

# SURVEY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Bible is a collection of many books. The two major divisions are the Old Testament, and the New Testament. In the Bible's case, the word 'Testament' means 'Covenant', as in 'Old' and 'New' Covenant. There are a total of 66 books that make up the Bible, 39 of which are in the Old Testament and 27 are in the New Testament.

The Bible's unity is due to the fact that, ultimately, it has one Author—God Himself. The Bible is "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). The human authors wrote exactly what God wanted them to write, and the result was the perfect and holy Word of God (Psalm 12:6, 2 Peter 1:21).

From the Old Testament, God raised up a family from within Israel through whom the blessing would come: the family of David (Psalm 89:3-4). Then, from the family of David was promised one Man who would bring the promised blessing (Isaiah 11:1-10).

The New Testament details the coming of that promised Man. His name was Jesus, and He fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament as He lived a perfect life, died to become the Savior, and rose from the dead.

The New Testament was written from approximately A.D. 45 to approximately A.D. 95. The New Testament was written in Greek, the everyday form of the Greek language in the first century A.D.

A. D. It is an abbreviation for "Anno Domini," which is a Latin phrase meaning "in the year of our Lord," referring to the year of Christ's birth, not His death.

At the beginning of this time, Israel was an occupied country, under the control of Rome. After the Jewish-Roman wars which took place from 66 A. D to 135 A. D., Israel ceased to be a country until 1948.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO FIVE SECTIONS:

1. **The Gospels** – Four account describing the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The word was derived from the Old English *god-spell*, meaning “good news”

The Gospels give us four different, yet not conflicting, accounts of the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Gospels demonstrate how Jesus was the promised Messiah of the Old Testament and lay the foundation for the teaching of the rest of the New Testament.

The word “Messiah” is a Hebrew word *that* means “anointed one” or “chosen one.” The Greek equivalent is the word *Christos*, in English, *Christ*. The name “Jesus Christ” is the same as “Jesus the Messiah.” In biblical times, anointing someone with oil was a sign that God was consecrating or setting apart that person for a particular role. Thus, an “anointed one” was someone with a special, God-ordained purpose. The four Gospels are names after the man who wrote them, they are:

- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John

2. **History** – The history of Christianity is laid out in the book of **Acts**. It basically starts where the four Gospel left off. The opening theme is set in Acts 1:4-5 “*Gathering them together*”, *He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”* Acts records the deeds of Jesus' apostles, the men Jesus sent out into the world to proclaim the Gospel of salvation. As these apostles traveled throughout the world they would establish churches. Acts tells us of the beginning of the church and its rapid growth in the first century A.D.

- Acts - wrote by Luke

**3. *Pauline Epistles*** - (letters) (books) – These letters were sent to the churches that Paul had established. These are the thirteen books which have the name Paul as the first word, hence claiming authorship by the Apostle Paul. Most of the names of the Epistles represent a people group from a particular region or town. For example: Romans was wrote to all who are beloved of God in Rome, Corinthians was wrote to the church of God in Corinth (Greece)  
(1 Corinthians 1:1-2).

- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy
- Titus
- Philemon

**4. *General Epistles*** (letters) (books) These are varies letters wrote by either an apostle or brother of Jesus, to difference individuals, groups, or churches.

- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude

**5. Prophecy** - A prophecy is a process in which one or more messages that have been communicated from God to a prophet, then communicated to others. Such messages involve divine inspiration, interpretation, or revelation of conditioned events to come.

- Revelation - wrote by the Apostle John

The word *epistle* comes from the Greek word that means “letter” or “message.” Epistles were a primary form of written communication in the ancient world, especially during New Testament times. Since many of the New Testament books were originally written as letters to churches or individuals, they are referred to as the Epistles.

An epistle would have been written on a scroll. Often, it was dictated and then reviewed by the author before being delivered by a trusted messenger.

For example, 1 Peter mentions that it was Peter’s letter written down by Silvanus, or Silas (1 Peter 5:12). Timothy was involved in the writing and delivery of several of the apostle Paul’s letters (Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Philemon 1:1), although Paul signed each one to verify that he was the author (Galatians 6:1).

Epistles also generally followed a familiar format. Most of Paul’s letters begin with an introduction that identifies his name and those of any associates, mentions his audience, and gives a greeting. The introduction is followed by the main body of the letter, and the epistles often conclude with a general blessing and personal notes to individuals within the recipient church.

This is just the opposite of what we do today, where we start by addressing the person we are writing to; usually using ‘Dear’ so on, then ending by tell the person who is sending the letter.

The ***Pauline Epistles***, were written by the Apostle Paul, they contain much of what the doctrine of the Christian faith is built upon, especially in relationship to salvation.

The ***Pauline Epistles*** expound on the doctrines of:

- Sanctification
- Justification
- Redemption
- Reconciliation.

The ***Pauline Epistles*** contain significant teachings on difficult theological issues such as:

- Election
- Predestination
- Foreknowledge
- The deity/humanity of Christ
- God's ongoing relationship with Israel
- The Judgment Seat of Christ.

The ***Pauline Epistles*** also get very practical in how the church should function, containing teaching on:

- Spiritual gifts,
- Qualifications of church leaders
- The role of women in ministry
- The relationship between law and grace in the life of a Christ-follower.

The ***General Epistles*** compliment the Pauline Epistles with additional teaching and application. These include Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude. The author of Hebrews is unknown (though many have historically attributed it to Paul or one of Paul's associates). James was one of the earliest New Testament writings and was written by James, the half-brother of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7). The apostle Peter wrote 1 and 2 Peter. The apostle John (the same author of the Gospel of John and Revelation) wrote 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John. The short Epistle of Jude was written by Jude, another half-brother of Jesus (Jude 1:1).

The book of **Revelation** prophesies the events that will occur in the end times.

Revelation 1:1, 4, 9 and 22:8 specifically identify the author of the Book of Revelation as the apostle John. It was likely written between A.D. 90 and 95.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John by God “to show his servants what must soon take place.”

It is the final warning that the world will surely end and judgment will be certain. It gives us a glimpse of heaven and all of the glories awaiting those who keep their robes white (Revelation 22:14).

Revelation takes us through the great tribulation with all its woes and the final fire that all unbelievers will face for eternity. The book reiterates the fall of Satan and the doom he and his angels are bound for.

We are shown the duties of all creatures and angels of heaven and the promises of the saints that will live forever with Jesus in the New Jerusalem.

All of the known authors of the New Testament are either an apostle (Paul, Peter, John) or a family member of Jesus (James, Jude), except Luke who was considered an Evangelist. Each of these individuals had a unique calling from the Lord Jesus that included writing letters to others. These letters, inspired by the Holy Spirit, are preserved as part of the New Testament.