

## III - THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament (NT) is a collection of 27 books written by 10 different authors over a period of approximately 40 years. It's written mainly for Christians and is usually broken up into 5 major sections.

- The Gospels of Jesus Christ** – The first four books of the NT are an overall narrative of the birth, ministries, miracles, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each of them focused on a particular attribute or meaning of the life and ministries of Jesus Christ. Matthew wrote from the perspective that “Jesus is a king”, Mark that “Jesus is a servant”, Luke that “Jesus is a man”, and John that “Jesus is God”. The first three gospels are referred to as the “synoptic gospels” due to their similarity. The gospel of John is different in that it has much unique information.
  - Jesus fulfilled “The Law” (613 “rules” including the Ten Commandments) given to the Israelites through Moses at Mount Sinai. Jesus gave a “new commandment” to Christians which is “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (See **Matthew 22:36-40**). This “new commandment” covers nine of the Ten Commandments excluding the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment [rest on the Sabbath day (Saturday)]. Christians “rest” in the work that Jesus Christ did and are not commanded to rest one day a week like the Israelites were. The Sabbath day was a shadow of the true rest that would come through Jesus.
  - God made a “New Covenant” with all of mankind stating that His law would be written on our hearts and that anyone who believes in their heart that Jesus Christ is the son of God, He freely gave His life for our sins, and God raised Him from the dead 3 days later, will be given eternal life in Heaven and become a “child of God”. This “New Covenant” is remembered by observing “The Lord’s Supper”.
- The Acts of the Apostles** – This is the fifth book of the NT and describes the journeys and “acts” of the apostles as they planted churches and instructed new Christians. This book starts off with the exit of Jesus Christ from the earth when He is taken up into the clouds. Fifty days later came the day of Pentecost when the apostles received the Holy Spirit as a “tongue of fire” and 3,000 others joined the Church (**Acts 2:1-4, Leviticus 23:15-16**). Soon thereafter, Saul (Paul), a great Pharisee that was persecuting the Christians, was called by Jesus in a vision on the road to Damascus. We are told of Paul’s journeys throughout the Mediterranean area including being shipwrecked and bitten by a viper which did not hurt or affect him. Many accounts are given about the apostles including healing the sick, casting out demons, miraculously escaping prison, and healing the blind.
- Paul’s Epistles** – The next thirteen books are letters (epistles) that were written by Paul to different churches which were struggling with legalism and paganism. He explains the reason Jesus came, why His death was required, and that His plan for redemption was for everyone and not just the Jews. These letters also cover extremely important information for Christians to live by including how we should interact with each other, our spouses, our children, and non-believers. They also explain what spiritual gifts are. The books of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy as well as Titus were written to church leaders to explain the leadership requirements, duties, and structure for Bishops (Overseers) and Deacons.
- General Epistles** – The next eight books are letters to “The Church” and Christians from the apostles Peter and John as well as the half-brothers of Jesus, James and Jude. It is unknown who wrote the book of “Hebrews”. These epistles cover more information describing how Christians should live in order to conform to God’s will. There are also many allusions that support and explain Old Testament stories.
- The Revelation of Jesus Christ** – The final book in the bible describes “The Day of the Lord”, also called “The Lord’s Day”, when God will intervene in history in order to fulfill His plan to “fix” the fallen creation. This will include a seven year tribulation period during which Satan is allowed to take complete control of the earth and everyone on it through the anti-Christ and false prophet. Great plagues and the armies of the anti-Christ will torment the people of the earth until Jesus Christ arrives and kills the armies with a word from His mouth. The anti-Christ and false prophet will be put into the lake of fire and Satan will be bound for 1000 years during which time Jesus will rule the earth, in righteousness, from the “New Jerusalem”.