

Marcion (~85-160) was the son of a Christian bishop and a teacher in Rome

- To give you some perspective, Revelation was written in the 90's

Marcion became a wealthy ship owner and had excellent organizational skills

Around 140 A.D., he arrived in Rome

- Here, he was welcomed by the Church
- Eventually donated a large amount of money and a building
 - He gave 200,000 sesterii to the Church in Rome
 - By comparison, the avg. worker received 900-1,200 sesterii a year
 - Depending on the time you look at, he gave somewhere between 150 and 200 years of wages
- By 144, his views had gotten him into trouble, and he was excommunicated

His trouble began when he became involved with Cerdo, an early gnostic teacher

- Marcion was influenced toward dualism, a worldview that pits two realities against each other
- Gnostics commonly taught a flesh/spirit distinction
- Marcion was more intrigued by the gnostics than he was a full-fledged disciple
 - He eventually applied dualism to the OT and NT

According to Marcion, the God of the OT was a wrathful, vengeful deity who wanted to keep humankind subject to himself, but Christ was sent by the real supreme God to reintroduce the old religion of love and peace

- The massive amounts of literature written to counter his teaching shows how popular it was and is

After he was no longer welcome in Rome, he used his organizational skills to work traveling and establishing new alternative Churches sympathetic to his view

- His influence eventually stretched all around the Mediterranean and lasted for a couple centuries

His extreme dualism laid the foundation for his false teaching

- In his most well-known book, Antithesis, he pitted the OT against the NT

<p>Gen. 3:9 - But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"</p>	<p>Lk. 5:22 - When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts?"</p>
<p>2 Ki. 1:9-10 - Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty men with his fifty. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "O man of God, the king says, 'Come down.'" But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty." Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.</p>	<p>Lk. 9:54-55 - And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them.</p>
<p>Ex. 20:5 - You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me...</p> <p>Ex. 34:14 - ...for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God...</p>	<p>1 Cor. 13:4 - Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant</p>

Marcion's solution was simple

- There were 2 Gods
 - YHWH is the OT and Jesus of the NT
- Both were bitter enemies, and both came to Israel
 - Jesus challenged YHWH's rule by coming to Israel
- Jesus was sent by an unknown Father to save us from YHWH's evil wrath
- He called the kind God of the NT "Abba"

His views of the OT God led him to become radically anti-Jewish

- He wanted to rid Christianity of all traces of Judaism
- He insisted the God who gave the law could not be the God who gave the Gospel

To help his point, he created his own canon

- He rejected all allegorical interpretations that were typically used to smooth over the difficult sections
- He completely got rid of the OT and selected portions of the NT
 - All references to Jesus's Jewishness were removed
 - He also removed anything he felt was corrupted by Jewish influence
 - He was left with a mutilated version the Gospel of Luke and 10 of Paul's letters
 - Changes to Luke include:

O foolish and hard of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken (24:25)	O foolish and hard of heart to believe in all that I have told you
They began to accuse him, saying, 'We found this man perverting our nation . . .' (23:2)	They began to accuse him, saying, 'We found this man perverting our nation . . . and destroying the law and the prophets.'

He added another heresy along the way by destroying the humanity of Jesus

- His dualism led him to view Jesus as having nothing to do with creation
- This is why he rejected the birth narrative
- His Jesus floated down out of the sky at the wedding at Capernaum

Marcion, due to his wealth and organizational skills, was able to establish a following for the next several centuries

- This struggle did allow the Church to work through these important issues and make clarifying declarations on several major doctrines
- Marcion's canon forced the Church to work on their understanding of the canon
- They also reaffirmed the OT as Christian scriptures
- They also worked to show how the NT and OT work with each other

ORTHODOX RESPONSE

Tertullian, a leader of the North African Church, in 207/208 led the charge against his work in "Against Marcion"

- He spent 5 books on explaining Marcion's argument before refuting it
- He went through Marcion argument by argument

Tertullian took most of his aim at the denial of Christ's humanity

- 3.8 - Nothing substantial can be allowed to have been effected by an unsubstantial thing; nothing full by a [emptiness]... if the worker were imaginary the works were imaginary. On this principle, too, the sufferings of Christ will be found not to warrant faith in Him. For He suffered nothing who did not truly suffer; and a phantom could not truly suffer. God's entire work, therefore, is subverted. Christ's death, wherein lies the whole weight and fruit of the Christian name, is denied although the apostle asserts it so expressly as undoubtedly real, making it the very foundation of the gospel, of our salvation and of his own preaching.
- Tertullian also showed that Marcion had no connection with earlier Christians
 - He demanded that the Marcionites provide proof that any of the Marcionite Churches connected to an Apostle
 - Because they couldn't do this, Tertullian said Marcion must be treated as a trespasser when he talked about Scripture
 - Tertullian: Who are you? When and whence do you come?...What are you doing on my land? By what right are you cutting down my timber, Marcion?... This property belongs to me... I am heir to the apostles

Tertullian rejected dualism and argued there is only one God

- God is the supreme being, subordinate to no one
- "But the Christian [truth] has distinctly declared this principle, 'God is not, if He is not one'"
- If there were any being equal with God, God would no longer be worthy of worship
- Marcion said justice and love could not co-exist, but Tertullian labored to show the one God is both love and just
- He pointed out Marcion's hypocrisy for saying God was not just but living righteously as though God were going to judge all men

Tertullian also argued for the goodness of material creation

- They were hypocrites as well because they ridiculed creation but were enthralled with astrology
- Tertullian, like the Bible, pointed out that God's goodness is seen in His creation, and before sin, it was all declared "good"

Irenaeus also spoke forcefully against Marcion

- Irenaeus recalled a meeting between Bishop Polycarp and Marcion where Marcion asked Polycarp if he remembered who he was
- Polycarp replied, "I do know you, the first-born of Satan"
- "...he mutilates the Gospel which is according to Luke, removing all that is written respecting the generation of the Lord, and setting aside a great deal of the teaching of the Lord, in which the Lord is recorded as most dearly confessing that the Maker of this universe is His Father. He likewise persuaded his disciples that he himself was more worthy of credit than are those apostles who have handed down the Gospel to us, furnishing them not with the Gospel, but merely a fragment of it."

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

Is Jesus the enemy of the OT God?

- John 12; John 1:1; Phil. 2

Did Jesus come in the flesh?

- John 1:14; 1 John 4:1-3

Is the OT in conflict with the NT?

- John 5:39; Luke 16:19-31

WHY DOES THIS MATTER TODAY?

Many today still struggle with and/or teach that the OT and NT have different Gods

- Richard Dawkins taught this in "The God Delusion"
 - "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully."
- People still misunderstand the cross because they don't think wrath and love can or should be reconciled
 - Rom. 3:25-26
- People still pervert biblical love by emphasizing it in exclusion to other divine attributes
 - The New Mood can be found in bestsellers like *The Shack* with its claims that "The Bible doesn't teach you to follow rules" (197), God doesn't need to punish sin (120), and the biblical portrayal of God's justice is caricatured as a blood-thirsty God who runs around killing people all the time (119)
- In doing this, they all miss the cross

Andy Stanley: If the Bible is the foundation of our faith, here is the problem, it is all or nothing. . . Christianity becomes a fragile house of cards that comes tumbling down when we discover that perhaps the walls of Jericho didn't.

- He is crumbling under the pressures of people who don't believe God's Word
- Rather than explaining why they are wrong and preaching the Gospel, he accepts a rejection of the OT
- "I'm convinced that we make a better case for Jesus if we leave the Old Testament or the old covenant out of the argument"
 - What about John 5:39?
- He even belittles the virgin birth
 - "If someone can predict their own death and resurrection, I'm not all that concerned about how they got into the world"
- Again, though he is different than Marcion, notice how much he is like him
 - You can get rid of so much of the Bible, just accept Jesus resurrection

Some today use his same tactics to become "red-letter Christians"

Rachel Held Evans and Peter Enns and Brian McLaren all see the violent OT God as the Israelites' revelation, not God's

- Because the Israelites were violent people, they portrayed their God as violent

Many today deny who the biblical Jesus is

- If He is not man, then His suffering means nothing
- If He is not God, then He can't take God's wrath for me

Praise God for sending us a Savior who is MORE than a good man...

- God sent His own Son who is co-equal and co-eternal
- This perfect Savior has accomplished what we never could have