

The Bible: God's Truth

Unit 1, Lesson 2b

The New Testament

The 27 books of the New Testament are broken into these categories:

GOSPELS: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

HISTORY: Acts

PAULINE EPISTLES: Romans through Philemon

An epistle is a letter, usually formal correspondence

GENERAL EPISTLES: Hebrews through Jude

PROPHECY: Revelation

GOSPELS

These four books are written accounts of Jesus' earthly ministry, describing the good news of salvation to enter God's Kingdom through His provision of the ultimate sacrifice for mankind's sins: Jesus.

"Gospel" is from the Greek word *εὐαγγέλιον* (euaggelion) meaning "good news"

MATTHEW: written by one of the twelve Apostles, a former tax collector, emphasizing Jesus as Messiah, for a Jewish audience

MARK: a short record of Jesus' ministry, focusing on the cross, probably written for Gentiles, considered the memoirs of Peter recorded by John Mark

Gentile:
➤ one who is not a Jew

LUKE: a gospel written after research and investigation by Luke, who accompanied the Apostle Paul on his missionary journeys, focusing on Jesus' relationship with people

JOHN: written by John, one of the twelve Apostles, and one of the three closest to Jesus during His earthly ministry

Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as "synoptic" gospels. Synoptic is from the Greek for synopsis meaning "seeing together". This term describes these gospels because they portray similar incidents and teachings.

Each gospel writer gives his reason for writing an account of Jesus' life. Read these passages and find out why they did it.

Matthew 1:1

1. What does Matthew consider important to establish at the beginning of his narrative?

"Christ" is Greek and "Messiah" is Hebrew for "Anointed One"

Mark 1:1

Mark is thought to be the earliest gospel written

2. What was Mark's purpose for writing this material, keeping in mind the meaning of the word "gospel".
3. How does Mark describe Jesus in this verse and how is this significant?

Luke 1:1-4

The name Theophilus means "lover of God"

4. What did Luke do before he wrote his history of Jesus' life and ministry?
5. What reason does he give for preparing this manuscript?

John 20:30-31

6. What does John hope you will do when you read what he has written?
7. What benefit will belief of what he has written bring to you?

HISTORY

A single book describes the history of the believers immediately after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, the establishment of belief among Jews and Gentiles, and details of Paul's missionary journeys in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey).

ACTS: a continuation of Luke's report after his research into the faith-based movement centered on Jesus, the Messiah

PAULINE EPISTLES

The Apostle Paul established groups of believers throughout Asia Minor. At least nine letters he wrote to these churches to instruct and encourage them have been preserved in the New Testament. These letters would have been circulated among the churches so that others would receive the message as well. Four letters that Paul also wrote to individuals are part of the Bible.

ROMANS: a letter to the church in Rome

1 AND 2 CORINTHIANS: two letters to the church at Corinth

GALATIANS: a letter to the churches of Galatia

EPHESIANS: a letter to the church in Ephesus

PHILIPPIANS: a letter to the church at Philippi

COLOSSIANS: a letter to the church at Colossae

1 and 2 THESSALONIANS: two letters to the church at Thessalonica with counsel and teaching

1 and 2 TIMOTHY: two letters to Timothy, a young man with whom Paul had a close relationship

TITUS: a letter to Titus to strengthen him in his work with the church along with instructions about church matters

PHILEMON: a letter to Philemon regarding the return of his slave

OTHER EPISTLES

These letters have various authors, including the apostles Peter and John.

HEBREWS: written by an unknown author describing the priesthood of Jesus, some believe it was authored by Paul, but this is inconclusive

JAMES: a letter to the church about practical lifestyle issues for the believer

1 and 2 PETER: two letters to the church written by the Apostle Peter, warning of false teachers and outlining events of the return of Jesus

1, 2, and 3 JOHN: three letters written by the Apostle John, concerned with living a life of love

JUDE: a short letter warning against false teachers

PROPHECY

Much effort is put into understanding the only New Testament book of prophecy, although with no consensus about how the images and details should be interpreted. This makes it an exciting and puzzling book to study.

"Pauline" refers to the Apostle Paul

Asia Minor = Macedonia = Turkey

Rome, Italy, was the capital city of the ancient Roman Empire

Corinth was a city in Greece

Galatia was a region of northern and central Asia Minor

Ephesus was a city on the western coast of Asia Minor

Philippi, Colossae, and Thessalonica were cities located in Asia Minor

1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are also known as the Pastoral Epistles

Abraham, the founding father of the Jewish race, was the first person called a Hebrew in the Bible (Genesis 14:13)

Hebrew = Israelite = Jew

Petrine epistles are those written by Peter

Johannine epistles are those written by John

REVELATION: Jesus reveals events to occur on earth, including His return to earth as victor and ruler over evil and the establishment of God's dwelling with mankind, in a vision to the Apostle John near the end of John's life.

Revelation means something revealed, which is, in this case, events in mankind's history

"Apocalypse" is from the Greek, meaning a prophetic disclosure or revelation

PROPHECY: Read **Hebrews 1:1-2**

How has God spoken in the past?

What were prophets to do with their messages?

How has God spoken in these last days?

How was Jesus' ministry similar to that of the prophets? See Matthew 24:35; John 8:26, 28; 12:49, 50; 14:10.

When are the "last days" mentioned in Hebrews 1:2?