

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 4



WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT IS

Scripture Texts: Matthew 1:1; Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:49; Matthew 16:18-19; Acts 1:8-9; Romans 1:11-12; 2 Peter 3:18

The New Testament is twenty-seven Books in five groups. Each of the four Gospels is named for the writer. All tell the story of Jesus' life, yet each with a little different view. Matthew wrote, showing Jesus to be the Jews looked-for Messiah and King. Mark wrote and showed Jesus as the Servant of the Lord, beginning with John preparing His way, His baptism, and moved with swift action through the episodes of His life. Luke wrote of Jesus as the Son of man, stressing His human side. His Book begins with the birth of John and Jesus and gives much detail throughout. John's Gospel is somewhat different. It contains deep spiritual thought. John wrote, proving Jesus to be the Son of God. Much is told of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. His life is our example, but His death is our salvation. By it, He provided the perfect sacrifice for sin. His resurrection made effective His death and assured our resurrection.

The New Testament is the good news of salvation from sin through Christ, the calling out of the church, and full victory to come.

MEMORY VERSE: *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.—John 17:17*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**Mark 16** Resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Tue.—**Acts 14** Missionary work of Paul and Barnabas.

Wed.—**James 4** Exhortations to the church.

Thu.—**Revelation 21** A description of the church.

Fri.—**Psalms 119:33-48** A prayer to delight in God's Word.

Devotional Reading: Ephesians 2 Teaching the church by letter.

A New Covenant

Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ. "Generation" here means birth, the entering into human life. Christ was always divine. He is from everlasting to everlasting, but He had to take on humanity. The process of His doing so is His generation. It is expressed in His name Emmanuel, meaning **God with us (Matthew 1:23)**. He was the eternal God come to live with us, to be one of us. Why are the names of David and Abraham singled out? Because promises were given to them which Christ's coming fulfilled. A son of David was to sit **upon the throne of David (Isaiah 9:7; Luke 1:32)**. To Abraham God said, **In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Genesis 12:3)**.

Matthew 26:26-29 The purpose of Jesus' birth was that He might die—die to redeem mankind. In dying, He sealed the new covenant with His blood. He gave bread and grape juice as symbols of that covenant. **This is my body . . . this is my blood of the new testament** (or new covenant). The old covenant was also sealed by blood, blood of animals (**Exodus 24:3-8**). The New Testament is so named because in it God's new testament of grace is set forth—not on stone, but written on the heart. With this He began to set up the spiritual kingdom over which He would rule forever. **Until . . . I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.**

Prophecies Must Be Fulfilled

Mark 14:49 **But the scriptures must be fulfilled.** The Old Testament had to be fulfilled if God's Word was to be everlasting. The Old is promise, the New, fulfillment. The New was not yet written when Jesus was on

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earth. When it says He did things **that it might be fulfilled which was spoken**, it refers to Old Testament promises.

The Kingdom Set Up and Empowered

Matthew 16:18-19 Jesus said, **I will build my church**. In all of His work, He was gathering material for His church. He was setting up His kingdom. From the first, He preached **the gospel of the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14; Luke 16:16)**. The New Testament is a record of the birth, growth, activity, nourishment, and future hope of God's **peculiar people**, the antitype of Israel, His **peculiar treasure** under the old covenant (**1Peter 2:9; Exodus 19:5**). Jesus said, **I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven** (or Kingdom of God) to use **on earth**. It would be foolish to believe that Christ would give Peter keys to a kingdom that did not exist.

Acts 1:8 Moving on into Acts, we read of Jesus' ascension back to Heaven and His promise: **Ye shall receive power** from the **Holy Ghost**. Who was to **come upon** them? The result is **Ye shall be witnesses unto me**—unto Jesus—in all the world. The Book of Acts is the record of that power and witnessing. The Holy Spirit did come (**Acts 2**) and filled saints went forth as He led. This was the church going forth to build His kingdom.

The Acts is a history book written by Luke. It takes up the story where his Gospel left off. It is an account of the progress of the church from the ascension of Christ and descent of the Holy Spirit to Paul's imprisonment in Rome. It is the history of the spreading of the Gospel and planting churches amid miracles and persecution in Jerusalem and Palestine, Asia Minor, and Europe. The conversion and work of Paul figures largely. It teaches what God expects His church to be.

Paul's Epistles

Romans 1:11 Now come the letters of Paul to the churches. How were new converts to apply their new knowledge and experience to their lives? To explain doctrine and instruct in Christian living, Paul wrote thirteen, and possibly all, of these letters. (Hebrews is unsigned.) They are named for the churches or individuals to whom they were sent. They are rich in spiritual food. Paul expresses his deep desire: **That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift**, that he might take of the **living water** in his heart (**John 4:10, John 4:14; Acts 9:17**) and plant it in theirs to spring up and flow out in **rivers of living water (John 7:37-39)**. Why? That **ye may be established, be rooted and built up** in Christ (**Colossians 2:7**). This is provided as we study his letters.

2 Peter 3:18 These are the General Letters or Epistles. They were written for the same purpose, to help saints to **grow in grace**—in the use of the power of God made available for our lives, **and in the knowledge of our Lord**—getting to know Him by living in Him.

The Revelation is the revelation of Jesus Christ to John of the things that the church would go through from its birth until Jesus comes back to receive it to Himself. It tells of the many enemies of the church, its battles and great victories. In **Revelation 22:20** Jesus says, **Surely I come quickly**. John looked forward to this. **Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus**. Are you ready?