

Study Guide for New Testament Competency Exam

Matthew

1. Papias ascribes this Gospel to Matthew. Who was he? (See Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:14-17; Luke 5:27-32; **Concordia Study Bible (CSB)**, 1445, under "Author.")
2. Note carefully: CSB, 1446 *re* Matthew's a) recipients; b) purpose; c) structure.
3. a) Note the role of the kings in the genealogy of Matthew 1. b) With what two persons does this list begin? Why? c) Why does Matthew include the four women of 1:3-6?
4. As you read the Gospel, observe Matthew's focus on Jesus as Fulfiller, Son of David, King, and Teacher.
5. Note three (or more) Old Testament prophecies from Matthew 1-2 and describe their fulfillment.
6. Identify the chief content of Matthew's five discourses: a) chapters 5-7; b) 10; c) 13; d) 18; e) 24-25.
7. How does Matthew describe the scribes and Pharisees? (5:20; 23)? Note also the CSB table on page 1483, which describes the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and, the unique agendas of the Essenes and the zealots.
8. Note the cluster of miracles in 8-9. Over what situations did Jesus there show his power and pity (might and mercy)?
9. How does Matthew apply the meaning of the feeding miracles of 14 and 15 in Matthew 16:5-12?
10. How is Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi a turning point in Matthew's Gospel?
11. How does the voice from heaven (17:5) at the transfiguration tie in with that at Jesus' baptism (in 3)?
12. Matthew expands the teaching section (beyond the other Synoptic Gospels) between the temple cleansing and the trials (21-25) as Jesus "takes on all opponents" in "Holy Week." What focus do the three unique parables of 25 have in common?
13. Examine the "Life of Christ" outline on CSB pp. 1488-90. Also, the post-resurrection notes on CSB pp. 1490 and 1597!
14. Observe Matthew's unique inclusions in 27-28 (e.g., Judas' hanging, the two earthquakes attendant to the resurrection, the tomb guards, the Great Commission).

Mark

1. Who was Mark? What is his New Testament role? (CSB, 1498)
2. Carefully observe the information (CSB, 1499) on Mark's Gospel's a) origin, b) recipients, c) occasion and purpose, d) special characteristics.
3. Mark's Gospel starts with John the Baptist. Why does he omit the nativity narrative?
4. Explain from Mark's selection of key words and materials why this is called a "gospel of action."
5. What is the significance of the 3-fold passion prediction of Mark (8:31; 9:30-32; 10:32-34)?
6. Remember the location of Mark's "Little Apocalypse." (13) Note how Mark here records the sayings of Jesus regarding the end of Jerusalem **and** the end of the world by giving them in alternating sections. [The same thing occurs in the parallel accounts of Matthew and Luke] What is the connection between the two events?
7. a) How is 10:45 thematic for the Gospel of Mark? b) Why do you suppose that 14:51f. is included *only* in Mark?

Luke

1. Carefully digest the information in CSB, pp. 1540-41 on a) God's grace in Luke! b) author! c) recipient and purpose; d) style; e) characteristics! f) sources; and g) plan.
2. Suggest a simple 4-part outline for Luke (including the brief Galilean ministry, 4:14-9:50; and, the unusually long Journey to Jerusalem, 9:51-19:27).
3. Luke has been called the "historian" among the evangelists. How is this apt? (See 1:1-5; 2:1-3; and 3:1-3).
4. What differences do you see in Luke's genealogy (3:23ff.) compared to that in Matthew 1? What theological points do you see Luke make here?
5. Luke's emphasis on the Holy Spirit's role is obvious in such places as Luke 2:25-27; Luke 4:1, 14; Acts 13:2-4; Acts 16:6-10 et al. Be alert to other such foci.
6. How is Luke's theme (19:10) illustrated by the Zacchaeus story?
7. List several of the parables found uniquely in Luke, and know their point.

In general

Know the key miracles and parables and their significance and/or message, as recorded by:

- a. the Synoptics (Matthew, Mark, and Luke);
- b. John, the "supplementary" Gospel.

Reference: a) on parables, CSB, 1578-79; b) on miracles, CSB, 1606.

John

1. Read carefully in CSB, 1600-01 the sections on: a) God's grace in John; b) author; c) date; d) purpose and emphases.
2. Note the content of the small number of miracles John records (CSB, 1606). Most of them are referred to as "signs." How are they *significant*?
3. When would Jesus' "hour" come? (See note on 2:4.)
4. What is "eternal life?" See John 3:15-18 and 5:24.
5. Observe the nature of the several points of conflict between "the Jews" and Jesus (see especially 3, 5-10).
6. John depicts most prominently Jesus' ministry at Jerusalem, usually at festival times. Note how Jesus gives added meaning to the feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, Pentecost, Dedication (Hanukkah), and the Sabbath.
7. John 7:53-8:11. Comment on the condition of the: a) text; b) woman; c) accusers.
8. John 11:45-53. a) How did the raising of Lazarus affect the Pharisees and chief priests?
b) How does Caiaphas unwittingly summarize the purpose of Jesus' death?
9. It is said that John presents seven "signs" that Jesus did and seven "I am" statements of Jesus. Name a few of each and give their significance.
 - a) signs (see 2-11).
 - b) the "I am's" (see 6-15).
10. The "upper room discourse" is John's longest discourse. Note especially:
 - a) the foot-washing (13);
 - b) the Comforter and His comfort (14-16);
 - c) The True Vine and the branches (15);
 - d) The High Priestly Prayer (17), with its 3 points of focus.

Key chapters of the 4 Gospels

Matthew Chapter 1—genealogy; 2—Magi, flight to Egypt; 5-7—Sermon on the Mount; 10—Sending of the Twelve; 13—seven parables of the kingdom; 16—Peter’s confession; 18—steps of reconciliation, and forgiveness; 23-25—seven woes and the eschatological discourse; 28—resurrection, great commission.

Mark Chapters 8-10—three-fold passion prediction; 13—the Little Apocalypse.

Luke Chapters 1-2—parallel infancy narratives of John and Jesus; 10—sending of the 70, the good Samaritan; 15—parables of the lost sheep, coin, 2 sons (prodigal + one); 19—Zacchaeus, triumphal entry to Jerusalem; 21—final discourse; 24—resurrection, ascension.

John Chapter 2—wedding of Cana, temple cleansing; 3—Nicodemus; 4—Samaritan woman & people; 6—feeding of 5000; 10—the Good Shepherd; 11—Lazarus raised; 20-21—resurrection appearances in Jerusalem and Galilee.

Key Persons

Jesus; Zechariah, Elizabeth, John the Baptist; Joseph, Mary; the Magi; King Herod (the Great); Archelaus; Herod Antipas; Simeon, Anna; The Twelve (especially Peter, James, John; Matthew; Andrew, Philip; Nathanael; Thomas; and Judas Iscariot); Mary Magdalene; Nicodemus; the woman of Samaria; the daughter of Jairus; the widow of Nain; blind Bartimaeus; Zacchaeus; Mary, Martha, and Lazarus; the Pharisees; Sadducees; Essenes; zealots; Herodians; Caiaphas; Pontius Pilate; Simon of Cyrene; the centurion of Golgotha, Joseph of Arimathea; the Emmaus disciples.

Key Places of the Gospels

Judea, Samaria, Galilee; Bethlehem; Egypt; Jerusalem; Nazareth; the wilderness of Judea; Jordan River; Sea of Galilee; Cana; Capernaum; Bethsaida; Chorazin; Magdala; Gadara; Nain; Sychar, Mt. Gerizim; Mt. Hermon, Caesarea Philippi; Phoenicia; Decapolis; Perea; Jericho; Pool of Bethesda; Pool of Siloam; Bethany; Mt. of Olives; Gethsemane; Golgotha; Emmaus.

The Acts of the Apostles

1. Read CSB, pp.1651-53 on: a) author; b) importance; c) theme and purpose; d) characteristics.
2. Note the leading apostolic roles of Peter and Paul in Acts.
3. How does Acts form a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles?
4. Acts can be outlined simply into 3 parts, in keeping with 1:8 (its theme). a) 1-7, Jerusalem; b) 8-12, “Judea and Samaria”; and, c) 13-28, the Gentile world.
5. How many days after Passover was Pentecost? On what day of the week was it? (See CSB, p. 1656, note on 2:1.)
6. Pentecost sermon. What is Peter’s main point? What is the people’s response?
7. Note the unusual detail of the lame man’s healing (3). See Paul’s comparable miracle (14:8-10).
8. Describe the Sadducees’ reaction to the apostles’ preaching of the resurrection. What is the apostles’ response? (4:1ff.; 5:17ff.)
9. Why was Ananias and Sapphira’s sin punished so severely? (5)
10. Who were the Hellenists? (6) How did Stephen, Philip, and the rest of “the Seven” minister to them?
11. What purpose did Peter and John serve regarding the Samaritans? How did Simon Magus respond? (8)

12. What evidence is there that the Spirit was at work through Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch? (8)
13. Saul's conversion. How is 9:15-16 thematic for the Pauline portion of Acts?
14. Defend the thesis that the Cornelius event is a watershed story in Acts. (See the speeches of 10, 11, and 15.)
15. How is Antioch uniquely suited as a missionary base? (11:19ff.)
16. Chart Paul's 3 missionary journeys (see Map 11, back of CSB), listing key events of several chief cities visited on each journey.
17. Is there a message in the names of Bar-Jesus? Sergius Paulus? (13) What happened to Mark after Cyprus?
18. At Pisidian Antioch, who responded in greatest numbers to Paul's sermon? (13) What were the reactions?
19. (15) Why was the "Apostolic Council" necessary? Who gave the main speeches? Did the Holy Spirit have a "vote"?
20. Note how the Spirit moves the mission into Europe. (16:6-10)
21. How did the saints at Berea show their religious fervor? (17)
22. What was the Areopagus? And, what did Paul achieve in Athens? (17)
23. Why were Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth? How did they help Paul? (18)
24. What decision did Paul repeat at Corinth? (See 18:6; also, 13:46f. and 28:28.)
25. What role did the Holy Spirit play in 19:1-7?
26. What is the significance of Ephesus' city clerk in regard to Demetrius, the silversmith? (19:38)
27. Paul's "Journey to Jerusalem." (21:1-16) Note the 3 prophetic warnings.
28. Chapters 22-28 include Paul's defense speeches (before Gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel; see 9:15).
29. (25:1-12) Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?
30. Note Paul's repetition (in 26) of his conversion experience (also repeated in 22) before King Agrippa II. What were the king's conclusions?
31. (27) Observe Paul's "leadership" on the voyage to Rome.
32. (28:25-31) At Rome, how is Isaiah 6 fulfilled regarding the Jews? How does that impact the Gentiles?

Key chapters of Acts

- 1—Ascension, completing the Twelve;
- 2—Pentecost at Jerusalem;
- 8—Samaria;
- 9—Saul's conversion;
- 10—Cornelius, Peter's vision;
- 13-21—three missionary journeys of Paul;
- 15—the Apostolic Council;
- 16—to Macedonia;
- 28—to Rome!

Key persons

Peter; Matthias (1); the Sanhedrin (4); Barnabas (4; 13-15); Ananias and Sapphira (5), Gamaliel (5:22); Stephen and Philip (6-8, 21); Ananias of Damascus; Aeneas and Dorcas; and, Simon the Tanner (9); Cornelius (10); Agabus (11); James, son of Zebedee (12); James, the Lord's brother (12; 15); Agrippa I (12); Paul; Mark (13); Silas and Timothy (15-16); Lydia; the jailer of Philippi (16); Jason (17); Aquila and Priscilla; Gallio; Apollos (18); Demetrius (19); Eutychus (20); Felix and Festus (24-25); Agrippa II (26); Publius' father; Caesar (28).

Key places in Acts

Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea Maris; Joppa; Tarsus; Antioch (on the Orontes River); Cyprus; Galatia (including Pisidian Antioch and Lystra); Macedonia (Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea); Achaia (Athens, Corinth); Ephesus; Miletus; Crete; Malta; Rome.

The Epistles

There are twenty one epistles between Acts and Revelation. Thirteen are attributed to Paul; the epistle to the Hebrews is anonymous; seven catholic (or general) epistles conclude the collection. The latter ones are also from writers within the apostolic circle (Peter, John, James, and Jude). The N. T. letters deal with matters of faith and life as experienced in the churches of the first Christian century. A chronology for the Pauline epistles is given in CSB, 1674-75.

General expectations.

For each of the epistles:

- a. Read carefully and digest the introductory material found in the CSB (paying special attention to such matters as the recipients, theme, purpose, occasion, primary content, and special characteristics);
- b. Read the epistles themselves; and
- c. Be able to grasp and recall emphases such as those suggested by the following notes. *Paul's missionary journey (and major!) epistles are directed to the Galatians, Thessalonians (2), Corinthians (2), and the Romans.*

Galatians

1. Note the different views of the epistle's destination (CSB, 1791). From the information available in Acts, the Southern Galatian theory seems the more plausible one.
2. Key verse, 2:16 (justified by faith; not by keeping "the law")
3. Galatians has been called "the Magna Charta" of Christian liberty. How is this apt?
4. Paul's agitation with the misleaders in Galatia is evident by such references as 1:6-9; 3:1-5; 5:12; and 6:11-13.
5. Paul's handwriting "authenticates" his letter in 6:11 (see also 2 Thessalonians 3:17).
6. Key contents:
 - a. 1—Paul defends his gospel and his apostleship; his call is from God, not from men.
 - b. 2—Paul is accepted by the apostles; he even stands up to Peter!
 - c. 3:6-9—Abraham's faith is counted as righteousness.
 - d. 3:26-29—Faith in Christ breaks down barriers between Jew/Greek; slave/free; male/female.
 - e. 4:1-7—adoption into sonship through Christ is God's gift in His time, making "heirs" out of former "slaves."
 - f. 4:21ff.—the illustrative "allegory" of Hagar and Sarah; (one's son is slave, the other's free; law and gospel).
 - g. 5:1ff.—"freedom" in Christ is explained.
 - h. 5:15-24—the desires of the flesh vs. "the fruit of the Spirit" (catalogued)
 - i. 6:15—not circumcision; but "new creation!" That is the issue in Galatia!

I and II Thessalonians

1. Digest the notes in the CSB, 1832-33 and 1840-41 on God's grace, background of the Thessalonian letters and of the city, as well as the purpose and theme of the two letters.
2. Summarize from 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11 the teachings of Paul on the *parousia* (second coming).
 - a. Are the "faithful dead" at any disadvantage as compared to "the quick?"
 - b. What does Paul say about the timing of the Lord's return?

3. Observe Paul's advice about "holy" (sanctified) living as God's people await the parousia (1 Thessalonians 4:1-12 and 5:12-22).
4. 2 Thessalonians corrects misunderstandings about Jesus' second coming. The Lord has not yet come back and would not return till after "the man of lawlessness" will have appeared. How is he described? (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12)
5. As we await the parousia, Paul urges that we pray (2 Thessalonians 3:1-5) and work (3:6-15); or, as Luther put it, "*ora et labora!*"

I Corinthians

1. Be familiar with the background of the city of Corinth and Paul's occasion for writing. (CSB, 1744-46)
2. Memorable chapters in 1 Corinthians: a) 13—Love (*agape*); b) 15—Resurrection.
3. Paul received reports about Corinth from several sources which triggered his writing; included are those from: a) Chloe's household (1:11); b) their letter (7:1); and c) three Corinthian men (see note at 16:17 in CSB).
4. What is at the heart of divine wisdom? (1:18-2:16)
5. How does Paul deal with these problems?
 - a. divisions in the church (1:10-17; 3);
 - b. incest (5);
 - c. lawsuits among believers (6:1-11);
 - d. sexual immorality (6:12-20).
6. What does Paul have to say about:
 - a. celibacy? sex and marriage? (7)
 - c. charity and self-denial for the sake of "the weak brother?" (8-10)
7. Paul urges that respect and propriety pertain in worship and certainly also at the Lord's Supper (11). Note here "the words of institution," as received by tradition (vv. 23-25).
8. Paul's classical teaching on spiritual gifts (12-14) envelopes the great "love chapter" (13). Note especially: a) the source of these gifts; b) their diversity; c) the interdependence of those gifted; d) the greatest gift (*agape*); e) the "ordering" of "prophecy" and "tongues"; and, f) the orderly use of gifts in worship.
9. Note the unique resurrection appearances of Christ listed in 15; how Christ's resurrection impacts ours; and, the glorious nature of the resurrection body.
10. Consider the discrete advice Paul gives about the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (16:1-4). He elaborates on Christian giving in II Corinthians 8 and 9.

II Corinthians

1. Introduction. 2 Corinthians is the most autobiographical of Paul's letters. The epistle can be outlined into three parts.
 - a. 1-7—Apologetic: regarding the ministry and Paul's exercise of it
 - b. 8-9—Hortatory: regarding the collection (memorable chapters!)
 - c. 10-13—Polemical: in defense of Paul's apostleship
2. Some notes on 1-7
 - a. Paul refers to an intermediate painful letter and a tearful visit. (2:1-4)
 - b. The gross sinner (from 1 Corinthians 5) has repented! (2:5ff.)
 - c. We have the treasure of His ministry in "jars of clay." (4:7)
 - d. Anyone in Christ is a "new creation." (5:17)
 - e. Don't be yoked with unbelievers. (6:14ff.)
 - f. Repentance at Corinth brings joy to Paul. (7)
3. Regarding the collection, 8-9
 - a. This is a "gold-mine" of stewardship principles! *Nota bene!*
 - b. "God loves a cheerful giver!" (9:7)

4. Chapters 10-13. Paul's defense is based on self-sacrifice and suffering for the gospel.
 - a. False charges and false apostles are rebuffed. (10-11)
 - b. Paul's sufferings are great; God's grace is sufficient. (11:16-12:13)
 - c. Paul prepares the Corinthians for his third visit. (12:14-13:10)

Romans

Key chapters: 3, 8, 9-11

- 1:16-17—theme: the gospel as the power of God to salvation;
- 2—God's judgment on all (for all have sinned);
- 3:21-26—the righteousness of God (justification) explained;
- 4—Abraham's grace and faith---received before circumcision;
- 5:12-21—the contrast between Adam and Christ;
- 6:1-14—dying and rising with Christ;
- 6:16ff.—the choice: sin and death, or sanctification and life;
- 7:7ff.—the internal war with sin (the Jekyll/Hyde struggle);
- 8:5-17—life in the flesh vs. life in the spirit;
- 8:28ff.—"more than conquerors" in Christ ("predestination," God's gracious plan)
- 9-11—Paul's (and God's) love for Israel; her "hardening";
- 9—the nature of "true Israel"; a remnant;
- 11:17-24—the metaphor of inclusion in "the olive tree"
- 12—sanctification as the "living" sacrifice; not conformed, but transformed; unity in the (Christian) body (vv. 4-8)
- 13—submission to governing authorities;
- 14-15—sensitivity for "the weak brother";
- 15:14ff.—Paul's ministry leads to the Gentiles and to Rome;
- 16—many personal greetings

Ephesians

1. *Ephesians* is one of Paul's "**Captivity Letters**" (along with *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*). As with other New Testament writings, digest the chief points of the introductory notes for *Ephesians* in CSB, 1801-03.
2. *Ephesians* is generally viewed as a circular letter (written for both the Christians of Ephesus and other churches in Asia Minor).
3. *Ephesians* 2:8-9 is perhaps the most widely quoted portion of the letter, "by grace you have been saved . . . not by works."
4. Three images for the church in *Ephesians*:
 - a. Christ as the "Head" of the church, His "body" (1:22-23);
 - b. a building ("a holy *temple* in the Lord" (2:20-22); and as
 - c. the bride of Christ (5:23-32).
5. "Unity" is a key focus for *Ephesians*.
 - a. unity for Jews and Gentiles through the blood of Christ (2:11-22);
 - b. unity for Christian service and edification (4:1-16).
6. Mutual submission is urged in 5:21-6:9 for:
 - a. wives and husbands (5:22-33);
 - b. children and parents (6:1-4); and
 - c. slaves and masters (6:5-9).
7. Uniquely, *Ephesians* 6:10-18 pictures the equipment for spiritual warfare as "the armor of God."

Colossians

1. While Ephesians emphasizes the church as Christ's "body," Colossians stresses Christ as the church's "head."
2. Observe carefully a) the nature of the Colossian heresy, and b) how the purpose of the letter relates to that. (CSB, 1825)
3. The unique "creation hymn" of 1:15-20 shows Christ's supremacy in both creation and redemption. Read and mark it well.
4. Learn and inwardly digest the manner in which Paul shows Christ as sufficient for salvation and as the antidote for the Colossian heresy (giving heed also to the footnotes for chapter 2 in CSB).
5. Note also several guidelines for Christian living that Colossians shares with Ephesians, e.g., "rules for households."
6. The final greetings of 4:7ff. contain vital information about such as Tychicus, Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras, Luke, Demas, and Nympha. Compare with the names in Philemon 23-24.

Philemon

1. Read what the CSB editor and Luther (p. 1820) say about God's "grace in Philemon."
2. How does this letter change the institution of slavery through its "new regard" for the slave?
3. Note the word play on Onesimus' name in vv. 10-11 and in v.20 and how they serve the letter's message.
4. How does the letter relate to Matthew 18:23ff. (the parable of the unmerciful servant)?
5. Is Paul, in making the case for Onesimus, also a master psychologist?

Philippians

1. Philippi has many imprints of the Greco-Roman world, including colony status. See CSB, 1814-15 for details (footnote on Philippi; "Recipients" paragraph)
2. Mark well the letter's leading "characteristics," as noted in CSB, 1815.
3. Explain how Paul sees his chains as vehicles for the gospel and for Christian joy at the same time (see especially 1:12-30 and 4:4-7).
4. Note well 2:5-11, the classic passage on Christ's humiliation and exaltation, as an example for His followers.
5. How were Timothy and Epaphroditus of special help to Paul, and how do they relate to Philippi? (2:19-30)
6. What does Paul have to say about the Judaizers and his own "pedigree" in Judaism? (3:2-9)
7. What is the challenge for the "yokefellow" to such as Euodia and Syntyche? (4:2-3)
8. Note Philippi's unique generosity to Paul and his appreciation of it. (4:10-20)

I and II Timothy

*In Paul's later years he penned the three "**Pastoral Letters**" which give counsel and support for two of his younger ministerial associates (Timothy and Titus) in the conduct of the pastoral office.*

1. Absorb the information on Timothy as found in CSB 1847-48 under "Recipient."
2. Note Paul's view of God's grace to himself as "chief of sinners." (1 Timothy 1:12-17)
3. Describe the heresy that Timothy needs to deal with. (1:3-7; 4:1-5; 6:3-10)
4. What are Paul's chief teachings on prayer in 1 Timothy 2?
5. List several qualifications for the pastor (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9).
6. Summarize the advice given to different age groups in 1 Timothy 5.
7. Why did Paul write 2 Timothy? (See CSB, 1857, under "Reasons".)

8. Paul is in his last days in the Mamertine prison in Rome as he writes and awaits the Lord's reward for his faithful ministry. (2 Timothy 1:15-18 and 4:6-18)
9. Note the tender encouragement given Timothy. (2 Timothy 1:3-7)
10. Note Paul's "trustworthy saying." (2 Timothy 2:11-13)
11. In general, note the warnings against false teachers, divisive persons, and godless errorists in the letters to Timothy.
12. Check 2 Timothy 3:14-17 regarding the power, authority, and purposes of Holy Scripture.

Titus

1. Peruse the notes in CSB, 1864 under "Recipient"; also, the notes on p. 1865.
2. Titus is a shorter version of the epistles to Timothy. List three common points.

Hebrews

1. Carefully study the CSB, 1873-75, noting also 11 as the "heroes of the faith" chapter.
2. Seven Old Testament quotes are given in 1 to show Jesus' superiority over angels, thus establishing two patterns for the rest of the epistle: a) heavy Old Testament usage, and b) Jesus as "better" than former institutions or leaders. Examples include Moses, the Aaronic priesthood, tabernacle, covenant, and sacrifices.
3. Several urgent warnings against apostasy are given. (See 3:7-11; 6:4-6; and, 10:26-31.) Why is this such a serious issue?
4. What is God's "rest"? How do the "rest" at creation and in David and Joshua's times relate to this rest? (4:1-11)
5. Characterize Jesus' high priesthood. (4:14-5:10)
6. How is Melchizedek's uniqueness signaled by the meanings of his name and title, and by his relation to Abraham? (7:1-10) How does Jesus compare with Melchizedek? (7:11-28)
7. Briefly summarize Christ's superior new covenant, tabernacle, and sacrifice (described in Hebrews 8-10).
8. Hebrews 11 defines faith. What is it? What quality did all the "heroes" listed here have? Which heroic figure(s) most inspire(s) you? Why?
9. What city did Abraham look for that is not "here"? (11:10;13:14)
10. What is the benefit of God's discipline? (12:4-13) How do the examples and reward of the saints and of the Savior motivate our discipline? (12:1-3)

The General Epistles

Read CSB, 1895. The seven brief catholic letters are ascribed to the apostles Peter and John and to the brothers of the Lord, James and Jude.

James

1. Read CSB, 1896-97 paying special attention to the sections on author, recipients, and distinctive characteristics.
2. James' epistle is one of practical advice for the Christian life. Observe what he says about these primary subjects:
 - a. Temptation (1:2-8, 12-18)
 - b. Rich and poor (1:9-11; 2:1-7; and 5:1-6)
 - c. Faith and works (2:14-26)
 - d. Use and abuse of the tongue (3:1-12; 4:11-12; and, 5:12)
 - e. Patience and prayer (5:7-11, 13-18)
3. Some of James' most memorable sayings are:
 - a. 1:27—about what pure religion is;
 - b. 2:8—the royal law, "Love your neighbor as yourself."
 - c. 2:17, 26—"Faith without works is dead."

- d. 4:15—“. . . say, “If it is the Lord’s will. . . .” (*Deo volente*)
- 4. Note how James uses these Old Testament saints as examples:
 - a. Abraham and Rahab (righteousness by works, 2:23-26)
 - b. Job (perseverance, 5:11)
 - c. Elijah (the power of prayer, 5:17-18)

Jude

1. Identify Jude. (CSB, 1937 under “Author”)
2. Jude’s message is summarized in 3-4; he warns against godless men and projects their doom (3-16).
3. The references to Michael and Enoch (9; 14-15) are based on non-canonical sources, yet have valued illustrative power.
4. The doxology (24-25) shows Jude’s pastoral concern and his personal piety.

I and II Peter

1. Read and mark the sections in CSB, 1903-04 on “God’s grace in 1 Peter” and on “Author and Date.”
2. Observe how Peter uplifts the reader as he refers to “a living hope through the resurrection” (1 Peter 1:3) of Jesus, “the living Stone” (2:4), joined to “you also, like living stones.” (2:5)
3. Reflect on 1 Peter 2:4-10, where Jesus is depicted as “a chosen and precious cornerstone” and the faithful as a “chosen people, a royal priesthood.”
4. The letter encourages Christians toward holy living (1:13ff.) in the various stations of life as they endure persecution and “participate in the sufferings of Christ.” (4:12-19)
5. 1 Peter 5:13 seems to refer to Rome (Babylon) and reflects Mark’s presence with Peter there.
6. Read with care CSB, 1916 on the similarities in 2 Peter 2 and Jude 4-18; also, the section on “Purpose.” 2 Peter deals with false teachers and evildoers inside the church (while the focus of 1 Peter had been on suffering endured from those outside the church).
7. 2 Peter is probably written between 65-68 A.D., shortly before Peter’s martyrdom in Rome under Nero. 2 Peter 3:15-16 shows an early awareness of Paul’s letters.
8. Some unique contributions of 2 Peter include Peter’s references to:
 - a. the inspiration of Holy Scripture; (2 Peter 1:19-21)
 - b. being eyewitness to the transfiguration; (2 Peter 1:16-18)
 - c. the Day of the Lord, and how to live as we await His sudden and decisive return. (2 Peter 3)

I John

1. Note well the material in CSB, 1924-26, especially the section titled “Author.” The description of *gnosticism* not only gives valuable background for reading 1 John (and other New Testament writings), but also describes threads evident in several present-day world religions and cults!
2. John refers to the false teachers as antichrists, liars, deceivers, and false prophets. He counters the chief errors which they taught, namely that:
 - a. the incarnate Jesus was not the Christ;
 - b. morality is a matter of indifference (since matter, including the human body is considered evil); and
 - c. knowledge for salvation is for the select few (spiritual snobbery).
3. John declares that sin is serious and real, and that Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice (1:8-2:2). True faith requires that our walk match our talk (2:3-6).

4. Love is the key word for John. See 2:9-11 and 3:11-18 regarding the need to love the brother. The motive for such loving is that God is love! (4:7-21)
5. 1 John 5 declares convincingly that Jesus is the Christ. (So do 2:22; 4:2-3, 15.) As you read, include the CSB footnote on 5:6, which counters the heresy of the gnostic Cerinthus.

II and III John

1. Who are "the chosen lady and her children?" (II John 1)
2. What does love include? (II John 5-6)
3. What is the gnostic heresy here described (II John 7-11)? How should one deal with it?
4. Gaius and Diotrephes have different approaches toward showing hospitality to missionaries. Who is commended, and who is rebuked? (III John) Why?

Revelation

1. Pay careful attention to these topics in CSB, 1942-45: date, occasion, purpose, literary form, and distinctive feature: symbolism of numbers.
2. The book has seven beatitudes. See the CSB note under 1:3 which gives their location. These blessings are for those who persevere in the faith despite trials.
3. The seven churches of Asia, named in 1:11 and addressed in 2-3, receive comfort and guidance; they represent all the suffering saints of Asia (and by extension, the redeemed of all ages). See the map in CSB, 1948.
4. Chapter 4 contains John's awesome vision of the Creator on His heavenly throne, while 5 reveals the Redeemer, Who alone is worthy to "unseal" mankind's future. He is called "the Lamb," the usual term for Jesus in the Apocalypse.
5. The seven letters, seals, trumpets, signs, bowls, sights, and beatitudes build to a climactic triumph for the Lamb and His followers over the "unholy three" of Satan, the Beast, and the False Prophet (introduced in 12-13, vanquished in 17-20). The series of sevens are cyclical in nature, each referring to the time between Jesus' first and second comings.

6. The anguished question, "How long?" posed by the persecuted saints and answered by God's call for patience (6:6-11), surfaces in various forms in Revelation. Its answer finally comes "after the 1,000 years are ended," when He returns to judge the wicked and reward the righteous (20-22). It echoes the apostolic word of Acts 14:22, "We must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God."
7. The symbolic 144,000 (all the redeemed) are depicted as both sealed (7) and as saved (14).
8. The turning point of the book (12-14) depicts the desperate efforts of the "triad" of Satanic forces and institutions and the glorious triumph of the saints. This scenario is replayed with extended drama in 17-20 where Babylon's forces fall and are judged while the Lamb (the Rider on the white horse) triumphs with His faithful followers.
9. The overthrow of the evil foe is depicted variously in symbolic language as:
 - a) at Armageddon (16:16);
 - b) at "Babylon" (Rome, 16:19-19:3);
 - c) between heaven and earth (19:11-21); and
 - d) "at the city He loves" (20:7-10).

God's final triumph is decisive and victory for the faithful is both assured and universal; it can't be limited to one spot on the map!
10. The symbolic 1,000 years of 20 (the time between Jesus' ministry and His return in glory) are suddenly ended as the wicked are judged and separated from the faithful before "the great white throne."
11. The joys and the glories of the New Jerusalem (heaven) are portrayed in brilliant imagery for the enjoyment of the faithful, while the wicked are consigned to "the lake of fire," which is "the second death." (21-22)
12. The book concludes on the seven-fold hopeful prayer and focus that Jesus' coming be soon.