

Introducing the Women's Hebrew Bible by Susanne Scholz.
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Susanne Scholz, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Merrimack College in Massachusetts, has written an excellent introduction to women's bible scholarship, with specific regard to the Hebrew Bible.

The book is divided into five chapters: chapter one considers the history of feminist approaches to the Hebrew Bible and demonstrates that it is far from the modern phenomenon that one might assume it to be; chapter two looks at the careers of four modern scholars, the pioneer Phyllis Trible, Athalya Brenner, Elsa Tamez, and Marie-Theres Wacker; chapter three examines the different methodologies that feminist bible scholars bring to their studies; chapter four looks at sexual violence in the Hebrew Bible, tolerated and excused to a quite shameful extent by some male bible scholars, and chapter five takes the biblical women Ruth, Jezebel and Rahab and the ways in which their lives have been interpreted by modern scholars.

Susanne Scholz leaves the reader with several powerful impressions: first, that it should be impossible for any thinking person to attempt to understand the Hebrew Bible without serious consideration of its feminist critique; second, that the women she highlights and others have courageously shone light on aspects of texts that male scholars have ignored for centuries; and third, that feminist bible scholarship has a way of breathing new life and relevance into ancient texts thus giving them a renewed meaning for the 21st century.

This is a book for scholars and lay people alike, and an easy but eloquent introduction to a vibrant and valuable field.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh