

# CHAPTER 1

## Preparing The Way (Introduction to the New Testament)

### The Meaning of the Term "New Testament"

On the evening before He would die on the cross, the Lord Jesus said these words : "For this is my blood of the \_\_\_\_\_, which is shed for many for the **remission** (forgiveness) of sins" (Matthew 26:28). The expression "New Testament" means the same thing as "New Covenant." When the Lord's Jewish disciples heard these words, they were familiar with the term "new covenant (testament)." God had given the Jews a wonderful promise found in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Read these four verses carefully and answer these questions:

1. Who promised to make a new covenant with the nation Israel (verse 31)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Was this new covenant different or the same as the covenant God made with the Jews in the days of Moses (verse 32)? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did the Jewish people keep the **Old Covenant** (the law and the commandments which God gave through Moses) or did they break it (Jeremiah 31:32)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you think you could keep the Ten Commandments perfectly? \_\_\_\_\_ Have you always obeyed the "greatest commandment" (Matthew 22:36-38)? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you a "lawkeeper" or a lawbreaker? \_\_\_\_\_ Can sinful man keep God's holy law (compare John 7:19)? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Under the Old Covenant, God put His law on tables of stone (2 Corinthians 3:3). Under the New Covenant, where does God put His law (Jeremiah 31:33 and compare 2 Corinthians 3:3)? \_\_\_\_\_ With God's law written on their hearts, will God's people Israel keep the law or will they break the law (Ezekiel 11:19-20; 36:25-27)? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Under the Old Covenant men and women stood before God, the righteous Judge as guilty lawbreakers. Under the New Covenant, what kind of relationship will men and women have with God (Jeremiah 31:33)?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Jeremiah 31:34 is describing the kingdom age which is going to take place in the future. During the kingdom the nation Israel will enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant. During this time, will it be necessary to witness to neighbors and to tell others that they need to know the Lord (Jeremiah 31:34)? \_\_\_\_\_ Why is this so (Jeremiah 31:34 and Isaiah 11:9)?  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. In the New Covenant, what two great promises do you find that begin with the words "I WILL" (see Jeremiah 31:34)?

I WILL \_\_\_\_\_  
I WILL \_\_\_\_\_

See also Romans 11:27:

I SHALL \_\_\_\_\_

Is this same promise made to believers living today (read Hebrews 8:10-12; 10:16-17)? \_\_\_\_\_  
In order for us to have complete forgiveness of our sins, what did the Lord Jesus Christ have to do (Matthew 26:28)? \_\_\_\_\_ If Christ had not shed His blood and died for our sins, would it be possible for us to have the complete forgiveness (remission) of our sins (Hebrews 9:22)? \_\_\_\_\_

The Old Covenant said, "The guilty lawbreaker must die!" (see Exodus 21:12,15,16,17; Ezekiel 18:14; Romans 1:32; 6:23). The New Covenant says, "Jesus Christ shed His blood and died for guilty lawbreakers. Because He paid the full penalty for sin, God is able to give complete forgiveness to the guilty ones who believe on His Son!"

Every time we take communion in church, we should REMEMBER that complete forgiveness of sins was made possible because of Christ's death on the cross (1 Corinthians 11:25)! The New Testament Scriptures proclaim the good news about the death of Christ and all the benefits which that death confers upon believers.

The Old Testament was characterized by LAW; the New Testament is characterized by GRACE (see John 1:17). Grace is God's amazing kindness toward wicked sinners who do not deserve any kindness at all. The grace of God was not absent from the Old Testament period, but the emphasis was upon God's law.

### The Four Hundred Years of Silence

The last Old Testament book to be written was Malachi. This book was written about 400 B.C. For the next 400 years God did not speak to His people! God did not send any prophets during this time! God did not speak or communicate to men for four centuries. Heaven was silent! There was a long famine in the land--not a famine of bread, but a famine "of H\_\_\_\_\_ the words of the Lord" (Amos 8:11-12). The Jews had the Old Testament and God expected them to read it and believe it and to wait for the coming of the Messiah.

Finally after these many years, God broke the silence, and He spoke to men in the best possible way. Read carefully Hebrews 1:1-2. How did God speak to men in Old Testament times (verse 1)? \_\_\_\_\_ How did God finally speak to men (verse 2)? "BY HIS \_\_\_\_\_"

Suppose I had a friend who lived 2000 miles away. How could I best communicate with this friend? Would it be best for me to send a letter? a telegram? make a phone call? send a tape? send an e-mail? give a message to someone else who would see this friend (a messenger)? What would be the *best* possible way to communicate and to speak with this friend? The best way is this: ***I could make a personal visit myself!*** This is exactly what God has done! He has personally visited this planet in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has visited us! God has spoken to us by His Son! The New Testament is the place where we learn all about God's visit!

Let us now compare the Old Testament with the New Testament:

<b>OLD TESTAMENT</b>	<b>NEW TESTAMENT</b>
<b>Think of a picture storybook:</b>	
The Old Testament is like a collection of pictures.	The New Testament contains the words underneath the picture (explaining what the pictures are all about)
<b>Examples:</b>	
<p><b>THE PICTURE IN THE OLD:</b></p> <p>THE SACRIFICIAL LAMB (Leviticus 1:2,10 etc.)→</p> <p>THE PASSOVER (Leviticus 23:5)→</p>	<p><b>THE EXPLANATION IN THE NEW:</b></p> <p>JOHN 1:29; 1 PETER 1:19</p> <p>1 CORINTHIANS 5:7</p>
The Old Testament is the <b>SHADOW</b> (Heb. 10:1)	The New Testament is the <b>SUBSTANCE</b> (the real thing!)
When I see a shadow I know there is something real (a tree, a flagpole, a person, a house, etc.) that is casting the shadow. <b>Example:</b>	
<p><b>THE SHADOW</b>↓</p> <p>THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND GOATS (see Hebrews 10:4)</p>	<p><b>THE SUBSTANCE</b> (the real thing)↓</p> <p>THE BLOOD OF JESUS (see Hebrews 10:19)</p>
<i>The blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins (Heb. 10:4,11) but they pointed ahead to the Saviour who could (Hebrews 10:12)!</i>	
The message of the Old Testament: <b>HE'S COMING!</b>	The message of the New Testament: <b>HE HAS COME and HE'S COMING AGAIN!!</b>
The Old Testament looks ahead: <b>THE SAVIOUR WILL SOMEDAY DIE!</b>	The New Testament looks back: "IT IS F _____" (JOHN 19:30)

### The New Testament Books

How many books does the New Testament contain (if you are not sure, look in the INDEX or TABLE OF CONTENTS at the beginning of your Bible)? \_\_\_\_\_

Five of these Books are history books. The history books would include the four Gospels and the book of Acts. The four Gospels present the BEGINNING of Jesus' **deeds** and **doctrine** (teaching). See ACTS 1:1-2:

"The **former treatise** (this refers to the Gospel of Luke) have I made...of all that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ both to **do** and **teach** until the day in which He was taken up (to heaven)."

The book of Acts presents the **continuation** of Jesus' **deeds** and **doctrine** as the risen Lord works through His Church (through believers). Does the risen Christ continue to work through believers today? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you letting and allowing Him to work through you right now?

THE FOUR GOSPELS	THE BOOK OF ACTS
The BEGINNING of Jesus' Deeds and Doctrine (Acts 1:1-2)	The CONTINUATION of Jesus' Deeds and Doctrine
The Lord Jesus on Earth	The Lord Jesus in Heaven
Jesus is God's perfect WITNESS.	The Believers are His WITNESSES (Acts 1:8).
Jesus ministered in Palestine, primarily to the Jews. (Mathew 10:5-6; 15:24).	The Church ministers in all world to every creature. (Mark 16:15).

**Birth of Christ**

**Ascension of Christ**

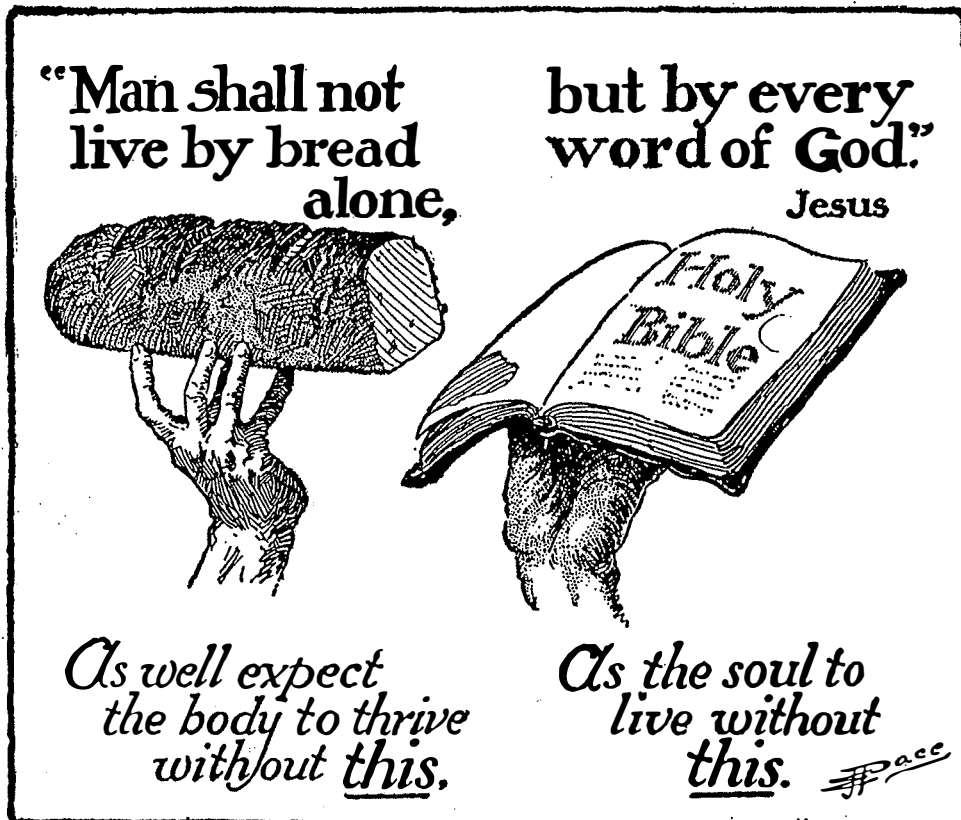
The Book of Revelation is also like a history book, but it is written before the events have taken place. It is history written in advance! It is the great Book of prophecy which sheds light on the future.

All of the other New Testament books are epistles or letters. For example, Paul wrote thirteen letters. Nine of these letters were written to churches (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians).\* Four of these letters were written to individuals (1 & 2 Timothy, written to Pastor Timothy; Titus, written to Pastor Titus; Philemon, written to Philemon who was a member of the Colossian Church).

\*Note: Some Bible scholars believe that Paul wrote Hebrews, a book in which the author is not named.

**THE NEW TESTAMENT AT A GLANCE**  
(adapted from *Unger's Bible Handbook*)

HISTORICAL	DOCTRINAL		PROPHETIC
THE FOUR GOSPELS	PAUL'S EPISTLES		THE REVELATION
Portraits of the Person and Work of Christ:  Matthew—Christ as King Mark—Christ as Servant Luke—Christ as Man John—Christ as God	Romans 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus Philemon	The Revelation or Unveiling Of JESUS CHRIST  Dealing with these prophetic subjects:  1. Church (2:1-3:22) 2. Time of Tribulation (4:1-19:10) 3. Second Coming (19:11-21) 4. Millennium (Kingdom) (20:1-10) 5. Final Judgment (20:11-15) 6. Eternal State (21:1-22:21)
THE BOOK OF ACTS (The acts of Jesus Christ as He worked in and through the lives of the apostles)	GENERAL EPISTLES		
History of the Birth and Early Life of the Church	Hebrews James 1 Peter 2 Peter	1 John 2 John 3 John Jude	



## All Choose Their Foundation

"AND THE LORD SAID, BEHOLD,  
THERE IS A PLACE BY ME, AND  
THOU SHALT STAND UPON A ROCK"  
*EX. 33:21*

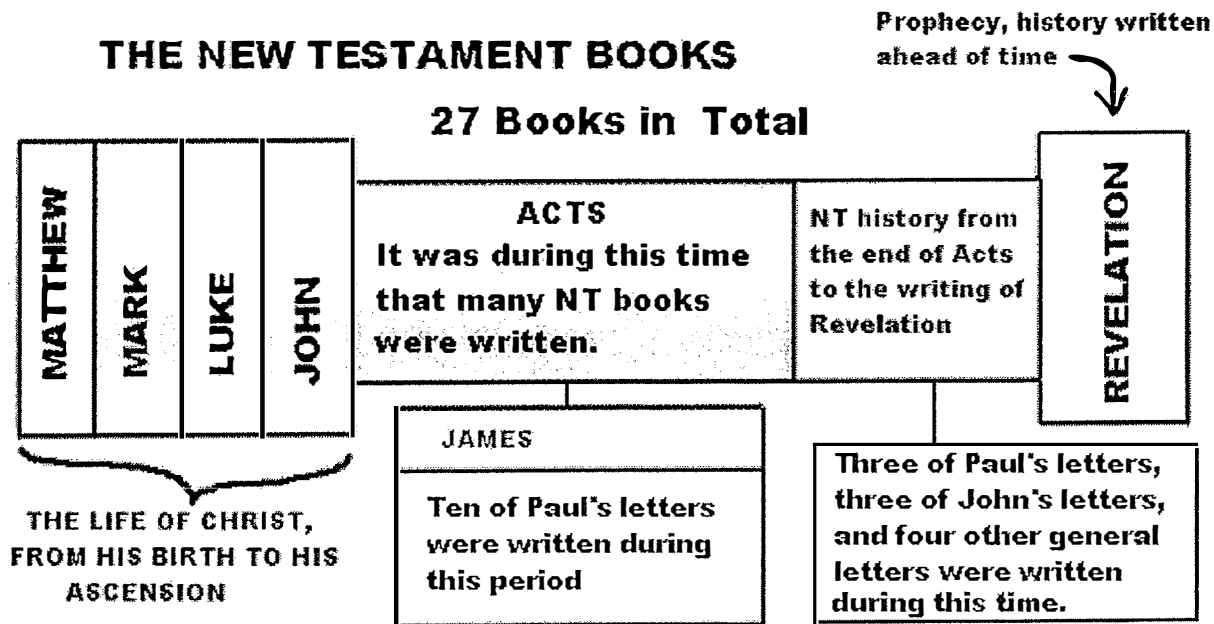


## The New Testament Books

In this chapter we want to see how the New Testament books fit together.

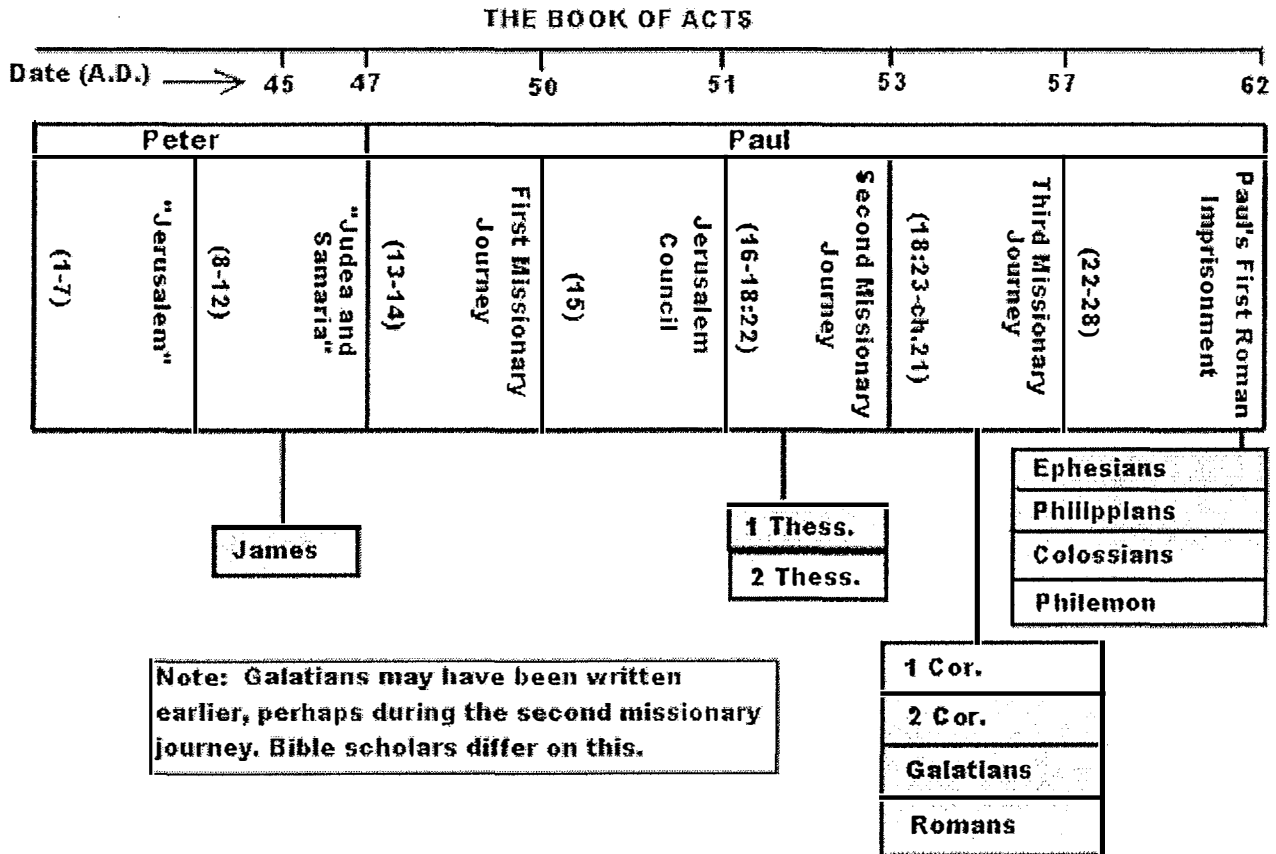
There are six New Testament books which are historical in nature and they advance the historical flow. These are the four gospels, the book of Acts and Revelation.

The four gospels present four views of the life of Christ, covering mainly the last three and a half years of our Lord's life, with special emphasis on the last week of our Lord's life. For a detailed study of the unique emphasis of each of the Gospels, see **Portraits of Christ (the Four Gospels)** which is found in our studied entitled *New Testament Books*. The book of Acts is a history of the early church. Within the framework of this book most of the New Testament was written. Acts 1:8 is the key verse to show the spread of the gospel. This verse also serves as an outline of the book of Acts. We will be showing when the various New Testament books were written in relationship to the book of Acts. Revelation is a prophetic book, and it may be considered historical only in the sense that it foretells future historical events, especially events that will take place in the future tribulation period (Revelation chapters 4-19), the second coming of Christ (chapter 19), the thousand year kingdom of Christ (chapter 20) and the new heavens and new earth (chapters 21-22). Prophecy is history written in advance. A historian writes about what happened in the past; a prophet tells about what will happen in the future.



The only letters of Paul that were not written during the events of the book of Acts were 1 Timothy, Titus and 2 Timothy. These books were all written after Paul's first Roman imprisonment (which we read about in Acts 28).

We will now take a more detailed look at the NT books that were written during the time of the book of Acts. The first part of the book of Acts has Peter as the main character (chapters 1-12). The last part of the book of Acts has Paul as the main character (chapters 13-28).

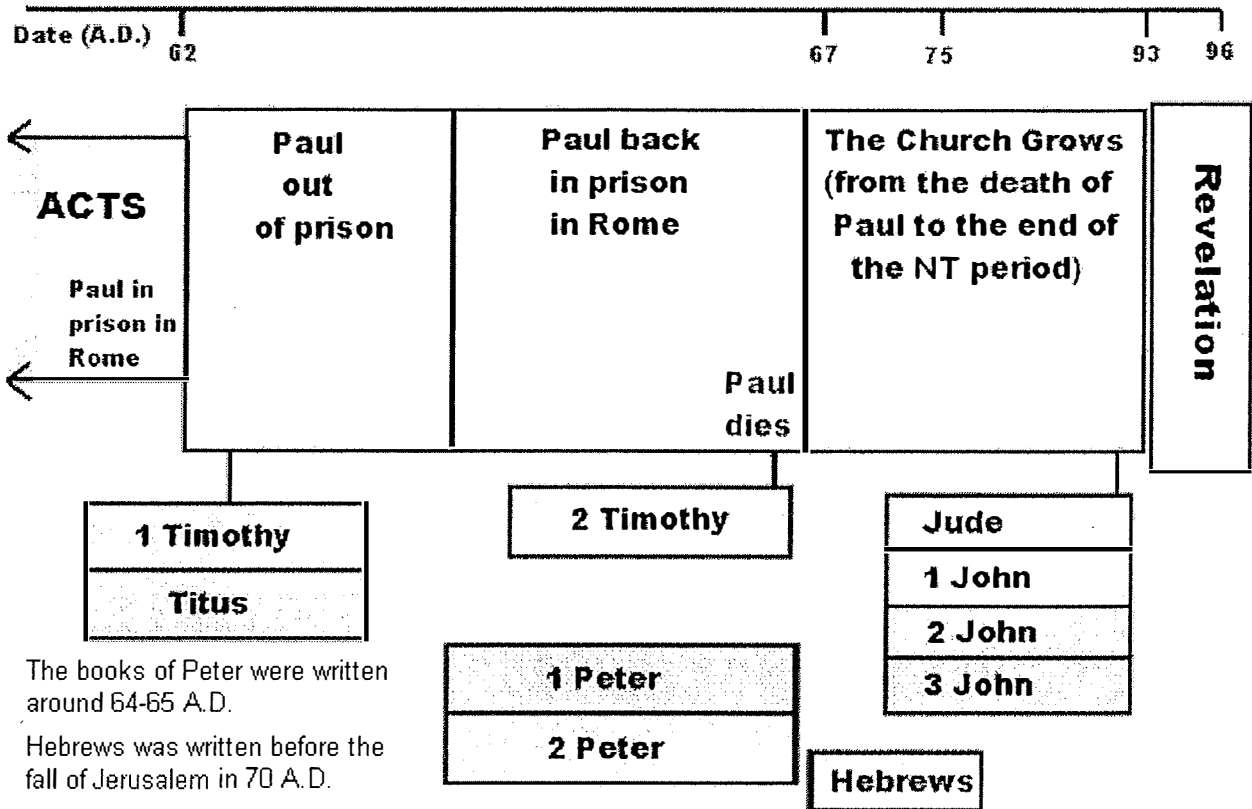


**ACTS 1:8** could be called "THE BOOK OF ACTS IN A NUTSHELL." In this verse Christ taught that HIS W \_\_\_\_\_ would be

1. IN JERUSALEM--the starting point (see Luke 24:49)  
(ACTS 2-ACTS 7)
2. IN ALL JUDAEA--the home of the JEWS  
(ACTS 8:1-4)
3. IN SAMARIA--the home of the SAMARITANS  
(ACTS 8:5-25)
4. UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH--the home of the GENTILES  
(ACTS 8:26-ACTS 28)

The following books were written after the events of the book of Acts had been completed:





Let us now briefly consider each of the New Testament books. The four gospels (**Matthew**, **Mark**, **Luke** and **John**) all emphasize the three and a half years of our Lord's public ministry. The main focus is upon His death and resurrection and the events leading up to our Lord's passion and triumph over death. Each of the gospels has its own unique emphasis as the following chart shows:

<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>
Presents Christ as <b>KING</b> (the Prophesied King)	Presents Christ as <b>SERVANT</b> (the Obedient Servant)
Key Verse: Matthew 2:2 "King of the Jews"	Key Verse: Mark 10:45 "The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto but to minister (serve) and to give His life a ransom for many"
PURPLE (Exodus 26:36)--the color of Kingship (Royalty).	SCARLET (Exodus 26:36)--the color of blood: the servant must give His life.
<b>LION</b> (Ezekiel 1:10; Rev. 1:7)--the king of beasts	<b>OX</b> (Ezekiel 1:10)--the sacrificial animal
Written especially for the Jews	Written especially for the Romans

## Luke

Presents Christ as Man  
(the Perfect Man)

Key Verse: Luke 19:10  
"Son of man"

WHITE (Exodus 26:36)--the color of purity:  
He is the sinless, pure, perfect Man.

MAN (Ezekiel 1:10)--His perfect  
Humanity

Written especially for the Greeks

## John

Presents Christ as God  
(the Divine Son)

Key Verse: John 20:31  
"Son of God"

BLUE (Exodus 26:36)--the heavenly color:  
He is the One who came down from heaven

EAGLE (Ezekiel 1:10)--the bird from the  
heavens

Written for the whole world

**They all point to that ONE, BLESSED PERSON  
the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the SAVIOUR, the SON OF GOD!**

The **Book of Acts** is a continuation of Jesus' doing and teaching (Acts 1:1) as carried out in and through the church which began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter is the key person in chapters 1-12; Paul is the key person in chapters 13-28.

**Revelation** gives a remarkable view of prophetic events. The key verse and outline of the book is Revelation 1:19. Chapters 2-3 deal with the churches. Chapters 4-22 are all future, dealing with the tribulation (4-19), the second coming (19), the kingdom (20) and the eternal state (21-22).

**James** is probably the earliest N.T. letter. It was written by the Lord's half-brother, the son of Joseph and Mary, and the brother of Jude. It is a very practical book, showing the need to be "doers of the Word," and to demonstrate by our works that our faith is real.

**Galatians** is against legalism [legalism involves putting believers under the law either for justification or for sanctification]. The law cannot justify; neither can it sanctify. The law can show us that we are unholy but it can never make us holy. The key to living the Christian life is not found at Mount Sinai, but it is found at Mount Calvary (Romans 6; Gal. 2:20).

**1 and 2 Thessalonians** are among Paul's earliest letters. They were written to new believers to establish them in the faith and to strengthen them in the midst of persecution. In 1 Thessalonians every chapter ends with a mention of the Lord's coming for His own (the rapture, compare John 14:3).

**1 Corinthians.** Each chapter deals with a problem that Paul seeks to correct. Believers can be off base doctrinally (in what they believe) and practically (in how they behave). Correction is possible, but only through God's infallible Word (1 Timothy 3:16).

**2 Corinthians** is Paul's most personal letter. In it we learn much about this unique servant of God and the kind of heart and devotion to Christ he had.

**Romans** presents the gospel of God and is a doctrinal masterpiece. See our study notes covering **book of Romans** chapter by chapter.

**Ephesians** presents how rich we are in Christ because of God's grace. In this book we learn about God's mystery (a precious secret hidden in the heart of God for centuries but now revealed to His saints). Ephesians is also rich in truth pertaining to God's precious church which is His body.

**Philippians** is about rejoicing in the Lord regardless of circumstances. The key verse is Philippians 4:4 and the key word is "REJOICE."

**Colossians** presents Christ as the preeminent One (1:18). He is everything the believer needs (the all-sufficient Saviour).

**Philemon** introduces us to a slave whom Paul led to the Lord in prison.

**1 Timothy** speaks of God-fearing conduct in the local assembly (3:15).

**Titus** along with 1 Timothy was written following Paul's first imprisonment. It is one of three of Paul's Pastoral letters (along with 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy).

**2 Timothy** finds Paul bound during his second Roman imprisonment and about to die for his faith. These are Paul's last recorded words.

**1 Peter** deals with suffering saints and 2 Peter contains Peter's last recorded words before his death.

**Hebrews** is God's great encouragement to grow up in Christ by continuing in the faith and not drawing back. God keeps His believers on the right path by giving them strong encouragements (such as the faith chapter in Hebrews 11) and also by giving them strong warnings (Hebrews 6 and 10).

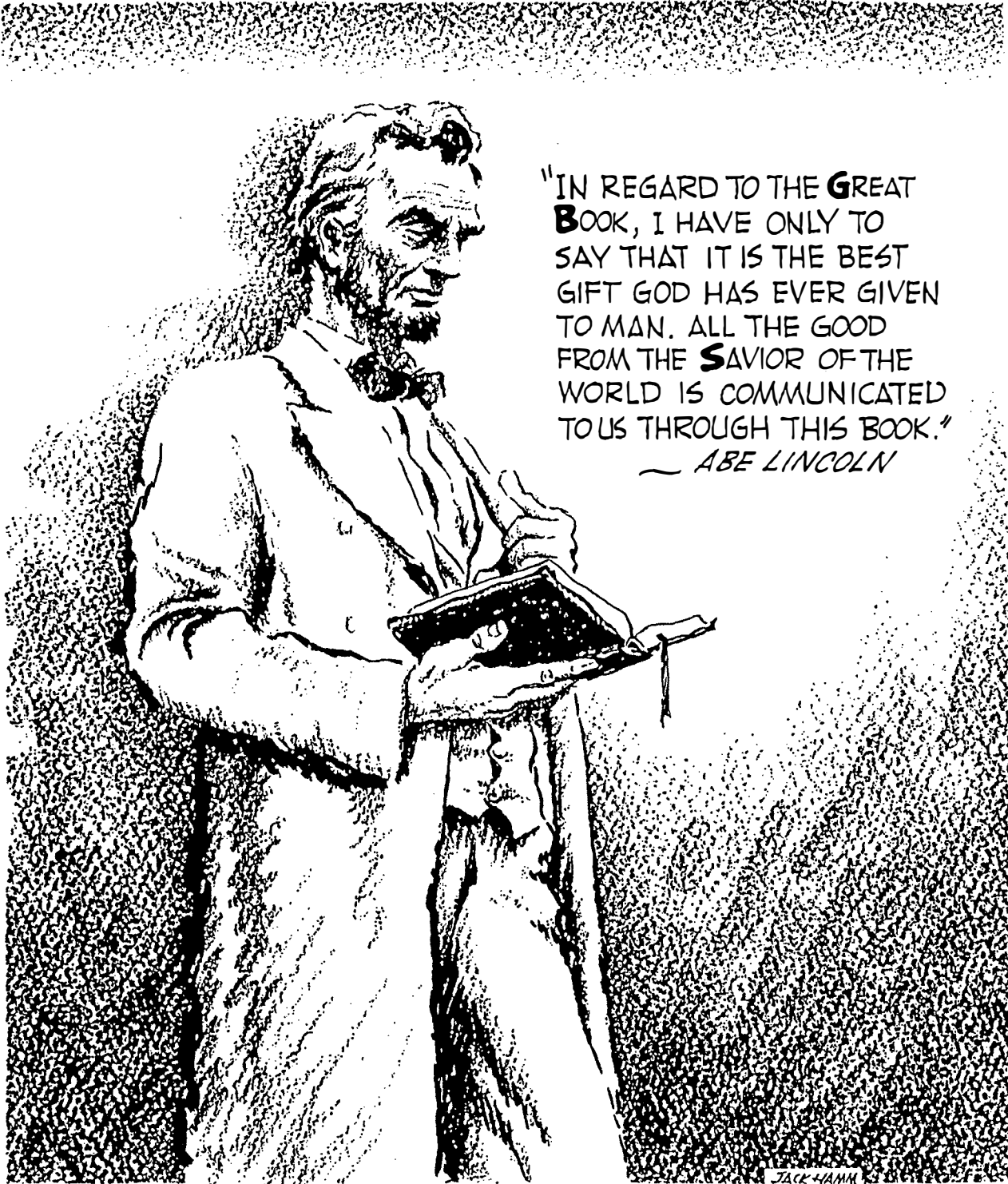
**Jude** shows us the need to earnestly contend for the faith, God's body of truth (verse 3). This book is a strong warning against apostates. It has been called "The Acts of the Apostates." It also gives comfort and encouragement to true believers (especially the last several verses).

**1 John** was written so believers might have joy and assurance of salvation (1:4; 5:13).

**2 John** shows who we should not receive or support (negative hospitality: "receive them not") and **3 John** shows who we should receive and support (positive hospitality: "receive them").

This concludes our brief summary of the 27 New Testament books and how they fit together in light of the historical books, especially the book of Acts. May the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ be clearly seen as we study these amazing, God-inspired books.

## The Best



"IN REGARD TO THE **G**REAT  
**B**OOK, I HAVE ONLY TO  
SAY THAT IT IS THE BEST  
GIFT GOD HAS EVER GIVEN  
TO MAN. ALL THE GOOD  
FROM THE **S**AVIOR OF THE  
WORLD IS COMMUNICATED  
TO US THROUGH THIS BOOK."

~ ABE LINCOLN

JACK HANN