



Goahead Theological Seminary & College

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Introduction to the New Testament

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New Testament Introduction is the academic discipline that examines the background, authorship, intended audience, purpose of composition, and structure of the 27 books of the New Testament. It addresses the historical and cultural contexts of each book—including the Synoptic Gospels, the Pauline Epistles, and the General Epistles—and explores the circumstances of the early church as well as issues of canonicity, thereby serving as an essential introductory course that facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the New Testament. Specifically, its objective is to foster an understanding of the life of Jesus Christ and the formation of the early church through an analysis of historical contexts and literary characteristics; key topics of study include textual criticism, the process of canonization, and exegetical analysis of the biblical texts.

1. Core Content of New Testament Introduction

- **Historical Questions (Special Introduction):** An examination of when, where, by whom, to whom, and why each biblical book was written. – This covers the historical background of each New Testament book, including its author, intended audience, date of composition, and purpose.
- **Structure and Content:** Identifying the overall flow and major themes of the Gospels, Acts, the Pauline Epistles, the Prison Epistles, the Pastoral Epistles, the General Epistles, and the Book of Revelation.
- **Background Studies:** Acquiring the background knowledge necessary for understanding the Bible—specifically, the Intertestamental Period, Jewish sects, and the socio-historical context of 1st-century Roman society.



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- **Key Themes:** Deriving the central message of the New Testament through methodologies such as historical criticism, Christ-centered interpretation, and covenant theology.
- **Composition:** Comprising a total of 27 books, the New Testament was written primarily by the apostles of Jesus Christ.
- **Nature:** It serves as the record of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and bears witness to the person and ministry of Jesus Christ—God's final revelation.
- **Intertestamental Period:** Understanding the background of the New Testament by studying the Jewish sects, the synagogue system, and the Apocrypha that emerged during the historical gap (approximately 400 years) between the Old and New Testaments.

2. Key Research Themes and Approaches

- **Gospel Studies:** An examination of the life of Jesus, the distinct characteristics of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), and the unique nature of the Gospel of John. These texts chronicle the birth, public ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke):** These books recount the life of Jesus from similar perspectives, though their points of emphasis vary according to each author's specific purpose in writing (e.g., Matthew wrote primarily for a Jewish audience).
- **The Gospel of John:** This book explores the divinity of Jesus in depth, approaching the subject from both philosophical and theological perspectives.
- **The Acts of the Apostles:** A historical narrative detailing the establishment of the early Christian church and the spread of the Gospel following the Resurrection, driven by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Pauline Epistles and General Epistles:** An analysis of Paul's missionary journeys, the theological arguments presented in his letters, and the



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specific contexts of the communities to which they were addressed. These letters—sent by the Apostle Paul to various churches—serve to establish core Christian doctrines, such as **sola fide (justification by faith). – (The First Epistle to the Thessalonians is generally considered to be the earliest written book among them.)**

- **General Epistles & Revelation:** Includes teachings directed toward the universal church—such as the Books of Hebrews and James—as well as the Book of Revelation, which presents an eschatological hope concerning the end of history and the Second Coming of Jesus.
- **Methodology:** Interpretation of the text through historical-critical analysis, social-scientific analysis, and literary approaches.

3. Learning Components of New Testament Introduction

- **Formation Process:** Production of the original New Testament texts, manuscripts, the original Greek language, and the process of canonization.
- **Historical Background:** The context of the era of Jesus Christ and the 400-year intertestamental period (the gap between the Old and New Testaments)

4. Recommended New Testament Introductions and Study Methods

- **Books:** **An Introduction to the New Testament** by D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo (available at Yes24), **Introduction to the New Testament** by Kim Se-yoon, and **The Early Church We Never Knew** by Park Young-ho.
- **Study Method:** It is crucial to first gain an understanding of the historical background of the New Testament as a whole, and then to identify and connect the core purpose of each individual book.

This field of study is primarily approached by pastors and seminary students as a foundational step toward conducting deeper research into the New Testament.

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