

**The New Testament in 20 Minutes Background**

2/2 Bible in 20 Minutes

2 Timothy 3:14-17

11 15 2009 Sam Jones Memorial United Methodist Church

**PP1 MASTER SLIDE****PP2 2 TIMOTHY 3:16****Introduction****PP3 HOLY BIBLE**

The Bible is both a book and a **library** of books. The Old and New Testament contain 66 different books written by diverse authors in various times and places. It begins in the beginning with Genesis and ends with the end in Revelation. The Scriptures include story, history, law, poetry, hymns, love songs, proverbs, prophecy, gospels, letters, and more.

Attempts to summarize the Biblical message have met with varying degrees of success. *Reader's Digest* published a *Condensed Version of the Bible*. There is a *Clift Notes of the Bible* that covers the major themes. I even received an e-mail forward that summarized **the Bible in 50 words**. Listen fast!

God made, Adam bit, Noah arked, Abraham split, Joseph ruled,  
Jacob fooled, bush talked, Moses balked, Pharaoh plagued, people walked,  
sea divided, tablets guided, Promise landed, Saul freaked, David peeked,  
prophets warned, Jesus born, God walked, love talked, anger crucified,  
Hope died, Love rose, Spirit flamed, Word spread, God remained.

**I. The Bible in 20 Minutes Series****PP4 THE BIBLE IN 20 MINUTES**

Today we are continuing a two week series entitled *The Bible in Twenty Minutes*. Last week we reviewed the Old Testament. Today we turn our attention to the New Testament. The sermon is actually divided into TWO stages.

The first part is an **overview** of the New Testament. For those keeping time, this does NOT count towards my twenty minutes! An insert with a review of the background material is included in your bulletin. I encourage you to keep it in your Bible.

During the second part of the sermon, we will rehearse the **Scriptural story**. We will begin with the birth of Christ and end with the end of the world.

**II. The New Testament****PP5 THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The Christian Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “*testament*” means “*covenant*” or “*relationship*.” The Old Testament describes the various covenants God made with the patriarchs and matriarchs of our faith along with the people of Israel. The New Testament describes God’s new covenant of grace through Jesus Christ.

The New Testament contains 27 books that can be divided into four groups:

## 1. The Gospels

### PP6 THE GOSPELS

The word “*gospel*” means “*good news*.” The gospels tell the good news of Jesus Christ. The New Testament contains the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the “*synoptic*” gospels—“*synoptic*” means “*with the same eye*.” Their gospels are very similar. Mark is the shortest of the gospels and was written first. Matthew and Luke based their gospels on Mark but also included their own material. John is quite different from the other gospels.

The gospels were not intended to be biographies; instead, they proclaim the good news of God’s salvation. Although some information is given about Jesus’ early life, they mainly focus upon the final days of Christ’s life. For the gospel writers, the crucifixion and the resurrection were critical part of the gospel accounts.

## 2. The Acts of the Apostles

### PP7

The fifth book in the New Testament is *The Acts of the Apostles* or simply *Acts*. It begins with the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven and the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The book describes the expanding growth of the church in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

The first chapters focus on the Jerusalem church and the original apostles, especially Peter. Then the spotlight shifts to the apostle Paul and his missionary journeys.

Many people do not realize that *The Gospel according to Luke* and *Acts* were written by the same author. They are a two part series on Jesus and the church.

## 3. The Epistles

### PP8

The third major section of the New Testament is called “*the Epistles*.” “*Epistle*” is a Greek word for “*letter*.” A large portion of the New Testament contains letters sent by various church leaders to the congregations under their pastoral care. Most of the letters were written by the apostle Paul. The Epistles contain both lofty theology and practical advice about the Christian faith. Two of the Epistles—Hebrews and James—could also be classified as sermons.

#### 4. Revelation

##### PP9

*The Revelation of John* is the final book of the Bible. Typically, the title is shortened to *Revelation*—note there is no “s” on the end of the name! The book has two main parts. The first section contains seven letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor from Jesus Christ. The second section describes John’s heavenly vision. Most people assume this refers to earth’s final days, although some scholars believe his vision dealt with the church’s situation at the time.

John was a church leader banished to the salt mines of Patmos because of his Christian faith. *Revelation* was written in the 90s AD during a time when the Roman Empire under Emperor Domitian persecuted the church. The book contains vivid imagery and confusing symbols. However, the book has a simple message at its heart: “GOD WINS!” Regardless of what we face as individuals or the church, the end result is never in doubt. God is victorious.

#### 5. Mnemonics

##### PP10 MNEUMONICS

I think it is helpful to memorize the order of the New Testament books. Here are a few mnemonic devices I shared in the *New Testament Overview* insert in your bulletin. Most folk already know the first four books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The next book is Acts. Then Romans. Then 1 and 2 Corinthians—if you remember 1 Corinthians, it’s easy to get 2 Corinthians!

The next four books can be remembered by this phrase: “*God’s Electric Power Company.*” The first letter of each word stands for Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians! Another trick is to remember that all of the “Ts” are together in the New Testament: 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, and Titus. Of course, Revelation is the final book. And the rest . . . you’ll just have to memorize!

#### Conclusion

##### PP11 BIBLE WITH CANDLE

2 Timothy 3 declares that ALL Scripture is “*God breathed.*” The Holy Spirit stirs in the pages of Scripture. The Bible is literally God’s WORD. When we open the Bible, we encounter the living Christ speaking to our lives.