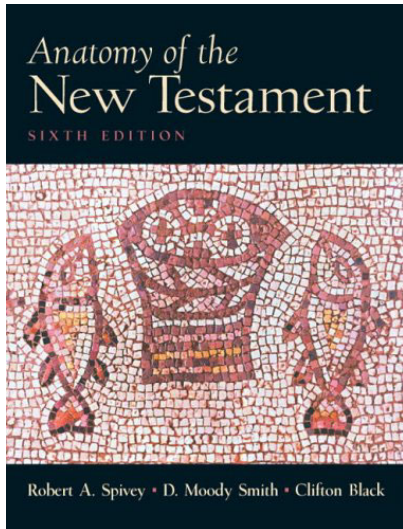


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**Spivey, Robert A., D. Moody Smith, and C. Clifton Black**

***Anatomy of the New Testament: A Guide to Its Structure and Meaning***

Sixth edition

Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.  
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The sixth edition of *Anatomy of the New Testament*, by Spivey, Smith, and Black is the latest revision of a classic undergraduate introductory text, first published in 1969. C. Clifton Black is added as a co-author for the sixth edition. The current version is updated with the inclusion of a number of features such as a glossary defining terms highlighted in the text and numerous explanatory sidebars that teachers and students will find helpful.

As the title suggests, *Anatomy* is a study of the New Testament as it is encountered by the reader, moving from the Gospels through the Apocalypse. Following a prologue outlining the nature of the textbook, the volume is divided into an introduction, thirteen chapters organized into two larger parts (“The Gospels and Jesus” and “The Apostles and the Early Church”), and a concluding epilogue. The text includes numerous relevant photographs and useful maps. The first chapter is devoted to an explanation of the historical and religious context of the New Testament, divided into the “Jewish World” and the “Greco-Roman World.”

The authors have chosen the metaphor of an anatomy for the description to indicate that they are uncovering the structures as they are found. The first Gospel treated (ch. 2) is the Gospel of Mark. Mark is placed first presumably to reinforce the discussion of the history of the Gospels and the idea of Markan priority found at the start of this chapter. The

Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John are treated in chapters 3–5. Each of these chapters begins with a discussion of the provenance of the Gospel and its relationship to the others. An outline of the Gospel is presented with major and minor divisions. The major themes and features of the text are treated in the remainder of the chapter following this initial outline. The pattern of provenance, outline, and discussion is used through *Anatomy* in the presentation of each of the books of the New Testament. Following the chapters on the Gospels, a chapter of largely theological reflection on “Jesus the Messiah” is included.

Part 2 begins with the book of Acts, which is presented in a standard way as comprising an authoritative history of the earliest church. The Pauline Epistles are examined in chapters 8–11. As with the Gospels, the Pauline and Deutero-Pauline correspondence is treated in the order it is assumed to have been written rather than the order found in biblical text. The one curious exception, however, is the treatment of 2 Corinthians in chapter 8, which precedes the full chapter on 1 Corinthians. Chapter 10 contains a fairly traditional discussion of Romans. The chapter devoted entirely to 1 Corinthians was added as a part of the revisions for the current edition. The Deutero-Pauline correspondence is treated in chapter 11. The Pauline history and letters are closely tied to the historical outline in the chapter on Acts, with numerous references aimed at providing an overall understanding of the history of the early church. The Catholic Epistles are treated in chapter 12 and Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation in chapter 13.

*Anatomy of the New Testament*, as with all introductory texts, attempts to present a complex of documents from another culture in terms undergraduates might understand. The presentation of material in this effort comes from a traditional Christian perspective, avoiding most controversial topics so as not to confuse students. Unlike most other introductions to the New Testament, *Anatomy* takes the text as it is found, from Gospels through Apocalypse, rather than attempting to build a timeline and history of the church and the associated documents. A few exceptions are made to this “as it is found approach” to emphasize important interpretative elements associated with the correct historical ordering of documents within each body of literature (e.g., Markan priority). While this model is commendable in its efforts and in the familiarity it surely evokes in students, it does leave open the possibility of communicating an impression of early Christianity that much of the discussion counters. Treating the Gospels prior to Paul and using Acts as the basis for the history of the early church may leave the impression of an orderly triumphant march from Jesus through Paul and onwards. While the authors are careful to qualify and explain the issues associated with the development of the church, the arrangement of the material might tend to work against their qualifications and explanations.

Several of the revisions to this edition of *Anatomy* are quite helpful. For example, the inclusion of an entire chapter on 1 Corinthians is an important improvement over the previous edition, given the importance of this letter. Learning might be further enhanced, however, by moving 2 Corinthians to this chapter and treating the Corinthian correspondence as a unit showing the development of Paul's thought. As it stands in the current edition, the treatment of 2 Corinthians prior to 1 Corinthians might lead to confusion. The highlighting of terms in the text (through the use of a bold typeface) and their subsequent definition in the glossary is an excellent addition to an introductory text, providing a helpful learning tool. However, certain terms that one might expect are not defined in the glossary. For example, social roles such as "widows" or "slave" would have been helpful to include, since these terms convey a far different meaning in their context than in the twenty-first century.

Overall, the sixth edition of *Anatomy of the New Testament* is a commendable effort at introducing the New Testament in one easy-to-read text. The volume is suited to the target audience of undergraduate students and provides a thorough and traditional theological introduction to the New Testament.