and Matthew, we need to understand how, when, and why Malachi became the last book of what we Protestants call the Old Testament, and why we have books we now call the New Testament. Let’s begin our study by examining the Hebrew Scriptures.

The books of the “Old Testament” began as actual “scrolls” used in the religion of the Hebrews.

A scroll is “scribe” (writing) on a “roll” (papyrus, leather, or parchment), thus “scroll.” The Hebrews Scriptures are called **The Tanakh**. The word Tanakh is an *anacronym*; **T**orah, **N**eviim, and **K**etuvim.

Hebrew Title	Hebrew Meaning	Greek/LXX Title	English Title
Torah	Teaching	Nomos	Law
Breishit	In the beginning	Genesis	Genesis
Shemot	Names	Exodus (Way Out)	Exodus
Vayyiqra	And he called	Leuitikon	Leviticus
Bemidbar	In the wilderness	Arithmoi	Numbers
Devarim	Words or Deeds	Deuteronomion (Second Law)	Deuteronomy

Hebrew Title	Hebrew Meaning	Greek/LXX Title	English Title
Nevi'im	Prophets (Former)	(History)	History
Yehoshua	The Lord saves	Yesous	Joshua
Shoftim	Judges	Kritai	Judges
Shmuel Alef, Beit	Samuel A (1), B (2)	Basileion A, B (Kings A & B)	1 & 2 Samuel
Melachim Alef, Beit	Kings A (1), B (2)	Basileion C & D (Kings)	1 & 2 Kings
Nevi'im	Prophets (Latter)	Prophetai	Prophets
Yeshayah(u)	Salvation of the Lord	Esaïas	Isaiah
Yirmeyah(u)	Raised up by the Lord	Yeremias	Jeremiah
Yehezkiel	God will strengthen	Yezeziel	Ezekiel
Hoshea	He saves	Osee	Hosea
Yo'el	The Lord is God	Yoel	Joel
Amos	Burden bearer	Amos	Amos
Ovadyah	Servant of the Lord	Obdias	Obadiah
Yonah	Dove	Yonas	Jonah
Micah	Who is like [God]	Michaias	Micah
Nahum	Comforter	Naum	Nahum
Havaqquk	Embrace	Ambakoum	Habakkuk
Tzefanyah	Hidden by the Lord	Sophonias	Zephaniah
Haggai	Festive	Haggaios	Haggai
Zecharyah	Remembered by the Lord	Zacharias	Zachariah
Malachi	My messenger	Malachias	Malachi

Hebrew Title	Hebrew Meaning	Greek/LXX Title	English Title
Ketuvim	Writings	Poetry	Poetry
Tehellim	Praises	Psalmoi	Psalms
Mishlei	Proverbs	Paroimiai	Proverbs
Iyyov	Persecuted	Yob	Job
Shir haShirim	Song of Songs	Asma	Song of Songs
Rut	Friendship	Routh	Ruth
Eychah	How!	Threnoi	Lamentations
Qohelet	Gatherer, Preacher	Ekklesiastes	Ecclesiastes
Ester	Star	Esther	Esther
Daniel	God is judge	Daniel	Daniel
Ezra	Help	Esdras	Ezra
Nechemyah	The Lord comforts	Neemias	Nehemiah
Divrei A, B	Deeds A, B	Paraleipomenon A, B	1 & 2 Chronicles

NOTE: Originally, the Hebrew scrolls that formed the canon numbered **22**

Read - **II Kings 22: 8-13**; Read - **Luke 4:16-21**. “The Scriptures” that Jesus was familiar with, those we now refer to as the *Old Testament*, but they did not end with Malachi. The scrolls were stored in a wooden box to be read publicly. The scroll considered the concluding crown jewel was **Chronicles**.

We don’t know when the “reordering” of the books of the Hebrew Scriptures began for Christians, but most likely it happened in the 4th century AD – 350 years after Christ. The earliest manuscripts with *the order of the modern Protestant Bible including New Testament gospels and letters date from the mid-300s A.D.* So, for Christians, the Old Testament is composed of 39 books (big scrolls were split into two), and a rearrangement so that the book of Malachi became the LAST BOOK OF THE OLD – and MATTHEW became the FIRST BOOK OF THE NEW. IT was an intentional re-ordering. The original design shape of the Hebrew scrolls was never lost in Jewish tradition up to this day and is kept in synagogues.

Chronicles was written AFTER the Jewish exile (post-539 BC), by either Zerubbabel, Ezra, or Nehemiah during the 400’s AD. The Chronicles scroll opens with a genealogy from the Creation of the world (Adam) and closes with Persian King Cyrus decreeing that the Hebrews are “to return to Israel” (II Chronicles 36) and rebuild “the house of Yahweh (Temple). Chronicles ends “**and let him go up...**”

The prophet Daniel in Daniel 9 writes toward the end of the Babylonian exile. Cyrus has conquered Babylon and is issuing a decree for the Jews to return to Judah. But Daniel sees a where Israel’s sin is still ongoing, and there was still covenant unfaithfulness in the post-exilic community. Exile did not burn out of the hearts of the people what needed to be purified. It would require another 490 years. They needed rescued from a deeper problem. **They needed a Messiah who’d build the true House of God.**

“You pour over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me” (John 5:39). Jesus knew He was the fulfillment of Chronicles. What’s even more beautiful is that when Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah. He reads:

“Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free; to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Isaiah 61; Luke 4:17-21).