

New Testament Survey (Part 1)

Gospels and Acts

The first five books tell the story of the New Testament.

The Gospel Accounts - The Life and Ministry of Christ

- Written for the same primary purpose.
- Written from different viewpoints.
- Written for different audiences.
- The first three are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they largely share the same content.

Acts - The Life and Ministry of the Early Church

Matthew

- Written...
 - By Matthew, a Jewish tax collector.
 - In the 70s-80s A.D., soon after the destruction of the temple.
 - To Jewish Christians and/or Jews considering faith in Christ.
- Primary theme: Jesus is the “Promised King.”
- Look for the focus on the “Kingdom of God” in the book’s overall structure:
 - Introduction of the King (1-4:11)
 - Proclamation of the Kingdom (4:12-7:29)
 - The Power and Mission of the Kingdom (8-10)
 - Questioning of the Kingdom (11:1-13:52)
 - Opposition to and Confession of the Kingdom (13:53-18:35)
 - Reception and Rejection of the Kingdom (19-25)
 - Victory of the King (26-28)
- Look up cross-references:
 - There’s 129 references or allusions to 25 of the 39 Old Testament books!

Mark

- Written...
 - By John Mark, who was close to Peter.
 - Between 65-70 A.D.
 - To Gentile Christians in Rome who were 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)

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.
- See how the overall structure works leads geographically toward Jerusalem
 - 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 (3:10-14; 12:13- 21; 16:1-13; 16:19-31; 19:1-10).

John

- Written...
 - By John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved.”
 - Sometime between 70-90 A.D.
 - “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
- 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).
- Note the seven signs that John includes:
 - 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).

Acts

- Written by Luke as “Part Two” of His Gospel.
- Primary theme: The Gospel spreads universally through the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- See how the overall structure leads geographically away from Jerusalem:
 - 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 repetition of “salvation” (2:21; 2:47; 4:12; 5:31; 13:23; 13:26, 47; 16:31; 28:28) and the “progress reports” regarding the advancement of the Gospel.
- See in the different speeches of Acts how the Gospel is contextualized in different settings to reach different people.