

Through *the* Bible

BOOK BY BOOK

PART

NEW TESTAMENT

MATTHEW to ACTS

THREE

❧ *Myer Pearlman* ❧

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Gospel Publishing House

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FOREWORD

Through the Bible Book by Book, a classic introductory guide to understanding the 66 books of the Bible, has been translated into numerous languages. It has been a standard classroom text for more than seven decades in churches and schools, as well as an aid for personal Bible study.

The author, Myer Pearlman (1898-1943), was one of the foremost theologians in the Assemblies of God in the 1930s and 1940s. Raised in an observant Jewish family in Birmingham, England, he learned the Torah (Old Testament) and Hebrew as a boy. Pearlman's family moved to the United States when he was a teenager. After serving in the U.S. Army during World War I, Pearlman returned to America and accepted Christ at a small Pentecostal mission in San Francisco.

Pearlman enrolled at the newly opened Central Bible Institute (now Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri) in 1922. Upon graduation, the principal, Frank M. Boyd, invited Pearlman to join the faculty.

Noted for his prolific pen, Pearlman authored numerous textbooks and the early years of the Assemblies of God adult Sunday school curriculum. At a time when anti-Semitism was on the rise in Europe and in America, it is significant that the Assemblies of God entrusted a Jewish-born theologian with such a significant responsibility. Pearlman's background, however, made him a uniquely qualified biblical scholar within the Pentecostal movement.

After years of constant writing, teaching and preaching, Pearlman literally worked himself to death. Myer Pearlman died on July 16, 1943, in Springfield, Missouri.

Darrin J. Rodgers, Director
Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

ABBREVIATIONS FOR THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

Old Testament		New Testament	
Genesis	Gen.	Matthew	Matt.
Exodus	Ex.	Mark	Mark
Leviticus	Lev.	Luke	Luke
Numbers	Num.	John	John
Deuteronomy	Deut.	Acts of the Apostles	Acts
Joshua	Josh.	Romans	Rom.
Judges	Jud.	1 Corinthians	1 Cor.
Ruth	Ruth	2 Corinthians	2 Cor.
1 Samuel	1 Sam.	Galatians	Gal.
2 Samuel	2 Sam.	Ephesians	Eph.
1 Kings	1 Kings	Philippians	Phil.
2 Kings	2 Kings	Colossians	Col.
1 Chronicles	1 Chron.	1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.
2 Chronicles	2 Chron.	2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.
Ezra	Ezra	1 Timothy	1 Tim.
Nehemiah	Neh.	2 Timothy	2 Tim.
Esther	Est.	Titus	Titus
Job	Job	Philemon	Phile.
Psalms	Ps.	Hebrews	Heb.
Proverbs	Prov.	James	James
Ecclesiastes	Ecc.	1 Peter	1 Peter
Song of Solomon	S. of Sol.	2 Peter	2 Peter
Isaiah	Isa.	1 John	1 John
Jeremiah	Jer.	2 John	2 John
Lamentations	Lam.	3 John	3 John
Ezekiel	Ezek.	Jude	Jude
Daniel	Dan.	Revelation	Rev.
Hosea	Hosea		
Joel	Joel		
Amos	Amos		
Obadiah	Oba.		
Jonah	Jonah		
Micah	Micah		

CHAPTER I

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Learn the following classification:

- I. The Gospels, dealing with the **manifestation** of our salvation.
 - 1. Matthew
 - 2. Mark
 - 3. Luke
 - 4. John
- II. The historical book, dealing with the **propagation** of our salvation.
 - 1. The Acts
- III. The doctrinal books, dealing with the **explanation** of our salvation.
 - The Pauline Epistles
 - 1. Romans
 - 2. 1 Corinthians
 - 3. 2 Corinthians
 - 4. Galatians
 - 5. Ephesians
 - 6. Philippians
 - 7. Colossians
 - 8. 1 Thessalonians
 - 9. 2 Thessalonians
 - 10. 1 Timothy
 - 11. 2 Timothy
 - 12. Titus
 - 13. Philemon
 - 14. Hebrews
 - The General Epistles
 - 1. James
 - 2. 1 Peter

3. 2 Peter
 4. 1 John
 5. 2 John
 6. 3 John
 7. Jude
- IV. The prophetic book, dealing with the **consummation** of our salvation.
1. Revelation

THE FOUR GOSPELS

The first question that confronts us before commencing the study of the Gospels is, Why four Gospels? Why not two, three, or just one? This can best be answered by stating the fact that, in apostolic times, there were four representative classes of people—the Jews, the Romans, the Greeks, and that body taken from all three classes, the Church. Each one of the evangelists wrote for these respective classes, and adapted himself to their character, needs, and ideals. Matthew, knowing that the Jews were eagerly looking forward to the coming of the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, presents Jesus as that Messiah. Luke, writing to a cultured people—the Greeks, whose ideal was the perfect Man, makes his Gospel center around Christ as the expression of that ideal. Mark writes to the Romans, a people whose ideal was power and service, so he pictures Christ to them as the Mighty Conqueror. John has in mind the needs of Christians of all nations, so he presents the deeper truths of the Gospel, among which we may mention the teachings concerning the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. The principle of adaptation referred to here was mentioned by Paul in 1 Cor. 9:19–21, and was illustrated in his ministry among Jew and Gentile. (Compare his message to the Jews in Acts 13:14–41, and that to the Greeks in

17:22–31.) This adaptation is a fine indication of a Divine design in the four Gospels.

In this connection we must remember that since humanity is just the same in one age as in another the message of the Gospels is addressed to mankind in general.

The foregoing facts reveal another reason for the writing of four Gospels; namely, that one gospel would not have been sufficient to present the many-sidedness of Christ's person. Each of the evangelists views Him from a different aspect. Matthew presents Him as King, Mark as Conqueror (and Servant), Luke as Son of Man, and John as Son of God. This viewing of Christ is like the viewing of a huge building—only one side can be taken in at one time.

The fact that the evangelists wrote their records from different viewpoints will explain the differences between them, their omissions and additions, the occasional seeming contradiction, and their lack of chronological order. The writers did not attempt to produce a **complete** biography of Christ, but taking into consideration the needs and character of the people to whom they were writing, they selected just those incidents and discourses which would emphasize their particular message. For example, Matthew, writing for the Jew, makes everything in his Gospel—the selection of discourses and incidents, the omissions and additions, the grouping of events—serve to stress the fact of Jesus' messiahship.

As an illustration of the way each evangelist emphasizes some particular aspect of Christ's person, let us take the following: Four authors undertake to write a biography of a person who has acquired fame as a statesman, soldier and author. One might wish to emphasize his political career, so he would gather together records of his campaigns and speeches to incorporate in the biography. Another

would lay stress on his literary successes, and would describe his different writings. The third, with the thought in view of emphasizing his prowess in the military world, would describe his promotions, his decorations, and the battles in which he distinguished himself. The fourth might wish to enhance his virtues as manifested in home-life, so he would relate those incidents that would tend to set him forth as the ideal parent, husband, or friend.

The first three Gospels are called synoptical, because they give us a synopsis (common view) of the same events and have a common plan. The Gospel of John is written on an entirely different plan from the other three.

The following are the points of difference between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John:

1. The Synoptics contain an evangelistic message for unspiritual men; John contains a spiritual message for Christians.

2. In the three, we are taken over the ground of His Galilean ministry; but in the fourth, over the ground of His Judean ministry mainly.

3. In the three, His more public life is displayed; but in the fourth, we are shown His private life.

4. In the three, we are impressed with His real and perfect humanity; in the fourth, with His true and awful deity.

MATTHEW

Theme. The central theme of this Gospel is, Jesus the Messiah-King. Matthew, writing to the Jews, and knowing their great hopes, sets forth Jesus as the One fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures relative to the Messiah. By the use of numerous Old Testament quotations, he shows what the Messiah ought to be; by a record of the words and deeds of Jesus, he proves

that He was that Messiah. The frequent recurrence of the words “kingdom” and “kingdom of heaven” reveals another important theme of Matthew’s Gospel. He sets forth the kingdom of heaven as promised in the Old Testament (Matt. 11:13), as proclaimed by John the Baptist and Jesus (3:2; 4:17), represented now by the Church (16:18, 19), and as triumphant at Jesus’ second coming (25:31, 34).

Author. Reliable tradition credits Matthew with the writing of this book. Very little is said concerning him in the New Testament. We learn that he was a tax-gatherer under the Roman government but was called by the Lord to be a disciple and apostle.

To Whom Written. To all mankind in general, but to the Jews in particular. That it was intended primarily for the Jew may be seen by the following facts:

1. The great number of Old Testament quotations—there are about 60. One preaching to the Jews would have to prove his doctrine from the ancient Scriptures. Matthew makes these quotations the very basis of his Gospel.

2. The first words of the book “The book of the generations of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham,” would suggest immediately to the Jew, those two covenants that contained promises of the Messiah—the Davidic and the Abrahamic. 2 Sam. 7:8–16; Gen. 12:1–3.

3. There is a complete absence of explanations of Jewish customs showing that he was writing to a people acquainted with them.

CONTENTS

- I. Advent of the Messiah. Chaps. 1:1 to 4:11
- II. Ministry of the Messiah. Chaps. 4:12 to 16:12
- III. Claim of the Messiah. Chaps. 16:13 to 23:39
- IV. Sacrifice of the Messiah. Chaps. 24 to 27
- V. Triumph of the Messiah. Chap. 28