

Overview of the New Testament

“In the name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, One God, Amen.”

- † The Bible contains 67 books (73 in the New Jerusalem Version) in the New King James Version, which is the commonly accepted one.
 - 39 in Old Testament
 - 27 in New Testament
 - Testament means covenant between God and man.
- † New Testament books were first canonized by Athanasius in his Easter festal letter in 367A.D.
 - He also mentioned that there were other books commonly read in churches that were good for edification and instruction, but should not be part of the official canon
 - Pope Athanasius also ordered the books of the NT in this festal letter.
 - New Testament was translated from the original Greek in which it was originally drafted; the language of intellectuals
- † Most important thing to understand is the the NT (like the OT) is not intended to be chronologically correct
- † Except for St. Luke, all writers of the Bible were Jews and the New Testament was written from many different places.
- † To understand the New Testament need to understand why the books were written
- † Overview of NT
 - 4 Gospels
 - Book of Acts
 - 14 Epistles of Paul
 - 7 Catholic (universal) Epistles
 - Revelation of Christ
- † Gospels – speak about the life of Christ, His miracles, His deity and His life-saving sacrifice for man.
 - The witness of two or three shall be true.
 - The four different perspectives help us to achieve a complete picture of Our Savior and how His impact on the world was seen and experienced by different observers. (similar to how reading a few different accounts of a major event help you to get a fuller understanding of what happened, as opposed to just reading one article)
 - Three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), parallel one another.
- † The Book of Acts was written by the Apostle Luke as the second of his two accounts. There are different estimates for the date of this book, but a reasonable estimate is mid-70s AD.
 - This, too, was addressed to Theophilus and intended to be an accurate accounting of some of the works of the Holy Spirit through the apostles and deacons. This book is commonly called the Acts of the Holy Spirit. This book clearly demonstrates that the heirs of the church were Gentiles, not Jews.
 - The early part of the book tells us briefly about the 40 days Christ spent with His disciples prior to His ascension, the choosing of a disciple to replace Judas Iscariot and then Pentecost.
 - As in his gospel, Luke pays careful attention to detail when recounting events that he was not actually present for (mainly chs 1-12).
 - The early parts of this book speak about the conversion of 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, how the church grew daily and what early church life was like.
 - Some significant events are:
 - The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira for their deception
 - Choosing the 7 deacons
 - Martyrdom of Stephen and preaching of Philip

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- Christ's vision to Peter shows that God has broken down the wall between Jew and Gentile
- Paul is converted on the road to Damascus
- A council is convened in Jerusalem to discuss circumcision of Gentiles
- From Ch 13-28, Luke recounts the missionary works of Paul and his 3 missionary journeys.
- Acts concludes with Paul under house arrest in Rome awaiting trial in Caesar's court.
- † Pauline and Catholic Epistles: These were written for one of two reasons
 - Instruction in Christian living, doctrine or exhortation
 - Response to heresy or trouble in a particular church
- † Revelation – vision of heaven given to John the Beloved (Evangelist and Disciple)

Estimate of dates that New Testament Books were written

Book	Date	Author	Purpose
Matthew	50 or 70 AD	Matthew	Written to Hebrews
Mark	70 AD	Mark	Written to the Romans
Luke	70-80 AD	Luke	Written to the Greeks
John	96 AD	John	Written about divinity of Christ
Acts	75-85 AD	Luke	Works of the Holy Spirit
Romans	55-57 AD	Paul	Gospel of Paul
1 & 2 Corinthians	55 AD	Paul	Correct incorrect worship practice and belief in Corinth; Love chapter!
Galatians	49 or 53 AD	Paul	Grace and faith
Ephesians	61-63 AD	Paul	Focusing on the Christian walk
Philippians	61-63 AD	Paul	Epistle of Joy
Colossians	61-63 AD	Paul	Addressing false doctrines about Christ
1 & 2 Thessalonians	50-51 AD	Paul	Being steadfast in the Christian walk amidst persecution
1 & 2 Timothy	64-65 AD	Paul	Pastoral instruction
Titus	64-65 AD	Paul	Pastoral instruction
Philemon	61-63 AD	Paul	Epistle of forgiveness
Hebrews	70 AD	Paul	Faith in Christ and the Gospel
James	62 AD	James, the Just	Faith and works
1 & 2 Peter	50-67 AD	Peter	Rejoice in suffering to become more Christ-like; practicing true knowledge of and faith in Christ
1, 2 & 3 John	90-95 AD	John	Love, confession, communion and establishing the correct teaching of the Trinity and Christ
Jude	60-80 AD	Jude or Thaddeus	Rejection of false teaching and earnestly pursuing the faith
Revelation	95 AD	John	God's revelation of heaven

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Order of the Bible:

- † The New Testament begins with the 4 gospels, which, in different ways, speak about the life of Christ. In many ways, the NT is the logical continuation, rather the fulfillment, of the OT.
- † In the OT, we have the prophecies and promises of a Savior:
 - “*For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given,*” (Isaiah 9:6)
 - “*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emanuel.*” (Isaiah 7:14)
 - “*He will send them a Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them.*” (Isaiah 19:20)
 - **Matthew:** This gospel was written between 58-70 AD in Antioch where Matthew lived. Some believe that Matthew actually used Mark’s gospel as reference, but this has not been proven or substantiated.
 - Matthew’s gospel was directed to the Jews in order to present Christ as the fulfillment of the OT prophecies. To prove this, he often used the phrase, “that what was spoken by through the prophet might be fulfilled...” He wrote to the Jews as a Jew about a Jew.
 - He begins his account with the genealogy of Christ, something important to Jews, to demonstrate his noble lineage and decent from King David.
 - Matthew refers to various Jewish observances and feasts, showing that Christ and His disciples kept them, as opposed to violating them.
 - His gospel was placed first in the NT, although it wasn’t the first to be written, because it was seen as a natural bridge between the OT and NT in its presentation of Christ as the fulfillment of the scriptures.
 - **Mark:** This gospel is believed to be the first of the four to be written, but there is substantial debate over this point. It has been dated from 55-65 AD.
 - This gospel was directed to the Romans, particularly those who had visited areas that Christ and/or His disciples visited and preached in. For this reason, many of the features of Matthew’s gospel (e.g. genealogy, OT customs and prophecies) are not found here.
 - This gospel emphasizes Christ’s ministry to the world; hence, it bypasses the birth and begins with Christ’s baptism.
 - Barnabas, the friend and fellow evangelist of Paul, was the cousin of Mark. It was in Mark’s mother’s house that the Last Supper took place, the Lord appeared to the disciples after His resurrection and Pentecost occurred. According to tradition, it was the site of the first church.
 - This gospel has the largest number of recorded miracles (18), demonstrating Christ’s divine authority and power over creation.
 - It has been suggested that Mark was the young man referred to in this gospel that fled the garden of Gethsemane naked after Christ’s arrest. This account is only mentioned in Mark’s gospel.
 - **Luke:** He was a physician and one of the 70 Apostles whom Christ sent out to preach ahead of Him in the cities that He would eventually visit. He also accompanied Paul through most of His missionary journeys. Luke wrote to the Gentiles and this gospel was probably written in the mid-60s AD.
 - Luke’s gospel is the only one to speak about the annunciation to Mary by the archangel Gabriel. It is said that Luke interviewed St Mary, after Christ’s ascension, in order to get an understanding of what events took place. That’s why his gospel starts out, “*Inasmuch as*

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many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us,”

- Luke’s account of Christ’s life is built upon the testimonies of others and the written accounts of others. Since he was a companion of Paul, he probably conducted his research during the first imprisonment of Paul in Rome.
- The gospel is said to be volume 1 in his writings, with the Book of Acts being the volume 2.
- A significant feature of Luke’s gospel account is that it is presented in a very academic way so that the reader has no choice but to believe that Christ is the Messiah. Nevertheless, Luke emphasizes 3 main points in this gospel: 1. Prayer, 2. Activity of the Holy Spirit, 3. Concern for sinners.
- This gospel is the longest of the four. One of the main themes of his gospel is that Christ came to seek and save that which was lost (Luke 15).
- One other interesting feature is that he presents the ancestry of Christ in Ch 3 vs Ch 1 in Matthew.
- **John:** This gospel is different from the other three in that it does not present as much of the history and chronology as the others, but rather focuses on Christ’s divinity and the Trinity. This gospel was written to the entire world and the last to be written.
 - John was the brother of James and both were the sons of Zebedee (called “Boanerges” or “Sons of Thunder” by Christ). He and Andrew were originally disciples of John the Baptist, but then followed Christ. He and his brother are believed to be the cousins of Christ.
 - This gospel is not written chronologically and is not intended to be a historical account. Rather it is intended to be a spiritual and theological account of Christ’s ministry.
 - John was an eyewitness at most if not all of the accounts in this gospel. Hence, this gospel is the only one of the four to record Christ’s prayer in ch 17.
 - The major themes of this gospel are:
 - God’s desire to save the world (John 3:16)
 - The Glory of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit
 - Spirituality of God
 - Sacramental observance (baptism, chrismation and Eucharist). John 6 speaks about the Bread of Life.
 - This gospel has the 7 “I am’s” of Christ
 - I am the bread of life
 - I am the good shepherd
 - I am the way, the truth and the life
 - I am the door
 - I am the resurrection and the life
 - I am the light of the world
 - I am the true vine
 - Two of the most significant verses in this gospel are John 1:11 and 20:31.
- The New Testament begins with the 4 Gospels.
 - Matthew – symbol is the face of a man because his Gospel begins with the birth of Jesus, emphasizing His human nature.
 - Mark – symbol is face of a lion because he begins with John the Baptist, who stood before Herod like a lion and he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness like a lion.

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- Luke – symbol of an ox because he begins with Zechariah and oxen were sacrificed by Jews.
- John – symbol of an eagle because eagle is symbol of divinity and John’s Gospel emphasizes Jesus’ divinity.
- Acts of the Apostles are often referred to as Acts of the Holy Spirit in spreading the gospel.
- Letters of Paul are next and begin with the letter to the Romans and end with letter to Hebrews, whom the good news was originally intended.
- Peter, John, James, and Jude wrote the Catholic or universal letters.
- John the Evangelist after a spiritual trance in which he was carried up to heaven wrote the Book of Revelation.

“Glory be to God, forever, Amen.”

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1. There are _____ books in the Bible
 - a. _____ in the OT; way to remember is ____ + ____ = _____
 - b. _____ in the NT; way to remember is ____ x ____ = _____
2. Order of the New Testament
 - a. ____ Gospels
 - b. Book of _____
 - c. _____ Epistles of Paul
 - d. _____ (universal) Epistles
 - e. _____
3. Where do we get the order and specific books of the NT?
 - a. This order was first established and canonized by _____ in his Easter Festal letter in 367 AD
4. Of the 4 gospels, 3 are “*synoptic*”, meaning _____
5. Overview of the Gospels:
 - a. Matthew was written to the _____ to prove that _____ is the _____ (symbol is the ox)
 - b. Mark was written to the _____ during the time of Nero to show that _____ also _____ like they are (symbol is the lion)
 - c. Luke was written to the _____ as a logical and accurate recounting of the events of Christ’s life (symbol is the man)
 - d. John wrote generally about the _____ of Christ (symbol is the eagle)
6. Book of Acts was written by _____ to _____ (hint: same person addressed in the gospel)

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- a. Acts is often called the Acts of the _____
7. _____ letters of Paul begin with the letter to the Romans and end with letter to Hebrews, to whom the good news was originally intended.
8. There are _____ Catholic or universal letters written by Peter, John, James, and Jude
9. Book of Revelation was written by _____ on the Island of _____ while he was in exile
 - a. hint: this NT writer was the only one to die a natural death _____