

Study guide to *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6th edition (Fortress Press, 2010)

By Robert A. Spivey, D. Moody Smith, and C. Clifton Black

This study guide to *Anatomy of the New Testament* is designed to help you engage with the New Testament in conjunction with this textbook.

Chapter 1: The World of the New Testament

Chapter 1 introduces the social and political worlds in which Jesus lived and out of which Christianity began to emerge. The Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds combined and were in conflict as the story of the Jewish people unfolds in this chapter. This chapter traces the important events and groups in Jewish history, including Jewish dynasties as well as life under Roman control, and concludes with the rapid spread of the early Christian communities in concert with the expansion of Alexander the Great's empire.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand how the nation of Israel was able to flourish only when larger empires were weakened or distracted.
2. Understand how the major sects of Jesus' time responded to the challenge of Greco-Roman civilization.
3. Understand how the different forms of the Messianic hope were shaped by the social situations of different groups of Jews.
4. Understand the importance of Alexander the Great in forming the world in which Christianity emerged.
5. Understand the role of the Greek language in shaping the New Testament.
6. Understand how the existence of the Roman Empire allowed the growth of Christianity.
7. Understand how the varieties of religion within the Roman Empire shaped Christianity.

Web Destinations

- [Early Christian Writings](#)
This site provides many writings of early Christians and non-Christian contemporaries in translation and original languages.
- [The New Testament Gateway](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages, but some links are not available.
- [The Perseus Digital Library](#)
This site provides almost all important Greek and Latin authors in translation and original languages.
- [The Talmud](#)
This is the translation of the Babylonian Talmud by Michael L. Rodkinson.
- [The Westar Institute](#)
The Westar Institute sponsors the Jesus Seminar, a relatively radical but productive group of New Testament scholars.

Chapter 2 Objectives

Chapter 2 discusses first the nature of the four Gospels, their literary genre as related to history and biography, and the relations among the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John. Then the chapter deals specifically with Mark, its origin within a persecuted community around 70 A.D., its structure, divided between Jesus' miraculous work in chh. 1-8, and his work of redemption through suffering in chh. 8-16. Themes include Jesus' conflict with demons, Pharisees, and his own disciples, and Jesus' Messiahship of suffering, which implies that his disciples will be redeemed by emulating his suffering.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the nature of the genre of the four Gospels and their relation to each other.
2. Understand how the probable origin of the Gospel of Mark within the persecuted church at Rome relates to the principal theme of redemption through suffering.
3. Understand how ch. 1:1-15 sets up the conflict between God and Jesus, on the one hand, and Satan, his demons, the Pharisees, and Jesus' own disciples, on the other hand.
4. Understand how chh. 1:16-8:21 show Jesus' victory over the demons and the Pharisees.
5. Understand how chh. 8:22-15:47 show how Jesus demonstrates to his disciples how God works through suffering.
6. Understand how the abrupt ending in ch. 16:1-8 probably was intentional, to recognize that God's, Jesus', and their followers' enemies could still cause terrible suffering, but to proclaim that Jesus had decisively defeated those enemies, and his followers would experience that victory for themselves by believing in it and embracing suffering.

Web Destinations

- [from jesus to christ: the story of the storytellers: the gospel of mark](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [The Gospel of Mark-ReligionFacts](#)
This site has links to works by good scholars.
- [A Synoptic Gospels Primer](#)
This has a number of sophisticated discussions of the relations among the Synoptic Gospels
- [What is a Gospel? Gospels and 'Good News' as a New Literary Genre](#)
Besides an explanation of the genre, there is an interview with Dennis R. MacDonald about Homer and Mark.

Chapter 3 Objectives

Chapter 3 characterizes Matthew's Gospel in terms of three major emphases: radical obedience to the intent of the Jewish law as a higher righteousness, Jesus, the Messiah sent by God to Israel, as the source of that obedience, and the realization of that obedience in the community which Jesus founded. The chapter relates Matthew's themes to the Sitz im Leben of Jewish Christians separating from Judaism, reorganized by the Pharisees following the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the origin of the Gospel of Matthew.
2. Describe what are the five main sections of the body of the Gospel.

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

3. Understand obedience and righteousness as understood by Matthew.
4. Understand Jesus' Messiahship and the kingdom of heaven as understood by Matthew.
5. Understand how discipleship, the church, and judgment are related in Matthew.
6. Understand the attitude of Matthew toward Judaism in term of the Gospel's Sitz im Leben.

Web Destinations

- [from jesus to christ: the story of the storytellers: the gospel of matthew](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [Gospel of Matthew](#)
This site has links to many scholarly articles.
- [New Testament Gateway: The Gospel of Matthew](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages, but some links are not available.
- [Notes on the Gospel of Matthew](#)
Prof. James Tabor's website covers many New Testament topics.

Chapter 4 Objectives

Although the author and place of writing of Luke's Gospel are unknown, it almost certainly was written between 70 and 100 A.D. The author states that he wishes to make an accurate account of the story of Jesus, which has already been told by eyewitnesses and servants of the word, thus alluding to the three Sitze im Leben of gospels, the life of Jesus, the life of the church as the tradition was transmitted, and the life of the evangelist's community. Luke tells how Jesus' career began in the heart of Judaism but immediately promised salvation to all people. Thus the Gospel, like the sequel of Acts, is a journey from the center to spread Jesus' witness to the whole world. What Jesus witnesses to is, from one point of view, God's forgiving love for every person.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the origin of the Gospel of Luke.
2. Understand how Luke relates to ancient biography and history.
3. Understand how Luke places Jesus firmly in Judaism but argues his significance for the whole world.
4. Understand Luke's concept of witness in the life of Jesus, in the careers of the disciples, and in the evangelist's own task.
5. Understand how the theme of the journey informs both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.
6. Understand the importance of forgiveness for Luke

Web Destinations

- [from jesus to christ: the story of the storytellers: the gospel of luke](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [New Testament Gateway: Luke and Acts](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

documents in translation and original languages and scholarly books and articles, but some links are not available.

- [Notes on the Gospel of Luke](#)
Prof. James Tabor's website covers many New Testament topics. This site includes Luke color-coded to show the three main sources and Q according to Luke.
- [Reference.com/Encyclopedia/Gospel of Luke](#)
This has a fair summary of the origin of the Gospel with links to other good articles and even a text-critical commentary.

Chapter 5 Objectives

Chapter 5 discusses the origin of the Gospel of John after the expulsion of Christians from the synagogue, its identification of Jesus with God throughout, its division between the revelation of Jesus to the world and to his disciples, its understanding of the incarnation as judgment, resulting in strife between church and world, its view of the church as inspired by the continuing love of Jesus, and its identification of Jesus' death, resurrection, and glorification.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the background of the Gospel of John in relation to the expulsion of Christians from Judaism.
2. Understand how, starting with its prologue, the Gospel more strongly advocates the divinity of Jesus than do the Synoptics.
3. Understand how John is divided between chaps. 2-12, in which Jesus reveals his glory to the world and gathers disciples, and chaps. 13-21, in which Jesus reveals his glory to his disciples.
4. Understand how John understands Jesus' career as judgment, that is, how people react to Jesus' determines their eternal destiny.
5. Understand how John depicts the church as embodying the love between God and Jesus and between Jesus and his followers and as inspired by the Paraclete, the continuing presence of Jesus following his death.

Web Destinations

- [The Fourth Gospel and John's Epistles](#)
This site has links to other websites and to scholarly writings on the Johannine literature.
- [from jesus to christ: the story of the storytellers: the gospel of john](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [Gospel of John: Information from Answers.com](#)
This site has an intelligent article on the Gospel with links to other articles.
- [New Testament Gateway: The Gospel of John](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages and scholarly books and articles, but some links are not available.

Chapter 6 Objectives

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

Chapter 6 deals with the question of the historical Jesus. Outside the four Gospels there is little information about Jesus. Form criticism attempts to detect the history of Jesus within the Gospels through five criteria: discerning the core of Gospel material, appropriateness or intelligibility, dissimilarity, multiple attestation, and coherence. The three main strands of the Jesus tradition are Jesus' miracles, his teaching, and his death. The author ends with the portrait of a man who claimed to announce God's direct rule over the world. Following his death, his followers claimed that God had raised Jesus from the dead and given him rule over the world.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the various sources for the history of Jesus: the four Gospels, the rest of the New Testament, Christian writings outside the New Testament, and non-Christian writings.
2. Understand the five criteria of form criticism: discerning the core of Jesus traditions, appropriateness or intelligibility, dissimilarity, multiple attestation, and coherence.
3. Understand the three main strands of the Jesus tradition: miracles, teaching, and his death.
4. Understand the Gospel portrait of Jesus' as claiming authority beyond any other human being, based in his claim that God's direct rule was beginning in his work.

Understand how the Christian claim that God had raised Jesus from the dead and given him rule over the universe pervades the New Testament.

Web Destinations

- [frontline: from jesus to christ: the first christians](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [Historical Jesus Theories](#)
Part of the very useful Early Christian Writings website, this has fair summaries of various theories about the historical Jesus.
- [New Testament Gateway: Historical Jesus](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages, but some links are not available.
- [Quests of the Historical Jesus](#)
This is a critique of the Jesus Seminar by Birger Pearson, an authority on Gnosticism.
- [William Lane Craig Articles: Historical Jesus](#)
This site consists of articles by a very conservative scholar.

Chapter 7 Objectives

Chapter 7 gives the origin of the Acts of the Apostles at the end of the first century by the author of the Gospel of Luke. Although it is difficult to be sure, Acts appears to include source material as well as Luke's own composition. Acts has important omissions, due to Luke's ignorance of some topics and his disinterest in others, such as how Christianity reached Antioch and Rome, and the career of the twelve apostles, apart from Peter. Acts is divided between the beginning of the church, its spread within Israel, and the career of Paul among the Gentiles.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand how Luke's theological interests shaped his account of the church's origins, e.g., the stories of the ascension, Judas, and Pentecost.

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

2. Understand how the career of Stephen relates to that of Paul.
3. Understand the main questions about the beginning of Gentile Christianity.
4. Understand the discrepancies between the portrait of Paul in Acts and in his own letters.
5. Understand Luke's tendency to minimize controversy and tragedy within the story of the growth of Christianity.

Web Destinations

- [Acts of the Apostles](#)
This site provides many writings of early Christians and non-Christian contemporaries in translation and original languages, as well as scholarly articles and books.
- [Acts of the Apostles: Definition and Much More From Answers.com](#)
This site has an intelligent article on Acts with links to other articles.
- [Christian Origins and the New Testament](#)
Prof. James Tabor's website covers many New Testament topics.
- [from jesus to christ - the first christians](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [New Testament Gateway: Luke and Acts](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages, but some links are not available.

Chapter 8 Objectives

Chapter 8 has a general discussion about how Paul's conversion from persecutor to apostle of Christianity actually caused him radically to reinterpret Judaism. Then it interprets six Pauline epistles. 1 and 2 Thessalonians deal with the return of Jesus, Galatians with the relation of Christians to the Jewish law, 2 Corinthians with Paul's apostolic vocation, Philemon with a runaway slave, and Philippians with Paul's career in retrospect.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand how Paul's experience of the risen Jesus transformed his understanding of Judaism.
2. Understand how concern about the return of Jesus shaped 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
3. Understand why Paul considered adherence to the Jewish law by the Galatians a denial of the value of Jesus' death.
4. Understand how Paul's apostleship was attacked and how he responded in 2 Corinthians.
5. Understand how Paul looked back on his career in Philippians.
6. Understand Paul's attitude toward slavery as expressed in Philemon.

Web Destinations

- [Beliefnet joins Peter Jennings and ABCNews.com for a special report about Jesus and Paul](#)
This site has links to articles by excellent scholars.
- [Catholic Encyclopedia: St. Paul](#)
Although published in 1917, it has a good discussion of Pauline chronology.

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

- [Christian Origins and the New Testament](#)
Prof. James Tabor's website covers many New Testament topics.
- [from jesus to christ - the first christians](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [New Testament Gateway: Paul the Apostle](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages and scholarly writings, but some links are not available.

Chapter 9 Objectives

Chapter 9 introduces 1 Corinthians. This letter gives us a more detailed view of one of the earliest churches than any other source. Paul deals with a variety of topics: factionalism, sexuality, lawsuits between Christians, idolatry, worship, spiritual gifts, his own apostolate, and the resurrection. All these problems stem from an individualism which undermines the community. The antidote is emulation of God's love.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand how 1 Corinthians tells us about the social situation of Pauline Christianity.
2. Understand how the Corinthians mistook Paul's preaching of freedom as license to ignore the needs of others.
3. Understand how Paul's view of sexual matters, while culturally determined, shows good judgment.
4. Understand how Paul's view of resurrection fits into his social consciousness.
5. Understand how Paul's conduct of his own mission coheres with the values he advocated to the Corinthians.

Web Destinations

- [Catholic Encyclopedia: Epistles to the Corinthians](#)
Although published in 1917, it has good discussions of Pauline issues.
- [Christian Origins and the New Testament](#)
Prof. James Tabor's website covers many New Testament topics.
- [1 Corinthians](#)
This site provides many writings of early Christians and non-Christian contemporaries in translation and original languages, as well as scholarly articles and books.
- [from jesus to christ - the first christians](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [New Testament Gateway: Paul the Apostle](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages and scholarly writings, but some links are not available.

Chapter 10 Objectives

Chapter 10 introduces Paul's letter to the Romans, the most systematic statement of his teaching, motivated by his desire for the Roman church to support his mission to the West. Paul starts by maintaining that the

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

righteousness of God is available to people through faith in Christ. Then Paul explores how humanity is ensnared in sin. A fuller treatment of how God offers his righteousness through faith follows. Then comes Paul's understanding of the new life effected by God's Spirit. Afterward, Paul discusses the place of the Jews within the economy of salvation. Finally, Paul teaches ethics shaped by the theology of the letter.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand how Paul teaches that righteousness based on obedience to the Jewish law is unattainable, so that God offers righteousness through faith in Christ.
2. Understand how Paul compares sin among Gentiles with sin among Jews, concluding that neither can save themselves from God's wrath.
3. Understand how Paul understands God's righteousness as a gift, effected through the death of Christ, and appropriated through faith in Christ.
4. Understand how, although Paul believed that most Jews had rejected God's righteousness in Christ, God had not rejected the Jews.
5. Understand how Paul believed that Christ had freed Christians from God's law but that such freedom allowed Christians to fulfill God's law.
6. Understand how the letter to the Romans fit into Paul's plans for a mission to the western Mediterranean.

Web Destinations

- [Catholic Encyclopedia: Epistle to the Romans](#)
Although published in 1917, it has good discussions of Pauline issues.
- [Christian Origins and the New Testament](#)
Prof. James Tabor's website covers many New Testament topics.
- [from jesus to christ - the first christians](#)
The PBS series website has contributions from good scholars although the TV series was made in 1997.
- [New Testament Gateway: Paul the Apostle](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages and scholarly writings, but some links are not available
- [Romans](#)
This site provides many writings of early Christians and non-Christian contemporaries in translation and original languages, as well as scholarly articles and books.

Chapter 11 Objectives

Chapter 11 discusses the Deutero-Pauline letters, falsely ascribed to Paul. First the chapter explains the ancient custom of falsely attributing writings to great leaders, then interprets the various letters. Colossians was written against a teaching that Christ was only one of many spiritual powers. Ephesians attempts to place the church on a secure foundation. The Pastorals, 1, 2 Timothy, and Titus, fight heresy by setting up an ordained clergy.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the ancient custom of falsely attributing writings to great leaders.
2. Understand how Colossians advocates the supremacy of Christ in relation to other spiritual powers.

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

3. Understand how Ephesians tries to build up the church as the new humanity, transcending the division between Jew and Gentile.
4. Understand how the Pastorals combat heresy by establishing an organized hierarchy.
5. Understand how the second-century church based its authority in an ordained clergy, creeds which clearly defined what teachings would be affirmed or denied, and an accepted body of writings.
6. Understand how the church chose the New Testament scriptures through the criteria of inspiration, apostolicity, catholicity, and the rule of faith.

Web Destinations

- [bible.org: New Testament: Introductions and Outlines](http://bible.org)
The commentaries on this site are conservative, but they show awareness of critical issues.
- [Catholic Encyclopedia](http://catholicencyclopedia.org)
Although published in 1917, it has good discussions of Pauline issues.
- [The New Testament](http://www.newtestament.org)
This site provides many writings of early Christians and non-Christian contemporaries in translation and original languages, as well as scholarly articles and books.
- [New Testament Gateway: Paul the Apostle](http://newtestamentgateway.org)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages and scholarly writings, but some links are not available.

Chapter 12 Objectives

Chapter 12 deals with five of the seven Catholic Epistles, so called because they are not addressed to particular churches. James sets forth ethical instruction. 1 Peter relates persecution of Christians to the passion of Christ. 1 and 2 John affirm the Incarnation and interpret it in terms of God's love, which Christians should copy. 3 John concerns hospitality toward travelling leaders.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand how James' emphasis on works may be only a different emphasis rather than a real contradiction of Paul's emphasis on faith.
2. Understand how 1 Peter applies the memory of Jesus' passion to the church's experience of persecution.
3. Understand how 1 and 2 John transform the apocalyptic idea of God's opponent to the ecclesiastical idea of heresy, especially to the denial of the Incarnation.
4. Understand how 3 John illuminates the status of itinerant leaders in the church at the beginning of the second century.
5. Understand how the Catholic Epistles illustrate the situation of the post-Apostolic church, persecuted from outside, divided by doctrinal, ethical, and political issues from inside, attempting to form an enduring community with the delay of Jesus' return.

Web Destinations

- [bible.org: New Testament: Introductions and Outlines](http://bible.org)
The commentaries on this site are conservative, but they show awareness of critical issues.
- [Catholic Encyclopedia](http://catholicencyclopedia.org)
Although published in 1917, it has good discussions of Pauline issues.

Study Guide for *Anatomy of the New Testament*, 6e by Spivey, Smith, and Black

- [The New Testament](#)
This site provides many writings of early Christians and non-Christian contemporaries in translation and original languages, as well as scholarly articles and books.
- [New Testament Gateway](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages and scholarly writings, but some links are not available.

Chapter 13 Objectives

Chapter 13 discusses four books whose place in the New Testament was controversial in the early church, and which all deal with eschatology. Hebrews combines teaching about Jesus as the divine heavenly High Priest with exhortations to Christians to persist in the journey to the eternal Sabbath. Jude mostly concerns heretical teaching probably with immoral consequences. 2 Peter probably elaborates on Jude in order to refute the idea that Jesus would not return, among other heresies. Revelation interprets the history of the first-century church apocalyptically to assert Christ's ultimate triumph over evil.

After reading this chapter you should be able to:

1. Understand the important place of eschatology and apocalyptic in the origin of Christianity, and especially in dealing with the delay of the parousia.
2. Understand how Hebrews uses teaching of Jesus as the divine heavenly High Priest to strengthen Christians for the journey to the eternal Sabbath.
3. Understand how Jude and 2 Peter fight disappointment over Jesus' delayed return and teachings which denied that it would happen.
4. Understand how Revelation responded to Roman persecution by casting the history of the church, and of the world, into an apocalyptic framework which looked to the final victory of Christ.
5. Understand how apocalyptic related to the social oppression and alienation of first Jews, and then Christians, under domination particularly by the Romans.

Web Destinations

- [bible.org: New Testament: Introductions and Outlines](#)
The commentaries on this site are conservative, but they show awareness of critical issues.
- [Catholic Encyclopedia](#)
Although published in 1917, it has good discussions of Pauline issues.
- [Christian Origins and the New Testament](#)
Prof. James Tabor's website covers many New Testament topics, including eschatology.
- [The New Testament](#)
This site provides many writings of early Christians and non-Christian contemporaries in translation and original languages, as well as scholarly articles and books.
- [New Testament Gateway](#)
Some of the materials on this site are very useful, especially Jewish, Christian, Greek, and Roman documents in translation and original languages and scholarly writings, but some links are not available.