

New Testament Survey

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Introduction

- The New Testament has 27 books and covers the span from Jesus' birth to the growth of the church, and was written from about 45-95 A.D. It was written in Common Greek, the business language of the day spread by Alexander the Great.
- Both the old and new Testaments have five segments. The Old Testament has Torah, Israelite History, Poetry and Wisdom, Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. The New Testament has the Gospels, Church History, Pauline Epistles, General Epistles and Prophecy.
- Nine authors were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the New Testament. Paul wrote the most books (13) while Luke wrote the most content (Luke-Acts).
- Possible Timeline for New Testament Writings
 - 45-50 A.D. – James (Early date)

- 49 A.D. – Galatians (Nontraditional date)
- 50s-60s A.D. – Mark
- 51 A.D. – 1 Thessalonians
- 51 A.D. – 2 Thessalonians (Within weeks of 1 Thessalonians)
- 55 A.D. – 1 Corinthians
- 56 A.D. – 2 Corinthians
- 57 A.D. – Galatians (Traditional date)
- 57-58 A.D. – Romans
- 58-62 A.D. – Matthew
- 60 A.D. – James (Early date)
- 60 A.D. – Luke
- 61/62 A.D. – 1 Timothy
- 61/62 A.D. – Titus
- 60-62 A.D. – Acts
- 60-62 A.D. – Philemon and Philippians
- 60-62 A.D. – Ephesians and Colossians
- 67-68 A.D. – 2 Timothy
- 67 A.D. – 1 Peter

- 67 A.D. – Jude
- 68 A.D. – 2 Peter
- <70 A.D. – Hebrews
- 85-95 A.D. – 1-3 John
- 90 A.D. – John
- 95 A.D. – Revelation

The Gospels

- Introduction
 - Four Gospels, biographies of Jesus' life, present four different perspectives of the same Jesus.
 - The first three Gospels (the Synoptics) are the most alike. John's Gospel has the most unique material.
- **Matthew** – Written to the Jews to prove from Old Testament prophecies that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - Statistics – Author: Matthew (Levi), a tax collector and apostle. Date: Around 58-62 A.D.
 - Probably the second Gospel written and perhaps used Mark as a source. Matthew organizes his Gospel like

into sections beginning with Jesus' origins, the Sermon on the Mount, miracles, Jesus' teachings and parables followed by his crucifixion, death and resurrection.

- Famous Verse: Matthew 28:19-20 (The Great Commission)
- **Mark** – Written to Romans and non-Jews like an action story of Jesus as God's Son.
 - Statistics – Author: John Mark, probably from Peter's perspective. Date: Around the 50s to 60s A.D.
 - The shortest Gospel and considered to be written first. Mark focuses on discipleship as the theme.
 - Famous Verse: Mark 8:34-37.
- **Luke** – Highlights Jesus' life and ministry containing the most healing miracles of the Gospels.
 - Statistics – Author: Luke the doctor. Date: About 60 A.D. when with Paul in Rome.
 - The longest of the Gospels, volume one of two (Luke-Acts). His Gospel is organized chronologically in historical order. Luke shows special interest in women, the poor, children and the Holy Spirit. Luke's Gospel contains 50% new material from Mark and Matthew.

- Famous Feature: The "Lost" parables in Luke 15.
- **John** – The last Gospel written, it contains 90% new material from the others.
 - Statistics – Author: the apostle John. Date: About 90 A.D.
 - John wrote "that you may believe Jesus is the Son of God" (John 20:30-31). John reveals the anonymous people of the synoptic Gospels. He highlights seven "I Am" statements and seven miracles of Jesus.
 - Famous Verse: John 3:16

Church History

- **Acts** – Outlines the historical origins and expansion of the Christian church following the apostles, mainly Peter and Paul.
 - Statistics – Author: Luke, Date: 60-62 A.D. Traveled with Paul and probably provided medical assistance in Rome.
 - Luke is most likely Greek, making him the only Gentile to write New Testament Scripture in elegant Greek. Acts 1:8 gives the "Table of Contents" beginning in Jerusalem, then Samaria, and if he ends of the known world in the Roman Empire. Acts first follows Peter's ministry

and then switches to Paul's ministry (Acts 13).

- The Gospel and Church break linguistic, cultural and ethnic barriers through the Holy Spirit's power. Acts tracks the spread of the Gospel through three cities: Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome. It records 18 prayer meetings, 9 revivals and 18 sermons.
 - Famous Verse: Acts 4:12

Paul's Letters

- Letters to Churches
 - **Romans** – The most complete and systematic approach to Paul's teaching in his churches and beliefs.
 - Statistics – Date: 57-58 A.D. Written from Corinth to introduce himself to Rome and would arrive about 60 A.D.
 - The Roman city church had not yet met Paul. Romans explains how God's wrath is coming on both Jews and Gentiles because they have violated the revelation each of them has received. His grace is also available through Jesus Christ. Humans are justified before God based on faith in Jesus' sacrifice rather than our own works.
 - Famous Verse: Romans 1:16-17.

- **1 Corinthians** – Paul responds to questions sent by the Corinthians and correct false doctrine and practices.
 - Statistics – Date: About 55 A.D. in Ephesus.
 - Contains answers to issues of church division, immorality, legal issues with other Christians, the Lord's supper, spiritual gifts, and the resurrection.
 - Famous Chapters – The Loan Chapter, the Lord's Supper, the Resurrection chapter.
- **2 Corinthians** – A follow-up letter to the first defending Paul's apostleship and ministry.
 - Statistics – 56 A.D. Written in Macedonia after Titus describes 1 Corinthians' effect.
 - One of Paul's most personal letters providing much biographical information about him. 2 Corinthians may have been his fourth letter to them. The first may have been lost. The second was 1 Corinthians. Paul followed 1 Corinthians with a severe letter dealing with your morality (1 Corinthians 5). This letter would be the fourth. Corinth was probably the most contentious problem church Paul founded.
- Famous Verse – 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- **Galatians** – Paul corrects false teaching that Christians must follow Jewish laws.
 - Statistics – Date: (Traditional) 57 A.D. Written in Ephesus, Macedonia or Corinth. (Nontraditional) 49 A.D. before the Jerusalem Council's decision about circumcision (Paul does not mention this).
 - Historically, Christianity emerged out of Judaism to become its own world religion and addressed many issues as it grew. Paul defended the truth that Christ alone is enough for salvation. Works do not save us.
 - Famous Passage – Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Famous Verse: Galatians 2:20.
- **Ephesians** – Written to Asia Minor's chief city, Paul describes the unity found under Christ between Jews and Gentiles in the church.
 - Written to Asia Minor's chief city, Ephesians contains the longest sentence in the New Testament in Greek (Ephesians 1:3-14). Paul describes spiritual blessings, Christian unity, the mystery of the gospel, the fivefold ministry, household relationships and spiritual warfare.
 - Famous Passage: Armor of God (Ephesians 6). Famous Verse: Ephesians 3:20-21
- **Philippines** – Focuses on the theme of joy in the Christian life.
 - Statistics – Date: 60-62 A.D. Perhaps the final prison epistle written as Paul seems confident he will be released. One of four prison epistles written from house arrest in Rome.
 - Does not address any major church issues but addresses some individuals. It was written after an offering for the Jerusalem church had been collected. Paul pens a most profound explanation of Jesus' emptying himself of divinity (Philippians 2:5-11).
 - Famous Verse: Philippians 4:13.
- **Colossians** – Focuses on the deity of Jesus Christ.
 - Statistics – Date: 60-62 A.D. One of four prison epistles written from house arrest in Rome.

- Probably written along with Ephesians.
- Paul never visited the Colossian churches but visited near them in his travels. Colossians is probably a chain letter passed around to the churches near Colossae. It highlighted Christ's divinity because of Colossians believing in other gods along with Jesus.
 - Famous Passage: Colossians 1:15-20.
 - **1 Thessalonians** – Paul encourages the fledgling church about several issues including Christ's second coming.
 - Statistics – Date: 51 A.D. probably Paul's earliest surviving letter. Written in Corinth.
 - Paul left Thessalonica in a hurry and was afraid the foundation he laid was not complete. 1 Thessalonians contains the doctrine of the rapture, explaining its events more clearly than elsewhere in Scripture.
 - Famous Verses: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22.
 - **2 Thessalonians** – A follow-up letter further explaining the second coming and reassuring believers.
 - Statistics – Date: 51 A.D. within weeks of 1 Thessalonians.
 - After reading 1 Thessalonians believers begin to think they missed the rapture. Paul reassures them Christ has not returned yet and provides details of how he will return. This letter gives the most detailed understanding of the Antichrist. 2 Thessalonians also deals with heavy persecution.
 - Famous Passage: 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4.
 - Letters to Individuals
 - **1 Timothy** – Written to his son in the faith at the end of his life, Paul gives wisdom concerning pastoral leadership.
 - Statistics – Date: 61/62 A.D. to 67 A.D. One of three pastoral epistles.
 - Timothy was a convert of Paul and became his son in the faith. He was with Paul during his second missionary journey until his death. Timothy was a leader in Ephesus and many of Paul's churches. Paul included leadership training to help Timothy, a young pastor and Paul's protégé, grow in leadership and addressing false teaching with practical advice.
 - Famous Verse: 1 Timothy 6:6-7
 - **2 Timothy** – More practical helps for a young leader learning how to lead the church.
 - Statistics – Date: 67/68 A.D. before Paul's execution. One of three pastoral epistles.
 - Paul is sure of his martyrdom for the faith in his final letter. Paul is thought a victim of Nero's persecution after Rome was burned down in 64 A.D. Paul encourages Timothy to remain faithful to his calling. 2 Timothy is the final word of a giant in the faith.
 - Famous Versus: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Timothy 4:7-8.
 - **Titus** – Written to another young leader in the church to encourage and instruct him.
 - Statistics – Date: 61/62 A.D. to 67 A.D. One of three pastoral epistles.
 - Titus worked with churches in Ephesus, the troubled Corinthian churches and Crete. Titus contains descriptions of God's grace along with the most

references to good works, except for James.

- Famous Versus: Titus 2:11-14.
- **Philemon** – Paul asks a Christian slaveowner to release his runaway Christian slave in love.
- Statistics – Date: 60-62 A.D. One of four prison epistles written from house arrest in Rome. Probably the first written of the prison epistles along with Philippians.
- Philemon is a Colossian Christian slaveowner whose slave, Onesimus, had escaped and found Paul in Roman prison. He becomes useful to Paul and Paul writes Philemon with news of his conversion and a plea not from apostolic authority but from Christian love to set him free.

General Letters

- **Hebrews** – Shows that Jesus fulfills all Old Testament institutions.
- Statistics – Author: Unknown, with many authors suggested. Date: Before 70 A.D. Probably written from Italy.
- The writer addresses Jews and Jewish Christians concerning beliefs in Angels, the Jerusalem temple, the Law of Moses, the old covenant and

other tenants of Judaism. He states that Jesus is superior to all of these institutions. The writer probably writes with the aim of evangelizing Jews or Jewish Christians who believe Jewish teachings are still necessary for salvation. He uses rabbinic teaching techniques, warnings and expectations.

- Famous Verse: Hebrews 11:1.
- **James** – Gives practical and godly wisdom for Christians living in the last days.
- Statistics – Author: James, Jesus' brother. Date: Early (About 45 A.D.) or Late (About 60 A.D.).
- Written by the lead pastor of the Jerusalem church for Christians dispersed by persecution, it contains wisdom on the subject's of speech, favoritism, faith and works, persecution, trials and suffering for Jesus.
- Famous Verse: James 5:16.
- **1 Peter** – Jesus gives Christians hope in the midst of persecution.
- Statistics – Author: Peter. Date: 67/68 A.D. to the churches in Asia Minor.
- Written during great persecution, probably by Nero (64-67 A.D.). Peter encourages believers suffering

persecution by giving more examples of Old Testament saints per capita than any other New Testament book.

- **2 Peter** – Apostasy is a real and present danger within the church.
- Statistics – Author: Peter, but disputed. Date: 67 A.D. before Peter was martyred probably in Rome.
- 2 Peter and Jude have similar language and subject matter. 2 Peter's audience is the same as 1 Peter. He wrote to encourage Christians about Jesus' second coming and to continue growing into spiritual maturity.
- **1 John** – Caps combats false teaching believing Jesus didn't have a physical body, stressing God's attributes.
- Statistics – Author: John. Date: 85-95 A.D. to the churches near Ephesus.
- 1 John addresses false teaching about Jesus and sin, the antichrist and encourages believers. In stressing God's attributes, he highlights God as light, righteousness and love.
- Famous Verses: 1 John 4:7-8.
- **2 John** – John highlights the truth in the face of false teachers.
- Statistics – Author: John. Date: 85-95 A.D. Written to the "Chosen

Lady,” probably a church in Asia Minor.

- The word, “truth” is highlighted throughout the letter as John addresses concerns this church would entertain false teachers. The two themes of loving one another and walking in truth are showcased.
- **3 John** – John again stresses the truth as the weapon against false teachers.
 - Statistics – Author: John. Date: 85-95 A.D.
 - John wrote this letter to a specific person (1 John 1:1). He wrote the letter to commend this person for his steadfastness in the faith.
- **Jude** – Focuses on false teachers infiltrating the church.
 - Statistics – Author: Jude, Jesus’ brother. Date: About 67 A.D. to the churches in Asia Minor.
 - Jude addresses the possibility of apostasy. He wrote a warning against falling away and inviting false teachers. Jude is written generally to Christians everywhere. It mentions the dispute over Moses’ body and quotes from the book of Enoch.
 - Famous Verses: Jude 14-15.
- **Revelation** – Prophetic visions of Jesus Christ as he protects the church in the last days.
 - Statistics – Author: John from exile on the island of Patmos. Date: 95 A.D.
 - Through a series of prophetic visions about Christ, the victorious Christ protects the saints from persecution and of the dangers of the end times. Revelation is full of vivid imagery, containing seven letters to churches in Asia Minor and many other features.

Prophecy