

The Oral Law (Part 1)

~Other Speakers S-Z: Robert Wurtz II:

For fundamentalist Christians the written word of God is the final authority in all matters of life and doctrine. The WRITTEN word of God is infallible and immutable. The 66 books of the biblical canon have been closed definitively since Jerome completed the Latin Vulgate in 405. Before that in January 7, 367 Athanasius bishop of Alexandria wrote, "Inasmuch as some have taken in hand to draw up for themselves an arrangement of the so-called apocryphal books and to intersperse them with the divinely inspired scripture...it has seemed good to me...to set forth in order the books which are included in the canon and have been delivered to us with accreditation that they are divine." Much more could be said.

That's what we believe, but that is not the position of Rabbinic Judaism. There is an addition to the Tenach (Old Testament) known as the "Oral Law" that was added to the teachings of the Rabbi's in the second century. It is purported that the "Oral Law" was given to Moses on the mount and was to be communicated to each person in leadership down to the people until everyone had been taught it 4 times all the way into the second Century CE. We may find this impossible to believe, but it is a fundamental aspect of Rabbinic Judaism. It is supposed to be an extended interpretation designed to elaborate on the written law. It is also called "A fence around the Torah."

In our next study we will examine the true origins of the Oral Law.