

A week or so ago I started to describe how I'm thinking of one of my future books, that I'm tentatively calling The Battle for the Bible. The book (if I write it) will be about how Christians got the Old Testament and saw the Old Testament as *their* book rather than the Jews', who had misinterpreted it and given up (without their knowledge) any claim to it. My argument is that this dispute is what ultimately led to the history of anti-Judaism among Christians, which is eventually what led centuries later to anti-semitism.

It will take a long time in the book to show how it worked - it's a complicated issue. In my first two posts I stated the thesis in its bald terms, and I received several negative comments about it by readers who thought it can't be that simple. And of course they are right. It's not. But I haven't started to explain how it all worked. You have to see the whole system before you can tell whether it works or not. (I've just spent three days in Pythagorio on the Greek Island of Samos, birthplace of Pythagorus, the famous Greek philosopher and mathematician. If you were to tell a person who knew absolutely nothing about math that with a right triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the square of the two other sides, they would think you were nuts. You have to show it and explain it before it makes sense. So too any historical view. You can't just state it and expect anyone to buy it. You have to show how and why it works....)

Anyway, my proposal to myself will not adducing all the evidence, but it will be doing more of that than I've done so far. My entire proposal is about 8000 words long, and so this will take a few more posts at least to lay out the skeleton of the case. Here's the next bit. (If you're not remembering the lead-in, see the two earlier posts <https://ehrmanblog.org/why-do-christians-have-an-old-testament-another-trade-book/> and <https://ehrmanblog.org/is-the-old-testament-a-christian-book/>)

The story of how it happened - how Christians, in effect, co-opted the Jewish Bible - is both historically intriguing and socially tragic. One part of my book will explore the historical intrigue; the other the social tragedy.

An Early Christian Conundrum: Is the Hebrew Bible Part of the Christian Scripture?

First I must deal with the all-important prior question I have already alluded to. If, very early in their history, Christians chose to bypass precisely the laws and instructions the Bible enjoins on the people of God, why did they see any utility of having the Old Testament at all? If it was outdated, why not simply jettison it altogether?

Early Christians took a number of different approaches to that question. One view can be assigned to the historical Jesus himself and his very earliest followers - the disciples and their converts. These were Jews ...

To see the rest of this post you will need to belong to the blog. There's a lot of interesting information here. You should join! Won't cost much, and all proceeds to help those in need.

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