

CHAPTER 8

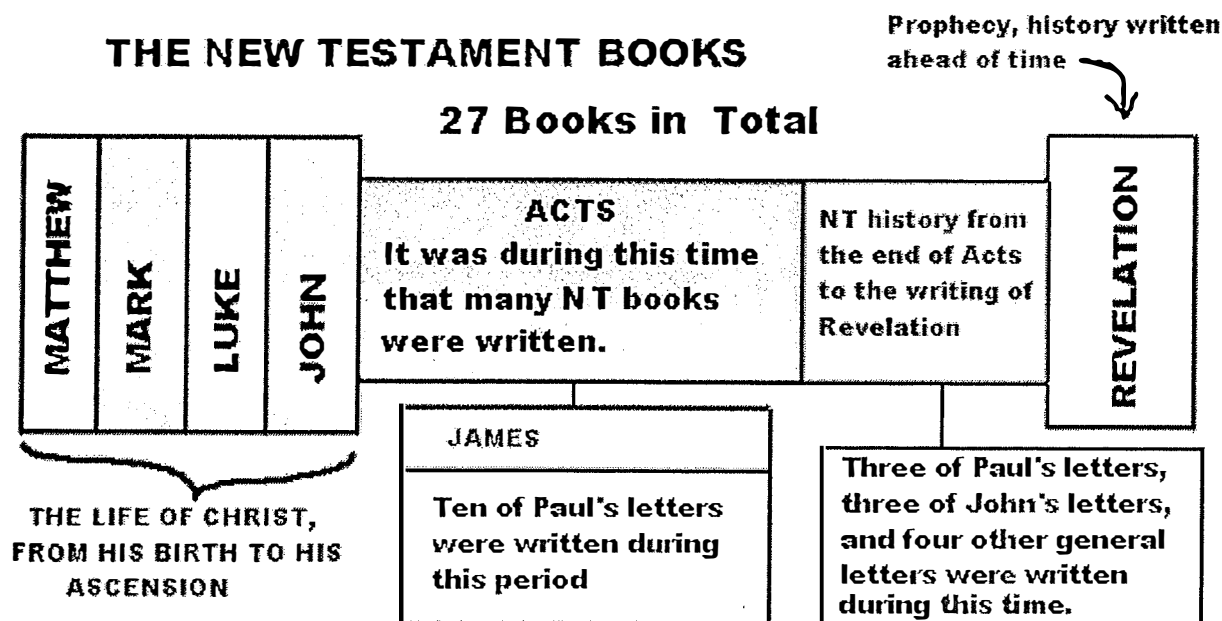
The New Testament Books

Note: For a detailed study of all the books of the Old Testament see our Sunday school lessons entitled The New Testament Books.

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

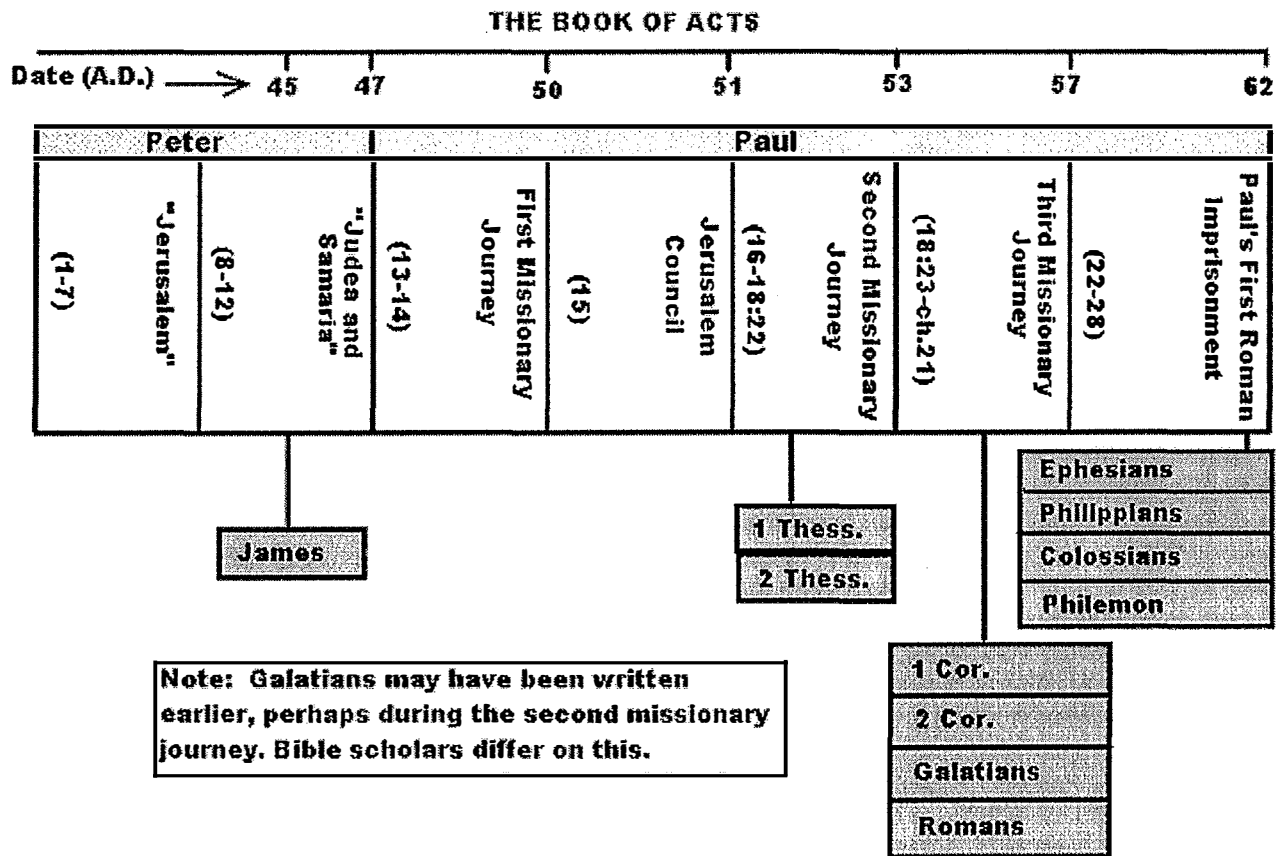
There are six New Testament books which are historical in nature and they advance the historical flow. These are the four gospels, the book of Acts and Revelation.

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).

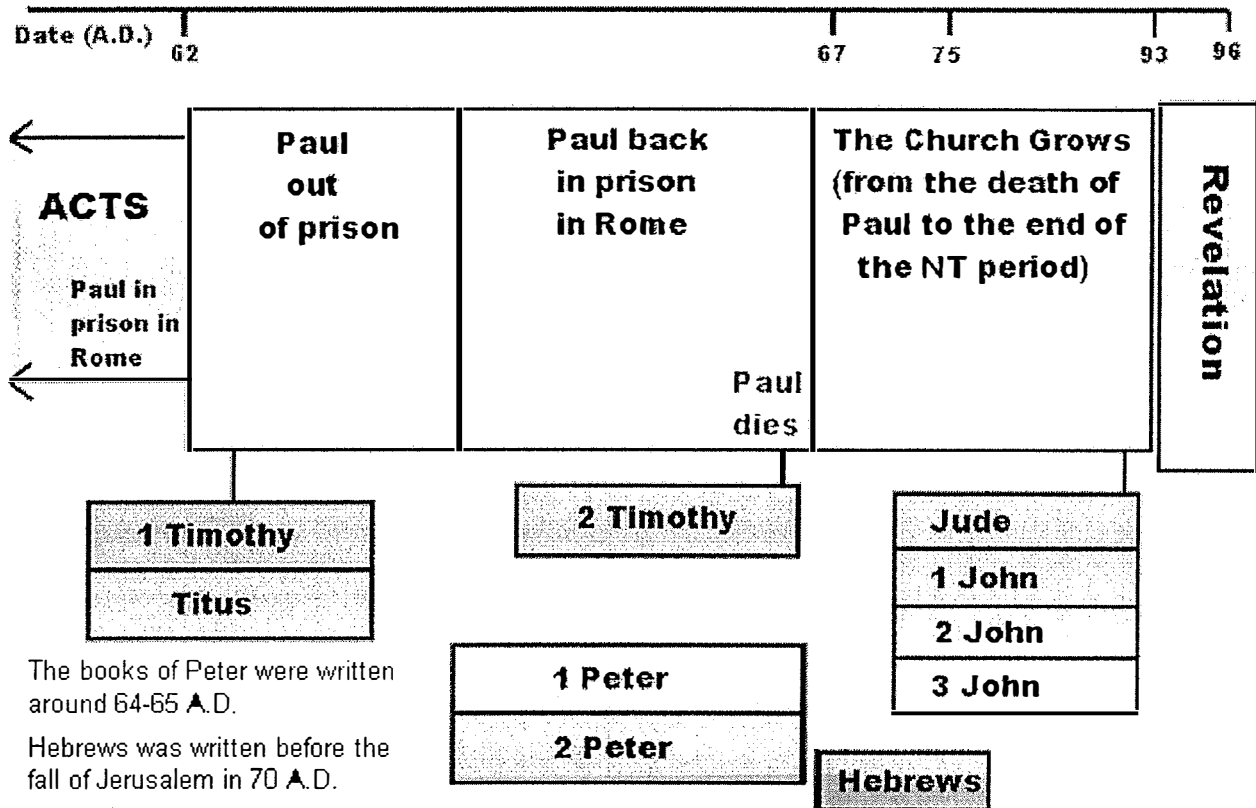
We will now take a more detailed look at the NT books that were written during the time of the book of Acts. The first part of the book of Acts has Peter as the main character (chapters 1-12). The last part of the book of Acts has Paul as the main character (chapters 13-28).



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:

Matthew	Mark
Presents Christ as KING (the Prophesied King)	Presents Christ as SERVANT (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.
LION (Ezekiel 1:10; Rev. 1:7)--the king of beasts	OX (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.

LETTER MARKED 'PERSONAL'



"MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDETH OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD" — MATT. 4:4

JACK HAMM