

Luke 16:16 The Law and the Prophets
were Until John

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(Note the "dot" between "chuck" and "henry")

Luke 16:16 (NKJV) *The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of Yahweh has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.*

Does the word "until" mean that the law and the prophets were done away with when John came on the scene? To understand what this verse means, it is helpful to know what it *doesn't* mean.

Law Does Not Cease to Be

The very near context (the next verse, v 17), shows that Luke 16:16 does not mean that the law ceased to be at the time of John:

Luke 16:17 (NKJV) *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail.*

Note: It is interesting that Yahshua immediately followed the words of v 16 with this comment. It may be that He wanted to ensure that they did not misunderstand Him to be saying that the law ceased at the time of John.

Prophecy Does Not Cease to Be

Rev 19:10, which deals directly with Yahshua and prophecy, shows that prophecy (and thus prophets) did not cease to be at the time of John: Rev 19:10 (NKJV)
And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Yahshua. Worship Yahweh! For the testimony of Yahshua is the spirit of prophecy."

Of course, Revelation itself is a book of prophecy, and was written many years after Yahshua's death, burial, and resurrection; again proving that prophecy did not cease to be at the time of John.

In light of this information, we can determine straightaway that Luke 16:16 does *not* mean that the law and the prophets ceased to be at the time of John.

Meaning of Luke 16:16

As for what Luke 16:16 *does* mean, notice that it states that since the time of John, "the kingdom of Yahweh is preached..." Well, this is certainly true. We have record that both John **and** Yahshua preached the message, "*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

Mat 3:1-2 (NKJV) *I In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*

Mat 4:17 (NKJV) *From that time Yahshua began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

Yahshua also instructed the Apostles to preach this message (Mat 10:1-7).

Remember that there were periods of time in Biblical history in which the law was given (Genesis through Deuteronomy), and in which the prophets prophesied (Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.).

When the job of giving the law was done, and then the time period of the prophets came, obviously this did not cause the law to cease. In the same way, when the time period for the prophets of old came to a close, and the time period came for John & Yahshua to preach the message of repentance & the kingdom of heaven being at hand, this did not cause the law or the prophets to cease from existence.

In Luke 16:16, Yahshua is laying things out in perspective. To paraphrase in a modern way, it's as if He's saying, "OK folks, here's what's going on: there was a time when you received the words of the law, then the words of the prophets. Today's lesson is about the kingdom of heaven, and it's at hand! So repent!"

Matthew supports this view: Mat 11:13 (NKJV)
For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

Matthew clarifies the meaning for us when he states that the prophets and the law *prophesied* until John, not that they were done away with at John's coming.

Conclusion

We have already seen in Revelation that the testimony of Yahshua is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10). Revelation also tells us that keeping the commandments of Yahweh is associated with the faith of Yahshua:

Rev 14:12 (NKJV) *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of Yahweh and the faith of Yahshua.*

This is further proof that neither prophecy nor the law was done away with.

Let us rejoice that Yahshua revealed to us an understanding of the timeframe we live in, and let us repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand! 📖