

# NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

**JAMES L. R. CATRON**



*Developed as a study course by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.*

*New Testament Survey*

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# STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

The New Testament was written over about fifty years. The first four books or Gospels as they are called, cover the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Together they provide a comprehensive picture of His life and teachings. The Book of Acts provides a history of the early Christians and the spread of the Church.

Paul's letters to various local churches and individuals are full of encouragement and explanations of the beliefs of the church. There are a number of letters from other authors and the New Testament closes with the Book of Revelation. In this last book, we are told of things to come.

This study will help you fit the New Testament together and understand the reasons for the coming of the Lord Jesus and the tremendous impact of His life, death and resurrection.

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## **Course Components**

This course has two parts: this study course and the exam booklet.

## **How To Study**

This study has twelve chapters, and each chapter has its own exam. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

## **Exams**

In the exam booklet there is one exam for each chapter (exam 1 covers chapter 1 of the course). Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material given in the course.

After you have completed each chapter, review the related exam and see how well you know the answers. If you find that you are having difficulty answering the questions, review the material until you think you can answer the questions. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text.

## **How Your Exams Are Graded**

Your instructor will mark any incorrectly answered questions. You will be referred back to the place in the course where the correct answer is to be found. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

If you enrolled in a class, submit your exam papers to the leader or secretary of the class who will send them for the entire group to the Correspondence School.

See the back of the exam booklet for more information on returning the exams for grading.

# Introduction to New Testament Survey

In the fall of 1951 as I was beginning my senior year of high school my parents gave me a gift of a Bible. This, my mother said, would be my graduation gift. Though I had begun to attend a high school Sunday School class, I was disappointed that this gift, given months before graduation, was to be my graduation present. Why did my parents not give me something practical, like money? Though I had nothing against the Bible, and in fact had some respect for it, I did not perceive this to be the best gift I could have ever received. My parents were not believers but they gave me the Bible anyway. I tried to read it occasionally, but it was difficult and boring. Little did I realize that within a few months after receiving that Bible I would actually love it and make an effort to read the whole New Testament starting with Matthew's Gospel. Little did I realize that I would eventually give my life to the study and communication of the Bible, the Word of God. Why the change in attitude? It was due to the fact that I trusted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior on January 3, 1952. Jesus Christ is the key to understanding the Bible (Luke 24:45). He gave me a hunger and thirst for the Word of God. I still have that hunger and thirst some forty-two years later. He can do the same for you. As you read this book and the appropriate Scriptures which go along with each lesson I trust that you will grow and mature in your faith in Christ. I trust that God our Father will not only give you an increasing hunger for the Bible, but for practical application of the Scriptures to your life.

## I. Background to New Testament Survey

The New Testament was written over a fifty-year period of time (A.D. 45–95). This is very brief in contrast to the Old Testament which was written over several centuries (c. 1400–400 B.C.) There are two portions of background which prepare a student to have a good grasp of the New Testament. The first portion is the *Old Testament* and the second is the *Intertestament Period*. The New Testament finds its roots in the Old Testament in a primary sense, and in the Intertestament period in a secondary sense.

### A. The Old Testament Roots of the New Testament

Without the Old Testament there would be no New Testament. One famous Biblical scholar of the fifth century A.D. said that “The New is in the Old concealed; The Old is in the New revealed.” What did he mean by that? Among other things, he meant that the unconditional promises and prophecies of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in the New Testament. The four Gospels, for instance, demonstrate clearly that the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ. The death of Jesus, for example, was prophetically described in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22. The New Testament would be very difficult to understand in several places without a knowledge of the Old Testament. The New Testament constantly mentions people, places, institutions, ceremonies, beliefs, etc. which would be a mystery without a knowledge of the Old. The Christian must not neglect the reading and study of the Old Testament. Make a reading schedule and determine to read through this first great portion of the Bible. The greater the familiarity you have with the Old Testament the more you will be able to understand and interpret the New.

### B. The Intertestament Roots of the New Testament 400–4 B.C.

With the book of Malachi the Old Testament came to a close (400 B.C.). Between Malachi and Matthew (400–4 B.C.) God did not give to the Hebrew people any further revelation. For this reason this period is sometimes called the Four Hundred Silent Years. Though silent in the sense of communicating new revelation to Israel, God was still at work during this period fulfilling His prophetic Word from parts of Daniel 8, 11, and Zechariah 9. The prophecies and their fulfillments were: (1) in the realm of the change of political powers controlling Palestine (six

military governments ruled Palestine during the 400 years); (2) the persecution of the Jews by Gentile overlords; (3) and God's protection and preservation of Israel from physical extinction and spiritual corruption through paganism.

Many things mentioned in the New Testament, especially the Gospels and the book of Acts, find their roots in the 400 years between the Testaments. For instance, (1) the family of king Herod (Matthew 2:1, 22); (2) the Jewish Sanhedrin—Jewish Supreme Court (Luke 22:66); (3) the religious sectarian groups such as the Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 2:4; 3:7) along with their religious ideas, traditions and practices (Matthew 25:1-2; 23; Acts 23:8). Then there were (4) political and militaristic groups such as the Herodians (Matthew 22:16) and the Zealots (one of Jesus' apostles had formerly been a Zealot—"Simon called the Zealot" (Luke 6:15). Of course (5) the Roman Empire which took over Palestine during Intertestament times (63 B.C.) was still in power throughout the New Testament era (Luke 2:1; 3:1; John 11:48).

The Intertestamental Period was in a sense a period of preparation for the coming of Jesus, the Christ. He came, says Paul, "when the fullness of the time had come . . ." (Galatians 4:4-5). During the 400 years between the Testaments God was at work preparing for that time when His Son, Jesus Christ, would step out of eternity into time. Note the following preparations which led to the "fullness of the time."

*There was the preparing of the way through the Greek language.* Alexander the Great conquered the Mediterranean world and the near east (334–323 B.C.) in a cultural sense as well as militarily. One very important aspect of Greek culture was the Greek language. After Alexander, the Greek language gradually became the language used everywhere. The Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek in Egypt between 250 and 100 B.C. This translation known as the Septuagint was used by Jews scattered over the Mediterranean world who were losing their ability to speak Hebrew. In the providence of God the gospel was spread to Jews and pagans in the Greek language. Also, the whole New Testament was originally written in Greek.

*There was the preparing of the way through Roman political power.* The Roman Empire brought a number of positive things which made the spread of the gospel a reality. For one thing, the Romans built a vast system of excellently made roads throughout the empire. Preachers of the gospel, like Paul, took advantage of these roads to enable them to move swiftly and with ease to their destinations. Never were circumstances better or more favorable for the proclamation of the gospel. The fact that Rome had its armies stationed throughout the empire to insure the law and order for which they were famous was a plus to the growth of Christianity.

*There was the preparing of the way through the Hebrew religion.* During Intertestamental times Judaism developed into a highly legalistic system. This legalism continued on into New Testament times with great vigor. Legalism is man's attempt to make himself acceptable to God on the basis of self effort (law keeping). It is illustrated in the Gospels in the various encounters Jesus had with the Scribes and Pharisees (see the teaching of Jesus, for instance, in Matthew 15). Legalism was Jesus' most formidable obstacle to overcome in Judaism. However, what positive things did the Hebrew religion contribute? The answer is simple. The Hebrew religion centered around the truth of monotheism (one God), and the Law of Moses. Wherever the Jews went in the dispersion they took these two foundational truths. Paul took advantage of this ideal situation when he went on his missionary journeys. How? He would always go to the Jews first, at the synagogue, using what truth they did know as a springboard to preach the gospel.

## II. The Books of the New Testament

### A. The Canon of New Testament Books

There are 27 books of differing lengths, authors, content, style, emphasis and purpose in the New Testament. They may easily be arranged into three major categories: *history*, *letters* (also called epistles) and *prophecy*. Observe the following arrangement:

HISTORY
Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts
LETTERS
Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John, Jude
PROPHECY
Revelation



## B. Summary of The Major Categories of New Testament Books

### 1. History

*The four Gospels* (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) give four different historical portraits of the Lord Jesus Christ. The English word “gospel” is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word “godespell.” Gode means good and spell means story or tale. The gospel is not just a good story, but a good story which is the good news of salvation to all mankind (Luke 2:10-11). The “good news” encompasses Christ’s coming, ministry on earth, perfect life, suffering and death upon the cross for the sins of the world. His bodily resurrection from the dead and His ascension to heaven with the promise of His return.

The writers of the four Gospels wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit so that we might have an accurate, purposeful and authoritative account of Christ’s life. Just as any thoughtful modern-day preacher would tailor his sermon to meet the needs of the congregation, so the writers of the four Gospels wrote their portraits of Christ’s life keeping in mind the makeup and needs of those for whom they wrote. But why four Gospels? Why not just one? Or why stop at four? Why not five or even more? The fact that there are four Gospels may be accounted for by the intention of the Holy Spirit to reach four representative groups which would find their counterpart in any age. Matthew wrote to the Jews presenting Jesus as the promised King; Mark wrote to the Romans and portrayed Jesus as the servant of the Lord; Luke wrote to Theophilus (for the Greeks) picturing Jesus as the perfect man; and John wrote for the world with his portrait of Jesus as God. In modern times there are those to whom Mark’s Gospel will have a special appeal and they will be first influenced by it. Others today may find that John’s Gospel is very attractive to them and they are first affected by it, etc.

The four Gospels may be divided into two categories. The first category includes Matthew, Mark and Luke. These three Gospels are called by scholars the *synoptic* Gospels. What does that mean? Synoptic means “to see together.” In other words, these Gospels take a similar approach in their presentation of the life of Jesus. John’s Gospel, the second category, is very dissimilar from the first three because over ninety percent of its content is not found in the other three.

*The Book of Acts* is the last of the five historical books. It continues the history where the Gospels finish. Jesus ascended to heaven but His work of reaching the world continued on through the preaching of the Apostles and others. Acts reveals the new body, the Church, which Jesus

had predicted (Matthew 16:16-18) and which the Holy Spirit created on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). It gives the history of the growth and development of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome. It is a thrilling book recording the triumph of the gospel throughout the Mediterranean world. During the history of the Acts period ten of the letters (epistles) of Paul were written. James also wrote his letter during this period.

## 2. *The Letters (Epistles)*

There are 21 books of the New Testament in this category. These are divided into two. The first major section consists of 13 letters written by the Apostle Paul (Romans through Philemon), and the second is made up of Hebrews through Jude which scholars have called the General Epistles.

Some of the *letters of Paul* were written to individuals to encourage them in their faith and work (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus). Some were written to particular churches to challenge their faith, pass on new truth and instruction, correct error, solve problems and warn against evil and false teachers (1 Corinthians, Colossians, etc.). Paul's letters have a great balance of doctrinal truth and practical application to individual and corporate church life.

The designation *General Epistles* is applied to Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3 John and Jude. The designation is not a Biblical expression but it does appear in the title of five of the above letters in the King James Version (A.D. 1611). It is an old term and scholars have puzzled over its meaning without coming up with any satisfactory answer. One interesting view is that the term denotes writings which are general in nature and not addressed to any specific church. One discerns when reading these eight epistles that two of the prominent themes are (1) encouragement for Christians who are suffering persecution (Hebrews through 1 Peter); and (2) warning against false teachers and teaching (2 Peter through Jude).

By way of clarification, there has always been debate over the authorship of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews does not identify himself but some believe it was Paul. Most, however, think it was someone else based on the author's literary style, vocabulary, method of argumentation, etc.

## 3. *Prophecy*

The book of Revelation gives a fitting conclusion to the New Testament. Though other New Testament books have some prophetic themes concerning both the Church and Israel, Revelation is exclusively

devoted to prophecy. John was told by Christ in Revelation 1:19 to “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” Revelation majors on the judgment which God will bring upon the earth prior to the second coming of Christ, and it ends on the positive note of victory over God’s enemies and the establishment of the kingdom.

### **C. The Order of the New Testament Books**

The order in which we find the New Testament books in our Bible is logical rather than chronological. For instance, James was probably the first book of the New Testament to be written (A.D. 45) but it is 20th in the order given in the New Testament. John’s Gospel was written somewhere between A.D. 85–95 but it is fourth in order. Galatians was written around A.D. 47–49, shortly after James, but it is ninth. In this study of the New Testament we shall consider each book, except Philemon and Titus, in the order in which it is placed in our Bibles. Philemon will be studied with Colossians and Titus before 2 Timothy. The first four books (Gospels) give the basic history of the founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ. This is followed by the proclamation of the person and work of Christ in the book of Acts. This in turn is followed by the interpretation of Christ’s person and work in the Letters. Finally, the book of Revelation shows the consummation of all things in the second advent of Jesus Christ.

# NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

## EXAM BOOKLET AK '04 (2 UNITS) NTS

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STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

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ADDRESS

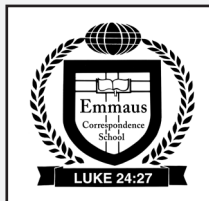
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CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

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INSTRUCTOR



*Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.*

## A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a single page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

### **MULTIPLE CHOICE**

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue                      C. yellow  
B. green                     D. orange

    **B**    

### **WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

### **RETURNING THE EXAM**

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

**DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES**

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## CHAPTER 1 EXAM

### INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

#### EXAM GRADE

***Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.***

*Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.*

1. The New Testament was written over a period of
 

A. 25 years	C. 40 years	
B. 30 years	D. 50 years	_____
  
2. The time between the two testaments is called the
 

A. silent years		
B. prosperous years		
C. rebellious years		
D. dark years		_____
  
3. God prepared the way for the coming of His Son through
 

A. the Greek language		
B. the Roman political power		
C. the Hebrew religion		
D. all of the above		_____
  
4. The books of the New Testament are arranged as
 

A. wisdom, prophecy, and history		
B. history, letters, and prophecy		
C. poetry, law, and wisdom		
D. letters, prophecy, and poetry		_____
  
5. The order of the New Testament books is
 

A. chronological	C. logical	
B. topical	D. psychological	_____
  
6. The four Gospels give four different
 

A. periods of the Lord's life		
B. purposes of the Lord's life		
C. portraits of the Lord's life		
D. powers in the Lord's life		_____

- 7. The Holy Spirit gave us four Gospels to
  - A. reach four representative groups of people
  - B. fulfill the prophecy of the Old Testament
  - C. make the life of Christ more exciting
  - D. dramatize the fullness of Christ's life\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 8. The writer of most of the *general* letters is
  - A. Paul
  - B. Peter
  - C. John
  - D. Luke\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 9. Among other things, the Book of Acts records the history of the
  - A. choosing of the twelve apostles
  - B. Pharisees and Sadducees
  - C. growth and development of the church from Jerusalem to Rome
  - D. the death of the Apostle Paul\_\_\_\_\_
  
- 10. The Book of Revelation is exclusively devoted to
  - A. prophecy
  - B. the Holy Spirit
  - C. God's promise of world peace
  - D. encouragement\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT DO YOU SAY?**

How would you respond to someone who says that Christ was born at the wrong time and therefore was rejected and killed?

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