

## Do we need the Old Testament?

*Haddington Rd Conversations*

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### Welcome

- Wide context
- Because the Bible says so
- Old Testament I
- Marcion
- Old Testament II
- Lectionary
- Reading the New Testament

### Wide context

- Jews and Christians in European history
- Christianity is born of Judaism
- Renewed respect / reconciliation
- Jesus the Jew
- We are all spiritually semites (Pius XI)
- *Nostra Aetate* (Vatican II)

### The Bible Says So

- “Because the Bible says so”
- Laura Schlessinger
- Lev 25:24 says I may indeed possess slaves, provided they are purchased from neighbouring nations.
- A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans but not to Canadians. Can you clarify? What can't I own Canadians?

### The Old Testament

- It can feel very remote
- Parts are extremely violent
- Parts seem to us immoral
- You need to know a lot
- We are not the first generation to feel this!

### Marcion of Sinope

- From Pontus, son of bishop, c. ad 85-165
- Two Gods: a higher transcendent and a lower creator
- YHWH is *not* the God of Jesus
- OT God: the demiurge, a tribal, violent God
- Incarnation in appearance only (docetism)
- Marcion produced a Biblical canon or list.
- The **Evangelikon**, based on Luke with parts removed that did not agree with his views.
- The **Apostolikon**, a selection of ten epistles of Paul the Apostle (also altered to fit his views) whom Marcion considered the correct interpreter and transmitter of Jesus' teachings.
- The gospel used by Marcion does not contain elements relating to Jesus' birth and childhood, although it does contain some elements of Judaism, and material challenging Marcion's ditheism.
- The **Gospel of Marcion**, called by its adherents the Gospel of the Lord, was a text used by the mid-2nd century Christian teacher Marcion of Sinope to the exclusion of the other gospels.
- Its reconstructed fragments now appear among the New Testament apocrypha.

- Marcion's teaching was condemned as heresy in the year 144.

### The Old Testament II

- Creation myths
- Ancient sagas and legends
- “History”
- Prophecy
- Poetry
- Wisdom
- Novels and short stories
- One “comic” book (at least one!)
  
- Experience of life
- Prayer
- Wisdom
- Quest for justice
- Foundational images
- Its okay to skip bit
- Development and evolution

### Lectionary

- Before Vatican II
- Renewal of the liturgy
- Rediscovery of Scripture
- At Vatican I
- The current Lectionary

	Verses total in the Bible	Verses used in the Missal	% used in the Missal
NT Gospels	3997	848 (1962)	22.4% (1962)
		2181 (1969)	57.8% (1969)
NT Epistles	4178	461	11%
		1061	25.4%
OT Readings	25,044	255	1.02%
		932	3.7%

- Pentateuch: 17
- Historical books: 3
- Prophets: 40
- (Isaiah: 26)
- Wisdom: 7
- Total: 67 readings from the Old Testament

### Reading the New Testament

- Sunday 8th October
- Gospel: Matthew 21:33-43

[Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people:]

Mt 21:33 “Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. 34 When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. 35 But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. 37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect

my son.’ 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ 39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” 41 They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.” 42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?’”

43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. 44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.”

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realised that he was speaking about them. 46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

### **The song of the vineyard**

Isa 5:1 Let me sing for my beloved  
my love-song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.

2 He dug it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
he expected it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.

Isa 5:3 And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and people of Judah,  
judge between me  
and my vineyard.

4 What more was there to do for my vineyard  
that I have not done in it?  
When I expected it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

Isa 5:5 And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.

6 I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.

Isa 5:7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the people of Judah  
are his pleasant planting;  
he expected justice,  
but saw bloodshed;  
righteousness,  
but heard a cry!

The use of Psalm 118:22—no doubt not part of the original parable—reflects an attraction to this verse across the New Testament. It was used to reflect on the cross and the break with the mother religion. It is found attached to the parable at this point, but also in Acts 4:11 and 1 Peter 2:7.

Ps 118:22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

- Paul
- Adam, Abraham, Moses, Psalm, Prophets
- Hab 2:4 Look, the one whose desires are not upright will faint from exhaustion, **but the person of integrity will live because of his faithfulness.**
- John's Gospel: theme of new creation in Christ
- In the beginning: *In the beginning God created* (Gen 1:1)
- Perfected: *God finished the work* (Gen 2:2)
- Rested: *God ceased on the seventh day* (Gen 2:2)
- Breathed: *and breathed into his nostrils* (Gen 2:7)

#### **Books/Kindle**

- Brent A. Strawn *The Old Testament is Dying. A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment.* Grand Rapids MN: Baker Academic, 2017
- Katharine Dell, *Who Needs the Old Testament. Its Enduring Appeal and why the New Atheists don't get it,* London: SPCK, 2017
- John Goldingay, *Do we need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself,* Downers Grove IL: IVP Academic, 2015.
- Stanley E. Porter, *Sacred Tradition in the New Testament. Tracing Old Testament Themes in the Gospels and Epistles,* Grand Rapids MN: Baker Academic, 2016