

Copyright © 2010 Jim Reese Ministries.

This file is the sole property of Jim Reese Ministries.

It may be copied only in its entirety and all copies of this file must contain this copyright notice.

This file may not be edited, revised, or changed in any manner. The file and its contents may not be offered for resale or incorporated in any commercial publications, recordings, broadcasts, performances, displays or other products offered for sale without the written permission of Jim Reese Ministries.

This file is made available for your personal Bible study and growth in the Christian life.

www.jimreese ministries.com

***WALK THROUGH THE
NEW TESTAMENT***
WITH PASTOR JIM REESE

Lesson 9

**The General Epistles of
James, I & II Peter,
I & II & III John, Jude**

WALK THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

TEN LESSONS:

- 1. Overview and Relationship of the Old and New Testaments**
- 2. The Life of Christ: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John**
- 3. The Life of Christ – The 4 Gospels: Part 2**
- 4. The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles**
- 5. The Epistle to the Romans**
- 6. The Epistles to the Corinthians and the Galatians**
- 7. The Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon) and I and II Thessalonians**
- 8. The Pastoral Epistles (I and II Timothy and Titus) and Hebrews**
- 9. The General Epistles: James to Jude**
- 10. The Revelation**

THE GENERAL EPISTLES

- Paul wrote the first 13 epistles and addressed them to churches or individuals.
- The General Epistles are so called because they were written, mostly, to general audiences.
- Hebrews, studied last week, is the first of eight.
- The other seven each bear the name of the author:
- James, I and II Peter, I, II and III John and Jude.
- Of these writers: two were Jesus' disciples – Peter and John, and two were Jesus' half brothers: James and Jude. (See Matt. 13:55 and Gal. 1:19)

Dates for writing these Epistles

- **68-70 Hebrews**
- **45-49 James**
- **64-65 1 Peter**
- **66-67 2 Peter**
- **85-90 1, 2, & 3 John**
- **69 Jude**
- **95 Revelation**

KEY WORDS OF THE GENERAL EPISTLES

Source: Walk Thru the Bible Ministries.Inc.

- Hebrews Milk to Meat
- James Faith Gauge
- 1 Peter Pain with a Purpose
- 2 Peter Poison in the Pew
- 1 John Fellowship Barometer
- 2 John Bolt the Door
- 3 John Open the Door
- Jude Fight for the Faith

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

- **Two of Jesus' disciples were named James:**
 - James the brother of John. The first apostle to be martyred, Acts 12:2
 - James the son of Alphaeus.
- **The James who wrote this epistle was a half-brother of Jesus:**
 - He had rejected Jesus as Messiah (John 7:5).
 - Christ's resurrection made him a believer. (I Cor. 15:7)
 - He was with the disciples before Pentecost (Acts 1:14).
 - He became leader of the Jerusalem Church (Acts 15:13).
 - James was martyred ca. 62 AD (Josephus).

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES cont.

- James wrote this epistle ca. 45 – 49 AD.
- It is one of the earliest books of the NT canon.
- James writes with the authority of one who had seen the resurrected Christ (I Cor. 15:7).
- He probably wrote this epistle to believers scattered (1:1) as a result of the unrest after John's brother James was martyred by Herod Agrippa in 44 AD (Acts 12).
- He refers to his audience as "brothers" 15 times.
- He gives 40+ allusions to the Old Testament.
- He gives 20+ allusions to Sermon on the Mount.

INTRODUCTION TO JAMES cont.

- James, like Proverbs, is full of strong statements about wise living.
- He uses picturesque language (i.e. surf of the sea, scorching wind, mirror, bits in horses' mouths, the tongue is a fire, can a vine produce figs? etc.)
- He emphasizes proof of faith by godly behavior.
- Key Verse: 2:18 *“But someone will say, ‘You have faith; I have deeds.’ Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.”*
- **Note: The following overview is an outline found in the MacArthur Study Bible, Moody Press, p 1894**
- See 13 tests to prove the reality of one's Christian faith.

OVERVIEW OF JAMES

1. The Test of Perseverance in Suffering 1:2-12
2. The Test of Blame in Temptation 1:13-28
3. The Test of Response to the Word 1:19-27
4. The Test of Impartial Love 2:1-13
5. The Test of Righteous Works 2:14-26
6. The Test of the Tongue 3:1-13
7. The Test of Humble Wisdom 3:13-18
8. The Test of Worldly Indulgence 4:1-12
9. The Test of Dependence 4:13-17
10. The Test of Patient Endurance 5:1-11
11. The Test of Truthfulness 5:12
12. The Test of Prayerfulness 5:13-18
13. The Test of True Faith 5:19-20

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF I PETER

- Jesus gave Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 16:17-19) which he used to unlock the Gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost (Acts 2) and to the Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10).
- As the church grew, so grew opposition and persecution.
- Peter had watched Christians driven out of Jerusalem and scattered throughout Asia Minor.
- His purpose in writing 1st Peter was to offer encouragement to scattered, suffering Christians.
- Theme Verse: I Peter 1:7 *“These [trials] have come so that your faith . . . may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”*

Peter's First Letter

1 ■ Rome

Apostle Peter writes his First Letter, to the Christian Jews of much of Asia Minor, probably from Rome c AD64



OVERVIEW OF 1ST PETER

1. Salvation and Hope-filled Living 1:1-12
 - A living hope amid temporary trials
2. Salvation and Holy Living 1:13-2:12
 - Crave pure spiritual milk 2:1-3
 - Living stones, spiritual house, holy priesthood 2:4-8
 - Chosen people, royal priesthood, holy nation 2:9-12
3. Salvation and Submissive Living 2:13-3:12
 - In government 2:13f, employment 2:18f, marriage 3:1f
 - Live in harmony with one another 3:8-12
4. Temporary Suffering and Eternal Glory 3:13-5:14
 - Give a reason for your hope 3:13-17
 - Jesus suffered for us; let us suffer for him 3:18-4:19
 - Be faithful, humble, self-controlled and alert 5:1-15

Note: "Suffering" 18 x, "Glory" 8 x in I Peter

Temporary Suffering Eternal Glory

- 1:6 *“In this [hope of **glory**] you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to **suffer** grief in all kinds of trials.”*
- 4:13 *“Rejoice that you participate in the **sufferings** of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his **glory** is revealed.”*
- 5:10 *“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal **glory** in Christ, after you have **suffered** a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”*

INTRODUCTION TO 2ND PETER

- Peter probably wrote II Peter in the Mamertine prison in Rome (where Paul wrote II Timothy) about 67 AD and shortly before his death:
 - II Peter 1:13-14 *“I will soon put aside [the tent of this body] as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.”*
 - Jesus told Peter in John 21:18 : *“when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”*
Tradition says Peter was crucified upside down.
- II Peter was written to expose false teachers.
 - 2:1 *“. . . there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves.”*

Note Peter's use of the word "precious":

- Precious faith I Peter 1:7, II Peter 1:1
- Precious blood I Peter 1:19
- Precious Savior I Peter 2:6
 - Precious to the Father I Peter 2:4
 - Precious to the believer I Peter 2:7
- Precious promises II Peter 1:4

KEY VERSE FOR 2ND PETER

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and goodness.”

II Peter 1:3

OVERVIEW OF 2ND PETER

Main points from New Testament Handbook by Charles Swindoll. Subpoints by JR

Chap 1: Be Pure! Exhortation to Spiritual Maturity

- Add to your faith goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, love (5-7)
- Be firmly established in God's inerrant Scripture (12-21)

Chap 2: Be Aware! Denunciation of False Teachers

- False teachers deny the sovereign Lord (1)
- They will be destroyed (1) like sinning angels (4), the world of Noah's day (5), Sodom and Gomorrah (6)

Chap 3: Be Diligent! Anticipation of Christ's Return

- Scoffers deny the coming of the Day of the Lord (3-4)
- God will destroy the universe and make a new one (5f)
- Till then, grow in Christ's grace and knowledge (17-18)

INTRODUCTION TO 1ST JOHN

- John ministered in Jerusalem until a little before its destruction in 70 AD.
- John's last years of ministry were in Ephesus.
- As the elder statesman in the church, his ministry reached out from there to all of Asia, including the seven churches of Revelation.
- It was here, or on the Isle of Patmos, that he wrote the Gospel of John (ca 85 AD), his three epistles (85 – 90 AD) and the Revelation (ca 95 AD).
- 1st John reveals profound truth in simple words.



The Apostle John's last years of ministry were in Ephesus.

KEY VERSE FOR 1ST JOHN

I John 1:7

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin.”

JOHN'S PURPOSES IN WRITING 1ST JOHN

1. So that you may have fellowship: 1:3
 - With us
 - With the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ
2. So that you may not sin. 2:1
3. So that you may not be deceived. 2:26
4. So that you may know you have eternal life. 5:13

OVERVIEW OF 1ST JOHN

1. God is Light 1:1 – 2:27 **Light 6 times**
 - We have fellowship by walking in the light
 - We are cleansed from sin by Christ's blood
2. God is Love 2:28 – 5:3 **Love 40 times**
 - God loves us
 - Our love for God is seen in our love for people and obedience to his commands
3. God is Life 5:4-21 **Life 7 times**
 - Eternal life is in Christ
 - He who believes on the Son knows he has life

Contrasts in 1st John

- Christ vs. Antichrists
- Light vs. Darkness
- Truth vs. Falsehood
- Righteousness vs. Sin
- Love of the Father vs. Love of the World
- Love vs. Hate
- Life vs. Death

INTRODUCTION TO 2ND JOHN

- This letter is addressed to *“the chosen lady and her children”*. This could mean:
 - An actual woman, or a metaphor for a local church
- Either way, its message is the same:
 - Be on guard against heresy,
 - In particular, Docetism (Greek for *Dokeo* = to seem): meaning that Jesus had no human body, but only appeared to have suffered & died on the cross.
- Key verses: 2nd John 1:7-8 *“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. . . Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for”*

OVERVIEW OF 2ND JOHN

1. Walk in Truth and Love vs. 1 - 6

- Great joy that some are walking in truth
- Concern that they also walk in love

2. Stand against Error vs. 7 – 13

- Warning about deceivers with false doctrines
- Do not take them into your house

INTRODUCTION TO 3RD JOHN

- This letter is to Gaius, a church leader in Asia Minor.
- John commends Gaius for his hospitality to traveling ministers of the gospel.
- John warns about Diotrephes who “loves to be first.”
- Both 2nd and 3rd John are short because he hopes to visit soon and talk “face to face.”
- Key Verse: *“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”*

OVERVIEW OF 3RD JOHN

1. Commendation for Gaius vs. 1 – 8

- He is faithful to truth and hospitable to strangers.

2. Condemnation of Diotrephes vs. 9 – 11

- He is a proud and controlling gossip.

3. Commendation for Demetrius v. 12

- He is appreciated by everyone.

INTRODUCTION TO JUDE

- Jude identifies himself as “*the brother of James*” (v. 1). See Mt 13:55, Acts 15:13, Gal 1:19
- Jude and James (1:1) could have written “*the half-brother of Jesus,*” but they each call themselves “*a servant of Jesus Christ.*”
- Jude was going to write a letter about salvation (v.3), but changed his mind when hearing bad news about people departing from the faith.
- Apostates had “*secretly slipped in*” (v. 4). An apostate is a person who has fallen from the true faith and now proclaims a false gospel.
- The theme of Jude is “contending for the faith.” Contend means to speak the truth and expose the falsehood.

KEY VERSE FOR JUDE

Jude 1:3

“Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”

OVERVIEW OF JUDE

1. Warnings about Apostasy vs. 3 – 23
 - Past examples: vs. 5 – 7
 - Unbelievers in wilderness v. 5
 - Fallen angels v. 6
 - Sodom and Gomorrah v. 7
 - Present examples: vs. 8 – 19
 - Rejecters of God's authority vs. 8 – 10
 - Imposers of selfish agendas v. 11
 - Leaders of ungodly activities vs. 12 – 16
 - Dividers of God's people vs. 17-19
2. Call to persevere against Apostasy vs. 20-23
3. Ultimate Victory over Apostasy vs. 24-25

JUDE'S DOXOLOGY

Jude 24 – 25

“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy – to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! AMEN”