

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY

GENERAL LETTERS

JAMES, 1 PETER, 2 PETER

LESSON 25

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL LETTERS
- II. INTRODUCTION TO JAMES
- III. OUTLINE OF JAMES
- IV. LESSONS IN JAMES
 - A. Main thought in James.
 - B. The believer - tests and temptations.
 - C. The believer shows his faith through works.
 - D. The believer and wisdom from God.
 - E. The believer and power through prayer.
- V. INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER AND 2 PETER
- VI. OUTLINE OF 1 PETER
- VII. LESSONS IN 1 PETER
 - A. Suffering.
 - B. Daily living.
 - C. Grace.
- VIII. OUTLINE OF 2 PETER
- IX. LESSONS IN 2 PETER
 - A. Christian growth.
 - B. False teachers.
 - C. The Day of the Lord.
- X. WORDS TO LEARN
- XI. ASSIGNMENT

LESSON

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL LETTERS

There are seven general letters. These letters are called general letters because they were written to all the Christians. James, Peter, John and Jude wrote these letters.

The general letters are James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John and Jude.

JAMES

II. INTRODUCTION TO JAMES

Who wrote James.

James wrote the letter of James, James 1:1.

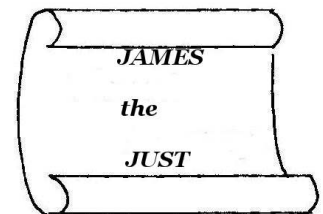
The Bible tells of three men by the name of James. They are: James, the son of Zebedee, Matthew 10:2; James, the son of Alphaeus, Matthew 10:3 and James, the brother of Jesus, Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3. It is believed that James, the brother of Jesus, wrote the letter of James.

James did not believe Jesus was the Son of God while Jesus lived on earth, John 7:5. He was not a disciple of Jesus, Matthew 10:2-4. Later, James was with the disciples in the upper room. This was after Jesus went back to heaven, Acts 1:13,14. Jesus Christ also showed Himself to James after His resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8. In his letter, James speaks of Jesus as the "Lord Jesus Christ." He calls himself the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. James was given the title "apostle," Galatians 1:19. It is believed that James was married, 1 Corinthians 9:5.

James was the leader of the church at Jerusalem. He was also the leader of the church council, Acts 15:13. He seemed to be very strict in the Jewish ways. However, James and Paul were good friends.

The Gentiles had a problem about circumcision and keeping Jewish laws. James helped them by writing a letter to the Gentiles, Acts 15:13-23. He told the Gentiles that they did not have to keep the Jewish laws.

James is called "James the Just." He spent much time in prayer.



When the letter was written.

It is believed the letter was written about A.D. 60 to 62. This was near the end of the life of James.

To whom the letter was written.

James wrote the letter to the Christians of the twelve tribes of Israel who were scattered in many places. The letter was written for all Christians.

III. OUTLINE OF JAMES

- A. Greetings, James 1:1.
- B. The believer - his tests and temptations, James 1:2-18.
- C. The believer receives the Word of God, James 1:19-27.
- D. The believer treats others right, James 2:1-13.
- E. The believer and true faith, James 2:14-26.
- F. The believer keeps his tongue under control, James 3:1-12.
- G. The believer and true wisdom, James 3:13-18.
- H. The believer and his personal life, James 4:1-10.
- I. The believer cares about others, James 4:11,12.
- J. The believer thinks of others in business, James 4:13 - 5:6.
- K. The believer waits for the Lord to come, James 5:7-12.
- L. The believer and his troubles, James 5:13-18.
- M. The believer is to bring backsliders back to God, James 5:19,20.

IV. LESSONS IN JAMES

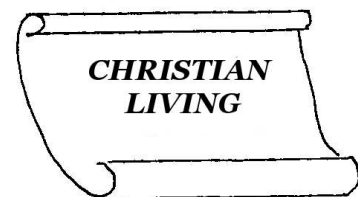
A. The main thought in James.

The main thought in James is Christian living. James shows how the Christian is to use the truth in his everyday living.

The key verses are:

"A faith that does not do things is a dead faith." James 2:17 (N.L.T.)

"If you know what is right to do but do not do it, you sin." James 4:17 (N.L.T.).



B. The believer - tests and temptations, James 1:1-21.

READ JAMES 1:1-21.

God sends tests to test the faith of a Christian. Tests may come through sickness, death or the need of something. The Christian is to learn to trust God. Tests

teach a Christian to be patient. Tests help to make a Christian perfect and complete.

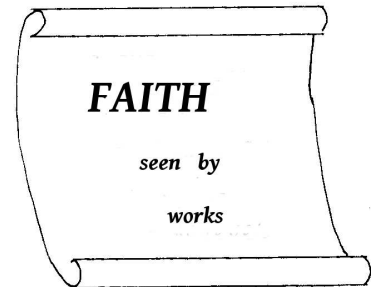
Temptation is that which makes a person want to do something wrong. God does not tempt a Christian. A Christian is tempted when he lets bad thoughts lead him.

The Christian is to keep looking into the Word of God. The Word of God will make him free.

C. The believer shows his faith through works, James 2:14-26.

READ JAMES 2:14-26.

James does not fight against faith. But he says it is wrong for a person to say he has faith and not live like it. James does not say "faith is not necessary," but he says faith must do something.



James explains the Old Testament law and the sermon on the Mount in the light of the gospel.

The faith of a Christian must be seen in the way he acts every day.

The faith of a Christian must be seen in the way he talks.

The faith of a Christian must be seen in the way he treats people.

The faith of a Christian must be seen by obedience to God.

Abraham believed God. He was a friend of God. Abraham showed his faith by what he did. God asked him to put Isaac on the altar to die. Abraham obeyed God. Abraham believed God would give Isaac back to him.

D. The believer and wisdom from God, James 3:13-18.

READ JAMES 3:13-18.

The wisdom that comes from the world and from the devil makes for jealousy and fighting. Jealousy and fighting cause many other sins.

The wisdom that comes from God is different. It **is** pure. It **gives** peace. The wisdom from God **is** gentle, willing to obey and **has** loving kindness. The wisdom of

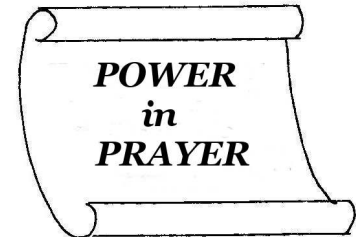
God does good, does not doubt and is not proud.

The wisdom of God is for all who ask God for it. God gives it freely.

E. The believer and power of prayer, James 5:13-20.

READ JAMES 5:13-20.

The prayer of a man right with God has great power. Elijah could do great things because he believed God. This power is strong enough to heal the sick. Two things are necessary for this power to work - there must be faith, (James 5:15), and sins must be confessed (James 5:16).



The believer should seek to bring back to God those who have turned away from God. He will save souls. Many sins will be forgiven.

1 AND 2 PETER

V. INTRODUCTION TO 1 AND 2 PETER

Who wrote 1 and 2 Peter.

Peter wrote these two letters. Peter uses his name as writer in these letters, 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1. The writer was with Jesus on the Mount of transfiguration, 2 Peter 1:16-18. Also the writer knew the warning of death given by Jesus. (2 Peter 1:14 compared with John 21:17-19; John 13:36).

Peter was a man from the province of Galilee. He was married, Matthew 8:14. Peter was a fisherman. Peter was one of the first to be brought to Jesus, John 1:41,42. Peter was one of the three who were really close to Jesus. He was in the garden with Jesus and also on the Mount of transfiguration, Matthew 26:36,37; Matthew 17:1.

Peter was always quick to do something. Often he did not think before he did something or before he said something. He wanted to be brave, but was a coward when Jesus was taken in the garden. He denied Jesus but was sorry for it, Matthew 26:69-75. Deep down in his heart he was loyal to Jesus and repented for denying Jesus Christ.

After the resurrection of Jesus, Peter was glad to see Jesus, John 21:7. He was with the group who was praying when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost. Peter was the

one to take leadership. He preached the first sermon at Pentecost.

Peter was the apostle to the Jews. Most of his time was spent with the Jews, Acts 1:1 -12:17. Yet, God showed Peter that the Gentiles could believe in Jesus too, Acts 10. Peter went to Samaria, a town of the Samaritans, Acts 8:14-25. Peter also went to Antioch in Syria, Galatians 2:11. Peter traveled quite a bit, 1 Corinthians 9:5.

It is said that Peter died in Rome. It is said that Peter was crucified with his head down, (John 21:18,19). Nero had him killed in the year A.D. 68.¹

To whom the letters were written.

Peter wrote to the Jewish Christians in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Find these on the map. The second letter seems to be written to the same people because he speaks of his letter, 2 Peter 3:1.

When the letters were written.

In 1 Peter 5:13, Peter says he is writing from Babylon. There was a city called Babylon in Mesopotamia, near the Euphrates River. In this city was a settlement of Jews. Some think Peter wrote from this city.

However, the Christians talked about Rome as Babylon too. They did this because the sins of Rome were so much like the sins of Babylon in the past. Mark was with Peter when he wrote, 1 Peter 5:13. Mark was also with Paul in Rome when Paul was in prison, Colossians 4:10. Peter had Silvanus carry his letter. This could be the same man called Silas, who was with Paul. Peter might have written his letters from Rome.

Why 1 Peter was written.

Little is said in the Bible about how the Christians got along with the Roman government. The reasons for this are:

- 1) Christianity was mostly a spiritual thing and not a government thing, John 18:36.
- 2) Christianity came out of Judaism. The Roman government did not interfere with Judaism.

¹William Smith, Bible Dictionary, p. 504.

- 3) As long as the Christians obeyed the laws of the Roman government, the government did not bother them.
- 4) The government thought well of those Christians with whom they had something to do. Example - Paul, Acts 24:12.

About the years 60 to 70 A.D. things began to change.

- 1) Christianity and Judaism were separated.
- 2) The Christians talked about a judgment coming. Many people did not understand this and hated the thought of judgment.
- 3) Many people did not like the Christians because they did not live in sin.
- 4) Many people did not like the idea that the world would be changed.

With these changes, Nero found it easy to blame the Christians for things he did. A large part of Rome was burned. It is believed that Nero set it on fire. He wanted room to build a big palace. He blamed the Christians for setting Rome on fire.

Nero persecuted the Christians. It was really a fiery trial -many Christians were burned.

The Christians did not know what to do. They wondered what would happen. They were to obey the government and not fight against it. They could not fight the government because that would make it worse for them.

Peter wrote the first letter to give the Christians an answer to their problem.

Why 2 Peter was written.

Peter wrote the second letter:

- 1) to warn the Christians of the false teachers who were among them.
- 2) to show the Christians how to live the Christian life.
- 3) to tell what the Day of the Lord would be like and when it would come.

VI. OUTLINE OF 1 PETER

- A. Suffering and future promises, 1 Peter 1:1-12.
- B. Suffering and godly living, 1 Peter 1:13 - 2:10.
- C. Suffering and living with others, 1 Peter 2:11 - 3:12.
- D. Suffering with right behavior and faith, 1 Peter 3:13 - 4:6.
- E. Right behavior and the end of time, 1 Peter 4:7-19.
- F. Suffering and the right relationship between the elders and the church, 1 Peter 5:1-11.
- G. Closing words, 1 Peter 5:12-14.

VII. LESSONS IN 1 PETER

READ 1 PETER.

The main thoughts in 1 Peter are suffering and glory. Glory means great praise and honor.



A. Suffering.

Peter knew the Christians were suffering tests and trials. He knew they were going to suffer even more. Peter knew how easy it was to get discouraged. He told the Christians that:

Suffering is to be expected. 1 Peter 4:12. Suffering will come to the Christian. He should be ready for suffering. It is the will of God that suffering come, 1 Peter 4:19.

Glory will follow suffering. Suffering comes to try the faith. Yet, when a Christian stays true to Christ during the suffering, he will have glory when Jesus comes again. Whenever there is suffering, glory will follow. The greater the suffering for Christ, the greater the glory which will follow. Peter knew he would share in the glory of Christ. 1 Peter 1:7; 1:11; 4:13; 5:1; 5:10.

A Christian can expect suffering to come. Because of the glory that will follow, he can take it patiently, 1 Peter 2:20. He can also rejoice in suffering, 1 Peter 4:13.

The suffering of Christ is an example. Peter talks about the suffering of Christ. Christ had suffered and gone into His glory. 1 Peter 1:11; 2:21; 4:1,2; 5:1.

Suffering will help the Christian. Through suffering, faith is tried and found to

be very precious, 1 Peter 1:6,7. God is pleased when a Christian is willing to suffer for Him, 1 Peter 2:19,20. When others speak badly of the Christian for no reason, God will help the Christian. In the end God will receive the glory, 1 Peter 4:13,14.

B. Daily Christian life, 1 Peter 2:9 - 3:22.

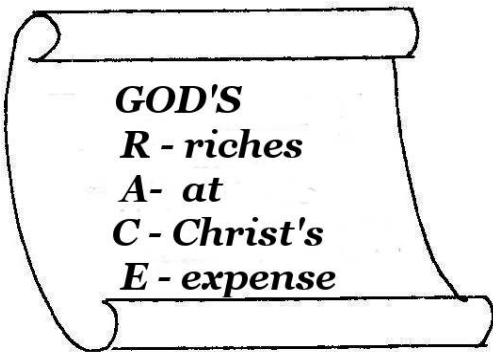
READ 1 PETER 2:9 - 3:22.

The Christian did not buy his salvation. His salvation was bought with the blood of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 1:18-21.

The Christians are a chosen people, 1 Peter 2:9-11. They are a part of the holy nation which belongs to God. The Christians have a special work to do - they are to tell others what God has done for them. The Christians are strangers in this world. Their real home is in heaven. The Christians are not to do the sinful things of the flesh.

When a Christian lives a godly life, he will make those who accuse him feel ashamed. The Christian is to obey the laws of the country. When he does this, he stops the mouths of foolish men. The Christian is to obey the person he works for. He is to live a God-like life in his home.

C. Grace.



Grace is all the riches of God at the expense of Christ. Grace is the loving favor given by God to a person who does not deserve it.

This grace of God gives peace, 1 Peter 1:2. The prophets told about this grace, 1 Peter 1:10.

Husband and wife can live together in love and unity when they have the grace of God,

1 Peter 3:7. The Christian is to use the grace of God wisely. He does this when he uses the gifts God has given to him to help others, 1 Peter 4:10. God gives grace to the humble Christian, 1 Peter 5:5.

God gives grace to the Christian for suffering, 1 Peter 2:19,20. The suffering will make the Christian perfect, strong and settled, 1 Peter 5:10. A Christian is in the true grace of God. He is to stand or remain in this true grace of God, 1 Peter 5:12.

VIII. OUTLINE OF 2 PETER

- A. The Christian's life and help, 2 Peter chapter 1.
- B. The false teachers' life and works, 2 Peter chapter 2.
- C. The coming of the Day of the Lord, 2 Peter chapter 3.

IX. LESSONS IN 2 PETER

The main thoughts in 2 Peter are: Christian living, false teachers and the Day of the Lord.

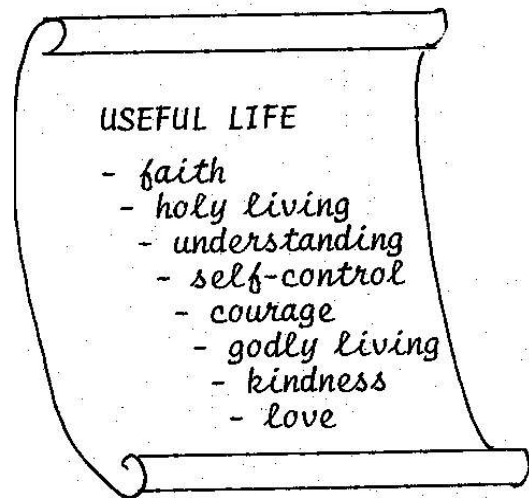
A. Christian growth.

READ 2 PETER 1:1-20.

God gave the Christian much faith. This faith is worth more than money, 2 Peter 1:1-4.

As a Christian knows Christ better, he will receive more grace and peace, 2 Peter 1:2. God gives the Christian everything he needs for his life and Christian living. This was given to him through God's great power. As a Christian knows God better. He learns that God has called him to share his life. Great promises are given to those who know Christ.

The Christian is to have faith that God will keep His promise. To this he is to add **Holy living**. Next, he is to add **understanding** of the things of God. To better understanding he is to add **self-control**. To this he is to add **courage** to not give up. He is to add **Godly living** to his life. Then he is to be **kind** to other Christians. He is to learn to love Christians with a **brotherly love**. When the Christian adds all these things together he will have **a useful and fruitful life**. But the Christian must keep adding these things every day, 2 Peter 1:5-12.

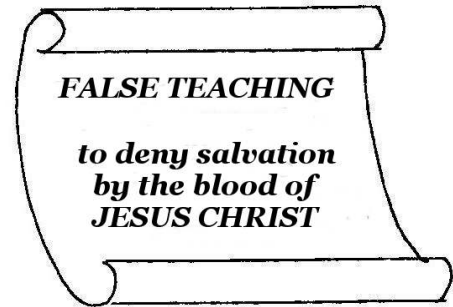


The Christian is not to follow man-made stories. He is to follow the Holy Word of God. The Word of God will not fail him or disappoint him. This Word was given to the prophets long ago. The Holy Spirit told them what to write, 2 Peter 1:16-20.

B. False teachers.

READ 2 PETER 2:1-3:7.

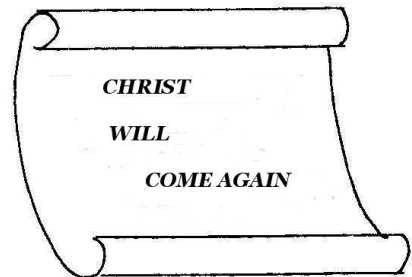
Peter warns the Christians of false teachers. These teachers would pretend to be Christians. Yet they would deny “the Lord that bought them,” 2 Peter 2:1. The false teachers would deny salvation by the blood of Jesus Christ. Also they would deny that Christ would come again, 2 Peter 3:4. The false teachers would lead people away from Jesus Christ by their sinful ways. Other people would speak bad words against the way of truth, 2 Peter 2:2.



C. The Day of the Lord.

READ 2 PETER 3:8-18.

Peter said that Christ will return. Peter said that God does not look at time the way a man looks at time. One day with the Lord is like a 1,000 years, and a 1,000 years like a day. God is giving people a chance to repent.



Christ will come when no one expects Him. Christ will come quickly. The Christians are to live so as to be ready for His coming. When Christ comes again, He will punish the wicked. Christ will make new heavens and a new earth.

X. WORDS TO LEARN

1. glory - great praise and honor.
2. self-control - to be the boss over oneself in what a person does and says.

XI. ASSIGNMENT

James.

1. What do tests (trials) do for Christians? James 1:2-4

2. How is a Christian to get wisdom? James 1:5,6

3. The man who doubts is like (James 1:5-8).
4. The man who doubts (will get) (will not get) an answer.
5. Temptations come from (James 1:13,14).
6. Tell six things a Christian should do. James 1:19-26.
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
 - 5)
 - 6)
7. Prayer, James 5:13-20.
 - 1) What kind of man was Elijah?
 - 2) What did Elijah do?
 - 3) What must the sick person do before he can ask God to heal him?

 - 4) What should each Christian try to do? James 5:19,20

8. A Christian sins when he (James 1:14).
9. What do you think about a person who says he has faith in God but is not doing what God wants him to do? James 2:14-17

10. What can the tongue do? James 3:5-12

11. Fightings among Christians come from and (James 4:1-5).
12. What does God want the Christian to do?
 - 1) James 4:7
 - 2) James 4:7

- 3) James 4:8
 - 4) James 4:8
 - 5) James 4:10
 - 6) James 4:11
13. How is the Christian to plan for the future? James 4:13-15

1 Peter.

14. What does Peter say about trials and sufferings?

- 1) 1 Peter 1:7
- 2) 1 Peter 1:11
- 3) 1 Peter 4:13
- 4) 1 Peter 5:1
- 5) 1 Peter 5:10
- 6) 1 Peter 4:12,13
- 7) 1 Peter 4:19
- 8) 1 Peter 2:23
- 9) 1 Peter 2:19,20
- 10) 1 Peter 4:14

What will follow suffering? (Look at the above answers to get the answer)

15. What seven things can a Christian do to help himself while he is being tested?

- 1 Peter 1:13 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 1 Peter 1:14 4)
- 5)
- 1 Peter 1:15 6)
- 1 Peter 1:22 7)

16. There are about 34 different commands or orders given in 1 Peter. Look up the following:
- 1) 1 Peter 2:2
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:13
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:7
 - 4) 1 Peter 3:14 - to not be
 - 5) 1 Peter 3:15
 - 6) 1 Peter 4:1
 - 7) 1 Peter 4:7
 - 8) 1 Peter 4:15
 - 9) 1 Peter 4:19
 - 10) 1 Peter 5:9
17. Peter tells of seven precious things (things of great worth). They are:
- 1) 1 Peter 1:7 . . . trial of _____ is precious.
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:19 .precious
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:4,6 precious
 - 4) 1 Peter 2:7 . . . is precious.
 - 5) 1 Peter 3:4 . . . is precious.
 - 6) 2 Peter 1:1 . . .precious
 - 7) 2 Peter 1:4 . . .precious
18. Those who put their trust in Jesus Christ are a chosen
a royal _____, an holy _____, a peculiar
to tell the praises of Him that called them out of darkness into light, (1
Peter 2:9).
19. What are the great things God gave us?
- 1) 2 Peter 1:1
 - 2) 2 Peter 1:1
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:3
 - 5) 2 Peter 1:4

20. What are false teachers like?
- 1) 2 Peter 2:1
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:2
 - 3) 2 Peter 2:10
 - 4) 2 Peter 2:10
 - 5) 2 Peter 2:12
 - 6) 2 Peter 2:12
 - 7) 2 Peter 2:13
 - 8) 2 Peter 2:17
21. What will men do in the last days? 2 Peter 3:3
- 2 Peter 3:3
 - 2 Peter 3:4
22. How does God look at time? 2 Peter 3:8
23. What does the Lord want? 2 Peter 3:9
24. How will the Day of the Lord come? 2 Peter 3:10
25. What will happen when the Day of the Lord comes? 2 Peter 3:10
26. The things of the world will be destroyed. What should the Christian think about? 2 Peter 3:11,17

NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY by Joseph F. Pope. Copyright, 1976 by Northern Canada Evangelical Mission, Inc., Box 3030, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, Canada, S6V 7V4. Edited 2019 by Helen Pope.

References taken from the NEW LIFE Testament are identified (New Life Testament). It is published by the Christian Literature International, Canby, Oregon. Used by permission. Thought quotes from NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY, M.C. Tenny used by permission. Copyright Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961. "Bible history" and "Footprints of Jesus" maps from the "Thompson Chain Reference Bible" used by permission. Copyright by B. B. Kirkbride Bible Co., Inc.