

Written For Our Growth in the Knowledge of Christ: A Survey of the New Testament Series Introduction

by Dr. Layton Talbert

This series complements the Old Testament series entitled *Written for Our Admonition: A Survey of the Old Testament*. That title was drawn from one of the New Testament passages (1 Corinthians 10:11) that comments on the enduring value and function of the Old Testament for the New Testament believer (Jew or Gentile). The title of this year's curriculum is drawn from a New Testament book that emphasizes the value and function of the New Testament for the New Testament believer. One of the thematic threads that holds together Peter's second epistle is an emphasis on "the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:2, 3, 8; 2:20; 3:18). Woven into that thread is an implicit inclusion of the New Testament Scriptures (3:15-16) and their role in equipping New Testament believers to escape erroneous doctrine and conduct. The key is not a list of laws but the revelation of a Person. Christ is the center of gravity in the New Testament. All the doctrines, rules, and principles of New Testament faith and life revolve around the Son, and are meaningless, powerless and, indeed, tedious apart from Him and life in Him.

In 2006, we used this series as part of a two-year effort to survey the entire Bible in our adult Sunday school classes. We studied Part 1 during the months of February – May, took a break for the summer months, and then resumed the survey from September – December. In general, we attempted to maintain a lesson per week.

Any survey will naturally have its frustrations, especially for the teacher and student eager to delve more deeply into the books and linger over inviting themes and passages. The temptation to move more slowly is enticing. We forced ourselves to keep moving, because our primary goal in the series was to survey, spanning the whole of the New Testament relatively quickly, rather than attempt to do so comprehensively.

I trust you and your church might profit in much the same way we did from Dr. Talbert's work. He provides many helpful tips for teachers, and supplies much more information that will be possible to teach in a single lesson. In so doing, he buttresses the teacher with helpful exposure to and understanding of the key elements of each New Testament book. (You may want to be sure to check the lesson length before hitting the print button on the computer ☺).