

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

36.1 The _____ Text and BHS (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*).

The text that is provided in BibleWorks™ is called the Masoretic Text (abbreviated MT). The term “Masoretic” is derived from the Hebrew word (_____) and refers to the textual tradition of Jewish scholars known as Masoretes. These scholars labored in the _____ of the biblical text between the sixth and tenth centuries A.D.

The Masoretes perfected a system of vowel pointing that was added to the consonantal text, thereby graphically representing the vowel tradition that had been transmitted orally until that time. The Masoretes developed a system of symbols to mark word accent in order to _____ in the reading and recitation of the text.

They also collected and prepared an elaborate set of _____ that accompanied the text in the top, bottom, and side margins. These laborious efforts helped to ensure the _____ transmission of the biblical text. This text was regarded by early scholars as _____ and is similarly accepted by modern scholarship. It is the textual tradition that is used for what is now the standard edition of the Hebrew Bible.

We are going to look at some of the major features located on the pages of the Hebrew Bible.

36.2 Looking at the BHS.

1. *Book Title*. The main body of the page is given to the biblical _____ in Hebrew. At the top of the page, the book is identified as Genesis and a Hebrew _____. You will notice that Genesis 1.1 begins with the same word but it is vocalized. Ancient literary works were frequently titled by the first _____ or phrase of the composition.

2. *Chapter and Verse*. Like most English Bibles, the text of the Hebrew Bible is divided into chapters and verses. There was no such _____ system in the original Hebrew texts. This was the work of Christian scholars in the 13th century A.D.

You should also note that the chapter and verse divisions of the Hebrew Bible do not always _____ with the divisions of our English Bibles. The phenomenon is especially common in the book of _____.

3. *The Masorah of the BHS.*

One of the important and interesting contributions of the Masoretes was their system of marginal _____. These notes are called the _____ and are traditionally categorized into two main groups: the marginal Masorah and the final Masorah. The category of marginal Masoreh is further divided into the Masorah _____ (small Masorah) in the outer side margins and the Masorah _____ (large Masorah), traditionally located in the top and bottom margins of the text. The Masorah parva consists of word-use statistics, similar documentation for expressions or certain phraseology, observations on full or defective writing, and others.

Though some of this information seems trivial and unimportant to the modern reader, these observations are the result of a passionate _____ to safeguard the accurate _____ of the sacred text.

4. *The Kethiv-Qere.* The most important of the Masoretic notes are those that detail the Kethiv-Qere that are located in the Masorah parva in the outside _____ of the outside margins of BHS.

Given that Masoretes would not alter the sacred consonantal text, the Kethiv-Qere notes were a way of “_____” or commenting on the text for any number of reasons (grammatical, theological, etc.) deemed important by the copyist.

The uncorrected wording of the text is the Kethiv, a term that means, “what is written.” The Qere is a term that means “what is to be _____.” The Qere is signaled by a small _____ that is written above the word in the text. This circle refers the reader to a marginal note where the consonants to be read are given.

Perhaps the most important example of this is the divine name LORD (YHWH). This word was (and is) never pronounced out of _____. The Kethiv is YHWH. The Qere (what is to be pronounced) is _____.

5. *The Textual Apparatus of BHS and Textual Criticism.* At the bottom of each page of BHS, below the Masorah Magna, there is a collection of editorial _____ in what is called the textual _____. In these notes, the editors of BHS have assembled a selection of important readings, textual variants and conjectural emendations that do not appear in the major Hebrew texts. The textual apparatus of BHS provides students with a point of entry into the exegetical discipline of textual _____.

In the study of biblical (textual) criticism, the term “_____” refers to the original copy of an author’s _____, such as that produced by the prophet Isaiah. The original copy of every book of the Bible has been _____. All known biblical manuscripts are only later _____ of the original autographs.

From ancient times and until the invention of the printing press, biblical manuscripts were _____ by hand with the inevitable result that textual corruptions, or “errors” were introduced into the text, despite the painstaking efforts of scribes to preserve the _____ of the text. Some books and sections of the Old Testament are relatively free of textual problems (the Pentateuch, Judges, Jonah). Other sections present the reader with an array of textual difficulties (Samuel-Kings, Psalms, Job, Ezekial, Zechariah).

Textual problems are generally categorized as either _____ or _____. Unintentional errors in the copying of a manuscript include the confusion of letters that look alike, the accidental omission of a letter(s) or word(s), the accidental repeating of a letter(s) or word(s), incorrect word division and a number of other similar errors.

Intentional errors in the copying of a manuscript include the altering of a text because the scribe deemed the wording to be _____ to God, the substitution of a euphemism for a word or expression that the scribe deemed to be indelicate or offensive and the introduction of glosses into the text for the purpose of clarification or explanation.

The discipline of textual criticism has two primary purposes: 1) to reconstruct the biblical text as close to its original _____ as can be established in light of existing manuscript evidence and 2) to document and better understand the _____ of the text through time.

36.7 The Ordering of the Books of the Hebrew Bible.

The Hebrew Bible is composed of twenty-four books arranged in three major divisions: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Hebrew Scriptures is also referred to as the Tanak, an acronym derived from the initial letters of three names of the three divisions

The _____	The _____	The _____
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Job
Leviticus	Samuel	Proverbs
Numbers	Kings	Ruth
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Song of Solomon
	Jeremiah	Ecclesiastes
	Ezekiel	Lamentations
	Twelve Prophets	Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra-Nehemiah
		Chronicles