

EXPLORING GOD'S WORD TEACHER'S GUIDE: LESSON 6A

[Use the New Testament layout chart]

[Themes to Teach: New Testament Layout, Importance of the Book of Acts]

We have concluded a general overview of the Old Testament and learned that God created mankind for relationship and that sin entered the world, severing that relationship. Yet, God had a plan to bring salvation through the nation of Israel. Much of the Old Testament is about God working with this one nation and setting the stage for the Messiah to come into the world.

I. UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT LAYOUT:

2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV 1900)

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

The New Testament has 27 books.

We are to rightly divide the Word of God. Understanding how the New Testament is laid out is essential to properly interpret it.

2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV 1900)

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

II. THE GOSPELS:

These are the biographies of Jesus Christ:

1. The Gospel of Matthew: He was a disciple of Jesus Christ – a tax collector. This Gospel is written to the Jewish people to prove that Jesus is their Messiah. Matthew traces Jesus' lineage back to Abraham and there is a great deal of emphasis placed on fulfilled prophecy in His life and ministry.
2. The Gospel of Mark: He was a protégé of Barnabas & Peter. This Gospel focuses extensively on the miracles of Christ.
3. The Gospel of Luke: He was a physician and traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. Luke's gospel is written with a Gentile reader in mind. Jesus is presented as the savior of the world and his lineage is traced back to Adam.
4. The Gospel of John: He was a disciple of Jesus Christ – a fisherman. John writes to show that Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (See John 1:1, John 1:14, John 10:30, John 14:7-9)

Collectively, these books cover His birth, life, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection.

Any differences in the accounts of the life of Jesus should not be viewed as a contradiction of each other, but each writer presents the story of His life from their perspective. We must take all four Gospels to have an accurate picture of His life.

The Gospels tell us what God did for us and how He made salvation possible for all mankind. In short, the Gospels tell us why we can be saved.

It is important to note that the New Testament does not really begin until after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

III. CHURCH HISTORY – THE BOOK OF ACTS:

The Book of Acts picks up where the Gospels leave off and provides detail about the birth of the church, and the growth and development of Christianity in the First Century.

It is the only book in the Bible where we can read actual accounts of people being saved under the New Testament and according to the Apostles Doctrine.

This book is central to understanding and interpreting the New Testament.

1. The Book of Acts is where we see the commandments of Jesus Christ carried out by His disciples. Their actions are the lens through which we understand His words and commandments.
2. The Book of Acts is also the context in which we should read the letters of the Apostles.

This book shows us how we can be saved.

IV. THE EPISTLES (THE LETTERS OF THE APOSTLES):

1. Pauline Epistles: Letters written by the Apostle Paul to a specific person or group of people.

Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews.

2. General Epistles: Letters written by other Apostles to a general audience.

James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude

These letters were written to the church during the time outlined in the Book of Acts. The purpose of these letters was to provide instruction in matters of Christian living, doctrine, and church order.

These 21 books tell us how to live as Christians.

V. PROPHECY – THE BOOK OF REVELATION:

Written by the Apostle John when he was in exile on the isle of Patmos. The central theme is one of the end time, final judgement, and the restoration of all things.