

*A Year's Spiritual Journey through a Study of
New Testament Books*

Part #4

**Important Lessons to be learned from
NEW TESTAMENT
GENERAL
BOOKS**

13 Lessons

**Prepared by:
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2005

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To be Learned
From a Study of**

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Lesson One

“Introduction and Background to the General Letters”

Of the twenty-two letters of the New Testament, it is believed that Paul was used by God to write at least thirteen and maybe a fourteenth of these letters. However, Hebrews is generally placed in the category with the other eight and they are referred to as “catholic” or “general” letters. They are given this title possibly because of their contrast to the letters of Paul. Most of his letters are addressed to an individual church or person, while the other nine do not have a specific destination or they are addressed to churches in a province. The letters of 2nd and 3rd John could be exceptions to this.

It is estimated that the writing time for these letters ranges from about 48 AD to 96 AD. They were written to mostly deal with different problems that faced large sectors of the church at the end of the first century. James and 1st Peter, as well as Hebrews, show a grave concern for unfaithfulness on the part of God’s people. 2nd Peter and Jude, as well as Revelation, are dealing more with future events and the church’s need of being faithful in the midst of grave doctrinal errors and persecution. John’s letters are gravely concerned about God’s people walking in Light, Love, and Truth. The layout below will give an approximate time of the writing of each book and a theme passage and topic for each book.

GENERAL LETTERS	
James (AD 48-49)-----	Practical Christianity (1:22)
Hebrews (AD 63-65)-----	Contrast Between Old & New Testaments (8:13)
1 Peter (AD 65)-----	Steadfastness in Midst of Persecution (4:12-13)
2 Peter (AD 66-67)-----	False Teachers and End Times (2:1)
Jude (AD 75)-----	The Value of Old Testament Examples (Vs. 5-7)
1 John (AD 80-85)-----	Contrast Between Darkness & Light (1:5)
2 John (AD 80-85)-----	Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ (Vs. 9-11)
3 John (AD 80-85)-----	The Need to Walk in Truth (Vs. 3-4)
Revelation (AD 96)-----	The Triumph of the Righteous (2:7)

The book of Acts gives very little historical background directly for this general letters, but it does help to provide some insights to the times leading up to their writing. By the time these letters were being written the Gospel had spread throughout the Roman World (Colossians 1:23). Persecution by the Jews at first had begun to subside somewhat, but a new persecutor was emerging in the form of the Roman Caesars. Nero was among the first to lift his hand to directly put some to death. It is believed that Paul was executed by his command outside the city of Rome. The church was also having to deal more and more with false teachers coming into their

midst, often unawares at first. These letters reflect a great deal of what was being advocated and how God’s Word dealt with such errors. But as the church settled down to everyday living and existing day after day, year after year, it began to be faced with other grave temptations and errors of thinking. These books seem to express a very grave concern for the faithfulness of the church through all of these trials and tribulations.

The following information may prove helpful as we study through the General Letters to Christians. We have tried to tie in major events connected with Christianity with the Roman Emperors that we in power at that time.

KEY EVENTS OF THE FIRST CENTURY		
ROMAN EMPORERS	DATES	BIBLICAL EVENTS
Augustus	BC 30-AD 14	Birth of Christ (4-5 BC)
Tiberius	AD 14-37	Ministry & Death of Jesus
	AD 33-36	Conversion of Paul
Caligula	AD 37-41	Conversion of 1st Gentles
Claudius	AD 41-54	Famine, Martyrdom of the Apostle James
	AD 54	Expulsion of Jews from Rome
	AD 47-49	Paul’s first Mission Trip
	AD 50	Controversy over Circumcision
	AD 50-53	Paul’s second Mission Trip
Nero	AD 54-68	Persecution of Church by Emperors
	AD 53-58	Paul’s third Mission Trip
	AD 58-63	Paul’s Long Imprisonment at Caesarea and Rome (4-5 years)
	AD 62	Death of James (Brother of Jesus)
	AD 63	Paul’s Trial at Rome and Release
	AD 63-67	Paul’s fourth Mission Trip
	AD 67	Paul’s Trials and Death at Rome
	AD 67	Possible crucifixion of Peter at Rome????
Galba	AD 68	
Otho	AD 68	
Vitellius	AD 69	
Vespasian	AD 69-79	Destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70)
Titus	AD 79-81	
Domitian	AD 81-96	Strong Persecution—John Imprisoned
Nerva	AD 96-98	
Trajan	AD 98-117	

We have divided the New Testament Books into four Categories: (1) Books of History (The Gospels and Acts); (2) First part of Paul’s Letters; (3) Second part of Paul’s Letters; and the (4) General Letters. However, there is another way to categorize these books: (1) History and (2) Letters to Christians. The chart on the next page will give a little more information in a general way about an overview of the New Testament Books.

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS IN SECTIONS		
<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>BOOKS</u>	<u>PURPOSES</u>
<u>GOSPELS</u>	Matthew Mark Luke John	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reveal the Messiah to the world 2. Record the preparations for the Kingdom 3. Give evidence for Deity of Jesus
<u>HISTORY</u>	Acts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Record Beginning of the church 2. Record how people were saved 3. Record of the Spread of the Kingdom
<u>PAUL'S LETTERS</u>	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians Galatians 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans Ephesians Philippians Colossians Philemon Titus 1 Timothy 2 Timothy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To confirm them in what they had been taught. 2. To show the Dedication of a Life after Christ. 3. To give full assurance of hope after death.
<u>GENERAL LETTERS</u>	James Hebrews 1 Peter 2 Peter Jude 1 John 2 John 3 John Revelation	

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. There are 9 books in the category of General Letters (Books).
- ___ 2. The term Catholic Letters are applied to these Letters because they were written by Catholics.
- ___ 3. All of the General Letters are written to a general group of churches—not exception.
- ___ 4. Either four or five writers were used by God to give us these letters.
- ___ 5. James was possibly the first of the “General Letters” to be written while Jude was the last.
- ___ 6. All the “General Letters” fit into the history found in the book of Acts.
- ___ 7. False Teachers and False Practices are two main topics of these “General Letters.”
- ___ 8. Persecution of Christians had subsided by AD 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem.
- ___ 9. It took less than 50 years for these 9 books to be written.
- ___ 10. I plan to read each of these books as I go through this study.

Lessons Two & Three

“Practical Christianity”

(James)

We know the writer to be *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,”* but to which James this refers is the question to be decided. There are several by this name mentioned in the New Testament, but only three that are considered prominent enough to have been the author: (1) James, the Lord’s brother; (2) James, the son of Zebedee (an Apostle); and (3) James, the son of Alphaeus. Of the three, James, the son of Zebedee was beheaded in about the year 44 AD, which would eliminate him as being the writer. Some writers have made an attempt to identify the other two as the same person—based on what they feel are good reasons. However, in order to identify the two as one, the phrase “the Lord’s brethren” would have to be understood as referring to near kinsmen rather than his actual brothers. It would seem preferable to keep them separated.

REFERENCES TO JAMES, THE LORD’S BROTHER

Following are some of the Scriptural and historical references made about James, the brother of the Lord, that would indicate the definite possibility that he was the writer of this letter.

1. The Scriptures teach that Jesus had brethren and sisters (Matthew 13:55-56).
2. It is indicated in John 7:2-9 that James did not fully believe Jesus to be the promised Messiah before his death, but after Christ arose He appeared to a “James” that would strongly be accepted as being His fleshly brother (1 Corinthians 15:7; Acts 1:13-14).
3. Thus, early we read of this James becoming very prominent figure in the Jerusalem church. On Paul’s first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion he saw only Peter and James (Galatians 1:18-19; Acts 9:26). Later, at the Jerusalem conference we find that this James was one of the elders of the church (Galatians 2:9; Acts 15:2; 15:6-13). Even before this Peter, upon being released from prison, said, ***“Go show these things unto James, and to the brethren”*** (Acts 12:17). Paul, in Acts 21:18-26, took the advice of James and the other elders just before his arrest in Jerusalem.
4. As revealed in Acts 21:18-28 and Galatians 2:12, as well as in the Epistle of James, and also from traditional history of his life, the writer of this Letter was still a strict Jew himself, but tolerated the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-23). He endorsed Paul’s work among the Gentiles, but was chiefly concerned about winning the Jews to faith in Jesus as the promised messiah. His life and his actions were of such a nature not to discourage the Jews from accepting Christ. Most of the early Christians in Jerusalem must have still lived according to the Law and its precepts as is revealed in the advice of James in Acts 21:20-28). Paul truly did teach both Jew and Gentile that the Old Law was taken out of the way, but in Jerusalem they were very slow in turning from it as a Law; and it would be easy to see why, and would be an explanation of the problem at Antioch that Paul speaks of in Galatians 2:12.

5. Early writings and traditions also point to James, the Lord's brother, as being the writer and an elder of the Jerusalem church. He is supposed to have died a martyr's death in the year AD 62. The destruction of Jerusalem came just a few years later (AD 70), and many of the Jews looked upon this as God's judgment upon them for murdering James.

THE DATE AND TO WHOM WRITTEN

At different times in Jewish history God had allowed Israel's enemies to take her captive. Thus, some out of all tribes were scattered throughout the world. Among those scattered were devout men that would travel unto Jerusalem to worship according to the Law. On the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, there were devout men from every nation present. Many were converted, remained a while longer to be taught, and upon the persecution mentioned in Acts 8, were scattered abroad. It is suggested that he may have had particularly in mind those in the eastern dispersion, for Peter later wrote to those in Asia Minor. Upon a closer study of James' feelings about the Jewish Law, we can see why some even suggest that the letter was even intended for Jews everywhere, but especially to Christians. The thing so amazing about the Letter is the few references to Christ that are made and the almost exclusive emphasis placed on Godly living with practically no reference to the great doctrinal themes discussed in Paul's letters. The letter is addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad—but probably intended for Jewish Christians.

The date of writing can be limited to the years of 45-62 AD, but to set a definite date would seem to be almost impossible. The internal evidence would point strongly towards a date later than the dispersion in Acts 8, but to a date before the Jerusalem discussion over circumcision (AD 49-50). The date perhaps could have been about 45-48 AD. In fact, this Letter may have been the very first one written by inspired men to Christians. And naturally, the place of writing would be Jerusalem.

PURPOSE FOR WRITING THE LETTER

We understand that this Letter is a pure specimen of Hellenistic Greek, and it can be seen from a brief reading to have a very distinct Jewish tone. It is an eloquent piece of work, yet stern and to the point. It covers a number of subjects without any apparent connection to them, but with closer study it becomes apparent that he is dealing with the common frailties, evil-tendencies, and temptations that the early Christians were facing during those early years of the church. It calls upon Christians to give evidence that we really mean what we confess. It is a treatise against hypocrisy and a concern with social and ethical aspects of Christianity. Few references are made to Christ and such subjects as the Gospel, Redemption, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, etc., are omitted. If any mention is made, it is more incidental and very simple.

The following outline can serve as an overview of the book. It is intended that the book of James be dealt with in two lessons.

OUTLINE OF JAMES

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| CHAPTER ONE | * <u>TRIALS, TEMPTATIONS, AND SIN</u>

1. Introduction (1)
2. Facing Life's Trials (2-12)
3. Temptation and Sin (13-16)
4. God, the giver of good gifts (17-18)
5. Pure religion defined (19-27) |
| CHAPTER TWO | * <u>WHAT IS SAVING FAITH</u>

1. Condemnation of showing partiality (1-13)
2. Perfecting of one's faith (14-26) |
| CHAPTER THREE | * <u>THE TONGUE AND WISDOM</u>

1. The Tongue must be bridled (1-12)
2. Two kinds of Wisdom and their fruit (13-18) |
| CHAPTER FOUR | * <u>MAN AND GOD</u>

1. The Christian and worldliness (1-4)
2. God's Grace and Man (5-10)
3. Brotherly concern (11-12)
4. Man's planning without consideration of God (13-17) |
| CHAPTER FIVE | * <u>MONEY AND ACTIONS</u>

1. Dealing with the ungodly rich (1-6)
2. How Christians are to act in all circumstances (7-20) |

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. To whom does James address his Letter?**
- 2. Why does he exhort them to be joyful when falling into divers temptations?**
- 3. Upon what condition will God grant us wisdom?**
- 4. Why should the poor man rejoice? The rich man?**
- 5. What is the blessing of enduring temptation?**

- 6. Can God be tempted of evil?**
- 7. Does God tempt man?**
- 8. What makes it possible for a man to be tempted?**
- 9. Is temptation a sin?**
- 10. Is God unpredictable?**
- 11. Of what have we been begotten?**
- 12. What attitude of heart is necessary to receive the engrafted word to save our soul?**
- 13. How can a man's religion be made vain?**
- 14. What is pure and undefiled religion?**
- 15. How were these people showing respect of persons?**
- 16. Who has been appointed heirs of the kingdom?**
- 17. Who had blasphemed the worthy name by which they had been called?**
- 18. What does one offense make us before the law?**
- 19. Why should we show mercy in our judgment?**
- 20. Faith without works is what?**
- 21. When was Abraham justified by works?**
- 22. Give James' definition of physical death.**
- 23. Who is a perfect (mature) man?**
- 24. What two things are mentioned to illustrate the power of small things?**
- 25. What does James say the tongue does?**
- 26. What are the acts that show the outcome of earthly, sensual, and devilish wisdom?**

- 27. What is the result of wisdom from above?**

- 28. What two reasons are given for their not having God's wisdom?**

- 29. What makes us the enemy of God?**

- 30. Upon what condition will the devil flee from us?**

- 31. What must we do to draw nigh to God?**

- 32. To what does James compare our life and why?**

- 33. What does James say is a sin?**

- 34. Of what does James accuse the rich of being guilty?**

- 35. What does James say to help them be patient?**

- 36. What two men are used as examples of patience and prayer?**

- 37. Can a brother err from the truth?**

Lessons Four, Five, & Six

“Contrast Between Old and New Testaments” **(Hebrews)**

The Letter that has been given the name “Hebrews” is a very important book in the New Testament. It deals with some of the great issues between the Old and New Testaments. As important as it is, it is strange that we do not know who the writer was that God used to pen this Letter. Several possibilities of authorship have been suggested: Paul, Aquila, Apollos, Mark, Barnabas, Silas, or even Clement of Rome. Since the writer did not name himself in the Letter, we must depend upon inferences from the Letter and early writings to give us some evidence upon which to suggest possible authorship.

THE WRITER OF HEBREWS

Out of the above names that have been suggested, we would like to recommend the possibility of the Apostle Paul as being the one whom God used to write this Letter and offer the following information to sustain this suggestion:

1. The writer seems to have written from Rome (13:24), which could very easily correspond to Paul’s release from his first imprisonment.
2. Timothy had been either released from prison or sent off on a journey from the writer, which the Greek word in (13:23) would allow either way. Timothy was sent from Rome by Paul to Philippi just before his release (Philippians 2:19-24).
3. The writer planned to visit them as soon as Timothy returned (13:23). Paul had been the means through whom the money was raised for the poor saints at Jerusalem and because of his great interest in them as well as the Jews of Jerusalem, it would be very natural for him to write to them stating his desire to visit again.
4. The ones to whom the Letter was sent had sympathized in the writer’s bonds (10:34), which could very easily have been when Paul was taken prisoner at Jerusalem from the mob, beaten, and placed in bonds for two years at Caesarea.
5. The closeness of Timothy and Paul and the thought that the writer and Timothy were coming together would strongly indicate the writer to be Paul.
6. In spite of the variations throughout the Letter from “Paul’s usual style,” there is still much of the style, phraseology, and logical structure that strongly resemble that of the Apostle’s writings. An explanation for the variations may be accounted for by two things:
 - a) The ones to whom he was writing were distinctly Jewish;
 - b) The subject matter required a different approach than the other Letters of Paul

TWO WHOM WRITTEN

The over-all indication is that the Letter was written to Jewish Christians primarily. It is also indicated that it was a particular locality to which he was writing. Certain facts can be ascertained from the Letter as follows:

1. They were all very well acquainted with the Old Testament and with the actual practices of sacrificing.
2. The Letter was to those that had a Jewish background.
3. No allusions are made to the controversies between Jewish and Gentile Christians.
4. The readers had been Christians for some period of time (5:12).
5. They knew the writer (13:18-19).
6. They knew Timothy (13:23).
7. They had steadfastly endured persecution and loss of property (10:32-34).
8. Some were in great danger of going back into Judaism.

From the above facts, the mass of evidence seems to point to the Jewish Christians in and around Jerusalem where especially the persecution and loss of property would mostly be true of Palestine. In addition to the above facts, the general testimony of the early (uninspired) writings indicate this as well. And finally, the title itself agrees with this conclusion for it is to the Hebrews which could only purely be said of the Jewish or Hebrew Christians in the Judean area.

THE OCCASION AND DATE OF WRITING THE LETTER

Depending upon the above facts, the occasion for writing the Letter can be seen as follows. On several occasions the Apostle Paul would write a Letter a sort time before he would go to a place, following it up by a visit. Paul had been to Jerusalem just five years before, and had been imprisoned at Caesarea for two years of that time. He came to know the situation in the church at Jerusalem very well. Persecution and loss of possessions had been a big blow to many of the early Christians, and they still had to deal with new uprisings of persecutions at the time of writing the Letter. Judaism was still strong, the Temple was still standing, and the sacrifices were still being made. The Letter indicates that there was a grave danger of apostasy among the Jewish Christians. The need for such a letter as this was obvious! They needed not only encouragement, but to be warned of the dangers of turning back to a system that would soon be ended permanently. The Temple with all its sacrifices would soon cease. The time when the Letter would have been written could therefore have been at the time of Paul's release in AD 63.

PURPOSE FOR WRITING THE LETTER

The primary purpose was to prevent the Jewish Christians from leaving Christ and going back into Judaism. The writer's method to accomplish this was by establishing the supremacy of Christ and Christianity over the old system of the Law of Moses by comparing the two. He especially showed that the change from the Levitical to the Christian system of justification was prefigured and predicted in the Old Testament. It dealt with the change of priesthood, a change of covenant, and new sacrifice, and a new sanctuary. Throughout the Letter the writer warns them about falling away, stating that there is no other sacrifice for sin if they turn from Christ. He tries to encourage them to renew their efforts and to make a complete break with Judaism.

Among the Letters of the New Testament perhaps there is no greater from the standpoint of doctrinal and literary excellence. It is a summary of the transition from the Old system to the New. It could be the final and greatest Letter to convince the Jews that the Old has been done away having served its purpose and has been replaced by a New and better system.

OUTLINE OF HEBREWS

- CHAPTER ONE** * **CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO PROPHETS & ANGELS**
1. Over the prophets (1-3)
 2. Over the Angels (4-14)
- CHAPTER TWO** * **THE FLESHLY STATE OF THE SON OF GOD**
1. The Great Salvation given through Christ (1-4)
 2. Christ made a little lower than the Angels to become man's High Priest (5-18)
- CHAPTER THREE** * **CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO MOSES**
1. Contrast of Servant and Son (1-6)
 2. The Need to hold to belief in the Son (7-19)
- CHAPTER FOUR** * **THE PROMISE OF A REST FOR GOD'S PEOPLE**
1. The need to be faithful to enter into this rest (1-12)
 2. We need Jesus as our High Priest (13-16)
- CHAPTER FIVE** * **THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S PRIESTHOOD**
1. God's promise of it (1-10)
 2. The dullness of his readers (11-14)
- CHAPTER SIX** * **THE SURENESS OF GOD'S PROMISES**
1. The danger of their falling (1-12)
 2. God will fulfill His promises (13-20)
- CHAPTER SEVEN** * **THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD**
1. The Melchizedec priesthood is superior to the Aaronic (1-10)
 2. The need for a change of Law brought a need for a change of priesthood (11-19)
 3. The continuity of Christ's priesthood shows His superiority (20-28)
- CHAPTER EIGHT** * **SUPERIORITY OF CHRIST'S COVENANT OVER THE OLD**
1. The Old Covenant served as a shadow for the New (1-5)
 2. The reason for the second Covenant (6-13)
- CHAPTER NINE** * **SUPERIORITY OVER THE TABERNACLE AND ITS SERVICES AND SACRIFICES**
1. Tabernacle was only a shadow of the New to come (1-10)
 2. Inferiority of the Sacrifices of the Old Law (11-28)

(Continued)

CHAPTER TEN

* **THE FINALITY OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE**

1. The ineffectiveness of animal sacrifices (1-4)
2. The once for all sacrifice of Christ (5-18)
3. The encouragement to hold to the sacrifice of Christ (19-31)
4. His reminder of what they had endured and not to draw back (32-39)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

* **THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE FAITHFUL BEFORE THEM**

1. What is faith (1-3)
2. Examples of faith (4-40)

CHAPTER TWELVE

* **THE NECESSITY OF TRIAL AND CHASTENING**

1. The value and need of chastening (1-13)
2. The grave danger of rejecting God and His Son (14-29)

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

* **FOLLOW YOUR LEADERS OBEDIENTLY**

1. Various exhortations (1-6)
2. Obey those who have the rule over you (7-17)
3. Personal remarks and requests (18-25)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did God speak in times past unto the fathers?
2. By whom has He spoken to us in these last days?
3. What exaltation has been given to Him?
4. Give the reasons why Christ is superior to Angels.

5. What are Angels and what are their purpose for existence?

6. Why should we not neglect this salvation?

7. Who first began to preach this salvation, and then by whom?

8. How did God bear witness to the truthfulness of their preaching?
9. Who was made a little lower than the Angels?
10. How was the captain of our salvation made perfect?
11. Why did Christ take upon Himself the form of flesh?
12. In what way was Christ superior to Moses?
13. Who makes up Christ's house?
14. How is it possible to depart from the living God?
15. We are made partakers of Christ if what?
16. Why did the Jews in the wilderness not enter into Canaan?
17. Who has entered into God's rest?
18. What description is given to the word of God?
19. Where is our High Priest now?
20. What is the general purpose of having a High Priest?
21. For whom does the High Priest have to offer sacrifices for sins?
22. Did Christ take the High Priesthood upon Himself without the Father's will?
23. How do we know that God had planned for Him to be our High Priest?
24. To whom did Jesus become the author of eternal salvation?
25. What did these people need to be given instead of strong meat?
26. Who is it that is impossible to renew again unto repentance?
27. Why is it impossible?
28. What is the value of an oath?
29. What is it that God is unable to do?

- 30. To whom did Abraham pay tithes?**

- 31. What description is given of Melchezedic?**

- 32. What did the Levites do in respect of tithes?**
- 33. How did Levi pay tithes unto Melchezedic?**
- 34. Was perfection by the Levitical Priesthood?**
- 35. If a change of priesthood was necessary, what else was necessary?**
- 36. Of what tribe of Israel was Jesus?**
- 37. Why couldn't He be a priest after the order of Aaron?**
- 38. How was Christ made a priest with an oath?**
- 39. What big difference is there between Christ's Priesthood and that of Aaron?**

- 40. Why was Moses commanded to make the Tabernacle according to a certain pattern?**
- 41. Was the first Covenant faultless?**
- 42. Through what prophet did God foretell that He would give a New Covenant?**
- 43. What will be the difference in this New Covenant from the Old?**

- 44. Describe the furniture in the first Tabernacle.**

- 45. Into what part of the Tabernacle did the Priest go continually and into what part did the High Priest go and why?**

- 46. With whose blood did Christ enter into the holy place?**
- 47. How is Christ the mediator of the New Covenant?**
- 48. When did His Testament go into force?**

49. How was the first Covenant dedicated?
50. How is remission secured, or upon what is it dependant?
51. If Christ had to suffer each year for the sins of the people, then for how long would He have to suffer?
52. What was wrong with the sacrifices under the Law?
53. Could the blood of bulls and goats take away sins?
54. How did Christ come to do the will of the Father?
55. What special point is now made by quoting: “their sins and iniquities will I remember no more?”
56. Had some of these Jewish Christians been forsaking the assemblies of the saints?
57. What day is referred to in verse 25?
58. If Christ is rejected, to what other sacrifice could the people turn?
59. What is said to be worse than despising Moses’ Law?
60. Had these people known the writer while he was in bonds?
61. When would they receive the promise?
62. What will happen to them that draw back?
63. Define faith?
64. How do we know the worlds were framed by God?
65. Out of what did He make the world?
66. Why was Abel’s offering accepted over Cain’s?
67. Who can come to God?
68. Was there any evidence of a flood about to come when Noah built his Ark?
69. What kind of City has God prepared for such men as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

70. What did Abraham think about killing his own son of promise as God commanded?

71. What great choice did Moses make while in Egypt?

72. By what did the walls of Jericho fall down?

73. Why did Rahab not perish with the people of Jericho?

74. Who are the cloud of witnesses that the writer speaks of in 12:1?

75. What is the sin that does so easily beset us?

76. Whom does the Lord chasten?

77. Why does God chasten His people?

78. What will come from our chastening?

79. How can we fail of the grace of God?

80. To what does the writer say that we have come?

81. In what manner are we exhorted to serve God?

82. Why should we be content with such things that we have?

83. Where did Christ suffer that he might sanctify the people with His blood?

84. With what words did the writer urge them to give up the City of Jerusalem?

85. What is the work of those who have the rule over us?

86. Who was to come with the writer when he visited them?

87. From where was this Letter probably written?

Lesson Seven

“Steadfastness in the Midst of Persecution”

(1 Peter)

It is interesting to notice that Peter had such a prominent position among the Apostles and was used to preach the first sermon on the day of Pentecost, but was only used by God to write two of the New Testament Letters. Maybe God was trying to tell us something. This letter that we are to study in this lesson is stated to have been written by ***“Simon Peter, a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ.”***

THE LIFE OF PETER

Peter’s original name was Simon or Simeon. His father’s name was Jona or John and his brother’s name was Andrew. It was while Andrew and another disciple of John the baptizer were present that they heard him say of Jesus, ***“behold the Lamb of God.”*** Upon realizing Jesus was the Messiah, Andrew quickly found Peter and brought him to Christ. It was upon this first meeting that Christ gave Simon his new name “Cephas” (Aramaic) or “Peter” (Greek) that meant “a stone” (John 1:29-42). John 1:44 indicates Peter and Andrew were residents of Bethsaida, but evidently later moved to Capernaum. It was while here that Luke pictures them as being in partnership with James, John, and Zebedee in the fishing business, and while they were disciples they continued in their fishing trade until upon this incident Jesus called them to constant companionship so they might become “fishers of men.” They forsook all and followed Him, both sets of brothers (Matthew 4:18-22). Peter and Andrew evidently lived together in Capernaum, for in Mark 1:28-31 we find Jesus, James and John going into their house and finding Peter’s mother-in-law sick with a fever, whereupon Christ healed her.

The scene now turns to a special chosen group of disciples that followed Christ in his preaching throughout the land, forsaking all as Peter expressed it (Matthew 19:27) and following Him. Peter, James, and John became the intimate companions of Christ and were granted (it seemed) special privileges. Peter’s characteristics began to stand out as a natural leader, showing energy and enthusiasm, but a little impulsive and impetuous. Besides the special privileges granted him along with James and John, Peter stands out many times as the spokesman for the group. He made two great confessions of Christ (John 6:68-69; Matthew 16:13-17), witnessed His transfiguration and suggested impetuously to build the three tabernacles (Matthew 17:1-5), and boasted of his devotion to Christ that he would not deny Him (Mark 14:29-31), but during the trial of Christ, denied Him three times.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, Peter and John were the first to the tomb upon hearing that His body was gone, and the Lord appeared to them upon several occasions. In John 21, it would seem to be the Lord’s way of restoring Peter back to his former zeal by having him confess Him three times. After the Lord ascended, Peter suggested the replacement of Judas, and was the spokesman for the twelve on the day of Pentecost. He now begins to exemplify more of the real character that Jesus had seen in him before: strength of character, courage, and boldness.

Peter spoke for he and John when brought before the Sanhedrin of the Jews, and voiced that conviction of heart when he said, ***“whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”*** It was Peter that questioned the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira, that healed people by his shadow (Acts 5:15), and that preached unto the first Gentiles to open the door into the kingdom for them (Acts 10-11). Later, after the death of James, Peter was also imprisoned, but miraculously was released by an Angel. He then departed for another place until after the death of Herod. Nothing more is said of him until after Paul’s first mission trip and the discussion in Jerusalem over circumcision of the Gentile converts in which Peter took a leading part. He afterwards went to the city of Antioch and where Paul rebukes him for his withdrawing his fellowship from the Gentile Christians (Galatians 2:12).

It is from here on that we have to rely almost entirely upon the traditional accounts of his life. It is quite possible that he traveled among the provinces of Asia Minor preaching the Gospel. It would seem that he carried his wife with him on at least some of his travels (1 Corinthians 9:5). There are some traditional accounts that Peter went to Rome and was there crucified upside down in about AD 67-68, which it is believed was shortly after the death of Paul. Some question the reliability of this account.

TIME, PLACE, AND TO WHOM WRITTEN

Peter’s Letter is addressed to ***“the sojourners scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.”*** Peter wrote to people in all the provinces of Asia Minor but one, Cilicia, which was separated by the Taurus Mountains from the others. It is suggested that Peter wrote to Jewish Christians scattered throughout this area. However, there are certain considerations that would indicate that it was addressed to all Christians. It would seem strange indeed to address his Letter to the Jewish element of the church and not to the Gentiles also, when the persecutions and problems evidently faced them both. Also, the following Scriptures indicate a Gentile audience (1:14, 18; 2:10; 3:6; 4:3).

The Letter was possibly penned by Silvanus (5:12) and written from Babylon. The problem here is whether the word should be understood in its literal sense or used figuratively, referring to Rome. John does use Babylon possibly in this way (Revelation 17-18). However, there is nothing in the text that would require it to be taken figuratively. Even the provinces are listed as though one would be coming from Babylon of Assyria to deliver the Letter first to Pontus, and then to the others in order.

The time of writing is harder to ascertain with certainty. Granting that Peter was at Babylon and writing to these churches, it is quite possible that he would not have written until after Paul wrote his first prison Epistles. The whole tone of Peter’s Letter and his evident acquaintance with Paul’s Letters would indicate a time of writing later than AD 63. Mark, being with Peter when writing this Letter, would permit a time of writing between Paul’s imprisonments. A good approximate date would be AD 65.

PURPOSE FOR WRITING THIS LETTER

Persecution by Jews had subsided somewhat, but now a new one was coming on the scene—Roman persecution that was started by Nero, Emperor of Rome (AD 63-65). This action also spread to the provinces of Asia Minor. Peter's primary purpose seems to have been to show the great hope of Christians and exhort them to hold on to this hope even during persecutions that must need come. Also, that this hope will serve as a great source of comfort during the afflictions and trials that are coming. He reminded them who they were, to whom they belong, and gave examples of Christ's sufferings and the value from suffering as a Christian.

OUTLINE OF 1 PETER

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| CHAPTER ONE | * <u>THE GREAT HOPE OF GOD'S PEOPLE</u> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Christian's hope is kept sure by his faith (1-9)2. God's foretelling of this salvation (10-12)3. Exhortations to obedience, holiness, and brotherly love (13-25) |
| CHAPTER TWO | * <u>THINGS TO WHICH THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ARE COMPARED</u> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. As newborn babes, lively stones, and a chosen generation (1-10)2. Abstinence, obedience, and love encouraged again (11-18)3. The need to bear up under suffering (19-25) |
| CHAPTER THREE | * <u>INFLUENCE OF A GODLY LIFE</u> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Christian wife's influence over her unbelieving husband (1-7)2. Live the life and have knowledge to be ready for persecution (8-22) |
| CHAPTER FOUR | * <u>COMFORT IN MIDST OF PERSECUTION</u> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Exhortations to godliness (1-11)2. Comfort when persecuted (12-19) |
| CHAPTER FIVE | * <u>EXHORTATION TO THE ELDERS</u> |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Encouragement to elders (1-4)2. Encouragement to Christians (5-7)3. Be prepared for the devil's wiles (8-9)4. Miscellaneous greetings (10-14) |

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. To whom does Peter address his first Letter?

2. Unto what had his readers been begotten?

3. What is God's power to keep the Christian faithful?
4. What is much more precious than gold that perishes?
5. What is the end of our faith that we shall receive?
6. What did the prophets prophesy beforehand?
7. By what had they been redeemed?
8. How had they purified their souls?
9. By what had they been born again?
10. What must be laid aside as newborn babes?
11. Upon what must a newborn babe feed?
12. Who makes us God's spiritual house?
13. What does Peter give as the opposite of believing?
14. Give four phrases that Peter uses to refer to his readers?

15. What wars against the soul?
16. Whom has God sent for the punishment of evildoers?
17. What are the servants exhorted to do?
18. What is acceptable with God?
19. What example has Christ left for us?
20. Who is the Shepherd and Bishop of our soul?
21. By what may an unbelieving mate be won?

22. What are women forbidden to wear?
23. Who can be the daughters of Sarah?

24. What must a man do if he is to see good days?
25. Over whom are the Lord's eyes?
26. In what manner should we give a reason for the hope that lies within us?
27. How many souls were saved by water in the days of Noah?
28. What does water have to do with our salvation today?

29. How should a Christian live his life in the flesh?
30. How had the Gentiles walked?
31. What is to be done with our gift from God?
32. Were the Christians to regard their persecution as strange?
33. What is a Christian exhorted not to suffer as?
34. What will be the end of them that obey not the Gospel?
35. What admonition did Peter give to the elders?

36. Who is the chief shepherd?
37. What does God do with the proud?
38. Why should we cast all our care upon God?
39. How does the devil walk about and why?
40. By whom did Peter write this letter unto them?
41. Who sends greetings along with Peter?

Lesson Eight

“False Teachers, Examples, & End Times”

(2 Peter & Jude)

We have combined these two books for this lesson. Even though they have two different writers, their topics are much the same: False Teachers, Disobedience, and the results of such. The Apostle Paul continually warns about the dangers of false teachers in his writings and indicated that they would get worse. Both Peter and Jude pick up this theme and stress it also

2 PETER

AUTHORSHIP. Peter is stated to be the one God used to write this Letter. Several things help to confirm this in the Letter:

- 1) The writer’s readiness to face death as the Lord had foretold (1:14; John 21:18-19).
- 2) His having heard the voice on the mount of transfiguration (1:17-18).
- 3) His mention of this being the second Letter that he had written unto them (3:1).
- 4) His reference to Paul’s Letters (3:15-16).

OCCASION & DATE OF WRITING. It is possible that this letter could have been sent to the same persons that his first letter was sent to. Both letters could very easily be understood to be universal—that is, intended to be read by the church everywhere. Peter evidently knew that his life was soon to end (1:14) and was very concerned about the new doctrine trying to creep into the churches by false teaching. The need was felt for a strong warning to be sent to the churches less they get caught up in these new ideas.

Since the letter does not state where Peter was when he wrote this letter, there could be at least two possibilities:

- 1) He could be writing from “Babylon” as he did in the first letter.
- 2) He could also have written the letter going to, or at Rome—where tradition says he died a martyr’s death shortly after the death of Paul.

We actually do not know from Scripture how Paul or Peter got back to Rome, but it seems to be certain that Nero was keying in on leaders among the Christians to put them to death. This would be a possible explanation why they died in Rome.

PURPOSE OF WRITING THE LETTER. This second letter certainly seems to be a “last letter.” It stresses that the hope we have is sure and also emphasizes the need for Christians to make that calling sure through faithfulness to Christ in their lives as well as in their teaching. Vivid warnings are given about false prophets that were soon to come to plague the church and that their end would be as all others had been before them. Several references are made to the second coming of Christ and the events that would take place at His coming. Detail and graphic words are used to describe the end of this present heavens and earth and that they would be replaced with something entirely new.

JUDE

AUTHORSHIP. The writer of this short book is stated as being “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.” Two things are significant about this statement:

- 1) He does not state he is an Apostle...and in verse 17 does not class himself with them.
- 2) He feels obligated to attach the statement that he is the brother of James to possibly give more credence to his work.

This Judge is therefore commonly identified as the half-brother of Jesus, as was the writer of the book of James. Jesus did have a brother named Jude (Matthew 13:55). James had attained prominence among the early disciples as one of the elders in Jerusalem.

LIFE OF JUDE. It seems that all of Jesus’ half-brothers had disbelieved his claims until his death and resurrection (John 7:5). However, after the resurrection he appeared to James (believed to be His half-brother), and to many others—above 500 brethren at one time. During the ten days before Pentecost, Jude could be understood as being among those termed “his brethren” (Acts 1:14). Again, Jude may have been included in the phrase “brethren of the Lord” as one who was carrying about a wife as he preached the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:5).

OCCASION AND DATE OF WRITING. Because of the great similarity of Jude and 2 Peter some controversy has arisen about who quoted or copied who. However, it is very possible for Jude to have been independent in his writing about the same things. Peter and Paul both speak of the coming of false teachers, while Jude shows that they have already crept into their midst. This may be the explanation for having another letter to be written on the same subject. Because of the above reason, among others, Jude is dated later than Peter’s second Letter. Allowing some time to elapse for these false teachers to come in, we could suggest a possible date of AD 75 or later.

OUTLINE OF 2 PETER

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| CHAPTER ONE | * <u>THE NEED FOR DILIGENCE</u> |
| | 1. To make calling & election sure (1-11) |
| | 2. The reason for his reminding them (12-21) |
| CHAPTER TWO | * <u>WARNING AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS</u> |
| | 1. Their coming is sure & so is their destruction (1-11) |
| | 2. Their sinful ways described & their terrible end (12-22) |
| CHAPTER THREE | * <u>THE CERTAINTY OF CHRIST’S COMING</u> |
| | 1. Scoffers will come and deny it (1-7) |
| | 2. The certainty of His coming (8-10) |
| | 3. So live and be ready for it (11-18) |

OUTLINE OF JUDE

CHAPTER ONE

*** WARNINGS CONCERNING FALSE TEACHERS**

1. Greetings (1-2)
2. Reason for writing (3-4)
3. Three examples of God's wrath (5-7)
4. Characterizations of these false teachers shown (8-16)
5. Exhortations on how to prepare against them (17-25)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON 2 PETER

1. **To whom does Peter address his second letter?**
2. **What are we exhorted to add unto our faith?**
3. **Why are we to add to these things?**
4. **Who does Peter say is blind?**
5. **To whom shall an entrance be given into that everlasting kingdom of our Lord?**
6. **What evidence do we have that Peter was soon to be put to death?**
7. **What instance does Peter call to mind that supported his statement of being an eyewitnesses of the majesty of the Lord?**
8. **By what did prophecy come in old times?**
9. **What warning does he give regarding false teachers?**
10. **What did God do with the Angels that sinned?**
11. **What do the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha serve as?**
12. **What was Lot's attitude toward the wicked in Sodom?**

13. Are Angels greater and more powerful than man?
14. Do Angels speak evil of dignitaries?
15. What was Balaam's sin?
16. Who offered liberty, but were still in bondage?
17. What end is worse than the beginning?
18. What two examples illustrate an apostate?

19. What will come in the last days?
20. By what is the earth and heavens kept in store?
21. How does God show his longsuffering to us?
22. What will happen some day to the heavens, earth and works therein?

23. Who will twist the Scriptures to their own destruction?
24. In what are we to grow?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OF JUDE

1. How does Jude identify himself?
2. Why should we earnestly contend for the faith?
3. What happened to the people God brought out of Egypt?
4. What happened to the Angels that kept not their first estate?
5. Who contended with the devil for Moses' body?
6. What reference is made to Enoch?
7. What two attitudes are to be expressed towards the sinful?
8. Who is able to keep us from falling?

Lesson Nine

“Contrast Between Darkness & Light”

(1 John)

Towards the end of the first century, several of the Apostles were already dead from what little insight that we can find and the others were scattered widely in other places. The need for the written word was becoming more and more pressing which brought about the finalizing of the New Testament books by the end of the first century. By AD 80, all of the books had been written with the exception of the ones that the Apostle John would write. The last five books in this quarter will be the ones believed to have been written by John. Upon the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple, the Apostle John moved to Ephesus where he continued to preach and teach throughout that area. It is possible that he and Timothy would have worked together since both are believed to have still been in that area.

OCCASION AND DATE OF WRITING 1 JOHN

The writer nowhere states who he is, but John’s stamp of identity is seen throughout. From the very early centuries of the church this Letter has been considered the work of the Apostle of love and faith. Abundant external testimony can be collected to verify his authorship. John is considered to be the writer of the Gospel of John, 1, 2, 3 John, and Revelation.

The alarming increase of false teachers (4:1) seems to have made the writing of a Letter from John a necessity. Irenaeus is quoted as saying: *“John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans....”* John’s Letters are strongly fighting against the encroaching teachings of Gnosticism, Docetism, and Anti-Nomianism. While Gnosticism is generally considered the broad term to encompass much of this false teaching, Docetism and Anti-Nomianism are separate outgrowths of the general attitude. The new doctrines basically denied the fact of the Son of God being born of a virgin, living among men, dying on a cross, and being raised the third day. Many references are made throughout his first Letter to combat such teaching. Gnosticism also took the form of licentiousness which is very strongly condemned continually in this first Epistle (2:6-10; 2:1-6; 3:3-12, etc.). The date would have to be somewhat arbitrary, but it is generally believed to have been written about AD 85-90.

PURPOSE OF WRITING

A basic purpose for the writing of this Letter would be to warn them against false teachers and keep them from continually walking in sin. A great deal of stress is laid upon “knowing,” “walking in the light” (or walking in the commandments of God), “love,” “belief,” “confessing Christ as come in the flesh,” and not “continuing in sin.” His purpose is fulfilled by attesting to the fact that Christ did come in the flesh, that we have an advocate with the Father if

we do sin, but we are not to continue in such. He also emphasized that love was the fulfilling of the Law and that a false teacher can be tried and proven false by certain tests.

OUTLINE OF 1 JOHN

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| CHAPTER ONE | * <u>GOD IS LIGHT & HIS CHILDREN WALK IN LIGHT</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. John's personal experience related concerning Christ (1-4)2. God is light (5)3. His children must walk in light (6-10) |
| CHAPTER TWO | * <u>TO KNOW & LOVE GOD IS TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Jesus died to take away our sin (1-2)2. To know and love God is to keep his commandments (3-6)3. How to know if we hate or love our brother in Christ (7-11)4. Exhortation not to love the world (8-17)5. Identity of the Anti-Christ (18-29) |
| CHAPTER THREE | * <u>THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR LOVE</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What God's love has done (1-3)2. Those who love God do not continue in sin (4-10)3. The need to show love to our brethren (11-24) |
| CHAPTER FOUR | * <u>THE NEED TO PUT TEACHERS TO THE TESTS</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Try those who teach (1-6)2. God's love manifested to and through us (7-21) |
| CHAPTER FIVE | * <u>GOD'S WITNESS TO US</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The proof of our love for God (1-5)2. God's witness to us of His Son (6-9)3. The necessity of faith (10-15)4. Concern for an erring brother (16-21) |

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. What physical senses does John use to show his surety of the Word of Life being made flesh?**
- 2. What basic message does John declare unto them?**
- 3. Who lies and does not the truth?**

4. Upon what condition may we have fellowship with God?
5. Can we live entirely above sin?
6. Why is Jesus our advocate?
7. Does a man know God who will not keep his commandments?
8. In what does John say a person abides who hates his brother?
9. In what three ways can we be tempted to show love for the world?

10. Who will abide forever?
11. What does John call the person who denies that Jesus is the Christ?
12. Who is born of God?
13. Who will purify himself?
14. Who is OF the devil and why?
15. Who will not commit sin? Why?
16. How do we know we have passed from death unto life?
17. Who does John say is a murderer?
18. In what way are we to love?
19. Upon what conditions will we receive what we ask?
20. What is the importance of confessing that Jesus Christ came in the flesh?
21. What is God said to be?
22. Upon what condition will God dwell in us?
23. Upon what other condition does God dwell in us?

24. What will perfect love cast out?

- 25. Can a man love God and hate his brother?**
- 26. What else is indicated that a person must do to be born of God?**
- 27. What is a sign that we may know that we love God's children?**
- 28. How can we show our love for God?**
- 29. What is the victory that overcomes the world?**
- 30. By what did Jesus Christ come?**
- 31. What three bear witness in the earth?**
- 32. To whom did he give assurance that they had eternal life?**
- 33. What is the sin not unto death? Unto death?**

- 34. How is sin defined?**
- 35. How do we know that Gentiles were among his readers?**

Lesson Ten

“Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ”

(2 John, 3 John)

The preaching of the Gospel brought about congregations of God’s people all over the known world (Colossians 1:23). Not only would these congregations need continual teaching to help to stabilize them in the faith, but also to equip them to go out and teach others themselves (2 Timothy 2:2). The big “fly in the ointment” would be teachers that would change the doctrine and teach in one or more congregations to lead them astray. So, the Apostles were constantly on guard with churches they were familiar with trying to be sure they abide in the teaching (doctrine) of Christ. If they were not able to be there in person, they may send a Letter that would serve as a stop-gap measure until they could come.

AUTHORSHIP OF 2 JOHN & 3 JOHN: Neither Letter states directly who the writer is, but the evidence both internal and external says that the Apostle John was their writer. The following will give some idea of why this conclusion:

- 1) The close identity of both Letters to 1 John in language and wording.
- 2) Most early writers made this identification.
- 3) The usual custom of John not naming himself in his works.
- 4) The use of the term “the elder” would certainly fit John (about 70-80 years old).
- 5) The authority with which he speaks to correct the troubles among those to whom he wrote.

OCCASION AND DATE OF WRITING OF BOTH LETTERS: There is much discussion over the question of who this elect lady was that John addresses his 2nd Letter to. It was someone that he knew and loved in truth, as well as a person of sincere character. It seemed obvious that there were some things that needed to be dealt with, but he did not want to write about it in a letter for some reason. He planned to visit in the near future. The date of this Letter would possibly be around AD 80-90. The 3rd Letter that was addressed to Gaius would probably be about the same time. The church where Gaius was needed help in dealing with a “strong-arm” man in the church.

PURPOSE OF WRITING BOTH LETTERS: Some one or more persons may have informed John of the condition existing where this lady lived, like the third Letter shows what the conditions were like where Gaius lived. The church may have met in this lady’s home. Since false teachers were going about from place to place teaching their evil ways, it was necessary not only to warn against their teaching, but also against even offering food and shelter and thereby become helpers of their evil teachings. Thus, this 2nd Letter would well serve to warn this lady against extending hospitality to such teachers until he, himself, could come and further instruct concerning these matters.

This 3rd Letter was addressed to “*the well-beloved Gaius.*” Since there are several men by this name mentioned in the Scriptures, it would be hard to know exactly which one it would

be. There are several things indicated about him in this letter however:

- 1) He was well-beloved of John.
- 2) He was not altogether wealthy in this world's goods, but was certainly rich towards God.
- 3) he had testimony borne by others that he walked in the truth.
- 4) He had been very hospitable unto traveling preachers in need of help in spite of the efforts of Diotrephes to oppose such men and they who helped.

Word had evidently gotten to John (possibly by some traveling preachers) about the troubles that Diotrephes was causing. This letter was brief, but to the point, and would be followed up by a visit to help deal with Diotrephes. Demetrius may have been the bearer of this Letter to Gaius.

OUTLINE OF 2 JOHN

CHAPTER ONE

*** IDENTIFYING & DEALING WITH FALSE TEACHERS**

1. Greetings (1-3)
2. Reason for writing (4)
3. Exhortation to love and obedience (5-6)
4. Identify and action concerning false teachers (7-11)
5. His plan to visit (12-13)

OUTLINE OF 3 JOHN

CHAPTER ONE

*** CHARACTERS OF SOME EARLY CHRISTIANS**

1. Gaius, the well-beloved (1-8)
2. Diotrephes, the dictator of the church (9-11)
3. Demetrius, of good report of all men (12)
4. John's plan to visit (13-14)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

2 JOHN

1. In what did John rejoice?
2. What were these false teachers denying?
3. Who does not know God?
4. How are Christians to treat these deceivers?
5. Why didn't John write more in this letter?

3 JOHN

- 1. What report had been given concerning how Gaius walked?**
- 2. What had Gaius done toward others mentioned?**
- 3. How could Gaius be a fellow-helper to the truth?**
- 4. Why had Diotrephes not received John's Letter?**
- 5. How had Diotrephes treated these traveling preachers?**
- 6. When did John hope to see Gaius?**

Lessons Eleven, Twelve, & Thirteen

“The Triumph of Righteousness” (Revelation)

Many reasons could be suggested as to the mis-understanding and the mis-use of this book that is referred to as *“the revelation of Jesus Christ”* to the Apostle John. Whatever approach that is taken to properly understand this book, it must be one that makes it meaningful to those to whom it was first addressed and then to us still today. A quick reading of the book would make the purpose of the book clear—it is to give assurance to God’s people of the ultimate triumph of righteousness over wickedness. God’s people are pictured as being exalted into the very presence of God—living and reigning with Christ. Whether one can fully understand the highly symbolic language, he cannot fail to get this concept from the book—God is in control and will bring ultimate victory for his people.

OCCASION AND DATE OF WRITING OF REVELATION

The letter is addressed to the seven churches of Asia (one of the provinces in the western part of Asia Minor). There are historical references to the fact that John had moved to this area and was busy preaching and working with the churches until his imprisonment. He would certainly have been acquainted with the churches mentioned in the letter. Both Eusebius and Clement of Alexandria state that John was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos during the reign of Domitian in the year 96 AD. It was while imprisoned that he was bidden to write this book by an Angel of God (1:11). The Letter was written to point out the conditions of the seven churches, but far more—it was to be a continual source of reminding churches of all ages that the Lord sees and knows of their condition. The book could be dated about 96 AD.

PURPOSE FOR WRITING REVELATION

One stated purpose for the letter is *“to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass”* and *“write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.”* The church at that time had undergone some strong persecutions, especially from the Romans. Much of the time, it seems that evil triumphs over righteousness. There is therefore a continual need of encouragement to followers of Christ that they might be faithful unto death, be overcomers unto the end, for Satan and his helpers will be overthrown at the culmination of all things. There is a need for emphasizing the superiority of Christ over Satan and of the punishment to be inflicted upon all who follow Satan. The general course pursued throughout the book seems to be one of repetition over and over, each time emphasizing something new or punishment being more severe until the final period. Some of the symbolism is easily understood, while chapter 17 helps to give an understanding to some of the symbols used. A great deal seems to be made over certain numbers: 7, 12, 144, 42, 3 ½, 1000. It is interesting to notice: 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, and 7 bowls. The book can easily be outline in seven sections as follows:

SECTION OUTLINE OF REVELATION

- SECTION ONE** * **THE LORD’S CHURCH AS IT IS IN THE WORLD (1-3)**
1. Christ in the midst of the 7 Golden Lampstands.
 2. These churches serve as a type of the various conditions to be found in churches through the ages.
- SECTION TWO** * **THE CHURCH SUFFERING TRIAL & PERSECUTION (4-7)**
1. Background scene for that which is to follow (4)
 2. Show who was able to open book with 7 seals (5)
 - a) “Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.”
 - b) “A Lamb as it had been slain.”
 3. Opening of 6 seals (6)
 - a) Great battle between righteousness & wickedness
 - b) The trials, persecutions, and deaths of God’s saints.
 - c) The ultimate punishment of the wicked.
 4. The sealing of the servants of God in this period (7)
- SECTION THREE** * **THE CHURCH AVENGED, PROTECTED, VICTORIOUS (8-11)**
1. Opening of 7th seal gives rise to 7 trumpets to sound (8)
 - a) Prayers of saints before God brings retribution.
 - b) Sounding of 1st 4 trumpets of doom.
 2. Sounding of 5th & 6th trumpets (9)
 - a) Sad commentary upon men...they would not repent!
 3. Sealing of 7 thunders (not shown to us) and John eating the little book (10)
 4. Tells of God’s two witnesses upon the earth, their victory over the evil one, and records the 7th trumpet (11)
- SECTION FOUR** * **THE GREAT BATTLE BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE DRAGON (12-14)**
1. The coming of Jesus gave great alarm to the Dragon (12)
 2. The devil’s helpers and their identification (13)
 3. Christ overcomes his enemies (14)
- SECTION FIVE** * **GOD’S WRATH UPON THE IMPENITENT (15-16)**
1. The triumphant and worship scene of the redeemed around the throne (15)
 2. Pouring out of the bowls of wrath upon impenitent (16)
- SECTION SIX** * **THE FALL OF BABYLON AND THE BEAST PUNISHED (17-19)**
1. Babylon’s Fall predicted and envisioned (17-18)
 2. The victorious picture of Christ and His saints (19)
- SECTION SEVEN** * **THE DRAGON’S DOOM—VICTORY OF CHRIST & HIS CHURCH (20-22)**
1. The binding, yet loosing of Satan and the Judgment scene (20)
 2. The New heavens and earth described (21-22)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. How soon were these things recorded to come to pass?**
- 2. Who has a blessing pronounced upon him?**
- 3. To whom did John write this Letter?**
- 4. How is Jesus described?**

- 5. When Jesus comes who will see him?**
- 6. Who is the Alpha and Omega?**
- 7. Where was John when he saw these things?**
- 8. How is Jesus again described?**

- 9. Who has the keys of Hell (hades) and death?**
- 10. What do the stars represent? The Candlesticks?**

- 11. What commendation was given to the church at Ephesus?**
- 12. What condemnation was given to the church at Ephesus?**

- 13. What commendation was given to the church at Smyrna?**

- 14. What will be given to the faithful?**
- 15. What commendation was given to the church at Pergamos?**

- 16. What condemnation was given to the church at Pergamos?**

17. What condemnation was given to the church at Sardis?
18. What gave Sardis what little life it had?
19. What commendation was given to the church at Philadelphia?
20. What condemnation was given to the church at Laodicea?
21. What was the description of the one sitting on the throne?
22. What were the seven Lamps of fire?
23. Describe the four beasts:
 24. What did they cry day and night?
 25. Who was able to open the seven seals?
 26. What represented the prayers of the saints?
 27. How many Angels were there about the throne?
 28. What was seen at the opening of the first seal?
 29. What was seen at the opening of the second seal?
 30. What was seen at the opening of the third seal?
 31. What was seen at the opening of the fourth seal?
 32. What was seen at the opening of the fifth seal?
 33. What was seen at the opening of the sixth seal?
 34. What was to be done before the four Angels were to hurt the earth and sea?

35. How many were sealed out of the 12 tribes of Israel?
36. How many more were seen about the throne of God?
37. Who were those clothed in white?
38. What happened at the opening of the seventh seal?
39. What happened after the first Angel sounded his trumpet?
40. What happened after the second Angel sounded his trumpet?
41. What happened after the third Angel sounded his trumpet?
42. What was the name of the star that fell from heaven?
43. What happened after the fourth Angel sounded his trumpet?
44. What happened after the fifth Angel sounded his trumpet?
45. Who was king over the locusts?
46. What happened after the sixth Angel sounded his trumpet?
47. What was in the hand of the mighty Angel that came down from heaven clothed with a cloud?
48. What was John told to do about recording the things uttered by the seven thunders?
49. What was John told to do with the little book?
50. For how long would the holy city be tread under foot?
51. For how long will the two dead bodies lie in the street?
52. In what city were the two dead bodies to lie?
53. For how long will their dead bodies be allowed to lie out openly?
54. What happened to the two dead bodies after being buried in the grave?
55. What happened after the seventh Angel sounded his trumpet?
56. What was the description of the woman about to give birth?

57. What was the description of the red dragon?
58. What happened to the woman's child that was born?
59. To where did the woman flee and why? For how long?
60. Who was cast out of heaven into the earth? When?
61. How did the brethren overcome the devil?
62. What did the dragon do when he was cast into the earth?
63. For how long did the woman stay in the wilderness?
64. Who helped the woman?
65. With whom did the dragon make war with then?
66. What was given unto the beast and for how long was his power to last?
67. Who would not worship the beast? Who would?
68. What was to be done with those who would not worship the image of the beast?
69. What is the number of the beast?
70. How many were redeemed out from among men, the first fruits unto God and to the lamb?
71. What did the first Angel cry out?
72. What did the second Angel cry out?
73. Of what did the third Angel warn?
74. What did those who had won their victory over the beast, sing?
75. What happened after the first vial was poured out?
76. What happened after the Angel poured out the second vial?

- 77. What happened after the Angel poured out the third vial?**
- 78. What happened after the Angel poured out the fourth vial?**
- 79. What happened after the Angel poured out the fifth vial?**
- 80. What happened after the Angel poured out the sixth vial?**
- 81. What happened after the Angel poured out the seventh vial?**
- 82. What description is given of the great whore?**
- 83. What was her name?**
- 84. Upon what was the woman drunken?**
- 85. What do the seven heads and seven mountains represent?**
- 86. Who are the ten horns?**
- 87. What do the waters represent?**
- 88. What will the ten horns do after a certain period?**
- 89. Who is the woman?**
- 90. What will happen to Babylon?**
- 91. What had she provided for the nations, the kings, and the merchants?**
- 92. Whose blood was found within her?**
- 93. What was John told to do when he fell down to worship at the feet of the Angel?**
- 94. Who was upon the white horse and what did he do?**

95. What was his name called?
96. What was the name of his vesture and thigh?
97. What did the Angel do with the dragon?
98. Why was he put there?
99. Who lives and reigns with Christ a thousand years?
100. What happened to the devil, beast, and the false prophet?
101. Out of what were the dead judged?
102. What determined their destiny?
103. Who were cast into the lake of fire?
104. What happened to the first heaven and earth?
105. What will be the condition of those in the new Jerusalem?
106. Who shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone?
107. What is the second death?
108. Where were the names of the 12 Apostles listed?
109. What were the dimensions of the city?
110. Who served as the Temple's sun?
111. Who will have a right to the tree of life and enter in through the gates of the city?
112. What warning is given concerning the words of this book?

