



The Scriptures

I. Authority of the Scriptures

- a. What is Scripture?
 1. Psalms
 - i. "The words of ADONAI are pure words..." Psalm 12:6 (NAS)
 - ii. "Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your Torah is truth." Psalm 119:142 (NAS)
 - iii. "As for God, His way is perfect, the word of ADONAI has been tested by fire..." Psalm 18:30
 2. Definitive statement: "All Scripture is God-breathed" 2Timothy 3:16
 - i. God-breathed = The source of all Scripture is the mouth of God
 - ii. Paul's Scriptures = the Hebrew Scriptures
- b. Hebrew Scriptures
 1. Codified around 200 CE by the Rabbis (our acceptance of the canon of Hebrew Scriptures speaks to our reliance upon the traditions of Judaism)
 2. Yeshua testifies to the validity of the Hebrew Scriptures
 - i. Luke 24:44-47
 - ii. Three things
 - a. Torah (תּוֹרָה), Prophets (נְבִיאִים, *N'viyiyim*), and (Psalms) Writings (כְּתוּבִים, *K'tuviym*)
 1. Different from the four-fold Christian delineation (Law, History, Poetry, Prophets)
 2. Coined term in Judaism: Acronym = (תַּנַּ"ךְ) *Tanach*
 - b. We understand the Scriptures when Yeshua opens up our understanding to them.
 - c. We find Yeshua in the Scriptures
 - iii. Yeshua's statements are sufficient to validate the Hebrew Scriptures as authoritative
 3. The Hebrew Scriptures referred to as "the Word"
 - i. The Word:
 - a. Is a fire and a hammer of destruction (Jeremiah 23:29) against those who misuse it
 - b. Is a light and a lamp (Psalm 119:105) to the feet of those who follow in its way
 - c. Is the Torah of ADONAI (Isaiah 2:3)
 - d. Is the word of the Prophets who spoke by inspiration, moved by the Spirit of God (Acts 28:25)
 - e. Is the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17), separating spirit and soul, joint and marrow, discerning the thoughts of the heart (Hebrews 4:12)
 - f. Is Truth (Psalm 119:160, John 17:17)
 - g. Is alive (Hebrews 4:12)

- h. Is straight and upright (Psalm 33:4)
 - i. cannot be broken (John 10:35)
 - ii. The Word is also:
 - a. The seed (Luke 8:11) of the Good News of the Messiah Yeshua
 - b. The Messiah Himself—the Son, the Only Begotten One (John 1:1ff)
 - c. This speaks of Yeshua being the fullness of Scripture
- 4. Yeshua—not the end of the Hebrew Scriptures, but their fullness
 - i. Yeshua’s definitive statement about the validity of Scripture
 - a. Did not come to throw down the Torah or the Prophets, but to fulfill, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter or stroke. (Matthew 5:17-18)
 - 1. “Torah and the Prophets”—another general reference to the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures
 - 2. Not to throw down (abolish, destroy), but fulfill (full up, bring to its fullest expression)
 - b. “...until heaven and earth pass away”
 - 1. How long is this?
 - 2. Literal markings and stroke of the writings—reference to the actual, physical writings of the Scripture, specifically the Torah.
 - 3. Stroke example: ד and נ (dalet and resh)
- 5. Summary: Both internally (with the Hebrew Scriptures themselves) and externally (by the Word Himself), the Hebrew Scriptures are attested to as wholly authoritative.
- c. The Greek Scriptures (Greek in language, not content)
 - 1. Are they Scripture?
 - i. Yeshua testifies to the validity of the Hebrew Scriptures
 - ii. We have only our faith and our reliance upon those who canonized the Greek Texts of Scripture (397 CE)
 - 2. Canon of the “New Testament”
 - i. Arrived at according to certain criteria (R.C. Sproul)
 - a. Apostolic authorship or endorsement
 - b. Received as authoritative by the first century “church”
 - c. Had to be in harmony with other books about which there was no doubt.
 - ii. We accept the tradition of the Church Fathers that the “New Testament” is inspired and therefore carrying the authority of Scripture. Our acceptance of the canon of the “New Testament” speaks to our reliance upon the traditions of Christianity.

II. Old Testament vs. New Testament

- a. Perspectives: Jewish vs. Christian
 - 1. Christian Old Testament (Protestant) contains same material (but in different order) as Jewish Tanach
 - 2. Judaism does not accept Christian New Testament in any way
- b. Is “Old Testament” a good term?
 - 1. “Testament” is another word for “Covenant”—so how about “Old Covenant”? Assumption: “Covenant” is referring to Torah

2. Matthew 5:18—Torah will not pass away “until heaven and earth pass away”
 - i. How “old” can a covenant be if it won’t “pass away” until the end of time?
 - ii. בְּרִית עוֹלָם (b’riyt olam)—everlasting covenant (primary reference is the covenant with Av’raham)
3. We should not think of the first 2/3rds of our Scriptures as “old” as in “useless” or “past its prime”
- c. Is “New Testament” a good term?
 1. Again, “testament” means “covenant”
 2. Do the books of the “New Testament” comprise a “New Covenant”?
 - i. Jeremiah 31:31-34
 - ii. Luke 22:20
 - iii. בְּרִית הַחֲדָשָׁה, b’riyt ‘chadashah (New Covenant)
 - a. Forgiveness of sins
 - b. Israel’s restoration to ADONAI
 - c. Accomplished through the blood of Yeshua
 - iv. The writings of the apostles are not the New Covenant. The *reality* of the New Covenant is the primary *topic* of their writings.
 3. Suggested alternatives
 - i. בְּרִית הַחֲדָשָׁה, b’riyt ‘chadashah
 - ii. Greek texts / Scriptures
 - iii. Apostolic Scriptures / Writings
 - iv. Messianic Scriptures / Writings
 4. An alternate alternative
 - i. Don’t lump all the books of the “New Testament” together at all—refer to each book by name or author
 - ii. Paradigm challenger: not everything has to have a convenient label
- d. Dividing the Scriptures for practical purposes causes a division in our understanding of the Word of God
 1. There are some natural divisions
 - i. Hebrew vs. Greek
 - ii. Apostles referring back to the Hebrew Scriptures
 - iii. Fullest revelation of Yeshua found in the Greek texts
 - iv. Some passages in the apostles’ writings written to Gentiles
 2. There is more continuity than division
 - i. Heavy reliance upon Hebrew Scriptures
 - ii. Fulfillment of Hebrew Scriptures in the Jewish Messiah
 - iii. Written solely by Jews (except Luke, possible proselyte)

III. Opinion and Interpretation

- a. We interpret Scripture through the bias of our own experiences
- b. Obstacles to understanding the Scriptures
 1. Opinion
 2. Interpretation
 - i. Example
 - a. “Christ is the **end** (τέλος, telos) of the law...” NIV
 - b. “For the **goal** (τέλος, telos) at which the Torah aims is the Messiah...” CJB

- ii. Hermeneutics (method of interpretation) must include context, harmony, original languages, history and culture
- 3. The Western (Greek) mindset
 - i. Example 1 - seeking to explain a paradox
 - a. From the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE)
 - b. The Hebraic mind can accept a paradox
 - c. Who can comprehend or explain how Yeshua, the Messiah, is a man, and yet, is God?
 - ii. Example 2 - “Kosher”
 - 1. Leviticus 11:1-2
 - 2. (to) eat = אָכַל (*achal*); food = אוֹכֵל (*ochel*)
 - 3. Mark 7:5 (context: ritual hand washing)
 - 4. Mark 7:18-19 (Yeshua’s explanation)
 - 5. Mark adds, “Thus [Yeshua] declared all foods clean”
 - 1. Context: To a Jew, what is food?!? (Lev. 11)
 - 2. Yeshua’s response: ritual hand washing is not what makes food clean; it’s a matter of the heart
 - 3. To the Pharisees, even “kosher” food can be unclean without the proper ritual hand washing. The discussion was never about which creatures are to be considered “food”.

IV. Applying Scripture to Our Lives

- a. We cannot continue to view and apply Scripture the way it has been done and expect things to change.
 - 1. Individualism
 - 2. Intellectualism
 - 3. Super-spiritualism
- b. We need to apply the Scriptures in our personal lives with communal and generational intentions.
- c. From the beginning, ADONAI has been calling His people Israel to return to His word and do it.
 - 1. Deuteronomy 30:11-14
 - 2. James 1:21-25