

STUDY SHEET ON NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament was written in the Greek language

The first four books of the New Testament are called “the Gospels”.

The word Gospel means Good News.

The writers of the gospels are called the Evangelists (which means someone who proclaims Good news).

Matthew was a disciple of Jesus and a tax collector. Mark was probably Peter’s secretary. Luke was an associate of St. Paul’s, a doctor, and probably a Gentile.

John was one of Jesus’ disciples, sat next to Jesus at the Last Supper, and lived the longest of all the disciples.

The first three gospels are very similar. They are called the Synoptic gospels.

The Gospel of John has a lot of material the first three don’t have.

Animals are traditionally associated with the four Gospels—Matthew as a man, Mark as a lion, Luke as an ox, John as an eagle. (As we noted, the lions on pedestals at the Copiague/Lindenhurst border represent St. Mark, who is the patron saint of the Italian city of Venice. That area of Copiague/Lindenhurst used to be called “Venice”).

Matthew’s Gospel begins with a genealogy of Jesus. It traces him back to Abraham and emphasizes his connection with David. God had promised David that one of his descendants would always rule. That promise is kept in Christ, the King of the universe.

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, even though He was not a sinner. He underwent baptism to show that He wants to stand with us sinners and save us.

After His baptism, Jesus was tempted by the Devil. The temptations were similar to those that Adam and Eve had surrendered to. He withstood the temptations, showing that He has come to deliver us from the sin and guilt of Adam and Eve.

Many of Jesus’ early disciples were fishermen. Jesus called them by saying, “I will make you fishers of men”. He did a miracle in which he helped them bring a huge catch of fish onto their boat.

Jesus did miracles of healing. He cast out demons that had invaded people. He taught spiritual lessons in parables (stories that made a point about God and His kingdom).

He journeyed to Jerusalem to die. That was His mission.

He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He rode on an humble donkey, not a noble steed (like a conquering hero would).

Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with His disciples. During this “Last Supper”, Jesus instituted the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion. “This is my body,” He said over the bread. “This is the New Testament in my blood,” He said over the cup.

He struggled in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. He asked to be delivered from suffering and death, but was willing to fulfill God's will. **“Not my will, but your will be done,”** He said.

Jesus was betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples.

Peter drew a sword to defend Jesus, but Jesus told him to put it away. He said that God could send 12 legions of angels to rescue Him. But it was God's plan that He suffer and die—so God told the angels to “stand down”.

Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus to death because the religious authorities pressured him.

Jesus spoke seven “words” (sayings) from the cross:

Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing. (Luke 23:34)

The cross is all about forgiveness, so it was appropriate for Jesus to forgive the very ones who killed Him.

“Woman, behold your son...Behold your mother.” (John 19:26-27) He gives His mother over to the protection of St. John. This probably means that Joseph had died by this time. Christ cared for his human mother.

“Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43) Two thieves were crucified with Jesus. One of them asked Him, “Jesus, remember when when you come into your kingdom.” And Jesus responded by promising heaven to the thief. It's never too late to place your faith in Jesus!

“I am thirsty.” (John 19:28) A reminder that Jesus was truly human and physical. He was indeed God, but His human nature was real.

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34) Jesus took the punishment for our sins. And the ultimate punishment for sin is to be separated from God. This is what Jesus experienced on the cross. How can God abandon God? Something of a mystery. But we know it happened. This means Jesus paid the full price for our sin.

“It is finished!” (John 19: 30) This is sometimes heard as, “I'm done for! I'm finished!” But it really means: “My mission is finished. I have done what I came to do. The full price for human sin has been paid!”

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. (Luke 23:46) This verse from the Psalms was the bedtime prayer of Jewish children—kind of like, “Now I lay me

down to sleep.” As He falls into the Big Sleep of death, Jesus entrusts Himself to God...like a little kid at bedtime.

Lutherans believe that somehow, in some mysterious way, God died in Jesus.

“God is dead” was not originally said by atheist philosophers, but by a Lutheran Good Friday hymn. How God could die is a mystery. But He did.

After the resurrection, Jesus’ body passed through the graveclothes, the rock at the mouth of the tomb, and the locked doors behind which the disciples were hiding. Many of Christ’s disciples did not recognize him after the resurrection. There usually had to be a “trigger” to enable them to recognize him. For Mary Magdalene, the trigger was Jesus calling her name. For the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the trigger was Jesus breaking bread and giving it to them (something like Holy Communion). For the disciples on the boat, the trigger was bringing in a huge catch of fish.

The story of Emmaus resembles a classic urban legend/ghost story known as “the vanishing hitchhiker”. The Emmaus story is the original and real-life version of this legend.

Jesus is not a “ghost” because He invites the disciples to touch His risen body and see that it is a real, physical body. He also eats fish in front of them (and the fish stays in His stomach!)

St. Stephen was the first martyr. As he dies, he says two things that resemble things Jesus said on the cross:

Lord, do not hold this sin against them.

Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

His violent death by stoning is described as “falling asleep”.

Saul persecuted the church. On the road to Damascus, Jesus appeared to Him. He became a Christian and preached the Faith he once tried to destroy.

Christians argued about whether people had to keep the Jewish law to be Christian (such as eating only kosher food). Peter and Paul both taught that Christians did not have to keep the Jewish law in order to be saved by Jesus.

Paul wrote 13 letters, most of them to churches. He emphasized the message that salvation is a free gift that we do not earn.

He also taught that, in baptism, we are united with Jesus. He tells us that suffering makes us stronger. He also says that the cross of Jesus is at the heart of our faith.

Peter compares baptism to Noah’s ark, where people were saved through the water.

John in Revelation tells us that our worship is joined with the worship of heaven.

We know that Jesus will return someday, but we don’t know when. That means we always have to be ready for His return—like a pop quiz or a surprise inspection!

