



# The Good News

The symbol for *The Good News* is a book, representing the format in which we read the “good news” of Jesus Christ today.

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## The Story Continues

*Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” John 6:68-69*

In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, God’s promise is fulfilled in a new and marvelous way. Through Jesus’ life, many come to know the power of God’s presence. Through Jesus’ death, many come to experience the power of God’s love. In Jesus’ resurrection, many come to discover the power of God’s transformation and share in Peter and the disciples’ confession of faith: in Jesus Christ there is eternal life.

Initially, this good news of Jesus Christ is shared by eyewitnesses. They proclaim what they have seen and heard: Jesus is alive! They remember the stories Jesus told, the people Jesus healed, and the lives Jesus changed. They testify to the power of God transforming hate to love, doubt to faith, anxiety to courage, fear to hope.

Eventually, the good news of Jesus Christ spreads throughout the world. Letters are sent to proclaim the message and to respond to questions of faith. Gospels are written to recall Jesus Christ, to tell his story to others, and to encourage belief in him. Since the letters and Gospels are written in Greek, the common language of the Roman Empire, the events in Palestine can be shared and read by everyone. The dispersion of the Jews throughout the ancient world helps the good news to spread in those communities. Within a few decades the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are written, circulated, and collected, although only much later will they be brought together to form the New Testament.

These fifteen discoveries examine some of the writings that joyfully reveal the good news of Jesus Christ.

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## Preparing for the Search

As you begin your study of *The Good News* here are some words that will be helpful to know.

**Eunuch** is the term usually used for a male who has been castrated (either by design or by accident) and therefore is unable to procreate. Eunuchs frequently served as harem guards. Some, like the man from Ethiopia whom Philip met on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, rose to occupy prominent roles in oriental courts. Eunuchs were forbidden by law to enter “the assembly of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 23:1)

**Galilee**, the area where most of Jesus’ ministry took place, is located in the northern part of Palestine. The Sea of Galilee and the cities of Nazareth, Capernaum and Bethsaida were located in this region. Palestine, in the time of Jesus, was divided into three territories: Galilee in the north, Samaria in the middle, and Judea in the south.

**Gospel** means “good news.” The Greek word for “good news” — *evangelion* — became the Latin word *evangelium*, which was then translated into Old English as “godspel” (good story) and finally became “gospel.” The word also refers to any one of the first four books of the New Testament that share the good news of Jesus Christ — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

**Judea** (joo-dee’uh) is the Greco-Latin form of Judah. At times it is used to refer to most of Palestine. In the New Testament, however, the term usually indicates the small area around the city of Jerusalem. Herod the Great ruled over this region until approximately 4 BCE. Bethlehem, the location of Jesus’ birth, is in Judea. Approximately ten years later Judea was placed under the rule of a Roman procurator.

**Synagogue** comes from a Greek word that can mean either a gathering of things or an assembly of people. In the New Testament it is a meeting place where Jews gather to study, pray, and worship. As he traveled about all of Galilee, Jesus worshipped and taught in synagogues.

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## **The Search Begins**

These passages represent a variety of the types of writing found in the New Testament. Some of the passages will be read again in later discoveries. As you read them this time, look for the words “good news” or “gospel.” Make notes that help you tell where, when, why, how, or by whom the good news was being told. Consider these questions in your reading:

- ◆ *How are the words “good news” or “gospel” used in the passage?*
- ◆ *What is the good news that is being shared?*
- ◆ *In what ways do individuals respond to the good news?*

**Matthew 4:17-25**, Jesus Preaches, Teaches, and Heals

**Luke 9:1-6**, The Twelve Preach the Gospel

**Acts 8:26-39**, Philip and the Ethiopian

**Romans 1:1-7**, Good News

Romans 15:14-21, Paul Writes Boldly

1 Corinthians 15:1-8, The Gospel

Ephesians 6:10-20, God's Armor

2 Timothy 1:3-14, Words of Encouragement

1 Peter 1:3-25, Living Hope

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## The Search Continues

◆ *In these readings I have questions about...*

◆ *In these readings I discovered...*

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## Focusing the Search

Like the Old Testament, the New Testament also contains stories, sayings, prayers, and hymns that were told, remembered, and retold for years before they were written down. However, much of the New Testament began as writings. The letters of Paul are examples of these writings. When the books of the New Testament were put into writing they were written in Greek, which was the common language of many people in the eastern Mediterranean area.

Use the following chart, “The New Testament in Translation,” to examine the Greek text and English translation of John 20:30-31.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT IN TRANSLATION

#### John 20:30-31

Today we read the Bible in translations from the original languages. The language of the New Testament is Greek, which is read from left to right, just like English. Now you be the translator. The English translation below the Greek words is from an “interlinear” translation of the Bible, meaning the English translation of the words is written directly under the Greek words. Use this translation to write your own translation on the next page.

30 Πολλὰ μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλα σημεῖα  
 Many -\* therefore and other signs  
 ἐποίησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐνώπιον τῶν μαθητῶν,  
 did - Jesus before the disciples,  
 ἃ οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ  
 which is(are) not having been written in - roll  
 τούτῳ· 31 ταῦτα δὲ γέγραπται ἵνα  
 this; but these\* has(ve) been written that  
 πιστεύητε ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ  
 ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the  
 υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύοντες ζωὴν  
 Son - of God, and that believing life  
 ἔχητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.  
 ye may have in the name of him.

Second, write down how this passage has been translated in the Bible which you are reading.

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Note any major differences between your translation and the one in your Bible.

## Putting it Together

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament proclaim the good news about Jesus of Nazareth. Included are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, four books that are called Gospels; Acts, a book about the growth of the early church; twenty one letters; and an apocalypse, the Revelation to John.

Locate in the front of your Bible the page that lists the names of the New Testament books and their abbreviations. Refer to the chart on page 146. Write these abbreviations beside the names of the books. Paying attention to the abbreviations will help in reading the notes and cross-references in your Bible. Next to each abbreviation are the numbers of the discoveries in this course that focus on that book.

## THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Literature	Book	Abbreviation	Discovery
Gospels	Matthew	_____	16,17,18,19,20,21,22,29
	Mark	_____	18,19,20,21,22,29
	Luke	_____	16,17,18,19,20,21,22
	John	_____	16,17,18,19,20,21,22
History	Acts	_____	16,23,24,25,26
Letters	Romans	_____	16,26,28,29
	1 Corinthians	_____	16,26,27,29
	2 Corinthians	_____	26,27
	Galatians	_____	26,28
	Ephesians	_____	16,27,28
	Philippians	_____	30
	Colossians	_____	26,28
	1 Thessalonians	_____	27,29
	2 Thessalonians	_____	
	1 Timothy	_____	
	2 Timothy	_____	16,28
	Titus	_____	
	Philemon	_____	
	Hebrews	_____	
	James	_____	28
	1 Peter	_____	16,27,28
2 Peter	_____		
1 John	_____	28	
2 John	_____		

3 John \_\_\_\_\_

Jude \_\_\_\_\_

Apocalypse The Revelation  
to John \_\_\_\_\_

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## Reflection

1. Reflect upon the good news of Jesus Christ. What makes it good news to you and to others? In what ways can you witness to the good news of Jesus Christ with others?

2. As you saw in the previous activity on translation, John states his purpose for writing the good news of Jesus Christ in 20:30-31: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.”

“Life” is an important word for John throughout his gospel. In fact, the author of the gospel uses the word “life” forty-seven times in telling the good news of Jesus. What does it mean to you to have life in the name of Jesus?