

# Survey of the New Testament

## What is the New Testament?

### #1. The New Testament is Literature

- A collection of 27 books...
- Written by one divine author and approximately 9 human authors.
- In koine Greek, the common language of the people...
- Over a span of less than 100 years.
- Three key genres in New Testament literature...
  - ▶ Historical narrative.
  - ▶ Epistle - letters
  - ▶ Revelation. Apocalyptic
- Three key characteristics of New Testament literature...
  - ▶ Historical accuracy.
  - ▶ Textual authenticity.
  - ▶ Divine authority.

### #2. The New Testament is History

- The Timeline of the New Testament...
  - ▶ The life of Christ begins around 4-6 B.C.
  - ▶ Revelation written near close of 1<sup>st</sup> century.
- The Timeliness of the New Testament...
  - ▶ The right time theologically.
  - ▶ The right time religiously.
  - ▶ The right time culturally.
  - ▶ The right time politically.
- Three primary divisions:
  - ▶ The story of the New Testament.
    - About 60% of the New Testament.
    - First 5 books. (Matthew – Acts)
  - ▶ The letters of the New Testament.
    - Next 21 books. (Romans – Jude)
  - ▶ The conclusion of the New Testament.
    - Final book. (Revelation)

## The story of the New Testament...

- The life and ministry of Christ. (Matthew - John).
  - ▶ Written for the same primary purpose.
  - ▶ Written from different viewpoint.
  - ▶ Written for different audience.
- The life and ministry of the church. (Acts).
  - ▶ “Part Two” of Luke’s Gospel.

### Matthew

- ▶ Written...
  - By Matthew, a Jewish tax collector.
  - In the 70s-80s A.D., soon after destruction of temple.
  - To Jewish Christians and/or Jews considering faith in Christ.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the “King of the Jews.”
- ▶ Overall Structure:
  - 1 – 4:11 – Introduction of the King.
  - 4:12-7:29 – Proclamation of the kingdom.
  - 8:1-10:42 – The power and mission of the kingdom.
  - 11:1-13:52 – Questioning of the kingdom.
  - 13:53–18:35 – Opposition to and confession of the kingdom.
  - 19:1-25:46 – Reception and rejection of the kingdom.
  - 26–28 – Victory of the King.
  - Look up cross-references - there’s 129 references of allusions to 25 of the 39 Old Testament books!
  - Look for the focus on the “Kingdom of God”.

### Mark

- ▶ Written...
  - By John Mark, who was close to Peter.
  - Between 65-70 A.D.
  - To Gentile Christians in Rome suffering persecution.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the “Suffering servant of God.”
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - The Servant’s Ministry in Galilee (1-9)
  - The Servant’s Journey to Jerusalem (10)
  - The Servant’s Last Week of Ministry (11-15)
  - The Servant’s Victory (16)
- ▶ NOTE: 41 times he says, “And immediately”
- ▶ Notice that almost half of his Gospel is devoted to events in the last week of Jesus’ life.

## Luke

- ▶ Written...
  - By Luke, a Gentile physician, historian, and companion of Paul.
  - In the 70s or 80s A.D.
  - To Theophilus, primarily for Gentile Christians.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the perfect “Son of Man” who brings salvation to both Jews and Gentiles.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Introduction of the Son of Man (1-4:13)
  - The Son of Man in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
  - The Son of Man in Judea (9:51-13:21)
  - The Son of Man in Perea (13:22-19:27)
  - The Son of Man in Jerusalem (19:28-24:53)
- ▶ Notice the emphasis on the Gospel as “good news for the poor” and the need for followers of Christ to honor Christ with their money.
- ▶ Make notes each time you see prayer and/or the Holy Spirit mentioned.

NOTE: The Synoptic Gospels

- The certainty: Matthew, Mark, and Luke “see” the life and ministry of Christ in a very similar way.
- The confusion: Is Mark the primary source for Matthew and Luke?
  - 97 % of Mark’s words are in Matthew.
  - 88 % of Mark’s words are in Luke.

Is there an unknown source that was a foundation for these books?

- The conclusion:  
Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not write their Gospels in isolation from one another.

## John

- ▶ Written...
  - By John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved.”
  - Sometime between 70-90 A.D.
  - To the world.
- ▶ Primary theme: Jesus is the eternal “Son of God.”
- ▶ Note the seven “I AM” statements of Jesus.
  - Bread of Life (6:35, 41, 48, 51).
  - Light of the World (8:12; 9:5).

- Door of the Sheep (10:7, 9).
- Good Shepherd (10:11, 14).
- Resurrection and the Life (11:25).
- The Way, the Truth, and the Life (14:6).
- The True Vine (15:1, 5).
- ▶ John highlights the Incarnation, using seven signs to demonstrate the deity of Christ.
  - Changing water to wine (2:1-11).
  - Healing the nobleman's son (4:46-54).
  - Healing the paralytic (5:1-9).
  - Feeding the 5000 (6:1-14).
  - Calming the storm (6:16-21).
  - Healing the blind man (9:1-7).
  - Raising of Lazarus (11:38-45).
- ▶ Pay attention also, though, to John's depiction of the Humanity of Christ.

## Acts

- ▶ Written by Luke as "Part Two" of His Gospel.
  - Luke – what Jesus "began" to do...
  - Acts – what Jesus "continued" to do...
- ▶ Primary theme: The Gospel spreads universally through the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - The Witness of the Church in Jerusalem (1-7)
  - The Witness of the Church in Judea and Samaria (8-9)
  - The Witness of the Church to the Ends of the Earth (10-28)
- ▶ Notice the "Progress Report" regarding the advancement of the Gospel...
  - 6:7 – The Gospel in Jerusalem.
  - 9:31 – The Gospel in Judea and Samaria.
  - 12:24 – The Gospel in Syria.
  - 16:5 – The Gospel in Asia Minor.
  - 19:29 – The Gospel in Europe.
  - 28:31 – The Gospel in Rome.
- ▶ See in the different speeches of Acts how the Gospel is contextualized in different settings to reach different people.

## The Letters of the New Testament...

- ▶ 22 of the 27 books in the New Testament are letters. (over 35% of the New Testament!)
- ▶ Why letters?
  - The church is reproducing.
  - The church is relational.
- ▶ Two groups...
  - Pauline epistles (Romans – Philemon).
  - General epistles (Hebrews – Jude).

## The life and writings of Paul...

- ▶ Paul wrote 13 New Testament letters.
  - Ordered from longest to shortest.
  - Nine written to churches; four written to individuals.
- ▶ Paul the person...
  - Born Saul of Tarsus
  - Diverse background...
    - > A Hebrew heritage.
    - > A Greek education.
    - > A Roman citizen.
  - Converted to Christ around 31-33 A.D.
- ▶ Paul the missionary...
  - First Missionary Journey (48-49)
    - > Approximately 1400 miles.
    - > Epistle: Galatians
  - Jerusalem Conference (49)
  - Second Missionary Journey (49-52)
    - > Approximately 2800 miles.
    - > Epistles: 1-2<sup>nd</sup> Thessalonians
  - Third Missionary Journey (53-57)
    - > Approximately 2700 miles.
    - > Epistles: Romans & 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians
  - Prison in Caesarea by the Sea (58-60)
  - Trip to Rome (60-61)
  - First Imprisonment in Rome (61-63)
    - > Epistles (called the prison epistles)
    - > Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon.
  - Final Ministry and Final Imprisonment
    - > Epistles (called the Pastoral Epistles)
    - > 1-2 Timothy, Titus

## Romans

- ▶ Written to Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome.
- ▶ Primary themes: The “righteousness of God” and the “Gospel” of God.”
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - The need for Righteousness (1-3).
  - God’s Provision of Righteousness (3-8).
  - Israel’s Rejection of God’s Righteousness (9-11).
  - The Practice of Righteousness (12-16).
- ▶ This book is key to unlocking the entire Word of God.
- ▶ Threefold purpose:
  - To instruct the church in the basic doctrines of the Gospel.
  - To show the practical implications of the Gospel.
  - To garner support for expansion of the Gospel.

## 1 Corinthians

- ▶ Written to a divided church in Corinth.
- ▶ Primary theme: the “wisdom of the cross.”
- ▶ Notice the letter’s bookends:
  - The Cross (1:17-2:16).
  - The Resurrection (15:1-58).
- ▶ Notice how Paul develops a theology of the cross that affects Christian ethics, Christian priorities, and Christian attitudes.
- ▶ See how Paul addresses at least 11 different issues in the church, including the purpose of spiritual gifts, regulations for worship, and sexual immorality.

## 2 Corinthians

- ▶ Written to a church amidst dissension in Corinth.
- ▶ Primary theme: Reconciliation in the body of Christ.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Response of the church to Paul’s ministry (1-7).
  - The church’s giving (8-9).
  - Defense of Paul’s ministry (10-13).
- ▶ Four main elements in the letter:
  - Paul’s explanation of his plans to visit Corinth.
  - Paul’s collection for the church in Jerusalem.
  - Paul’s defense of apostleship and ministry.
  - Paul’s concern about Jewish Christian opponents to the Gospel.

## Galatians

- ▶ Written in response to the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15).
- ▶ Primary theme: Paul condemns the false Gospel of faith and works.
  - The false Gospel: Faith + Works = Justification.
  - The true Gospel: Faith = Justification + Works
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Grace and the Gospel (1-2).
  - Grace and the Law (3-4).
  - Grace and the Spirit (5-6).
- ▶ Note the danger of legalism and the joy of freedom.
- ▶ Paul is countering Judaizers who are putting regulations on Gentiles to enter the church.

## Ephesians

- ▶ Written from prison to church leaders in Ephesus and surrounding areas.
- ▶ Primary themes:
  - The unity of the church.
  - The victory of Christ.
  - The power of the Spirit.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - The Doctrine of the Church (1-3)
  - The Practice of the Church (4-6)
- ▶ Note each time you see the phrase “in Christ” or “with Christ” (35 times!)

## Philippians

- ▶ Written from prison to the church at Philippi (a Roman colony.)
- ▶ Primary themes: joy and unity in Christ.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Christ is our life (1).
  - Christ is our example (2).
  - Christ is our goal (3).
  - Christ is our strength (4).
- ▶ Note the “Christ hymn” of 2:5-11.
  - Jesus is God.
  - Jesus is man.
  - Jesus is savior.
  - Jesus is Lord.

## Colossians

- ▶ Written to a church Epaphras had founded and Paul had never visited.
- ▶ Primary theme: The \_\_\_\_\_ sufficiency of Christ - “Christ is all and in all” (3:11) and we are “made full in Him” (2:10).
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - The head of all things (1:18; 2:10).
  - The Lord of creation (1:16-17).
  - The Author of reconciliation (1:20-22; 2:13-15).
  - The basis for the believer’s hope (1:5, 23, 27).
  - The source of the believer’s power (1:11, 29).
  - Redeemer and Reconciler (1:14, 20-22; 2:11-15).
  - The embodiment of God (1:15, 19; 2:9).
  - The Creator and Sustainer of all things (1:16-17).
  - The all-sufficient Savior (1:28; 2:3, 20; 3:1-4).
- ▶ Note the \_\_\_\_\_ practical \_\_\_\_\_ implications of a life that is sustained by Christ alone.
- ▶ Paul is countering Gnostics who were denying the deity of Christ.

## 1 Thessalonians

- ▶ Written from Corinth to a young church in Thessalonica.
- ▶ Primary themes:
  - To encourage new believers.
  - To answer \_\_\_\_\_ charges \_\_\_\_\_ against Paul.
  - To explain the \_\_\_\_\_ second \_\_\_\_\_ coming \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.
  - To warn against \_\_\_\_\_ idleness \_\_\_\_\_.
- ▶ Overall structure (based on 1:3):
  - Work Produced by Faith (1-3).
  - Labor Prompted by Love (4:1-12).
  - Endurance Inspired by Hope (4:13-5:28).
- ▶ Note how every chapter ends with a reference to the coming of Christ.
- ▶ Note the centrality of the \_\_\_\_\_ word \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2 Thessalonians

- ▶ Written as a follow-up letter to Thessalonica.
- ▶ Primary themes:
  - To encourage believers who were facing increasing persecution.
  - To exhort those who were idle to work for the glory of Christ until He comes back!
  - To edify the believers in their pursuit of \_\_\_\_\_ holiness \_\_\_\_\_.
- ▶ Note how this book reminds you to live with the expectation that “it might be today.”



## 1 Timothy

- ▶ Written to encourage \_\_\_\_\_ young \_\_\_\_\_ Timothy as he leads the “big-city church” in Ephesus.
- ▶ Primary theme: God desires for \_\_\_\_\_ godly \_\_\_\_\_ leaders to lead His church.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Guard the doctrine of the church (1).
  - Guard the worship of the church (2).
  - Guard the leadership of the church (3).
  - Guard the purity of the church (4).
  - Guard the practice of the church (5-6).

## 2 Timothy

- ▶ Paul writes this letter – likely his last – while awaiting his trial and death.
- ▶ Primary Theme: Paul demonstrates how a Christian martyr should face death.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - The Pastoral Appeal (1)
  - The Practical Appeal (2)
  - The Prophetic Appeal (3)
  - The Personal Appeal (4).
- ▶ Note the weight of Paul’s concern for Timothy.

## Titus

- ▶ Written to Titus, a leader of the church in Crete who had been led to Christ by Paul (2 Cor. 8:23).
- ▶ Primary theme: \_\_\_\_\_ grace \_\_\_\_\_ leads to godliness.
- ▶ Overall Structure:
  - Organizing the Church (1).
  - Following Christ (2-3).
- ▶ Fourfold purpose:
  - To remind Titus to appoint elders in the church.
  - To warn Titus against false teachers in the church.
  - To instruct Titus how to lead different people in the church.
  - To encourage Titus regarding the importance of grace in the church.

## Philemon

- ▶ Written...
  - To Philemon, a Christian in Colossae who had come to faith in Christ through Paul.
  - About Onesimus, a slave of Philemon who had come to faith in Christ through Paul.
- ▶ Primary Theme:
  - Inform Philemon of Onesimus' salvation.
  - Ask Philemon to forgive him.
  - Request to visit Philemon.
- ▶ Note the picture of Christ as the Redeemer of lost sinners.
- ▶ Note how Christ transforms our relationships.

## The General Letters...

- ▶ Nine letters not written by Paul.
- ▶ Ordered (again) basically by length.
- ▶ Titled according to the names of their authors.
  - James, Peter, John, Jude, and the author of Hebrews.
- ▶ Written to more general audience.

## Hebrews

- ▶ Who wrote Hebrews? Only God knows!
- ▶ Most likely written to Jewish Christians facing persecution.
- ▶ Primary theme: the superiority of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - A Superior Person: Christ (1-6)
  - A Superior Priesthood (7-10)
  - A Superior Principle: Faith (11-13)
- ▶ See how these key words point to the supremacy of Christ:
  - Better (1:4; 6:9; 7:7, 19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:16, 35, 40; 12:24).
  - Perfect (2:10; 5:9, 14; 6:1; 7:11, 19, 28; 9:9, 11; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:2, 23).
- ▶ Note the Old Testament everywhere in Hebrews!
- ▶ Message of Hebrews revolves around five exhortations:
  - Let us not drift from the Word (2:1-4).
  - Let us not doubt the Word (3:7-4:13).
  - Let us not grow dull toward the Word (5:11-6:20).
  - Let us not despise the Word (10:26-39).
  - Let us not disobey the Word (12:14-19).

- ▶ Things to remember...
  - The author is quoting from the Greek Old Testament.
  - The author argues many times from the lesser to the greater.
  - The author views everything in the Old Testament through the lens of Christ!

## James

- ▶ Likely written by James, the brother of Jesus.
- ▶ Primary theme: to address the practical implications of true faith – what does Christianity look like in Action?
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Stand with confidence (1).
  - Serve with compassion (2).
  - Speak with care (3).
  - Submit with contrition (4).
  - Share with concern (5).
- ▶ Note the Old Testament all over James – in 108 verses, there are references or allusions to 22 OT books and at least 15 references or allusions to the teachings of Christ.

## 1 Peter

- ▶ Written to the church in Asia Minor – modern day Turkey – facing increasing suffering and persecution.
- ▶ Primary theme is the sufficiency of God's grace, which is used in every chapter (1:2, 10, 13, 2:19-20; 3:7; 4:10; 5:5, 10, 12).
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - A call to holy living (1:13-2:10).
  - Living for the sake of a pagan world (2:11-4:11).
  - Walking through suffering as the church (4:12-5:11).
- ▶ Note how to live out the Christian life in the middle of suffering and persecution.

## 2 Peter

- ▶ Peter is most likely awaiting execution as he writes this letter.
- ▶ Primary theme: growth in grace and knowledge.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Grow in His grace (1:1-11).
  - Look forward to His coming (1:12-21).
  - Trust in His judgment (2).
  - Cling to His Word (3).

- ▶ Note the emphasis of Peter regarding the church:
  - Satan can come as a lion to devour with persecution (1 Peter).
  - Satan can come as a serpent to deceive with false doctrine (2 Peter).

## 1 John

- ▶ Primary themes:
  - God is light (1:5).
  - God is love (4:8, 16).
  - God is life (1:1-2; 5:11-13).
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - That we might have fellowship (1:3).
  - That we might have joy (1:4).
  - That we might not sin (2:1-2).
  - That we might overcome error (2:26).
  - That we might have assurance (5:13).
- ▶ Note how John uses simple foundational words over and over again: love (46 times), know (40 times), sin (27 times), abide/remain (24 times), world (23 times), life (13 times).

## 2 John

- ▶ Written to either one local church or an esteemed woman in a local church.
- ▶ Primary theme: The church must...
  - Guard the doctrine of the incarnation.
  - Avoid false teachers.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Practicing the truth (1-6).
  - Protecting the truth (7-11).

## 3 John

- ▶ Shortest book in the Bible.
- ▶ Primary theme: hospitality in the church.
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - Gaius: A prosperous Christian (1-8).
  - Diotrephes: A proud Christian (9-10).
  - Demetrius: A pleasant Christian (11-12).

## Jude

- ▶ Written by Judas, the brother of Jesus.
- ▶ Primary theme: “          contend           for the faith” (3).
- ▶ Overall structure:
  - To condemn the practices of the ungodly in the church.
  - To counsel believers to hold fast and contend for the faith.
- ▶ Note how Jude emphasizes the power of Christ to keep His church to the end.

## Revelation

- ▶ What genre is it?
  - Apocalyptic literature (1:1).
  - Prophecy (1:3).
  - Epistle (1:4).
- ▶ This book has no parallel...

## Revelation

- ▶ Written...
  - By John when he was exiled on Patmos.
  - To Christians facing persecution in the first century.
  - About the gospel and the future of God’s kingdom.
- ▶ Primary theme is the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Note the Old Testament throughout Revelation...
  - **278** out of 404 verses contain references to the Old Testament!
  - Most often referring to the Psalms, Daniel, Zechariah, Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel.
- ▶ Help in understanding the apocalyptic imagery...
  - Remember that the imagery is fantasy.
  - John interprets the most important images.
  - See the visions as a whole, not always pressing every detail.
- ▶ See the majesty of God in Christ all over Revelation!
  - Throne is used 44 times.
  - King, kingdom, or rule about 37 times.
  - Power and authority about 40 times.
- ▶ Main approaches to interpreting Revelation:
  - Pretorius = only intended for original readers in 1<sup>st</sup> century.
  - Historical = all of church history is fulfilling it.
  - Symbolic = battle between Christ and Satan – good and evil.
  - Futurist = total prophecy – actual events to happen one day.

### #3. The New Testament is Theology

- How does God reveal His Kingdom in the New Testament:
- Through the gospel of the Kingdom.
  - Through the mission of the Kingdom.
  - Through the hope of the Kingdom.

#### The Gospel of the Kingdom

➤ **The King has come.**

- He is the anointed King
- He is God
- He is the new Adam
- He is the true Israel
- He is the Passover Lamb
- He is the Word of God
- He is the tabernacle
- He is the temple

➤ **The King has conquered.**

- Jesus has authority over nature
- Jesus has authority over disease
- Jesus has authority over demons
- Jesus has authority over suffering
- Jesus has authority over sin
- Jesus has authority over death

➤ **The King is in control.**

- He has a plan.
  - ...His plan never fails
  - ...He planned to go to the cross
  - ...He planned to rise from the grave
  - ...He planned to send His spirit
  - ...He planned to bring the nations to Himself.
- He has the power to accomplish His plan.
  - ...His authority cannot be stopped.
  - ...His word cannot be stopped.
  - ...Nothing can or will keep His plan from being accomplished!

➤ **The King has a new community.**

- He enlarges the Kingdom through the church.
- He expresses the Kingdom in the church.
  - ...The church comprises the body of Christ.
  - ...The church possesses the authority of Christ.
  - ...The church embodies the love of Christ.
  - ...The church completes the suffering of Christ.
  - ...The church displays the **glory** of Christ.
- He entrusts the Kingdom to the church.
  - ...The church must guard the Gospel.
  - ...The church must proclaim the Gospel.

### **The Hope of the Kingdom**

➤ **The King is coming back.**

- He came as the lamb.
- He will come as the lion.
- The King will bring...
  - ...Final redemption for those who have accepted the Kingdom.
  - ...Final judgement for those who have rejected the Kingdom.

➤ **The King will host an eternal celebration.**

- Indescribable beauty.
  - ...A new creation
  - ...A new Jerusalem
  - ...A new temple
  - ...A new order
- Inexpressible joy.
  - ...It is full – eternal satisfaction
  - ...It is free
- Irreversible justice.
  - ...Eternal sonship
  - ...Everlasting separation