

SCRIPTURE READING SCHEDULE REASON

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The Seed of Abraham's biblical reading schedule departs from the traditional Torah and Haftarah readings of the Orthodox and Messianic Jewish communities. Having followed the Messianic and Orthodox readings of the Torah and Haftarah (and *Brit HaDasha* or New Covenant) for years, I began to wonder why my grasp of the rest of Scripture was slipping. It was because I wasn't reading the whole Bible, just certain sections of it. The Scripture Readings schedule is designed to be read every day of the week, beginning on the first day of the week (Sunday). In a year's time the whole Bible is read, but what makes this reading plan different from most, if not all the others is that every week you'll be reading the words of Messiah Yeshua (or the Book of Acts) along with other sections of the Word. Most other reading plans fail to have the reader in the Gospels and Acts for as long as six or more months out of the year. That's a long time to not be reading about the life Yeshua lived in Israel and the works of the Holy Spirit in Acts.

In home fellowships and congregations this schedule will mean that everyone coming on Shabat (Sabbath) will have already read the readings for the week and will be able to discuss them with each other. It also allows for the shepherd to select his teaching from one of the sections and know that his flock will have already read it, and so be 'more prepared' to hear the Word of the Lord to them and have comments and questions to ask after the sermon about the message and/or the other readings.

I realize that in setting off in another direction from the traditional Torah readings, and also, when they begin (April or springtime for us, the biblical beginning of the New Year; Ex. 12:2 versus in October after the Feast of Tabernacles for the Messianic and Orthodox Communities), I have launched off in a direction that few in the Messianic community might care to follow. Having been led to travel down roads that few in that, or any other community care to walk in, I am able to present this reading schedule without much concern for it 'being different.' Many people have reaped spiritual benefits from the *Ruach haKodesh* (the Spirit of the Holy One) as they have read the readings, and I pray that you will also find it a tremendous blessing.

One benefit is the way that the Scripture readings compliment one another or dovetail and how the Lord uses that to reinforce His Word. Another is the fact that every week of the year, you'll be in the Gospels (or Acts), reading the words of Messiah Yeshua, and seeing how the Holy Spirit moved so powerfully through the early believers, while also being in the Torah (the five books of Moses; Genesis through Deuteronomy) every week. This is very important as true biblical understanding comes from these two foundational sections. Not only that, but every week there are readings from the Prophets, the Writings, and from Romans to Revelation.

The books for the Torah, Prophets and the Writings (the 'Old Testament') generally follow the order of the Hebrew *Tanach*. This will prove important for a couple of reasons. One concerns Matthew, who was the first Gospel to be written (about 44 AD). Matthew starts with the Lord's genealogy. Many are confused by this because it doesn't make for 'good reading' unless one is 'into' genealogies. Why did Matthew begin his Great News about Yeshua with His genealogy? Chronicles (one book in Matthew's time and not divided into two as it is today) is the book of genealogies about Israel and about King David's lineage from which Messiah would descend, etc. Matthew intentionally begins with Yeshua's genealogy because Chronicles, not Malachi, is the last book in the Hebrew Bible (i.e. the Old Testament) and thus a biblical, genealogical 'bridge' is formed between the last book of the Jewish Bible (Chronicles) and Matthew's proclamation of Yeshua as the long expected Messiah, the King of the Jews, who descend-

ed from both Father Abraham and King David. The reason why the Christian Bible has Malachi as the last book is because it bases its order on the Septuagint, the official Greek Bible translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, written about 250 BC for the Jewish people living outside the land of Israel.

Also, the reading for the New Covenant (Testament) letters is arranged more in accordance with the way they were chronologically written even though the (Gentile) ‘Church Fathers’ spoke of Paul’s letters being *after* those of the other Apostles, which lent credence to the fact that the Apostles in Jerusalem were ‘before’ Paul in both coming to Yeshua and in terms of their authority and place within the whole Assembly of Jewish and Gentile believers. The Jerusalem Church is rightly called ‘the Mother Church.’ I’ve placed all the letters in a chronological order, though, to be able to see when they would have been read if any single congregation would have been privy to them. Of course, none of them were, but it gives us a view as to when they came about.

It was the Roman Catholic Church that placed Paul’s Letter to the Romans, and the rest of Paul’s letters, immediately after Acts. This was meant to elevate the Roman Catholic Church above all the other congregations and also, ‘to place in the background’ the letters from the Apostles of Jerusalem—Kefa (Peter), Yakov (Jacob; James), Judah (Yehuda; Jude) and Yohanan (John).

I don’t believe that Paul wrote Hebrews because the author speaks of hearing the Message of Salvation from *others* (Heb. 2:1-3). Paul, though, always spoke of his Gospel as having been given to him by the risen Savior; not any man. There are other internal reasons why Pauline authorship of Hebrews isn’t accepted among most scholars, and Hebrews 2:1-3 is one of a number of solid reasons why.

Placing Paul’s letters according to the chronology in which they were written is very beneficial. It allows us to see how Paul’s understanding and theology developed and matured over time. Reading them in their chronological order allows for this progression to become apparent.

I’ve also changed the traditional order of the first five books of the New Covenant, as recent scholarship has placed the dating of Mark after Matthew and Luke. The chronology in which the Gospels were written was Matthew (44 AD), Luke (62 AD),¹ Mark (66 AD) and John (90 AD).

In the reading schedule, books like Nahum, Lamentations, 1st Thessalonians and Philemon, which don’t have chapters after them, mean that the whole book or letter is to be read.

May Yeshua bless you as you embark on this Scriptural Journey with Him,

Avram Yehoshua

¹ Acts was written in 64 AD.

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