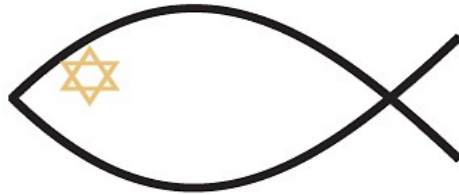


"Think not that I come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Matthew 5:17

Jewish Heritage Revival

One Heritage United by Messiah



"And When he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice"
John 10:4

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Order of Scripture

Questions pertaining to the current structure and order of the New Covenant Writings:

How important is the order that scripture is presented?

Did you know that the sequence scripture is presented can convey a message in and of itself?

In contrast, by reordering the books ultimately can eliminate a message.

Before we get into the order of scripture, there needs to be some historical context, providing insight as to the mindset of believers. This time period will begin in the mid second century. We are now a few generations removed from Yeshua's resurrection and the disciples death.

My goal today is to have you leave here with a better understanding of how we got to where we are, and the impact it has had on the message of Messiah to believers.

Historical influences:

In the past I have conveyed to you influences from centuries ago that today still greatly influence the body of Messiah...and not in a positive way.

The result of many of this influences has resulted in such theologies as:

- Dispensationalism (Israel has been set aside for a time)
- Replacement Theology (The church has replaced Israel)
- Dual Covenant Theology (Israel is redeemed through Abraham, the church through Jesus)
- Covenant Theology – Israel and the church are one and the same

Council of Nicea 325 CE:

Many of you are aware of the Council of Nicea of 325 CE, when Constantine assembled leaders from throughout the Roman empire, with the purpose of consolidating and unifying the church, under Roman authority.

“At this meeting the question concerning the most holy day of Easter was discussed, and it was resolved by the united judgment of all present that this feast ought to be kept by all and in every place on one and the same day And first of all it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy feast we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin for we have received from our Saviour a different way...And I myself have undertaken that this decision should meet with the approval of your Sagacities in the hope that your Wisdoms will gladly admit that practice which is observed at once in the city of Rome and in Africa, throughout Italy and in Egypt...with entire unity of judgment.” (Vol. 5, p. 228). (note 3)

In essence, Passover specifically and other Jewish practices have been outlawed for believers.

There was significant influence of such a view long before Constantine and the Council of Nicea...

Marcion:

A man by the name of Marcion would become instrumental in creating a mindset that would forever change the direction of how believers in Messiah would think. Eventually labeled a heretic, Marcion's influence would remain, to varying degrees.

Study of the Jewish Scriptures, along with received writings circulating in the nascent Church, led Marcion to conclude that many of the teachings of Yeshua were incompatible with the actions of the god of the Tenach, Adonai

- Marcion responded by developing a dualist system of belief around the year 144.
- This dual-god notion allowed Marcion to reconcile supposed contradictions between Old Covenant theology and the Gospel message proclaimed by Yeshua.

By the year 144, what had happened?

- The destruction of the Temple and the major center for believers in Messiah was greatly weakened
- Yochanan's death, approximately 90 CE
- The Bar Kokbah Revolt 132 – 135 CE, where all Jewish people were expelled from the land and it became illegal for any Jew to live in the land.
- The primary Jewish influence for believers and what was once the authoritative base, is now gone.

Marcion affirmed:

- Yeshua to be the savior sent by the Heavenly Father,
- Sha'ul was his chief apostle.

In contrast to the nascent Christian church, Marcion declared:

- Christianity was in complete discontinuity with Judaism and entirely opposed to the Old Testament message.
- Did not claim that the Jewish Scriptures were false.
- Instead, Marcion asserted that they were to be read in an absolutely literal manner, thereby developing an understanding that Adonai was not the same god spoken of by Jesus.
- For example, Marcion argued that the Genesis account of Adonai walking through the Garden of Eden asking where Adam was proved Adonai inhabited a physical body and was without universal knowledge (omniscience), attributes wholly incompatible with the Heavenly Father professed by Jesus.
- The god of the Old Covenant, whom he called the Demiurge, the creator of the material universe, is a jealous tribal deity of the Jews, whose law represents legalistic reciprocal justice and who punishes mankind for its

sins through suffering and death.

- Contrastingly, the god that Jesus professed is an altogether different being, a universal god of compassion and love who looks upon humanity with benevolence and mercy. Marcion also produced his *Antitheses* contrasting the Demiurge of the Old Testament with the Heavenly Father of the New Testament.

Marcion proposed his own unique New Covenant canon.

- His canon consisted of only eleven books grouped into two sections:
- The *Evangelikon*, being a version of the Gospel of Luke, removing the “Jewish parts”
- The *Apostolikon*, a selection of ten epistles of Paul the Apostle, whom Marcion considered the correct interpreter and transmitter of Jesus' teachings. From this selection of New Testament books he eliminated elements relating to Jesus' birth, childhood, Judaism, and material challenging Marcion's dualism.

In 144, Marcion became one of the first declared a heretic for his deviations from the orthodox viewpoints of the apostolic church.

I have never read Marcion's version of Luke, but I can't imagine there would be much left after his edit of anything Jewish from the book. The book of Luke is a Temple centered book whereby it not only begins at the Temple during the Aviyah division of service, but it ends at the Temple with Yeshua's disciples rejoicing after the resurrection of Messiah and forty days of fellowship and study.

- The suppression of the Marcionist form of Christianity is thus viewed as a catalyst for the development of the New Covenant canon.

Legacy / Influence:

The church that Marcion founded had expanded greatly within his lifetime, and was a rival to the orthodox Christian church. Its adherents were strong enough in their convictions that the Marcionite church retained its following for more than a century. It survived Christian controversy, and imperial disapproval, for several centuries more.

Its influences are still felt today...

Influence today...

- Historic Marcionism, and the church Marcion himself established, appeared to die out around the 5th century. (After Nicea)
- Marcionist ideas may have survived and even contributed to heresies in Bulgaria and France.
- Marcion's influence and criticism of the Tenach are discussed to this very day.
- Marcionism is discussed in recent textbooks on early Christianity, such as *Lost Christianities* by Bart Ehrman.
- Marcion claimed to find problems in the Tenach; problems which many modern thinkers cite today (see Criticism of the Bible and Biblical law in Christianity), especially its alleged approval of atrocities and genocide.
- Many atheists, agnostics and secular humanists agree with Marcion's examples of Bible atrocities, and cite the same passages of the Old Testament to discredit both Judaism and Christianity.
- Most Christians agree with Marcion that the Old Testament's alleged approval of genocide and murder are inappropriate models to follow today.

On the other hand, because of the rejection of the Old Testament which originates in the Tenach, the Marcionites have been believed by some Christians to be anti-Jewish. Indeed, the terms "Marcionism" and "neo-Marcionism" has sometimes been used in modern times to refer to anti-Jewish tendencies in Christian churches, especially when such tendencies have been thought to be surviving residues of ancient Marcionism.

- During the Nazi period some aspects of Marcion's ideas were appropriated by the German Christians. They

advocated a complete rejection of everything Jewish in Christianity, which they termed "Positive Christianity". These ideas fell out of favor after Germany's defeat in World War II.

The supposed problems of the Tenach, and the appeal of Jesus are such that they identify themselves as modern day Marcionites, and follow his solution in keeping the New Testament as sacred scripture, and rejecting the Tenach canon and practices.

- A term sometimes used for these groups is "New Testament Only Christians". Carroll R. Bierbower is a pastor of a church he says is Marcionite in theology and practice.
- The Cathar movement, was a Christian dualist movement that thrived in some areas of Southern Europe, particularly northern Italy, northern Spain and southern France, former Occitania and Catalonia, between the 12th and 14th centuries.
- Historically and in modern times, Cathar movement reject the Tenach for the reasons Marcion conveyed. It remains unclear whether the 11th century Cathar movement is in continuation of earlier Gnostic and Marcion streams, or represents an independent re-invention.
- John Lindell a former Methodist and Unitarian Universalist pastor, advocates Christian deism, which does not include the Tenach as part of its theology.

So, I believe, because of the influences that ultimately began with Marcion, (most documented) and truly culminated at Nicea to the point where it was commanded, the order of the New Covenant writings has ultimately been changed to disrupt the flow, ultimately leading to a much different context.

Understanding The Presentation of Scripture

Let's look at the order of scripture in the New Covenant. You currently have the Gospels followed by Acts, then Paul's writings beginning with Romans, followed by the Jewish Writings beginning with Hebrews, concluding with Revelation.

When looking at the first five books – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts in their present order, many don't realize that there is a disruption in the flow, due to their order, that removes significant meaning from the account of Messiah.

In previous messages I had indicated that the Word of Adonai, from Genesis to Revelation was a continuous message and should not have been interrupted. Yet, in the majority of bibles you have a disruption. That disruption is found in a single page entitled "New Testament". This single page has forever disrupted the flow of Adonai's message. Millions of people have accepted an incorrect position that the New Covenant is separate and distinct from the Tenach (Jewish Bible) The result is a separation that diminishes the very foundation of Adonai's message.

In a similar manner the books of the Tenach have been reordered in the Christian bible. The Christian bible ends the "Old Testament" with the book of Malachi, whereas the Tenach ends with 2 Chronicles. The premise behind ending with Malachi and beginning the New Covenant writings with Matthew is to show the connection of Messiah coming through the prophecy:

Mal 4:5 (3:23) Look, I will send to you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of Adonai.

Mal 4:6 (3:24) He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers; otherwise I will come and strike the land with complete destruction." [*Look, I will send to you Eliyahu the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible Day of Adonai.*]

And then beginning with the book of Matthew and the genealogy of Messiah.

Unfortunately, this new order conceals the manner in which Messiah would come, not once but twice. This truth is found in the divisions of the books in the Tenach (Jewish Bible):

There are three sections that comprise the Jewish Bible:

- Torah – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy
- Nev'im (The Prophets) – Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and "the Twelve" minor Prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi)

- K'tuvim (The Writings) – Psalms, Proverbs, Job, The Five Megillot (The Five Scrolls) (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther), Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles

Note: In the Jewish bible, Samuel, Kings and Chronicles are written as one book each.

When we look at the structure of the Jewish Bible and its division, we see that with the second division, Nev'im, the last book is Malachi and the prophecy mentioned earlier relates to the coming of Messiah.

What gets lost with the reordering of the Jewish Bible is the return of Messiah as King...

2Ch 36:22 Now in the first year of Koresh king of Persia, so that the word of Adonai spoken by Yirmeyahu might be fulfilled, Adonai activated the spirit of Koresh king of Persia to proclaim throughout his entire kingdom, and put in writing as well:

2Ch 36:23 "Here is what Koresh king of Persia says: Adonai, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms on earth, and he has charged me to build him a house in Yerushalayim, in Y'hudah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may Adonai his God be with him! He may go up"

Chronicles ends with the proclamation to rebuild Jerusalem. However, when you look at the wording of the last verse, does it not sound similar to Revelation 11:15?

Rev 11:15 The seventh angel sounded his shofar; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah, and he will rule forever and ever!"

This very passage that closes the Jewish Bible, in essence speaks of Yeshua coming as King...HIS SECOND COMING.

So, order is important!!!

The New Covenant Writings

This brings us to the New Covenant Writings.

The New Covenant Writings are divided into 5 sections in current Christian bibles:

- Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
- History – Acts
- Sha'ul's writings – Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon
- General Letters – Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John and Jude
- Revelation

On the surface, there doesn't appear to be anything wrong. However, it isn't what is there but what is lost.

Looking deeper into the order, the books of Luke and Acts have the same author. When we look at Luke's introduction in the book of Acts...

Act 1:1 Dear Theophilus: In the first book, I wrote about everything Yeshua set out to do and teach,

Act 1:2 until the day when, after giving instructions through the Ruach HaKodesh to the emissaries whom he had chosen, he was taken up into heaven.

Act 1:3 After his death he showed himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. During a period of forty days they saw him, and he spoke with them about the Kingdom of God.

We find it to be a continuation of his first book. There is a brief recap as to what Luke had written originally. He then goes on with his narrative account of the progression of believers in Messiah and its movement forward to the nations.

However, when we look at the order of the books, there is an interruption of the narrative. The book of John interrupts Luke's narrative.

Why is this?

I can only speculate on motive, but let's look further into what this disruption does.

In Luke's narrative, beginning in chapter 22, it is the beginning of his account of Messiah's last Passover. The end of Luke's Gospel closes with their rejoicing at the Temple, after Yeshua had spent 40 days after His resurrection teaching them everything that was recorded in scripture about Him:

Luk 24:44 Yeshua said to them, "This is what I meant when I was still with you and told you that everything written about me in the Torah of Moshe, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled."

Luk 24:45 Then he opened their minds, so that they could understand the Tanakh,

Luk 24:46 telling them, "Here is what it says: the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day;

Luk 24:47 and in his name repentance leading to forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed to people from all nations, starting with Yerushalayim.

Luk 24:48 You are witnesses of these things.

Luk 24:49 Now I am sending forth upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been equipped with power from above."

Luk 24:50 He led them out toward Beit-Anyah; then, raising his hands, he said a b'rakhah over them;

Luk 24:51 and as he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven.

Luk 24:52 They bowed in worship to him, then returned to Yerushalayim, overflowing with joy.

Luk 24:53 And they spent all their time in the Temple courts, praising God.

Where Luke's Gospel leaves off, his account in Acts continues, but, with a bit of a retrace, providing another piece of information that didn't appear in his Gospel.

Act 1:4 At one of these gatherings, he instructed them not to leave Yerushalayim but to "wait for what the Father promised, which you heard about from me.

Act 1:5 For Yochanan used to immerse people in water; but in a few days, you will be immersed in the Ruach HaKodesh!"

Act 1:6 When they were together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore self-rule to Isra'el?"

Act 1:7 He answered, "You don't need to know the dates or the times; the Father has kept these under his own authority.

There is already an expectation that Yeshua will restore rule to Israel, reuniting the Kingdom under one King for the first time since Solomon, but this is for another message.

Needless to say, Luke's narrative in his Gospel is connected to his narrative in Acts.

So then the questions comes up..."Why is John placed between Luke and Acts?"

What would be the motivation of changing the canon?

By disrupting the flow of Luke and Acts ultimately eliminates a significant part of the Feasts of Adonai and its relationship to Yeshua.

From the waving of the sheaf at first fruits during the Passover season at Unleavened bread. On the first day of the week after the Shabbat during that week we are instructed to count seven Shabbats, that will bring us to the Feast of Shavuot, (Feast of Weeks / Feast of Pentacost).

Lev 23:11 He is to wave the sheaf before Adonai, so that you will be accepted; the cohen is to wave it on the day after the Shabbat.

Lev 23:12 On the day that you wave the sheaf, you are to offer a male lamb without defect, in its first year, as a burnt offering for Adonai.

Lev 23:13 Its grain offering is to be one gallon of fine flour mixed with olive oil, an offering made by fire to Adonai as a fragrant aroma; its drink offering is to be of wine, one quart.

Lev 23:14 You are not to eat bread, dried grain or fresh grain until the day you bring the offering for your God; this is a permanent regulation through all your generations, no matter where you live.

Lev 23:15 " 'From the day after the day of rest — that is, from the day you bring the sheaf for waving — you are to count seven full weeks,

Lev 23:16 until the day after the seventh week; you are to count fifty days; and then you are to present a new grain offering to Adonai.

This is what is known as the counting of the Omer.

Omer, simply means measure. However, this is a specific measure of days to be counted.

This time on the Jewish calendar is significant.

- It relates our time in the desert from leaving Egypt, to the giving of Torah (50 days)
- It connects Passover to Shavuot (Exodus from Egypt to giving of Torah)
- It connects Yeshua's resurrection to being empowered by the Spirit of Adonai.

The time lines are exactly the same.

To eliminate or in this case, the placement of John's Gospel to interrupt the Omer, in essence removes the literal resurrection of Yeshua leading to Shavuot, aligning it to Omer, one of the most important times on the Jewish calendar.

Why?

In my view, it is to remove the Jewishness from the Gospel message. The historical information provided earlier suggests that there is a negative view towards the Jewishness of the message of Adonai. We have seen Marcion's negative views and how he created his own canon of scripture. The council of Nicea in essence outlawed any and all practices of Jewish origin from the lives of believers. So, to remove something as significant as the Hebrew calendar from the New Covenant writings would not be out of the question.

When we look at John's Gospel and its introduction:

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 He was with God in the beginning.

Joh 1:3 All things came to be through him, and without him nothing made had being.

Joh 1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind.

Joh 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not suppressed it.

And relate it to Genesis, we find it to be very similar...

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

So, this leads to the question...

Why would those who established the order of the canon of scripture actually put John between Luke and Acts?

Wouldn't you think John should be the first Gospel, not the last?

Would a better order be:

- John
- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- Acts

Let's call them the 5 Books of Messiah

So, now that we have looked at the first 5 books, what about the rest?

When we look at Luke's account in Acts, there is a distinct Jewishness to the first nine chapters. It is an exclusively Jewish narrative. It isn't until chapter 10 and Peter's visit to Cornelius that we begin to talk about non-Jewish people coming to Messiah. So, based on the order that Luke portrays in Acts, wouldn't it be appropriate for the next grouping of books be what we will call the Jewish Writings:

- Messianic Jews (Hebrews)
- Ya'akov (James)
- Kefa 1 & 2 (Peter)
- Yochanan 1, 2 & 3
- Yudah (Jude)

At the forefront of this group of writings is the book of Hebrews. It is a book written by Jewish people, to Jewish people and about Jewish people. The power of this book is that given today's topsy turvy, upside down view of scripture, this book is just as valid today, presenting to the non-Jewish person, the significance of Messiah from a Jewish perspective.

The next section of scripture to place would again take direction from Luke's narrative, beginning with chapter 10 and Kefa's visit to Cornelius, Messiah and the Nations:

- Romans
- 1 & 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 & 2 Thessalonians
- 1 & 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon

Sha'ul's letter to the Roman's was not his first letter but is the most complete expression of the Gospel message that bring the nations into the Commonwealth of Israel. Therefore, it should begin this section as it is a transitional piece from a Jewish only message to a Jewish + Nations message.

This brings us to the last section – Tikkun Olam or the completion of world repair.

- Revelation

The one's responsible for placing an order to the New Covenant scriptures did get at least one placement correct.

So, when we look at the placement of scripture, not in a chronological order that they were written, but according to the chronological content:

<u>5 Books of Messiah (Section 1)</u>	<u>Jewish Writings (Section 2)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John • Matthew • Mark • Luke • Acts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messianic Jews (Hebrews) • Ya'akov (James) • Kefa 1 & 2 (Peter) • Yochanan 1, 2 & 3 • Yudah (Jude)
<u>Messiah to the Nations (Section 3)</u>	<u>Tikkun Olam (Section 4)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romans • 1 & 2 Corinthians • Galatians • Ephesians • Philippians • Colossians • 1 & 2 Thessalonians • 1 & 2 Timothy • Titus • Philemon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revelation

The first time I heard this was at Messiah Conference and Rabbi David Rosenberg had offered this nugget of information while trying to get the presentation ready for another teaching. As he was sharing this great information I was struck by the order and ultimately what the order of the scriptures revealed. It was the Gospel message instructed by Yeshua to His Talmidim...

Mat 28:19 Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh,

Mat 28:20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age."

Act 1:8 But you will receive power when the Ruach HaKodesh comes upon you; you will be my witnesses both in Yerushalayim and in all Y'hudah and Shomron, indeed to the ends of the earth!"

It was as clear as day...

Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria (the nations), to the ends of the earth (Revelation)

To the Jew especially (first) and equally to the nations...

Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

Rom 1:17 For in it is revealed how God makes people righteous in his sight; and from beginning to end it is through trust — as the Tanakh puts it, "But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust."

Ultimately, order is important. It conveys a message in itself, even before you crack the book open. However, please keep in mind that I know of Jewish people who opened to the first book of the New Covenant and read the lineage of Messiah in Matthew that prompted them to pursue the truth of Yeshua. Matthew is the book that we can ultimately say, to the Jew first.

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