

General Epistles

For Today's Class:

We will be studying the following:

- Hebrews
- James
- I Peter
- II Peter
- Jude

Some General Thoughts:

Each book is very precious to the believer. They are designed for certain issues in the life of the church and believer. They should be read again and again and even memorized.

A Quick Look:

I Peter – hope in tribulation

II Peter – reminders about the precious, inspired Word of God, false teachers, and the Coming of Christ

James – true faith produces good works

Hebrews – Christ is superior

Jude – warnings against false teachers

Hebrews

Recommendation:

- *I Wish Someone Would Explain Hebrews* by Stuart Olyott
- <https://banneroftruth.org/us/about/banner-authors/stuart-olyott/>

Quote: Every Christian needs to understand Hebrews. If they do not, they will misunderstand the Old Testament and will also fail to fully appreciate what our Lord Jesus Christ has done, what he is doing now, and what he is going to do in the future. As a result, they will remain spiritually stunted.

Overview of Hebrews:

- Author: Unknown or the Apostle Paul among others
- Recipient: Not stated; but most likely Jews who had passed through a severe persecution for the faith (Heb. 10:32-34)

- Data: Around AD 70
- Key Word: Christ is Better or Superior
- Key Verse: Hebrews 4:14

Highlights - Focus on a few places in Hebrew

Hebrews 1:1-4

Profound words about Jesus

- heir of all things
- Creator of all things
- Radiance of the Father's image
- Sustains all things
- Purification of sins
- Sat down on the Throne
- Greater than angels and has a great name

Highlight-on Angels:

- Spiritual beings
- Messengers
- Ministers
- Surround the throne of God
- Live in Heaven
 - Michael – Daniel 12
 - Gabriel – Daniel 9; Luke 1
 - Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Deut. 33:1

Look at Hebrews 11 – how many heroes of the faith did you find?

Conclusion - Applications: Hebrews 10:19-25

- Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
- let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.
- **And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.**

James

- ❖ Author – James the Lord’s half brother
- ❖ This is probably the first epistle written
- ❖ It has 108 verses and 59 commands.
- ❖ Central theme: Faith produces works.

I Peter – Living in a Hostile World

Quick Look:

- ✚ Author: Peter
- ✚ Audience: I Peter 1:1
- ✚ Theme: Holy and Hopeful Living in a Hostile World
- ✚ Date: hard to pinpoint
- ✚ Silvanus – another name for Silas (Acts 16) (I Peter 5:12)

Peter: Who was he?

- ✓ His brother Andrew brought him to Jesus
- ✓ Denied Jesus three times
- ✓ He was restored (John 21)
- ✓ Became a key leader in the Jerusalem Church
- ✓ Brought the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10)
- ✓ Author of two epistles and possibly the book of Mark.
- ✓ He could take rebuke (Gal 2 and II Peter 3).

An outline:

1. Peter calls us to be humble.
2. Peter calls us to cast our cares upon the Lord.
3. Peter says God cares for us.
4. Peter tells us to be sober-minded (he wasn’t sometimes ☺); Peter knew the devil’s temptations upon him.
5. Peter tells us to resist the devil firm in faith – i.e. using God’s word.
6. Peter reminds us of the victory (I Peter 5:10-11)

Focus on Silas – what does God have for you to do? What’s your moment?

- Latin name is Silvanus
- Prominent member in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)
- Accompanied Paul on the second missionary journey
- Imprisoned at Philippi (Acts 16:4). [He was singing too.]

II Peter

Outline

- Initial Greeting (1:1–2)
- God's Grace in Christ Is the Source of Godly Living (1:3–11)
- Peter's Reminder to the Churches (1:12–21)
- Evaluation of False Teachers (2:1–22)
- The Day of the Lord Will Surely Come (3:1–13)
- Concluding Encouragements (3:14–18)

Notice the Key Themes of II Peter:

1. God, through his grace in Jesus Christ, has enabled Christians to partake of the divine nature (1:2–4).
2. God's grace results in godliness (1:5–15).
3. The revelation of truth in Christ and in Scripture is sure because it is from God and not from man (1:16–21).
4. False teachers are handed over for destruction at the hand of God (2:1–10).
5. Key Themes of II Peter
6. False teachers are ethically bankrupt (2:11–22).
7. Believers must endure in the face of opposition, knowing that they are living in the last days (3:1–13).
8. The Lord is patient with his creation, but someday he will suddenly return to judge it (3:8–10).
9. God rescues the righteous (2:7–9; 3:13–18).

Jude

- Written by Jude the Lord's half brother
- Written to those who are called, beloved and kept for Christ
- The believers are to contend for the faith.
- There has and will be opposition to the truth.

Jude gives some special exhortations

- Build yourself up in the faith
- Pray in the Holy Spirit
- Keep yourself in the love of God
- Waiting and hastening the coming of Christ
- Be sure to be merciful in how you deal with others
- God is able to keep you from stumbling.

Benediction:

Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time^[h] and now and forever. Amen.

Resources

- *Illustrated Bible Survey* by Ed Hindson and Elmer Towns
- *The New Testament: An Introduction to its Literature and History* by J. Gresham Machen
- *The Message of the New Testament* (sermons on each book of the N.T.) by Pastor Mark Dever
- Precept Austin – website
- Insight for Living – website