

Unlocking the Mystery: Introduction to Bible Study New Testament

Groupings

Gospels

Matthew 21:4-5, Mark 14:72, Luke 19:11, John 20:30-31

Acts

Epistles

Paul's letters to the churches

Paul's letters to individuals

General Epistles

Revelation of (to) John

Timeline

See back of this page.

Themes

Jesus has come as the Savior of the world

Malachi 4:5-6, Matthew 1:1, Matthew 11:14, Luke 9:20

The close of Messiah's earthly ministry

1 Peter 3:19, Matthew 21:31, 2 Peter 3:9, Acts 1:7

History of the early church

Luke 11:13, John 17:15, Matthew 28:20

Law in the New Testament

Matthew 5:18-20, Matthew 5:21-40, Matthew 5:17, John 13:34-35

Response to the Gospel

Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 10:8, 2 Corinthians 4:7

Historical Background of the New Testament:

Date	Bible Event	Contemporary Scene
c. 4-6 BC†	Birth of Christ	Roman Empire: Caesar Augustus (27 BC - 14 AD)
c. 25 AD†	Baptism of Jesus and the beginning of His public ministry.	Emperor: Tiberius (14-37 A.D.) Local tetrarch: Herod Antipas Roman governor: Pontius Pilate
c. 30 AD†	Death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.	
c. 30 AD†	Founding of the Church by the Holy Spirit at the Feast of Pentecost in Jerusalem. (Acts 2)	
c. 30-37†	The gospel spread from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria (Acts 1-12). Preaching of a crucified, risen Savior at Jerusalem. Persecution of Christians; martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 7)	
37-41	Paul's conversion (Acts 8-9, 22; 1 Cor 15:8)	Caligula (37-41)
41-54	Cornelius converted (Acts 10). The gospel to the "ends of the earth." (Acts 13-28) Missionary outreach from Antioch in Syria. Paul's early ministry includes fight against legalism.	Claudius (41-54)
54-70	Paul evangelizes cities of the Roman Empire; writes his great epistles. Peter's epistles, the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) and the Epistle to the Hebrews are written down.	Nero (54-68) - first emperor to persecute Christians. Galba (68-69) Otho and Vitellius (69) Vespasian (69-79)
70		Jerusalem destroyed. Emperor Titus rules from 79-81.
c. 85 AD	John the apostle banished to the Isle of Patmos, where he receives the Revelation.	Domitian (81-96), a persecutor of Christians.
96-117	Completion of the New Testament writings.	Nerva (96-98) Trajan (98-117), persecutor of Christians.
100-150	Period of the "Church Fathers," important because their writings contain thousands of quotations from what later became the canon of the New Testament.	Hadrian (117-138) and Antoninus Pius (138-161) both persecuted Christians.
150-313	Fight against Empire and Error: the monotheistic separatist Christian church posed a threat to Rome's pagan syncretistic state. The Church also struggled against <i>Gnosticism</i> , <i>Montanism</i> and <i>Monarchianism</i> -- various heresies contrary to Scripture. (The NT began to crystallize by 200 AD, and the early creeds were developed as standards for orthodoxy.)	
312	Conversion of Constantine, the Roman Emperor.	Constantine (306-317)
313	Constantine's Edict of Milan effectively legalized Christianity and halted official persecution. Sunday established as a day of rest and worship. Ordered 50 Bibles on vellum.	
380 AD	Emperor Theodosius suppressed heathenism and made Christianity the legal state religion, transforming it from a movement to an institution.	Theodosius the Great (379-395)
	*NOTE: The Roman Empire had split in 364, and as the Bishop of Rome gradually became more powerful, the "authorized" Bible was the Latin version. Latin remained the language of liturgy (in the West) and scholarship in the Church until the 1500's. ¹	

† Exact dates for these events are disputed by various scholars.

¹ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Handbook* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), p0. 899-903