

Student Notes

New Testament Survey



The life of Jesus and the Early Church

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LESSON 6: *The Epistles and Revelation*

i. The Epistles

Use of an amanuensis (secretary)

Style of letters

Most of Paul's letters were "occasional." The form is typically (i) Greeting, which includes the name of the author, credentials, blessings, name of recipient; (ii) Body, which was typically responses to problems; (iii) Conclusion, which gave greetings for others in the apostolic band.

Content of letters

1. THEOLOGICAL themes

- a. salvation by faith alone (Gal., Eph. 1,2; Rom. 5-8; Col. 2....)
- b. The Person and work of Christ (Col. 1)
- c. The church (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12....)
- d. Spiritual warfare (Eph. 2, 6)
- e. End of the age (1 Thess 4,5; 2 Thess. 2).

2. PRACTICAL issues facing the church

- 1. Sexual ethics
- 2. Slavery
- 3. Money
- 4. Family relations
- 5. Jew/Gentile relations

<i>Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians</i>	<i>Ephesians Philippians Colossians Philemon</i>	<i>1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians</i>	<i>1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus</i>
Polemical (Doctrinal Argument)	Philosophical & Personal	Prophetical	Pastoral
Faith	Love	Hope	Church order
Christ & the cross	Christ & the church	Christ & second coming	Christ & the congregation
Plan of salvation	Privileges of salvation	Perfecting salvation	Purpose of salvation
Conflict	Conquest	Consolation	Consistency
Soteriological	Christological	Eschatological	Ecclesiological

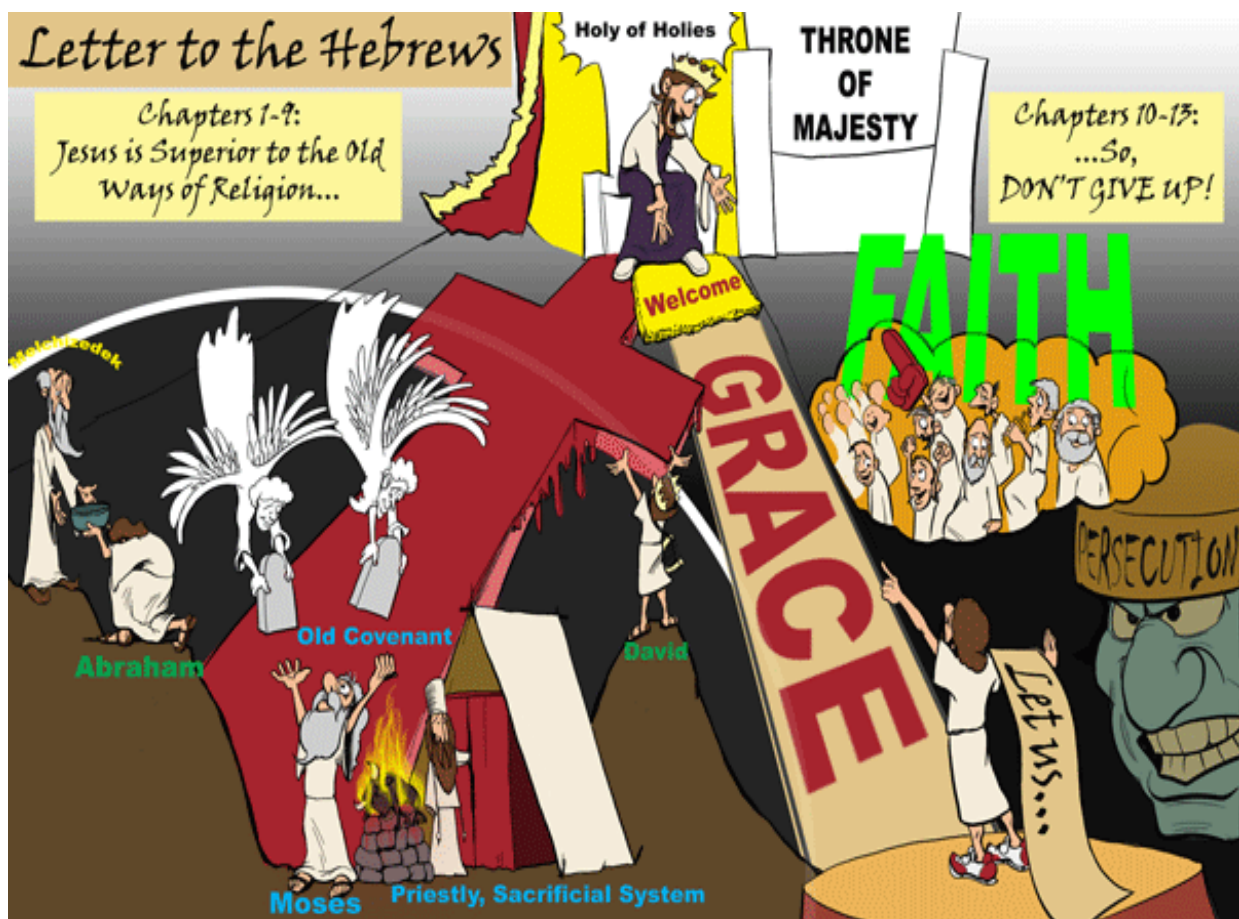
ii. Comments on Hebrews and the General Epistles

A. **Hebrews.** This is a theology of the Old Testament in the light of the person and ministry of Christ.

B. **James.** To a primarily Jewish audience. James provides practical instruction on godly living.

C. **1 and 2 Peter.** To the diaspora. Churches under persecution. Practical instruction on unity during opposition. Explains the role of Satan in their persecution.

D. **1,2,3 John and Jude.** Written primarily to a gentile church. The doctrine of Christ's humanity are taught and the call to moral purity and love are emphasized.





The Books of 1 & 2 Peter

Focus	1 Peter						2 Peter					
Divisions	1 Salvation & Sanctification 2		2 Submission & Suffering 3		4 Steadfastness & Service 5		1 Growth in Grace 2		2 Growth in Knowledge 3		3 Growth in Expectation 3	
Topics	Reassurance						Remembrance					
	Suffering from Without (Persecution)						Suffering from Within (False Teachers)					
Place	Written in Rome											
Time	About A.D. 63-64						About A.D. 64-66					
Author	The Apostle Peter											

The Books of 1, 2 & 3 John

Focus	1 John						2 John						3 John			
Divisions	Living in the Light		Living in Love		Living in Love		Protect the Word		Proclaim the Word		Christian Leadership		Christian Fellowship			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	6	7	13	1	8	9	14		
Topics	Walk in the Light						Walk in the Truth						Working with Others			
	Faith						Heresy						Hospitality			
Place	Written in Ephesus															
Time	About A.D. 90															
Author	The Apostle John															

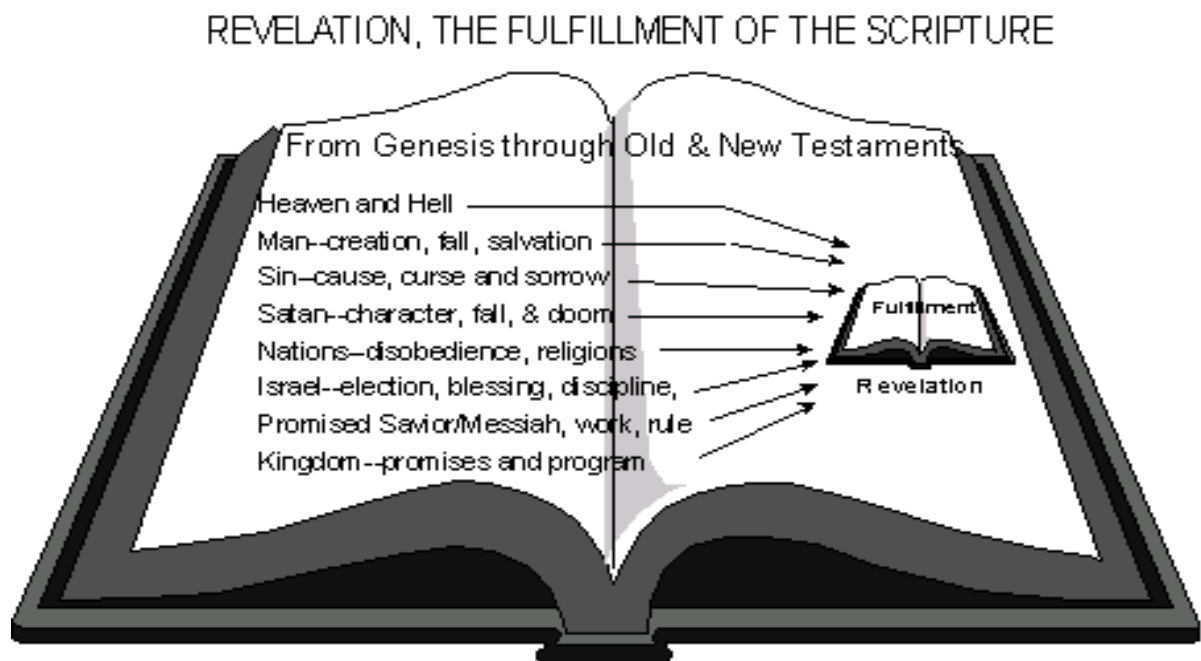
The Book of Jude

Focus	“...earnestly contend for the faith...once delivered” v 3											
Divisions	Remember Your Faith				Remember God's Judgment				Build Up Your Faith			
	1		3	4			16	17				25
Topics	Contention				Condemnation				Caution			
	The Holy Ones				The Unholy Ones				The Sanctifier			
Place	To All Believers											
Time	About A.D. 67-70											
Author	The Apostle Jude Thaddeus but more likely Jude the Brother of James & the Half-brother of Jesus											

(iii) The Prophetic Book

Revelation – Written by John (AD 90s)

Is actually the revelation of Jesus Christ in Church History through to eternity.



The Book of Revelation

Focus	Heaven	Earth												New Heaven & Earth
Divisions	Letters to the Seven Churches	Opening the Seven Seals		Blowing the Seven Trumpets		Describing the Seven Signs		Pouring Out the Seven Bowls		Destroying God's Enemies		Making all Things new		
	13	46	79	1013	1426	1719	2022							
Topics	Coming King	Coming Calamity										Coming Kingdom		
	Judge	Judgment										Joy		
Place	Aegean Island of Patmos													
Time	About A.D. 95-96													
Author	The Apostle John													

Major Interpretations of Revelation:

Four Major Interpretations			
<i>Interpretation</i>	<i>Chapters 1–3</i>	<i>Chapters 4–19</i>	<i>Chapters 20–22</i>
Futurist	Letters' recipients represent periods of church history	Describes a 7-year Tribulation that is to come	Millennium Final Judgment New heaven and new earth
Historicist	Are actual letters to first-century churches in Asia	Represents events throughout history	Millennium Final Judgment and new earth New heaven
Preterist	Are actual letters to first-century churches in Asia	Represents conditions in the first century (particularly the fall of Jerusalem)	Represents heaven and God's final victory
Idealist	Are actual letters to first-century churches in Asia	Presents a symbolic conflict of good and evil	Symbolizes victory of good over evil

iv. Summary of Major Themes in the New Testament

A. Time

1. Linear v. Cyclical.

Linear: Accountability and ultimate JUDGEMENT

Cyclical: Biblical history is like a SYMPHONY.

2. Time follows expansion of the KINGDOM of God (through evangelism and missions).

2. Parousia – everything hinges around Christ's SECOND COMING.

B. The Messiah

1. Prophetic fulfilment, yet in a MYSTERY (1 Cor 2:6-9; Rom. 16:25,26; 1 Pet.1:10-12;Mt. 13:11-17).

2. THE SACRIFICIAL system and the cross.

C. Grace

1. Polemic (hostile) against LEGALISTIC self-righteousness.

2. God's acceptance is extended to ALL.

D. New Community of God

1. New Covenant and the work of the Holy Spirit.

2. Neither Jew nor Greek. Gal. 3:28.

3. Citizens of heaven.

4. Global ambassadors.

E. World Mission

The Gospels: Jesus lays down what the Church's mission is (to spread the Kingdom to every tongue, tribe and nation) and how to accomplish it (in the character and authority of Christ) – Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20.

Acts: Account of how the early Church outworks this mission in the power of the Holy Spirit – Acts 1:8.

Epistles: Every aspect of how we, as individuals and the Church, can be set free to fulfil His mission – Rom 16:26

Revelation: The certain truth that His mission will be accomplished – a world full of people bearing His image, the Kingdom filling the earth and Christ ruling and reigning with His saints – Rev. 7:9

Condensed Outline of the New Testament

GOSPELS - 4 BOOKS

Matthew - Written by Matthew, one of the twelve apostles. Narrative especially adapted to the Jews, showing that Jesus is the kingly Messiah of Jewish prophecy.

Mark - Written by John Mark. A brief, picturesque record emphasising the supernatural power of Christ over nature, disease, and demons.

Luke - Written by 'the beloved physician.' The most complete biography of Jesus. It portrays Him as the Son of Man, full of compassion for the sinful and the poor.

John - Written by 'the beloved disciple.' The narrative unveils Jesus as the Son of God and records His deeper teachings. Two ideas, 'Faith' and 'eternal life', echo throughout the book.

HISTORICAL BOOKS - 1 BOOK

The Acts of the Apostles - Written by Luke. A sequel to the Gospel of Luke. Main theme: The origin and growth of the early Church from the ascension of Christ to the imprisonment of Paul at Rome.

EPISTLES OF PAUL - 14 BOOKS (Including Hebrews)

Romans - Addressed to Christians in Rome. Part 1, Ch 1-11. An exposition of the need for, and the nature of, the way of salvation. Part 2, Ch 12-16. Largely exhortations relating to spiritual, social, and civic duties.

1 Corinthians - Addressed to the church at Corinth. Main themes: The cleansing of the Church from various evils; doctrinal instruction.

2 Corinthians - Main themes: The characteristics of an apostolic ministry and the vindication of Paul's apostleship.

Galatians - Written to the Church in Galatia. Main themes: A defence of Paul's apostolic authority and of the doctrine of justification by faith, with warnings against false teachers and reversion to Judaism.

Ephesians - Written to the Church in Ephesus. An exposition of the glorious way of salvation. Special emphasis upon the fact that all barriers between Jews and Gentiles are broken down and the Church as the body of Christ.

Philippians - A love letter to the Church in Philippi. It reveals Paul's intense devotion to Christ, his joyful experience in prison, and his deep concern that the Church should be steadfast in sound doctrine.

Colossians - Written to the Church at Colossae. Main theme: The transcendent glory of Christ as the head of the Church. This sublime truth calls for the abandonment of all worldly philosophy and sin.

1 Thessalonians - Written to the Church in Thessalonica. It is composed of apostolic commendations, reminiscences, counsels, and exhortations. Special emphasis upon the comforting hope of the future coming return of Christ.

2 Thessalonians - A sequel to the first epistle. Written to enlighten the Church concerning the doctrine of Christ's second coming and to warn believers against unrest and social disorders.

1 Timothy - Counsel to a young pastor concerning his conduct and ministerial work.

2 Timothy - Paul's last letter, written shortly before his death, giving instructions and counsels to his beloved 'son' in the gospel.

Titus - An apostolic letter giving advice and exhortations to a trusted friend who was a pastor in a difficult field. Special emphasis on the doctrine of good works.

Philemon - A private letter written to Philemon, encouraging him to receive and forgive Onesimus, his runaway slave.

Hebrews - Writer uncertain. Main theme: The transcendent glory of Christ and of the blessings of the new age compared with those of the Old Testament. Key word is *better*.

GENERAL EPISTLES - 7 BOOKS

James - Probably written by the Lord's brother. Addressed to Jewish converts. Main theme: Practical religion manifesting itself in good works as contrasted with mere profession of faith.

1 Peter - A letter of encouragement written by the apostle Peter to the saints scattered throughout Asia Minor. Main theme: The privileges of believers who are following the example of Christ - to have victory during trials and to live holy lives in a hostile world.

2 Peter - Largely a warning against false teachers and scoffers.

1 John - A deep spiritual message written by the apostle John to different classes of believers in the Church. It stresses the believer's privilege of spiritual knowledge and the duty of fellowship and brotherly love.

2 John - A brief message from John on divine truth and worldly error. Addressed to 'the chosen lady and her children.' A warning against heresy and false teachers.

3 John - An apostolic letter of commendation written to Gaius, containing character sketches of certain persons in the Church.

Jude - Probably written by the brother of James. Main themes: Historical examples of apostasy and divine judgement upon sinners; warnings against immoral teachers.

PROPHETIC - 1 BOOK

Revelation - Written by the apostle John. Mainly a series of apocalyptic visions dealing with end-time events. A great moral conflict is portrayed between the divine and satanic powers, ending in the victory of the Lamb.

End of Course Test - Acts onwards

1. The Birth of the Church was...

- a. When Jesus died on the Cross.
- b. In Antioch.
- c. At Pentecost (Acts 2)
- d. When Jesus breathed on the Disciples.
- e. At the Jerusalem Council.

2. Which is NOT a mission's strategy Paul used?

- a. Target urban centers.
- b. Reach out to the rich first.
- c. Reach 'God fearers'.
- d. Start at Synagogues.
- e. Establish church in a short time and appoint elders.

3. The **main** question addressed in the Jerusalem council was...

- a. What is the relationship of Christianity with the Mosaic Law?
- b. Should Gentiles be Christians at all?
- c. Should Jewish Christians keep the Law.
- d. Should the Church accept Paul?
- e. Should the Church celebrate Easter?

4. Galatians and James when compared...

- a. Have the same message.
- b. Contradict each other.
- c. Give a balance in our faith.
- d. Are not related at all.
- e. Should not be in the Bible.

5. First and Second Thessalonians were written...

- a. During Paul's First Missionary trip.
- b. During Paul's Second Missionary trip.
- c. During Paul's Third Missionary trip.
- d. During Paul's Imprisonment.
- e. By the Apostle Peter.

6. Ephesians emphasizes the Body of Christ whereas Colossians emphasizes the...

- a. Feet.
- b. Hands.
- c. Heart.
- d. Eyes.
- e. Head.

7. The N.T is linear time in that...

- a. Shows accountability and ultimate judgment.
- b. It is like a symphony.
- c. It is all in chronological order.
- d. It has repeating patterns.
- e. It is all in allegory form.

SECTION TWO: MATCHING...

Match the N.T book to the correct keyword/s by drawing lines....

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|
| 8. Philippians | a. Righteousness |
| 9. 1 Timothy | b. Persecution. |
| 10. Titus | c. Leadership manual. |
| 11. 1 Peter | d. End time Holiness |
| 12. Romans | e. Conduct manual. |
| 13. 1 Thess | f. To live is Christ |

