

THE HOLY TEXTS OF JUDAISM

The holiest texts in Judaism are the first five books of the BIBLE (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*), which Jews call the TORAH and believe that God gave to MOSES on Mount Sinai.

The Hebrew Scriptures, comprising the TORAH, the prophets, and the historical books called *the writings*, were codified by Jewish religious scholars somewhere between 200 BCE and 200 CE. They are identical to books in the *Old Testament* Christians read; 100 CE is the date of the earliest Old Testament canon.

At least one copy of the TORAH in Hebrew is kept in every synagogue in the form of a hand-written parchment scroll. Jews read a particular, set portion of the TORAH scroll each week in synagogue.

The TALMUD is a compendium of law and commentary on the TORAH applying it to life in later and changed circumstances.

