

# The Meaning of Torah in Early Judaism

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Torah in Motion  
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Syllabus

## Description:

This course will explore the ways in which the concept of Torah developed among Jews in the ancient world. We will begin by exploring the relationship between written texts and oral traditions in the Tanakh, will move on to consider the controversies surrounding scriptural translation in the Second Temple period, and will close with a unit on how the notion of Oral Torah developed.

## Selected Sources:

### Unit 1: The Written Torah

Shemot 17:14–16  
Devarim 17:14–20  
Melachim 22:1–20  
Yirmiyahu 36:1–32  
Nechemiah 8:1–8

### Unit 2: The Translated Torah

Josephus, *Against Apion*, 183–189  
Prologue to Ben Sira  
The Letter of Aristeas, 308–311  
Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 12.2.13–14  
Philo, *The Life of Moses*, 2.39–43

### Unit 3: The Expanded Torah and the Oral Torah

Jubilees 1:1–11  
Philo, *On Abraham*, 4–6  
Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 13.293–298  
The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, T. Levi, 13:1–4  
4 Ezra 12, 14

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Mishnah Avot 1:1  
Sifra Bechukotai 2:7  
B. Shabbat 31a