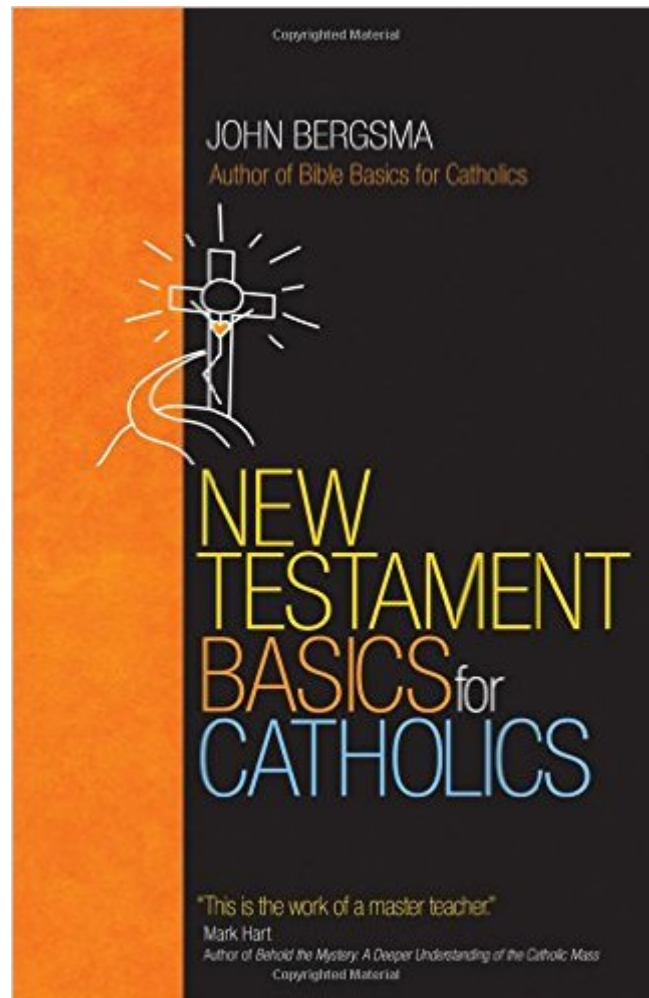


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# New Testament Basics For Catholics



## Synopsis

Award-winning author and theology professor John Bergsma follows up his popular Bible Basics for Catholics--which has sold more than 60,000 copies--with a closer, more in-depth look at the New Testament. Using simple illustrations and the same clear, conversational style that characterized his earlier book, Bergsma introduces four of the most important writers in the New Testament: Matthew, Luke, Paul, and John. With humor and simple illustrations, theology professor John Bergsma focuses on Matthew, Luke, Paul, and John, whose writings comprise about 90 percent of the New Testament. The gospel of Matthew, written for Jewish Christians, illuminates the life and teachings of Christ as the long-promised Messiah. In Luke's gospel, readers will delve into the infancy and Triduum narratives, as well as the Acts of the Apostles and the life of the early Church. This leads the reader to discover St. Paul and his first and arguably greatest theological treatise: Romans. Finally, "the beloved apostle" St. John draws us in to the unsurpassed beauty of the fourth gospel, as well as the most mysterious book of the New Testament: the book of Revelation. A concluding chapter offers suggestions for further study. Intended as an introductory work for those who are new to scripture study, this New Testament book does not aspire to be a comprehensive guide to all twenty-seven books of the New Testament, but is intended to lay the foundation for a lifetime of scripture reading.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

New Testament Basics for Catholics is an enthusiastic self-study guide written in a colloquial style.

The intent of the book is to give the reader a basis on which to build more learning. This book is by the same author who produced Bible Basics for Catholics. This book, New Testament Basics for Catholics, is a teaching guide for a self-guided study course, to use alongside a Bible, with the chapters and verses provided along the way. Through the course of the book, the author links the Bible texts to Catholic traditions such as: The organization of the Church, Mass, Prayers, Religious Orders, Charity, Priests and Deacons, Sacraments. Because the Bible is not just a religious text, this book is not just a religious course, despite taking a strict Catholic dogmatic line. The Bible is also literature, history and philosophy. This book attempts to touch on those points too, to some extent, but I would have enjoyed more of that. The author has selected this approach to this basic introduction to the New Testament: "I have found that by focusing on just four authors, one can get a fairly good grasp of the New Testament. Between them, these four authors wrote around 90 percent of the New Testament. They are Matthew, Luke, Paul, and John." All the lessons in the book are tied together with a common theme: Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand. Under that umbrella, the lessons take place, returning to the theme at the end. The author makes excellent use of memory techniques such as that, together with concise overviews, and working from broad strokes down to details. Part of the book is a summary of the Old Testament, covering the six major covenants of God with the Jewish people.

After reading this book, I want to read the previous book by Dr. Bergsma called Bible Basics for Catholics: A new Picture of Salvation History. But don't worry if you have not read it yet because the first chapter in this book gives you a quick summary of the Old Testament. One of the things that appealed to me about reading this book is an interest in understanding the overarching story of salvation history and more specifically the history of the Church founded by Christ and told in the new testament. I love the organization of the book. It simplifies the whole of the new testament by revealing the differences and similarities of the Gospels and Paul's letters. You will find shortcuts and suggestions to help you remember important points of the bible and chronological timeline. But there is also an in-depth analysis of the books of Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews and Revelation. Dr. Bergsma states "Every sacrament is rooted in Jesus's death and resurrection. Baptism is a sharing in Jesus's dying and rising. In Matrimony we give our body to our spouse as Jesus gave his body on the Cross. The Eucharist makes present once more the sacrifice of Christ's crucified body. And we could go on." It is a big help in bible study to understand the audience the author of the original bible books intended and the Greek meaning of words unpacked for the reader. But, I also think in Testament Basics the author speaks in common language we can

all understand. You can read it like a novel straight through and keep it close by when studying the new testament. There is also enough catholic theology that helps in understanding the church's perspective as well.

John Bergsma does it again with *New Testament Basics for Catholics*. This book focuses on four key authors from the New Testament (Paul, Matthew, Luke and John) to tie together the whole Kingdom of God as recorded in the New Testament and foreshadowed and prophesied in the Old Testament. Using simple stick figure illustrations, some will be familiar to readers of his *Bible Basics*, the Bible seems approachable and yet deep truths are explained. Anyone who can draw my favorite scene from the *Princess Bride* into a discussion on the Bible and Ancient Jewish customs while still maintaining his teaching authority is obviously a gifted teacher. In the same way that covenants moved us through salvation history with accompanying sketches in the last book, these four authors move us through Jesus's ministry and message about the Kingdom. Parallels are drawn as are sketches to help you pick out the key elements that make the message and how that message picked up on Old Testament events that the average reader in the first century saw as obvious. John Bergsma and his books are must read for anyone wanting a deep introduction to the Bible, not just Catholics or Bible scholars. I really can't say enough about this book or this author. This book is easy to read, has a sense of humor, but is in no way a shallow introduction. I was presented with many details that I had never noticed before or had to read heavy theological tomes to get presented previously. Fans of Scott Hahn will enjoy. This book doesn't cherry pick to make a point, but draws out exemplars in order to tell the cohesive story that Jesus left us of His mission and His Kingdom. As with *Bible Basics*, the book is aimed at Catholics, but isn't trying to prove the truth of her teachings. He doesn't have to it just happens.

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