

Fulfilment

Matthew 5:17-18

INTRODUCTION: Today we begin a delightful but important journey together. We begin to read and walk together through the New Testament, and we shall do it in a year. Let me tell you a few things about the journey itself.

- **This is not a difficult journey.** You will be able to read every book, every chapter, every word of the New Testament by reading six chapters a day. Only four times throughout this entire year, will I ask you to read seven chapters instead of six. But I will make up for it. Twenty times, I will ask you to read less than six chapters. Reading one chapter a day will get the job done. This is not a difficult journey.
- **This can be a very rewarding journey.**

Each Sunday I will by the grace of God do three things.

1. Describe the context of the passage we read during the week.
 2. Summarize the portion of "God's Story" given in our reading.
 3. Focus our attention on one portion of the reading to use in our personal daily journey with God.
- **Carefully completing this journey will leave memories, understandings, and practices that will be a blessing forever.**

Reading the New Testament in four segments will greatly increase our understanding of the New Testament as a whole. Here is how we will read it.

- **Gospel of Luke – Acts** because Luke the physician wrote both.
- **Gospel of Matthew – Romans**
- **Gospel of Mark – Letters**
- **Gospel of John – Revelation** also because John wrote both.

Let me tell you a few things about the New Testament as a whole that are important for us to remember as we begin this journey together.

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE WORD OF GOD.

As much as we shall benefit our understanding by knowing the context of the writings that make up the New Testament, both the context of the author and the context of the recipients and of the time in which it was written, one truth remains that provides the most critical context of all.

Every word, every sentence, every paragraph, every chapter, every book of this New Testament we are about to study is the very Word of God.

Peter explained it,

2 Peter 1:16–21 16 For **we did not follow cunningly devised fables** when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 19 And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; 20 knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but **holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.**

And Paul said also,

2 Timothy 3:16 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,** and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

So when we speak describing how Matthew, the converted Jewish tax collector who became an apostle and the writer of the first gospel, writes to his fellow Jews, presenting Jesus as the Messiah King, ...

And when we talk of Luke, not only a physician but also an avid historian, as one to show special interest in the physical side of things and one who is a stickler for details, ...

We are not saying that the truth is somehow obscured or distorted by the peculiar perspective of each author.

NO! Quite the contrary. We are saying that

God chose certain men

- made them holy through **faith** in His Dear Son
- causing them to write from their peculiar **perspective**
- the absolute and unadulterated **truth**

- as revealed by the Holy Spirit of the Living God!

So, do you have this first observation imbedded permanently in your mind and planted deep in the recesses of your heart?

Every word, every sentence, every paragraph, every chapter, every book of this New Testament we are about to study is the very Word of God.

I can tell you that in my own life, coming to this conviction in my heart is what made me want to read the Bible, made me want to study the Bible.

While I questioned whether the Bible was true, while I had doubts about whether its history was correct, while I wondered if it reflected more of the thoughts of men than the mind of God, I didn't want to spend time reading and studying the Scripture.

But when God in His grace broke through the pride of my heart and showed me the absolute perfection and truthfulness of His Word, I wanted to study it. I wanted to dig into the words He had chosen in Greek and Hebrew and discover the depth of the revelation God had given to men and made available to me.

The second observation I want to share with you about the New Testament as a whole is

II. **THE DOMINANT THOUGHT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS FULFILMENT.**

Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus from King David to Joseph the husband of Mary and then in a single verse declares that Mary was found to be with child before she came together with Joseph. Matthew then explains that when Joseph was thinking about breaking their betrothal, an angel told him the child was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Then he says ...

*Matthew 1:22–23 22 So all this was done **that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”*

A total of **twelve times in his gospel, Matthew recites these words, “that it might be fulfilled,”** as he demonstrates that throughout the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God is fulfilling the words and promises He sent through the prophets of the Old Testament.

- Matthew is the one to tell us that the first words Jesus spoke as He began His ministry were “... it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Mt. 3:15
- Mark tells us that Jesus began His proclamation by saying “The time is fulfilled ...” Mk 1:15

- Luke records that when Jesus read Isaiah in the synagogue of His home town in Nazareth, He ended the reading by declaring, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” Lk. 4:21
- John joins the chorus and seven times describes events that happen or words that are spoken “that it might be fulfilled.”

Jesus Himself said,

Matthew 5:17–18 17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

Jesus was saying, I did not come to change or replace the Tanuk, what we call the Old Testament. He said, I came to fulfill it! **“Not the tiniest letter, not the smallest part of a letter, will pass away until all of it is fulfilled.”**

Now friend, listen carefully to me because I do not want you to misunderstand what I am saying. I love the Old Testament. It too is the very Word of God. But **the Old Testament is incomplete. By itself it leaves you with questions without answers.**

The OT is full of animal sacrifices, but what do they accomplish?	Even by the days of Samuel, God declares His displeasure with the sacrifices of His people.
God makes a covenant with Israel in the days of Moses,	But Israel repeatedly breaks the terms of the covenant, and finally in the days of Jeremiah declares that covenant null and void, and one day to be replaced by a new covenant. But when the OT closes, no new covenant has been established.
God chose for Himself a people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;	Yet these people forsake the Lord. God chastens them and they return briefly, only to rebel again. God sends them into exile, but when they have the opportunity to return to the land He has given them, only a handful choose to do so. When the OT closes, the people of God remain under the rule of whoever has control of the region they occupy.
God promised that a king from the line of David would sit up on David[s] throne forever,	But at the end of the OT, no one sits on David’s throne.

At the end of the book, Malachi declared, "The Lord whom you seek shall come!"	Yet when the ink runs out on the last page, the Lord has not come.
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The New Testament is the completion, the fulfillment of the Old.

The animal sacrifices	All pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God upon to cross to take away the sin of the world.
The new covenant has come	In the shed blood of the Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary.
God has not rejected the people He chose, but He has set them aside for a season until they believe	But God has also chosen a new people out of all the nations of the earth, all of those who trust His Son as Lord and Savior.
God's promised king from the line of David did come, but His reign was over a kingdom not of this world.	
But that King declared that He is coming again.	And the New Testament declares to us great detail of His return and His reign forever over all the earth.

That wonderful book called the Old Testament offers us many wonderful and exciting chapters of "God's Story."

But it is left to the pages of the New Testament to tell us the rest of the story, and what a glorious ending it shall be!

The New Testament completes and fulfills the Old.

Finally, I must share with you that

III. THE FOCUS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT IS JESUS CHRIST.

The goal of each of the gospels is not to merely record things Jesus did or said.

The goal of each gospel is to present the Person of Jesus as Savior and Lord.

- Matthew presents Jesus to the Jews as their Messiah-King.

- Mark presents Jesus primarily to the Romans as YHWH's Servant, the miracle worker!
- Luke presents Jesus to the Greeks as the perfect Son of Man.
- John presents Jesus to the world as the Son of God, the Living Word, the Light and the Life.

It is easy to see Christ as the focus of each of the gospels.

But Christ is also the focus of the other four sections of the New Testament we will read and study.

- In Acts we see the church, the Body of Christ.
- In Romans we read the Doctrine of Christ.
- In the Letters we discover "Christ in you, the hope of glory."
- In the Revelation we see the Exalted and Resurrected Christ, coming as King of kings and Lord of lords.

CONCLUSION: So the question is, "What are you going to do?"

I am not asking you to fill out a card or even raise a hand.

But would you when we pray make a commitment to God that you will read a chapter a day to read through the New Testament with our church this year?

- Will you ask God to help you to increasingly believe that every word, sentence, and chapter has been breathed out by Him and is the very Word of God?
- Would you ask the Lord to help grow your understanding, whether presently it is small or great, to help you see more clearly how Christ is and brings in the future, the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies of God?
- Would you ask the Father to cause Jesus to become more and more the focus of your own life and heart?