



RELEVANT

How To Study the Bible



**Lesson Four:
How is the Bible Constructed?**

Question: How is the New Testament Constructed?

The New Testament Consists of Five Parts

GOSPELS	HISTORY	PAULINE EPISTLES	GENERAL EPISTLES	APOCALYPTIC
Matthew Mark Luke John	The Acts of The Apostles	Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews	James 1 & 2 Peter 1, 2, & 3 John Jude	Revelation

The New Testament Books Were Written During the 1st Century

- ▶ The New Testament books were written sometime from about 50 AD to about 95 AD.
- ▶ Jesus was crucified by the Romans in about 30 AD.
- ▶ So, these books were written by some of Jesus' disciples/apostles, the help of eyewitnesses, and some of his family.
- ▶ **2 Peter 1:16-21 (NASB)** - *For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such a declaration as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory: "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased"— and we ourselves heard this declaration made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture becomes a matter of someone's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*
- ▶ **Luke 1:1-4 (NASB)** - *Since many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting to me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in an orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.*
- ▶ **1 Corinthians 15:3-9 (NASB)** - *For I handed down to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

There Were Nine People That Authored the New Testament

MATTHEW

- ▶ Matthew was one of the 12 original apostles and thus an eyewitness to the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Matthew, who was also called Levi, was a Jew who lived in Capernaum. He worked for the Romans as a tax collector, which means he was a rather shady businessman who would've been despised by his fellow Jews. In fact, he was working at his tax booth when Jesus called him to follow him (Mark 2:13).

MARK

- ▶ Mark's full name is John Mark and he had close connections with the apostles and the early church. His mother's name was Mary, and their home was one of the key gathering places for the first church in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12). Mark was also the cousin of Barnabas, another key leader in the early church (Col. 4:10), and he traveled with Barnabas and Paul for part of their first missionary journey. Towards the end of Paul's life, he asked Timothy to bring Mark to him because "he was useful to him" (2 Tim 4:11). Early church tradition says that the apostle Peter was the main source for the Gospel Mark wrote.

LUKE

- ▶ Luke is the author of Luke and Acts. He was a close colleague of the apostle Paul. He traveled with Paul from Troas to Philippi on Paul's second missionary journey (notice the "we" in Acts 16:11), remained there for a few years, rejoined Paul at the end of the third missionary journey (Acts 20:5-6), and stayed with him over the next four years while Paul was in prison. Luke was a physician by training, and, in Colossians 4, he's included among Paul's Gentile colleagues, which means he's most likely the only Gentile author in the New Testament. So, we can assume that almost certainly he used both eye-witness interviews and written material in producing his gospel. With Acts, Luke was a participant in many of the events recorded, especially in the last ten chapters.

JOHN

- ▶ John (who wrote the Gospel of John, the 3 letters of John, and Revelation) was one of the 12 original apostles and an eyewitness to the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He grew up in a family of commercial fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, and when Jesus called him and his brother James to follow him, they left the family business to become his disciple. As a young man, it appears he and his brother had a bit of a fiery side, being nicknamed "the sons of thunder" because of it (Mark 3:17; Luke 9:54). In his Gospel, John calls himself the "disciple whom Jesus loved," suggesting that he had a particularly close friendship with Jesus, and Jesus entrusted the care of his mother Mary to John as he hung on the cross (John 19:26-27). John outlived the other apostles (his later life spent in Ephesus) and his writings are likely the last ones of the New Testament.

PAUL

- ▶ Paul is the author of 13 letters in the New Testament. He grew up in a conservative Jewish home and was trained in the way of the Pharisees. His hometown was Tarsus (born with Roman citizenship), a large Greco-Roman commercial city in the southeastern corner of modern-day Turkey, but at some point he moved to Jerusalem for schooling (Acts 22:3). He studied under one of the greatest rabbis of his day, Gamaliel, and distinguished himself in zeal and learning (Gal 1:14). His zeal was so intense that it led him to persecute the Christians. Nevertheless, the rare combination of Jewish learning, Roman citizenship, and Greco-Roman city life made Paul uniquely equipped to make disciples throughout the Roman Empire. So, in order to bring Paul to himself, Jesus appeared to him when Paul was on his way to arrest Christians in Damascus (you can read the story in Acts 9). Once Paul surrendered to Jesus, he applied the same zeal to making disciples of Jesus that he once had for persecuting them. Paul's ministry spanned about 30 years until he was finally beheaded for his faith in Jesus in Rome in the mid-60's.

JAMES

- ▶ The author of James was the brother of Jesus. Based on the order in which the brothers are listed in Matthew 13:55, James is the next oldest son of Joseph and Mary after Jesus. During his ministry, James (and his other brothers) misunderstood Jesus' purpose and was skeptical of him (John 7:5). But after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to James (1 Corinthians 15:7), and this led James to believe in him. He became a key leader in the church in Jerusalem (e.g., Acts 12:17; Acts 15). Paul even calls him one of the "pillars" (Gal 2:9). According to early church tradition, James' leadership and faithfulness earned him several nicknames. He was called James the Just and also "camel knees" because he spent so much time on his knees praying for the Jews. He was stoned to death in Jerusalem in A.D. 62.

PETER

- ▶ Peter was one of the 12 original apostles and an eyewitness to the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. In fact, he and his brother Andrew were two of the very first followers of Jesus (John 1:40-41). His hometown was Bethsaida, and he and his brother were commercial fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. His actual name was Simon, but Jesus gave him the nickname "Peter" which means "Rock." His strong, bold personality resulted in him becoming the leader of the apostles, even though at times it caused him to say or do some foolish things. In spite of this strong personality, Peter denied Jesus three times on the night of his arrest. Peter wept bitterly over this failure and after his resurrection, Jesus reassured Peter by commissioning him to ministry (John 21:15). Peter became the key leader and spokesman in Jerusalem when the church first began, and he boldly proclaimed Jesus even to the very leaders who had crucified him. Peter was put to death for his faith in Jesus in the mid-60's, and tradition says he was crucified upside down because he didn't feel worthy to die the same way Jesus had.

JUDE

- ▶ The author of the short letter of Jude was Jude, Jesus' brother. Like his older brother James, he misunderstood Jesus' purpose and was skeptical of him during his ministry (John 7:5). But after Jesus' resurrection, Jude was gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem with the believers (Acts 1:14). Jude identifies himself in his letter as the "brother of James," seemingly content to be known as the sibling of a more well-known church leader.

HEBREWS

- ▶ There's been no shortage of speculation over who wrote Hebrews. Suggestions include people like Paul, Apollos, Luke, and Barnabas. Whoever wrote it had a good command of the Old Testament and a very polished Greek writing style. But the fact is, the early church father Origen was right when he said, as to who wrote Hebrews, "Only God knows"! That was true when he said it around A.D. 200 and it's still true today.

Who Were the Gospels Written To?

- ▶ Matthew to the Jews
- ▶ Mark to the Gentile Converts and Romans
- ▶ Luke to the Gentiles
- ▶ John was to the Universal Church

Moment of Reflection: How did this lesson impact you today?