



GodsWord Ministries

Telling His story to the World

Overview of The New Testament



*We preach: Christ in us - the **Hope** of realizing the glory.*

We proclaim Him (Jesus Christ, the Lord), guiding and admonishing everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom (i.e. comprehensive insight into the ways and purposes of God), that every person may be presented mature (i.e. full-grown, complete, and perfect) in Christ. (Col 1:27-28)

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT GOD AND HIS STORY

We believe that the Bible is an authentic Book, written under the Divine inspiration of the Spirit of God, telling the people of the world the wonderful story of God's dealing with mankind.

God's story can roughly be divided into three dispensations and goes as follows:

- First dispensation

The creation and mandate

In the beginning, God the Almighty Father, created the heaven and the earth and all that is on the earth as is recorded in Genesis 1: 1-25.

He then created man in His own image and likeness and gave them a profound mandate:

Gen 1:28 And God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it [using all its vast resources in the service of God and man]; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and over every living creature that moves upon the earth. (AMP)

We believe that God has never ever deviated from this plan and purpose for mankind.

This first dispensation tragically ended with man's transgression (recorded in Genesis 3) when they were driven out of the Garden of Eden.

- Second dispensation

God's promises to bring us back to His original creative purpose – the dispensation of the Law

The start of this dispensation is recorded in Genesis 3 where God announced that the Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.

This exciting dispensation takes us on a journey where we experience the calling of Abraham, the Covenant that God cut with him and the Oath swearing.

During this dispensation, Israel was established as a nation – with the promise that the Saviour, Jesus Christ will be born from among them.

This was the time of the Tabernacle (the Religious Order of Israel), the Law of Moses (the Principles they lived by) and the Prophets (keeping Israel on track with God's ordinances).

This dispensation was drawing to an end when our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ was born and was dramatically ended when Jesus cried out on the cross – “it is finished” and He died.

The Law is completely fulfilled and the life and abundance of Jesus Christ inaugurated.

- Third dispensation (the one that we are living in now)

The Christ centred dispensation of the Spirit, where the Holy Spirit is constantly revealing and declaring to us the fullness and completeness of the finished work of Christ. Also called: the dispensation of Grace

Christ has paid the ultimate sacrifice, once and for all. In Christ, we have been fully restored and enabled to walk in the original intent and purpose of God.

He (Christ) is now our Advocate (Greek: “Parakletos”) with the Father and the propitiation of our sins. (1 John 2:1-2)

The Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Advocate (Greek: “Parakletos”) here on earth and dwells in us and is always with us. (John 14:16-17).

All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus Christ and we are complete in Him (Col 2:9-10). The Holy Spirit applies everything that Christ has done for us, to our everyday walk of life and takes us practically into this completeness and fullness of Christ.

SECTION 1 – New Testament Overview

Below is a quick overview and summary of the New Testament before we start the series of teachings on “The Third Dispensation”

I came across this excellent piece of work done by Rev. Paul R. Schmidtbleicher, Th.B., Th.M., pastor of the [Evergreen Baptist Church](#) in the Seattle Area of Washington

(Taken from his website: <http://www.scriptureman.com/> - with his permission)

Introduction:

The Bible is an massive library of 66 separate books. Gaining an understanding of this one book composed of sixty-six is a life long study. As one has said, "It is hard to see the forest through the trees." One early approach is to come out from among the "trees" of chapters and verses and see the "forest" by way of an overview of the Bible in its scope and entirety. Such is the point of this panoramic view of God's Word.

The Double Division: The Old and New Testaments

The Bible is divided into two sections. The first section, called the Old Testament, takes up origins as well as the history of the Jews, the nation through whom the Messiah, Jesus Christ would come. The second section, called the New Testament, begins with the birth and life of God's Son, Jesus Christ. It then proceeds to trace the origin of the church as well as the commands and principles given to the Church.

[A more detailed descriptive overview of the testaments is included at the end of this survey.]

The New Testament

If the library of 27 New Testament books were laid out in categories this is how it would look.

The New Testament					
Library of 27 Books					
Gospels Life of Christ	History of the Church	Paul's Letters to Churches	Paul's Letters to Individuals	General Letters	Prophecy
Matthew	Acts	Romans	1 Timothy	Hebrews	Revelation
Mark		1 Corinthians	2 Timothy	James	
Luke		2 Corinthians	Titus	1 Peter	
John		Galatians	Philemon	2 Peter	
		Ephesians		1 John	
		Philippians		2 John	
		Colossians		3 John	
		1 Thessalonians		Jude	
		2 Thessalonians			

The New Testament contains the Gospels (Biographies of Jesus Christ), History, Letters of Paul to Churches and Individuals, General Letters to the Church at large, and Prophecy

-The Gospels

The first four books of the New Testament present four biographies of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Each biography is written from a separate vantage point with a distinct purpose in mind. A complete understanding of the life of Christ is gained as all four accounts are harmonized with each other much like taking testimony from four different witnesses standing on the four corners of an intersection where an accident has occurred.

Matthew

Matthew records the life of the Lord Jesus Christ for the Jew. Detail is given to prove his legal heirship to the throne of King David. The emphasis of the events in the life of Christ and their selection are meant to emphasize that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and King fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures. He came to His own people first but was rejected.

Mark

Mark is written to record the life of Christ primarily to a non-Jewish audience. Mark

portrays Jesus as the servant coming to serve all humanity and provide for eternal salvation.

Luke

Luke, by his own introduction, claims to present the most chronological ordering of the events in the Life of Christ. Luke, as the beloved physician, emphasizes the humanity of Christ in that he was hungry, he thirsted and was tired. The birth account is most complete in Luke. God would become a man (Jesus) to secure for us eternal salvation.

John

John is written and organized to proclaim the Deity of Jesus Christ. He is Very God - the Son of God - having taken upon Himself humanity in order to become our Savior. John presents more of the miracles of Christ and those words which would clearly show forth His Deity.

-History

The New Testament has one book devoted to the early history of the spread of the gospel. The Savior, Jesus Christ, had come and taken upon Himself the sins of the world. Through Him, salvation has been provided to the human race. This message together with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit would begin the church.

Acts of the Apostles

The early history of the church is set forth in the book of Acts. From the beginning of the church on the Day of Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit, its history of growth in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the rest of the Roman empire is presented. The ministry in Jerusalem begins with the Holy Spirit empowered messages of Peter and John. The growth extends into Samaria as Philip the Evangelist presents the message of Christ. The remainder of the book takes up the three missionary journeys of Paul, his trials and triumphs as the gospel message is taken throughout the empire.

Epistles or Letters

The doctrines of faith would be proclaimed in letters or epistles that were written either to local churches or individuals. These letters were inspired by God as a part of the Word of God. They were circulated among churches and believers as God-inspired Scripture. The letters to churches are named after the cities in which the local churches were located. The letters to individuals - sometimes more than one - are named after the individual and thus called General Epistles.

-Paul's letters to Churches

Romans

Romans has been called the Magna-Carta of the Christian Faith in that all the major teachings of Christianity are presented in Romans. The first three chapters present the lost nature of the human race who are divided into being heathen, self-righteous, or religious. All human action is rejected. The solution is Jesus Christ. He is presented as the sole source of man's salvation. His sacrifice on the cross paid God's penalty for the sins of the human race. Faith in Christ brings eternal salvation to man (Chapters 4-5).

The Christian Life is to be one of gradual victory over individual sins (Chapter 6-7) and the sinful nature we possess. Furthermore, the enablement of the Holy Spirit (Chapter 8)

empowers the life of the believer. The relationship between the foundation of Judaism and the capstone of Christianity is presented in Chapters 9-11. Finally, details on the day to day living of the Christian life are presented in the remainder of Romans.

1 Corinthians

The churches of the city of Corinth faced many practical problems as they were growing in their conversion to Jesus Christ. This first letter was written to address problems developing by ongoing sins, believer and unbeliever marriages, court cases, and other important areas. It was also written to address several questions that members of the Corinthian churches had raised in regards to the faith. The letter is blunt, to the point, and sometimes rather harsh. Because of this, it was sent amidst much prayer with great concern as to how it would be accepted and implemented.

2 Corinthians

After news of a very positive response to the earlier letter of 1 Corinthians is received, 2 Corinthians is written. It was written to provide understanding and background into the very heart of those who minister the gospel as they seek to set forth truth to which there will either be acceptance or reaction. Paul, the human author, bears his heart as he seeks to minister to the Corinthian Churches and guide them away from false teachers and unto a foundation of correct Christian doctrine.

Galatians

Probably the earliest written New Testament book, the subject is the perversion of the gospel. The book is written to the churches of Galatia. Some were teaching of the need for good works to be a necessary part of gaining eternal salvation. This is characterized as a false gospel. God's salvation was totally provided by grace in which all that was needed was provided by Him. Man's part is to simply accept the "gift" as provided by the Lord in simple faith or trust. Once salvation is gained by simple faith alone, the life-changing provisions given by the Lord normally motivate the believer, now empowered by the Holy Spirit, to want to serve and obey the Lord under the umbrella of liberty in Christ. Service, good works, and obedience are based upon the believer's thankfulness and gratitude towards the Lord and His awesome gift of salvation.

Ephesians

Ephesians is written to the churches of the city of Ephesus. The book presents some of the most basic doctrines and practical applications for the new Christian. Early chapters teach how mankind is born spiritually dead and through faith in Christ is removed from spiritual death and immersed into a new life in Christ. The practical implications of this conversion are to be a gradual separation from the old life called the "old man" and immersion into the new aspects of the Christian Life called the "new man" which is built on the new principles presented in the Scriptures. This results in husbands loving wives, children obeying parents, and numerous other practical results set forth in Ephesians.

Philippians

Philippians was written as the human author, Paul, was imprisoned in the city of Rome for preaching the gospel of Christ. It is written to the churches of the city of Philippi. The subject is Christian Joy. Despite one's circumstances in life - good or bad - the Christian has the inner resources to be joyful and experience the peace of God.

Colossians

Colossians is written to the churches of the city of Colosse. The book presents some of

the most basic doctrines and practical applications for the new Christian. Early chapters teach how mankind is born spiritually dead and through faith in Christ is removed from spiritual death and immersed into a new life in Christ. Jesus Christ is not only presented as the Savior but also as the Creator God. The practical implications of this conversion is to be a gradual separation from the old life called the "old man" and immersion into the new aspects of the Christian Life called the "new man" which is built on the new principles presented in the Scriptures. This results in husbands loving wives, children obeying parents, and numerous other practical results set forth in Colossians. It is a companion book to Ephesians.

1 Thessalonians

This letter was written to the churches of Thessalonica. The church was founded amidst much persecution. As the church grew and time advanced, some of the older believers died. The ones left behind had growing questions as to how eternal life and resurrection would affect those having died. 1 Thessalonians would answer this prophetic question proclaiming how, at the return of Christ, the dead would rise first and then be followed by the living into the presence of the Lord. Other practical questions on Christian living are also addressed in this book.

2 Thessalonians

This second letter was written to the churches of Thessalonica after a false letter was received by them. The letter proclaimed that the persecution they were experiencing was the Great Tribulation and they were going to have to live through it to be delivered. The Lord would inspired Paul to lay down details as to the order of events preceding the Great Tribulation. It had not yet occurred. Other matters of faith and practice are also presented in some detail in 2 Thessalonians.

-Paul's Letters to Individuals

1 Timothy

Timothy was an early convert of the Apostle Paul. As he grew in the faith, he came to the realization that he had the spiritual gift of Pastor Teacher. 1 Timothy is a letter written to Timothy as a young pastor. The book covers details and qualifications for pastors and deacons. It expounds upon the ministry of teaching and preaching God's Word and committing it to faithful men able to teach others. There are various warnings on apostasy as well as advice and warnings on money. Ordination to ministry and how to handle various members of a congregation are presented.

2 Timothy

As the Apostle Paul's life would draw to a conclusion, Timothy is to carry on in his place. 2 Timothy is a very personal letter of instruction and exhortation to carry on the ministry. As the days advance, a warning is given of the growing apostasy that will blossom. In the midst of such apostasy, Timothy is charged to preach the Word and fight the good fight.

Titus

Titus was also a young pastor given charge over a church on the island of Crete. The qualifications for pastors are presented as well as specific teachings on the duties of servants and citizens. There is also the warning against the growing threat of false teachers and foolish questions that are to be avoided.

Philemon

Philemon was a runaway slave who had met up with the Apostle Paul and becomes a believer. His master, Onesimus, was a believer and a friend of Paul. This letter would be written as Philemon realizes that to begin his Christian life he must return to his master. The letter would explain his new faith and entreat Onesimus to receive Philemon in grace as a brother in Christ.

-General Letters

Hebrews

The human author of Hebrews is unknown. The book is written to the Jews in order to proclaim Jesus Christ as the long promise Messiah and explain how the Old Covenant of the Old Testament pointed towards Jesus Christ in shadow and prophecy. Hebrews show the preeminence of Jesus Christ. The book is also important in that it shows the modifications of the New Covenant or New Testament that supersede the Old Covenant or Old Testament. Jesus Christ is presented as the High Priest fully able to present us (believers) to the Lord God of Heaven.

James

One of the earliest books written, James seeks to detail the relationship of faith to works. In the overview: Man's works are not necessary to gain eternal salvation. On the other hand, a living faith - one that is truly alive - will produce as a matter of normal course - good works. Many details of practical Christian living are showcased in the letter of James.

1 Peter

As the church grew in numbers and power, persecution also began to grow. 1 Peter was written to help the believer in the face of the undeserved sufferings that would certainly be faced. The testings of one's faith are more precious than gold says the Lord in 1 Peter. In light of potential sufferings, the believer is to pay close attention to duties as a citizen, as a servant, as a wife and husband. In all things, humility and the example of Christ is to be followed. Pastors are to feed their congregations and beware of false teachers, even Satan himself.

2 Peter

The Lord would use Peter and 2 Peter to teach of the rise of false teachers in the latter days. Peter gave his own testimony attesting to the truth of the gospel and the inspiration of the Scriptures. He also prophesies on the appearance of false teachers who will lead many astray. The marks of false teachers are presented and scoffers are warned concerning the final judgment of the "Day of the Lord."

1 John

John is known as the apostle of love. The Lord uses this first letter to teach of the fellowship of the believer as a son with the Lord God as Father. Sin is seen as a child's offence against the heavenly father. John writes about experiencing God as Father through communing with Him and obeying Him. The love of God is explained and defined as that which is purely practical and perfect. The true believer who is walking in the love of God is able to love fellow believers.

2 John

2 John is written to a lady or small church meeting in the home of a believing woman. The letter commends the faithfulness of the children or congregation thus far. They are commanded to love by keeping the commandments of the Lord. The letter also warns of false teachers who would deny the Person of Christ.

3 John

3 John is written to Gaius to encourage him in the faith. He was a faithful believer walking in the truth and producing numerous good works. On the other hand is presented a man named Diotrephes who is ambitious and not walking in the truth. His example is not to be followed. A third person, Demetrius, is presented as a good example to follow.

Jude

Jude was written to warn of false teachers and to encourage contending for the faith. False teachers will attack the doctrines that pertain to the Person of Christ and we are called to contend for a true and Biblical doctrine of Christ. Apostasy in time past brought historical judgment and apostasy is to be avoided. Further warning is given concerning false teachers including their predicted and certain judgment.

-Prophecy

One book, Revelation, is given to outline the future events surrounding the Second Coming of Christ. Prophecy of the second coming is seen to be fulfilled in the same literal sense as were the prophecies pertaining to the first coming of Christ.

The Old Testament				
Library of 39 Books				
Law	History	Poetry	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
Genesis	Joshua	Job	Isaiah	Hosea
Exodus	Judges	Psalms	Jeremiah	Joel
Leviticus	Ruth	Proverbs	Lamentations	Amos
Numbers	1 Samuel	Ecclesiastes	Ezekiel	Obadiah
Deuteronomy	2 Samuel	Song of Solomon	Daniel	Jonah
	1 Kings			Micah
	2 Kings			Nahum
	1 Chronicles			Habakkuk
	2 Chronicles			Zephaniah
	Ezra			Haggai
	Nehemiah			Zechariah
	Esther			Malachi

Revelation

The Revelation of Jesus Christ outlines the future events that will surround the second coming of Jesus Christ. The human author, John sees this vision of future events as he envisions the very throne room of Christ and Him sitting upon the throne.

Seven churches outline the seven types of churches and "flavours" of faith that have existed in all generations since the church began on the Day of Pentecost.

As John is "caught up" into heaven, a period of tribulation and judgment begins on the

earth. Three series of seven seals, trumpets, and vials of judgment are poured out upon the earth seeking to drive mankind to acknowledge the Lord as God. Several personages appear to either lead the rebellion against God or to stand against it. In the end, Jesus Christ returns to destroy His enemies and establish His Kingdom on Earth known as the millennium. Satan is bound until the end. After the final battle between Satan and his followers and Jesus Christ a new heavens, new earth, and the city of the New Jerusalem are created to begin the glories of the final state of blessing.

The Old Testament and the New Testament Overviewed

A "Testament" is in its most basic meaning, a contract. The Lord God had one type of contract with mankind prior to the coming of His Son, Jesus Christ and a second new contract once the sins of humanity were paid for by the Cross of Jesus Christ. This New Contract would be the New Testament. Prior to Jesus' payment for sin, man's sins stood between man and God being unresolved. Therefore, man languished under the best that God would do, a hard system of external law to protect man and keep him close to God. Once the sin problem was handled by the death and payment of Jesus Christ, a new contract (New Testament) applied this great victory over sin enabling man to have a very personal relationship with God. This personal relationship through Jesus Christ provided direct contact with God through Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the external laws of God under the Old Contract are no longer external but are now being internalized. They are being inscribed within the believer to mold the believer from the inside out under the New Contract.

The Old Testament set forth the foundation and example of a relationship with God while the New Testament sets forth God's provision for that relationship with Him and the ultimate goals of such a wonderful relationship.

Now that we have a general picture of the New Testament we can settle for some serious life-changing teachings.

Compiled by: Deon Gerber
[God's Word](#)