

Lesson 1

Introduction to the New Testament

Welcome to this study, *A Journey through the Gospels and Acts*. Over the next 24 lessons, you will study about the life of Christ and His influence on mankind. Meeting Jesus' disciples, who left everything to follow Him, you will discover that Christ dramatically impacted their lives. As you study about the birth of the Christian Church, you will become acquainted with some of the apostles who fervently served God regardless of the consequences.

Throughout this workbook, you will be looking up verses in the Bible. If an (OT) follows the verse, it is found in the Old Testament. If an (NT) follows the verse, it is found in the New Testament. Let's get started!

The first order of business is an overall introduction to the New Testament. The Bible is divided into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. While the Old Testament was written before Jesus' life on earth, the New Testament was written after His life on earth. The New Testament is a compilation of 27 books written by approximately eight men. It is divided into four groups of books, which include five historical books, thirteen Pauline epistles, eight general epistles, and a prophetic book, outlining end-time events.

Open your Bible to the Table of Contents located at the front of the book. There you will find a breakdown of the Old and New Testaments with a listing of the books contained in each. Glancing over the New Testament listing, answer the following question by writing your answer in the spaces provided.

1. List the first five books of the New Testament.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	

The first four books of the New Testament are known as the Gospels. Gospel means "good news." These books are referred to as such because the writers

described the good news of salvation made possible by Jesus' life, death and victorious resurrection. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote the four Gospels.

The book of Acts contains historical data concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Christian Church. Additionally, Acts records the work of the apostles after Jesus' ascension back to the Father in heaven. Luke penned Acts.

2. Turning again to the Table of Contents, list the next thirteen books, which are referred to as the Pauline epistles, contained in the New Testament.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

The apostle Paul wrote the thirteen Pauline epistles. Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians were written to churches. First and 2nd Timothy and Titus were letters to pastors. Philemon was a wealthy slave owner to whom Paul wrote regarding forgiveness and restoration. Concerned about the body of Christ, Paul penned his advice and exhortations in order to prevent believers from falling away from God. Paul's story is an exciting transformation from one who persecuted Christians to a man who willingly put his own life on the line countless times in order to further God's kingdom. You will have the opportunity to read about some of Paul's experiences throughout this study.

Take another look at the New Testament Table of Contents. Answer the question that follows.

3. List the next group of epistles, which are referred to as the general epistles. There are eight of them.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John and Jude comprise the general epistles. Most biblical scholars agree that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews although there is no solid evidence of this. The remaining books bear the names of their authors. Next to Paul, John, who penned the Gospel of John, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John and Revelation, wrote the greatest number of New Testament books. After taking one last look at the Table of Contents, answer the following question.

4. In the following space, write the last book of the New Testament, which is a prophetic book, outlining end-time events. _____

Considered one of the most difficult books in the New Testament to comprehend, the book of Revelation reveals the three enthronements of Jesus. The first of which is His enthronement in heaven, where He presently sits at the right-hand of God. His second enthronement will be on the earth during His Millennial reign. This will occur after the Tribulation but before the final judgment of man. Jesus' third enthronement will be in the new heaven and earth, which God will create after the final doom of Satan and the judgment of man.

As you can see, the New Testament is full of good news, excitement and revelation. Is it any wonder that the Bible continually makes the Top 10 Best Selling book list each year? Over the weeks to come, you are certain to experience Jesus in a way that you have never before experienced Him. As you do, He will prepare you for the exciting calling He has on your life. God bless you as you seek Him.

That's enough for today. Let's review what you've learned:

- The New Testament is a compilation of 27 books written by approximately eight men.
- It is divided into four groups of books: five historical books, thirteen Pauline epistles, eight general epistles and a prophetic book, outlining end-time events.
- The five historical books are Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts.
- Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are referred to as the Gospels, and they bear the names of their authors; Luke penned Acts.
- Nine of the thirteen Pauline epistles, which include Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, were written to churches. First and 2nd Timothy and Titus were letters to pastors.
- Addressed to a wealthy slave owner, Philemon was a letter concerning forgiveness and restoration.
- The eight general epistles are Hebrews, James, 1st and 2nd Peter, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John and Jude.
- It is believed that Paul penned Hebrews, and the remaining general epistles bear the names of their authors.
- The prophetic book, which is Revelation, was authored by John.

This week's memory verse is Luke 1:49 (NT). Below, it is written.

“For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name.”

5. Write this week's memory verse in the space provided. To assist you in learning it, repeat it to yourself several times.

Lesson 2

Matthew

In Lesson 1, you were presented with a brief overview of the books that comprise the New Testament. The first book, which bears the name of its author, is Matthew. Who was he? To find out, turn in your Bible to Matthew 9:9-13 (NT). Read this passage titled, “The Calling of Matthew.” Answer the questions below by placing a check mark beside the correct answers.

1. Where was Matthew when Jesus called him?

- a. at the synagogue
- b. at a tax collector’s booth
- c. at his home

2. What did Matthew do when Jesus said, “**Follow me**”?

- a. He refused to go.
- b. He told Jesus he would go after he finished his work.
- c. He got up and followed Jesus.

3. At whose home did Jesus dine later that day?

- a. Matthew’s
- b. another tax collector’s
- c. a Pharisee’s

4. Who else joined them for dinner that night? (Check all that are correct.)

- a. many tax collectors
- b. sinners
- c. other disciples

5. When the Pharisees saw this, what question did they ask Jesus' disciples?
- a. "Why does your teacher eat so much?"
 - b. "Why doesn't your teacher eat with us?"
 - c. "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"
6. To whom did Jesus say He had come?
- a. sick people, sinners
 - b. doctors
 - c. healthy people
7. Finish this statement Jesus made in response to the Pharisees: **"I desire _____, not _____"** (verse 13).
- a. sacrifice, mercy
 - b. mercy, sacrifice
 - c. righteousness, sin

Israel was under Roman authority. In spite of that authority, there arose within the Jewish community powerful religious groups known as the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. The Scribes and Pharisees were experts in the Law, which God had handed down to His people through Moses. Adding additional requirements to God's commands, the religious leaders made it impossible to obey God's Law. The Sadducees ruled the temple, including the Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish court system. The Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day were more interested in legalism and politics than in God.

Although these religious groups had their differences, they shared a common hope. Waiting for a Deliverer to come and set them free from Roman authority, they knew that He would be a descendent of King David. Also, they believed that He would rule from David's throne in Jerusalem. Possessing the Old Testament scrolls, they knew the Law like the backs of their hands. When God's Deliverer, Jesus, arrived on earth, however, He was neither received nor embraced by them. Since they were so self-righteous, they could not fathom that He would associate with sinners and tax collectors.

While dining at Matthew, the tax collector's house, Jesus responded to the Pharisees' accusations by saying, **"But go and learn what this means: 'I desire**

mercy, not sacrifice” (verse 13). Consumed with ceremonial rituals and animal sacrifices, the religious leaders had repeatedly overlooked the importance of love, forgiveness and mercy. Not only did Jesus preach these virtues, but He also practiced them as evidenced by His association with sinners and tax collectors. Imagine Matthew’s awe that day as he witnessed Jesus’ rebuttal to the elite Jewish religious leaders. Undoubtedly, Matthew was paying close attention. Did he realize that the religious leaders would eventually crucify the One who had extended such mercy to them?

After Jesus’ death, resurrection and return to heaven, the Christian Church was born. The Church desperately needed God’s written Word to provide instruction for living. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the New Testament began to be written. Opening with the book of Matthew, the New Testament has served to guide Christians for many years in their journey with God.

It is believed that Matthew penned his Gospel to the Jews. He, himself, was of Jewish descent. Throughout the book of Matthew, there are countless references to how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming Messiah. Proving to the Jews that Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah about whom the prophets had spoken in the Old Testament was important to Matthew. Also in his book, Matthew covered Jesus’ birth, His ministries in Galilee and Judea, His death, resurrection and final instructions to His disciples—“**Go and make disciples of all nations...**” (Matthew 28:19). Who better to write the first Gospel than a Jewish sinner turned disciple? After Jesus called him to follow, Matthew became one of the twelve disciples whom Jesus personally taught.

Matthew’s story is a wonderful example of how God can transform a sinner into the likeness of Jesus if that person allows Him to do so. Through his choices, Matthew demonstrated the importance of dedicating your life to God in service to Him. After his conversion, Matthew followed Jesus for three years. After Jesus’ ascension back to the Father, Matthew became an apostle. He continued to preach about the love and mercy of the One who saved a sinful tax collector and changed his life forever. Eventually, Matthew was martyred because of his faith in Christ. Over 2,000 years later, Matthew’s testimony is still changing lives today!

That's enough for today. Let's review what you have learned:

- When Jesus came to earth, Rome ruled Israel.
- Within the Jewish community, there arose powerful religious leaders known as Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees.
- Matthew was a tax collector when he was called to follow the Lord.
- Matthew became a disciple of Christ.
- Being a Jew, Matthew's goal in writing his Gospel was to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.
- After Jesus' ascension, Matthew became an apostle.
- Matthew continued preaching until he was martyred because of his faith.

This week's memory verse is Luke 1:49 (NT). Below, it is written.

“For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name.”

8. Write this week's memory verse in the space provided. To assist you in learning it, repeat it to yourself several times.

Lesson 3

Mark

Unlike Matthew, Mark was not a disciple. He was not fortunate enough to actually meet Jesus and sit under His teachings. Mark, whose full name was John Mark, was an apostle. Arriving on the scene after Jesus' return to heaven, John Mark failed miserably when he first began in the ministry. As you will learn in today's lesson, however, God did not give up on John Mark. In time, he became worthy of the Lord's calling.

John Mark's mother was Jewish. His father was Roman. They resided in Jerusalem. John Mark's cousin was a man named Barnabas, who was a godly man full of compassion.

Preaching the Gospel, Barnabas and Paul traveled together. Devoting his life to serving God, Paul penned the majority of the New Testament. He will be examined in later lessons. On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas were accompanied by John Mark. During the trip, John Mark decided for some unknown reason that he did not want to be there. Deserting them, he returned home to Jerusalem. This greatly upset Paul.

Sometime later, Paul and Barnabas were preparing for another missionary journey. Compassionately, Barnabas longed to give John Mark a second chance and invite him to go with them. Paul disagreed. Picking up with the story in Acts 15:36-41 (NT), read this passage titled, "Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas."

Below are several statements taken from this passage. Put a "T" in front of those statements that are true. Put an "F" in front of those statements that are false.

- ___ 1. Paul wanted to return to those towns where they had preached to see how the believers there were doing.
- ___ 2. Paul suggested that he and Barnabas take John Mark with them.
- ___ 3. Paul did not think it was wise to take John Mark because he had deserted them in Pamphylia.

- ___ 4. Barnabas agreed with Paul that it would be better not to take John Mark along with them.
- ___ 5. Barnabas and Paul argued and decided to part ways.
- ___ 6. Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus.
- ___ 7. Paul chose Silas to go with him.

What an unfortunate situation—a friendship torn apart because of anger. Sadly, this is an all-too-common occurrence between good friends. An argument takes place. Pride gets in the way, and neither person is big enough to apologize and forgive. So many friendships have ended because of pride. Tragically, the work that God had called Paul and Barnabas to accomplish as a team ended that day.

Although Barnabas was not heard from again, John Mark reappears in the epistles, repeatedly commended by none other than Paul himself. Turning to the following verses, read both, which were penned by Paul.

Colossians 4:10 (NT)

2nd Timothy 4:11 (NT)

- 8. In the space provided below, write your interpretation of Paul’s opinion of John Mark according to these verses.

During his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul wrote to the church at Colosse. According to Paul’s own admission, John Mark accompanied him. Additionally, Paul instructed the people to welcome John Mark should he come to visit them.

In 2nd Timothy 4:11, Paul wrote to Timothy again from a prison cell in Rome. He requested that Timothy bring John Mark along with him when he came to visit because Paul considered John Mark beneficial to his ministry. Sadly, Paul’s brother in Christ, Demas, had deserted him because of his love for the world. Apparently, Paul had changed his mind about John Mark.

The Gospel of Mark is a treasured account of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. Biblical scholars agree that Mark traveled with Peter, and that it was from Peter’s

firsthand experience as a disciple of Christ that Mark learned of the stories he penned. In his Gospel, Mark wrote about John the Baptist's ministry, Jesus' baptism and His temptation experience in the wilderness. John Mark also recorded information concerning Jesus' ministries both in Galilee and Judea. Mark's intended audience was Roman Gentiles who had converted first to Judaism and then later to Christianity. Portraying Jesus as Jehovah's Servant, John Mark provided ample illustrations of the Lord performing miracles and ministering to a hurting public.

From John Mark's example, we can learn that although we may fail, God is always willing to forgive us and give us another chance. That is exactly what He did for John Mark, and He will do it for you, too. Trust Him.

That's enough for today. Let's review what you've learned:

- John Mark's mother was Jewish, and his father, Roman.
- John Mark deserted Barnabas and Paul during a missionary tour.
- Barnabas and Paul split up because of a disagreement regarding John Mark.
- Traveling with Peter, John Mark grew to be a faithful apostle.
- Later, Paul found John Mark to be helpful to his ministry.
- Mark's intended audience was Roman Gentiles.
- In his Gospel, Mark portrayed Jesus as a Servant.

This week's memory verse is Luke 1:49 (NT). Below, it is written.

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9. Write this week's memory verse in the space provided. To assist you in learning it, repeat it to yourself several times.

Lesson 4

Luke's Account of Mary and Elizabeth

Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels because they cover much of the same material. In Lesson 2, you discovered that Matthew, who was a Jew, was a tax collector before he became one of Jesus' disciples. Portraying Jesus as the Messiah, Matthew penned his Gospel to the Jews.

In Lesson 3, you were introduced to John Mark, who penned the book of Mark. Unlike Matthew, Mark was not a disciple. He traveled with Peter, who was one of Jesus' disciples. Mark's Gospel is an account of the information and events he learned from Peter. Mark wrote his book to the Romans and portrayed Jesus as a Servant.

Luke, who penned the books of Luke and Acts, also was not a disciple. Traveling with the apostle Paul, Luke's writings were an account of the events and information he learned in his travels. Luke was a physician. It is believed that he wrote to the Gentiles, and he emphasized the human side of Jesus.

Although each Gospel author wrote about Jesus, he may or may not have included particular events in his book. For example, only Luke recorded the coming births of John the Baptist and Jesus. Appearing first to John's father, Zechariah, the angel, Gabriel, later appeared to Jesus' mother, Mary, to announce the coming births of John and Jesus. After Mary received word that Elizabeth was expecting, and soon she would be, too, she paid Elizabeth a visit. Picking up with the story in Luke 1:39-56 (NT), read these passages titled, "Mary Visits Elizabeth," and "Mary's Song."

Answer the questions below by writing your answers in the spaces provided.

1. When he heard Mary's voice, what did Elizabeth's baby do?

2. After greeting Mary, with whom did Elizabeth become filled?

3. Why do you think Elizabeth said that Mary was blessed?

4. In Mary's song, she praised God. List three statements that she made concerning Him.

Why did God choose Elizabeth and Mary to mother two of the most important people ever born? For a clue, read Luke 1:5-6 and Luke 1:38 (NT). Answer the following question.

5. After reading these verses, why do you think God chose Mary and Elizabeth to mother Jesus and John the Baptist?

Looking about constantly for those on whom He can depend, God chose these two women because they served and obeyed Him. They were godly. Their names and their stories are known around the world because of their faithfulness and obedience to the Lord. God's desire is to carry out His will and His Word through His people. Are you preparing yourself in order that God might choose you when

the time is right? Reading and studying God's Word, as you are doing now, is an excellent way to prepare yourself for His calling. Stay in His Word so that when He calls upon you, you will be ready.

Throughout his book, Luke portrayed Jesus as a man. Certainly, the information contained within the pages of Luke related to the human side of Christ. There was much emphasis on Jesus' human dependence upon God through prayer.

Through parables such as The Good Samaritan and The Pharisee and the Publican, Luke emphasized relationships between people. Additionally, he recorded some of Jesus' miracles, which were not included elsewhere in the Bible, such as the Healing of the 10 Lepers. Interestingly, Luke penned more healing miracles than Matthew and Mark combined. Perhaps his position as a physician played a role in his emphasis upon miracles. Not only did he pen the book which bears his name, but Luke also wrote the book of Acts.

In Lesson 5, you will revisit the book of Matthew to read about the Christ Child's miraculous escape from death. From the very beginning, the enemy was out to destroy our Lord. Because it was not yet time for Jesus to surrender His life, God warned Joseph of the enemy's evil scheme. It's an exciting adventure, and I'll see you there!

That's enough for today. Let's review what you've learned:

- Matthew, Mark and Luke are known as the Synoptic Gospels.
- Luke was a physician who wrote to the Gentiles about Jesus, the man.
- Only Luke recorded the stories of the coming births of John the Baptist and Jesus.
- God chose Mary and Elizabeth because they served and obeyed Him.
- Preparing yourself now for God's call on your life is important.
- Exclusively found in the book of Luke are parables such as The Good Samaritan and The Pharisee and the Publican.
- Perhaps because he was a physician, Luke penned more healing miracles than Matthew and Mark combined.
- Additionally, Luke wrote the book of Acts.

This week's memory verse is Luke 1:49 (NT). Below, it is written.

“For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name.”

6. Write this week's memory verse in the space provided. To assist you in learning it, repeat it to yourself several times.

It's time to take Quiz 1.

Quiz 1

Lessons 1-4

Short Answer Questions. Write your answers to the following questions in the spaces provided.

1. List the first five books of the New Testament. _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____

2. The thirteen books immediately following the first five in the New Testament are referred to as what? Why?

3. How many books are included in the general epistles? _____

4. Who do most biblical scholars credit with writing Hebrews? _____

5. What is the last book in the New Testament, and who wrote it? _____, _____

Multiple-choice Questions. Put a check mark beside the correct answer in the following multiple-choice questions.

6. When Jesus came to earth, what empire ruled Israel?
 a. Babylonian
 b. Roman
 c. Egyptian

7. What trade did Matthew practice prior to meeting Jesus?
 a. tax collector
 b. tent maker
 c. fisherman

8. In Matthew 9:9-13, what complaint did the Pharisees have against Jesus?
- a. He was ignoring the Pharisees.
 - b. He was associating with sinners.
 - c. He was not following the custom of washing before eating.
9. In response to the Pharisees complaint, to whom did Jesus say He had come?
- a. religious people
 - b. the sick, sinners
 - c. healthy people
10. To what group of people did Matthew specifically write his Gospel?
- a. Jews
 - b. Gentiles
 - c. the entire world

True/False Questions. Following are several statements. Put a “T” in front of those statements that are true. Put an “F” in front of those statements that are false.

- 11. Mark, whose full name was John Mark, was one of Jesus’ disciples.
- 12. Both of John Mark’s parents were of Roman descent.
- 13. Paul and Barnabas parted ways because Barnabas wanted to take John Mark on a missionary journey with them, but Paul refused.
- 14. Mark portrayed Jesus as a servant.
- 15. Mark wrote his Gospel specifically to people of Jewish descent.
- 16. Luke was one of Jesus’ disciples.
- 17. Only Luke recorded the stories of the coming births of Jesus and John the Baptist.
- 18. Luke’s intended audience was Gentiles, and he portrayed Jesus as a man.
- 19. Perhaps because he was a physician, Luke penned more healing miracles than Matthew and Mark combined.
- 20. Mark is credited with writing the book of Acts.

21. In the space provided below, write this week's memory verse and where it is located.

Answer Key

Lesson 1:

1. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts
2. Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2nd Thessalonians, 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon
3. Hebrews, James, 1st Peter, 2nd Peter, 1st John, 2nd John, 3rd John, Jude
4. Revelation
5. “For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name” (Luke 1:49).

Lesson 2:

1. b; 2.c; 3.a; 4.a,b,c; 5.c; 6.a; 7.b;
8. “For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name” (Luke 1:49).

Lesson 3:

1. T; 2.F; 3.T; 4.F; 5.T; 6.T; 7.T;
8. Paul grew fond of John Mark and even found him beneficial to his ministry.
9. “For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name” (Luke 1:49).

Lesson 4:

1. He leaped for joy inside her stomach.
2. She became filled with the Holy Spirit.
3. She was blessed to be Jesus’ mother.
4. “He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.” “The Mighty One has done great things for me.”
“His mercy extends to those who fear him from generation to generation.”
“He has performed mighty deeds with his arm.”
“He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.”
“He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.”
“He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.”
“He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, even as he said to our fathers.”
5. They served and obeyed God.
6. “For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name” (Luke 1:49).

Quiz 1: (Questions 1-20 worth 4.75; Question 21 worth 5 points.)

1. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts
2. They are referred to as the Pauline epistles because Paul wrote them.
3. 8
4. Paul
5. Revelation, John
6. b; 7.a; 8.b; 9.b; 10.a; 11.F; 12.F; 13.T; 14.T; 15.F; 16.F; 17.T; 18.T; 19.T; 20.F;
21. “For the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is His name” (Luke 1:49).