



Contents

Preface v



PART ONE An Invitation to the New Testament I

CHAPTER 1 An Overview of the New Testament 2

Key Topics/Themes 2

What Is the New Testament? 3

The New Testament and the Hebrew Bible 4

Language and Literature of the New Testament 11

Other Early Christian Literature 16

Scholarly Approaches to the New Testament 18

The New Testament Read from Different Social Perspectives 20

Summary, 21 | Questions for Review, 21 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 21
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 21 | Recommended Reading, 22

CHAPTER 2 How the New Testament Was Formed and Handed Down to Us 23

Key Topics/Themes 23

Formation of the New Testament Canon 23

Transmitting the New Testament Texts 27

English Translations 31

Summary, 36 | Questions for Review, 36 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 36
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 37 | Recommended Reading, 37



PART TWO The Three Worlds in Which Christianity Originated 39

Photo Essay | The Jewish and Hellenistic Background of Early Christianity 40

CHAPTER 3 The Diverse World of First-Century Judaism 42

Key Topics/Themes 42

The Three Worlds of the New Testament Era 42

The One God, Yahweh	42
The Torah	44
The Divine Promises	47
The Jerusalem Temple	47
First-Century Jewish Diversity	49
The Messiah: First-Century Expectations	58
Messianic Claimants Before and After Jesus	64
Summary, 65 Questions for Review, 66 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 66 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 66 Recommended Reading, 66	

CHAPTER 4 The World of Greek Thought and Culture 68

Key Topics/Themes	68
Alexander and the Diffusion of Greek Culture	68
Greek Philosophy	70
Greco-Roman Religion	73
The Mystery Religions	80
Summary, 83 Questions for Review, 84 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 84 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 84 Recommended Reading, 84	

CHAPTER 5 The World of Roman Political Power 86

Key Topics/Themes	86
Alexander and His Successors	87
Antiochus's Persecution and the Maccabean Revolt	87
The Roman Emperors	92
The Jewish Revolt Against Rome	97
Summary, 103 Questions for Review, 103 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 104 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 104 Recommended Reading, 104	



PART THREE Diverse Portraits of Jesus 105

Photo Essay Archaeological Sites and Artifacts Associated with Jesus' Life	106
--	-----

CHAPTER 6 The Gospels

<i>Form and Purpose</i>	109
Key Topics/Themes	109
The Gospel Writers' Emphasis on Jesus' Religious Meaning	110
Different Approaches to Reading the Gospels	115

The Gospels and Modern Scholarship	116
Literary Analysis of the Gospels	119
Summary, 124 Questions for Review, 124 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 124 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 124 Recommended Reading, 124	

CHAPTER 7 **Mark's Portrait of Jesus**

<i>The Hidden Messiah and Eschatological Judge</i>	126
Key Topics/Themes	126
Mark's Historical Setting	126
Mark's Puzzling Attitude Toward Jesus' Close Associates	128
Mark as a Literary Narrative	131
Prelude to Jesus' Public Ministry	134
The Galilean Ministry: Inaugurating the Kingdom	134
The Journey to Jerusalem: Jesus' Predestined Suffering	143
The Jerusalem Ministry: A Week of Sacred Time	144
Mark's Passion Narrative: Jesus' Trial and Crucifixion	148
Postlude: The Empty Tomb	151
Summary, 151 Questions for Review, 152 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 152 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 152 Recommended Reading, 152	

CHAPTER 8 **Matthew's Portrait of Jesus**

<i>A Teacher Greater than Moses</i>	154
Key Topics/Themes	154
Matthew's Relationship to Mark and Luke: The Synoptic Problem	154
Matthew's Relationship to the Hebrew Bible	158
Authorship, Purpose, Sources, and Organization	160
Introduction to the Messiah: The Infancy Narrative	168
The Beginning of Jesus' Proclamation	170
First Major Discourse: The Sermon on the Mount	172
First Narrative Section: Ten Miracles	174
Second Major Discourse: Instructions to the Twelve Apostles	175
Second Narrative Section: Questions and Controversies	175
Third Major Discourse: Parables on the Kingdom	177
Third Narrative Section: From the Rejection in Nazareth to the Transfiguration	178
Fourth Major Discourse: Instructions to the Church	179
Fourth Narrative Section: The Jerusalem Ministry	179

Fifth Major Discourse: Warnings of Final Judgment	180
Fifth and Final Narrative Section: The Passion Story and Resurrection	183
Summary, 185 Questions for Review, 185 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 186 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 186 Recommended Reading, 186	

CHAPTER 9 **Luke's Portrait of Jesus**

A Savior for "All Nations" 189

Key Topics/Themes 189

Israel and the Church: Luke's Theology of History 190

The Author and His Sources 191

Infancy Narratives of the Baptist and Jesus 199

Jesus' Galilean Ministry 201

Luke's Travel Narrative: Jesus' Teachings on the Journey to Jerusalem 205

The Jerusalem Ministry: Jesus' Challenge to the Holy City 211

The Final Conflict and Passion Story 213

Epilogue: Postresurrection Appearances in the Vicinity of Jerusalem 215

Summary, 215 | Questions for Review, 216 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 216
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 217 | Recommended Reading, 217

Photo Essay | Themes and Settings in the Book of Acts 218

CHAPTER 10 **Luke's Portrait of the Early Church**

Jesus' Followers Continue His Work 221

Key Topics/Themes 221

The Divine Plan of Humanity's Salvation 223

Prologue and Account of the Ascension 225

Founding the Jerusalem Church 225

The Work of Peter and the Apostles 228

Persecution of the Hellenistic-Jewish Christians: The First Missions 228

Preparation for the Gentile Mission: The Recruitment of Paul and Cornelius 230

The First Missionary Journey of Barnabas and Paul: The Jerusalem Conference 231

Paul's Second Missionary Journey: Evangelizing Greece 235

Paul's Third Missionary Journey: Revisiting Asia Minor and Greece 239

Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem and Imprisonment in Caesarea 241

Paul's Journey to Rome and His Preaching to Roman Jews 242

Summary, 243 | Questions for Review, 243 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 244
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 244 | Recommended Reading, 244

Photo Essay Diverse Portraits of Jesus 246

CHAPTER II John's Portrait of Jesus

Divine Wisdom Made Flesh 249

Key Topics/Themes 249

Authorship 250

Hymn to the Word (Logos) 259

The Book of Signs 262

The Book of Glory 267

John's Interpretation of the Passion 269

Epilogue: Postresurrection Appearances in Galilee 272

Letters from the Johannine Community 272

Summary, 275 | Questions for Review, 276 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 276
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 277 | Recommended Reading, 277

CHAPTER I2 The Continuing Quest for the Historical Jesus 279

Key Topics/Themes 279

The Christ of Theology and the Jesus of History 279

Early Historical References to Jesus 281

A Survey of the Historical Search for the "Real" Jesus 283

The Continuing Scholarly Debate 284

Some Criteria for Testing the Authenticity of Jesus' Words and Deeds 285

A Nonapocalyptic Wisdom Teacher 288

An Apocalyptic Jesus 289

Some General Agreements About the Historical Jesus 290

Wisdom and the Kingdom of God 293

Summary, 295 | Questions for Review, 296 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 296
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 297 | Recommended Reading, 297



PART FOUR Paul and the Pauline Tradition 299

Photo Essay Paul and His World 300

CHAPTER I3 Paul

Apostle to the Nations 302

Key Topics/Themes 302

Seeking the Historical Paul 303

The Historical Reliability of Acts 303

The Nature of Paul's Conversion	304
Dating Paul's Career	306
Paul's Letters	308
Paul's Characteristic Theology	310
The Importance of Women in Early Christianity	313
The Supremacy of Love	316
Summary, 317 Questions for Review, 317 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 317 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 317 Recommended Reading, 317	

CHAPTER 14 Unity, Freedom, and Christ's Return

<i>Paul's Letters to Thessalonica and Corinth</i>	319
Key Topics/Themes	319
First Letter to the Thessalonians	320
First Letter to the Corinthians	323
Second Letter to the Corinthians	332
Summary, 335 Questions for Review, 336 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 336 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 336 Recommended Reading, 336	

CHAPTER 15 Freedom from Law and Justification by Faith

<i>Galatians and Romans</i>	338
Key Topics/Themes	338
An Angry Letter to the "Stupid" Galatians	339
Letter to the Romans	343
Summary, 353 Questions for Review, 353 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 353 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 354 Recommended Reading, 354	

CHAPTER 16 Letters from Prison

<i>Philippians and Philemon</i>	356
Key Topics/Themes	356
Place of Origin	356
Letter to the Philippians	357
Letter to Philemon	362
Paul's Lasting Influence	364
Summary, 367 Questions for Review, 367 Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 367 Terms and Concepts to Remember, 367 Recommended Reading, 368	

CHAPTER 17 Continuing the Pauline Tradition

2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles, and Other Early Christian Writings Influenced by Pauline Thought 369

Key Topics/Themes 369

The Problem of Pseudonymity 370

Second Letter to the Thessalonians 371

A Disputed Letter to the Colossians 373

Letter to the Ephesians 375

The Pastorals: Letters to Timothy and Titus 378

Other Early Christian Writings Influenced by Pauline Thought 382

Summary, 384 | Questions for Review, 384 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 384
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 385 | Recommended Reading, 385



PART FIVE General Letters and Some Visions of End Time 387

CHAPTER 18 General Letters on Faith and Behavior

Hebrews, the Catholic Epistles, and the Noncanonical Teachings (Didache) of the Twelve Apostles 388

Key Topics/Themes 388

Authors and Dates 389

The Book of Hebrews 390

James 395

1 Peter 398

Jude 401

2 Peter 403

An Early Noncanonical Witness to Early Christian Life: The Teaching (Didache) of the Twelve Apostles 404

Summary, 407 | Questions for Review, 407 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 407
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 408 | Recommended Reading, 408

Photo Essay The Conflict Between Caesar and Christ 410

CHAPTER 19 Continuing the Apocalyptic Hope

The Book of Revelation and Other Jewish/Christian Apocalyptic Works 412

Key Topics/Themes 412

Revelation and the Apocalyptic Tradition 413

Jesus' Letters to the Seven Churches 422

Visions in Heaven 422

Signs in Heaven: The Woman, the Dragon, the Beast, and the Seven Plagues 424

Other Hellenistic-Jewish and Christian Apocalypses 430

Summary, 435 | Questions for Review, 436 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 436
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 437 | Recommended Reading, 437

CHAPTER 20 **The Judeo-Christian Bible and Subsequent History** 439

Key Topics/Themes 439

The Evolution of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Greek Scriptures 440

Constantine the Great 441

The Church and the Secular World 443

Shocks and Readjustments 444

The Ongoing Debate 448

Summary, 450 | Questions for Review, 450 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 450
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 450 | Recommended Reading, 451

APPENDIX **The Other Gospels**

Additional Portraits of Jesus 452

Our Composite View of Jesus 452

The Gospel of Thomas 455

The Gospel of Judas 460

The Case of Secret Mark 461

The Gospel of Peter 461

Gospels About Jesus' Infancy and Childhood 462

Summary, 466 | Questions for Review, 467 | Questions for Discussion and Reflection, 467
| Terms and Concepts to Remember, 467 | Recommended Reading, 467

Glossary of New Testament Terms and Concepts 469

Credits 497

Index 499