



Word of Life Church – Bible Study Notes
The New Testament
(27 Books)

The New Testament consists of 27 books. These books cover the life of Jesus, the birth and spread Christian church, counsel on faith and the appropriate practices of Christians, and the summation of time. These 27 books use for literary genres: 1) biographies, which are the Gospels, 2) historical, which is the book of acts, 3) letters, which are the epistles, 4) apocalyptic, which is the Book of Revelation

The Four Gospels –Tell the story of the Good News about Jesus Christ. Biological accounts of who Jesus was, what Jesus said and what Jesus did.

Matthew – 50AD – written by Matthew, one of the 12 Apostles. His writing appears directed toward a Jewish audience. This gospel was written before the fall of Jerusalem. The major themes are: Jesus as fulfillment of Scripture, Jesus the Savior of Israel and the world, Jesus as supreme authority, Jesus as teacher, preacher, and healer.

Mark – 68AD – written by John Mark, who recorded the Apostle Peter’s recollections of Jesus. Mark is also a cousin of Barnabas who traveled with Paul on his first missionary journey. Mark came from a wealthy family. His writing is directed toward a Gentile audience. The major themes are: the supernatural nature of Jesus, the death and resurrection of Jesus, Jesus as servant.

Luke – 60 AD – written by Luke, a highly educated physician and traveling companion of Paul, based on Luke’s investigation of historical facts as reported by eyewitnesses and servants of the word of God. His writing is directed toward Christians who had a pagan background. The major themes and Luke are: God's universal work, Jesus as Savior, early events of Jesus' life, the place of women in Jesus' ministry, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

John – 85-90AD – written by John, one of the 12 apostles. John expresses a more highly developed Christology than the other three gospels. He was combating the influence of Gnosticism so that people would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that Jesus was fully human and fully God; and that believing one may have life in His name.



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Acts – 60AD – Tells how the Good News spread across Jerusalem, Judah, Samaria, Asia, and Europe (Macedonia and Achaia (Greece)) over the span of three decades.

Acts of the Apostles

Acts 1:8 – but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. (The Holy Spirit is the enabling power of God to share the good news of the gospel of the Kingdom of God to an unbelieving world and the power of God to work miracles)

Acts 2:1-4 – In-filling of the Holy Spirit. The apostles received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues and they were empowered and compelled to publically share the Good News that Jesus is the Christ and the Savior

Acts 3 – 7 – The growth of the church in Jerusalem

- Manifestations of the in-filling of the Holy Spirit
- Lame and sick are healed
- The importance of ministering in the name of Jesus (Acts 3:6-8; Acts 3:16; Acts 4:8-12; Acts 4:17-20; Acts 4:29-31; 5:27-32, 33-42)
- Acts 6-7 Stephen ministers the gospel and is stoned. Saul (Paul) is watching (Acts 7:58).

Acts 8 – Gospel - Spread to Samaria by Philip (Acts 8:4-17)

Samaritans are baptized in the Holy Spirit – Acts 8:14-19

Internationally – Ethiopian Eunuch (Minister of Finance) – Acts 8:25-38

Acts 9 – Conversion of Saul

Peter conduit for Miracle of resurrection – Acts 9:32-41

Acts 10 – Spread of Gospel to the Gentiles by Peter

Cornelius – a Centurion

Gentiles baptized in the Holy Spirit speak in tongues (Acts 10:44-46)

Acts 11 – Peter reports to Jerusalem Council about Gentiles Converts

Disciples first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26)

Paul goes to Antioch with Barnabus

Acts 12 – Peter arrested in Jerusalem

Mary's house – Mother of John (Mark) – Acts 12:12



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Paul's First Missionary Journey

Acts 13 – Paul's First Missionary Journey (around AD 47)

Prophets and teachers at Antioch

Antioch – Capital of Roman Province of Syria; pop about 300,000+; 300 mi from Jerusalem

Barnabus, Saul, and John (Mark) take first missionary journey

- Seleucia
- Cyprus
 - o Salamis – Proclaim the Word of God (v5)
 - o Paphos – Bar-Jesus (Elymas) - Jewish, False Prophet, and magician opposed them – stricken with blindness – Proconsul Sergius Paulus became believer.
- Pamphylia
 - o Perga – John (Mark) leaves them to return to Jerusalem
- Pisidia
 - o Pisidian Antioch – Paul taught Jesus the Messiah in synagogue. Second week the Jews resisted. Paul takes the gospel to the Gentiles. They received the gospel and the word spread through the whole region. Jews persecute Paul and Barnabus, who move on to Iconium.
 - o Iconium (Acts 14) – Paul goes to the synagogue first. Some Jews become believers. But there were Jews who disbelieved and stirred up resistance.
- Lycaonia
 - o Lystra – Lame man healed. Jews from Antioch and Iconium came captured and stoned Paul.
 - o Derbe – Preached and made many disciples
- Returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch – Follow-up Care, appointed elders
- Pamphylia
 - o Perga
 - o Attalia
- Sailed to Antioch

Acts 15 – Council at Jerusalem

Judaizers from Judea – Gentiles must conform to the Law of Moses and circumcision.

Paul and Barnabus went to Jerusalem

Met w/ the apostles and the elders

Some of the sect of the Pharisees - conform to the Law of Moses and circumcision

James' decision:

- Abstain from things contaminated by idols (food sacrificed to idols)
- Abstain from fornication
- Abstain from consuming blood and things strangled



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Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Paul and Barnabas had a falling out over Barnabus' nephew John Mark going on the trip. Paul and Silas went on the journey.

The journey was about 3 years in duration and covered some 3,000 miles.

Acts 16 – Paul's Second Missionary Journey

- Derbe
- Lystra – Timothy – Son of Jewish woman and Greek father. Paul has him circumcised
- Distributing the decrees from the Jerusalem Council
- Phrygia – passed through
- Galatia – passed through
- Asia – forbidden by Holy Spirit to minister
- Bithynia – forbidden by Holy Spirit to enter
- Mysia – passed through
- Troas – vision to go to Macedonia
- Thrace
 - o Samothrace – port city
- Macedonia
 - o Philippi (leading city, Roman Colony) – Converted Lydia, a businesswoman from Thyatira (Lydia see map) (v14). Delivers slave girl from spirit of divination. Thrown in jail. Earthquake frees them. Jailer converted.
 - o Amphipolis – traveled through
 - o Apollonia – traveled through
 - o Thessalonica (Acts 17) – preaching in a synagogue for three weeks. Some Jews were persuaded, along with a large number of God-fearing Greek and a number of leading women. Jews tires up trouble
 - o Berea – preached in the synagogue. Received the Word. Many believed. A number of prominent Greek woman and men. Paul sent on. Timothy and Silas remain.
- Achaia
 - o Athens – reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue. Epicureans and Stoics. Sermon on Mars Hill (Areopagus). Some believed.
 - o Corinth (Acts 18) – wrote epistles to Thessalonians and Philippians. Meets Aquilla and Priscilla. Claudius commanded all Jews to leave Rome. Reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath with the Jews and Greeks. Jews resisted and Paul now focuses on the Gentiles. Paul stay in Corinth for 18 months.
 - o Sailed to Syria, stopped in Ephesus.



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Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:23 – Paul's Third Missionary Journey

- Galatia – Strengthening the disciples
- Phrygia – Strengthening the disciples

Acts 19 – Achaia – Likely to have written Romans while here in 57 AD

- o Corinth
- Macedonia
- Ephesus – There for three (3) years, Paul's longest continuous ministry
 - o v2-6 John's Baptism vs. Holy Spirit Baptism
 - o Extraordinary miracles
 - o Sons of Sceva – v14 – 17
 - o Silversmiths riot because economy was affected – v23 – 41
- Macedonia
- Achaia (Greece)

Acts 20 – Macedonia

- o Philippi
- Troas – Raised a young man (Eutychus) from the dead v9 – 12
- Assos
- Mitylene
- Chios
- Miletus – called for elders from Ephesus 7 exhorted them v17 – 38

Acts 21 – Cos

- Rhodes
- Patara
- Tyre (Syria)
- Ptolemais
- Caesarea – Prophet Agabus – v10 – 14
- Jerusalem



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Epistles – Tell about the faith and Practice of the early Christian community. They were not arranged in chronological, it is unclear what the rationale was for the order of arrangement for the epistles, it appears as though they were organized from longest to shortest, both Pauline and non-Pauline. Please see the chart below regarding the various authors, approximate timing, and potential locations where the epistles were written. The Pauline epistles were written by the apostle Paul; the general epistles were written by the author whose name is indicated in the title. It is unclear exactly who authored Hebrews, but there is content and references that suggests the apostle Paul could be a good candidate.

<u>PAULINE</u>	<u>GENERAL</u>
Romans – 57-58AD	Hebrews – 60-68AD
1 Corinthians – 55AD – from Ephesus – 3 rd Journey	James – 45-50 AD
2 Corinthians – 56AD – 3 rd Missionary Journey	1 Peter – 65AD
Galatians – 49-52 AD	2 Peter – 66AD
Ephesians – Prison – 60 AD	1 John – Ephesus – 90-95 AD
Philippians – Prison – 60 AD	2 John – Ephesus – 90-95AD
Colossians – Prison – 60 AD	3 John – Ephesus – 90-95AD
1 Thessalonians – 51 AD 2 nd Journey – Corinth	Jude – 68AD
2 Thessalonians – 51 AD 2 nd Journey – Corinth	
1 Timothy – Pastoral – 64AD	
2 Timothy – Pastoral – 67AD	
Titus – Pastoral – 65AD	
Philemon – Prison – 60 AD	

PAULINE EPISTLES

Romans

- Rome was capital of the Roman Empire
- Themes:
 - o The knowledge of God and the sinful fall of humanity.
 - o Atonement, salvation, and justification is a gift from God as an act of grace is received by faith in Jesus Christ not through good works of humanity.
 - o Those who are in Christ are no longer slaves to sin; they are empowered by the Spirit of God to live a new life taking dominion over carnal desires.
 - o Despite Israel's difficulty in accepting Jesus as the Messiah, God still has a plan for Israel's salvation.



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1st and 2nd Corinthians

Corinth

- Largest city in 1st Century Greece (Achaia)
- Located on an isthmus – 3.5 mile wide. Most shipping to/from Rome passed through Corinth.
- Famous for bustling trade, wealth, and immorality (extensive prostitution).
- Sizeable Jewish population in Corinth. It grew after Roman Emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome in 49AD.
- Themes in 1st Corinthians:
 - o Paul addresses the issue of factions in the church. It's not about an individual's philosophy is about the crucified Christ as a central message of the gospel.
 - o Paul also addresses issues regarding Christian conduct, specifically in the areas of marriage, divorce, celibacy, diet, idolatry, personal Christian freedom, worship, spiritual gifts, ordering the church, and about resurrection and the age to come.
- Themes in 2nd Corinthians:
 - o Paul readdresses the issues in his first letter to the Corinthian church regarding this self-serving posturing.
 - o Paul acknowledges that some progress has been made and praises them for this progress.

Galatians

Galatia

- Region in north central Asia minor, which today is modern Turkey. Under Roman rule this region became a province of Rome and expanded southward to include portions of Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pontus, Pamphylia, and Cilicia.
- Themes:
 - o True versus False Gospel
 - o Paul asserts his leadership role in the church; beware of false teachers.
 - o Normative practices for Christians.
 - o Grace versus the Law - this epistle contains the strongest declaration and defense of justification by faith.
 - o Positive ethic



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Ephesians

Ephesus

- Capital of the Roman Province of ASIA
- Port City in the Aegean Sea
- Center for worship of pagan goddess Artemis (Diana). The temple dedicated to Artemis was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
- Home to temple for worship of the Roman Emperor and his family.
- Center of occult (magic) practices.
- Themes:
 - o Christ's authority and supremacy over creation.
 - o Christ's reconciliation work through the cross.
 - o Salvation is through grace not works.

Philippians

Philippi

- Settlement for retired soldiers
- Named for Philip II of Macedon – Alexander the Great's Father
- Site of major Roman battle in 42 BC
- Held certain civic and tax privileges
- Along the Via Egnatia – the major East-West Commercial Highway
- Themes:
 - o Keep Christ before you
 - o Beware of religious leaders who would lead them astray
 - o Avoid strife and promote harmony among the believers.
 - o Gratitude for the financial support the Philippians have given to Paul.

Colossians

Colossae

- Not a large City
- 100 miles ESE of Ephesus, near Laodicea and Hierapolis.
- Located along a major southern trade route that extended through Asia Minor from the Aegean Coast into the Syrian Euphrates region.
- Plagued by earthquakes.
- Key message of the Epistle is overcoming false doctrines. Addresses the issue of the challenges of how the church is being affected and perhaps seduced by popular culture, powerful institutions, such as, media, government, and education.
- Christology is at the heart of the Epistle.
- Themes
 - o Christ is the Image of the Invisible God.
 - o In Christ dwells the fullness of the God-head.
 - o Christ holds all things together.
 - o Christ's Uniqueness and Pre-eminence.



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1st and 2nd Thessalonians

Thessalonica

- Thriving Port City
- City along the Via Egnatia - the major East-West Commercial Highway
- Themes 1st Thessalonians:
 - o Encourages new believers by commending their faith and love.
 - o Nature of Paul's apostolic ministry and the authority of his proclamation teaching.
 - o Appropriate Christian behavior and work habits.
- Themes 2nd Thessalonians:
 - o Commends their faith and love.
 - o Beware of false teaching regarding the coming day of the Lord.
 - o Advice for handling wayward brethren.
 - o Assurance of eventual victory reward and justice for believers.

1 Timothy

Pastoral Epistle – To encourage and advise Timothy on how to handle some of the false teaching and false teachers present in the church at Ephesus.

- Themes:
 - o The gospel produces practical a visible change in the lives of those who believe it.
 - o Timothy should be focused on: prayer and worship, high standards for those filling church offices, avoidance of heresy through maintenance of sound teaching, proper care for widows and elders, and godly respect for slaves by their masters.

2 Timothy

Pastoral Epistle - this epistle was written to Timothy while Paul is in prison in Rome awaiting his final trial and execution. This letter was written to encourage Timothy and to urge him to visit Paul before winter sets in.

- Themes:
 - o Suffering many times is a price one pays for being true to Christ.
 - o Endurance and perseverance through the power of God is required.
 - o Appropriate virtues for a Christian leader
 - o False teaching must be dealt with firmly



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Titus

Pastoral Epistle – this epistle was written to Titus while Titus was in Crete. This epistle was written to give encouragement and instruction to Timothy as to how to deal with the false teaching that was creeping into the church Crete.

- Themes:
 - o The gospel should produce godliness in the lives of believers.
 - o The importance of having godly leaders serving in positions of leadership in the church.
 - o Instructions for various age groups regarding appropriate Christian behavior.
 - o The gospel is the basis for Christian ethics.

Philemon

- Philemon was a wealthy slaveholding Christian who lived in Colossae. At some point Onesimus, one of his slaves, escaped and fled to Rome. Onesimus became a Christian and came into contact with and began supporting the apostle Paul in Rome. Paul knew that Onesimus had to return to his master to address the situation. Paul wrote a letter to Philemon to intercede for Onesimus.
- Themes:
 - o Reconciliation.
 - o The supremacy of Christian love over secular conventions.

GENERAL EPISTLES

Hebrews

- written to a Jewish Christian audience.
- assumes a level of knowledge of the Old Testament sacrificial practices.
- Jesus has perfected the Levitical institutions and rendered them obsolete.
- Themes:
 - o Jesus is fully God and fully human
 - o Jesus is the eternal high Priest
 - o Jesus is supreme over angels, Moses and the Law, to the earthly tabernacle and its priests.
 - o The Christian must live by faith.
 - o God is trustworthy.

James

- written by James the Just, the brother of Jesus and the leader of the Jerusalem church.
- Written to a Jewish Christian audience sometime in the mid-40s A.D.
- Themes:
 - o authentic trust in Christ results in good works



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1 Peter

- written by the apostle Peter
- written to Christians in central and Eastern Asia to encourage them in the face of persecution.
- Themes:
 - o There is glory to come to those who suffer for Christ.
 - o The believer is a Pilgrim in a foreign world.
 - o Follow Christ, as he suffered to free us from sin, even if it means suffering ourselves.
 - o Our hope for the future is based on Christ's resurrection

2 Peter

- written by the apostle Peter
- Themes:
 - o encourages Christians to grow in their Christian walk.
 - o The grace of God empowers Christians to live godly lives, even in the face of persecution.
 - o Assures readers that what God is promised through the prophets in his word as taught by the apostles is true.
 - o Warns against false teachers and doctrines.

1 John

- written by the apostle John
- Themes:
 - o God's love and love we should have toward each other
 - o Stick to the basics:
 - Sound doctrine
 - Obedient living
 - Fervent devotion
 - o Assurance of forgiveness and salvation

2 John

- written by the apostle John
- Themes:
 - o Christians must walk in love
 - o Beware of false teachers
 - o Do not welcome and support false teachers

3 John

- written by the apostle John
- Themes:
 - o Appropriate Christian hospitality



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Jude

- written by Jude, the brother of Jesus and James.
- Themes:
 - o Believers must go on the offensive for the faith.
 - o Deity of Christ is crucial and is to be affirmed.
 - o Beware of evil doers and resist them.

APOCALYPTIC

This is a form of theology and literature that postulates the increase of evil in the world, the end of the age, and the decisive intervention of God to inaugurate the age to come.

Revelation

- written by John, one of the 12 Apostles, circa 95 A.D.
- The book is conforms to the apocalyptic literary genre. The style of writing is highly symbolic.
- Themes:
 - o Instructions for seven churches in Eastern Asia
 - o The consummation of time
 - o Jesus's return and the final Great White Throne judgment
 - o The creation of a new heaven and earth where believers will serve and be in the presence of God forever and ever.