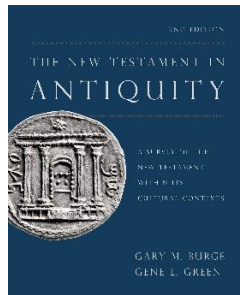


# Chapter Summaries and Highlights



## *Chapter 1-Studying the New Testament*

**Key Terms** Scripture, context, geography, history, culture, semantic range, bias, context of antiquity, shame and honor

### **Key Points**

- God embedded Scripture in the historical and cultural context of its original readers
- In order for us to accurately understand the meaning of the NT, we must understand our own interpretive contexts and the original context of the NT

### **Chapter Summary**

Though many Christians are familiar with portions of the New Testament, relatively few accurately understand its thrust or can provide in any detail how the first-century geographic, historical, and cultural background illuminate the teachings of the New Testament. Scripture is indeed divinely inspired, yet the Old and New Testaments do not exist in a vacuum; they are addressed to a particular people group, at a particular time. Therefore, we must relentlessly pursue the historically situated texts of the New Testament.

Before we enter into the New Testament's worldview, we must recognize our own cultural bias. Without realizing it, we bring the cultural and historical framework of our own world to the text. This is inevitable, and we ought to seek to understand further our own worldview. Nevertheless, in order for us to comprehend the New Testament, we must embrace the cultural context of the biblical world.

This book attempts to recreate the New Testament's context through three foci: geography, history, and culture. It is crucial that we possess some working knowledge of geography, especially in the Gospels and Paul's career. For example, some areas in Galilee are inhabited by primarily Gentiles, whereas in other locations, Jews primarily reside. This distinction affects the nature of Jesus's ministry—he chooses to reveal in a particular manner based on the local inhabitants. The historical context is especially important, particularly the former Greek empire and its pervasive culture, which was eventually eclipsed by the Romans. Finally, the New Testament is inextricably bound up with first-century culture. Every society orchestrates its life with predictable reflexes and rituals. Social habits, religious traditions, political interests, even music and art contribute to values shared by a generation. The New Testament shares much with the surrounding culture(s). Shame and honor ordered much of society ancient society.

# Student Learning Objectives

## **Chapter 1 – Studying the New Testament**

*The students will be able to:*

1. Understand the role of perspective and bias in studying the New Testament.
2. Attend to the difference between our cultural context and that of the biblical world.
3. Know the meaning of the phrase, semantic range.
4. Describe the context of antiquity.
5. Identify the factors contributing to the Jewish identity in antiquity.
6. Describe the role played by shame and honor in ancient society.
7. Understand what it means to say that the New Testament is Scripture.