

## **Maranatha Faith Temple New's Convert Class** **The the Study of the New Testament Handout** **November 11, 2025**

The approximately 400 years between the final book of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament are often called the "silent years" because there were no prophets to record new scripture or direct revelation from God.

**A time of preparation for the Messiah:** During this time, God still worked through political and cultural events, establishing a unified linguistic and infrastructural foundation that would help the Gospel spread after Christ's arrival.

### **Background: language and layout**

The New Testament was written after the Lord Jesus Christ appeared on Earth. In contrast, the Old Testament was written before He arrived and it predicts the mission, work, place and time of arrival of Jesus on Earth. The Old Testament was preserved by the Jews and written mainly in Hebrew, the Jewish language. Jesus lived during the time of the Roman occupation of the land of Israel. Although Latin was the language of Roman officials, the most well-known language throughout the Roman Empire was Greek.

This was because Alexander the Great had previously conquered so many lands that Greek had become an international language, rather similar to English being the global language at present. The Old Testament had been translated into Greek and this Greek Bible was used by the large number of Jews outside the land of Israel. The New Testament was written by Jewish Christians in the Greek language, who used and quoted from the Greek as well as the Hebrew Old Testament to show that Jesus Christ was the Messiah promised by God in the Old Testament.

There are 39 Books in the Hebrew Old Testament and 27 Books in the Greek New Testament. As a mnemonic:  $39 + (3 \times 9) = 66$  Books in the Bible. These books are written by a variety of authors but the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ applies to them all. A summary of the Old Testament is here.

The New Testament begins with four Gospels about the life of Jesus, followed by a narrative about the early Christian church, followed by epistles or letters from the apostle Paul, from James the Lord's brother, from the apostle Peter, the apostle John,

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Jude, and finishes with the visionary Revelation about the future of the Christian church until the end of Time.

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**Setting the stage for Jesus:** This period ultimately set the historical and religious context for the coming of Jesus, who would be the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

The number 400 in the Bible represents both a period of *suffering* and preparation and a "silent" period of transition between the Old and New Testaments. It marks the 400 years of Israel's affliction in Egypt, a time of oppression that ultimately led to their liberation by God and their formation as a nation. It also signifies the roughly 400-year gap between the Old and New Testaments, a period without prophetic revelation from God before the birth of Jesus.

*At the end of the 400 years of "silence," John the Baptist appeared, heralding the arrival of Jesus Christ. This period, known as the intertestamental period, was a time of great political and religious upheaval, which ultimately created conditions that were ripe for the gospel's spread. By the time of Jesus's birth, the world was unified linguistically by the Greek language, had improved infrastructure through the Roman Empire, and the Jewish people were anxiously awaiting a savior, as described in the book of Malachi at the start of the period.*

The New Testament is the second part of the Christian Bible, written originally in Greek and recording the life and teachings of Jesus and his earliest followers. It includes the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, twenty-one epistles by St. Paul and others, and the book of Revelation.

The "New Testament" is called that because it refers to a "new covenant" or agreement established with God through Jesus Christ, in contrast to the "Old Covenant" established earlier with the Jewish people. The New Testament chronicles the life of Jesus and the early Christian church, detailing the events and teachings that form the foundation of this new covenant, which Christians believe fulfills the old one. From a Christian

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perspective, the New Testament writings reveal how the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews states that the new covenant has made the first one obsolete.

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#### Political and religious transitions

**Persian, Greek, and Roman rule:** The Jews were conquered by the Persian Empire, followed by Alexander the Great and the Greeks, and eventually the Romans.

**Cultural and linguistic change:** The Greeks introduced Hellenization, which led to Greek becoming the common language, known as *Koine Greek, a language that became essential for the New Testament to be widely understood.*

**Internal strife:** The period was marked by religious and political conflict, including the Maccabean Revolt against Syrian ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, who desecrated the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

**Rise of new groups:** The political and religious turmoil led to the emergence of new groups, such as the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the establishment of synagogues as new centers of worship.

#### A world ready for the Messiah:

**"Fullness of time":** The Roman Empire's infrastructure of roads and relative peace facilitated travel, while the shared language of Koine Greek allowed the gospel message to be more easily disseminated across different cultures.

**An expectant population:** By the end of the 400 years, many people, both Jewish and non-Jewish, had grown weary of their current circumstances and *were filled with hope for a deliverer.*

**Fulfillment of prophecy:** The period culminated in *the arrival of John the Baptist* and Jesus, fulfilling prophecies from the Old Testament. The events of this era set the stage for the arrival of Jesus, who is presented in the New Testament as the fulfillment of these prophecies and the savior for all people.

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**The New Testament Books of the Bible:**

**Gospel:**

**Matthew** - Written in 80-85 CE. Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Matthew, the tax collector disciple of Jesus. An account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that stresses he is the Jewish messiah sent from the Jewish God to the Jewish people in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Jewish Scriptures.

**Mark** - Written in 70 CE. Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Mark, the personal secretary of the apostle Peter. The earliest record of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, which portrays him as the messiah no one expected or understood, who was sent to die for the sins of the world and be raised from the dead.

**Luke** - Written in 80-85 CE. Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Luke, a traveling companion of Paul. An account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that stresses he was the final prophet sent from God, destined to be rejected by his own people so salvation would go to gentiles.

**John** - Written in 90-95 CE. Author: anonymous; traditional ascribed to Jesus' disciple John the Son of Zebedee. An account of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection focusing on his identity as a pre-existent divine being sent from above to bring eternal life to all who believe in him

**History:**

**Acts** - Written in 85-90 CE. Author: anonymous: same author as Gospel of Luke. An account of the miraculous spread of the Christian church after Jesus' resurrection, through the preaching and miracles of the apostles, especially Paul, who took the message to gentiles.

**Romans** - Written 60-64 CE. Author: Paul. Written to the Christian church of Rome to explain the essentials of Paul's gospel message, that only the death of Jesus can bring salvation from sin, for both Jews and gentiles.

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**1 Corinthians** - Written: mid 50s CE. Author: Paul. Written to the church in Corinth, in response to numerous problems experienced after Paul's departure, including divisions in the church, sexual immorality, proper worship, and the reality of the future resurrection.

**2 Corinthians** - Written: mid 50s CE. Author: Paul.

**Follow-up letter to 1 Corinthians**, which attacks "super-apostles" who claim precedence over Paul and explains that followers of Jesus in this age will experience hardship rather than glory.

**Galatians** - Written: late 50s CE. Author: Paul. Written with urgency to gentile churches throughout region of Galatia to attack those arguing that gentile Christians must adopt the ways of Judaism, especially circumcision.

**Ephesians** - Written: end of first century. Author: unknown, in the name of Paul. Letter to church of Ephesus, giving a plea for the unity provided by Christ and the free salvation he provides, to a church experiencing splits between Jewish and gentile factions.

**Philippians** - Written: late 50s CE. Author: Paul. Joyful letter thanking the church in Philippi for its moral and material support and urging church unity among members who should live for others in imitation of Christ.

**Colossians** - Written: end of first century. Author: unknown, in the name of Paul. Letter urging Christians in Colossae not to worship spiritual powers other than Christ, who alone provides all that is needed for salvation and spiritual completion.

### **Epistles:**

**1 Thessalonians** - Written: 49-50 CE. Author: Paul. Paul's earliest letter. A joyful recollection of his time with the church, stressing the imminent arrival of Christ from heaven and the salvation he will then bring, even to believers who had already died.

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**2 Thessalonians** - Author: unknown, in the name of Paul. Written in imitation of 1 Thessalonians, an appeal to Christians not to think the return of Christ is immediate. The end is coming, but it will be preceded by clear signs.

**1 Timothy** - Written: end of first century. Author: unknown, in the name of Paul. Allegedly written to Paul's young follower Timothy, pastor of church in Ephesus, giving instructions about how to organize and run his church.

**2 Timothy** - Written: end of first century. Author: unknown, in the name of Paul. By the same author as 1 Timothy and Titus, also addressed to Timothy, giving Paul's final thoughts and instructions as he is preparing soon to die.

**Titus** - Written: end of first century. Author: unknown, in the name of Paul. By the same author as 1 and 2 Timothy. Addressed to Paul's follower Titus, pastor of church on Cyprus, giving instructions about how to organize and run his church.

**Philemon** - Written: late 50s CE. Author: Paul. Letter written to a wealthy Christian, Philemon, urging him to receive back and forgive his slave Onesimus, who had absconded with his property and fled to Paul for help.

**Hebrews** - Written: end of first century. Author: Anonymous; traditionally ascribed to Paul. A plea to readers not to leave the Christian faith for Judaism, since Christ is superior to everything in the Hebrew Bible, which foreshadowed the salvation he would bring.

**James** - Written: end of first century. Author unknown, in the name of Jesus' brother James. A moral essay correcting Christians who believed that "faith alone" would save, by stressing the need to do "good works," since faith without works "is dead."

**I Peter** Written: end of first century. Author unknown: in the name of Jesus' disciple Peter. A letter encouraging Christians experiencing suffering for their faith, emphasizing that Christ himself suffered, as would all those who strive to be his witnesses in the world.

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**2 Peter** - Written: ca. 120 CE. Author unknown: in the name of Jesus' disciple Peter. A letter explaining why the "imminent" return of Jesus had not yet happened, assuring its readers that a delay was necessary but all was going according to God' plan.

**1 John** - Written: end of first century. Author: anonymous; traditionally ascribed to to Jesus' disciple John the Son of Zebedee. An essay written to urge followers of Jesus to be fulling loving to one another and not to be led astray by a separatist faction that suggested Jesus was a phantasmal being and not fully human.

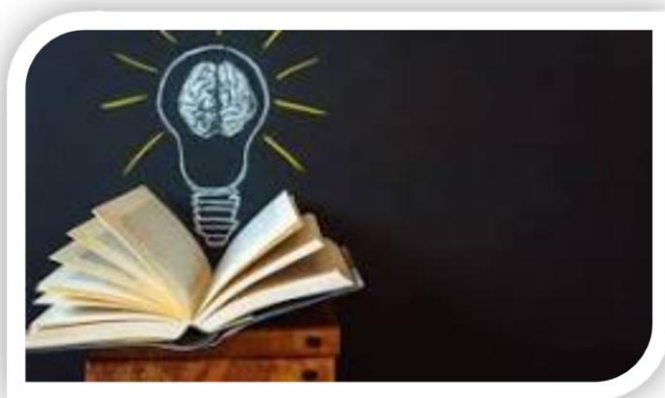
**2 John** - Written: end of first century. Author anonymous; same author as 1 John; traditionally ascribed to Jesus' disciple John the Son of Zebedee. Brief letter addressing a church leader's community urging unity in love and the avoidance of false teaching.

**3 John** - Written: end of first century. Author anonymous; same author as 1 John; traditionally ascribed to Jesus' disciple John the Son of Zebedee. Very brief letter addressing similar issues of **2 John** - in light of a specific problem, the reception of a visiting church leader who was rejected by some in the congregation.

**Jude** - Written: end of first century. Author anonymous; in the name of Jude, the brother of Jesus. Brief and vitriolic letter attacking false teachers who had infiltrated the Christian community, without indicating the nature of their teaching.

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**Prophecy: Revelation** - Written 90-95 CE. Author: an unknown John; traditionally ascribed to Jesus' disciple, John the Son of Zebedee. A description of mysterious visions of the heavenly realm and the cataclysmic disasters to strike the earth before all God's enemies are destroyed and a new utopian world arrives for the followers of Christ.



**Building your knowledge**

2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God,  
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,  
rightly dividing the word of truth".



Did you Know That the first five of the Ten Commandments were  
written to define the relationship between God and humanity, while  
the last five were written to provide a moral and ethical code for how  
humans should treat each other.



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# THE NEW TESTAMENT

## in Summary

- Matthew — life of Christ (including genealogy), Sermon on the Mount, miracles, parables, death, and resurrection
- Mark — the ministry, miracles, disciples, parables, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ
- Luke — detailed account of Christ's birth (including genealogy), ministry, teachings, death, and resurrection
- John — the divine life and ministry of Jesus, told by one of his closest disciples: "In the beginning was the Word..."
- Acts — 1st century church: Day of Pentecost, conversion of Paul, persecution by Rome, missionary journeys
- Romans — Paul encourages church in Rome: Be servants of God, not slaves to sin
- 1 Corinthians — Paul warns church in Corinth against sexual immorality, describes characteristics of love
- 2 Corinthians — Paul writes about forgiveness & reconciliation, describes personal trials & thorn in flesh
- Galatians — Paul urges church of Galatia to stand firm, forsake fleshly desires, & produce fruit of Spirit
- Ephesians — Paul gives Ephesians marriage & family advice: love, respect, honor, obey, put on full armor of God
- Philippians — Paul reminds believers in Philippi: God strengthens us, supplies our need, should fill our thoughts
- Colossians — Paul's letter to believers in Colossae about freedom in Christ and setting affections on things above
- 1 Thessalonians — Paul's letters to the church in Thessalonica: Rejoice always, pray continually, be thankful
- 2 Thessalonians — Paul requests prayers, urges Thessalonians to stand firm, don't be deceived by man of lawlessness
- 1 Timothy — Paul sends Timothy a warning against false teachers, call to prayer, requirements for elders & deacons
- 2 Timothy — Paul urges Timothy to stand strong, flee temptation, pursue righteousness, prepare for difficulty
- Titus — Paul instructs Titus to do good & teach sound doctrine; urges older women to instruct younger
- Philemon — Paul's letter to Philemon concerning runaway slave Onesimus, now a brother in Christ
- Hebrews — great examples of faith, admonition to run with endurance, hold fast to God's promises w/o wavering
- James — James's letter on perseverance: Rejoice in trials, bridle your tongue, know that faith without works is dead
- 1 Peter — Peter's letter on living a holy life, suffering for doing good, and watching out for false teachers
- 2 Peter — Peter offers encouragement to grow in grace & knowledge of Christ and to watch for His appearing
- 1 John — John's letters on loving God, loving others, discerning light from darkness, & overcoming the world
- 2 John — John urges believers to continue in love and reject false teachers
- 3 John — John tells Gaius to reject evil, imitate good: "I have no greater joy than to know my children walk in truth."
- Jude — Jude's letter urging believers to persevere in the faith and avoid unrighteous, sinful living
- Revelation — John's vision of the end times and Christ's message to the seven churches



In the beginning was the Word,  
 AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.  
 HE WAS WITH GOD IN THE BEGINNING.  
 THROUGH HIM ALL THINGS WERE MADE;  
 WITHOUT HIM NOTHING WAS MADE THAT  
 HAS BEEN MADE. IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THAT  
 LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF ALL MANKIND. -John 1:1-4