

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

Part 3

If you were not here last week, we began an overview of the entire Bible. Last week we examined the O.T. and the period of time between the O.T. and N.T. Today, we will finish our overview by examining the 27 N.T. books.

The first four books of the N.T. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are known as the Gospels because they contain the good news about Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection. They record what happens from about 6 B.C. – A.D. 30.

However the first three books Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have a lot in common, and they focus on Jesus' work in Galilee. The Gospel of John is different from the Synoptic Gospels because it focuses on Jesus' work in Judea. John fills in the gaps the Synoptic Gospels leave out. All of them combined gives us a more complete picture about Jesus' life and His death. Consider the following chart:

The Gospels	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Unique	42%	7%	59%	92%
In common	58%	93%	41%	8%

Each Gospel account has its own theme, and each account was written to a specific group.

The Book of Matthew does not claim who the author is, but according to Christian tradition, the apostle Matthew was the author. Matthew was written around A.D. 50 – 60. One thing that offers some proof that Matthew was the author is that he was a tax collector and was familiar with finances. There are more references to money in Matthew than in the other Gospels.

Matthew was written to the Jews to convince them that Jesus was the promised Messiah as prophesied in the O.T., which is the reason this book quotes the O.T. around 60 times and makes around 130 references to O.T. events. Matthew shows how Jesus fulfilled prophecies of the Messiah. Since the Jews believed in the O.T., this was the best place to go to prove that Jesus is the Son of God.

Matthew starts out with the genealogy of Christ, which was important to the Jews because it showed that Jesus came through the seed of Abraham. Matthew gave the Jews hope even though they crucified the Messiah because he lets them know that a new Israel was in the making, which is the church.

Matthew 21:43 "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

While Matthew was writing to the Jews, he also gave hope to the Gentiles because he said:

Matthew 8:11 "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 12:21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."

Matthew carefully records 20 miracles that Jesus did, which proves that He was the Son of God, but he also carefully records the words of Jesus such as the sermon on the Mount (5-7), The parables about the kingdom (13) and the Olivet discourse (24-25). Matthew also records how Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Scribes with 7 woes in Chapter 23. Matthew closes his book with The Great Commission.

The book of Mark's author is not named but Christian tradition says it was John Mark. Mark was the son of Mary (Act 12:12) and the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). He had a close relationship with Peter because he called him my son (1Pet. 5:13). He probably wrote this Gospel under the influence of Peter around A.D. 60-68 .

Mark's account is different from Matthews because he was writing to the Romans. Since they did not understand Hebrew tradition, he explained it to them:

Mark 7:2 Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. ³ For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders.

A Jew would have known that defiled hands meant unwashed and why they viewed that way, but a Roman would not. He also used Latin terms to help the Romans understand things better. He also explained the value of Jewish money in Mark 12:42 in which two mites makes a quadrans. A quadrans or farthing is Latin term for a certain coin. Also, Mark refers to the O.T. only 19 times. Mark was most likely writing to encourage the Christians in Rome who were being persecuted.

Mark only records one major speech of Jesus, the Olivet discourse (Mark 13), but he emphasizes that Jesus was a servant who came to do God's will. In fact, he uses this word "servant" 14 times describing Jesus' activities. He also records 19 miracles of Jesus.

Mark also makes it clear that Jesus is the Son of God through the:

- Testimony of God (Mark 1:11; 9:7)
- Testimony of Jesus (Mark 13:32; 14:61-62)
- Testimony of demons (Mark 3:11; 5:7)
- Testimony of the Roman Centurion (Mark 15:39)

About 40% of this book is devoted to the final journey of Jesus and the events surrounding His death. Mark concludes with The Great Commission.

Luke is written by a Gentile physician named Luke around A.D. 60 -68 who addressed his book to an individual, but the message has much broader use than for just one person. Luke was written mainly to the Greeks, and he shows the human side of Jesus and portrays Him as being a perfect man.

The Greeks, who are also Hellenist, were centered on humanity especially in the field of philosophy and science, which is why Luke focuses on Christ's humanity and His perfect example.

He gives the most complete record of Jesus' birth and childhood (Luke 1, 2). He traces Christ's lineage all the way back to Adam, and he captures Jesus' human traits such as weeping and being in agony (Luke 19:41, 22:44). He records many of Jesus' prayers. In fact, out the 15 prayers Jesus made in the Gospels, Luke records 11 of them.

Luke was a man who investigated and had a great knowledge of Jesus' miracles. He records 20 of them with 6 of them being unique to Luke. He treats them as a historical reality. Since Luke was a doctor, there must have been overwhelming evidence of the virgin birth for him to argue it so strongly in Luke 1:26-38.

We can see that Luke's account was for the Gentiles because he explained that Capernaum was a city of Galilee (4:31), that the country of the Gerasenes was over against Galilee (8:26), and that the town of Emmaus was 7 miles from Jerusalem (Lk. 24:13). The Jews that lived in Palestine would have already known these things. Also, Luke records several things that would include Gentiles:

...I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people (Luke 2:10)

A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel (Luke 2:32)

Luke also makes reference to the O.T. in regards to the Gentiles

Luke 4:25 "But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; ²⁶ "but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. ²⁷ "And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

The parable of the Good Samaritan shows that spiritual matters are to go beyond that of Judaism (10:25-37).

Luke is also known for the following parables and stories:

The rich fool (12:13-21)

The prodigal son (15:11-32)

The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)

The Pharisee and the publican (18:9-14)

The gospel of John does not name its author either, but Christian tradition says that the apostle John was its author. It was written around A.D. 60 – 95. John's message was universal, but his primary focus was that Jesus is Deity and the Son of God.

John 20:30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

A few things we learn about John is that:

1. His father's name was Zebedee (Mt. 4:21).
2. His mother's name was Salome (Compare Mk. 15:40 to Mt. 27:56).
3. His brother's name was James (Mt. 4:21).
4. He was one of the twelve apostles (Lk. 6:13-14).
5. Many times He was in the company of Simon Peter, and he and his brother had a partnership with Peter and his brother in their fishing business (Lk. 5:10).
6. He was in Jesus' inner circle of friends (Mk. 5:37ff; Mt. 17:1ff)

Jesus Deity is proven by 7 "I AM" statements and 7 miracles.

Finally, I want to point out a few of the unique features about the Gospel of John:

1. It has no parables (John 10:1ff is a proverb).
2. The synoptic Gospels begin with Adam and work their way to Christ, but the Gospel of John begins with God.
3. It fills in the details the synoptic Gospels leave out.
4. It records Jesus' longest prayer (John 17).
5. It teaches many details about the work of the Holy Spirit.
6. It is written in the most simplistic form of Greek, yet it teaches a deep spiritual message.

Next, we come to the history book of the N.T., the book of Acts. This book records how the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and how the church began and grew. A great verse that describes what the book of Acts is all about is:

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The book mainly focuses on what Peter and Paul did as they went around spreading the good news. The book was written by Luke around A.D. 62 – 64 and it covers what happened from about A.D. 30 – 62. Luke was a companion of Paul on several occasions. When Luke writes about Paul, he would use the word "we" if he was with him at that

time. This great book records the birth of the church in Acts 2 and what one must do to be saved. We learn that around 3000 souls were added to the church at the birth of the church and how the church continued to grow quickly. It records many conversions of Jews and Gentiles. Two things that are always mentioned at every conversion are belief and baptism. It tells us about the first Christian put to death and how Saul turned from being the persecutor of the church to an apostle of Christ. It also records how both Jew and Gentile can become children of God. The book ends with Paul being in chains in Rome waiting to stand before Cesar.

After the book of Acts, we have 21 letters or epistles. Paul wrote 13 of them. He started writing his letters during his 2nd missionary journey as recorded in Acts 15 – 18, and he wrote his last letter shortly before he was put death in his 2nd imprisonment in Rome. Before I give you a brief overview of each of his letters, I want to show you in what order he wrote them and their approximate dates because they are not in chronological order in the Bible.

During Paul's 2nd missionary journey (Acts 15-18), he wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians around A.D. 52-53.

During Paul's 3rd missionary journey (Acts 18 -21), he wrote Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans around A.D. 57.

During Paul's 1st Roman imprisonment (Acts 28), he wrote Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians around A.D. 62.

Shortly after he was released from Roman imprisonment, he wrote 1 Timothy and Titus around A.D. 64.

During his 2nd Roman imprisonment, he wrote 2 Timothy around A.D. 66-67.

The book of Romans is considered to be one the greatest letters Paul wrote. In it, he deals with necessity to be saved by having an obedient faith and how sin will separate us from God. He goes to great lengths to explain that we are not justified by the Law of Moses, but by the Law of Christ through faith. He also explains in detail what the grace of God is all about and what happens to us when we are baptized into Christ (Rom. 6). Romans 12 gives some great advice on how to live the Christian life, and Romans 8 ensures us that nothing will separate us from the love of God. This letter was written to the Roman Christians, but its universal message applies to everyone. I personally like:

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

1 Corinthians was written by Paul because he had heard bad news concerning the church there. They were starting to divide themselves and call themselves after men instead of after Christ. Paul writes them to correct their division and to show them that God wants us to be unified in accordance with His Word. He addresses many issues the church was having, such as them corrupting the Lord's Supper, eating meats offered to idols, disputing over spiritual gifts, and dealing with marriage and divorce, etc. Chapter 13 is known as the love chapter, but it also teaches that once God's Word was fully revealed miracles would end.

Second Corinthians was written by Paul after he heard how the Corinthians responded to his first letter. He found out that they had repented and corrected their sins (2 Cor. 2, 7). Paul heard from Titus that some Judaizing teachers had made their way into Corinth and were teaching false doctrine and saying that Paul wasn't really an apostle. When Paul wrote this letter:

- He praised them for obeying his first letter (7:4, 15).
- He urged them to express their love and encouragement to the brother who repented (2:6-9).
- He warned them about false teachers (11:3-4).
- He defended his apostleship (11, 12).

He also lets the Corinthians know that we will all have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account for our actions (2 Cor. 5:10). So, this letter is an appeal to them to remain faithful to God and to warn as many sinners as they can that they are lost without God. We also learn a lot about Paul's character and the many hardship he endured in his life as a Christian.

The book of Galatians was written by Paul and it is one of his more severe letters in which he tries to get these Christians back on track. Some Judaizers had come in and admitted that Jesus was the Messiah, but they were claiming that salvation required the works of the Law of Moses. They were also trying to attack Paul's apostleship.

In this letter, Paul shows that the Law of Moses has been replaced with Law of Christ and that justification comes from an obedient faith in Christ not by the works of Law of Moses. He also defends His apostleship. Paul also makes it clear that we can fall from grace (Gal. 5:4), so we should take it for granted. He stresses how anyone can become a child of God that is willing to be baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27-29).

The book of Ephesians was written by Paul. The first half of the book deals with doctrine and last half with living a Christ centered life. Paul likes to use the phrase "in Christ" in his letters. He uses this phrase 200 times throughout his letters 30 times in the book of Ephesians. He stresses that we are no longer under the Law of Moses, but under the system of grace and that we have to be in Christ to have all the spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3). He teaches that we can have the understanding of an apostle when we read the Scriptures (Eph. 3:4). He also stresses that there is only one body, and we are to be united in that one body (Eph. 4). If we are not in that one body, we will not be saved because Jesus is the Savior of the one body (Eph. 5:23). He encourages the Ephesians to stay away from evil and gives some great advice on how to have a marriage that will last and be pleasing to God (Eph. 5). He also gives some good parenting advice and tells how we should put on the whole armor of God so we withstand the whiles of the devil (Eph. 6).

AN OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE

Part 4

The book of Philippians was written by Paul and many call it a love letter to the church at Philippi. It is full of love, gratitude, joy, and cheerfulness. When Paul thought about the church in Philippi, it caused him to rejoice and he said that we should rejoice in the Lord always (Phil. 3:1). As Paul does in most of his letters, he encourages unity and warns them about false teachers, but the majority of the letter is full of praise. There was only one incident that Paul wanted to correct at that church, which was a lack of unity between two women:

Philippians 4:2 I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in the Book of Life.

This letter stresses how we should treat each other with love and patience. It tells us we should always rejoice in the Lord knowing that Jesus can and will give us strength, and that heaven will be our home if we stand fast in the faith.

The book of Colossians was written by Paul and it is very similar to the book of Ephesians. In fact, it has about 78 verses that are almost identical to Ephesians. Apparently, some false teachers had come into their area and were trying to bind festivals and other rituals on the people. So, Paul stresses the supremacy of Christ over man and how we need to live our lives according to God's Word and not man's ideas. In chapter 2, Paul stresses how we should not get caught up in philosophies of men. He talks about our salvation, how we are buried with Christ in baptism, and how sins are forgiven at the point of baptism. We can know this happening at our baptism by our faith in the operation of God (Col. 2:11ff). Chapter 3 points out how we should keep our thoughts on heaven and do all things in the name of Christ. Chapter 4 has more practical thoughts about living the Christian life.

The book of 1 Thessalonians was written by Paul. When Paul first began preaching the gospel there, he did not get to stay long because of the opposing Jews (Acts 17). The church began to be persecuted there, so Paul sent Timothy back to them to see how they were doing and he brought back a good report (1 Thess. 3:6). However, they did have some problems that needed to be addressed. So, Paul's objective was to comfort these Christians in their affliction and correct some misconceptions they had about the dead and Jesus' second coming.

Paul commended them for:

- Their acceptance and practice of the gospel (1:1-10).
- Their genuine Christian character and for being an example to all (1:7).
- Their faith, evangelistic zeal, and long suffering (1:8; 2:14).
- Their genuine love of the brethren (4:9-10).

Paul wrote to them to:

- Encourage them in the midst of persecution (2:14).
- Assure them of his love for them and his desire to see them again (2:17-20; 3:6-8).
- Warn them about the sin of the flesh and being idle (4:1-8; 11-12).
- Comfort the bereaved and teach them about Jesus' second coming (4:13-18; 5).

Chapter 5:14-22 is a list of Christian duties that is a great companion to Romans 12.

The book of 2 Thessalonians was also written by Paul shortly after his first letter to them. This letter continues to offer comfort to the persecuted Christian, but also warns about how disobedience to God's commands will cause one to face everlasting punishment (2 Thess. 1:7ff). Though Paul already told the people about Jesus' second coming, he had to address it again because there was some that were trying to say that Jesus had already come. We can see this in:

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. ³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,*

Paul let them know that this great falling away would happen before Jesus came again. Others had misunderstood the suddenness of Jesus return and thought it meant He would come back soon, so some stopped working and were waiting around for Him to come back. Paul lets them know that must not be idle, and they must work so they can feed their families, and he encouraged them to never grow weary of doing good (3).

The book of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus, which were written by Paul, are sometimes called the pastoral letters because they give the qualifications of elders. Some call them the preacher's manual. There are seven main points that these letters address:

1. The qualification of elders.
2. The qualification of deacons.
3. Instructions to various groups in the church such as men, women, widows, virgins, the young, the old, servants, the rich, backsliders, and heretics.
4. Preaching the Word is stressed.
5. Live as an example of Christ.
6. Keep the church pure.
7. Rebuke false teachers.

Timothy was a young man that met Paul on his first missionary journey and joined Paul on his 2nd missionary journey. He was an evangelist, and Paul loved him as son and

trained him well. Paul sent Timothy to different places to check the progress of the churches he had established and to build them up. While Timothy was a faithful man, he needed to be encouraged, so Paul wrote 1 Timothy and sent it to him while he was preaching at Ephesus.

Paul had warned the Ephesians elders earlier:

Acts 20:28 "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

This is the reason Timothy was there. This 1st letter would show the church that Timothy had the authority of Paul to minister to them and to help them with these false teachers. This letter was also written to encourage Timothy do the work that had been assigned to him.

Paul charged Timothy:

1. To wage the good warfare and to hold on to his faith and good conscience (1 Tim. 1:18-19).
2. To remind the brethren of what they are supposed to do as Christians and to show them by being a good example (1 Tim. 4:6, 12).
3. He was to take heed to himself and to the doctrine (4:16).
4. He was to flee youthful lust and follow after righteousness (1 Tim. 6:11-12).
5. He was to keep the commandments and fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6).

Let's take a quick look at what you will find in this letter:

1. Warns about false teachers, and teaches us that Jesus came to save sinners.
2. We are taught to pray for everyone, and we learn that God wants everyone to learn about His Word and be saved.
3. We are given the qualifications of elders and deacons.
4. A warning of how some will depart from the faith and how Timothy is to be a good servant of Christ.
5. Instructions are given on how we should treat each other.
6. Another warning about false teachers and the dangers of pursuing riches.

The book of 2 Timothy is the last letter Paul wrote to Timothy from his second imprisonment in Rome. Though his death would be soon, he wanted to write another letter to encourage Timothy. In this last letter, Paul encourages Timothy to do the work of an evangelist, to preach the word, and to hold fast the pattern of sound doctrine. He also wants Timothy to come to him before he is put to death.

Let's take a quick look at what you will find in this letter:

1. We learn about Timothy's mother and grandmother and how Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed of the gospel.
2. Paul tells Timothy to be a good soldier of Christ and to pass on what he has learned to others so they can teach the truth. He also encourages him to study the Scriptures and to rightly divide them.
3. Paul warns Timothy about how people will get involved in all kinds of sin, and he encourages him to remember what he has been taught from the Scriptures.
4. Paul tells Timothy to preach the word and to look forward to the day Jesus returns. He asked Timothy to come to him and bring his cloak, books, and parchments.

The book of Titus was written by Paul to Titus, another evangelist. We do not know as much about Titus as we do about Timothy, but Paul had left Titus in Crete to help the church grow. The main thoughts of this book are the same as we found in 1 and 2 Timothy.

So, let's just take a quick look at what you will find in this letter:

1. Qualifications of elders are given, and the elders are told to shut the mouths of those who are teaching false doctrine.
2. Instructions are given to older men and women, younger men and women, and to slaves. The older women are instructed to teach the younger women.
3. Paul encourages them to be ready for every good work and respect those who are over them and each other.

The book of Philemon is the shortest letter Paul wrote and it shows the transforming power of the gospel. This book is about how Onesimus was a slave that ran away from his owner and possibly stole money or goods from (Phm. 1:18). He fled to Rome where he was converted by Paul and served him while he was in his 1st Roman imprisonment. Since Onesimus was Philemon's rightful slave, Paul knew that Onesimus should go back to his master and he did so willingly with this letter in which Paul asked Philemon to receive him back as a brother in Christ (Phm. 1:16). Paul also promised to pay Philemon back if Onesimus owes him anything. While Paul could have commanded Philemon to do this as an apostle, Paul chose to appeal to him instead (Phm. 1:8). Since Onesimus had become a Christian, he would be far more useful than just a mere slave. Paul had no doubt that Philemon would take Onesimus back and treat him fairly because he was a Christian as well.

The Book of Hebrews' author is unknown. However, the most popular guess is that Paul wrote it, but others have guessed that Apollos, Luke, or Barnabas wrote it. The date of the book is also difficult to determine, but we know that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 because the temple was still standing (Heb. 9:6-8; 10:1). So, I will date it around A.D. 64 – 68.

The letter was addressed to the Hebrew Christians who had endured persecution, and they knew who the author was and who Timothy was. The author expected to visit them soon along with Timothy (13:18-19, 23). This letter encourages Christians to be faithful, and it warns against falling away. It shows us how Christ is superior over all things and how Christianity is superior over all religions. It clearly shows that we are under a new better covenant under Christ (Heb. 7:22; 8:6). It makes around 100 references to the O.T., which was the best way to teach and reassure the Hebrews that Jesus had fulfilled the O.T. prophecies and is now our High Priest. It encourages the Christian not neglect the assembly of Saints (Heb. 10:25), and not to allow themselves to drift away from God and lose their salvation (Heb. 2:1-3). It also explains that when we sin willfully it is like trampling Jesus under our foot and counting the blood of the covenant a common thing (Heb. 10:26-29). It also provides encouraging verses such as:

Hebrews 13:5 *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."* ⁶ **So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"**

The book of James was probably the first book written in our N.T. Bible. While there are four men called James in the N.T. with two of them being apostles, Christian tradition says that Jesus half brother James wrote the book because he was a prominent figure in the church at Jerusalem around A.D. 44 until he was martyred around A.D. 62. Some date this writing as early as A.D. 44 – 47.

This book was written to the Jewish Christians that were scattered abroad as the first verse says:

James 1:1 ... To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

Many call this book “The Proverbs of the New Testament.” It promotes living a Christian life by being a doer of God’s Word, instead of just a hearer (Jam. 1:22). James teaches that we show our faith by our works (Jam. 2). Some think that James and the writing of Paul contradict one another because Paul said:

Galatians 2:16 ... a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ

What people fail to understand is that Paul is saying the we are not justified by the works of the Law of Moses. He has never taught we are justified by faith alone. Instead, he teaches that we must have an obedient faith and work out our own salvation (Phi. 2:12). Paul mentions the need for an obedient working faith in many other passages as well (Acts 26:20; Eph. 2:10; Rom. 1:5; 6:17; 16:26; Gal. 5:6). So, James’ message is in perfect harmony with Paul’s message. Paul speaks of the faith that works, and James talks about the works of faith. As James states:

James 2:20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Let's take a quick look at what you will find in this letter:

1. Talks about pure religion and how we should find joy in trials and pray for wisdom without doubting. Tells how sin develops, and we are taught that God's Word saves so we should be doers of it.
2. Teaches that we should treat the rich and the poor alike, and that faith without works is dead.
3. Teaches us about the destructive nature of the unbridled tongue.
4. Warns against worldliness and about boasting about tomorrow because tomorrow may never come.
5. Warns the rich about being selfish. Teaches us to be patient until the coming of the Lord and tells what fervent prayers can do.

The book of 1 Peter is written by Peter A.D. 63-68. It was written to the elect scattered throughout Asia to both Jews and Gentiles (1:1-2; 2:9-10). Peter tells us the purpose of this letter in:

1 Peter 5:12 I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

These Christians were being persecuted (3:17; 4:12-19) and Peter encourages them in his letter to remain faithful to God and to endure their suffering because all things can be overcome by faith in Christ. He was also preparing them for future trials that they would face for serving God. This is a letter of hope.

The main points of each chapter are:

1. Salvation.
2. Spiritual growth and behavior.
3. Honoring Christ.
4. Suffering for Christ.
5. The true grace of God.

Christ can be found in every chapter:

1. Christ, our source of hope and redeemer (3, 18-19).
2. Christ, the chief cornerstone, our example, and sin-bearer (6, 21, 24).
3. Christ, our Lord (15, 22).
4. Christ, our sufferer (1, 13).
5. Christ our Shepherd (4).

The book of 2 Peter was written by Peter shortly after his first one. It was written to:

2 Peter 1:1 those who have obtained like precious faith

It would have been written around A.D. 63-68. Peter wrote this to encourage the scattered Christians to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (2 Pet. 3:18). He also warns them about false teachers, and reassures them that Jesus will come again.

Let's take a quick look at these 3 chapters:

1. Peter teaches about the all sufficiency of Scripture and gives a recipe for guaranteed spiritual growth.
2. He warns about false teachers and how cunning they can be.
3. He tells how Jesus will come again and how heaven and earth will be destroyed.

The book of 1 John was written by the apostle John according to Christian tradition. He was writing to the churches in Asia Minor. This book along with 2 and 3 John are hard to date. They were written between A.D. 60-95. Some prefer the earlier date because none of these letter mention the destruction of Jerusalem as something that had happened. Others prefer a later date because one of the things that 1 John combats is Gnosticism, which some think it had it beginning later in the first century.

The them of this letter is fellowship with God and Christ (1:3). John mentions several reasons for writing this letter. He wrote it to:

- Add to their joy (1:4)
- Guard them against sin (2:1)
- Confirm that the faithful have overcome the evil one (2:12-14)
- Warn them against false teachers (2:21, 26)
- Strengthen their faith in Christ and assure them of eternal life (5:13).

John also stresses how we must love one another and love God by keeping His commandments.

2 John is written by John, and he is writing to the elect lady and her children, which may be talking about a particular church and it members. Whichever one it is, he was delighted that her children were living faithful lives, and he warned her about false teachers and how she should not even show hospitality to such a person.

3 John is written by John, and he is writing to Gaius. There are 3 men with name of Gaius in the N.T. (Acts 19:29; 1 Cor. 1:14; Rom. 16:23), but we do not know which Gaius he was writing to. We learn that this man was a faithful Christian that John loved, and he was a good example to other believers. He showed hospitably to traveling evangelist. John also says great things about a man Demetrius, but has harsh words about a man name Diotrephes. Diotrephes would not receive travelling evangelist, and he would kick members of the church out that would receive them.

The book of Jude was written by Jude, who most believe was the half-brother of Jesus. This book was written around A.D. 64-68. It was written:

Jude 1:1 to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father

The purpose of his writing is found in:

Jude 1:3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Jude warns against false teachers and gives several examples of what happened to those that choose to sin against God. He encourages Christians to remain faithful to God and to keep in mind that eternity in heaven will be worth it all.

Finally, we come to the prophetic book of Revelation, which was written by John (1:1) during a time that the church was undergoing great persecution. It uses a lot of apocalyptic language and symbols. Those who teach the rapture will say that most of the book of revelation is referring to a future event that will happen very soon. They see men like Hitler, helicopters, and a great battle taking place on the earth in this book. They also see Jesus setting up a physical kingdom for 1000 years on the earth. While this view makes an interesting story, it does not fit with the rest of the Bible and it is not supported in the book of Revelation without some heavy twisting of the Scriptures.

Even John said:

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

There two most popular views of what the book of Revelation is about that fits well with what John is talking about is as follows:

1. Some believe it is talking about how Christians were struggling against Judaism and the Roman Empire under the reign of Nero A.D. 37-68 who was known for persecuting Christians. This early view shows that most of Revelation records what happened before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and it foretells the destruction of the Jerusalem. This would mean it written around A.D. 64 – 68.
2. Others believe that Revelation focuses on how Christians would be persecuted by the Romans under the reign of Domitian who reigned from A.D. 51-96. They believe this book talks about the downfall of the Roman Empire . This would mean that it was written around A.D. 96.

Both of these views show that the majority of the events that are given in the book of Revelation have already happened. I lean more toward the early date because John said that these things must shortly take place and the Roman Empire did not fall until almost 400 years later. There are many other reasons I lean toward the early date, but we do not

have time to examine them. The latter part of the book is certainly talking about what happens when Christ comes back again.

The theme of Revelation is the glorious triumph of Christ and the ultimate victory of the righteous. Its message is designed to comfort and support Christians under trials and persecutions by assuring them that all the enemies of righteousness will be destroyed and the church and its members will be victorious in the end.

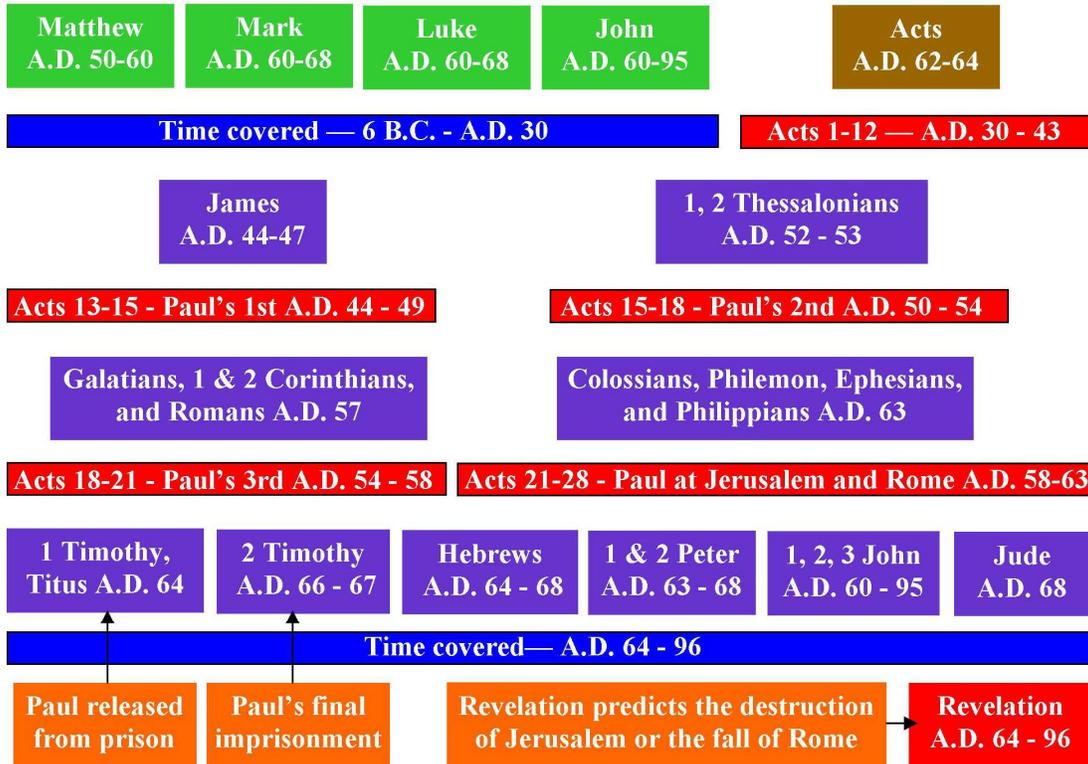
A quick outline of this book would be:

1. The seven churches (1-3).
2. The seven seals (4-7).
3. The seven trumpets (8-11).
4. The enemies of the church (12-14).
5. The seven bowels of wrath (15-16).
6. Destruction of most of the enemies of the church (17-19).
7. The destruction of the dragon followed by a new heaven and earth (20-22).

This book ends with giving us a warning not to add or take away from the words of this book.

Well this brings us to the end of our overview of the Bible. I hope you have found it helpful. I would like close by showing you a chart I put together that shows the chronological order of the events of the books of the N.T. and their approximate dates.

**NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
(ALL DATES ARE APPROXIMATE)**



Note: The New Testament books are listed in chronological order based on the events they cover, which may or may not correspond to when they were written.