

VIA EMMAUS: A CHRIST-CENTERED WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE

General Epistles: James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude (41)

INTRODUCTION

7 Occasional Letters Written By James, Peter, John Jude – *Apostolic Authority (Gal 1:19)*
Predominant Themes *Christ is the God-man who is leading his people*
Church is the fulfillment of Israel and he has appointed leaders
The people of God are sojourners suffering for the sake of Christ
False teaching abounds, so we must walk in truth and love
God's salvation will be accomplished, the wicked will be judged

JAMES

Wisdom from God that Leads to Active Faith in an Adulterous World

Author James, the brother of Jesus, Jude (**Matt 13:55**); not the apostle; leader in Jerusalem (**Acts 15**)
Date Early 40's – *Likely written before Jerusalem Council (48-49 AD), may explain 2:14-26*
Audience Jewish Christians (**1:1**) experiencing trials & suffering (**1:2-5**) caused by the "Rich" (**2:1-9**)
Themes (1) Wisdom letter – *Reiterates much of the Sermon the Mount*
Joy amid trials (**1:2 || 5:10-12**) Exhortation to be perfect (**1:4 || 5:48**)
Prayer for needs (**1:5, 4:2 || 7:7-11**) Warning against anger (**1:20 || 5:22**)
Doers of the word (**1:22 || 7:24-27**) Poor inherit kingdom (**2:5 || 5:3, 5**)
Keeping the whole law (**2:10 || 5:19**)
(2) The Word of God (**1:19-27**) and our words (**3:1-4:12**) – *Be active hearers, not hasty speakers*
(3) Faith and works (**James 2:14-26**) – *Does James contradict Paul?*
(4) Faith and suffering (**James 4:13-5:18**)

1 PETER

Hope-filled Suffering for the Glory of Christ

Author Peter, an apostle (**1:1, cf. 5:1**) – *A few urge a pseudonymous writer, but this is not compelling*
Date 62-63 AD – *During the oppressive reign of Nero (AD 54-68); Likely written from Rome (5:13)*
Audience "elect exiles of the dispersion" (**cf Acts 2**) – *Gentiles from Modern-Day Turkey (1:14, 18; 4:3-4)*
Themes (1) Those who suffer as Christians will be exalted (**1:6-9; 2:18-25; 3:13-22; 4:12-19**)
(2) Christ died as a substitute (**1:17-21; 2:24; 3:13-22**) – *His death is also exemplary (2:21-23)*
(3) Authority and submission (**Government: 2:13-17; Marriage: 3:1-7; Church: 5:1-6**)
(4) New life in Christ is the basis for all good works (**1:3; 1:13-2:3**)

2 PETER

Growing in the Knowledge of the Grace of God

Author Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle (**1:1**) – *There are many who contend his authorship*
(1) Simeon Peter (**1:1**); (2) Eyewitness (**1:16-18; cf Matt 17:1-8**); (3) Deliberate deception
Why differences – *Peter may have used a different scribe, Peter may be dependent on Jude*
Date AD 64-67, before Peter died while he was in Rome
Audience Unspecified Christians, likely same people as before (**3:1**) – *Warning of false teachers*
Themes (1) True knowledge of God's grace results in godliness (**1:3-15**)
(2) Word of God is more sure than personal experience (**1:16-21; cf. 3:15**)
(3) False teachers are *ethically bankrupt & bound for destruction (2:1-22)*
(4) Redemption is Cosmic (**3:1-7, 11-13**) & Personal (**3:8-10**)

1 JOHN

Author

Knowing That You Know Christ

John, the apostle Introduction fits John, the beloved disciple (**cf. John 19:26-27; 20:2-10**)
Style and vocabulary – “Believe” (v), not “Faith” (n)
Themes – divinity & humanity, believing & practicing, primacy of love

Date

AD 90’s – *Polycarp and Papias cite John’s letters* (ca. AD 100)

Audience

Writing from/to Ephesus (Jerusalem to Ephesus ca. AD 67); unspecified congregation (**2:19**)

Occasion

Gnosticism (**2:22-23; 4:1-6**)? Schism (**2:19**)? – *More positive* (**1:4; 2:1, 12-14, 26; 3:11; 5:13**)

Themes

- (1) The Son of God (**1:1-4; 2:1-2; 3:8; 4:1-6, 9-10, 14; 5:12**)
- (2) Fruit of the New Birth (**6x: 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18**)
 - Practice truth/righteousness (**1:6; 2:29; 3:7, 10**)
 - Walk in the light/as he walked (**1:7; 2:6**)
 - Confess sins and have forgiveness (**1:9; 2:12**)
 - Keep/obey his commandments/Word (**2:3, 5; 3:22, 24; 5:2, 3**)
 - Love one another/the brothers (**2:10; 3:10, 11, 14, 16, 18, 23; 4:7, 11, 21**)
 - Overcome the evil one/them/the world (**2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4**)
 - Do the will of God/cannot keep on sinning (**2:17; 3:9, 22**)
 - Confess the Son/believe in Jesus (**2:23; 3:23; 4:2, 15; 5:1, 4, 13**)

2 JOHN

Author

Walking in the Truth, Loving One Another

John, the apostle/elder – *based on writing style, position in the canon, theological outlook*

Date

AD 90’s – see above

Audience

“The elect lady” – *Most likely a congregation; most of 2 John is 2nd Person Plural (v. 5)*
Church is (1) feminine, (2) pictured as a bride, (3) used as a social subunit

Themes

- (1) Living out the truth (**vv. 1-2, 4, 6**) in love (**vv. 5-6**)
- (2) Love without truth is not love (**v. 7-11**) – *Benevolence should be checked by truth* (v. 10-11)
- (3) False teaching abounds (**v. 7-11**) – *False teachers are not welcome*
- (4) Genuine community is personal (**v. 12**) and universal (**v. 13**) – *See also 3 John 13-15*

3 JOHN

Author

Cooperation for Sake of the Name

John, the apostle/elder – *elder is a term used of pastoral leaders in the NT (Acts 14:23; 20:17)*

Date

AD 90’s – see above

Occasion

Its been suggested that 1-3 John were originally “stapled”; 3 John was a personal letter

Audience

Gaius is likely the pastor, or lead elder of the church

Themes

- (1) John’s joy is seeing his children walking in truth (**v. 3-4**)
- (2) Support Christian workers is needed and commended by God (**v. 5-8**)
- (3) Church discipline is not optional, but essential for healthy churches (**v. 9-10**)
- (4) Church leadership is based upon reputation – *a bad reputation disqualifies* (**v. 11**)

JUDE

Author

Contending for the Faith By Keeping Yourself in Love with God

Jude, brother of Jesus but identifies himself as “servant of Jesus Christ, brother of James”

Date

Mid-60’s – *Similar themes as 2 Peter puts it at the same time*

Audience

“the called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ” (**v. 2**) – *unspecified Christians*

Themes

- (1) False Teachers – *Sought to commend salvation, turns attention to ‘creepers’* (**v. 3-4**)
- (2) OT Interpretation – *Jesus leads Exodus* (**v. 5**); *Sodom & Gomorrah* (**vv. 7-8; Gen 19**); *Cain, Balaam & Korah* (**v. 11-13; Gen 4; Num 31:16; Num 16**), *Enoch* (**v. 14-16; 1 Enoch**)
- (3) False Teachers – *God will judge them, Character counts more than charisma*
- (4) Angelology – *Fallen angels* (**v. 6**), *Michael and the devil* (**v. 9**) – *Who do you pray to?*
- (5) Perseverance – *Your who are kept* (**v. 2**), *keep yourself in the love of God* (**v. 19-23**)
How do you keep yourself in the love of God? (1) Faith, (2) Prayer, (3) Hope