

Survey of the New Testament

Explanation of Weekly Preparation For Class

Most lessons have a few assignments for everyone (“ALL”), followed by four other assignments (explained above). Each week, you should choose at least one of the four assignments to complete before class (key verses, concordance, dictionary, additional reading and application). Avoid doing the same type assignment from week to week in order to develop your abilities in the various ways to study.

Key Verses Read each verse that is listed. Out of that list, choose three verses and for each of those, write down an important truth to be learned from that verse.

Concordance Work Most books have key words related to the theme of that book. Use a concordance to find how many times that word appears in the book we are studying.

Dictionary Work Use a dictionary to define the key words related to the theme of that book.

Chapters & Truths Read the assigned chapter(s) of the book we are studying and identify a few lessons that we should learn from those chapters or answer related questions.

In addition to learning the theme and content of each book, this series of lessons is also intended to give us practice using various “study tools.” All of this work can be done using books or computer programs. If you do not have a Bible dictionary, Bible concordance, or a Bible-related computer program, I can help you get those. There are several internet sites offering free Bible programs. We cannot devote class time to learning how to use these programs, but if you need help with that, we can arrange time to do that.

Each week, we will study one book of the Bible, beginning with Matthew until we get to 2 Thessalonians, which should take roughly 3 months. We will begin our study with an introduction to the New Testament.

Introduction to the New Testament (1)

Over the next few months we will study half of the New Testament (Matthew to 2 Thessalonians). Before we begin that study, we will learn about the history of books of the New Testament. These 27 books did not fall from the sky but were revealed at the right time, by God's design and decision. Let's spend some time thinking about how the New Testament has arrived to our time.

The Old Testament: Essential Background

The Old Testament may be broken into four basic parts:

(1) The history of man, with special attention given to how Israel became a nation (Genesis-Exodus).

(2) Israel entering the promised land (Exodus-Joshua).

(3) Israel possessing the promised land and then their unfaithfulness and captivity (Joshua/Judges-2 Chronicles and Job-Zephaniah).

(4) A remnant of the Israelites (those from the southern tribes) return to Canaan (Ezra-Esther, Haggai-Malachi).

* The Jews often divided it in two sections: the Law (or "Moses") and the Prophets (Lk. 24:27, 44-45).

In every single book of the Old Testament, we learn how badly man needs a savior because of sin. Here are a few passages which show that: Gen. 2:17; 3:6; Judg. 21:25; Is. 59:1-2 (Heb. 10:1-4).

Prophecy is another important part of the Old Testament. Prophecies are general at first (Gen. 3:15; 12:3; 49:10) but get increasingly specific the further you go into the Old Testament (Dan. 2:44; Mic. 5:2).

Without a knowledge of man and Israel's history, man's need for a savior, and prophecy it would be practically impossible to understand the New Testament. When you pray, thank God for the Old Testament!

The Purpose of the New Testament

Having all necessary background information in the Old Testament, the New Testament has a focused purpose, summarized in one word: Jesus.

The New Testament shows the connection between Old Testament prophecies and Jesus. In Luke 24:44-47, Jesus reminds the apostles of the importance of Old Testament prophecy. They would be using it as they went out to preach repentance and remission of sins in all the world. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John specifically point out prophecies which Jesus fulfilled (Matthew 1:22-23; 2:1, 5; Mark 1:1-3; Jn. 19:36-37) while others are identified by more diligent study (Is. 53:9 & Lk. 23:32; Mt. 27:57-60).

The New Testament records Jesus' deeds proving His deity and authority (Jn. 21:24-25; 20:30-31).

The New Testament records Jesus' words which all men, having been assured of His authority, must accept if they diligently seek God. Some of Jesus' words came from His mouth while He was on earth (Jn. 12:48; 16:4), but He did not teach everything that man needed to know. The Holy Spirit delivered the remaining message to the apostles and prophets (Jn. 16:12-13; Eph. 3:3-5).

The Proof that the New Testament is From God, Not Man

Today, television shows, school teachers, and many religious teachers insist that the New Testament is from man, not God. Are they right?

The New Testament claims to be the commandments of the Lord God—the same God who revealed the Old Testament (Ex. 34:32; 1 Cor. 14:37). Both the Old and New Testament are called Scripture (2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Pet. 3:15). The Bible claims the same author from Genesis to Revelation.

One way that we know the Old and New Testament go together is because of their similarity. The book of Hebrews tells us that God commanded many of the practices of the Old Testament in order to symbolize the better way He would later reveal. For example, the blood of the lamb in the Old Testament was "shadow" of the blood Jesus would give, so He is called "The Lamb of God" (Jn. 1:29, 36). The religion of Islam and their book, the Koran, have no connection to the practices of the Old Testament, though they claim that their book is also from God. They make that claim, but there is no evidence. The New Testament is the only book that matches perfectly with the Old Testament events and practices.

Also, the people, teachings, and events of the New Testament fit perfectly with the prophecies of the Old Testament. Jesus reminded the apostles of this, and we have the same reminder (Lk. 24:44-46). When prophecies are made and a record of their fulfillment exists, that is a 100% certain guarantee that God, not man, is the source of that book. We can be certain that God is the author of the Old and New Testament.

Short answer

1. How many books are in the New Testament?
2. What nation does the Old Testament primarily tell us about?
3. What Old Testament books tell us about Israel possessing the Promised Land and then being taken away from the land into captivity?
4. Find a verse from the Old Testament that shows the need for a savior from sin.
5. Find a verse from the Old Testament that is a prophecy and find the New Testament verse where that prophecy was fulfilled.
6. Why should we thank God that we have the Old Testament?

True or False

1. Micah prophesied that Jesus would be born in Jerusalem.
2. Jesus claimed to be God but could not prove it.
3. The Old Testament and New Testament are both called Scripture.
4. Both the Bible and the Koran are from God.
5. Jesus taught everything that we need to know while He was on earth.

Thought questions

What deed did Jesus do on earth that proves that He was, and is, fully God?

Have you ever heard someone say that the Bible is not from God? When and from who did you hear that?

How can we be certain that the Bible is from God?

Introduction to the New Testament (2)

In our first study, we saw the connection between the Old and New Testament and that God revealed them. When God revealed them, nobody spoke the English language, so how do we have God's word in English today? Let's learn how God used many men to preserve and give us a Bible in our language.

From Heaven to Men

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would deliver all truth to the apostles (Jn. 16:12-13). The words they wrote were to be read and understood by diligent workman then and now (Eph. 3:3-4; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15).

1. *The Bible is Revealed* The Bible was written one book at a time and delivered to specific saints and churches who passed those letters onto others (Col. 4:16; Gal. 1:2; 2 Pet. 3:15; Rev. 2-3).

Since these words were from God, it is not surprising that Christians copied what the apostles wrote, but this would not be an easy or common task especially in a time where not every person was trained in reading and writing.

During the first century, words were written on scrolls or dried animal skin, called parchments (2 Tim. 4:16). These are the materials onto which the New Testament was written and copied. We know that the writings of the apostles and prophets were copied and preserved because very old books and letters that were written soon after the lives of the apostles have been discovered which quote from or refer to all of the New Testament.

2. *Many Copies of the Bible* Ancient copies of the New Testament books written in Greek are called manuscripts. "The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world." (Lightfoot, 120). As additional manuscripts are discovered, our confidence in the accurate preservation of the New Testament grows.

Ever since the books of the New Testament were revealed, man has continued making copies of it, even by people who were not carefully following those writings. Paul warned that dangerous teachings would soon come but not all of those teachings would contradict all of the Bible (Acts 20:29-31; 1 Tim. 4:1-3). One of the errors that quickly developed was in the area of the organization of the local church. Churches with elders eventually appointed one of the men as a "head elder," who was then called "a bishop." Then all the "bishops" in an area would meet and choose a man to be leader over that entire area. This led to the creation of new teachings that were not in the Bible. These men and churches began following some of the teachings of the Bible and some of the teachings of these new "leaders."

Around the third century, one of the things these new leaders decided was to have certain men live away from society and live in private places called "monasteries." The men who went were called "monks." Some of these men were given the regular job of making copies of Scripture. Although monks and monasteries were not a part of God's revealed plan for His people, many copies of Scripture were made by monks and kept in these monasteries. Some of the copies of the Bible made in these places were lost for hundreds of years but later discovered. Some of the most well-preserved copies of the Bible discovered from the ancient past are given names, such as The Vatican Manuscript, The Sinaitic Manuscript, and The Alexandrian Manuscript.

3. *The Bible is Translated* After the Bible was revealed and copied, the Bible was wanted by people who did not speak, read, or write in the Greek language, so the Bible was translated. These rare copies of the Bible were often controlled by churches who were following only portions of what the Bible said. Ever since God revealed the New Testament, men continued creating new teachings and practices taught neither by Jesus nor the apostles and not found in Scripture. The same thing happened in the Old Testament, where people had and kept part of God's word but added to and subtracted from His teachings (1 Kg. 12:28-33).

Although these men had abandoned many of the Bible's teachings, they still read from it and thus continued the work of copying and translating the Bible. Yet, imagine how long it took to copy the Bible one at a time—book by book, paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence, word by word, letter by letter! It was a slow, tiresome, and sometimes an error-prone process.

The Rapid Spread of the Bible

1. *The Catholic Church Limited Access to the Bible* When copies of the Bible were few and expensive, most people did not have their own copy. The Bibles in Catholic churches were typically written and read from in Latin, even in places where the common person did not speak the Latin language. So when the priest would read from the Bible in Latin, most people did not understand what he was reading. Then he would tell the people what the Bible said or meant, but they could not search the Scriptures to know whether or not he was teaching them the truth (Acts 17:11). This was never how God wanted His word taught.

In Nehemiah 8:1-8, the Jews assembled together to hear the reading of Scripture. Ezra read in the language of the people who listened, so all could understand. Then he and the Levites “helped the people to understand the Law.” This was very different from the practice of the Catholic Church.

The apostle Paul encouraged all Christians to study and understand Scripture (Eph. 3:3-5; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15). Since copies of the Bible were rare, the Catholic Church had an easy job of keeping the Scriptures away from the average person, until the printing press was invented.

2. *Men Prominent in the Production and Spread of the Bible*

A. John Wycliffe lived from 1330-1384. He was the first person to translate the entire Bible from Latin into English, though he had help. This was completed in 1382, but it was still rare for everyone to have a personal copy of the Bible.

B. William Tyndale lived in the early 1500s. He translated the New Testament from Greek into English. In 1526, his translation was brought to England. The Catholic Church did not welcome his work, but they could not stop it. After Tyndale’s death, a king of England (King James) paid for another translation of the Bible into English. Completed in 1611, historically this is the most well-known and widely-used English translation known as The King James Version.

C. Johannes Gutenberg Around 1453 the Bible was printed on a new invention--the printing press, by Johannes Gutenberg. This began a new era for the availability of the Bible.

3. *Common English translations*

A. King James (New King James) Version

B. New American Standard Bible

C. New International Version- Due to the influence of Calvinism, early printings of the NIV often used the phrase “sinful flesh” instead of “flesh.” This was mostly corrected in editions of the NIV printed since 2011.

- When purchasing a Bible and considering a new version, find out who the translators are and what approach they used. A “word for word” approach (“complete equivalence”) is the most literal translation approach. A “thought for thought” approach (“dynamic equivalence”) uses a less precise word if the translator thinks it makes the sentence more readable or understandable. A “paraphrase” is more like a commentary. You should also find out the translations approach to gender.

This historical information is interesting and helpful in many ways, but above all, we trust that God would not reveal the way of salvation through Jesus Christ and then allow that message to be lost leaving man without a way to salvation. Jesus promised that His word would not pass away (Matt. 24:35). Peter wrote so that there would always be a reminder of what he taught and affirmed that the word of the Lord endures forever (2 Pet. 1:13-15; 1 Pet. 1:25). God desires all men to be saved and is not far from any (1 Tim. 2:3-4; Acts 17:27).

Modern Arrangement of the New Testament Books

1. Matthew-Acts record the life and teachings of Jesus and the initial spread of the gospel.

2. Romans-Revelation are arranged according to the author of the book(s).

A. Romans – Philemon were written by the apostle Paul.

B. Hebrews’ author is not identified by name in the book.

C. James The author identifies himself as “James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). Most people believe that this is one of Jesus’ brothers.

D. 1 & 2 Peter were written by the apostle Peter

E. Jude The author identifies himself as “Jude, the brother of James” (1:1). He might be the brother of the author of the book of James, but Scripture does not give all these details.

F. 1-3 John and Revelation were written by the apostle John (1 Jn. 1:1-3; Rev. 1:1-2).

Short answer

1. How much truth did Jesus promise that the Holy Spirit would bring to the apostles?
2. Read Ephesians 3:1-4 and answer the following questions.
 - A. What did Paul do with the knowledge that God gave him?
 - B. What did Paul expect the Ephesians, and us, to do what with he wrote?
 - C. When we read Paul's writings, will we know what Paul knew?
3. After the truth of the gospel was spread, describe how man changed God's plan for the organization of the local church.
4. Name one of the well-known and well-preserved ancient manuscripts of the Bible.
5. How did the invention of the printing press make the Bible available to more people?
6. When Ezra read the Scripture, what helped the hearers to understand what he was reading?

True or False

1. Today, we can have the same knowledge as the apostles had about truth.
2. We have evidence which shows that the Bible today is the same as it was 2,000 years ago.
3. The Holy Spirit speaks to us today the same way He spoke to the apostles.
4. The first translation of the Bible into English was the King James version.

Thought questions

1. When we have plenty of food available, it is easy to forget how thankful to God we should be for it. If we had only a little bit of food, we might be more grateful. The same can be true with the Bible. How many Bibles are in your house? Write down that number: _____
2. Do you think that most families in other countries have that many Bibles in their home?

* Most of the historical names and dates in this lesson were found in the book "How We Got The Bible" by Neil Lightfoot. For more information on the history of the Bible, read it for yourself. It is a relatively short and simple book.

Matthew

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 28

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:18; 3:2; 4:23; 6:33; 16:16-18; 26:26-28; 28:18-20)

Concordance work (kingdom, Christ, church, covenant, authority, Son of Man)

Dictionary work (Christ, church, covenant, authority, baptize)

Read chapters 5-6 and write three important truths we can learn *or* read chapters 26-27 and write three important truths we can learn

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Mark

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 16

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:17; 2:5-11; 4:39; 7:21; 9:1; 16:15-16)

Concordance work (immediately, Moses, kingdom, taught, Son of Man, Son of God)

Dictionary work (Christ, preach, gospel, transfigured, baptize)

Read chapters 6-7 and write three important truths we can learn *or* read chapter 14-15 and write three important truths we can learn

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Luke

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 24

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:1-4; 6:12-13; 20:1-2; 22:39-44; 24:44-49)

Concordance work (“it happened,” Son of Man, Son of God, Christ, kingdom, lost)

Dictionary work (betrothed, Christ, woe, repent, Scripture)

Read chapter 6, 16 and write three important truths we can learn *or* read chapter 22-23 and write three important truths we can learn

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

John

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 21

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key verses-1 (1:1; 2:19; 3:3, 16; 4:23; 8:31-32; 12:48; 13:5; 14:6; 15:26-27; 16:12-13; 20:28-29, 30-31)

[other key verses 6:48; 9:33; 10:17-18; 21:24-25]

Concordance work (Christ, life, light, believe, love, witness, glory, truth, kingdom, “I am the”)

Dictionary work (Christ, believe, love, witness)

Read chapters 18-19 and write three important truths we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Acts

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 28

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses-1 (1:8; 2:38, 42; 4:12; 8:12, 35-36; 10:34-35; 16:31-33; 19:5-6; 20:7; 22:16)

[other key verses 5:29; 14:23; 26:25; 28:30-31]

Concordance work (Holy Spirit, baptized, Christ, Peter, Paul, kingdom, church)

Dictionary work (Christ, baptize, repent, kingdom, church)

Read chapter 2 and write three important truths we can learn

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Romans

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 16

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:16-17; 3:9, 21-23; 4:7-8; 5:6-8; 6:1-4, 23; 7:4; 8:2-3; 9:6-8; 10:1-3, 9-10, 17; 12:1-2; 14:1-3, 20)

[other key verses 2:6-10; 10:13-15]

Concordance work (faith, believes, law, sin, saved, righteousness)

Dictionary work (faith, works, believe, gospel, righteous)

Read chapter 10 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

1 Corinthians

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 16

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:10-13; 2:9-13; 3:1-3; 5:9-11; 6:9-11; 10:11-13; 11:18, 23-26; 14:26, 40; 15:3-4; 16:1-2)

[other key verses 4:6-7; 7:10-11; 12:4-10; 13:8-10]

Concordance work (Christ, immorality, concerning, Spirit, knowledge, wisdom)

Dictionary work (carnal, saint, sanctify, justify, tongue, prophet)

Read chapter 2 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

2 Corinthians

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 13

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:3-5, 9-10; 3:6-7; 4:8-10; 6:4-10; 10:10; 11:3-4, 12-15, 22-28)

Concordance work (Christ, fellowship, comfort, righteousness, boast, boasting, glory)

Dictionary work (apostle, wages, disqualified, covenant)

Read chapter 5 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Galatians

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 6

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:6-9; 2:11-14; 3:19, 23-25, 26-29; 4:9-11; 5:1-4, 19-21, 22-26; 6:1-2, 8-10)

Concordance work: (Christ, gospel, flesh, Spirit, law, grace)

Dictionary work: (pervert, accursed, gospel, tutor, flesh, covenant)

Read chapter 3 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Ephesians

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 6

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:3, 19-23; 2:1-3; 7-10, 18-20; 3:1-5, 10-11; 4:4-6, 11; 5:17-19; 6:13-17)

Concordance work: (Christ, saints, body, grace, knowledge, Gentiles)

Dictionary work: (nature, reconcile, mystery, revelation, coarse jesting, love)

Read chapter 4 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Philippians

ALL:

Read chapter 1-4

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:1, 5, 27; 2:4, 5-8, 12; 3:8, 12-14, 17-18; 4:6-9, 10-13, 15-16)

Concordance work: (Christ, gospel, rejoice, need, love, mind)

Dictionary work: (bishop, defense, pattern, supplication, rubbish)

Read chapter 2 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

Colossians

ALL:

Read chapter 1-4

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:13-14, 16, 18; 2:6-7, 12, 14, 16-17, 2:20-23; 3:1-3, 17; 4:5-6)

Concordance work (Christ, body, wisdom)

- Also read chapter 3 and write two important lessons we can learn.

Dictionary work (perfect [1:28], reconcile [1:20]; firstborn [1:15, 18]; translated [1:13]; name [3:17])

Read chapter 1 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

1 Thessalonians

ALL:

Read chapter 1, 5

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:5; 2:12, 13, 24-25; 3:6-8, 12-13; 4:8, 11-12, 13-18; 5:2, 12-13, 22)

Concordance work (Lord Jesus Christ, gospel, comfort)

- make a list of all the different ways Paul refers to Jesus in this book.

Dictionary work (Macedonia (1:8), Achaia (1:8), church)

- Read chapter 2 and list the ways Paul said he did behave and the ways he did not behave.

Read chapter 4 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class

2 Thessalonians

ALL:

Read chapters 1-3

Summarize this book in one word, a short phrase, or a few sentences:

What makes this book unique among the other books of the Bible?

Key Verses (1:3, 6-10; 2:14-15; 3:6, 14-15)

Concordance work (Lord Jesus Christ, tradition, disorderly)

- also, make a list of all the different ways Paul refers to Jesus in this book.

Dictionary work (tradition [2:15], unreasonable [3:2], withdraw [3:6], disorderly [3:6], note [3:14])

- also, read chapter 1 and write one important lesson we can learn.

Read chapter 3 and write three important lessons we can learn.

Your preparation for class

Notes in class