

A SURVEY OF  
THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES  
FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC



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J.K. MCKEE



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Cover image is of the synagogue at Capernaum

Photo taken by J.K. McKee, November 2004

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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 Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. 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>   | ICC: <i>International Critical Commentary</i>  |
| AMG: <i>Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament</i>  | IDB: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>  |
| ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)   | IDBSup: <i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement</i>  |
| Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament  | ISBE: <i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>   |
| Ara: Aramaic  | IVPBBC: <i>IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old &amp; New Testament)</i>   |
| ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)  | Jastrow: <i>Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature</i> (Marcus Jastrow) |
| b. Babylonian Talmud ( <i>Talmud Bavli</i> )  | JBK: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Koren</i> (2000)   |
| B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.   | JETS: <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>  |
| BDAG: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich) | KJV: King James Version  |
| BDB: <i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>  | Lattimore: <i>The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore</i> (1996)   |
| BECNT: <i>Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament</i>  | LITV: <i>Literal Translation of the Holy Bible</i> by Jay P. Green (1986)  |
| BKCNT: <i>Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament</i>   | LS: <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Liddell & Scott)   |
| C.E.: Common Era or A.D.  | LXE: <i>Septuagint with Apocrypha</i> by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)   |
| CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995)  | LXX: Septuagint  |
| CGEDNT: <i>Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words</i> (Barclay M. Newman)                                      | m. Mishnah   |
| CHALOT: <i>Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>  | MT: Masoretic Text   |
| CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)   | NASB: <i>New American Standard Bible</i> (1977)  |
| DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition  | NASU: <i>New American Standard Update</i> (1995)   |
| DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls   | NBCR: <i>New Bible Commentary: Revised</i>   |
| ECB: <i>Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible</i>  | NEB: <i>New English Bible</i> (1970)   |
| EDB: <i>Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible</i>  | Nelson: <i>Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words</i>   |
| eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text                       | NETS: <i>New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> (2007)  |
| EJ: <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>  | NIB: <i>New Interpreter's Bible</i>  |
| ESV: English Standard Version (2001)  | NIGTC: <i>New International Greek Testament Commentary</i>   |
| exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to understand what a Biblical text means on its own                | NICNT: <i>New International Commentary on the New Testament</i>  |
| EXP: <i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>  | NIDB: <i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i>   |
| Ger: German   | NIV: <i>New International Version</i> (1984)   |
| GNT: Greek New Testament  | NJB: <i>New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic</i> (1985)  |
| Grk: Greek  | NJPS: <i>Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures</i> (1999)   |
| <i>halachah</i> : lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community                 | NKJV: <i>New King James Version</i> (1982)   |
| HALOT: <i>Hebrew &amp; Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> (Koehler and Baumgartner)                                       | NRSV: <i>New Revised Standard Version</i> (1989)   |
| HCSB: <i>Holman Christian Standard Bible</i> (2004)   | NLT: <i>New Living Translation</i> (1996)  |
| Heb: Hebrew   | NT: <i>New Testament</i>   |
| HNV: <i>Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible</i>   | orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world                         |
|   | OT: <i>Old Testament</i>   |
|   | PreachC: <i>The Preacher's Commentary</i>  |

REB: Revised English Bible (1989)  
RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)  
t. Tosefta  
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament  
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*  
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*  
TEV: Today's English Version (1976)  
TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)  
TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*  
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition  
v(s). verse(s)  
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*  
Vul: Latin Vulgate  
WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*  
Yid: Yiddish  
YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)



# INTRODUCTION

One of the principal goals of the ministry work of 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. One of the main reasons, behind studies such as this, 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.<sup>1</sup> I believe that this has been lacking in significant segments of the Messianic community, and significant lack of establishment (or even working toward more 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 everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (Colossians 1:28, ESV).

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 continual and committed process? I think it is safe to say that any of us who have dedicated 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 often battle with our flesh and with the influence of 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 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 have 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 a proverbial "lone ranger."

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<sup>1</sup> Consult especially the author's article "Where Should the Messianic Movement be in 2107?"

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 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, as demonstrated by the Savior’s ministry? How many truly know how the good news was spread abroad in the Book of Acts to the Mediterranean world, 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 had 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 humanity 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.<sup>ii</sup> Some believe that Jesus was a pacifist who did not believe in any kind of war or violent resistance, 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 some parts of 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 whole world, and not only Israel. 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 in which Ancient Israel 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 in which we live today in the Twenty-First Century. 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

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<sup>ii</sup> 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).

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 you may hear them talked about in a few Messianic fellowships and assemblies (even if just hypothetically).

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 true 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 my Wednesday Night Bible Study podcast, since it began in July 2005, have noticed that we have largely focused on examinations of specific books from the Apostolic Scriptures (James, Hebrews, Philippians), 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.<sup>iii</sup> However, these studies take a great deal of time and effort to go through chapter-by-chapter and verse-by-verse. Admittedly, an entire lifetime of committed work lies before the Messianic interpreter, as I certainly do believe we are entering into a season of really 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 are steadfast and determined enough to 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 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, not at all unlike the emerging 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 significant load of projects and analyses 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 his or her 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 can have an entire bookshelf full of Messianic commentaries on the Apostolic Scriptures—much less 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 those rather difficult issues that the *whole of Scripture* represents. The Holy Scriptures are the only place to which we can go 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, on a macro level. 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 attention and 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

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<sup>iii</sup> Through 2011, these studies have further addressed: Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, Acts 15, and the Pastoral Epistles of 1&2 Timothy and Titus.

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, and everything in between—*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.”<sup>iv</sup> 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 which 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 our faith community spiritually and theologically from them.

Before reading the entry accessible in this workbook, you should begin by 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 books, 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 your goal is to try 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 the New English Bible (1970). Some of you may want to use a specialty 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 that David H. Stern's *Complete Jewish Bible* (Clarksville, MD: Jewish New Testament Publications, 1998) is quite popular in the Messianic community, 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 it is paraphrased and will not easily help gauge the weaknesses that we as Messianics sometimes have in regard to the Apostolic Scriptures.<sup>v</sup>

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<sup>iv</sup> *Webster's New World Dictionary and Thesaurus*, second edition (Cleveland: Wiley Publishing, Inc, 2002), 638.

<sup>v</sup> Likewise, I would seriously recommend that you *not* use the King James Version to use for these studies. The 1611 KJV, while a major contribution to our faith history, is nevertheless four centuries 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.

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 newer *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 have been gleaned from several Bible encyclopedias, including: the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), the before mentioned *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, 1976-1992) and *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books). Of course, all of these are tools that you can have in your personal or congregational library.<sup>vi</sup>

## 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 attitude as you approach controversial passages. 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 various verses.

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 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 and/or broad groups of First

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<sup>vi</sup> For a catalogue review of possible reference materials, consult a resource such as David R. Bauer, *An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003).

## A SURVEY OF THE APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

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 to distinct individuals. Remember to read these texts as letters that addressed problems and situations that Believers originally faced in ancient times, *before* you begin to consider what they mean for us today.

After reviewing 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 which 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 study 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 persons who enter into the Messianic community, 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, *Messianic Apologetics*

## UPDATES TO THE CURRENT EDITION

This paperback release of *A Survey of the Apostolic Scriptures for the Practical Messianic* has been updated and revised in a number of areas, particularly following the audio podcast study conducted in 2007, and the release of other volumes in the *Practical Messianic* commentary series. A few adjustments have been made to some of the entries, as I have factored in some additional resources added to my personal library since the first edition release, including: *An Introduction to the New Testament* by D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), the *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), and the various New Testament encyclopedia volumes by InterVarsity Press.<sup>vii</sup>

A noticeable difference that you will see is that unlike the first edition, where the texts of the Apostolic Scriptures were listed in their standard canonical order, they have now been reshuffled to basically follow the order of the audio study conducted in 2007. Mark is listed first, as it is widely agreed to have been the first Gospel composed. Luke and Acts are naturally listed consecutively, as volumes I and II of a composite work. The General Epistles entries appear before the Pauline Epistles. 2 Peter is followed by Jude, and Colossians is followed by Philemon, just as they frequently do in many commentaries.

More engagement with various sources does not mean that my basic positions and conclusions on the composition of the Apostolic Scriptures, and the role each book plays, has changed over the past five years. I have fine tuned some statements here and there, have also made readers more aware of various liberal theories and other positions that you will likely encounter, and have added some more thoughts for our emerging Messianic community to consider as we approach these texts.

Readers who want more information and teaching on a particular text can certainly consult the new volumes of the *Practical Messianic* series produced since this workbook was originally released (studies on Philippians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon, Acts 15, and the Pastoral Epistles of 1&2 Timothy and Titus). A related ongoing assignment for our ministry is the production of various “Message of...” summary articles, which will be available in a forthcoming *Practical Messianic* volume. These articles may serve to be some useful, further reading for you, after conducting your study on a particular Biblical book.

J.K. McKee, September 2011

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<sup>vii</sup> These include: Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992); Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993); Ralph P. Martin, and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament & its Developments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997); Craig E. Evans, and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).





GOSPELS  
AND  
ACTS



# GOSPEL OF MARK

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**Approximate date:** late 50s or early 60s C.E.

**Time period:** the ministry of John the Immerser to the ascension of Yeshua

**Author:** John Mark, secretary of the Apostle Peter

**Location of author:** Rome

**Target audience and their location:** predominantly Roman, later Alexandrian

**People:**

Yeshua the Messiah, John the Immerser/the Baptist, the Twelve Disciples: Simon Peter, Andrew, James (son of Zebedee), John, Levi/Matthew son of Alphaeus, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas Iscariot, Yeshua's family: Mary, James, Joseph, Judas, Simon (all brothers), religious leaders, Pharisees, Legion, Jairus, Syrio-Phoenician woman, Bartimaeus, Sadducees, Simon the Leper, Pontius Pilate, Barabbas, Simon of Cyrene, Alexander, Rufus, Mary Magdalene, Joses (probably a shortened form of Joseph), Salome, the centurion (at the cross), Joseph of Arimathea

**People mentioned:**

Isaiah, Moses, David, Herodians, Beelzebul, Elijah, Satan

**Places:**

wilderness of Judea, Jerusalem, Jordan River, Nazareth, Galilee, Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Idumea, Tyre, Sidon, region of the Gerasenes, Decapolis, Gennasaret, Syria Phoenicia, Dalmanutha, Bethsaida, Caesarea Philippi, Jericho, Bethphage, Bethany, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Golgotha (Calvary)

**Places mentioned:**

Praetorium, Cyrene

**Key Themes and Events:**

proclamations of John the Immerser / immersion (or baptism) of Yeshua / calling of disciples / acknowledgement of Yeshua by demons / varied miraculous healings by Yeshua (sick, leprosy, paralytic) / Yeshua forgives sins / Yeshua is called a blasphemer / Yeshua declares Himself Lord of the Sabbath / large crowds follow Yeshua / Yeshua appoints Twelve *specific* Apostles / Yeshua is accused of being demon possessed / Yeshua gives His parable of the sower / Yeshua describes His followers as a light, the Kingdom of God as a mustard seed / Yeshua calms a storm on the Sea of Galilee / Yeshua casts Legion out of a Gerasene man into a herd of pigs / a woman is healed by touching Yeshua's garment / Yeshua resurrects Jairus' daughter from the dead / Yeshua questioned in His hometown / Yeshua doubted by His family / Yeshua feeds the five thousand / Yeshua walks on water / Yeshua tells some Pharisees that what comes out of a person is more important than what goes inside / Yeshua delivers the Syrio-Phoenician woman's daughter of a demon / Yeshua heals a deaf man / Yeshua feeds four thousand / Yeshua heals a blind man / Peter confesses Yeshua to be the Messiah / Yeshua predicts His own death / Yeshua rebukes Peter about His death / Yeshua is transfigured before Peter, James, and John / Yeshua heals a boy with an evil spirit / Yeshua warns against leading others' astray / Yeshua speaks about unwarranted divorce / Yeshua compares the Kingdom of God to small children / Yeshua encounters a rich young man / Yeshua tells James and John they will have to endure similar things that He will have to experience / Yeshua heals a blind man at Jericho / Yeshua enters triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey / Yeshua clears the Temple

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complex of the moneychangers / Yeshua curses a fig tree / Yeshua's authority questioned / Yeshua delivers the parable of the tenants / some Pharisees try to trick Yeshua into speaking against Caesar / some Sadducees ask Yeshua about the resurrection / Yeshua speaks about the greatest commandment / Yeshua highlights the widow's offering / Yeshua teaches on the End of the Age / Yeshua anointed in Bethany / Yeshua celebrates the Passover with His Disciples / Yeshua predicts Peter's betrayal / Yeshua prays to His Father in Gethsemane / Yeshua is arrested / Yeshua defends Himself before the Sanhedrin / Peter denies Yeshua / Yeshua appears before Pontius Pilate / Yeshua is mocked and beaten by Roman soldiers / Simon of Cyrene is impressed to carry Yeshua's cross / Yeshua is crucified and dies a painful death / the veil in the Temple is torn in two / the centurion at the cross proclaims Yeshua as the Son of God / Yeshua buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb / the Marys and Salome witness the resurrected Messiah [ / Yeshua rebukes those who failed to believe the report of the women / Yeshua admonishes His Disciples to go out into the world / Yeshua ascends into Heaven ]

**Key Scriptures:** Mark 1:1-3; 10:45 / **Introduction** (1:1-13); **Galilean Period** (1:14-5:43); **Further Journeys in Galilee** (6:1-9:50); **Judean Period** (10:1-13:37); **Last Supper and Resurrection Narratives** (14:1-16:20)<sup>1</sup>

**Theological Summary:** In past theological history, the Gospel of Mark was often thought to have only been a kind of abridgment of the Gospel of Matthew, and so it was not given a huge amount of examination, or even in some cases thought to have that much value. This significantly shifted among theologians in the Twentieth Century, with now the Gospel of Mark believed to contain one of the earliest testimonies to the ministry of Yeshua (Cranfield, *IDB*),<sup>2</sup> actually having been composed first among the Synoptics. So much attention has been given to Mark in the past half-century, that "the number of written works...over the past forty years [to 1992]...rivals and may well surpass that written on Matthew and Luke combined" (Guelich).<sup>3</sup>

At least ninety percent of the material of Mark is repeated in Matthew, and this is often viewed as evidence regarding how important Mark was to the authors of Matthew and Luke,<sup>4</sup> and the primacy of this text to these other works. In recent years, previous neglect of Mark has now been replaced by a renewed interest in Markan studies. Some specialty translations of the New Testament produced, notably including that by classics scholar Richmond Lattimore,<sup>5</sup> now may place Mark as the first Gospel before Matthew and Luke. A large number of conservative scholars are in agreement that the Gospel of Mark was the first of the four Gospels to have been written, with the authors of Matthew and Luke borrowing extensively from it.

The authorship of the Gospel of Mark is widely confirmed by conservatives to be John Mark (Acts 12:25; 15:37), although some liberals may say that this is an arbitrary assignment. The Apostolic Scriptures indicate that John Mark was the son of Mary, whose house provided a meeting place for the Believers in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). Mark was a cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), and was a companion with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:5). Mark deserted Paul and his party at Perga in Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). He is described as being Paul and Barnabas' "helper," and there was a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas about taking him on their second journey (Acts 15:36-39), which resulted in them splitting up. Paul seems to have become extremely displeased about Mark, but later extends greetings to him (Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24), indicating that he had regained his trust and the two had reconciled. Paul also sent for Mark prior to his death (2 Timothy 4:11). In the closing greetings of the Epistle of 1 Peter, Peter delivers the message, "She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does my son, Mark" (1 Peter 5:13), with Babylon being widely agreed as a code term for the city of Rome.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), pp 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> C.E.B. Cranfield, "Mark, Gospel of," in George Buttrick, ed. et. al., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 3:267, 269.

<sup>3</sup> R.A. Guelich, "Mark, Gospel of," in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 512.

<sup>4</sup> R.P. Martin, "Mark, Gospel of," in Geoffrey Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 3:249.

<sup>5</sup> Richmond Lattimore, trans., *The New Testament* (New York: North Point Press, 1996), pp 3-45.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.15.2.