

Gift of a Promise: His Word and His Body

Lesson 4

Unit Two

The New Testament: An Overview

Here I Am, Lord

1 Corinthians 13

Digging for Facts!



Fill in the correct word from the box below.

The Bible is not one _____; it is a library of books that were written over a period of more than 1,500 years by many different _____. These authors were _____ by the Holy Spirit in their _____ and writing. Thus, the Bible is the inspired Word of God without _____. It also has the _____ touch from its authors. Paul is different from David,

who is different from James or Moses. So, their _____ and personality come out to us. These _____ the marvelous depth and wonder of _____ and how God _____ to use us even though he does not need to.

error authors thinking book chooses
human inspired style Scripture create

Our past investigation has taught us many things about the Bible. For example, the Bible is filled with many genres or types of literature, including law, history, wisdom, writings, and poetry. Today we are going to explore the specific genres of the New Testament: sacred biography, history, letters, and apocalyptic literature.

Nor Gdagaran Եւր Կտակարան

Exploring the New Testament

Sacred Biography: The Gospels

Gospel literally means the “**Good News**,” specifically the good news that through Jesus Christ we are saved from sin and death. When the Gospels were written in the 1st century, it was a brand new form of literature. The four Gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John) go beyond what we might consider as traditional biography because their primary purpose was to show how Christ revealed himself as Lord and Savior in history through the eyes of each Gospel writer. This is a little different than writing about the life of a President or any other famous personality.



Eyewitness News...

Gospel writers tell their stories

Have you ever been in a situation where you were one of many witnesses called to give your personal account of a car accident or altercation of some kind? Very often a group of people can witness or hear the very same thing...but leave the scene with very different accounts. Today we will explore the scriptural accounts of the four Gospel writers who all were eyewitnesses of Christ's teachings, his miracles, his compassion and the unconditional love he expressed in virtually every situation.

We call Matthew, Mark, Luke and John "Gospels" because they tell the Good News of Jesus Christ. These four books each have their unique picture of Jesus Christ, and are being written with a particular audience in mind. So it was the task of the Gospel writers to offer an eyewitness account in a way that would best impact their audience.



It is believed that Mark was written first. The writers of Matthew and Luke probably used Mark as a starting point in creating their Gospels. This is why these three Gospels have some very similar stories and tell the events of Jesus' life in chronological order. As a matter of fact, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as "synoptic" gospels, which means "seeing together" or "seeing from the same point of view." The Gospel of John is quite different from the other three and is often called the "theological" Gospel as John presents the teachings of Jesus thematically, emphasizing that he is the Son of God. Having four different accounts gives us a more complete understanding of Jesus than just having one.

Gospel Avedaran Աւետարան

So, What Did We Just Learn?

Fill in the correct answer to the sentences that follow.

1. Gospel literally means _____
a. Eyewitness b. Christ's mission
c. Good News d. synoptic accounts
2. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they
a. Were written at the same time
b. Were all written for the same audience
c. Include many of the same stories, often in the same order.
3. It is believed that the first Gospel to be written was
a. Matthew b. John
c. Luke d. Mark
4. The Gospel of _____ is different from the other three, because it has fewer miracles and fewer parables but presents Jesus more clearly as the Son of God.
a. Luke b. John
c. Matthew d. Mark

Four Witnesses – Four Stories

First Witness...**Mark** representing the Christians in Rome...Read Mark 14: 1-5

Second Witness.... **Matthew** who represents the Jewish followers of Christ: Read Matthew 26:2-5; 6-7

Third Witness.... **Luke** who represents the Gentile Christians: Read Luke 22: 1-2; 3-6



Fourth Witness... **John** who represents all Christian people... Read John 11:38-53; 12:3

Cross Examination Questions

1. What was the occasion?
2. Identify who was involved in the event.
3. What were they trying to do?
4. What were they trying to avoid?
5. What happens right afterwards?

Early Church History

In your history class in school, you studied about the heroic men and women who helped create the United States: George Washington, Susan B. Anthony and many more. The Acts of the Apostles is a book containing stories like these, telling us about the people and events in the early history of the Church. In fact, it is actually considered the second volume of a two volume history written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke. It continues the account of salvation history by telling about the beginning of the Christian movement, primarily through the



travels, teaching, and miracles of the apostles and the new apostle/missionary, St. Paul.

Here is a reading from Acts 6: 1-7.

6 ¹But as the believers rapidly multiplied, there were rumblings of discontent. The Greek-speaking believers

complained about the Hebrew-speaking believers, saying that their widows were being discriminated against in the daily distribution of food.

²So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, "We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program.

³And so, brothers, select seven men who are well respected and are full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will give them this responsibility.

⁴Then we apostles can spend our time in prayer and teaching the word."

⁵Everyone liked this idea, and they chose the following: Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit), Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas of Antioch (an earlier convert to the Jewish faith).

⁶These seven were presented to the apostles, who prayed for them as they laid their hands on them.

⁷So God's message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.

4. What qualifications were they looking for?

5. How was this solution accepted?

6. What three things happened as a result?

Love Letters

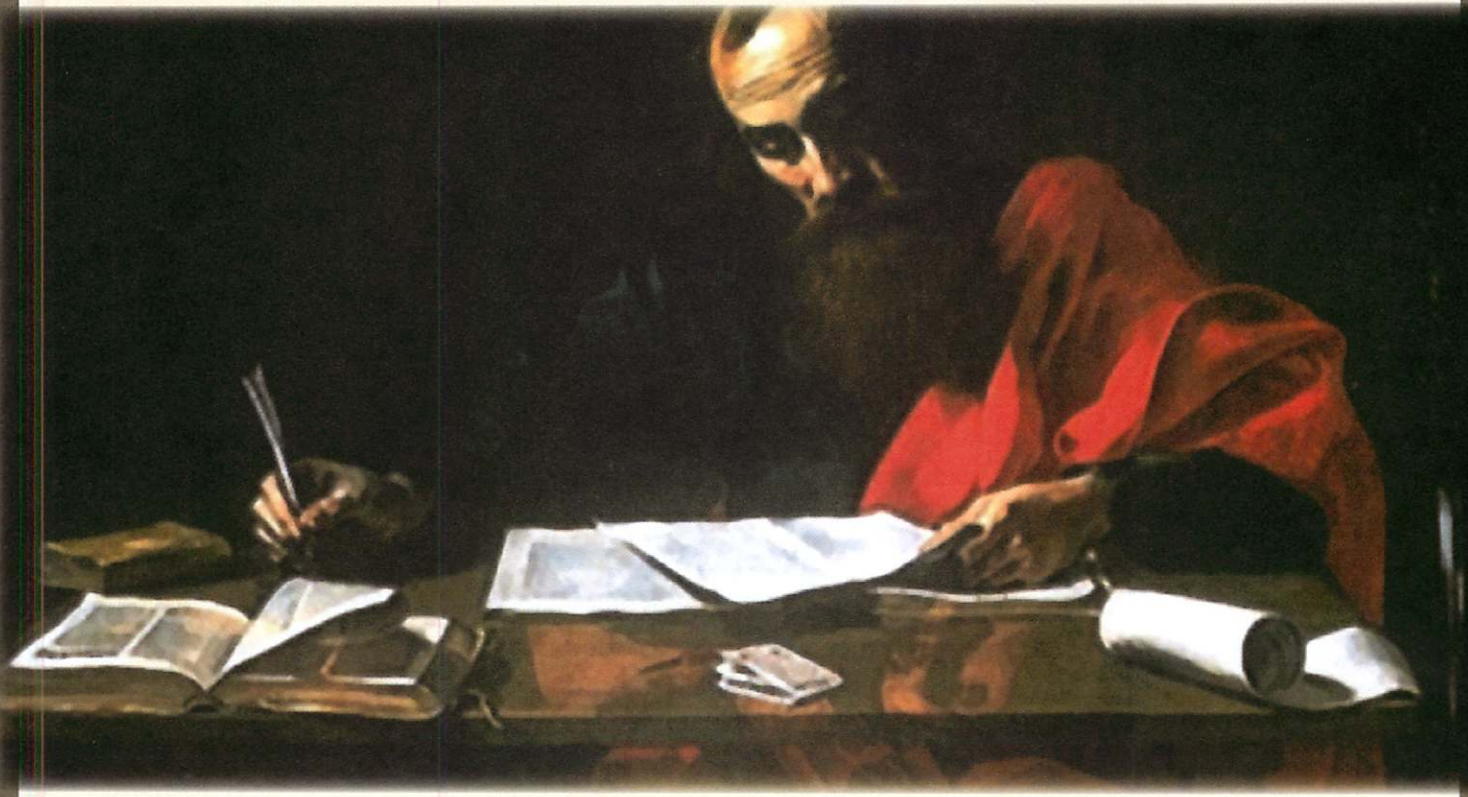
This refers to the 21 letters (also known as '*Epistles*') in the New Testament written to a specific group or person such as Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, Peter, and John. Most challenge the listeners to live Christian lives as true disciples of Jesus Christ.

Today's opening prayer was from a letter to the Corinthians, reminding them that faith had no meaning without love.

Apocalyptic writing

The last book of the New Testament is the book of Revelation. It is written in apocalyptic style. Apocalyptic writing is a type of literature that paints a picture of the end times, using powerful imagery and symbols whose full meaning is hidden to us for the time being. It expresses the certainty that God will be victorious over evil.

1. What was the problem?
2. What did the apostles do in immediate response?
3. What was the solution?



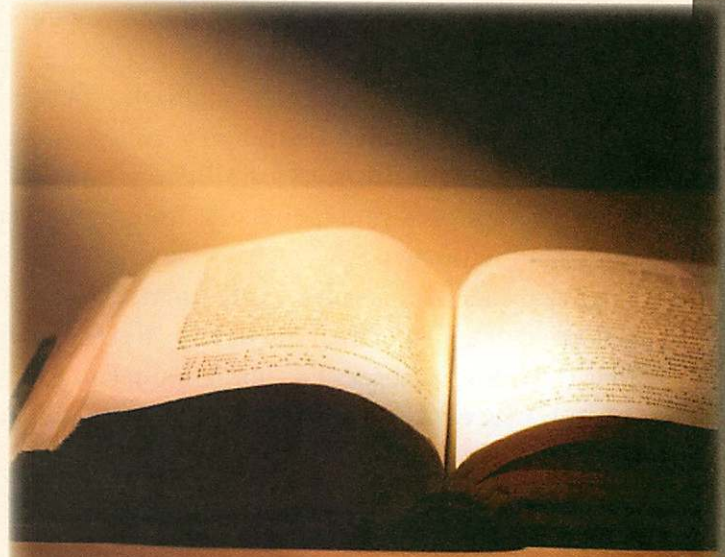
A Vision of Christ

In Revelations 1: 12 – 19, an amazing encounter with the writer and Christ is described. Write in all the images the writer describes. The first three are done for you:

1. There are seven lampstands
2. One like the Son of Man (Christ!)
3. Wearing a robe down to his feet
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

11. _____
12. _____

What an amazing image!



Our Armenian Way

In April 2012 the Library of Congress opened an exhibition entitled **1512 A.D.: The Birth of the Armenian Printed Heritage** in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the first printed Armenian book and the first printing press dedicated to the publication of works in the Armenian script *Oorpatarkirk*, *The Book of Friday*, printed by Hakob Meghapart in Venice, Italy.

The exhibition was mounted in the Northwest gallery off the Great Hall of the historic Thomas Jefferson Building and displayed manuscripts and early imprints to

illustrate the natural evolution from the hand-copied to the printed book.

The single work most reproduced in the Armenian manuscript tradition was the Gospel book or *avedaran*. Nearly all illuminated Armenian manuscripts up to the twelfth century are Gospels.

Entire Bibles containing the Old and New Testaments are rare and date from the thirteenth century on. Complete New Testaments, that is the Gospels plus the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, are even rarer. This reflects the hierarchy of importance of the parts of the Bible in the Armenian and Orthodox churches. In the Gospels, Christ is most fully revealed, then in the rest of the New Testament and, finally, in the Old Testament. All our liturgics also support this. For example, only the Gospel book, not the entire Bible, rests on the altar and only the Gospel reading is chanted.

