

## How the Scriptures Were Chosen



The rationale behind the choice of the scriptures was, first and foremost, authenticity. This was true of both the New and the Old Testaments. There were many spurious tracts and these had to culled out. A large volume of literature, especially Gnostic\* works, were springing up like weeds, not only complicating the choices, but adding a sense of urgency to the task of identifying those that were authentically apostolic.

\*Gnosticism is a form of mysticism where knowledge itself is the god. According to that belief, one elevated himself to proximity with the divine through study and scholastic understanding; passing through stages of perfection as a person's knowledge increased. Gnosticism's premise was that closeness to God was limited only to the select few who could attain it intellectually; and that, only through long and protracted study. This differed diametrically to Jesus who taught that those closest to God were the poor and simple, and that they were justified by faith alone. Gnosticism was elitist. A modern similarity can be found in the precepts of L. Ron Hubbard's Scientology.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT AND ITS APOCRYPHA

The decision about which books the Old Testament should keep or discard as sacred was complicated by the fact that scholars had to deal with two lines of scripture, Greek and Hebrew. In the end, Christianity chose the Greek and the Jews chose the Hebrew. Since the Greek Old Testament had more books in it than the Hebrew, controversy has raged over Christianity's decision ever since.

With both sets of books (New Testament and Old Testament), there was a grey area where the job of selecting canon became more difficult. When the Jews officially codified their Old Testament at Jamnia around 90 A.D., even the Book of Ezekiel was suspect. According to the Talmud, it was saved only at the last hour by a bribe of precious oil.

Ultimately, the Jewish Rabbi's drew the line on the basis of language alone, culling out

everything that was not first-authored in Hebrew. There is some reason to believe that this was a frontal assault on Christianity because all of its known books were first-authored in Greek. So, in effect, the Jewish decision stripped the Christian documents of their claim to divinity (as far as the Rabbi's were concerned).

At the time of Jesus, about 100 years before Jamnia, the Old Testament existed only as scrolls of books. These were kept at the Jerusalem Temple. The synagogues, however, used Targums (like Catechisms) that were written in the language of the Judaeans (Aramaic). These consisted of scriptural quotations and explanations.

A Jewish administration in Jerusalem about 300 B.C., wished to address the problem of the Jewish exiles (Jews living dispersed around the world). Very few spoke Aramaic and almost none understood Hebrew. They read and spoke the language of the lands they were living in, and virtually all understood Koine Greek, the ancient world's language of commerce. So the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem authorized the translation of the Hebrew scrolls into Greek. According to one report, seventy Jewish scholars were sent from Jerusalem to Alexandria Egypt (then the ancient world's greatest library) to complete this work.

What came out of that effort was the Greek Bible. Published about 275 B.C., it was very popular, and, according to the Talmud, hung side by side with the Hebrew in the Jerusalem Temple at the time of Christ. Fragments of the Greek scriptures were also found at Qumran (as a part of the Dead Sea Scrolls).

It was the Greek Old Testament that the Apostles and early Christians used because it was in the language of the dispersion. As everyone knows, Vespasian and Titus conquered Jerusalem in 70 A.D., burned down Herod's Temple and exiled the Jewish dissidents and populations, scattering them throughout the Roman empire. This began the Diaspora, a dispersion that has lasted for almost 2000 years. As the Jews departed the Holy Land, the Christians went with them to spread the Gospel to the churches and synagogues of the world. That is why Peter and Paul and the other disciples all ended up in Rome, and why the western church became headquartered there. It was all a part of the Diaspora, i.e., the exile to "Babylon".

When the Rabbi's made their decision regarding the codification of the Hebrew Old Testament, they outlawed the Greek Old Testament. That action nullified the Old Testament scriptures which were being used by the Christian proselytizers, closing to them any contact they might otherwise have had with the world's Hebrew synagogues. Furthermore, most Christian scholars in the early Church disagreed with the decisions made at Jamnia, rejecting them outright. The entire Christian Church continued using the Greek Old Testament.

What was apparent to Christian scholars was the grey area that surrounded part of the

books being considered. Some were obviously fanciful, and a few had been written during the Christian era. Roman scholars felt those had to be eliminated. That is why the Catholic (Roman) Old Testament differs from the Greek. Early Christian scholars kept what they felt were authentic books, but eliminated those they felt didn't measure up to intense scholastic or spiritual scrutiny. Their decisions were backed up by Origin and the Church scholars that later followed him. As far as the Greek-written (apocryphal) works included in these decisions are concerned, the results and reasons surrounding their choices can be found on our web page, "[apocrypha.htm](#)".

All these books were assigned by the Roman church to a category in which their true canonical nature remained somewhat in question, but, like the Greeks, the lay people of the Roman church considered them true scripture and used them as such.

The Old Testament remained unchanged until Martin Luther appeared in 1519 or so. He discarded the Greek Old Testament and replaced it with the Hebrew version (they used the Jamnia rescension). The Apocryphal Old Testament books he gathered together and placed in his Bible between the New and Old Testaments. It was at this point that the Roman Church finally decided to agree with the Greek Church in canonizing the Greek-written works. Most of the apocryphal books chosen were written by dedicated Jews 100 to 200 years before the birth of Christ.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT AND ITS APOCYPHA

Authenticity was so important to those selecting which books were sacred enough to qualify as scripture, the newer works were barely considered. Instead the arguments centered on which included books in the list should be removed from it. In the end, none were and the New Testament was codified just as you see it today.

Because of the threat of the Gnostics, all writings of the era came under intense scrutiny. The wildly popular grey area books like Clement, Barnabus or Shepard of Hermas were never considered canon by the early writers. The questionable books were those among the chosen themselves. James, Jude, 2nd Peter and Revelation. One or two even questioned Hebrews and John's last two letters. Most of the New Testament books seem to have been defined close to 100 A.D. The impeccable scholar Origin who compiled his list about 95 years later excluded James and Jude but kept as scripture all the rest. About 100 years after that, the rest of the important New Testament scholars appeared and most of them agreed with the present canon as well. The only exception was the Book of Revelation. Four of the eleven church scholars had reservations about this document.

As far as the apocryphal books of the New Testament were concerned, none were chosen as scripture. The closest work was First Clement. It was written about 90 AD by the Bishop of Rome and was eliminated from contention only narrowly. One reason, it

contained a prophecy stating that "across the impassable ocean other worlds" existed. Another passage refers to the mythical Phoenix bird as if it were real. Despite the books early authorship and impeccable message, those references were considered too fanciful and the work was rejected as true scripture.

The question of authenticity as far as New Testament scripture is concerned can be found, not in scholarship but in Christ Himself. He told His disciples:

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: Whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven." (Mt.16:19).

"scripture cannot be rejected". (Jn.10:35).

Jesus took the keys of the kingdom out of the hands of the Jewish high priest and gave them to Peter, and through him, the Apostolic body. Nothing could be more "bound on earth" than the scripture they chose. With Christ's announcement that heaven would bind itself to their choices, it becomes a case-closed situation. The same cannot be said for Jamnia, however, because those decision occurred after the replacement of authority had already taken place. Christian binding appears exclusive. And once bound, Jesus said, scripture cannot be rejected.

In the New Testament, now divinely bound, is contained a chapter in the Book of Acts that unbinds the Hebrew covenant, nullifying the Old Testament that governed it. Because that, too, is bound in scripture, their decision in that regard cannot be rejected.

Where Martin Luther fits into this scenario is a matter of speculation. Did he have authority to switch Old Testaments 1400 years after the Christian fathers had codified it? Fortunantely, with the Old Testament it isn't that serious. If you eliminate all of the questionable books, the only thing lost are prophecies anyway and there are enough of those even in the Hebrew books alone to prove Jesus true.

Of greater concern, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons have each changed the wording of certain passages in the New Testament. Do new versions of scripture come under the same blanket of binding covered by Christ's directive? Almost all Christian scholars say no. They remain universally agreed that no one has authority to change the ancient canon of the New Testament. Their thinking is that what the early Church fathers bound in the beginning cannot be altered. This is why all churches return to the original Greek manuscripts when upgrading translations of their scriptures into modern tongues.

The situation with the Old Testament is far less critical. It was dissolved as a legal and

binding document on Christians by Peter and Paul and the Twelve Apostles. [See Acts 15](#). They unanimously agreed that from the day of their decision forward, the Old Testament had no authority to lay down rules for Christians outside of those defined by the New Testament. For that reason, the Old Testament is now, for Christians, a book of prophecy and history only. That applies equally to its Apocryphal works.

The rules of the Old Testament have greater meaning to non-believers. Everyone not baptised remains under its declarations and obligations. Gentiles remain gentiles and pagans remain pagans. And everyone, pagan and Hebrew alike, are legally bound to live under the condemnation of a Law that contains no provisions for mercy or salvation. It is a death sentence, and can only be reversed by Christ through the process of being baptised out of the Law and into His mercy and offer of salvation from God.

This does not mean that in Christianity the Old Testament has no meaning. Its words, centered as they are on ancient prophecy, are invaluable towards proving whether Jesus is true or not (Acts 17:11-12). This certainty is absolute in terms of both Testaments. We can take enormous surety in the knowledge that the selection process was so rigid, culling out books, even of impeccable stature. It guarantees that the credentials of the remaining works are authentic. Add to that the dogmatic assurance by Christ that God will back the New Testament to the letter, its own inerrancy becomes indisputable.

See also:

[1. The Apocrypha](#)

[2. Decision of the First Jerusalem Council](#)

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## The Old Testament Apocrypha

The Books called the Apocrypha consist of 14 books originally attached to the Greek Old Testament that were not in the Hebrew-written Bible. That is because they were "first-written" in the Greek language. They were considered scripture and used as such by the Jews of the Dispersion (Jews living in foreign countries) at the time of Christ.

About 60 years after the crucifixion of Christ, a group of Rabbi's (survivors of the Roman annihilation of Jerusalem) met at Jamnia and canonized a Hebrew scripture specifically devoid of Greek writings. Any work of scripture not originally written in Hebrew was discarded as unclean.

This codification of the Hebrew Bible by the Jewish Rabbi's cancelled for the Jews the authority, not only of the contested books we now call apocryphal, but also the popular Greek Old Testament itself that foreign Jews had been using for the previous 300 years. That work had earlier been authorized for publication by the Jewish Sanhedrin in Jerusalem for use by the Jews of the Dispersion whose language was primarily Greek.

Jamnia was a seminal decision because it isolated Christians from Jews on the basis, not just of scripture, but of language as well.

The early Christians stuck to the Greek Old Testament and the Jews concentered themselves on the Hebrew Old Testament decided on by the Rabbi's at Jamnia.

The early Christians had good reason for their decision to retain the Greek scriptures. Not only did the entire pagan

world speak Greek, but according to the Talmud, at the time Jesus preached, Hebrew and Greek scrolls hung side by side in Herod's Temple. Even the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran include fragments written in both languages. When Christ's disciples wrote the New Testament books, they, too were composed in the same Greek language, allowing the world at large to read them.

The Jewish action, fixated as it was on the Greek language, nullified both sets of Christian books. The New Testament and the apocryphal books were both relegated to pagan classification and permanently discarded.

In prophecy, this is why Jesus, quoting Isaiah, announced that He would speak to the Jewish people in a foreign language. Obviously, that 'foreign' language was Greek.

The early Christian Church in the first century A.D. quickly coalesced into two Roman churches, one in the east, which we call today Eastern Orthodox, and the other in the west now called Roman Catholic. Both adopted the Greek Old Testament. Owing, however, to the nature of some of the material and questions raised by the Jewish Rabbi's at Jamnia, the Roman Catholic Church did so with reservations. It was obvious to Catholic scholars that some of those apocryphal documents, though dating from antiquity, were less than inspired.

The strongest motivation for those reservations, however, came from the fact that in the writings of the Apostles, almost all of the Old Testament quotations used to emphasize their points, came from books outside those fourteen.

Consequently early Catholic scholars assigned those questionable Greek-written books to a middle category,. In doing so, they coined the term "Apocrypha" which meant "hidden" to define them. The title was not meant to disparage their claim to divine inspiration, but to suggest that their content was more for scholars because of the hidden nature of the revelations they contained. They felt the general public was not sufficiently enlightened to readily understand them.

Later, in the middle ages, the Roman Church, agreeing with what had been up to that time an unofficial policy of acceptance, officially moved a certain group of the apocryphal books back to the regular (or recognized) scriptures. That is where they remain to this day - i.e., true scripture to Greeks and Romans. Together, the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches represent about 75% of the world's Christians, so acceptance of these books as true scripture is substantial in the modern Christian community.

In the Protestant Church, it is a different matter.

When Martin Luther broke with the Catholic Church, he ordered the Greek Apocrypha placed between the Old Testament and the New Testament in his 1534 Bible, with the inscription:

"Apocrypha: these are book which are not held equal to the Sacred Scriptures and yet are useful and good for reading".

As the Protestant revolt swept Europe, and sects of all sorts began appearing and sparking centuries of bitter internecine Christian warfare, the apocryphal books of the Old Testament were removed entirely from most Protestant Bibles. The Anglican Church retained them, but with the caution that they be used only for "life, and instruction of manners; but not to establish any doctrine".

The caution about doctrine was irrelevant.

Soon after Pentecost, and long before the Jews codified their scriptures at Jamnia, the twelve Apostles, together with Paul and the other leading figures in the Jerusalem Christian movement met in that city to decide the fate of the Old Testament laws. In a single sweeping edict, they cancelled the Old Testament's entire doctrinal authority. Not just the 14 'apocryphal' books, but the entire Old Testament (Hebrew and Greek alike). None of it thereafter could be used to establish doctrine in the developing Christian community (Acts 15:1-29). From that point on, the Old Testament's messages could be used only for prophecy.

The authority for the twelve Apostles to do this stemmed from the fact that Jesus had changed the management. He had given the world an entirely new Covenant. The old Covenant no longer applied. It's authority had been cancelled by God.

Today, some Christians in Protestant circles regard the Old Testament Apocrypha as simply fiction, or worse. That is an overreaction. When we think about these books in terms of prophecy, many of them remain very valuable. Among them are serious works written by Hebrew scholars and prophets and the inspiration of their verses is obvious. Stemming as most of them do from a century or more before the birth of Jesus, they offer invaluable insight into the Jewish historical process. For those who continue to use them as scripture they offer far more (see list below).

The Old Testament Apocrypha consists of the following 14 books listed in two categories, those accepted as scripture by the Roman and Greek churches and those not accepted as scripture.

## **Accepted Books**

### **Ecclesiasticus**

This book, written about 180 B.C., contains proverbs and practical observations of life two centuries before the birth of Christ. The work closely resembles the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament. It represents one of the most valuable records of early Rabbinical thought. It was translated into Greek in 132 B.C. by a grandson of the author (Jesus ben Sira)

### **Wisdom**

In many respects this is one of the most valuable books of the entire Apocrypha. It was written by a Jew of the Dispersion about 65 B.C. It is similar to the Wisdom Books of the Old

Testament. It was written especially to combat the materialistic tendencies of the canonical book of Ecclesiastes. Filled with stunning prophecy and replete with the powerful and spiritual essence of God, this book is also sometimes referred to as the 'Wisdom of Solomon'.

## **1 Maccabees**

First Maccabees, written by a Jew in Palestine during the latter part of the 2nd century B.C., is perhaps the best historical source on the period from 175 to 135 B.C. Well written, it reveals deep insight into the root causes of the Maccabean rebellion and details the rebellion itself down to the death of Simon in 135 B.C. This book is essential to both Christians and Jews. It gives detailed information relative to Antiochus Epiphanes and his desecration of the Jerusalem Temple, an action which Jesus said would be repeated at the time of the end. The book also contains a wealth of details relative to the Jewish feast of Hannukah (which celebrates the re-dedication of the Temple Antiochus debased). That information is available from no other source, Jewish or otherwise, and without it there would be no Hannukah celebration.

## **2 Maccabees**

Unlike the first Book of the Maccabees, this work is a combination of history and fiction. It seems to be less useful than the first. It is an abridgment of a far more extensive work in existence at the time of its writing in the latter part of the 2nd century B.C. It presents information about the period leading up to the rebellion of the Maccabees under Mattathias in Modein and follows it down to 161 B.C.

## **Tobit**

The Book of Tobit, a work of fiction, was very popular among Jews and early Christians. It is a story of romance and legend from the Jewish Dispersion in Egypt. It was written in the 3rd century B.C., and was based upon two well-known Egyptian stories. The purpose of this book was to teach useful lessons, and at the same time correct some of the then-current superstitions. It features prominently the angel Raphael.

## **Bel and the Dragon**

Written about 100 B.C., this story reveals Daniel's wisdom in exposing the falsehood of idolatry and those who promote it. The book also reveals the existence in Babylon of a dragon-god. Information about this idol is available from no other source, but it is particularly relevant in light of dragon prophecies relative to the last days, scattered throughout the scriptures.

## **Judith**

The Book of Judith relates a story of victory won by the chosen people over its enemies, thanks to the intervention of a woman. It is a legendary tale of a Jewish widow reminiscent of 'Joan of Ark' who succeeds in outwitting and finally slaying a great Assyrian general, thus bringing deliverance to her oppressed people. It was written in Palestine during the latter half of the 2nd century B.C., probably by a Pharisee

## **Esther (additional verses)**

This work, written about 100 B.C., consists of a number of additions to the Biblical book of Esther. The additions were added for detail and to make up for some of the spiritual deficiencies of the canonical book. The added verses greatly enhance the apocalyptic nature of the story and bring enormous symbolic understanding to it, dramatically enhancing its relationship to God. It is replete with dragons, and images easily reminiscent of the most important tenants and personages involved in the last-day warfare between Satan and Christ. The symbolism it brings to the Book of Esther is powerful prophecy.

## **Baruch**

The greater part of this book was written in the 1st century A.D. under the assumed name of Baruch, the private secretary of Jeremiah. The 6th chapter is known as the Epistle of Jeremiah. Both books contain a series of exhortations, encouragements and severe denunciations.

## **Books Not Accepted**

### **The Prayer of Manasses**

This work dates from the first century B.C. It was intended to be used in connection with the story of Manasseh's Babylonian captivity (2 Chron. 33). Parts of the Prayer have found their way into Protestant liturgy.

### **The Song of the Three Holy Children**

This addition to the Book of Daniel was written about 100 B.C. and was found inserted in his book, in the third chapter, right after the 23rd verse.

### **The History of Susanna**

This is another 1st century B.C. addition to the book of Daniel. It is generally found prefixed to the book. The purpose of the story is to magnify Daniel's powers and the judgment.

### **1 Esdras**

This is the Greek version of, and in some parts a reconstruction of the canonical Book of Ezra. It was written about 100 B.C. Some of the subject matter added is from the book of Nehemiah.

### **2 Esdras**

This book is an apocalypse, especially chapters 3-14. It is composite in origin, dating from 65 B.C. to 120 A.D. The value of the book lies in the fact that it focuses heavily on the period of Jewish thought surrounding the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The views it expresses on eschatology are closely allied to the teachings of the New Testament.

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I Will Increase The Visions"**

*Hosea 12:11*



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## Law of Moses Gives Way to Christ

"But certain members of the Pharisees' party who had become believers objected, insisting that the pagans should be circumcised and instructed to keep the Law of Moses."

*Acts 15:5*

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Jesus' revelation that the writings of the Law and the Prophets were symbolic (they were all pointing to Jesus) put Him in direct conflict with those who held that the teachings of the Old Testament were absolute and needed to be accepted literally and followed exactly as they were written.

Because obsession with these rules was so pervasive and so compelling (even among early Christians), reforming the ritual of the Old Testament became one of the earliest priorities of God and the Church.

When the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem to decide this matter, there was much disagreement among them as to how much of the Torah should be retained and how much discarded.

Moved by the Holy Spirit, Peter stood up before the assembly and argued, "

God, who can read everyone's heart, showed his approval of the pagans by giving them the same Holy Spirit he gave to us. It would only provoke God's anger now, if we were to impose on them the very burden of the Law that neither we nor our ancestors were strong enough to support. Remember, we believe that we are saved in the same way as they are: through the grace of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 15:8-11).

This statement silenced the discord.

In one of the most momentous decisions in the history of the Christian Church, the Jerusalem assembly separated the Church from the rules and regulations of the Old Testament, decreeing:

"It has been decided by the Holy Spirit and by ourselves not to saddle you with any burden beyond these essentials: you are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from fornication. Avoid these, and you will do what is right." (Acts 15:29).

With this decree, the Apostles in Jerusalem severed the Church from its bondage to the rules of the Torah and the Talmud so that Christians could live their lives in the mercy and justice of Jesus without having to struggle with the voluminous decrees of the Law of Moses.

When this meeting ended, only the template of the Torah and the symbolism it advertised remained in place. The Laws and rituals of the Old Testament were all completed in Christ. They were superseded in their entirety by faith: the commandments of the Gospel and the directives of a 'new' Testament which had begun to be penned around the four Gospels and the letters of Paul.

Their ability to grant that freedom was guaranteed by Jesus, Himself, when He issued these words to His apostles:

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: Whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven." (Mt.16:19).

The importance of what happened that day in Jerusalem cannot be overstated. The religious freedom of the entire Christian Church occurred instantly the moment those council directives were approved. Their decree, now itself bound under the power of "the keys of the kingdom" as scripture, can never be overturned.

"scripture cannot be rejected". (Jn.10:35).

The entire Apostolic body attended that Jerusalem Council, the first in Church history. All twelve of Christ's Apostles, Paul, Silas, Barnabus and all the elders of the new Jerusalem Church were in attendance, the great and the small. Those who were of the Phariseic party and had converted to Jesus argued that the Laws of Moses should be incorporated into the rules of Christian doctrine.

There was a long discussion on the matter (Acts 15:6-7). When all the members of the gathered assembly had presented their views on the subject, and after Peter had made his own statement, James, the head of the Jerusalem church arose and said:

"My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has described how God first arranged to enlist a people for his name out of the pagans. This is entirely in harmony with the words of the prophets...I rule then, that instead of making things more difficult for the pagans who turn to God, we send them a letter telling them merely to abstain from anything polluted by idols, from fornication, and from the meat of strangled animals..." (Acts 15:13-20).

This directive, immediately approved by all, allowed the Church to build itself only in the directives of Christ.

A question continues to be asked: how can this decision freeing Christians from the Law compare with Christ's statement in Matthew 5:17-20, stating that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets and that anyone who breaks even the least of those commandments or teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in heaven?

"Do not imagine that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to abolish but to complete them. I tell you solemnly, till heaven and earth disappear, not one dot, not one little stroke shall disappear from the Law until its purpose is achieved. Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven." (Mt.5:17-19).

Jesus is speaking in this passage about the Law of Moses and its transition into the Law of God. That transition considers them to be two parts of the same Law. Moses authored a reflection of the Law which was fulfilled in its entirety by Jesus Christ when He brought the true Law of God down from heaven. The Law of God is the Gospel Jesus taught, and that is the Law referenced here - i.e., the Gospel, the Law of God that completed everything Moses foresaw .

We are ordered in Mt. 5:19 to keep all the commandments of Jesus Christ, down to the very smallest detail, and teach others to do the same.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. We can see that completion in every aspect of Christianity. The Old Testament forms the template upon which the religion of Jesus Christ has been built. The entire architecture of the Church is built on this Mosaic

template. That alone proves the template's fulfillment. So does the fact that Jesus made such extensive efforts to fulfill every prophecy written about Him in the Old Testament.

Through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, Paul recognized that there could not be two laws. One belonged to the Guardian (Moses). It was meant to be a caretaker of the people until the true law of God arrived to take its rightful place. He also realized that there is no place for the guardian once the true Father had taken His place. The Law of Moses had to pass away. Only the Law of God through Christ was eternal and would never pass away. As scripture teaches, no one can go into the sanctuary as long as the outer tent remains standing. It had to come down.

"By this, the Holy Spirit is showing that no one has the right to go into the sanctuary as long as the outer tent remains standing; it is a symbol for this present time. None of the gifts and sacrifices offered under these regulations can possibly bring any worshipper to perfection in his inner self; they are rules about the outward life, connected with foods and drinks and washing at various times, intended to be in force only until it should be time to reform them." (Heb. 9:8-10)

It was clear to everyone that no one could be saved in the Law of Moses. No one could survive his Law. Any slip in the Law at any time meant death. No one could stumble in even the smallest of its myriad regulations and live. Moreover, the Mosaic sacrifices were imperfect and for this reason unable to meet the stringent specifications of their own law. A perfect unblemished sacrifice for sin was essential to fulfill the precise language of the Mosaic Law.

That is why everybody in the Old Testament died. Moses could save no one. His Law was good, outlining sin in detail, but certain death to humanity. That is why Paul told the Jewish leaders the following about their Law:

"If you can teach the ignorant and instruct the unlearned because your Law embodies all knowledge and truth, then why not teach yourself as well as the others? You preach against stealing, yet you steal; you forbid adultery, yet you commit adultery; you despise idols, yet you rob their temples. By boasting about the Law and then disobeying it, you bring God into contempt." (Rom. 2:20-24).

The Law was unable to do anything about a sinner but condemn him to death. God had carried out this very sentence on His own Son in order to cancel the Law's ability to condemn those who accepted Christ's death as their own in His name through baptism and

conversion into His Gospel (the true Law of God). There could be no higher or more perfect sacrifice than Jesus, the Son of God.

Paul expressed our rescue in these terms:

"Before faith came, we were allowed no freedom by the Law; we were being looked after till faith was revealed. The Law was to be our guardian until the Christ came and we could be justified by faith. Now that that time has come we are no longer under that guardian, and you are, all of you, sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." (Gal.3:23-26)

"When law came, it was to multiply the opportunities of falling, but however great the number of sins committed, grace was even greater; and so, just as sin reigned wherever there was death, so grace will reign to bring eternal life thanks to the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 5:20-21).

"Through the Law I am dead to the Law, so that now I can live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I live now, not with my own life, but with the life of Christ who lives in me." (Gal.2:19).

Jesus Christ died on the cross to replace the Law of Moses with grace.

"...we acknowledge that what makes a man righteous is not obedience to the Law, but faith in Jesus Christ." (Gal.2:16).

"But if you do look to the Law to make you justified, then you have separated yourselves from Christ, and have fallen from grace." (Gal.5:4)

It is this same freedom from the Law of the Old Testament that was verified and codified at the Jerusalem Council meeting by Peter, Paul and the rest of Christ's Apostles without dissent. Faith (the Word we proclaim) is the Law of God, the true Law of heaven and earth that brings grace in place of the Law for all who are baptised in His name.

"The word, that is the faith we proclaim, is very near to you, it is on your lips and in your heart. If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. By believing from the heart you are made righteous; by confessing with your lips

you are saved. (Rom.10:8-11)

"He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross; and so he got rid of the Sovereignities and the Powers, and paraded them in public, behind him in his triumphal procession." (Col. 2:14-15).

Because Jesus overrode the Law, Christians are able to stumble in Christ and not die because they are protected from failure by God's Grace which protects those who are faithful to Him.

"Does it follow that we should remain in sin so as to let grace have greater scope? Of course not. We are dead to sin. so how can we continue to live in it? (Rom.6:1-2)

"That is why you must not let sin reign in your mortal bodies or command your obedience to bodily passions, why you must not let any part of your body turn into an unholy weapon fighting on the side of sin; you should, instead offer yourselves to God, and consider yourselves dead men brought back to life; you should make every part of your body into a weapon fighting on the side of God; and then sin will no longer dominate your life, since you are living by grace and not by law." (Rom.6:12-14).

"You must live your whole life according to the Christ you have received - Jesus the Lord; you must be rooted in him and built on him and held firm by the faith you have been taught, and full of thanksgiving." (Col. 2:6-7).

It was essential that the guardian law of Moses be separated from God's Law brought by Jesus Christ. As Paul's letters show, various Jewish Christians of his time were trying to retain the Mosaic laws and raise them up as legalities that competed with the freedoms of grace: not only circumcision, but saturday sabbaths, distinctions between pagans and Jews, temple rituals, rules of retaliation and graven images, idols, distinctions between male and female, hair and clothing styles; distinctions between foods, Hebrew and Greek language; jewelry, words and scores of other regulations either documented in the Torah or contained in the traditions of the Talmud.

The cut had to be 100%. There could be no middle ground. Arbitration on which rules constituted a saved Christian could only lead to division, separating Jews from Greeks and

pagans and bringing chaos to the religion.

Thus we can see in Paul's teaching that Christ's exhortation in Matthew 5:17-19 is divided into two parts. The first applies to Jesus' completion of the Law and the Prophets - bringing to pass all that the Mosaic Law promised. The second applies, not to the Mosaic copy of the Law, but to what it pointed to - the Law of God (the commandments of the Gospel) brought down from heaven by Jesus Christ.

In fact, Moses, himself, bears witness to this transition (from the old to new). He wrote that God told him this about Jesus Christ:

"I will raise up a prophet like yourself for them from their own brothers; I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him. The man who does not listen to my words that he speaks in my name, shall be held answerable to me for it." (Dt. 18:18-19).

This command is clear. It is Jesus' words everyone must listen to.

"Therefore, the man who infringes even one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be considered the least in the kingdom of heaven; but the man who keeps them and teaches them will be considered great in the kingdom of heaven." (Mt.5:19).

In other words, according to Moses, God's entire Law is in Jesus Christ.

"I tell you most solemnly, it was not Moses who gave you bread from heaven, it is my Father who gives you the bread from heaven, the true bread; for the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and they are dead; but this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that a man may eat it and not die. I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever." (John 6:32-51)

Paul confirmed all this when he dismissed the Law of Moses, cancelling every record of our debt to it. Though he dismissed the Law of Moses from the Law of God, Paul suffered no penalty for his action (i.e., he is not the least in the kingdom of God; in fact, Paul is one of the highest figures in the Christian Church). The Holy Spirit has backed his action. Thus there can be no question that Paul had divine authority to take us out of the Law.

That authority can be seen confirmed in the history of the Church.

Today, the Christian era is almost over. We are already in the "third day", the day of Christ's return. The Church is now almost 2000 years old. That means all the things we are discussing here are virtually past-tense at this point. Those 2000-years clearly show that Paul's doctrine, later agreed upon by the Apostles at Jerusalem in Acts 15, was immediately embraced by the Church, codified in scripture, and reaffirmed by succeeding Church leaders throughout the Church's reign on earth. The outer tent was torn down completely, and not rebuilt.

Christian history shows that after the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:1-29), only Christ remained in God's salvation picture. The Hebrew Law thereafter was not used to bind rules on the developing Christian community. From that point on, grace ruled alone and the Old Testament's messages served the people of God almost solely as prophecy and historical reference (bringing understanding through contrast).

With the exception of the Ten Commandments (written by the hand of God, and reaffirmed by Jesus) the laws governing the Old Testament as far as Christians were concerned were replaced or transfigured in their entirety by the commandments of Jesus Christ and the guidelines of the New Testament. Even the Ten Commandments were transitioned! (Mat. 5:20-48)

The holy days were also changed. Where is Passover? Where is Weeks? Where is Hannukah? All these and the others were changed to Christ in the very earliest days of the Church. Each part of the Torah of Moses has been elevated and restructured in Christ in accordance with its true meaning to God. In fact, the entire legal structure of the Torah served the Christian Church as the template for the Law of God brought by Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament remained, but it was there in the way the Book of Hebrews announced it to be - a law surpassed and slowly passing away. A document brimming with prophecies, some still to be revealed.

Salvation and eternal life apply only to those who follow Christ. Jesus gave His life on the cross as the perfect sacrifice according to the Law, able to remove forever the mark of the beast, Satan's stain on our soul. Everyone on earth, not yet baptised in Christ, carries this mark. It can only be removed by faith in Jesus through baptism in His name in heartfelt repentance.

God had given Moses full authority to bind the Law on the Hebrew tribes, and, because no one could keep the Law he bound, it doomed every Hebrew citizen subject to it. Yet, the Law's condemnation went far deeper than the Hebrew tribes, because it condemns all

mankind to death through the apostasy of Adam and Eve (Romans 5:12-19).

This means that everyone on earth not yet baptised, whether in the Law or out of the Law, remains intractably subject to the Law which condemns to death everyone who continues to carry the stain Satan placed on our souls through Adam or Eve (i.e., "original sin").

Before the Law came, no one could be held accountable for sin (Rom. 7:8-13). Moses changed that. His Law bound the whole world in sin.

*As Paul said, the Law "is meant to silence everyone and to lay the whole world open to God's judgment; and this is because no one can be justified in the sight of God by keeping the Law..." (Romans 3:19-20).*

Since most people on earth have never been baptised, the Law remains very powerfully alive today, and fully binding on the human race. Those who refuse to acknowledge Christ's offer of redemption forfeit their chance to escape Satan's grasp and achieve eternal life. Obeying the Law cannot change that condemnation. Only baptism into Jesus can separate anyone from the law of sin and death.

Why would God make a law that leads to death?

To destroy Satan and the sin he brought to the creation. The Law applies to everyone on earth and in the Abyss and beyond. The Law is not only about the first death, it is about the second death, the destruction of evil itself in the spiritual world. It guarantees the death of Satan, and all who follow him: the Beast and the False Prophet included.

Only in Christ can we escape this sentence. Only Christ leads to eternal life. He was the perfect sacrifice that has power to take death's sentence off our souls. His commandments lead to eternal life.

Jesus Christ brought an entire new covenant. The old covenant of Moses no longer applies to those who have joined themselves through faith and baptism to God's new covenant. Those so joined have died to their flesh in this world to put on a new body in Christ's eternal kingdom in heaven (Heb. 9:15-28).

*"See, the days are coming - it is God who speaks- when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel (and the House of Judah), but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master (Jer.31:31-32).*

"No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive: Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people." (Jer.31:33).

The first covenant is gone and it will not return. Not ever! The Old Testament itself has decreed that. It has been replaced by a new covenant, one that comes to us in the Christ that God sent - the same Messiah the Hebrew and Jewish people waited for with such anticipation for so many centuries.

"By speaking of a new covenant, God implies that the first one is already old. Now anything old only gets more antiquated until in the end it disappears". (Heb.8:13).

This is why the Apostles made clear in Jerusalem the supremacy of Jesus over the old covenant. The Old Testament with all of its rules and laws will pass away but Christ's words will never pass away. His Gospel is eternal. It is the one everlasting Law of God. There can be no other.

See also,

[1. The Apocrypha](#)

[2. How the Scriptures Were Chosen](#)

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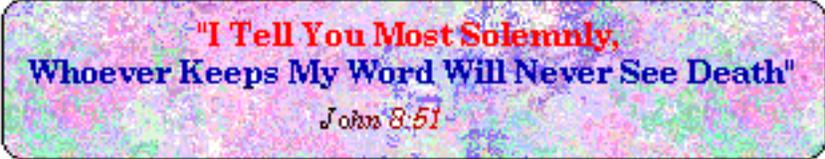
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**"I Tell You Most Solemnly,  
Whoever Keeps My Word Will Never See Death"**  
*John 8:51*