

All the New Testament writings are occasional documents. In other words they are written to address specific needs of their audience. None of the writers of these were writing theology for its own sake. Rather they wrote in order to address the questions or problems of specific local congregations or individuals.

In order to properly interpret the New Testament it is imperative to learn the circumstances under which the writings were written, to ask what it is going on in this congregation or to examine how the author responds. Good interpretation of the Bible mandates that we ask the historical or literary questions of authorship, date, provenance, content, and purpose for each book of the Bible.

The New Testament can be divided into the following four segments:

1. The Gospels (biographical)
2. The Acts of the Apostles (historical)
3. The Epistles (doctrinal)
 - a. Letters from Paul to the churches
 - b. Letters from Paul to individuals
 - c. Hebrews
 - d. Letters by others (James, Peter, John, Jude)
4. The Apocalypse (eschatological)

The gospels can be subdivided into synoptic gospels and the 4th gospel. The epistles can be subdivided into the early epistles of Paul [arrange an order of length from long (Romans) to the shortest (Philippians)] The book of Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The two Petrine epistles, The three Johannine Epistles, and the Epistle of Jude.

The books of the New Testament are arranged in an order that simply makes sense. It is logical to place the Gospels first because they relate to the birth, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The book of Acts presents the narrative of the ascension of Jesus, the ministry of the apostles and other followers of Jesus, and the growth and spread of the early church in Israel and the entire Mediterranean area. The Epistles are next in order because they demonstrate the ongoing impact of Jesus and his message on the believing communities to which they are addressed. Finally, it makes sense to close the New Testament with Revelation since a controlling theme of the book regards the second coming of Jesus.

The term gospel (Greek evangelion) means good news. It refers to the preaching of Jesus (Mark 1: 14) the early preaching about Jesus (Romans 1: 1-5; 1 Corinthians 15: 1 - 8), and books written about Jesus (1: 1).

1. The native language of Jesus was Aramaic.
2. Jesus could read and speak Hebrew.
3. The third major language spoken in Palestine was Greek.

According to Mark 1:14 - 15 the central theme of Jesus teaching is the kingdom of God.

Jesus can be characterized in the Gospels:

1. Healings
2. Exorcisms
3. Controlling nature
4. Resuscitations

The synoptic gospels are Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They're called synoptic because they "see with one eye." In other words they present a very similar portrait of the life, ministry, teaching, and passion of Jesus.

Matthew's Gospel is written to the Jews in order to demonstrate that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament. It is characterized by the five large blocks of Jesus's teaching.

1. The righteousness of the kingdom
2. The proclamation of the kingdom
3. The mystery of the kingdom
4. The people of the kingdom
5. The future of the kingdom

Mark's Gospel was written to encourage Roman believers for the purpose of encouraging them to maintain faithfulness to God in spite of their persecution and suffering. Jesus portrayed as a model for Christian discipleship who suffers at the hands of the Romans but still fulfills the commands of God.

Luke's Gospel is the first of a part two work addressed to Theophilus. The author presents Jesus as the Savior of the world and emphasizes prayer.

The 4th Gospel, also known as the Gospel According to John, begins by presenting Jesus as the Incarnate Word of God made flesh. The author required seven of Jesus signs are miracles of Jesus.

1. The turning of water into wine at Canaan
2. The healing of the nobleman's son
3. The healing of the lame man by the pool of Bethesda
4. The feeding of the 5000 (the only miracle found in all four gospels)
5. The Walking on the water
6. The healing of the man born blind
7. The raising of Lazarus from the dead

Of Jesus are intricately connected to the "I am" sayings of Jesus

1. I am the bread of life
2. I am the light of the world
3. I am the door of the sheep
4. I am the Good Shepherd
5. I am the resurrection and the life
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life
7. I am the true vine

The very use of the words "I am" are meant to recall the name of Israel's God, Yahweh (I am).

The Book of ACTS

Known as the Acts of the Apostles – is the second of a two-part work by Luke addressed to Theophilus. His purpose is to continue the narrative that he began in the Gospel that bears his name. An outline can be discerned from acts 1 and 8 where Jesus promises that after the disciples have received the Holy Spirit they will be witnesses in Jerusalem Judea Samaria and the ends of the earth.

New Testament scholars have identified the core elements of the preaching of the apostles it includes the following six elements.

1. The age of fulfillment has dawned the latter days foretold by the prophets
2. this is taking place through the birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
3. By virtue of the resurrection, Jesus has been exalted at the right hand of God as messianic head of the new Israel.
4. The Holy Spirit in the church is the sign of Christ present power and glory.
5. The messianic age will reach its consummation in the return of Jesus.

6. An appeal is made for repentance with the offer of forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, and salvation.

This observation is important because it identifies that which was considered most important to the preaching of the early church. It therefore should serve as a model for contemporary Christian preaching.

One of the most important events in the so-called Jerusalem council at which the issue of how people are saved is discussed. According to Acts 15, the Judaizers were arguing that in the order for gentiles to be saved, they first had to become Jewish and become circumcised. Paul vehemently denies this and states that people are saved only by grace through faith. No works of the law can say. This incident serves as the foil for understanding Paul's arguments in his letters to the Galatians.

The epistle is another term for a letter. The most prolific letter writer in the New Testament is Paul. He follows the standard format of ancient letter writing that includes the following six elements.

1. Identification of sender(s) (Paul [and])
2. the identification of the recipients (to the church at...)
3. A greeting (grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.)
4. The Thanksgiving (I thank my God every time I think about you...)
5. The body of the letter
6. The closing, which may include final exhortations and more greetings.

All of Paul's letters can be examined this way. For example. The writers of First Corinthians are Paul and Sosthenes. The recipient is the Church of God, which is at Corinth. The greeting is found in verse 3 and the Thanksgiving is in verses 4 - 9. The body begins in 1-10 and runs through 16:9 before the closing.

The early epistles of Paul, Galatians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians.

Galatians is Paul's letter to a group of churches whom he had fallen prey to Judaizers.

First Thessalonians. Was written to encourage these believers to exemplify moral purity and good works as they await the parousia of Jesus.

2nd Thessalonians was written in response to the letters that were supposedly written by Paul and stating that the end of the world had already come. Paul reassures these believers that the end of the age has not yet arrived because there are certain events that must first take place. And then redirects them to good works until the 2nd coming of Jesus.

1st and 2nd Corinthians, Romans.

First Corinthians were written by Paul to the church at Corinth in response to all reports that he had received about divisions, sexual immorality, and lawsuits among the believers. In addition, he responds to a letter that the Corinthians had sent to him asking questions about sex and marriage. Food offered to idols, proper decorum and worship, spiritual gifts, the resurrection of the dead and the offering of the Saints in Jerusalem.

2nd Corinthians was written by Paul as a defense of his apostleship before those who would argue the contrary.

Romans was written by Paul to the church at Rome in order to encourage unity among the believers in order to bring this about he outlines the plan of God to bring about salvation from sin for all people, Jews and Gentiles alike.

The latter epistles. The prison and pastoral Epistles.

The Prison Epistles. These letters were written by Paul while he was in prison in Rome. He refers specifically to his chains in each of these works. These letters include Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.

The Ephesians was written by Paul while in prison at Rome. The purpose is to encourage the believers to unity, especially since this was God's plan for eternity.

Colossians was written by Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome. He sent this letter to the Saints in Colossus by Tychonicus.

Philemon Was written by Paul while he was in prison in Rome. This letter is regarding Philemon slave Onesimus, a resident of Colosse whose name means useful.

The Pastoral Epistles.

These letters were written by Paul the pastor. Specifically, they are addressed to Timothy, Paul's protege who is pastoring in Ephesus, and Titus, another protege who is pastoring in Crete.

First Timothy addresses such issues as public worship, qualifications for church leaders, and how to confront the false teachers in Ephesus

Titus was written by the apostle Paul to Titus, whom he had left to pastor a church on the island of Crete.

Second Timothy is chronologically last in order of the three pastoral Epistles. It regards Paul's last words before his death at the hands of Nero in AD 64. Paul encourages his protege to fulfill his ministry.

The General Epistles.

With the exception of two and three John. These epistles are not addressed to any specific individual or local church. For this reason they are called General or Catholic epistles. Not Catholic as in Roman Catholic, but Catholic with a small C meaning universal. The general epistles are James verses second, Peter first. Second and third John and Jude. These epistles are titled according to the purported author, as opposed to the epistles of Paul that are titled according to the addressees.

According to the testimony of the early Church, the Epistles of James was written by James, the son of Joseph and Mary and the stepbrother of Jesus. He writes to persecute Jewish Christians in order to encourage them to have pure religion. Which is tested by trial. And temptation in the faith.

The Petrine Epistles. This letter was written by Peter, one of Jesus's disciples, sometime between AD 64 and 68.

1 Peter was written to believers in Asia Minor, the regions of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. The purpose of these epistles was to encourage these Christians who were being persecuted simply because they were Christians.

2 Peter was written by Simon Peter to encourage believers to spiritual growth and to warn them about false teachers, especially those that deny the second coming of Christ.

Johnannine Epistles. These are the letters that are written by John, the son of Zebedee. And one of the apostles of Jesus somewhere between 8080 and 95, according to the early church tradition. In addition to the three letters and the Gospel, he also wrote the Apocalypse.

First John is the treatises in which the author underscores fellowship and the importance of believers loving God and other believers.

Second John is an epistle to an unidentified lady and her children, perhaps a metaphor for the Church. The author warns against the Antichrists who deny the doctrine of Christ, namely that Jesus Christ was truly human.

3rd John is the letter of encouragement to Gaius. You know he commends Demetrius and warns against Diotrephes.

Jude, the brother of Jesus, Matthew (13:15) writes this epistle as a warning against certain nominal Christians who threaten to undermine and destroy the fellowship of believers by their immoral character and conduct.

The apocalypse. (Revelation)

Martin Luther said. "For a book that's supposed to be a revelation, it's remarkably obscure" Indeed, for the unknowing, the book can be somewhat difficult to understand. However, this book is best understood when a few principles are kept in mind. Revelation is addressed to the seven churches of Asia Minor, modern day Turkey. These churches were located in the cities of Essences, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

Glossary of terms for the New Testament:

1. Amhaaretz: A Hebrew term meaning "People of the land." These are the common, uneducated people with whom Jesus spent most of his time.
2. Amanuesis: A person who transcribes or copies manuscripts. This was common practice to make use of and. Amanuesis our secretary with writing letters. The sender would then pin a concluding thought to close the letter.
3. Apocalypse. Literally to unveil to uncover R2 reveal. Greek word. It is an unveiling of things. People are events that were previously hitting. According to Revelations 1 and one, the last book of the Bible is an unveiling of Jesus himself and a description of events past, present and future.
4. Apostle. A term meaning one who is sent. On a mission. It is applied to the 12 disciples. A few others, including Paul. Who met the qualifications to preach the message of the gospel and to act on the behalf of Jesus.
5. The Beatitudes. The teachings of Jesus in Matthew. Chapter 5, verses 1 through 12 and Luke chapter 6, verses 17 through 26 that begin with the phrase "Blessed are..." Luke adds a series of woes that contrast with the blessings.
6. Cannon. Means ruler standard. It refers to the body. Of literature that is considered by religious group as the rule of standard and therefore authoritative for beliefs and practice for Christians. The cannon is made-up of 66 books of the Bible, and it's close to any further editions.
7. Christology The study of the person and works of Jesus Christ. (Greek; Christos)
8. Ecclesiology: The study of the Church. (Greek: EKKLESIA).
9. Epistle: an ancient letter. (Greek: Epistole)
10. Eschatology: The study of "Last things" or the end time.
11. Essenes: A Jewish sect that lived as a small monastic community like that at. Qumran, which produced the Dead Sea Scrolls.
12. Exit Jesus. Literally means "to draw out" This term refers to the practice of close. Analysis of a biblical text in order to determine the intended meaning of the author.
13. 4th Gospel: The Gospel according to John.
14. Gentile: Any person who is not Jewish. (Romans 9: 24).

15. God fearers: Gentiles who were willing to honor certain aspects of Judaism (for example, the worship of one God, closed parentheses, but did not want to become circumcised or observe other Jewish laws and rituals.
16. Gospels: Literally means “good news” It can refer to the preaching of Jesus. (Mark. One: 14 dash 15),, the message about the life and sacrifice death of Jesus that brings salvation to all. Are the first four books of the New Testament which are written about Jesus?
17. Haustafeln: German for household codes. It refers to the instructions given to husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves.
18. Judaizers. Those persons who taught that in order for gentiles to be saved, they must become Jewish by getting circumcised, keeping kosher food laws.
19. Kerygma the Greek word for preaching. The New Testament scholars used this term to refer to the content of the early Christian preaching that included the proclamation that:
 1. the New Age promised. The Scripture has not dawned
 2. this dawning of the New age has taken place through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
 - 3 Jesus has been exalted to the right hand of God as the leader of the new people of God
 4. the Holy Spirit present in the church is the sign that Jesus is still alive and present with his followers
 - 5 Jesus will come again and consummate the Kingdom of God.
 6. Therefore people should repent.
20. Messiah. Literally means the anointed 1. Coming from the Hebrew, the term refers to the ruling King, our coming Savior.
21. Parable. An earthly story used by Jesus in order to illustrate some spiritual truth.
22. Parousia. A Greek term meaning presence are coming. It is used to refer to the second coming of Jesus according to the New Testament, Visible return of Jesus to the earth.
23. Passion. The suffering of Jesus. It can also refer to those sections of the Gospels which focus on the suffering and death of Jesus.
24. Pastoral Epistles. The three letters written by the Apostle Paul to his two proteges, Timothy, Pastoring and Ephesus. And Titus pastoring on the island of Crete.
25. Pericope. The technical term for any individual unit art section of the gospels. It literally means to cut around, or it is that which you can cut around in the Gospel and it can stand

by itself. For example, the story of Jesus healing the blind man, or Jesus's teaching. Of a parable.

26 Pharisees. The largest Jewish group during the time of Jesus, they taught strict observance of the Mosaic laws and the various oral interpretations of them. In addition, they believed in angels and demons, predestination, and the resurrection of the body At the end of the age.

27 Pneumatology: The study of the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

28. Prison Epistles. Those letters written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.

29 Proselyte. One who converts to a religion.

30. Republicans.. Taxa roll collectors among Jews, publicans were much hated because they handled currency with pagan inscriptions and cooperated with the Romans.

31. Sadducees. A group of religious leaders with whom Jesus had repeated contact throughout the Gospels. Unlike the Pharisees, they regarded only the first five books of the Old Testament as fully authoritative and denied the oral interpretation of these books. They also did not believe in predestination. Angels and demons are the resurrection of the dead.

32 Synagogue. A place of worship for Jews living outside Israel that arose after the destruction of the Temple in 586 BC.

33 Synoptic Problem. The theological term used to refer to the problem of identifying the relationship between the first 3 Gospels. (Matthew, Mark and Luke) It is an attempt to answer the question why these gospels are similar to and different from one another.

34 Temple. The central place of Jewish worship in Jerusalem, where sacrifices were offered.

35 Truth. They usually have one main point and challenge the hearers to make a decision in response.

36 Word. Jesus is referred to as the word in John 1: 1-14 and Revelation 19:13. The Greek term is logos.

37. Zealots. A Jewish party during the time of Jesus that advocated armed rebellion against the Romans. It was hoped that doing this would bring about the Kingdom of God. According to Mark 3: 18 and Acts 1: 13, Simon was a former Zealot.

