

A SURVEY OF
THE APOSTOLIC
SCRIPTURES
FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

J.K. MCKEE



A SURVEY OF THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES

FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

by John Kimball McKee

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ABBREVIATION CHART AND SPECIAL TERMS

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that are used in publications by TNN Press. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

ABD: <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>	Lattimore: <i>The New Testament</i> by Richmond Lattimore (1996)
AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>	LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament	LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Lidell & Scott)
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)	LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)
b. Babylonian Talmud (<i>Talmud Bavli</i>)	LXX: Septuagint
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.	m. Mishnah
BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)	MT: Masoretic Text
BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>	NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)
BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i>	NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.	NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i>
CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995)	NEB: New English Bible (1970)
CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)	Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i>
CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>	NIDB: <i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>
CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)	NIV: New International Version (1984)
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition	NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls	NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)
EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>	NKJV: New King James Version (1982)
ESV: English Standard Version (2001)	NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)
EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>	NLT: New Living Translation (1996)
Ger: German	NT: New Testament
GNT: Greek New Testament	orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world
Grk: Greek	OT: Old Testament
<i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community	REB: Revised English Bible (1989)
HALOT: <i>Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)	RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)
HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2001)	Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament
Heb: Hebrew	Thayer: <i>Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible	TDNT: <i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>	TEV: Today's English Version (1976)
IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>	TNTC: <i>Tyndale New Testament Commentaries</i>
ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>	TWOT: <i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)</i>	UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition
Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow)	v(s). verse(s)
JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)	Vine: <i>Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words</i>
KJV: King James Version	Vul: Latin Vulgate
	WBC: <i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>
	Yid: Yiddish
	YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

INTRODUCTION

One of the principal goals of the ministry work of TNN Online and Outreach Israel Ministries is to equip Messianic Believers in their spiritual growth, as we are all continually sanctified and made perfect by the power of God's Spirit. This coming year (2007), the principal theme of TNN's featured articles is how we as the Messianic movement can move from having a raw view of the Bible's teachings to having a more defined and well-polished theology. I believe that this has been lacking in significant segments of the Messianic community, and significant lack of establishment has made some Messianic individuals easy cannon fodder for the enemy. But this is not what the Lord wants. Our Heavenly Father wants us to have a relationship with Him via His Son, Yeshua, so that we may be equipped to perform His work in the world in a marvelous way. As Paul wrote the Colossians, "Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Messiah" (Colossians 1:28, RSV).

But how are we to arrive at this state of being "complete" (NASU)? Is it something that happens instantaneously, or something that must occur over time via a process? I think it is safe to say that any of us who have committed ourselves to the Lord know that while being forgiven of our sins and spiritually regenerated is something that happens instantly, being conformed to the image of the Messiah (Romans 8:29) is something that can take a lifetime. We continually war with our flesh and with the sin in our fallen world (Romans 7:23; Ephesians 6:12), and it is for this very reason why the transformation of our character to one more like God's character will often take an entire lifetime. The mysteries of God's universe are too complicated for us to understand all at once; we can only take them "in fragmentary and varied fashion" (Hebrews 1:1, NEB).

There are some important keys that any spiritual mentor can tell you that will help you in your journey with the Lord. Each of us needs to pray every day. A consistent, disciplined time of prayer and one-on-one time of entreating and talking to God is absolutely imperative to have a right relationship with Him. Prayer is the time when we thank the Lord for the life He has given us, we ask Him questions about our lives and what we are doing, and we make requests of Him. Yeshua Himself says, "Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you" (Mark 11:24). Of course, this must be tempered by the fact that not everything we ask for may be beneficial for us. But, praying to the Lord and communing with Him will bring the right answer, and He will surely grant us what we need in its proper time.

Each one of us also needs to be in fellowship and accountability to other Believers. In the Messianic movement today, this is particularly important, as many of us are spread abroad and Messianic congregations for some are few and far between. It can also be extremely difficult. Many feel uncomfortable inside some of the Messianic fellowships or congregations that they attend, for whatever reason. As a growing movement, the spiritual needs of some people are simply not met at the Messianic congregations they visit or attempt to become involved with. This frequently takes place, unfortunately, because the leaders of fellowships and congregations are not mature enough to truly serve the spiritual needs of the people. It also commonly takes place because some Messianic assemblies are fractionalized among various "cliques" representing a particular view or ideology on a subject or issue. Thankfully, technology has helped eliminate some of the distance barriers, cultural divides, and even social differences. Those who find themselves marginalized in some way need not be permanently alone. In order for any of us to survive spiritually, we need to be in the company of others—*somehow*—lest one of us is killed as the proverbial "lone ranger."

There is a third critical aspect of the faith process that is absolutely imperative to anyone who wants to grow in his or her relationship with God. Unfortunately—and *surprisingly*—in today's emerging Messianic movement it gets widely overlooked: **a consistent study of the *whole* Bible.**

What?! Some of you who attend Messianic fellowships and associate with those "who want to be fully Biblical" may consider this a strong accusation. But I have not accused anyone of not studying Scripture; I have rather made the statement that many do not consistently study the whole Bible. As a Messianic teacher, it has been my observation over the past three to five years (2002-2007) that the majority of Messianic Bible studies are focused on the weekly Torah portions. While I certainly do not wish to discount the important value of studying the Torah, many Messianics have made the reverse mistake of many Christians who only focus on the "New Testament." How many of our Messianic youth, for example, are familiar with what the Gospels tell us about the life of Yeshua the Messiah, when all they may be focused on is studying Hebrew so they can read the Torah? How many know what the gospel of salvation truly is?

How many truly know how the good news was spread abroad in the Book of Acts and what the Apostles endured? Did you know that some Messianic youth do not even know who Paul was?

I believe I am justified in asking if this is truly acceptable in a movement that strives to be “fully Biblical.” Failing to know who figures such as Paul are, who authored nearly a third of the Apostolic Scriptures, and the basic facts of the Gospels and Acts, are unacceptable for any generation of “Believers.”

It is very true that many of us come from Christian backgrounds where our study of the Bible has primarily been focused around the New Testament, and so entering into the Messianic movement has been a breath of fresh air for us. It is a good thing that people are studying the Torah consistently. But Torah study cannot become an end to itself; it must also be coupled with consistent meditation on the Prophets and histories of the Tanach, and with the instructions of Yeshua and the Apostles. The Torah may make up the foundation of the Bible, but it by no means is the only part of the Bible. What we learn in the Torah must be properly applied elsewhere. We have a responsibility to ourselves and our posterity to develop a fully Biblical theology firmly based on what we can read and understand in the authorized canon of Scripture.

Christians who primarily focus on the Apostolic Scriptures can frequently become one-sided in their approach to God, thinking that Yeshua the Messiah (Jesus Christ) came to abolish the Law of Moses—a Torah that many of them have not frequently examined. These people can also adopt the unfortunate view that our Creator is inconsistent in His approach to mankind in the texts of the “Old Testament” versus the texts in the “New Testament.” Some, whether consciously or not, have adopted the Marcionite heresy of believing that the God of the “Old Testament” is full of anger and wrath, whereas the God of the “New Testament” is full of love and grace.¹ Some believe that Jesus was a pacifist who did not believe in any kind of war, whereas Ancient Israel was stoning offenders of the Law left and right and was a society in which no one would have wanted to live. Some believe that God would not condemn anyone as long as they “love others,” and would condone homosexual relationships. These may sound like extreme examples, but these attitudes are evidenced in some churches today.

Reverse errors to these mistakes, however, rear themselves far too frequently in the emerging Messianic movement. Some people, who focus almost exclusively on the Torah in their Bible studies, forget that God is concerned about the salvation of the world. Some forget the love, grace, and mercy of God—or think that our Heavenly Father’s love is only attainable by those who “keep His commandments,” *as they do*. Some forget that the world that Ancient Israel existed in during the reign of Kings David and Solomon was not the world that Yeshua the Messiah and the Apostles lived in, and is certainly not the world we live in today. And, perhaps worse than anything else, some are not willing to let Yeshua’s instructions be primary to the teachings of Moses, in spite of his prophesying that “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him” (Deuteronomy 18:15; cf. Acts 3:22; 7:37). In perhaps the most extreme of cases, some would not hesitate to begin stoning sinners in their midst and would advocate that animal sacrifices must still be offered for the atonement of willful sin. These may likewise sound like severe examples, but they are evidenced in some Messianic fellowships and assemblies.

How or why anyone arrives at these two extremes is not something that any of us can humanly determine, as only the Lord truly knows the heart intent of every person. But the way to avoid these two extremes is obvious: **we must submit ourselves to a consistent study of God’s Word.** This does not include a selective reading of the Torah once a week, nor does it include selective readings from the Gospels, either. It must include us knowing what God’s Word says, being able to know the basic facts of Scripture, and being sensitive to the Holy Spirit when issues arise that require us to turn to an absolute authority.

Those of you who have followed TNN Online’s Wednesday Night Bible Study program since it began in July 2005 have noticed that we have largely focused on examinations of specific books from the Apostolic Scriptures (Galatians, James, Hebrews), as well as some topical studies. I fully believe that these have been helpful for many of you wanting to have a good, conservative, Messianic handle on these texts, and they will continue. However, these studies take a great deal of time to go through chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse. Admittedly, an entire lifetime of work lies before the Messianic interpreter as I believe we are entering a season of being able to seriously refine and systematize our theology. If the history of the Reformation can teach us anything, progress in a movement can only truly be made when the Lord calls out certain individuals who can devote the time and effort to write commentaries on books of the Bible and treatises on doctrine. Whether you agree with his theology or not, the Protestant movement is

¹ The *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* notes that Marcionism is “The movement begun with Marcion in the second century, which rejected the validity of the OT witness for Christians because the God of the OT was believed to be incompatible with the loving God revealed through Jesus. Often persons who focus on the NT in their preaching or teaching and who overlook the OT as the ‘cradle’ for Jesus and the Christian faith (and hence who fail to give proper credence to the ‘Jewishness’ of Jesus and the early church) are accused of Marcionism” (Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999], 75).

undoubtedly indebted to the work of John Calvin, who spent most of his life in Geneva doing precisely this—in a time when Protestantism was still in its infancy and fractionalized just like the Messianic movement today.

We live in a Twenty-First Century that has enabled us to do more work in less time with the advent of computers, mass communication, and the Internet. However, we still have a great deal of work ahead of us as the Messianic community, because while God raises up men and women to exposit on Messianic theology, so too must the work of daily ministry continue. No one can devote all of their time to exclusively focus on examining this text or that issue, when people have personal issues and crises that need to be dealt with, and new people are entering into the movement every day. People need real world solutions to their problems, and the only way we will find answers for them is by submitting to the instruction of God's Word. Admittedly, it may be several decades before we see the day that a person will have an entire bookshelf full of Messianic commentaries on the Apostolic Scriptures—to say nothing of the full Bible.

We can probably wait a little longer to have a verse-by-verse set of commentaries on the Bible, as the Lord increasingly matures us and enables us to deal with the increasingly more difficult issues that the *whole of Scripture* represents. The Holy Scriptures are the only place where we are going to find the definitive answers for the challenges that our lives present to us. While we can probably wait to have a comprehensive understanding of every verse of the Bible, we cannot afford to wait on dealing with the Bible as a whole. Each of us must have a good handle on the basic facts of Scripture, so we can determine what our strengths and weaknesses are as the Messianic movement, and where we need to focus our energies for the short term and the long term. In order to survey Scripture, we must read each book, not to try to figure out everything all at once, but to get a good idea about what the story is, who the characters are, how they interact, and the broad questions we should be asking ourselves.

We are actually going to begin our survey of the Bible in the Apostolic Scriptures, and not in the Tanach. Some of you understandably may be asking, "Why? Doesn't the Bible begin with the Book of Genesis?" This is true; the Bible does begin with the Book of Genesis. But in order to properly survey the Bible, we must go back in time and consider issues that are often not dealt with in an individual's daily meditation on the Word. Most people just pick up the Bible and start reading. I consider this to be a serious mistake because it is where the vast majority of interpretational errors occur. Most people who read the Bible do not consider when a Biblical book was composed, who the author was, where the author was when writing, and who the intended audience of the text was. When we do this, there is admittedly a great deal of controversy that exists between the far Right and the far Left of the theological spectrum—that we cannot avoid. We cannot act as though the Bible just "popped out of the sky."

I have purposefully chosen to begin our survey of the Bible with the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament for several reasons. The first is that some Messianic Believers have become so zealous for the Torah that they literally need a re-introduction to Yeshua and the Apostles. The second is that many Messianic Believers who read the Apostolic Scriptures, who may not need a "re-introduction," do need to have its books placed in a distinct Messianic context for them. The third, and perhaps most important, is that it is much easier to survey the Apostolic Scriptures as we are largely dealing with a broad First Century of 100 to 120 years, whereas the Tanach spans from the Creation of the world to the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon, with contemporary literature spanning anywhere from 2,200 to 4,000 years. There is actually *less controversy* surrounding the composition of the New Testament than the Old Testament, so not surveying the Tanach before the Apostolic Scriptures has been done to introduce you to smaller issues *before* greater issues.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO SURVEY THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES?

A survey may be defined as both "a detailed study, as by gathering information and analyzing it" and "a general view."ⁱⁱ This examination of the Apostolic Scriptures will primarily be general, but also be detailed in that aspects of the text will be considered that are often overlooked. Most of these aspects will be related to a text's composition that will place it in its proper historical and/or cultural setting, and the circumstances that likely precipitated its being written. Imperative to our discussions will be considering how each text should be viewed or applied in a Twenty-First Century Messianic setting, and the challenges that are commonly presented to us spiritually and theologically from them.

This study of the Apostolic Scriptures follows the standard order of the New Testament as it appears in most English Bibles, with few exceptions. This is so you can easily follow the workbook while using your own study Bible in

ⁱⁱ Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus, second edition (Cleveland: Wiley Publishing, Inc, 2002), 638.

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tandem with it.ⁱⁱⁱ Each study should begin with you having read the text beforehand. I would recommend that as much as possible that you dedicate several hours before each study, reading the assigned text in a single sitting. Because we are surveying Biblical texts, it is not necessary for you to pay close attention to every single detail. Instead, it is necessary for you to read the text as though you were reading a book, as we are trying to get a good feel on the overall message.

As you proceed to read large portions of the Bible in a very short timespan, I would strongly recommend that you pick a Bible version that is not translated as literally as some others. While I use the New American Standard, Updated Edition (1995) as my primary version, which is rather literal, the NASU can slow a person down significantly who is trying to read through a text to digest its basic facts. The NASU has not been published to use as a Bible that reads through more quickly like a book. For this job, I would recommend that you use a dynamic equivalency translation such as the New International Version (1984) or New English Bible (1970). Some of you may want to use a speciality version, such as Richmond Lattimore's translation of the New Testament (New York: North Point Press, 1996), which not only easily reads as a book, but lacks chapter and verse numbers. While I know David H. Stern's *Complete Jewish Bible* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1998) is quite popular in the Messianic movement, its constant use of Hebrew terms may be unfamiliar to many of you, who do not need to be confused. This may be a good secondary source to use, but is paraphrased and will not easily help gauge the weaknesses that we have as Messianics in regard to the Apostolic Scriptures.^{iv}

When you read entire books of the Bible in a short space of time, questions will arise that you may not consider when reading shorter selections. There are some excellent study Bibles on the market that I believe can help you considerably to gain a good socio-historical feel of the text. From an evangelical and conservative point of view, these include the venerable *NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) and the relatively new *Archaeological Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005). While somewhat liberal, the *New Interpreter's Study Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003) incorporates many Jewish and classical sources into its footnotes for the New Testament. Another good tool to have is a Bible atlas, as we will be going through many places that may be unfamiliar to you. I would specifically recommend the *HarperCollins Concise Atlas of the Bible* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997).

Some of you may also wish to have additional resources to make use of in your survey of the Apostolic Scriptures. I would recommend that you have a good Bible encyclopedia, such as the relatively conservative *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), and a one-volume commentary like the *New Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970). Some of these can be found at discount booksellers new or used, and should be a welcome addition to any Believer's library. For those of you who would like to hone some of your skills of reading Scripture, then I would recommend the book *Bible Study That Works* by David L. Thompson (Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1994). An excellent supplementary read to our survey study is F.F. Bruce's book *New Testament History* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), which will give you a good overview of the First Century world.

Most of the references that I will be making in the lectures have been gleaned from several Bible encyclopedias, including: the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), the beforementioned *ISBE*, and the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992). I am also indebted to the thorough work of Donald Guthrie in his *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), as well as the textbook *A Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994) by Robert Gundry. Some information has also been incorporated from select commentaries, most notably from the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) and *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books). Of course, all of these are tools that you can have in your personal or congregational library.

HOW DO YOU SURVEY THE TEXT?

The procedures of this survey study should be fairly easy to follow for the person who is eager to learn. Make sure that you have set aside some time to read in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Make sure that you are alert, as there can be a tendency to "doze off" when reading large portions of text. Your mind will need to be focused—and you need to get those body chemicals moving!

The first thing that you should do before opening your Bible is pray. (Too many people forget to do this!) Ask the Lord to fill you with His Holy Spirit, and stimulate both your heart and your mind. Ask Him to give you the right

ⁱⁱⁱ In spite of the fact that the General Epistles (James, 1&2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude) generally appear *before* the Pauline Epistles in most ancient Greek texts (consult "The General Epistles" introduction in *James for the Practical Messianic*), this workbook follows the standard order to facilitate a quicker personal reference on your behalf.

^{iv} Likewise, I would seriously recommend that you *not* use the King James Version to use for these studies. The KJV, while a major contribution to our faith history, is nevertheless almost 400 years old and reads somewhat archaically. Furthermore, it is based on younger Hebrew and Greek manuscripts unlike newer versions today like the RSV, NEB, NASU, NIV, etc.

attitude as you approach controversial texts. Ask Him to give you the skills to read the text and make intelligent observations. Ask Him to show you where your strengths and weaknesses are concerning a text.

Secondly, you should take your study Bible and jot down a few things from its introduction. Mark down how the Christian Bible version you are working from interprets or views a text. Is its approach conservative or liberal? How many of the views are incorporated from First Century Judaism and/or the Greco-Roman classical world? To what degree is history a factor in the interpretation of a text?

Third, before you begin reading a text you need to remember that the Apostolic Scriptures are a collection of specific literary types or genres. This is one of the reasons why I will refrain, with the exception of Acts and Revelation, from referring to our texts as “the Book of _____.” The Apostolic Scriptures are a largely a collection of Gospels and Epistles. The Gospels were originally composed as evangelistic tools that the First Century Believers used to share the good news of salvation with distinct groups of First Century society. Likewise, the Epistles, whether written by the Jerusalem Apostles or the Apostle Paul, were letters written to collections of Believers in cities and distinct individuals. Remember to read these texts as letters that address problems and situations that Believers faced in ancient times, before you begin to consider what they mean for us today.

After considering these things, you can then begin to read the assigned text. As you read the text, you may wish to have a sheet of paper divided up into four sections. With each new character you encounter (not withstanding genealogy charts), write down his or her name. Do the same with city names and regions. Write down critical events that you see taking place that really stand out to you. Please try not to “cheat” and use any of your Bible’s headers; what events do you think are important? When you finish reading the book, write down 3-4 broad sweeping questions that you have on the fourth section. Please do this when you are finished, so you can reflect on the entire text, and not on precise issues. Be honest as you write these questions, as you need to be able to gauge where you are and where you need to improve. Obviously, if you need multiple sheets of paper – use them!

When you have finished your own survey of the text, then you may finally read the Messianic summary that I have provided here in the workbook. If you are conducting this study in a group setting with other Messianic Believers, then the suggested study questions I have offered can be used for you to ask questions about the text you have just examined. If you are doing this on your own, answer these questions yourself. Most importantly, each one of you needs to write a 1-2 paragraph summary about each of the texts of the Apostolic Scriptures. In your own words, encapsulate what you think makes each text important in the scope of God’s revelation to humanity. When you meet with your fellowship or study group, go around the room and share what makes each text important.

GETTING STARTED

As we begin our survey study of the Apostolic Scriptures, remember that our goal is to get an overall feel of the text; we do not need to understand its entire depth or all of the mysteries of God’s universe all at once. At a later time you can examine a text verse-by-verse along with some commentaries and other resources, and really get into the “meat” of it. Equally so, our goal is not to feed on just the “milk” of the Word, either. This survey course is going to be “meaty,” but will be more in the sense of having a stew with each text, as opposed to a steak. In a way, this survey study may be the first exposure that some of you will have to understanding the books of the Bible in their original historical-cultural setting, and as such many of you will find how much easier it is to understand the background history of the Apostolic Scriptures when compared to the Tanach.

I sincerely hope that *A Survey of the Apostolic Scriptures for the Practical Messianic* will be a great help not only to you, but to future Messianics who are looking to enrich their understanding of God’s Word. I also hope that this workbook can be used to facilitate a greater need for us to continue conducting studies of all Biblical books, and dealing with the controversies some of them present us with head on – rather than avoiding them as though they do not exist. I trust that you will all learn something new that you can integrate into your life and relationship with our Messiah Yeshua.

J.K. McKee
Editor, TNN Online

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Approximate date: early-mid 70s C.E.

Time period: the conception/birth of Yeshua to the ascension of Yeshua

Author: Matthew the disciple

Location of author: Phoenicia, Transjordan, Alexandria (all debated)

Target audience and their location: the Jewish Diaspora

People:

Yeshua the Messiah, Mary, Joseph, the Twelve Disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John (sons of Zebedee), Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot (10:2-4), King Herod, Magi, Archaleus, John the Immerser/the Baptist, Pharisees, Sadducees, Satan, centurion (at Capernaum), Peter's mother-in-law, Beelzebul, Yeshua's family: James, Joseph, Simon, Judas (all brothers), Herod the tetrarch, Herodias, Philip (brother of Herod the tetrarch), a Canaanite woman, mother of James and John, Caiphas, Simon the Leper, Pontius Pilate, Barabbas, Simon of Cyrene, Mary Magdalene, centurion (at Golgotha), Joseph of Arimathea

People mentioned:

David, Abraham, Yeshua's patrilineal ancestors (1:1-16), Jeremiah, Rachel, Isaiah, Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Samaritans, Jonah, Solomon, Elijah, Caesar, Abel, Zechariah, Berekiah, Praetorium

Places:

Bethlehem, Judea, Jerusalem, Egypt, Galilee, Nazareth, Judean wilderness, Jordan River, Capernaum, Zebulun, Naphtali, Sea of Galilee, Syria, Decapolis, region of the Gadarenes, Korazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea Philippi, Jericho, Bethphage, Mount of Olives, Bethany, Gethsemane, Golgotha (Calvary)

Places mentioned:

Babylon, Ramah, Nineveh, Sodom, Cyrene

Key Themes and Events:

listing of Yeshua's genealogy / conception of Yeshua via the Holy Spirit / appearance of Magi before King Herod / Magi appear before Yeshua and present Him gifts / Joseph and Mary escape with the child Yeshua to Egypt / Joseph and Mary settle in Nazareth / ministry of John the Immerser / immersion of Yeshua by John / temptation of Yeshua in the wilderness / Yeshua begins His ministry in Capernaum / Yeshua begins to call Disciples to Himself / Yeshua heals the sick / Yeshua delivers His Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7) / people are amazed at Yeshua's teaching abilities / Yeshua heals a man with leprosy / Yeshua heals a centurion's servant with only a word / Yeshua heals Peter's mother-in-law / Yeshua calms the Sea of Galilee during a storm / Yeshua delivers two men from demons, casting the demons into a herd of pigs / Yeshua heals a paralytic and forgives him of his sins / Yeshua is declared a blasphemer / Yeshua calls Matthew the tax collector to follow Him / John the Immerser's disciples ask Yeshua about fasting / a woman with a blood issue is healed by touching Yeshua's garment / Yeshua resurrects a dead girl / Yeshua heals a blind man / Yeshua casts a demon out of a mute man / Yeshua sends out His Twelve Disciples / John the Immerser questions Yeshua's Messiahship from prison / Yeshua speaks favorably of John the Immerser / Yeshua pronounces judgment against unrepentant cities / Yeshua declares Himself Lord of the Sabbath / Yeshua tells the Pharisees that they will be given the sign of Jonah via His death and resurrection / Yeshua proclaims His true family to be those who serve the Father / Yeshua delivers His parable of the sower / Yeshua delivers assorted parables on the Kingdom of God (weeds, mustard seed, yeast, hidden treasure and pearl, net of fish) / Yeshua's family and hometown question Him / John the Baptist is beheaded / Yeshua feeds the five thousand / Yeshua walks on water / Yeshua describes the importance that what enters a person is less important than what comes out / Yeshua admires the faith of the Canaanite woman, honoring her request for her daughter to be delivered / Yeshua feeds the four thousand / Yeshua warns against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees / Peter confesses Yeshua as the Messiah / Yeshua predicts His own death to His Disciples / Yeshua is transfigured before Peter, James, and John / Yeshua tells His Disciples about the deeds they can perform with great faith / Yeshua pays the Temple tax by

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having Peter catch a fish with a four-drachma coin / Yeshua warns against those who would lead others astray / Yeshua teaches on some important homeiletical parables (lost sheep, a brother who sins, the unmerciful servant, a teaching on divorce, the workers in the vineyard) / mother of James and John asks Yeshua to give her sons an exalted position in His Kingdom / Yeshua heals two blind men at Jericho / Yeshua enters triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey / Yeshua drives the moneychangers out of the Temple complex / Yeshua curses a fig tree / the chief priests and elders question Yeshua's authority / Yeshua delivers some key parables to the religious leaders (the two sons, the tenants, the wedding banquet) / some Pharisees try to trick Yeshua into speaking against Caesar / some Sadducees ask Yeshua about the resurrection / Yeshua tells the Pharisees in Jerusalem about the greatest commandment / Yeshua rebukes the Pharisaical leaders for their abuses / Yeshua tells His Disciples about the End of the Age / Yeshua says that no one knows the day or hour of His return / Yeshua issues some eschatological parables (ten virgins, talents, sheep and the goats) / the high priest crafts a plot to seize Yeshua and kill Him / Yeshua is anointed at Bethany / Judas Iscariot agrees to betray Yeshua / Yeshua and His Disciples have their last Passover together / Yeshua tells Peter He will deny Him / Yeshua prays urgently to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane / Yeshua is arrested with a betraying kiss by Judas / Yeshua is taken before the Sanhedrin and proclaimed guilty of blasphemy / Peter denies Yeshua / Yeshua faces Pontius Pilate / Yeshua is mocked and beaten by Roman soldiers / Simon of Cyrene is impressed to carry Yeshua's cross / Yeshua is taken to Golgotha and crucified painfully / Yeshua dies and the Temple curtain is torn, dead are raised, and an earthquake occurs / the Roman centurion at the cross proclaims Yeshua the Son of God / Yeshua is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea / Yeshua is resurrected from the dead / Yeshua appears to the remaining Eleven Disciples in Galilee / Yeshua delivers the Great Commission

Key Scriptures: Matthew 5:14-17; 22:37-40; 25:40; 28:19-20 / **The Infancy Narratives** (1:1-2:23); **The Preparation for the Ministry** (3:1-4:11); **The Galilean Ministry** (4:12-25); **The First Discourse Section: The Sermon on the Mount** (5:1-7:29); **Narrative** (8:1-9:34); **The Second Discourse Section** (9:35-10:42); **Narrative** (11:1-12:50); **The Third Discourse Section: The Kingdom Parables** (13:1-52); **Narrative** (13:53-17:27); **The Fourth Discourse Section: Various Sayings** (18:1-35); **Narrative: The Judean Period** (19:1-22:46); **The Fifth Discourse Section: Eschatology** (23:1-25:46); **The Passion and Resurrection Narratives** (26:1-28:20)^a

Theological Summary: The Gospel of Matthew demonstrates the most Jewish character of all the Gospels. This is fully realized by its numerous appeals, direct or indirect, to the prophecies of the Tanach that demonstrate the Messiahship of Yeshua. The primary readership of Matthew's Gospel without a doubt was Jewish Believers. This is evidenced by the fact that Yeshua's ancestry from the Patriarchs of Israel is documented (1:1-17); the author does not explain Jewish customs or traditions in the text (which differs substantially from Mark and Luke); he makes references to God as "Heaven" or "the Kingdom of Heaven" consistent with First Century Jewish practice that avoided usage of the Divine Name YHWH; and the author emphasizes Yeshua as the "Son of Man" or the "Son of David." The author wants his readers to know in no uncertain terms that Yeshua is the Messiah and the King of Israel. This does not mean that First Century Jews were Matthew's only audience, but doubtlessly were his primary audience.

Scholars are not in uniform agreement as to when the Gospel of Matthew was composed, as dates suggested range from the early 60s C.E. all the way to the mid to late 80s C.E. This is contingent on the fact of whether or not Yeshua's statement in Matthew 24:2 regarding the destruction of Jerusalem was written down before it occurred or not. Those who accept predicative prophecy may accept a post-70 C.E. composition date of Matthew (given the text's likely reliance on Mark), and this includes many conservative Christians and Messianics.

Some theologians question this text's authorship, as the author does not identify himself in the Gospel. What we do know about this Gospel comes from Christian tradition, which ascribes Matthean authorship. The Second Century Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor, is recorded as having written, by the Fourth Century historian Eusebius, "Matthew composed his history [*logia*] in the Hebrew dialect, and everyone translated it as he was able" (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16). This one statement by Papias, which appears to have been repeated by some of the other Church Fathers, has been interpreted in various ways, some misleading.

The Gospel of Matthew, because of its sheer size, was one of the most frequently used texts in early Christianity. Matthean authorship of this Gospel has been easy to accept because of the fact that Matthew, or Levi, was a tax-collector (9:9), and could seemingly have written a valid record of Yeshua's life. Greek copies of this Gospel started appearing with the words *kata Matthaion* (KATA MATΘAION) around 125 C.E. (Guthrie, 43). Conservative theologians have no problem accepting genuine Matthean authorship of this Gospel. The controversy over Matthew's Gospel, however, relates to what Papias means by saying that Matthew wrote "*logia*" (λόγια), a Greek term for "sayings" or "oracles," "in the Hebrew dialect." Many, especially in the Messianic movement, interpret this as meaning that Matthew was the

^a Cf. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), pp 57-60.

originator of a complete text in Hebrew or Aramaic, and that the Greek Matthew we possess today is a translation. (Some Messianics even say that the Greek is invalid.) This presents a problem because “Matthew’s Greek reveals none of the telltale marks of a translation. Furthermore, Matthew’s OT quotations are derived from the LXX [Septuagint] rather than the Hebrew text” (*ISBE*, 3:281).

The ambiguity of the word *logia* has led to several theories, since no ancient Hebrew or Aramaic Matthew, or fragment of such a text, has surfaced that pre-dates our present Greek Matthew. A significant belief proposed is that Matthew composed a list of sayings of Yeshua in Hebrew or Aramaic, which were then used for the composition of a later Greek gospel. This would make this “Hebrew Matthew” be the “Q” or “Source” document (“Q” is an abbreviation for *Quelle*, the German word for “source”) that some theologians believe lies behind our canonical Gospels. If Q is what composed the *logia* that Papias talks about, “then it is possible that Matthew expanded these into a Greek Gospel” (*NIDB*, 631). The problem with this is simply where Q is today, as it would likely have been carefully preserved by the early Believers.

A second possibility is that this text referred to by Papias was a later Hebrew translation of Matthew from the Greek that *post-dates* the Greek Matthew we have today. This would require that any Hebraisms used by Matthew in his Gospel be oral, as “The gospel traditions undoubtedly once circulated in oral Aramaic; but the written gospels are Greek books, and the basic source for Matthew and Luke was unquestionably a Greek work, the Gospel According to Mark” (*IDB*, 3:304). This view advocates that Matthew borrowed from Mark’s Gospel, coming from the Apostle Peter’s viewpoint, and repeats Mark’s material, adding to it where necessary, to confirm its Apostolic authority.

Many weighing the evidence (including the author) believe that Matthew’s Gospel was composed using both Mark’s Gospel and the Hebrew or Aramaic *logia*, notes that had been previously compiled by Matthew. There is *no hard evidence* that Matthew as a complete Gospel was originally written in Hebrew, pending the discovery of a legitimate text that pre-dates our present Greek Matthew; **at best the *logia* that Papias describes would be what some believe is Q.**

A third possibility is simply that “in the Hebrew dialect” is synonymous to “in a Jewish style.” In other words, Matthew’s Gospel was originally a Greek document that incorporated Hebraic sources, and then everyone who read it interpreted it as best as possible. This seems to be the default position of many commentators on this text.

The language question is highly contingent on the fact of establishing where Matthew’s Gospel originates. The earliest quotation of this text appears in the Second Century *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* (1:1), written by Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (Gundry, 163). Antioch was a Greek-speaking city. “Other specific suggestions are that the gospel originated in Phoenicia or in a Transjordan situation or in Alexandria” (Guthrie, 39). Caesarea has also been suggested as a place of origin (*Ibid.*). All of these places adjacent to the Land of Israel, with the exception of Transjordan, spoke Greek as their primary language. If Matthew’s Gospel was indeed composed in one of these cities, then it points to a Jewish audience in the Diaspora, which on the whole did not speak Hebrew or Aramaic as its primary language.

Theologically speaking, the Gospel of Matthew is the broadest sweeping of all the Gospels, covering the most amount of material. Its content is focused around five specific narratives: the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7), Missionary Discourse (ch. 10), Parable Discourse (ch. 13), Kingdom Discourse (ch. 18), and Eschatological Discourse (ch. 24). More than a few theologians have tried to explain these five separate “parts” of Matthew as the author setting up a parallel to the Pentateuch or the Torah. In actuality, such claims appear to be overstated as they often ignore the remainder of Matthew’s content. It is notable, however, that much of Matthew’s usage of Tanach quotations is done so in a very midrashic style, requiring one to be very familiar with First Century Jewish hermeneutics. Matthew does not go to great lengths explaining First Century Jewish customs or traditions, nor explaining the historical context of the events as Luke does. When reading Matthew, one must have a knowledge of First Century Judaism, and a strong foundation in the Tanach.

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