

LESSON 9. NT Overview

As with the prior lesson, the teacher and student can choose what areas to focus on. The timeline below can be used as a broad overview to the discussion.



THE MINISTRY OF JESUS:

His birth (Matt. & Mark), the ministry, the death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

Matthew: Most OT references, Jewish audience, begins with the birth of Jesus (1-2), the ministry of John the baptist (3), the trial in the wilderness (4); the sermon on the mount (5-7); miracles, parables, teaching, conflict with opponents (8-26); trial and crucifixion (27); empty tomb and resurrection (28).

Mark: Shortest gospel; Roman audience. Generally similar content to Matthew. Fewer events recorded (though occasionally more detail about the events it does record).

Luke: Gentile Physician is the author; Greek audience. Begins with the parents of John the baptist, his birth, and the birth of Jesus. Then much similar content to Mark and Matthew, but also includes some sections and famous parables not found elsewhere: the good samaritan; the lost son, etc. Luke and Acts form a sequential history written by Luke.

John: a later gospel, covers Judean ministry, when Jesus would travel from Galilee down to Jerusalem for the feasts. Emphasis on evidences of Jesus as the Son of God. Extensive texts on teaching given the apostles the night before the arrest and crucifixion.

HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH:

Acts: Three decades of early church history from Jerusalem to Samaria and beyond, following especially Peter in the first half, and Paul (Saul of Tarsus) in the latter half.

Key events: the ascension (ch. 1); Day of Pentecost (ch. 2); ministry of Peter and the other apostles (ch. 2-6); martyrdom of Stephen (ch. 7); persecution and spread of the gospel (ch. 8); conversion of Saul (ch. 9); conversion of Gentiles (ch.10-11); persecution (ch.12); Paul's 1st missionary journey (ch.13-14); council at Jerusalem (ch.15); 2nd missionary journey (ch.15:36-18:22); 3rd missionary journey (18:23-21:16); Paul in Jerusalem and in prison (Acts 21-26); Paul's prisoner journey to Rome (ch. 27-28).

LETTERS:

1. from Paul: a.) to churches: to Rome, Corinth, Galatia, etc. etc.
b.) to Individuals: to Timothy, Titus, Philemon.
2. from others (James, Peter, John, etc.)

Some letters are to churches Paul established (like Philippians and Galatians),

Some are to cities where he had not work at (like Romans and Colossians).

Some letters are encouraging and thankful (like 1 Thessalonians and Philippians).

Some are addressing serious problems in the churches (like 1 Corinthians and Galatians).

Some letters cover extensive themes (like Romans),

Some cover a variety of issues (like 1 Corinthians).

Other letters cover things like wisdom and practical living (James); suffering and persecution (1 Peter); or the superiority of the new covenant over the old (Hebrews).

Though written to specific people or churches in the first century, we can learn a great deal from these letters and apply the principles taught in them.

Apocalypse: the Revelation of Christ, set in the time of Roman persecution against the church. (Rev. 1:3; 1:9)