

# NEW TESTAMENT



## GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

### Lesson 1: "That Ye Might Believe That Jesus Is the Christ"

- Isaiah and John the Baptist prophesy of the Savior's mission.
- The Apostle John testifies that Jesus Christ is "the true Light."

A study of this lesson will encourage us to strengthen our testimonies of Jesus Christ by studying the New Testament.

## Introduction

### Overview of the New Testament

The 27 books in the New Testament can easily be divided into four parts:

- The Gospels, which are a record and witness of Jesus Christ's life, mission, and teachings. They do not present a biography of Christ's life, but instead, they bear a strong testimony of Him and his mission. Even though Matthew, Mark, and Luke are classified as the "synoptic gospels" (meaning "see-alike"), they are each unique in their testimony of the life of Christ, his teachings, his deeds, and the emphasis each gospel places on certain events. The Gospel of John, however, differs from the previous three in both its content and its presentation.
  - Matthew wrote to the unbelieving Jews, referring often to Old Testament prophecies to demonstrate to the Jews that Jesus the Christ was the promised Messiah.
  - Mark probably directed his writings to his missionary acquaintances, the Romans. He wrote in a simple style and highlighted the miracles of the Savior. It is generally accepted that the Apostle Peter greatly influenced Mark's writings.
  - Luke was strongly influenced by the Apostle Paul, his close associate and missionary companion. Luke was a more polished writer and seems to have directed his testimony to the educated, cultured Greeks.
- John emphasized doctrine because he was writing for the newly converted saints. In his writing, we see an emphasis on spiritual things that would increase the understanding of the new saints.
- The book of Acts, which is an account of the ministry of the Apostles after Jesus' death and Resurrection. This book focuses on Peter's work among the Jews and Paul's work among the Gentiles.
- The epistles (letters) of Paul and other Church leaders, written to instruct and edify the Saints of their time.
- The Lord's revelation to the Apostle John on the isle of Patmos.

Throughout this year, we are encouraged to strengthen our testimonies of Jesus Christ by studying the New Testament in detail both in and out of our Sunday class. In this lesson, our testimonies of Jesus Christ and our appreciation of the New Testament can be strengthened by studying the words of Isaiah and others who prophesied of the Savior's mission.

NEXT WEEK:  
Lesson 2 - "My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord"

## Isaiah and John the Baptist prophesy of the Savior's Mission.



Isaiah Writes of Christ's Birth

**Isaiah 61:1-3** prophetically described aspects of the Savior's mission including:

- "Preach good tidings unto the meek" (verse 1).
- "Bind up the brokenhearted" (verse 1).
- "Proclaim liberty to the captives" (verse 1).
- "Comfort all that mourn" (verse 2).

**Luke 3:4-9** (Joseph Smith Translation (JST) pgs. 805-6 appendix/LDS edition/King James Bible) -

John the Baptist prophesied of the Savior's mission just before Jesus began his mortal ministry. He prophesied that the Messiah would:

- "Take away the sins of the world" (verse 5).
- "Bring salvation unto the heathen nations" (verse 5).
- "Gather together those who are lost" (verse 5).
- "Make possible the preaching of the gospel unto the Gentiles" (verse 6).
- "Be a light unto all who sit in darkness" (verse 7).
- "Bring to pass the resurrection from the dead" (verse 7).
- "Administer justice unto all" (verse 9).
- "Convince all the ungodly of their ungodly deeds" (verse 9).



John Preaching in the Wilderness

**Luke 4:16-21** Jesus quoted this passage while teaching at a synagogue at the beginning of his ministry to declare that he was the Messiah.

Those who have studied the Savior know that Jesus fulfilled each of these prophecies. When you think about the things that Jesus has done for us, do you also think about what our lives be like if Jesus had not done these things for us?

## The Apostle John testifies that Jesus Christ is "the true Light."

**John 1:1-3** (pages 807-8 in the appendix of the LDS edition of the King James Bible) teaches us that:

- He "was in the beginning" with God the Father. Note: The Savior's mission began in the pre-mortal world, long before he was born in Bethlehem.
- He is God. When we speak of God, we usually refer to Heavenly Father. However, "*the personage known as Jehovah in Old Testament times ... is the Son, known as Jesus Christ, ... who is also a God. Jesus works under the direction of the Father. ... Many of the things that the scripture says were done by God were actually done by ... Jesus*" (Bible Dictionary, "God," 681).

- Through him the gospel was preached in the pre-mortal world (Joseph Smith Translation, John 1:1).
- He made all things (John 1:3).
- He is the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh (John 1:14; see also 1 Nephi 11:14-21). (Note: This doctrine will be discussed in lesson 2.)

He ... was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:8)

**John 1:6-8.** John the Baptist is the man mentioned in these verses. His mission was to bear witness of the light "that all men through him might believe" in the Savior.

Consider how can we, like John, "bear witness of that Light"?

In the following verses, John teaches of two attributes of the Savior...

- **John 1:4** - Here, the Apostle said "in [Jesus] was life".
- **John 1:9** - He testified that Jesus is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world".

Each of the following verses helps us consider how the Savior has given each of us light and life.

- **John 8:12** - His followers "shall not walk in darkness", they will have the "light of life"
- **1 Cor. 15:20-22** - "even so in Christ shall all be made alive"
- **Moroni 7:15-18** - "the light by which ye may judge, ...the light of Christ"

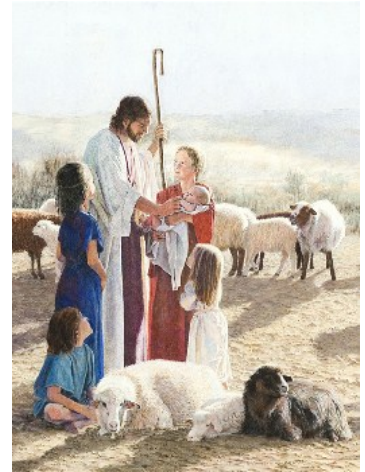
Elder Thomas S. Monson taught: *“We need not visit the Holy Land to feel him close to us. We need not walk by the shores of Galilee or among the Judean hills to walk where Jesus walked. In a very real sense, all can walk where Jesus walked when, with his words on our lips, his spirit in our hearts, and his teachings in our lives, we journey through mortality”* (Ensign, May 1974, 48).

- Moroni 7:41; D&C 88:6-14 - “to be raised unto life eternal” ... “the light of truth”
- Bible Dictionary, “Light of Christ,” 725 (3 paragraphs)

John 20:31 reveals John’s purpose in writing his testimony—that we might “believe that Jesus is the Christ”. Christ is a Greek word meaning “anointed”. When we have a testimony that Jesus is the Christ, we know that he is the Son of God and was anointed and foreordained to be our Savior. Take time to consider how studying the New Testament in Sunday School this year might help strengthen your testimony that Jesus is the Christ.

James 1:5-6; D&C 50:17-22; D&C 88:118 - These scriptures help us understand what can we do individually and as a class to be guided by the Spirit as we study the New Testament. We can pray in faith to understand what we study; teach by the Spirit and receive the teachings by the Spirit of truth; and “seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”

John 1:10-14 (JST) These words apply to us, even though we were not on the earth during the Savior’s mortal ministry.



## Conclusion

Your testimony of the Savior will increase as you seek the Spirit’s guidance in your study of the New Testament and as you participate in class discussions. Use the New Testament Class Member Study Guide as you study the scriptures in preparation for each class.

**THE CHALLENGE:** Obtain a notebook and title it The Gospel Doctrine Class - New Testament. Each Sunday spend 10-20 minutes recording your thoughts about the teachings and scriptures for the current lesson. At the end of the year you will have a greater appreciation for the New Testament and its teachings. You will be inspired to more fully implement the teachings of the scriptures and live a better life.

