



What Is the New Testament All About? (Matthew - John)

“Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and he will be called Immanuel (meaning, God is with us).” (Matthew 1:23 NLT)

The New Testament is all about Jesus Christ and his church. To help you better understand as you read and study the New Testament, here is a “helicopter” view of this part of the Bible.

The books of the Bible are divided into classifications. In the 27 books of the New Testament, the five classifications are:

4	Gospels	Matthew – John
1	History	Acts
13	Letters of Paul	Romans – Philemon
8	General Letters	Hebrews – Jude
1	Prophecy	The Revelation

All of the Scriptures are about Jesus, but if you want to get to know Jesus, read the four Gospels, the heart of Scripture. God led four different men to introduce Jesus. Imagine that you and three friends went on a vacation. When you returned and shared, do you think you would share the same details? You would cover the same events and places you traveled in a similar order, but the details would be different. In the same way the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke have much in common, but the details vary. They all describe what Jesus did – visiting towns, doing miracles, teaching, dying on the cross and resurrecting. For this reason, they are called the Synoptic Gospels, which means, “to see together.” However, John’s biography is unique and contains 90% new material. As you read the Gospels, remember you are reading that you might get to know Jesus. Write in your journal all the things you learn about his character and personality. Whatever you learn, remember that is what God is like! Jesus is God in human form.

The book of Matthew

Doubting Jews questioned, “Is Jesus the promised Messiah? Is this our King who will overthrow the Romans? How can this humble teacher from Nazareth be our King?” They overlooked the prophecies that spoke of their King as a suffering servant whom his people would reject and kill. Tragically, the majority did not recognize him.

When Matthew, a despised tax collector, answered the call to become a disciple of Jesus, his life drastically changed. He longed for all his people to know that their Messiah, “the anointed one”, had come. How could he prove this to his people? He proved it by pointing to 128 Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled during his life. As you read Matthew, look for and underline the word **fulfilled**. As a 21st century disciple, rejoice in the proof that Jesus is the fulfillment of all prophecy!

The book of Mark

Think about it. If a friend turned against you and made fun of you because you are a believer, what would you need? Encouragement? Mark, a disciple and close companion of the Apostle Peter, wrote his gospel to the suffering Roman Christians to encourage and assure them that Jesus **is** the Messiah. He reminds them that Jesus came as a servant, not as a conquering king. He came to give his life that people might be saved. *“For even I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.”* (Mark 10:4, NLT) Mark also reminds his readers that every believer should be a servant. *“But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you, must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all.”* (Mark 10:43, 44, NLT) Mark proves that Jesus is the Messiah more by what Jesus does than by what he says. This is a great Gospel to read first!

The Book of Luke

How can you know that the facts in the gospels are true? Luke, a doctor and a man of science and detail, says that he carefully rechecked all the written and eyewitness accounts of what Jesus had done so that you could be certain of the truth. As a close friend and companion of Paul, Luke had access to the other disciples and the early church. He presents Jesus, not only as the Son of God, but also as the Son of Man – fully God in the flesh! Luke gives a detailed account of Jesus’ miraculous birth, mentions his childhood and lifts up his human development. He presents Jesus as the ideal human man, fully prepared to live the perfect life. Follow carefully the stories and illustrations in Luke. As you read, record how Jesus loves and cares for others. Ask yourself, “How can I become more like Jesus?”

The Book of John

Is Jesus God? John, the disciple and eyewitness who describes himself as the one Jesus loved, presents Jesus, the Creator and Maker of all things, as the Word – fully human and fully God. He powerfully argues that Jesus has always existed and is God himself, the source of eternal life.

In the beginning the Word [Jesus] already existed. He was with God, and he was God. He was in the beginning with God. ... So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. (John 1:1, 2, 14, NLT)

John reveals Jesus is God in every chapter. He does this by the titles given to Jesus and by recording eight miracles, which he calls signs. He shows how Jesus affirms his preexistence and eternal deity by using the name, "I AM." God used this same name of himself in the Old Testament when Moses asked him for his identity. John says he wrote the gospel "*so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life.*" (John 20:31, NLT) Look for the signs, titles and "I AM" sayings in John that prove Jesus is God. How will this wonderful truth influence your daily life?

Attitude Check:

- How eager are you to get to know Jesus through the Gospels?

Explore:

- Read, "Who is Jesus?" and "Live in God's Love" (John 15:9-11) Read the Scripture and the article on the same or nearby page.
- Write in your journal one thing you learned about Jesus.

Talking with God:

- Dear God, as I study, open my mind and heart that I might truly know you.