

# The New Testament (27 Books)

## THE GOSPELS

### Matthew

- **View of Jesus:** The fulfillment of Jewish Scripture and tradition.
- **Unique to Matthew:** The nativity from Joseph's standpoint; the magi; five major discourses; frequent quotation of Hebrew prophecy.
- **Don't miss:** The Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5–7 and the Final Judgment in 25:31–46.

### Mark

- **View of Jesus:** Miracle-worker.
- **Unique to Mark:** The shortest of the Gospels; no birth story; emphasis on action; no sermons, but many clever quips.
- **Don't miss:** The challenge of humility in 10:42–45.

### Luke

- **View of Jesus:** Savior of the World.
- **Unique to Luke:** Birth of John the Baptist; Annunciation and Magnificat; shepherds in birth story; Jesus tells extended parables, like Prodigal Son and Good Samaritan; disciples on the road to Emmaus.
- **Don't miss:** All the meals in this Gospel.

### John

- **View of Jesus:** The Word, the Bread, the Light, the Way, etc.
- **Unique to John:** The Wedding at Cana; in-depth conversations with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, and Pilate; the Eucharist discourse in chapter 6; the extended Last Supper teaching and prayer (13–17).
- **Don't miss:** The beautifully restorative “Feed my sheep” moment with Peter after the Resurrection.

### Acts

- **Theme/story:** The sequel to Luke's Gospel, Acts traces the spread of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome.
- **Key characters:** Peter; John; deacons Stephen and Philip; Paul and Barnabas and other colleagues; and a number of people—lame man, magician, centurion, jailer—touched by the message of Jesus and the power of the Spirit.
- **Don't miss:** An angel springing Peter from prison in chapter 12.



## NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS

### Romans

- **Theme:** How God saves us. With legal precision, this letter from Paul describes the problem of sin, the importance of faith in Jesus, and the activity of God's Spirit in our lives and in the Church.
- **Don't miss:** Chapter 8 is possibly the most powerful chapter in the Bible. Check it out.

### 1 Corinthians

- **Theme:** Troubleshooting issues in a struggling congregation: dissension, immorality, public worship, and confusion about spiritual gifts.
- 
- **Don't miss:** Chapter 13, the famous "love chapter."

### 2 Corinthians

- **Theme:** In a kinder, gentler connection with Corinth, Paul still asserts his authority in the face of certain detractors.
- **Don't miss:** The "ministry of reconciliation" described in 5:11–21.

### Galatians

- **Theme:** In Christ, we have freedom from the law and from the flesh.
- **Don't miss:** The "fruit of the Spirit" listed in 5:22–23.

### Ephesians

- **Theme:** God's eternal plan, and how it involves the Church.
- **Don't miss:** The beautiful prayers at the ends of chapters 1 and 3.

### Philippians

- **Theme:** Joy in the Lord ... even in difficult situations.
- **Don't miss:** The apostle's confidence in 1:6 that God is still working in us.

### Colossians

- **Theme:** Keeping the faith ... together.
- **Don't miss:** Music and the Word in 3:16.



### 1 Thessalonians

- **Theme:** Personal greetings from Paul and exhortations for the church.
- **Don't miss:** The percussion of holy living in 5:16–22.

### 2 Thessalonians

- **Theme:** The Christian's responsibility to work diligently and avoid deception.
- **Don't miss:** The glimpse into Paul's own ministry in 3:7–8.

### 1 Timothy

- **Theme:** Paul advises the young leader Timothy on matters of worship, organization, and right teaching.
- 
- **Don't miss:** Warnings against the love of money in chapter 6.

### 2 Timothy

- **Theme:** Often considered Paul's final epistle, this letter contains both personal and ministerial advice.
- **Don't miss:** What it says about Scripture in 3:16–17.

### Titus

- **Theme:** Guidance for church leadership.
- **Don't miss:** What appears to be an early Christian hymn quoted in 3:4–7.

### Philemon

- **Theme:** Paul urges his friend Philemon to welcome back a runaway slave.
- **Don't miss:** In verse 24, the mention of two Gospel-writers among Paul's companions.

### Hebrews

- **Theme:** How Christ has fulfilled the Jewish traditions.
- **Don't miss:** The heroes and heroines of faith in chapter 11.



### James

- **Theme:** Living what you say you believe.
- **Don't miss:** Touches of satirical comedy in 1:23–24; 2:1–4; 2:15–16; and 3:5.

### 1 Peter

- **Theme:** God provides comfort to those who suffer for Christ.
- **Don't miss:** Guidance for talking with non-believers in 3:15–16.

### 2 Peter

- **Theme:** The danger of false teaching.
- **Don't miss:** Qualities of the growing believer, in 1:5–8.

### 1 John

- **Theme:** Love and truth.
- **Don't miss:** The value of confession in 1:9.

### 2 John

- **Theme:** Christian love.
- **Don't miss:** The size of this letter; it fit on one sheet of papyrus.

### 3 John

- **Theme:** Offering a loving welcome to traveling ministers.
- **Don't miss:** The brief descriptions of Diotrephes and Demetrius. Imagine what they would have been like.

### Jude

- **Theme:** The danger of false teachers.
- **Don't miss:** The beautiful blessing of verses 24–25.

### Revelation

- **Theme:** This highly symbolic work encourages believers with assurance of God's ultimate victory over the forces of evil. The connection between the Catholic Mass and the book of Revelation is striking. Read and observe.
- **Don't miss:** All the songs: "Holy, Holy, Holy"; "Worthy is the Lamb"; "Hallelujah."