

Judaism Traditions and the Early Church

Why the period of time between the close of the Old Testament and the New Testament

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Why was there so much time between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of what became the New Testament with the coming of Christ? *God did not want to have the New Testament written in Hebrew!*

There may be many Jews offended at it, because they think that Hebrew is the only sacred language in the world, and that everything that God has to say to mankind comes down through the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

There had to give rise to the Greek Empire beginning with Alexander, and then it broke down into the four regions with the generals, and ended up with the Seleucids in the north and the Collomies in Egypt. The Jews, during that time, became very familiar and actually they were using the Greek language more than Hebrew. That's why the Apocrypha is written in Greek.

Also, during that time, beginning about 297_{B.C.} they began translating the Septuagint, beginning with the Law of Moses. The reason that God wanted to use the Greek for the New Testament is because it is a much more precise language than is Hebrew. Hebrew has a broader interpretation of the words; it has many more secondary meanings than the Greek does.

The doctrines of the New Testament have to be precise, and you cannot get precision with the Hebrew. There's another reason why God wanted it written in the Greek instead of Hebrew. From the close—actually before the close—of the Old Testament and the canonization under Ezra, the Jews developed a higher Judaism. {note commentary: Canonization of the Old Testament (chpt. 3: *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*)}

If you've never read the *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin you do not understand Judaism. Let's understand very clearly: the Jews claim that:

1. the oral tradition was given to Moses and was passed down by word of mouth

which is a lie

2. what God gave to Moses, he and was told to write it down and put it in a book

and put the books of the Law in the side of the Ark where they had sleeves where they would take the scrolls that were rolled up and slip them into these sleeves.

Of course, it was added to by the Prophets and the Writings, and so forth, but in the commentary in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order* I say that the Old Testament is not a Hebrew Bible.

It is not a Jewish Bible, though the Jews use it, and it was written in Hebrew. It is an Aaronic Levitical Bible. Moses—a Levite—wrote the first five books. Then you have Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Ezra were priests, and so forth. When David wrote the Psalms he gave them to Asaph who was the one in charge of the Holy of Holies that was in the special tent in David's house.

Everything that was written by others who were not of the priesthood, or Levites had to be passed to the priesthood and the priesthood was the final one to put it into Scripture.

Then when we come to the days of Ezra—he was a priest and a scribe—God used him and the ones called the sopharim or the assembly of the 120 Levites to go through the Old Testament and update certain things, to canonize it and finalize it. The only thing that was added after Ezra died was the book of Malachi.

From Malachi down to the days of Jesus, the Jews apostatized and this is what the apocrypha books are all about.

- 1) they began to use the Greek language instead of Hebrew

God destined the Greek language to be used for the New Testament because it was much more precise.

- 2) Judaism has it's own set of laws separate from the Laws of God

That's what we find in Mark 7 where Jesus castigated the scribes, Pharisees and elders for having the traditions 'which reject the commandments of God.

When we come to the beginning of the New Testament, it's very evident that the New Testament was written in Greek. It was not written in Aramaic; however, there may have been some parts of Matthew that were written in Hebrew, but that's about it.

I think it was only for the necessary keeping of the Passover. The reason is that in Jesus' last Passover, how many kept the New Covenant Passover with Jesus? *Only the eleven!* All the rest of the disciples, when they gathered together after Jesus ascended into heaven, after the 40 days, there were 120 disciples. None of the rest of the 108 had the Passover as Jesus gave it to the apostles.

So, the first thing they had to do before the next Passover was to write down the instructions on what to do. We find here:

Acts 6:1: “Now, in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a complaint by the Greeks... [the Greek-speaking Jews] ...against the Hebrews... [the Jews who spoke Hebrew] ...because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.” We find here the linguistic division beginning with those who spoke Hebrew and those who spoke Greek. Later it all ended up being Greek.

Verse 2: “And after calling the multitude of disciples to *them*, the twelve said, ‘It is not proper for us to leave the Word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, brethren, search out from among yourselves seven men of good repute, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and **the ministry of the Word**’” (vs 2-4).

The “...**ministry of the Word**” had to be writing down the teachings of Jesus. That becomes a very important point to understand. They were writing these things very early on. Matthew was a Levite and a tax collector for Herod Antipas who had his capital city in Sepphoris, which was about four miles from Nazareth.

There was a special about the Lost City of Sepphoris and the activity of Jesus and so forth. But the way that most of these History Channel programs show it, they were crude, ill-dressed, ill-kept people. *Not so!* For Jesus to be a carpenter meant that He was a carpenter, he dealt in masonry and also plumbing; *they had plumbing!* In the city of Sepphoris, guess what they had? *Four story apartments!* They had a big city square and a city hall, they had what we would call a coliseum for sports. They had a library, Herod’s palace and paved streets with stone. It was really a well-developed city.

That means that in the area where Christ had His main ministry in Galilee, Nazareth, Capernaum and so forth, He was in the Greek-speaking area. In choosing the apostles, who were former fishermen, most of them were from the tribe of Benjamin, and *none of them were Jews from Judaism with the possible exception of Judas Iscariot!*

All the rest, with the exception of John... Read the commentary—chpt. 10: *John’s Final Canonization of the N.T.*—about John and his Aaronic Priesthood connection and I think you will find it very interesting that what John did in finalizing the New Testament, we have a continuity of God using the Aaronic priesthood all the way through to finalize the Word of God. How is that for consistency?

But here “...**the ministry of the Word**” (v 4) means to be writing it, write down the teachings of Jesus, because they knew that they were to be witnesses. Just like they knew that everything that Moses taught the people was written down.

This is the last day of Jesus’ 40 days, Acts 1: 4: “And while *they* were assembled with *Him*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to ‘await the promise of the Father, which,’ *He said*, ‘you have heard of Me. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit after not many days.’ So then, when they were assembled together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You restore the kingdom to Israel at this time?’: (vs 4-6).

That’s a great weakness of all the people of God. They want the kingdom to come during their lifetime. It’s not going to come during the lifetime, except for those at the end. We all thought that we were at the end, but the end may be a little further off than we suppose. I think that this generation that is coming up now appears to be the generation that is ‘the generation’ at the end.

Verse 7: “And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know *the* times or *the* seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority; but you yourselves shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem... [that’s where it started] ...and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto *the* ends of the earth’” (vs 7-8).

Back to the question as to why there was that gap between the canonization of the Old Testament and the coming of Jesus. God wanted the areas where the Gospel was to start would be all Greek-speaking. God was going to do something that He never did with Judaism or with the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, everyone was to belong to Israel. If you were a foreigner you had to be circumcised and you had to become part of Israel that way. In the New Testament, God now was going to change it, and He had to do it in a way to prove what He was doing, and that was that the Gospel eventually was going to go to the whole world, to all of the nations not requiring circumcision, and to be an extension of the Old Testament but not an extension of Judaism.

Judaism is, indeed, a separate religion from what you find in the Old Testament. We will understand some things and part of the historical time involved was for God to develop everything the way that He wanted it in preparation for preaching the Gospel, because the day that Jesus was to be crucified had been determined before the foundation of the world. So, that’s another reason why there is

the gap.

But to essentially establish the Koiné Greek as the basis of all the languages that would be the modern languages. That's why you have reading from left to right; that's why you have an alphabet that is very similar, beginning with the Greek and goes on into the Latin and all of the 'romance languages' of Europe.

Europe uses the same alphabet that we do today, but they speak different languages. So, this is all part of the scheme that what God had done with laying the foundation for the Greek language.

In Mark 7 we find some of the things of Judaism and their traditions that this is why they rejected Jesus. The scribes, Pharisees and the Sadducees were the leaders of the Jews. They expected the Messiah come and *join them politically* to help raise up an army against the Romans and to free them from the Romans.

They had no idea whatsoever of preaching the Gospel to the whole world, and stretching it out to our day and beyond. But here's what the Jews did, they confined everything to a narrow, very miniscule rigid difficult way to live. That's not what God wanted with the New Testament.

If you can read the *Code of Jewish Law*, that will be very enlightening! Some of it will be very humorous and some of it will be very sad.

Mark 7:1: "Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him. And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*), they found fault" (vs 1-2).

Let me give you what I can recall from the *Code of Jewish Law* of a required hand-washing every morning before you did anything. You had to have a pitcher of water, you had to take the pitcher in your left hand and pour the water over the right hand, put the pitcher in the right hand and pour it over the left hand, and do it three times and dry your hands. The reason you had to clean your hands was because during the night an unclean spirit has come upon you.

That's just one little thing, and that was even before you could take care of the 'call of nature.' What does that have to do with the conversion of the heart and mind? *Nothing!*

Verse 3: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly." Remember the time that Jesus didn't wash His hands? They found fault; He had been invited to lunch and didn't wash His hands.

Verse 4: "Even *when coming* from the market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves...." Because if they go to the market and there's a Gentile there, you might get contaminated by being near that Gentile. We'll help answer that question a little later on.

The Jews in Judaism have another standard of clean and unclean, and common or unclean. No place in the Bible does it call anyone 'common.' It does refer to those who have been sick and contagious as being 'unclean.' Or having touched a dead body as being unclean and they went out to wash themselves, and so forth.

But the Jews had it this way: If you go to the market and there's a Gentile there, you can't do anything until you first wash, because you have come from the dirty market where the Gentiles were. If you had some food that you were to eat, you better buy it from a Jew so that it is kosher. Likewise, if you have someone prepare bread. If you had a Gentile servant who worked with you, and you were a Jew—male or female—and she worked in the kitchen and was making bread. If it was under the supervision of a Jew the bread was 'common.' If it was not under the supervision of a Jew, but a Gentile supervising a Gentile supervising a Gentile, the bread was 'unclean.'

There's no designation in the Bible like that. This is all the add-on traditions of the Jews, which Jesus pointed out here.

They washed themselves first, "...And there are many other things that they have received to observe, *such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables. For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?'" (vs 4-5).

One of the things that Jesus was going to do is divorce the Church from Judaism. That's why He called Paul. That becomes a very important thing in understanding the New Testament.

Note sermon series: *Circumcision Wars*; that will help you understand about the proselytes and circumcision and so forth.

Verse 6: "And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men"' (vs 6-7).

What is the quickest explanation of that? The Jews would not like this, but the truth is any adding of commandments by men to be made as binding as the commandments of God is *the way of*

Cain! They had these things.

Verse 8: “For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men... [What does that do?] ...*such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.’ Then He said to them, ‘Full well do you reject the commandment of God, **so that you may observe your own tradition**” (vs 8-9).

Then He explains one that they had: ‘you give the money to us’—Sound familiar?—‘and you will be free from taking care of your father and mother, because it’s ‘corban’—dedicated to the temple.

So, #1 was to separate the testaments by a period of time, **bring in the Greek language** and make that the language through which then the New Testament and Gospel would be preached to the world.

Not only was God going to eliminate the temple service, He was going to—#2—**reject Judaism within the Church**. This also becomes important with sacred-namers. If you’re bothered by sacred-namers, I’ll just give you a little clue:

- Was Paul a Pharisee? *Yes!*
- Did Paul know Hebrew? *Yes!*

Remember that Paul talked to the crowd in Hebrew and they were all a hush (Acts 22). Nowhere in any of the writings of the Apostle Paul do you find Hebrew names. So, if it were required, Paul would have put it there, and Christ would have inspired the apostles to put it in their writings, as well.

A simple argument against sacred-namers: What are the sacred names of the New Testament? *The Father* and *Jesus Christ the Son!* That’s it! God wants it simple; we are to be in a family relationship with God. Sacred-names is a formal relationship with God.

Matthew 23:4: “For they bind heavy burdens and hard to bear, and lay *them* on the shoulders of men; but they will not move them with *one of* their own fingers.” Heard of that before? The people have to do it, but ‘we’re above the people, we don’t have to do it.’

Verse 5: “And they do all their works to be seen by men....” I couldn’t help but think of this when I watched the funeral of Pope John Paul II. That pictured the glory of Catholicism’s occult religious practices.

“...They make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments; and they love the first place at the suppers, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the

marketplaces, and to be called by men ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ But you are not to be called Rabbi; for one is your Master, the Christ, and all of you are brethren” (vs 5-8). Hello! Church government, pay attention! ***We’re all brethren!***

Verse 9: “Also, do not call *anyone* on the earth your Father; for one is your Father, Who *is* in heaven. Neither be called Master; for one is your Master, the Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant” (vs 9-11)—the one who does more to help and serve. Not the other way around, because:

Verse 12: “And whoever will exalt himself shall be humbled; and whoever will humble himself shall be exalted.”

Then notice the condemnation that Christ was separating from the coming Church of God, although it crept back in a little later.

Verse 13: “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and as a pretext you offer prayers of great length. Because of this, you shall receive *the* greater judgment.”

When you read Matt. 23 turn on your Trinity Channel and watch some of what they do on the Trinity Channel. You will see why evangelical Protestantism is in a death spiral. They’re doing many of the things that Jesus said not to do.

So, there had to be this separation. Then Jesus goes on saying, v 14: “**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees**, hypocrites! For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven before men; for neither do you yourselves enter, nor do you allow those who are entering to enter. **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees**, hypocrites! For you travel the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he has become one, you make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves. **Woe to you, blind guides**, who say, ‘Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.’ **You fools and blind!** For which is greater, the gold, or the temple, which sanctifies the gold? And *you say*, ‘Whoever shall swear by the altar, it is not binding; but whoever shall swear by the gift that *is* upon it, he is obligated *to fulfill* his oath.’” (vs 14-18).

What did Jesus say? *Let our ‘yes’ be yes and our ‘no’ be no!* He wants is from the inside of the mind and heart to be true and right. Not all this little nit-picking.

Verse 19: “***You* fools and blind!** For which is greater... [v 20]: Therefore, the one who swears by the altar swears by it, and by all things that *are* upon it. And the one who swears by the temple swears by it, and by Him Who dwells in it. And the one who

swears by heaven swears by the throne of God, and by Him Who sits upon it” (vs 19-22).

In other words, all of that came from God so if you swear upon this you’re duty-bound, but Jesus says that it goes all the way up to God.

Verse 23: “**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees**, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, but you have abandoned the more important *matters* of the law—judgment, and mercy and faith....” Then He goes on and on.

Let’s see where there was a time when God had to make it absolutely clear to begin to sever Judaism from the true Christianity that Jesus was teaching.

Remember that the Gospel was to be preached first to the Jews. Where was the Church formally started in the eyes of everyone? *In Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came!* It was on Pentecost because that was the same day that God gave the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai.

So, the Jews should have known, and the Gospel was preached to them first. Now came a time when God was going to be dealing with the Gentiles and deal with them without requiring circumcision of the flesh, **but would require the circumcision of the heart!** This is why that God did it the way that He did with Cornelius. Cornelius was praying in his house and an angel appeared to him and said to send for Simon-Peter. He sent for him and Simon-Peter had the vision of all these unclean things coming down from heaven.

That is not eat unclean food, by the way, because Peter said, ‘Lord, I’ve never eaten anything common or unclean.’ *Common* refers to the practice of Judaism.

Acts 10:25: “And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshipping *him*. But Peter raised him up, saying, ‘Stand up, for I myself am also a man.’” (vs 25-26).

Now we’re into a real problem with Judaism and Jews, and Gentiles. Peter actually reached down helped lift him up. According to Judaism Peter was now contaminated because he had touched an unclean uncircumcised Gentile. That had to be removed out of the Church, and this was the beginning of the removal of that kind of attitude.

Verse 27: “And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them, ‘**You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race....** [let alone touch him and lift him up] ...**But God has shown me that no man should be called common or unclean**’” (vs

27-28).

How does Peter refer this to men? *Common* would probably be a Gentile who had been circumcised and was allowed to come into the Court of the Gentiles at the temple and into the area of the Gentiles in the synagogue. *Unclean* would be someone who was uncircumcised. So, God showed Peter through this vision that he should call no man common or unclean. But the key is that **this law was not a command of God in the Old Testament**. Very important to understand. **It was a law of Judaism!**

When you get to the book of Galatians you find Paul correcting Peter and calling him a hypocrite because he was a hypocrite. Who did God use to start dealing with the Gentiles first? *Peter!* This was knocking down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles that had formally existed with the religion of Judaism.

Verse 29: “For this reason, I also came without objection when I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?” So, he explained about it.

Verse 34: “Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons, but in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him’” (vs 34-35). This with Judaism is an unheard of thing!

Verse 36: “The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed *concerning* Jesus, Who *was* from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all *the* things that He did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging *Him* on a tree. *But* God raised Him up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses who had been chosen before by God, to *those of* us who did eat and drink with Him after He had risen from *the* dead. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to fully testify that it is He Who has been appointed by God *to be* Judge of *the* living and *the* dead” (vs 36-42).

Here Peter is preaching a long extended sermon to them.

Verse 43: “To Him all the prophets bear witness, *that* everyone who believes in Him receives remission of sins through His name.” This is staggering against the whole temple system!

Go online to templeinstitute.org and you will see that the Jews will say to this day that there will not be ‘the presence of God unless there is the temple and the priesthood to disperse the blessings of God through the priesthood.’ They can’t come any other way. So, this was revolutionary! This is what got the Jews so upset; that God was not going to use them any longer, and that Jesus did not politically join them to overthrow the Romans.

So, this is really profound! Notice what happened. God had to do something supernatural to prove to Peter, and the rest of the apostles and Jews especially.

Verse 44: “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message.” This was a phenomenal thing!

Verse 45: “And the believers from the circumcision...”—*circumcision party*, because these were circumcised Jews who would not have anything to do with Gentiles; yet, they were converted and came with Peter and they didn’t understand that the Gospel was going to be preached to the Gentiles, who were uncircumcised, and they would receive the Holy Spirit without physical circumcision.

This all comes into answering the original question: **Why was there such a period of time between the close of the Old Testament and the New Testament?** The answer is contained right here, because from this point forward, God was going to do something greater beyond the temple, beyond Jerusalem and the Jews. As a matter of fact, going even further, God gave the Jews 40 years to repent after the crucifixion of Christ and before the destruction of the temple

What would they have to repent of? *All of the laws of Judaism!* That’s like going up to an orthodox Jew today with his hat, curls and his phylacteries on his forehead and right hand, and when he goes to the Wailing Wall and is rocking back and forth, and saying ‘You know, my friend, you don’t need the hat, you don’t need the curls, you don’t need the phylacteries. Why don’t you just get on your knees and repent to God and accept Jesus?’

You may be arrested; you may be even beaten up; you may be violently escorted away if you tried to do that. So, this is what this amounted to at this point. This was astonishing!

“...were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles **also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out**” (v 45). Why? ‘We received it at the temple! We were there! We saw the Holy Spirit; He gave it to *us* Jews! We’re the special people!’ *Not quite!*

The special people are no longer by a race of people, or by birth. The special people are those whom God chooses and calls *spiritually!* So, everything is changed, and in order to bring about this change Peter had to do this. God had to reveal it to him and those that were with him. They were astonished!

They “...were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles **also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out**. For they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God...” (vs 45-46). Here are these Italians were speaking in Aramaic and Hebrew.

(go to the next track)

Peter would probably not do this on his own, so God forced the issue and made it happen, because that is the will of God.

Verse 45: “And the believers from the circumcision were astonished...” They didn’t expect this to happen, especially to raise uncircumcised Gentiles to the same level as the Jews. That’s an unthinkable thing in the eyes of Judaism. Note:

- sermon series *Scripturalism vs Judaism*
- book: *Judaism: Revelation of Moses or Religion of Men?*

This all ties in with it. What could Peter conclude?

- 1) He had the vision; God said to get up and go with the three men. That’s why he came down three times.
- 2) He went to Cornelius and said, ‘God has shown me that I should not call any man *common or unclean*.’
- 3) Peter preached the Gospel to them
- 4) They all received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized because Peter would not have baptized them until they would have received the Holy Spirit first.

God is the One Who forced the issue against the will of the circumcision party, even within the Church, which would cause some problems later on. That’s another whole story in itself.

Verse 46: “...Then Peter responded *by saying*, ‘Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did?*’” (vs 46-47). Some Protestants come along and say that you can receive the Holy Spirit without being baptized.

Here’s the rule to always remember: ***never take an exception and make it the rule!*** This is an exception.

Verse 48: “And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days.” So,

Peter stayed there probably for the greater part of a week teaching and explaining how he walked around with Jesus and the other eleven apostles:

- the teachings of Jesus
- the miracles of Jesus
- the forgiveness of Jesus
- the healing of Jesus

That would be something to be in that first group with Cornelius! God was directly dealing with him.

Acts 11:1: “Now, the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God.” I guess a lot of ‘little birds’ flew quickly back to Jerusalem in the form of some of those Jews who were with Peter, telling them, ‘I got news! I got news! Did you hear that the Gentiles have been given the Holy Spirit and Peter baptized them?’ Whoa! This is monumental!

Verse 2: “And when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the* circumcision disputed with him.” They came on correct and chastise him. ‘Peter, you must have made a mistake. You know that you can’t be with any man who is not circumcised.’ They were still following some of the laws of Judaism, and that’s what they said.

Verse 3: “Saying, ‘You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them.’” He ate with them for at least four days, wouldn’t you suppose, morning, noon and night. Did Peter have any difficulty with it at this point? *No!*

Verse 4: “But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them, saying”—they resisted the Lord and he explained and he went anyway. As he related these things and so forth, read the rest of Acts 11.

Then Peter talked about the baptism of John and the Holy Spirit and said, v 17: “‘Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, **who was I to dissent?**.... [or fight God] ...Do I have the power to forbid God?’ And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed granted repentance unto life’” (vs 17-18).

Then God chose the Apostle Paul who was a Pharisee of the strictest order, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was not a Jew from the line of Judah, but he was an Israelite from the line of Benjamin who was a Pharisee practicing Judaism when God called him. A distinct difference!

I will answer the question as to why God called Saul to become Paul: *To insure that the Church of God would not be burdened down with Judaism!* He knew everything about Judaism. I want you to keep that in mind in relationship to:

- sacred-namers
- to those who want to bring in Hebrew practices that are not necessary, such as:
 - ✓ prayer shawls
 - ✓ phylacteries

Numbers 15:37: “And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel and command them that they make fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue. And it shall be to you for a fringe that you may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and so that you do not seek after your own heart and your own eyes which you yourself wantonly go after, That you may remember and do all My commandments, and be Holy to your God’” (vs 37-40).

- Why don’t we do that today?
- Even though God commanded it there?

There are even some people who have come into the Church today who say that if you don’t have a blue fringe on your garments, God doesn’t accept you. How do we answer the question? *We have the commandments written in our heart and mind and we do not need a blue fringe to remind us!*

There is one of the ritual laws that God gave that is fulfilled by the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Paul knew all these things, and you have in the book of Galatians a strange combination of Judaism and later even paganism mixed in with days, months, years and so forth. What I want to cover here is concerning the Gospel.

With this I want to cover a ‘slight of hand’ by a man whom we all knew very well: Herbert W. Armstrong. I need to bring this out because this is a misapplication of Scripture that he applied to himself by saying what he himself taught. If anyone teaches against that ‘you’re accursed.’ That’s a slight of hand. This has to do with the Word of God and the true Gospel of God. And this has to do with the teachings that Christ personally gave to Paul when Paul was three and a half years in Arabia being taught personally and with vision.

Galatians 1:6: “I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which *in reality* is not another *Gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ” (vs 6-7).

Again, if you add anything to the words of God, you are following *the way of Cain!* Jude refers to it in the book of Jude.

Verse 8: “But if we...” Paul is including the

apostles and there's a reason why he says we. Later Peter is brought into the equation, and in not a very good way.

"...or even an angel from heaven..." (v 8). This goes with the course of miracles that Oprah Winfrey taught. A woman heard a voice to write things down, that 'I am Jesus.'

"...or even an angel from heaven, should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!" (v 8). Every one of us need to hear that.

Verse 9: "As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! Now then, am I striving to please men, or God..." (vs 9-10). Basic question for every minister:

- What are you doing?
- Why are you doing it?
- What are you preaching?
- Why are you preaching?
- Are you preaching to impress your superiors?
- Are you preaching so you can get an increase in rank and salary?
- Are you willing to 'tow the party line' which comes from the top down?

Which is contrary to the Word of God!

- Are you willing to stand for the Truth regardless of the circumstances and what happens?

Very important! Because if you don't, ***then you're pleasing men!***

"...Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (v 10). That eliminates a good number of people. That's another way you can tell a false prophet.

- Do they preach all of the Gospel of God?
- Do they preach all of the Gospel of Christ?
- Do they teach you to have a personal relationship with God?
- And whoever is teaching you is a teacher to facilitate that for you?

OR

- Are they robbing you?
- Are they 'beating you on the face' as Paul said (2-Cor. 11)?

Paul says, 'You're so wise and intelligent that you allow fools...' We all have to ask of those who hear the message and those who preach the message. I do this all the time! I ask God every day:

- Help me to know what I need to do!
- Help me to see where we are going!

- Lead us in the way that we need to go!

That's the only way I can preach to the brethren the Gospel that's in the Bible. I'm beholden to no man, save Jesus Christ.

Verse 12: "Because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was by the revelation of Jesus Christ*"—which Herbert W. Armstrong *never* received. He learned it in the library in Oregon by his own admission and from the Church of God Seventh-Day. The woman who brought the knowledge of the Sabbath to Loma Armstrong—his wife—was a member of the Church of God Seventh-Day.

That's the slight of hand that caused a lot of people to follow a man, to please a man, and to this day say that 'if you are not adhering to the 18 Truths that Herbert Armstrong re-instituted, you are not preaching the Gospel.'

- Was he Christ?
- Was he Paul?
- *No! None of us!*

A very important lesson to learn. He did receive it by men. He was taught in the Church of God Seventh-Day. He was taught of himself in the library. And I'm sure that God's Spirit led him to understand. *But he was never taught by direct revelation from Christ!* That is a blatant lie that he was. There are going to some people upset at that. Be upset! But if it wakes you up, *good!*

Verse 13: "For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism..." He knew everything about Judaism; he knew all of the laws that they made:

- the extra hand-washing
- the clean and unclean
- the separation laws from the Gentiles

He knew all of those things! That's why God called him, to ensure that those things would *never take root in the Church of God!*

"...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many *of my* contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers" (vs 13-14).

What did Paul have to do? *He had to give up all the traditions of the Jews! He had to give up all Judaism!* After three and a half years of being taught by Jesus Christ, do you think he would revert back to any of those? *No way!* So, this is why we have the book of Galatians. Here enters Peter, and he had a little political slip, which could have been very dangerous. It could have opened the door for

Judaism to re-enter the Church of God.

Galatians 2:11: “But when Peter came to Antioch...” Who was Peter? *The apostle for the circumcision!* Remember, he preached to the Jews and then he was sent to Cornelius. He knew all about what God was going to do with the Gentiles. But he was dealing mainly with the Jews—the Jews in Jerusalem—and James was partly a fault in this. Peter clung not only to the ritual laws of the temple, but a lot of the laws of Judaism because the Jews converted out of Judaism into the Gospel of Christ and brought many of the practices with them. Let’s see how this works out, and this is also very important.

“...I withstood him to *his* face because he was to be condemned.... [Have you ever been in a church service like this? Try this on for size]: ...For, before certain *ones* came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles....” (vs 11-12). God already showed him that it’s okay to eat with the Gentiles.

“...However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles, being afraid of those of the circumcision party*” (v 12). ‘What would James think if he found out that I was eating with Gentiles? I’ve got to stay in good favor with James.’ *Political thoughts!*

Verse 13: “And the rest of *the* Jews joined him in *this* hypocritical act, inasmuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.” It would be like this: We had a nice meal here this afternoon. If there were some Jews among us they would say, ‘We’re going to eat at the other end by ourselves, because we don’t want to be with the rest of you goyim!’ How’s that for brotherly love? Even Barnabas got carried away.

Verse 14: “But when I saw that they did not walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, **I said to Peter in the presence of them all**, ‘If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles...’” There is neither Jew nor Greek, you are all to eat together.

Can you imagine the tremendous uproar that this caused? “...I said to Peter in the presence of them all... [in front of the whole congregation] ...‘If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles... [eating with them; living like the converted Gentiles] ...and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?’” (v 14).

That is to make them separate and eat separately and not be in your presence when you yourself were the one whom God sent to be with Cornelius and you performed the first baptism of Gentiles in the Church—after God had given the Holy Spirit to them supernaturally—to prove the point that you are to treat all men the same, because God is no respecter of persons, and you represent

God!

Whoa! You kind of want to have a time capsule and go back there and just be a fly on the wall and see what was happening. This is a pretty good rendition though.

Verse 15: “We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—knowing that a man is not justified by works of law...” (vs 15-16).

Separating to eat separately was not a Law of God, but a work of Judaism, *works of law*. They thought that they couldn’t be righteous if we’re going to associate with these people. ‘We must separate ourselves.’ That didn’t make them righteous! How are you made righteous? How is a person made righteous?

- repentance
- baptism
- accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ
- having the blood of Jesus Christ blot out your sins

That’s how you’re made righteous! You’re not made righteous by a work of a law. Even Sabbath-keeping and all of the commandments, though they are all required, please do not misunderstand this statement: ***The laws of God, and any other law of Judaism or other religions, are not designed—nor do they function—to justify you to God!*** Do you understand that? ***Justification only comes through Christ, no other way!***

Here they were in a big uproar! Men are not justified by works of law, “...**but through the faith of Jesus Christ**, we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order **that we might be justified by the faith of Christ**, and not by works of law; because by works of law shall no flesh be justified” (v 16).

- Did Peter have the Holy Spirit of God? *Obviously!*
- Did Barnabas have the Holy Spirit of God? *Yes!*
- Did even the Jews who came down from James have the Holy Spirit of God? *Yes!*

You don’t receive the Holy Spirit of God unless there’s repentance and baptism, and that’s how you are justified: *through the blood of Jesus Christ!*

- Were they made more righteous by separating and eating away from the Gentiles? *No!*
- Did it make them more loving? *Most assuredly not! It made them less loving!*

As a matter of fact, they were exhibiting hatred because Jesus said, ‘You shall love one another as I love you, and I sent you to the Gentiles.’ Understand the magnitude of Gal. 2. This is matter of keeping

law or not keeping law. It's a question of how you are in right standing with God.

All of this is quite a long way from the original question, but it all flows to this thing and how God was sending the Gospel to the Gentiles who were Greek-speaking, and why the New Testament is in Greek and not in Hebrew. And why there was the 400 years between the end of the Old Testament period and the beginning of the New Testament period for this very thing.

Verse 17: “Now then, **if we are seeking to be justified in Christ...**”—and we are. We are constantly justified *by repentance and forgiveness!*

“...and we ourselves are found to be sinners... [we covered that with the law of sin and death] ...*is* Christ then *the* minister of sin?...” (v 17).

What is Paul telling us here concerning the separating from the Gentiles by the Jews while they were eating. This must have been a Feast day, as well; maybe even during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at which time leaven is a type of sin. What is Paul saying here concerning that behavior? *He's calling it sin!* That's what he's doing; that kind of act. *Christ is not behind this!*

“...MAY IT NEVER BE! For if I build again those things that I destroyed... [i.e. Judaism, personal sins, persecuting the Church, etc.] ...I am making myself a transgressor” (vs 17-18). Christ doesn't have anything to do with this.

Paul is literally telling Peter and Barnabas, and those from Jerusalem—and I'm sure this did not sit well with the circumcision party from Jerusalem—‘You're sinning!’ I'm sure it didn't sit well. They were building again the things that were destroyed, and they were making themselves a transgressor.

Verse 19: “For I through law died to *works of law...*” The wages of sin is death. He also died to the laws of Judaism; this kind of separation that they had one from another.

“...in order that I may live to God” (v 19). So, our whole purpose and focus changes, from individual acts to make ourselves appear better to seeking God and worshipping God and living by God.

Verse 20: “**I have been crucified with Christ, yet, I live....**” Everything he had in the past. All Judaism was crucified, dead and buried. It should have been with the others, too, but it wasn't.

“...**Indeed, it is no longer I; but Christ lives in me....**” (v 20). He was telling them that Christ wasn't going to dwell in them very much

longer if you continue in this kind of separatist behavior of *human traditions* of Judaism. Paul says, ‘Christ is to live in me.’

“...**For the life that I am now living in the flesh, I live by faith**—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me” (v 20). In other words, the tremendous sacrifice of Jesus Christ to free us from sin, to give us access to God the Father.

Verse 21: “I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *is* through *works of law*, **then Christ died in vain.**” What a pitiful thing for people to claim, like they did here, that now they are more righteous than everybody. You could probably see the uppity-up look that was on their faces: *Gentiles! We'd better move over!*

- **You just denied Christ!**
- **You just nullified the grace of God!**

The grace of God is based on:

- love
- forgiveness
- acceptance
- commandment-keeping

in the spirit of the Law. All of that is what is necessary in this.

So, I hope this helps you understand the problem that they had there. This is to not a problem concerning God's Law, but a problem concerning *men's religious laws* through Judaism, and you could say the same thing with Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism, Islam, or any of the others.

This is why one of the most dastardly things that the Catholic Church has done is go into the Gentile areas and find out how these people worship their gods and keep the same rituals and traditions and just rename them.

I think it pays us to understand these things. Now I will answer the question: **Why is God going to have the Jews build the temple again?**

- Do I think it will be a full temple?
- Do I think it will be a small replica?
- *I think it will be a full temple, but a small sized one!*

I suspect that they are secretly cutting the stones somewhere. They already have the cornerstone made, but they are going to have to learn that the Mosque of Omar is not the place where the temple is going to be. There is no way that the Jews are going to be able to build the temple where the Mosque of Omar is. The whole world would destroy them instantly!

There would be 250-million Arabs running, screaming, shouting with their swords and guns killing every Jew in sight as quick as they could do it

if they dared to build it where the Mosque of Omar is. It will have to be built where the other temple was, which is south of the Mosque of Omar where the Gihon spring is. I believe that the Spring of Gihon is going to flow with sweet water again in enough volume so that the Jews will realize that this is where the temple has to be built, because you need water to clean up the bloody mess of sacrifices.

It will be a small authentic temple. A lot of people say that it could just be a 'Holy' place where they offer offerings. *No!* The Jews don't have that in mind. They would not be satisfied with a tabernacle. They could have put up a tabernacle years ago and started sacrifices long ago. They're going to build a temple.

Why are they going to build it? *As a witness to the Jews that after all of these years of rejecting Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, and rebuilding the temple they do not have salvation! That's why!*

It's kind of like allowing them to build the Tower of Babel and then cut it off. Let them build the temple for them to realize that salvation cannot come through the temple, but God is going to begin working with the Jews after the temple is built.

When the sacrifices are stopped, which they will be, I believe that God is going to send the power of His Holy Spirit, and there is going to be a mass conversion of Jews. I believe that the repentant priest and the governor of Judea will be the two witnesses. It won't be anyone from the Church of God.

Here is the lesson that they need to learn, Isa. 66. After the temple is rebuilt and the sacrifices are stopped, and *the antichrist* goes into the temple and says *he is God*, then they will realize that the temple cannot save them.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool. Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word'" (vs 1-2).

That's going to be the end result of stopping the temple activities this time. There will be repentance! Here's where we are in the world today. Isn't it interesting that every time they proclaim peace between the Palestinians and Jews another war breaks out? That's nothing to laugh at, all the suffering going on, but this is the state of things:

Zechariah 12:2: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people all around, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day **I will**

make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people..." (vs 2-3).

Let's understand something concerning the Word of God: when it says all people it means *all people!*

"...All who burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the nations of the earth be gathered together against it" (v 3). Then God talks about how He's going to raise up the governors of Judah, *and He will!*

Verse 6: "In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a hearth of fire... [v 7]: The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first..." Tie that in with Rev. 7. The first 12,000 of the 144,000 are from the tribe of Judah. God will fulfill His Word.

"...so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the people of Jerusalem may not be magnified above Judah" (v 7).

Verse 10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the people of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication...."

That will happen when the beast goes into the temple and says, 'I am God!' Then the Jews will repent of that great mistake of building the temple and realize that the Messiah is coming.

"...And they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced... [because they will see the coming of Christ] ...and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourns for his only *son*, and shall be in bitterness over Him, as the bitterness over the firstborn. In that day shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem like the mourning of Hadad Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family apart; the family of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart" (vs 10-12).

Remember, the line through whom Jesus came was *Nathan! Not Solomon!*

Verse 13: "The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart; all the families who remain, every family apart and their wives apart" (vs 13-14).

That vast repentance is going to come about when the temple is overrun by the beast and he says that he is God!

The two witnesses will rise up in power, and I think the final Elijah is going to be the one who is going to be ministering to all the Jews who repent. There will be repentance, baptisms, zeal and protection from God. It will be a sight to behold!

Even though there is a condemnation of Judaism, that doesn't mean that God has rejected the Jews, the house of David or the Levites. ***They are all going to come to repentance!***

All Scripture from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 6:1-4
- 2) Acts 1:4-8
- 3) Mark 7:1-9
- 4) Matthew 23:4-23
- 5) Acts 10:25-29, 34-46, 45-48
- 6) Acts 11:1-4, 17-18
- 7) Numbers 15:37-40
- 8) Galatians 1:6-10, 12-14
- 9) Galatians 2:11-21
- 10) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 11) Zechariah 12:2-3, 6-7, 10-12

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- Acts 22; 11:8
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Revelation 7

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- *Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried & Goldin
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- Chapter 3: Canonization of the Old Testament
- Chapter 10: John's Final Canonization of the N.T.

Sermon Series:

- *Circumcision Wars*
- *Scripturalism vs Judaism*

FRC:bo

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