

# The Structure and Books of the New Testament

The New Testament is composed of 27 books. They can be grouped as follows:

- the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- the Acts of the Apostles
- 21 Epistles, or Letters
- the Book of Revelation

These 27 books are called the New Testament because they proclaim in a variety of ways, but with a common voice, the new covenant, or testament, that God has established with all people in Jesus Christ. The four Gospels are the very heart of the New Testament, “because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Savior,” Jesus Christ. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #125) The four Gospels announce the Good News for all people, narrating the life, ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. The Gospel was first preached by the Apostles and others after the Ascension of Christ, and then it was written down by the Evangelists before the end of the first century. The Acts of the Apostles can be considered the sequel to Luke’s Gospel. It recounts the life of the early Church and the progress guided by the Holy Spirit of preaching the Gospel among Jews and Gentiles. The Epistles are letters of the Apostles and their earliest followers to particular Christian communities to assist them, and thereby us, in living an authentic Christian life. Finally, the Book of Revelation, a complex and misunderstood part of the New Testament, reflects on the early Church’s experience of persecution from the perspective of the future when God’s victory over sin and death will be complete.