

spiritual infant

DISCIPLE ME

THE ONE ABOUT THE BIBLE

PART 3: Why Christians Believe the New Testament

DISCUSS:

The New Testament focuses on the Gospel or “Good News” story about Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and the response of Jesus’ closest followers to this event.

- When you think of all the stories you’ve heard about Jesus, what is one story that sticks out to you?
- What is it about Jesus that makes Him such a significant historical figure?

READ: HOW DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT RELATE TO THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- The New Testament is not as disconnected from the Old Testament as some might assume. The authors of the New Testament books and letters were well-versed in the Old Testament Scriptures. In fact, they constantly referenced passages and stories from the Old Testament. Jesus’ followers saw His story as the continuation of the Hebrew Bible. Using the QR code to the right, take a few minutes and watch the “New Testament Overview” from The Bible Project.



DISCUSS:

- How is the story in the New Testament an extension of the story in the Old Testament?
- Based on your understanding and the overview of the video you just watched, how would you summarize the story of what God is doing in the world?

READ: WHAT DID THE ORIGINAL AUTHORS THINK?

In our last discussion, we discovered that Jesus viewed and cited the Old Testament as God’s authoritative word or scripture. But what about the New Testament? In the remaining 27 books that make up the New Testament, we find The Gospels - historical eyewitness testimonies - as well as Pastoral Epistles – or letters-written by Jesus’ closest followers to the leaders and members of various first-century churches.

Should these writings carry the same weight or authority as the Old Testament Scriptures? When the Gospels and Letters of the New Testament were written, did the writers know they were writing scripture, or did someone else take their writings and declare them as scripture at a later date?

In today's study, we are going to take a closer look at how the New Testament Authors viewed what they were writing when they were writing the Gospels and letters.

STUDY: PAUL & PETER

Read 1 Corinthians 2:13

- Where does Paul say that his words and wisdom come from?

Read 1 Corinthians 14:36-37

- In this passage, how does Paul refer to his instructions to the Corinthian church?

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:13

- In this passage, Paul thanks his readers for how they viewed his writings. How did they view what they had received from the Apostle Paul?

Read 2 Peter 3:15-16

- In this passage, Peter refers to the writings of Paul as being on the same level with what other writings?

READ: AN EXTENSION OF GOD'S STORY

For those who have chosen to follow Jesus, there is usually no difficulty in believing His words or His teaching as authoritative. However, some who are skeptical assume that the Apostles had no idea how their writings would be received and speculate that they could never have anticipated them being collected and viewed as the Word of God. But based on Paul and Peter's own words, there is evidence to suggest that they were aware of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, doing a unique work, enabling them to tell Jesus' story and the story of His followers as an extension of the Old Testament story. For this reason, the early church Fathers viewed and adopted these writings, the Gospels and the Epistles, as Scripture and gave them authority in their daily lives.

CHALLENGE:

Take time this week to read through one of the Gospels. Pick Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Read Jesus' story and discover how it's an extension of God's Big Story.