

Glossary

This glossary provides brief definitions of the “Important Names and Terms” printed in boldface in the text and listed at the end of each chapter. In the glossary itself, internal cross-references are also in **bold**. For information about other people, places, events, institutions, realities, and concepts in the Bible, students should consult the Index, as well as a concordance and one of the dictionaries or encyclopedias listed in the Bibliography on pages 435–437.

Aaron: Brother of **Moses** and Israel’s first priest.

Abel: Second son of **Adam** and **Eve**, who was killed by his older brother **Cain**.

Abraham (Abram): An ancestor of Israel. He was the father of **Ishmael**, by **Hagar**, and of **Isaac**, by **Sarah**. God promised him many descendants and the land of Canaan (see **Promised Land**), and required that he and all of his male offspring be **circumcised**.

Absalom: Son of **David** who killed his half-brother Amnon, who had raped Absalom’s sister Tamar. Later he led a revolt against his father’s rule but was defeated and killed by David’s men.

acrostic: A text in which the opening letters of successive lines form a word, phrase, or pattern. The acrostics in the Bible are poems in which the first letters of successive lines or stanzas are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet in order.

Adam: The first human, whose name comes from the word for soil, from which he was made. In the **garden of Eden** he and his wife **Eve** were punished for having eaten from the fruit of the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. Father of **Cain** and **Abel**.

Ahab: king of **Israel** (871–852), and husband of **Jezebel**.

Ahaz: King of **Judah** (735–715 BCE) who became an **Assyrian** vassal despite the advice of the prophet **Isaiah**.

Ammonites: **Israel**’s neighbors east of the Jordan River. The Ammonites are the “sons of Ammon,” who according to Genesis 19 was the son of Lot by one of his daughters. Their name is preserved in the modern city of Amman, Jordan.

Amos: Prophet in Israel in the mid-eighth century BCE; also the book named for him.

angel: A word of Greek origin originally meaning messenger. In the Bible, these are supernatural beings sent by God to humans.

anthropomorphic (anthropomorphism): The attribution of human characteristics to a nonhuman being, such as a deity.

apocalyptic: A genre of literature in which details concerning the end-time are revealed by a heavenly messenger or **angel**.

Apocrypha: Jewish religious writings of the Hellenistic and Roman periods that are not considered part of the Bible by Jews and Protestants, but are part of the **canons** of Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, who also call them the Deuterocanonical books.

apodictic law: A type of law characterized by absolute or general commands or prohibitions, as in the **Ten Commandments**. It is often contrasted with **casuistic law**.

Aramaic: A language originating in ancient Syria that in the second half of the first millennium BCE became used widely throughout the Near East. Parts of the books of **Daniel** and **Ezra** are written in Aramaic.

ark of the covenant: The religious symbol of the premonarchic confederation of the twelve tribes of **Israel**, later installed in the **Temple** in **Jerusalem** by **Solomon** in the tenth century BCE. It formed the footstool for the **cherubim** throne on which **Yahweh** was thought to be invisibly seated.

Assyria: Kingdom in northern **Mesopotamia** that ruled much of the Near East during the first millennium BCE. The Assyrians captured the **northern kingdom of Israel** in 722 BCE and laid siege to **Jerusalem** in 701 BCE.

avenger of blood: (Hebr. *goel*) The closest male relative who is legally responsible for his kin, usually in matters relating to vengeance or property. The word is often translated “redeemer.”

Baal: The Canaanite storm-god, who in **Ugaritic** myth defeats Sea and Death. In the Bible, worship of Baal is condemned.

Babylon: The capital city of Babylonia, a kingdom in southern **Mesopotamia** that ruled much of the Near East in the late seventh and sixth centuries BCE. The Babylonians laid siege to **Jerusalem** in 597 and destroyed it in 586, exiling many of its inhabitants to Babylonia.

Balaam: A non-Israelite **prophet** who was hired by the king of **Moab** to curse the Israelites on their way to the **Promised Land** after the Exodus but, inspired by God, blessed them instead.

ban: (Hebr. *herem*) Something dedicated to a deity and restricted for the deity’s use, such as the spoils of war, including captured people.

Bathsheba: Wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of King **David**’s warriors. David committed adultery with her and had her husband killed. Later she became the mother of **Solomon**.

Cain: Oldest son of **Adam** and **Eve**, who killed his brother **Abel**.

Canaan: The name of the **Promised Land** before the Israelite conquest. In second-millennium BCE Egyptian sources, Canaan refers to the entire southern **Levant**. According to Genesis 9, the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, were descendants of **Noah**’s grandson Canaan.

canon: A list of the books considered scripture by a religious group.

casuistic law: Case law, often in the form of a conditional sentence, in which specific situations are addressed. It is often contrasted with **apodictic law**.

cherubim: Composite supernatural beings who function as guardians of the entrance to the **garden of Eden** in Genesis 3.24 and whose outstretched wings over the **ark of the covenant** supported the throne of **Yahweh**.

Chronicler: In modern scholarship, the term used for the author(s) of the books of **Chronicles** and, according to some scholars, of the books of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah**.

circumcision: The removal of the foreskin. According to Genesis 17.9–14, it is the sign of the **covenant** between God and **Abraham** and is to be performed on all of Abraham’s male descendants on the eighth day after birth.

cities of refuge: In the Bible, six cities set aside as places where someone accused of murder could find asylum until the case was decided.

city of David: Another name for **Jerusalem**, especially the ancient pre-Israelite city that King **David** captured and made his capital in the early tenth century BCE. In later tradition, it is also used of Bethlehem, David’s birthplace.

Code of Hammurapi: An ancient collection of laws issued by the **Babylonian** king Hammurapi (also spelled Hammurabi) in the mid-eighteenth century BCE.

confessions of Jeremiah: In modern scholarship, those parts of the book of **Jeremiah** in which he laments to God the difficulties he experienced as a **prophet**. The confessions are in Jeremiah 11.18–12.6, 15.10–21, 17.14–18, 18.18–23, and 20.7–18.

cosmology: An account of the origins of the world; in the ancient Near East, cosmologies are usually creation myths.

covenant: (Hebr. *berît*) A term originally meaning “contract,” used in the Bible of marriage, slavery, and international treaties and used metaphorically to characterize the relationship between God and the Israelites and between God and individuals such as **Abraham**, **Aaron**, and **David**.

Covenant Code: In modern scholarship, the collection of laws found in Exodus 20.22–23.19, identified as “the book of the covenant” (Ex 24.7). It is one of the oldest collections of laws in the Bible.

covenant lawsuit: A genre used by the **prophets** in which **Israel** is put on trial by **Yahweh** for having violated its **covenant** with him.

Cyrus: King of **Persia** (559–530 BCE) who captured **Babylon** and allowed the Judean exiles there to return to **Judah**.

D: The Deuteronomic source according to the **Documentary Hypothesis**, which is found almost exclusively in the book of Deuteronomy.

Daniel: The hero of the book named for him, in which he is a courtier in the court of kings of **Babylon** and **Persia** and receives revelations concerning the history and the future of the Jews.

David: Son of Jesse, from Bethlehem. As a young man he served in **Saul**’s army and killed the Philistine champion **Goliath**. Although he was a close friend of Saul’s son **Jonathan** and had married Saul’s daughter **Michal**, he and Saul became enemies. When Saul died, David succeeded him as king of **Israel** about 1000 BCE and soon moved his capital to **Jerusalem**. He was succeeded by his son **Solomon**, whose mother was **Bathsheba**.

Davidic covenant: The **covenant** between **Yahweh** and **David**, which guaranteed the divine protection of the dynasty that David founded and of **Jerusalem**, its capital city.

Day of Atonement: A fall ritual of purification, described in Leviticus 16, later known as Yom Kippur. See also *scapegoat*.

day of the LORD: A phrase used by the prophets to describe Yahweh's fighting against his enemies. In apocalyptic literature it is used of the final battle between good and evil.

Dead Sea: A large body of water in the Rift Valley into which the Jordan River flows. Due to evaporation, it has a high mineral content and no life is found in it, hence its name.

Dead Sea Scrolls: Ancient manuscripts found in caves on the western side of the Dead Sea beginning in 1948. Some of them are the oldest surviving manuscripts of books of the Bible, dating as early as the third century BCE.

Deborah: One of the judges who led a coalition of Israelite tribes against Canaanite adversaries in the twelfth century BCE, celebrated in the Song of Deborah named for her.

Decalogue: A word of Greek origin that means "ten words"; another name for the Ten Commandments.

Delilah: Woman who betrayed Samson to the Philistines by revealing that the secret of his strength was his uncut hair.

Deuterocanonical books: See *Apocrypha*.

Deuteronomic Code: According to modern scholars, the core of the book of Deuteronomy in chapters 12–26, a collection of ancient laws that differ in many details from those found in the books of Exodus and Leviticus.

Deuteronomic school: A group of writers who over several centuries produced the book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History.

Deuteronomistic History: According to modern scholars, the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, which form a narrative history of Israel in the Promised Land. It was produced in several editions from the late eighth to the sixth centuries BCE by the Deuteronomistic Historians, who were informed by the principles of the book of Deuteronomy.

Diaspora: Literally, scattering or dispersion, used to refer to exiles from Judah to Babylonia in the early sixth century BCE, and subsequently for any Jews living outside of Israel.

divine council: The assembly of gods, over which the high god presides. In the Bible, Yahweh is described as the head of the divine council, and prophets claim to have witnessed or participated in its meetings.

Documentary Hypothesis: The theory classically formulated by Julius Wellhausen in 1878, which explains the repetitions and inconsistencies in the first five books

of the Bible, the Pentateuch, as the result of originally independent sources or documents having been combined over several centuries. The principal hypothetical sources are J, E, D, and P.

E: The Elohist source according to the Documentary Hypothesis, found in the books of Genesis through Numbers.

Ecclesiastes: The pseudonym of the author of the book named for him, in which he explores the meaning of life. Also known as Qoheleth.

El: Head of the Canaanite pantheon and the creator deity in Ugaritic texts, who presides over the divine council; also a title for the god of Israel.

Elijah: A prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel in the mid-ninth century BCE.

Elisha: A prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel in the mid- to late ninth century BCE; successor of Elijah.

elohim: The Hebrew word for god or gods, which, although plural in form, is often used as a title for Yahweh and is translated "God."

endogamy: The custom of marrying within one's ethnic or religious group.

Enkidu: In the epic of Gilgamesh, the wild man created by the gods to distract Gilgamesh from his destructive behavior. Gilgamesh and Enkidu became friends, and Enkidu's death motivated Gilgamesh to seek immortality.

Enuma Elish: Also called the Babylonian Creation Epic, this is a work on seven tablets in praise of the patron god of Babylon, Marduk. It describes how Marduk defeated the primeval sea-goddess Tiamat and then created the world and humans. Its title is its opening words, which mean "when above."

Esau: Son of Isaac and older twin brother of Jacob; ancestor of the Edomites.

Esther: Judean exile and heroine of the book named for her, according to which she became queen of Persia and saved her people. See also *Purim*.

etiology: A narrative that explains the origin of a custom, ritual, geographical feature, name, or other phenomenon.

Eve: The first woman, who ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden of Eden and gave its fruit to her husband Adam. Her name means "life." She was the mother of Cain, Abel, and Seth.

Ezekiel: A prophet among the exiles in Babylonia in the early sixth century BCE; also the book named for him.

Ezra: A scribe expert in the Torah, a priest, and a leader of exiles returning to Judah from Babylon in the mid-fifth century BCE, and the book named for him.

Fertile Crescent: The arable area of land from southern **Mesopotamia** northward and then westward and southward through the **Levant**.

First Isaiah: In modern scholarship, the parts of Isaiah 1–39 that are associated with the eighth-century BCE prophet **Isaiah**.

form criticism: The study of relatively short literary units in literature and in folklore with regard to their forms or genres, their original settings (German *Sitz im Leben*), and their social, religious, and political functions. It was developed by Herman **Gunkel**.

Former Prophets: In Jewish tradition, the first division of the **Prophets**, comprising the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings.

garden of Eden: The garden of God in which **Adam** and **Eve** lived until they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Its location is unknown.

genealogy: A family history in the form of a list of descendants.

Gilgamesh/Gilgamesh: The hero of the Mesopotamian epic named for him, who with **Enkidu** travels widely and ultimately meets **Utnapishtim**.

glory of Yahweh: The visible sign of the presence of the invisible God, depicted as a light-filled cloud, characteristic of both **P** and **Ezekiel**.

golden calf: The statue of a calf that the Israelites worshiped at Mount **Sinai** according to Exodus 32, and also similar statues at the shrines of Bethel and Dan in the northern kingdom of **Israel**.

Goliath: A Philistine champion killed by **David**.

Gunkel, Hermann (1862–1932): The German scholar whose commentaries on Genesis and Psalms applied **form criticism** to the Bible.

Habakkuk: A prophet in **Judah** in the late seventh century BCE; also the book named for him.

Hagar: Secondary wife of **Abraham** with whom she had **Ishmael**.

Haggai: A prophet in the late sixth century BCE who urged the rebuilding of the **Temple**; also the book named for him.

Hannah: Wife of Elkanah and mother of **Samuel**.

Hebrew Bible: The **Tanakh**. Its contents are the same as in the Old Testament in the Protestant **canon**, but the order of the books differs.

Hezekiah: King of **Judah** (715–687 BCE) during whose reign the **Assyrian** king **Sennacherib** attacked **Jerusalem**. He was advised by the prophet **Isaiah**.

Holiness Code: In modern scholarship, chapters 17–26 of the book of **Leviticus**, an originally independent source

whose principal theme is the holiness of **Yahweh** and of his people.

Hosea: A prophet in the northern kingdom of **Israel** in the mid-eighth century BCE; also the book named for him.

Immanuel: The child whose birth and early life were signs from God to **Ahaz**, king of **Judah**, during the Syro-Ephraimite War (Isa 7.14). He was probably the child of the prophet **Isaiah** and his wife, who was also a prophet.

Isaac: Son of **Abraham** and **Sarah**, who inherited the divine promise rather than his older half-brother **Ishmael**.

Isaiah: A prophet in **Judah** in the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE who advised **Ahaz** and **Hezekiah**; also the book named for him. See also **First Isaiah**; **Second Isaiah**; **Third Isaiah**.

Ishmael: Son of **Hagar** and **Abraham**, and older half-brother of **Isaac**.

Israel: This name is used in several senses. First, it is the new name given to the patriarch **Jacob** in Genesis 32.28; **Jacob's** twelve sons then become the ancestors of the tribes of **Israel**. Second, it designates the people and later the geopolitical entity formed from the twelve tribes. Third, it is used as the name of the northern kingdom of **Israel**, as opposed to the southern kingdom of **Judah**.

J: The Yahwist (or Jahwist) source according to the **Documentary Hypothesis**, found in the books of Genesis through Numbers.

Jacob: Son of **Isaac** and **Rebekah** who inherited the divine promise rather than his older twin brother **Esau**. Father of twelve sons through **Leah**, **Rachel**, **Bilhah**, and **Zilpah**; they became the ancestors of the twelve tribes of **Israel**.

Jephthah's daughter: **Jephthah** was one of the judges who before a battle vowed to sacrifice to God whatever first came out of his house if he returned victorious. His daughter, who is not named, came out, and he fulfilled his vow with her agreement.

Jeremiah: A prophet in **Judah** in the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE who interpreted the destruction of **Jerusalem** as divine punishment; also the book named for him.

Jeroboam I: First king of the northern kingdom of **Israel** in the late tenth century BCE, who made golden calves for worship at Bethel and Dan.

Jerusalem: Capital city of **Israel** and later **Judah**; also called **Zion**.

Jezebel: Daughter of the king of Tyre who was the wife of King **Ahab** of **Israel** in the mid-ninth century BCE, whom the prophets **Elijah** and **Elisha** condemned.

Job: Hero of the biblical book named for him, in which he challenges God to explain why disasters have overcome him even though he is blameless.

Joel: A prophet and the book named for him, which probably dates to the fifth or fourth century BCE.

Jonah: Hero of the book named for him, in which he is described as a prophet who reluctantly goes to the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. On the way there he is swallowed by a great fish.

Jonathan: Son of Saul and close friend of David.

Joseph: Oldest son of Jacob and Rachel. He was sold into slavery and in Egypt became an important official. Father of Ephraim and Manasseh.

Joshua: Moses's successor, and the book named for him, according to which he led the Israelites in their conquest of the Promised Land.

Josiah: King of Judah (ruled 640–609 BCE) who conducted a reform of worship inspired by a version of the book of Deuteronomy.

Judah: The name of one of Jacob's sons, the ancestor of the tribe of Judah. This tribe dominated southern Israel and became the southern kingdom of Judah. Later the same region was called Judea.

judge: A ruler or a military leader, as well as someone who presided over legal hearings.

Kadesh(-barnea): Site in northern Sinai where the Israelites stayed for some time during their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land.

King James Version: The most important translation of the Bible into English, first published in 1611. Also known as the Authorized Version.

Kirta: The hero of the Ugaritic epic that is named for him; the epic has many connections with biblical literature. Also called Keret.

Latter Prophets: In Jewish tradition, the second part of the Prophets, comprising the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel and the Book of the Twelve (Minor Prophets).

Leah: Sister of Rachel, first wife of Jacob, and mother of six of his sons.

Levant: A term used for the western part of the Near East, comprising the modern countries of Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan.

Leviathan: A primeval watery adversary of God, often depicted as a dragon. See also Behemoth, Rahab (monster).

Levites: The priestly tribe, named for Jacob's son Levi, whose primary responsibilities were ritual.

Major Prophets: In modern scholarship, the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, so called because of their

relative length compared to the shorter books of the Minor Prophets. In Christian tradition, the books of Lamentations and Daniel have often been included under this heading.

Malachi: A prophet; also the book named for him, which probably dates to the fifth century BCE.

Manasseh: King of Judah (ruled 687–642 BCE), often described as an evil king.

manna: The divinely given "bread from heaven" (Ex 16.4) that fed the Israelites in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt.

Marduk: The chief god of Babylon, the storm-god who defeated Tiamat, as recounted in *Enuma Elish*.

Megiddo: A major city in northern Israel that because of its strategic location was the site of many battles. In apocalyptic literature, it can be called Armageddon and will be the site of the final battle between the forces of good and evil.

Mesopotamia: A word of Greek origin meaning "(the land) in the middle of the rivers." It refers to the fertile floodplain between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers and comprises much of modern Iraq and northern Syria.

messiah: Derived from the Hebrew word *mashiah*, meaning "anointed one," this term is used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to past and present kings and priests who had been anointed. In later Jewish and in Christian traditions, it is used of a future leader to be sent by God.

Micah: A prophet in Judah in the late eighth century BCE; also the book named for him.

Michal: Daughter of Saul and wife of David.

Midian: Home of the Midianites, who were adversaries of Israel during their Exodus from Egypt and during the period of the judges. Zipporah, the wife of Moses, was a Midianite. Midian is located in northwestern Arabia, which may be the location of Mount Sinai.

Minor Prophets: In modern scholarship, the twelve shorter prophetic books, from Hosea through Malachi.

Miriam: Sister of Aaron and Moses who led the Israelites in a victory hymn after the Exodus and later, with Aaron, challenged Moses's leadership.

Moabites: Israel's neighbors east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites are the "sons of Moab," who according to Genesis 19 was the son of Lot by one of his daughters.

monotheism: The belief that there is only one god.

Moses: Leader of the Exodus from Egypt to whom God gave his laws on Mount Sinai. Brother of Aaron and Miriam.

myth: A traditional narrative about the remote past in which gods and goddess are often principal characters.

Nabonidus: Last king of **Babylon** (ruled 556–539 BCE), famous for having lived in Arabia for an extended period.

Nahum: Prophet in **Judah** in the late seventh century BCE; also the book named for him.

Nebuchadnezzar: See **Nebuchadrezzar**.

Nebuchadrezzar: King of **Babylon** (ruled 605–562 BCE) who captured **Jerusalem** in 586 and exiled many of those living there to Babylon. Also spelled Nebuchadnezzar.

Nehemiah: Governor of **Judah** appointed by the **Per- sians** in the mid-fifth century BCE, who rebuilt the walls of **Jerusalem** and led religious reforms.

Noah: Hero of the biblical Flood story.

northern kingdom of Israel: The territory that split from **Judah** after the death of **Solomon** in the late tenth century BCE and was an independent kingdom with its capital in **Samaria** until the **Assyrians** conquered it in 722 BCE.

Obadiah: A sixth- or fifth-century BCE prophet who at- tacked Edom; also the book named for him.

Old Testament: In Christian tradition, the name for the first part of the Bible, which comprises the Hebrew scriptures.

oracle against the nations: A genre used by the **prophe- ts** and in **apocalyptic** literature to describe **Yahweh's** judgment on foreign nations.

P: The Priestly source according to the **Documentary Hypothesis**, found in the books of Genesis through Numbers and at the end of the book of Deuteronomy.

parallelism: A feature of biblical and other ancient Near Eastern poetry, in which one phrase or line is followed by another that is synonymous, contrasting, or climactic.

Passover: The spring festival commemorating the Exodus from Egypt.

Pentateuch: A word of Greek origin, meaning “five books,” used by modern scholars to refer to the first five books of the Bible. See also **Torah**.

Persia: Kingdom in modern Iran that ruled the Near East from the late sixth to the late fourth centuries BCE. See also **Cyrus**.

Philistines: One group of the Sea Peoples. In the late second millennium BCE, having failed to conquer the Egyptians, they settled on the southeast coast of the Mediterranean where they vied with **Israel** for the control of **Canaan**. The term “Palestine” is derived from their name.

Promised Land: The land promised by God to **Abraham** and his descendants. Its boundaries vary in the Bible, but

it corresponds roughly to the territory comprising modern Israel and Palestine.

prophet: A word of Greek origin meaning “spokesper- son.” The prophets were believed to be recipients of direct communications from God. Sayings of and stories about many of the prophets are found in the part of the Bible known as the **Prophets**.

Prophets: In Jewish tradition, the second of the three parts of the **Hebrew Bible**, comprising the books of **Joshua** to 2 Kings and **Isaiah** to **Malachi**. See also **Former Prophets; Latter Prophets; Major Prophets; Minor Prophets; Torah; Writings**.

proverb: A short pithy saying, often in poetry.

Purim: The festival commemorating the deliverance of the Judeans from the plot of the Persian official Haman by **Esther** and Mordecai.

Rachel: Sister of **Leah**, second wife of **Jacob**, and mother of **Joseph** and Benjamin.

Rahab: Prostitute in Jericho who helped spies sent by **Joshua** to escape. She and her family became part of **Israel**.

Rebekah: Wife of **Isaac** and mother of **Esau** and **Jacob**.

redaction criticism: In modern scholarship, the study of the processes of redacting or editing, by which such larger works as the **Pentateuch** and the book of **Isaiah** were given their final forms.

Reed Sea: The body of water that the Israelites crossed in their **Exodus** from Egypt. Although later identified as the Red Sea, it is more likely one of several smaller bodies of water or wetlands east of the Nile Delta.

Rehoboam: The first king of the **southern kingdom of Judah** (ruled 928–911 BCE) after the death of his father **Solomon**.

Ritual Decalogue: In modern scholarship, the replace- ment copy of the **Ten Commandments** that **Moses** re- ceived from God after he had broken the first set because of his anger at the **golden calf** incident. Found in Exodus 34.10–26, it is exclusively concerned with worship, hence its name.

royal ideology: In modern scholarship, the term for the complex of ideas associated with the Davidic monarchy, including the **Davidic covenant**.

Ruth: Heroine of the book named for her, in which, al- though a **Moabite**, she becomes the mother of **Obed** and thus the great-grandmother of **David**.

sabbath: The day of rest, the seventh day of the week. The term can also be used for longer periods of time, as in a “sabbatical year.”

Samaria: The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel from the early ninth century to 722 BCE, when it fell to the Assyrians. Subsequently, Samaria was used as the name of the region in which the city was located.

Samson: A judge known for his great strength, involvement with Delilah, and killing Philistines.

Samuel: A prophet, priest, and judge in eleventh-century BCE Israel. He anointed both Saul and David as Israel's first kings. The books of Samuel are named for him.

Sarah (Sarai): Wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac.

Saul: First king of Israel, in the late eleventh century BCE. Father of Jonathan, Michal, and Ishbaal (Ishbosheth). After his death in battle with the Philistines, he was succeeded by David.

scapegoat: A goat “for Azazel” (Lev 16.10), who was probably originally a desert demon, to which the sins of the community are symbolically transferred on the Day of Atonement.

Second Isaiah: In modern scholarship, chapters 40–55 of the book of Isaiah, dated to the mid-sixth century BCE. Also called Deutero-Isaiah.

Second Temple: The Temple completed in 515 BCE to replace the Temple of Solomon, which had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586.

Sennacherib: King of Assyria (705–681 BCE) under whom the Assyrians laid siege to Jerusalem in 701.

servant songs: In Second Isaiah, a group of four poems that speak of a servant of Yahweh. They are Isaiah 42.1–4, 49.1–6, 50.4–11, and 52.13–53.12.

Shema: In Jewish tradition, three excerpts from the books of Deuteronomy and Numbers that are recited daily and, written on small scrolls, attached to the body during prayer and to the door of a house. The term means “Hear,” from the opening word of Deuteronomy 6.4.

Sinai: The mountain from which God gave the Israelites his laws after their Exodus from Egypt. Its location is disputed. Also called Horeb. The Sinai Peninsula is named for the mountain.

Solomon: Son of David and Bathsheba who succeeded his father as king of Israel in the mid-tenth century BCE and built the Temple in Jerusalem.

son of man: A phrase that in the Hebrew Bible means human being. In Daniel 7.13, it is used of someone who is given universal rule; the identity of this person is disputed.

southern kingdom of Judah: The kingdom that after the death of Solomon in the late tenth century BCE continued to be ruled by the Davidic dynasty with its capital

in Jerusalem, until it was captured by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. *See also* Judah.

Succession Narrative: In modern scholarship, an originally independent source incorporated into the Deuteronomistic History that relates how Solomon eventually succeeded David on the throne. It is found in 2 Samuel 9–20 and 1 Kings 1–2. Also called the Court History of David.

suzerainty treaty: In modern scholarship, a binding agreement between a king or suzerain and a lesser king, the suzerain's vassal. Elements of suzerainty treaties are used by the biblical writers in their presentation of the covenant between God and Israel.

synagogue: A word of Greek origin meaning “gathering together,” used of religious assemblies of Jews and the buildings in which such assemblies took place.

Syro-Ephraimite War: The attack on Judah and Jerusalem by the northern kingdom of Israel and Aram in 734 BCE, in an attempt to force the king of Judah, Ahaz, to join an anti-Assyrian alliance.

tabernacle: The movable shrine that housed the Israelite deity and served as a sacred center of the wandering Israelite community after the Exodus from Egypt, described in detail in Exodus 26. Also called the “tent of meeting.”

Tanakh: An acronym used for the three parts of the Hebrew Bible in Jewish tradition, formed from the first letter of each of its three parts: the Torah, the Neviim (the Prophets), and the Ketuvim (the Writings).

tell: An artificial mound formed from the stratified accumulated debris of successive human occupations.

Temple of Solomon: The Temple in Jerusalem built by King Solomon in the mid-tenth century and destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. It is also known as the First Temple.

Ten Commandments: The text of the contract or covenant between God and Israel made on Mount Sinai. *See also* Decalogue.

textual criticism: The study of manuscripts to determine an original text.

theodicy: A word of Greek origin meaning “divine justice,” used with reference to literature that deals with the problem of human suffering, especially the suffering of the innocent.

theophany: A word of Greek origin meaning the appearance of a god, used by modern scholars to refer to the appearance of a deity to humans, usually with appropriate manifestations of divine power.

Third Isaiah: In modern scholarship, chapters 56–66 of the book of Isaiah, dating to the late sixth or early fifth century BCE. Also called Trito-Isaiah.

Tiamat: The goddess of the primeval salt water who in *Enuma Elish* is defeated by the storm-god **Marduk**.

Tiglath-pileser III: King of **Assyria** (745–727 BCE) who extended Assyrian control over the Near East.

tithe: A religious offering of one-tenth of the value of produce, livestock, or other commodities.

Torah/torah: In Jewish tradition, the Torah is the first of three parts of the **Hebrew Bible**, comprising the five books of Moses from Genesis to Deuteronomy. The word *torah* literally means “teaching” or “instruction” and is often translated “law.” See also **Prophets; Writings**.

Tower of Babel: The tower built after the Flood in an attempt to reach the heavens. God punished the builders by scattering them and confusing their languages.

tree of life: The tree in the **garden of Eden** whose fruit provided immortality.

tree of the knowledge of good and evil: The tree in the **garden of Eden** whose fruit was forbidden.

Ugaritic: A Semitic language closely related to Hebrew used in second-millennium BCE texts from the site of Ugarit on the Mediterranean coast of Syria. The Ugaritic texts include a number of **myths** and epics that shed light on **Canaanite** religion.

United Monarchy: During the tenth century BCE, the ten northern tribes of **Israel** and the southern tribe of **Judah** were united under the rule of **David** and his son **Solomon**, both of whom are called “king of **Israel**.” When Solomon died in 928 BCE, the united kingdom of **Israel** was split into the **northern kingdom of Israel** and the **southern kingdom of Judah**.

Utnapishtim: In the *Gilgamesh* epic, the hero of the story of the Flood.

Wellhausen, Julius (1844–1918): A German scholar who wrote *A History of Israel* (1878), which is the classic formulation of the **Documentary Hypothesis**.

wisdom literature: A type of writing whose focus is human existence and often its relationship to the divine. It employs a variety of forms, such as proverbs, dialogues, and fables. Wisdom literature was used widely in the ancient Near East and is found throughout the Bible, especially in the books of Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and in Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon in the **Apocrypha**.

Woman Wisdom: The depiction of the concept of wisdom as a goddess who is the companion of **Yahweh**.

Writings: In Jewish tradition, the third of three parts of the **Hebrew Bible**, comprising the books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. See also **Prophets; Torah**.

Yahweh: The personal name of the God of **Israel**.

Zechariah: A prophet in **Judah** in the late sixth century BCE; also the book named for him.

Zedekiah: Last king of **Judah** (ruled 597–586 BCE), during whose reign **Jerusalem** was destroyed by the **Babylonians**.

Zephaniah: A prophet in **Judah** in the late seventh century BCE; also the book named for him.

Zerubbabel: One of the leaders of the return to **Judah** from exile in **Babylon** in 538 BCE

Zion: A name of **Jerusalem**, used especially in poetic texts.