

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX
THE GENERAL EPISTLES

These are the letters in the New Testament that were not written by the Apostle Paul. These epistles include the book of James, First and Second Peter, First, Second and Third John, and Jude. We will begin with the book of James. You will note that James was well aware of the importance of faith. Even though he did not write Hebrews, he could have written Hebrews 11:6. He also focuses on how to live as a Christian in everyday situations.

HEBREWS 11:6

6 BUT WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM: FOR HE THAT COMETH TO GOD MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, AND THAT HE IS A REWARDER OF THEM THAT DILIGENTLY SEEK HIM.

James begins his book mentioning Jesus in verse 1. He only writes the name of Jesus one more time. That is in verse 1 of chapter 2. His main message is to teach faith. He states that the testing of faith produces wholeness of character.

JAMES 1:2-4

**2 MY BRETHREN, COUNT IT ALL JOY WHEN YE FALL INTO DIVERS TEMPTATIONS;
3 KNOWING THIS, THAT THE TRYING OF YOUR FAITH WORKETH PATIENCE.
4 BUT LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK, THAT YE MAY BE PERFECT AND ENTIRE, WANTING NOTHING.**

Since God tempts no one, the overcoming of temptation is the subduing of one's own destructive desires.

JAMES 1:12-15

**12 BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMPTATION: FOR WHEN HE IS TRIED, HE SHALL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE, WHICH THE LORD HATH PROMISED TO THEM THAT LOVE HIM.
13 LET NO MAN SAY WHEN HE IS TEMPTED, I AM TEMPTED OF GOD: FOR GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN:
14 BUT EVERY MAN IS TEMPTED, WHEN HE IS DRAWN AWAY OF HIS OWN LUST, AND ENTICED.
15 THEN WHEN LUST HATH CONCEIVED, IT BRINGETH FORTH SIN: AND SIN, WHEN IT IS FINISHED, BRINGETH FORTH DEATH.**

Everyone who confesses salvation is to renounce evil deeds, such as are mentioned in the following verses.

JAMES 1:19-21

**19 WHEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, LET EVERY MAN BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH:
20 FOR THE WRATH OF MAN WORKETH NOT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.**

21 WHEREFORE LAY APART ALL FILTHINESS AND SUPERFLUITY OF NAUGHTINESS, AND RECEIVE WITH MEEKNESS THE ENGRAFTED WORD, WHICH IS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOULS.

For us to hold the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, we must exclude partiality.

JAMES 2:1

1MY BRETHREN, HAVE NOT THE FAITH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD OF GLORY, WITH RESPECT OF PERSONS.

Faith must issue in works to be a living faith.

JAMES 2:14–26

14 WHAT DOTHTH IT PROFIT, MY BRETHREN, THOUGH A MAN SAY HE HATH FAITH, AND HAVE NOT WORKS? CAN FAITH SAVE HIM?

15 IF A BROTHER OR SISTER BE NAKED, AND DESTITUTE OF DAILY FOOD,

16 AND ONE OF YOU SAY UNTO THEM, DEPART IN PEACE, BE YE WARMED AND FILLED; NOTWITHSTANDING YE GIVE THEM NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE NEEDFUL TO THE BODY; WHAT DOTHTH IT PROFIT?

17 EVEN SO FAITH, IF IT HATH NOT WORKS, IS DEAD, BEING ALONE.

18 YEA, A MAN MAY SAY, THOU HAST FAITH, AND I HAVE WORKS: SHEW ME THY FAITH WITHOUT THY WORKS, AND I WILL SHEW THEE MY FAITH BY MY WORKS.

19 THOU BELIEVEST THAT THERE IS ONE GOD; THOU DOEST WELL: THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE, AND TREMBLE.

20 BUT WILT THOU KNOW, O VAIN MAN, THAT FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD?

21 WAS NOT ABRAHAM OUR FATHER JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, WHEN HE HAD OFFERED ISAAC HIS SON UPON THE ALTAR?

22 SEEST THOU HOW FAITH WROUGHT WITH HIS WORKS, AND BY WORKS WAS FAITH MADE PERFECT?

23 AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED WHICH SAITH, ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS IMPUTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: AND HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD.

24 YE SEE THEN HOW THAT BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED, AND NOT BY FAITH ONLY.

25 LIKEWISE ALSO WAS NOT RAHAB THE HARLOT JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, WHEN SHE HAD RECEIVED THE MESSENGERS, AND HAD SENT THEM OUT ANOTHER WAY?

26 FOR AS THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD, SO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ALSO.

God-given wisdom reveals itself in characteristic action.

JAMES 1:5

5 IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, THAT GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY, AND UPBRAIDETH NOT; AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM.

JAMES 3:13–18

13 WHO IS A WISE MAN AND ENDUED WITH KNOWLEDGE AMONG YOU? LET HIM SHEW OUT OF A GOOD CONVERSATION HIS WORKS WITH MEEKNESS OF WISDOM.

14 BUT IF YE HAVE BITTER ENVYING AND STRIFE IN YOUR HEARTS, GLORY NOT, AND LIE NOT AGAINST THE TRUTH.

15 THIS WISDOM DESCENDETH NOT FROM ABOVE, BUT IS EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEVILISH.

16 FOR WHERE ENVYING AND STRIFE IS, THERE IS CONFUSION AND EVERY EVIL WORK.

17 BUT THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE, AND EASY TO BE ENTREATED, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, WITHOUT PARTIALITY, AND WITHOUT HYPOCRISY.

18 AND THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SOWN IN PEACE OF THEM THAT MAKE PEACE.

To follow one's own passions is to seek the friendship of the world and thus to be at enmity with God.

JAMES 4:1–4

1 FROM WHENCE COME WARS AND FIGHTINGS AMONG YOU? COME THEY NOT HENCE, EVEN OF YOUR LUSTS THAT WAR IN YOUR MEMBERS?

2 YE LUST, AND HAVE NOT: YE KILL, AND DESIRE TO HAVE, AND CANNOT OBTAIN: YE FIGHT AND WAR, YET YE HAVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK NOT.

3 YE ASK, AND RECEIVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK AMISS, THAT YE MAY CONSUME IT UPON YOUR LUSTS.

4 YE ADULTERERS AND ADULTERESSES, KNOW YE NOT THAT THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD? WHOSOEVER THEREFORE WILL BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD IS THE ENEMY OF GOD.

Ideally, we would never be guilty of the things mention in the previous verses, but if we should, the remedy is to wholeheartedly repent and return to Jesus.

JAMES 4:6–10

6 BUT HE GIVETH MORE GRACE. WHEREFORE HE SAITH, GOD RESISTETH THE PROUD, BUT GIVETH GRACE UNTO THE HUMBLE.

7 SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD. RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU.

8 DRAW NIGH TO GOD, AND HE WILL DRAW NIGH TO YOU. CLEANSE YOUR HANDS, YE SINNERS; AND PURIFY YOUR HEARTS, YE DOUBLE MINDED.

9 BE AFFLICTED, AND MOURN, AND WEEP: LET YOUR LAUGHTER BE TURNED TO MOURNING, AND YOUR JOY TO HEAVINESS.

10 HUMBLE YOURSELVES IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, AND HE SHALL LIFT YOU UP.

James now addresses how we should plan for the future. Our plans should be made subject to divine permission.

JAMES 4:13–15

13 GO TO NOW, YE THAT SAY, TO DAY OR TO MORROW WE WILL GO INTO SUCH A CITY, AND CONTINUE THERE A YEAR, AND BUY AND SELL, AND GET GAIN:

14 WHEREAS YE KNOW NOT WHAT SHALL BE ON THE MORROW. FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? IT IS EVEN A VAPOUR, THAT APPEARETH FOR A LITTLE TIME, AND THEN VANISHETH AWAY.

15 FOR THAT YE OUGHT TO SAY, IF THE LORD WILL, WE SHALL LIVE, AND DO THIS, OR THAT.

James also wants us understand that we are to embrace the present. When you stop and think about it, that is the only time that we have. Yesterday is gone. In fact, the last minute is gone. True, we are moving toward the future, but even the next minute has not gotten here, yet. While in this present moment, we should be carrying out God's will for our lives, preparing for and occupying until the coming of the Lord.

JAMES 5:7–8

7 BE PATIENT THEREFORE, BRETHREN, UNTO THE COMING OF THE LORD. BEHOLD, THE HUSBANDMAN WAITETH FOR THE PRECIOUS FRUIT OF THE EARTH, AND HATH LONG PATIENCE FOR IT, UNTIL HE RECEIVE THE EARLY AND LATTER RAIN.

8 BE YE ALSO PATIENT; STABLISH YOUR HEARTS: FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD DRAWETH NIGH.

We are to be examples for other people to follow just as the men of faith were in Bible times.

JAMES 5:10–11

10 TAKE, MY BRETHREN, THE PROPHETS, WHO HAVE SPOKEN IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, FOR AN EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING AFFLICTION, AND OF PATIENCE.

11 BEHOLD, WE COUNT THEM HAPPY WHICH ENDURE. YE HAVE HEARD OF THE PATIENCE OF JOB, AND HAVE SEEN THE END OF THE LORD; THAT THE LORD IS VERY PITIFUL, AND OF TENDER MERCY.

James returns frequently to the subject of prayer. As action should be consistent with faith, so prayer, as the expression of faith, should be wholehearted and related to action. When we trust the One and only true God through faith, demons rightly respond with terror.

JAMES 2:19

19 THOU BELIEVEST THAT THERE IS ONE GOD; THOU DOEST WELL: THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE, AND TREMBLE.

As we trust the one God, we can quickly realize that He is the only giver of good gifts. He gives generously and unreservedly.

JAMES 1:17

17 EVERY GOOD GIFT AND EVERY PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE, AND COMETH DOWN FROM THE FATHER OF LIGHTS, WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING.

Requests to him should therefore be made wholeheartedly, with no doubt about His ability or willingness to give and should be for objects consistent with his character.

JAMES 1:5-8

5 IF ANY OF YOU LACK WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, THAT GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY, AND UPBRAIDETH NOT; AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN HIM.

6 BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, NOTHING WAVERING. FOR HE THAT WAVERETH IS LIKE A WAVE OF THE SEA DRIVEN WITH THE WIND AND TOSSED.

7 FOR LET NOT THAT MAN THINK THAT HE SHALL RECEIVE ANY THING OF THE LORD.

8 A DOUBLE MINDED MAN IS UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS.

James sees no problem in unanswered prayer; it is to be explained by the inadequacy of the prayer, either untrusting or misdirected. Obviously, the person praying must be “double minded,” otherwise his prayer would have been answered. Even where prayer expresses a proper confidence in God, it should be accompanied by action if it is to be worth anything.

JAMES 2:15-16

15 IF A BROTHER OR SISTER BE NAKED, AND DESTITUTE OF DAILY FOOD, 16 AND ONE OF YOU SAY UNTO THEM, DEPART IN PEACE, BE YE WARMED AND FILLED; NOTWITHSTANDING YE GIVE THEM NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE NEEDFUL TO THE BODY; WHAT DOTHTH IT PROFIT?

True and fervent prayer is, however, powerfully effective, as in the example of Elijah.

JAMES 5:17-18

17 ELIAS WAS A MAN SUBJECT TO LIKE PASSIONS AS WE ARE, AND HE PRAYED EARNESTLY THAT IT MIGHT NOT RAIN: AND IT RAINED NOT ON THE EARTH BY THE SPACE OF THREE YEARS AND SIX MONTHS.

18 AND HE PRAYED AGAIN, AND THE HEAVEN GAVE RAIN, AND THE EARTH BROUGHT FORTH HER FRUIT.

Prayer and praise are the proper response of the individual to suffering or joy and James encourages prayer within the community for its members, both in the specific case of sickness.

JAMES 5:13–15

13 IS ANY AMONG YOU AFFLICTED? LET HIM PRAY. IS ANY MERRY? LET HIM SING PSALMS.

14 IS ANY SICK AMONG YOU? LET HIM CALL FOR THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH; AND LET THEM PRAY OVER HIM, ANOINTING HIM WITH OIL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD:

15 AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH SHALL SAVE THE SICK, AND THE LORD SHALL RAISE HIM UP; AND IF HE HAVE COMMITTED SINS, THEY SHALL BE FORGIVEN HIM.

Without question, prayer and praise are definitely the remedy for sin.

JAMES 5:16

16 CONFESS YOUR FAULTS ONE TO ANOTHER, AND PRAY ONE FOR ANOTHER, THAT YE MAY BE HEALED. THE EFFECTUAL FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILETH MUCH.

As Christian behavior should be consistent with Christian faith, so it should be consistent in itself. Those who hear the word should also be doers of it.

JAMES 1:22–25

22 BUT BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY, DECEIVING YOUR OWN SELVES.

23 FOR IF ANY BE A HEARER OF THE WORD, AND NOT A DOER, HE IS LIKE UNTO A MAN BEHOLDING HIS NATURAL FACE IN A GLASS:

24 FOR HE BEHOLDETH HIMSELF, AND GOETH HIS WAY, AND STRAIGHTWAY FORGETTETH WHAT MANNER OF MAN HE WAS.

25 BUT WHOSO LOOKETH INTO THE PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY, AND CONTINUETH THEREIN, HE BEING NOT A FORGETFUL HEARER, BUT A DOER OF THE WORK, THIS MAN SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIS DEED.

The law of love should be kept in full and all persons should be treated alike under it.

JAMES 2:8–11

8 IF YE FULFIL THE ROYAL LAW ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURE, THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF, YE DO WELL:

9 BUT IF YE HAVE RESPECT TO PERSONS, YE COMMIT SIN, AND ARE CONVINCED OF THE LAW AS TRANSGRESSORS.

10 FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL KEEP THE WHOLE LAW, AND YET OFFEND IN ONE POINT, HE IS GUILTY OF ALL.

11 FOR HE THAT SAID, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, SAID ALSO, DO NOT KILL. NOW IF THOU COMMIT NO ADULTERY, YET IF THOU KILL, THOU ART BECOME A TRANSGRESSOR OF THE LAW.

It is intolerable to bless God and curse men made in his image.

JAMES 3:9-11

9 THEREWITH BLESS WE GOD, EVEN THE FATHER; AND THEREWITH CURSE WE MEN, WHICH ARE MADE AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF GOD.

10 OUT OF THE SAME MOUTH PROCEEDETH BLESSING AND CURSING. MY BRETHREN, THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT SO TO BE.

11 DOTH A FOUNTAIN SEND FORTH AT THE SAME PLACE SWEET WATER AND BITTER?

James is especially concerned with “sins of speech,” where he sees inconsistency as most blatant; this relates of course to his concern with prayer, but he expresses his concern at large.

JAMES 1:19

19 WHEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, LET EVERY MAN BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH:

True religion involves bridling the tongue.

JAMES 1:26

26 IF ANY MAN AMONG YOU SEEM TO BE RELIGIOUS, AND BRIDLETH NOT HIS TONGUE, BUT DECEIVETH HIS OWN HEART, THIS MAN'S RELIGION IS VAIN.

JAMES 3:2-4

2 FOR IN MANY THINGS WE OFFEND ALL. IF ANY MAN OFFEND NOT IN WORD, THE SAME IS A PERFECT MAN, AND ABLE ALSO TO BRIDLE THE WHOLE BODY.

3 BEHOLD, WE PUT BITS IN THE HORSES' MOUTHS, THAT THEY MAY OBEY US; AND WE TURN ABOUT THEIR WHOLE BODY.

4 BEHOLD ALSO THE SHIPS, WHICH THOUGH THEY BE SO GREAT, AND ARE DRIVEN OF FIERCE WINDS, YET ARE THEY TURNED ABOUT WITH A VERY SMALL HELM, WHITHERSOEVER THE GOVERNOR LISTETH.

Speech should be a straightforward and truthful matter, where “yes” means yes and “no” no, without need of the dangerous reinforcement of oaths.

JAMES 5:12

12 BUT ABOVE ALL THINGS, MY BRETHREN, SWEAR NOT, NEITHER BY HEAVEN, NEITHER BY THE EARTH, NEITHER BY ANY OTHER OATH: BUT LET YOUR YEA BE YEA; AND YOUR NAY, NAY; LEST YE FALL INTO CONDEMNATION.

James gives vent to his conviction of the seriousness of sins of speech in a highly rhetorical description of the tongue, smallest but most powerful member of the body.

JAMES 3:5–8

**5 EVEN SO THE TONGUE IS A LITTLE MEMBER, AND BOASTETH GREAT THINGS. BEHOLD, HOW GREAT A MATTER A LITTLE FIRE KINDLETH!
6 AND THE TONGUE IS A FIRE, A WORLD OF INIQUITY: SO IS THE TONGUE AMONG OUR MEMBERS, THAT IT DEFILETH THE WHOLE BODY, AND SETTETH ON FIRE THE COURSE OF NATURE; AND IT IS SET ON FIRE OF HELL.
7 FOR EVERY KIND OF BEASTS, AND OF BIRDS, AND OF SERPENTS, AND OF THINGS IN THE SEA, IS TAMED, AND HATH BEEN TAMED OF MANKIND:
8 BUT THE TONGUE CAN NO MAN TAME; IT IS AN UNRULY EVIL, FULL OF DEADLY POISON.**

Now that we have reached the end of the writing of James, which do we need to say, “AMEN!!!” or “OH, ME!!!”

Next, we will move on to the work of Peter. He was the son of Jonas or John, two versions of the same name. His birth name was not Peter, but rather it was Simeon or Simon. He was a fisherman of Bethsaida, but at the time we discover him in the Bible, he is living in Capernaum. During much of the Gospel, we find Peter continuing to live and work in Capernaum as he pursued the trade of fishing.

Peter was brought to Christ by his brother Andrew. He was on the Jordan River with his brother Andrew, and James and John when Jesus makes his first call. Peter was a reluctant man who spent some time with Jesus, and then he returned to fishing. It was later when Jesus meets him again on the Sea of Galilee that Peter becomes a permanent companion of Christ and one of the twelve disciples.

He wrote two epistles. His first epistle was for the purpose of encouraging believers who were, and are, experiencing persecution.

1 PETER 1:1

1 AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST, TO THE STRANGERS SCATTERED THROUGHOUT PONTUS, GALATIA, CAPPADOCIA, ASIA, AND BITHYNIA,

His familiarity with the Old Testament and Jesus is evident in this book as he relates several teachings toward how believers should respond to persecution based on the life that Christ lived fulfilling the Old Testament. Peter was once called Simon which means “one who hears”. However, sometimes Simon seems to have had a difficult time listening on occasion. Jesus gave Simon his new name, Peter, which means “rock”.

1 Peter was likely written prior to the persecutions by Nero, which began in A.D. 64, sometime between A.D. 61-64. Nero’s persecutions are often associated with arenas in which Christians were thrown into battle against fierce animals. However, it is likely, Peter was not writing to address physical persecution taking place but verbal. The Epistle was

probably written from Rome, however, uncertainty arises because the Epistle states in 5:13 that it was written from Babylon.

In the book of 1 Peter we find three main sections: salvation (1:3—2:10), submission (2:11—3:12) and suffering (3:13—5:11). Each of these sections was written to encourage believers to remain strong in the foundation that had been laid by Jesus through his disciple Peter. In the section about salvation Peter affirms that trials bring about renewal as they burn away our past way of living toward living holier lives in Christ. Chapters 2 and 3 begin to focus on our role in being submissive to the powers above us: roles between spouses, the government and God are explicitly mentioned in these passages. Finally the book culminates in chapters 4 thru 5 about how to we should respond to suffering. The word “suffering” occurs in the following verses: (1:11; 2:19, 20, 21, 23; 3:14, 17, 18; 4:1 (bis), 13, 15, 16, 19; 5:1, 10).

Listed below are verses that are frequently referred to in 1 Peter.

1 PETER 1:14-16

14 AS OBEДИENT CHILDREN, NOT FASHIONING YOURSELVES ACCORDING TO THE FORMER LUSTS IN YOUR IGNORANCE:

15 BUT AS HE WHICH HATH CALLED YOU IS HOLY, SO BE YE HOLY IN ALL MANNER OF CONVERSATION;

16 BECAUSE IT IS WRITTEN, BE YE HOLY; FOR I AM HOLY.

1 PETER 1:22-23

22 SEEING YE HAVE PURIFIED YOUR SOULS IN OBEYING THE TRUTH THROUGH THE SPIRIT UNTO UNFEIGNED LOVE OF THE BRETHREN, SEE THAT YE LOVE ONE ANOTHER WITH A PURE HEART FERVENTLY:

23 BEING BORN AGAIN, NOT OF CORRUPTIBLE SEED, BUT OF INCORRUPTIBLE, BY THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH LIVETH AND ABIDETH FOR EVER.

1 PETER 2:21

21 FOR EVEN HEREUNTO WERE YE CALLED: BECAUSE CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN EXAMPLE, THAT YE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS:

1 PETER 3:15-17

15 BUT SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS: AND BE READY ALWAYS TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH YOU A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR:

16 HAVING A GOOD CONSCIENCE; THAT, WHEREAS THEY SPEAK EVIL OF YOU, AS OF EVILDOERS, THEY MAY BE ASHAMED THAT FALSELY ACCUSE YOUR GOOD CONVERSATION IN CHRIST.

17 FOR IT IS BETTER, IF THE WILL OF GOD BE SO, THAT YE SUFFER FOR WELL DOING, THAN FOR EVIL DOING.

1 PETER 4:7-16

7 BUT THE END OF ALL THINGS IS AT HAND: BE YE THEREFORE SOBER, AND WATCH UNTO PRAYER.

8 AND ABOVE ALL THINGS HAVE FERVENT CHARITY AMONG YOURSELVES: FOR CHARITY SHALL COVER THE MULTITUDE OF SINS.

9 USE HOSPITALITY ONE TO ANOTHER WITHOUT GRUDGING.

10 AS EVERY MAN HATH RECEIVED THE GIFT, EVEN SO MINISTER THE SAME ONE TO ANOTHER, AS GOOD STEWARDS OF THE MANIFOLD GRACE OF GOD.

11 IF ANY MAN SPEAK, LET HIM SPEAK AS THE ORACLES OF GOD; IF ANY MAN MINISTER, LET HIM DO IT AS OF THE ABILITY WHICH GOD GIVETH: THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST, TO WHOM BE PRAISE AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

12 BELOVED, THINK IT NOT STRANGE CONCERNING THE FIERY TRIAL WHICH IS TO TRY YOU, AS THOUGH SOME STRANGE THING HAPPENED UNTO YOU:

13 BUT REJOICE, INASMUCH AS YE ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS; THAT, WHEN HIS GLORY SHALL BE REVEALED, YE MAY BE GLAD ALSO WITH EXCEEDING JOY.

14 IF YE BE REPROACHED FOR THE NAME OF CHRIST, HAPPY ARE YE; FOR THE SPIRIT OF GLORY AND OF GOD RESTETH UPON YOU: ON THEIR PART HE IS EVIL SPOKEN OF, BUT ON YOUR PART HE IS GLORIFIED.

15 BUT LET NONE OF YOU SUFFER AS A MURDERER, OR AS A THIEF, OR AS AN EVILDOER, OR AS A BUSYBODY IN OTHER MEN'S MATTERS.

16 YET IF ANY MAN SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM NOT BE ASHAMED; BUT LET HIM GLORIFY GOD ON THIS BEHALF.

1 PETER 5:6-11

6 HUMBLE YOURSELVES THEREFORE UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, THAT HE MAY EXALT YOU IN DUE TIME:

2 CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM; FOR HE CARETH FOR YOU.

8 BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, AS A ROARING LION, WALKETH ABOUT, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR:

9 WHOM RESIST STEDFAST IN THE FAITH, KNOWING THAT THE SAME AFFLICTIONS ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN YOUR BRETHREN THAT ARE IN THE WORLD.

10 BUT THE GOD OF ALL GRACE, WHO HATH CALLED US UNTO HIS ETERNAL GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS, AFTER THAT YE HAVE SUFFERED A WHILE, MAKE YOU PERFECT, STABLISH, STRENGTHEN, SETTLE YOU.

11 TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

The book of 1 Peter emphasizes that suffering brings perseverance. It is by suffering that we are disciplined. Christ allows suffering in our lives to mold us into the person He has fully created by disciplining us (much like a loving father and mother would). The Apostle Paul also taught this.

ROMANS 5:3-6

3 AND NOT ONLY SO, BUT WE GLORY IN TRIBULATIONS ALSO: KNOWING THAT TRIBULATION WORKETH PATIENCE;

4 AND PATIENCE, EXPERIENCE; AND EXPERIENCE, HOPE:

5 AND HOPE MAKETH NOT ASHAMED; BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY GHOST WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US.

6 FOR WHEN WE WERE YET WITHOUT STRENGTH, IN DUE TIME CHRIST DIED FOR THE UNGODLY.

As we go about life sometimes it can become easy to blame God for the things that happen in life, but it is important to recognize that the suffering we face develops perseverance in our lives and ultimately should sanctify us toward living holy lives.

Peter followed this writing up with what we know as 2 Peter. The book of 2 Peter was written closer to the end of Peter's life, but to the same group of people that were addressed in 1 Peter. Since Peter died during the reign of Nero, we know that it must have occurred prior to 68 AD. This means that 2 Peter would have been written between 65 and 68 AD.

2 PETER 3:1

1 THIS SECOND EPISTLE, BELOVED, I NOW WRITE UNTO YOU; IN BOTH WHICH I STIR UP YOUR PURE MINDS BY WAY OF REMEMBRANCE:

Peter feels it is vital to warn the churches of new challenges coming their way. His letter is not centered on evangelizing, rather it is centered on the success of these young churches as troubles would inevitably come to them. Peter covers a number of topics, or points, in this book. He does not spend a lot of time on one or the other. Chapter one of 2 Peter focuses on the calling and election of leaders. He wants to equip the church by teaching them how to know if someone is called. What should that person be like? Peter shares his advice on establishing a calling.

2 PETER 1:10

10 WHEREFORE THE RATHER, BRETHREN, GIVE DILIGENCE TO MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE: FOR IF YE DO THESE THINGS, YE SHALL NEVER FALL:

He goes on to speak about the prophecy in Scripture which lays the foundation for chapter two. Chapter two discusses the biggest issue Peter speaks of; false teachers. He knows the world he lives in is changing. The Hellenistic Age was full of astrology and magic. Rome was declining as the post-Augustan era was waning. This came with a decline in political control as well as a decline in public morals. These churches were going to encounter false teachers, and Peter wanted them to be ready. He encourages and instructs the churches as they face this new challenge.

Chapter three is where Peter reminds the church that a day of judgement is coming. He tells them that God will keep His promise and return for His people. Peter also warns them that in the last days there will be those who do not believe.

2 PETER 1:3-4

3 ACCORDING AS HIS DIVINE POWER HATH GIVEN UNTO US ALL THINGS THAT PERTAIN UNTO LIFE AND GODLINESS, THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM THAT HATH CALLED US TO GLORY AND VIRTUE:

4 WHEREBY ARE GIVEN UNTO US EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES: THAT BY THESE YE MIGHT BE PARTAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, HAVING ESCAPED THE CORRUPTION THAT IS IN THE WORLD THROUGH LUST.

2 PETER 3:3-4

3 KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT THERE SHALL COME IN THE LAST DAYS SCOFFERS, WALKING AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS,

4 AND SAYING, WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING? FOR SINCE THE FATHERS FELL ASLEEP, ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY WERE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION.

To help the people understand, Peter reminds them of the Old Testament prophets and prophecy.

At no time does Peter instruct the believers of his day to rise up against their enemies. Rather, he encourages these early Christians to stay firm in their faith. This gives up the important lesson that every believer has a duty and response to form until the coming of Christ. We have to stay in the Word and keep an open line of communication with God. Without this, we are not equipped to battle the scoffers and false teachers. We will not be able to face the challenges that will arrive on the doorstep of the church. Dissension can come to any person or congregation. To combat this, we must know God and who He is. This is our first line of defense against false teachers and heretics. Grace can only come with knowledge. Knowledge will only come as we mature in our faith.

See if any of the following verses from 2 Peter happen to be among your favorite verses.

2 PETER 1:6

6 AND TURNING THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRHA INTO ASHES CONDEMNED THEM WITH AN OVERTHROW, MAKING THEM AN ENSAMPLE UNTO THOSE THAT AFTER SHOULD LIVE UNGODLY;

2 PETER 1:19-20

19 WHILE THEY PROMISE THEM LIBERTY, THEY THEMSELVES ARE THE SERVANTS OF CORRUPTION: FOR OF WHOM A MAN IS OVERCOME, OF THE SAME IS HE BROUGHT IN BONDAGE.

20 FOR IF AFTER THEY HAVE ESCAPED THE POLLUTIONS OF THE WORLD THROUGH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, THEY ARE AGAIN ENTANGLED THEREIN, AND OVERCOME, THE LATTER END IS WORSE WITH THEM THAN THE BEGINNING.

2 PETER 3:3-4

3 KNOWING THIS FIRST, THAT THERE SHALL COME IN THE LAST DAYS SCOFFERS, WALKING AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS,

4 AND SAYING, WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING? FOR SINCE THE FATHERS FELL ASLEEP, ALL THINGS CONTINUE AS THEY WERE FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION.

2 PETER 3:9-10

9 THE LORD IS NOT SLACK CONCERNING HIS PROMISE, AS SOME MEN COUNT SLACKNESS; BUT IS LONGSUFFERING TO US-WARD, NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH, BUT THAT ALL SHOULD COME TO REPENTANCE.

10 BUT THE DAY OF THE LORD WILL COME AS A THIEF IN THE NIGHT; IN THE WHICH THE HEAVENS SHALL PASS AWAY WITH A GREAT NOISE, AND THE ELEMENTS SHALL MELT WITH FERVENT HEAT, THE EARTH ALSO AND THE WORKS THAT ARE THEREIN SHALL BE BURNED UP.

At this point, we should ask ourselves, “Am I truly living a life of faith that is adequate to open the way for me to enter into heaven when Jesus comes and calls me home?”

Are you ready to move on into studying First, Second and Third John? I hope so because here we go. 1, 2, and 3 John have from earliest times been attributed to the apostle John, who also wrote the Gospel of John. The content, style, and vocabulary seem to warrant the conclusion that these three epistles were addressed to the same readers as the Gospel of John. The Book of 1 John was likely written between A.D. 85-95.

False spiritual teachers were a big problem in the early church. Because there was not a complete New Testament that believers could refer to, many churches fell prey to pretenders who taught their own ideas and advanced themselves as leaders. John wrote this letter to set the record straight on some important issues, particularly concerning the identity of Jesus Christ. John assumed that the recipients of this letter were familiar to the Gospel message that he had written earlier. This information would just be a refresher course.

Because John’s letter was about the basics of faith in Christ, it helped his readers reflect honestly on their faith. It helped them answer the question, Are we true believers? John told them that they could tell by looking at their actions. If they loved one another, that was evidence of God’s presence in their lives. But if they bickered and fought all the time or were selfish and did not look out for one another, they were betraying that they, in fact, did not know God.

That did not mean they had to be perfect. In fact, John also recognized that believing involved admitting our sins and seeking God’s forgiveness. Depending on God for cleansing from guilt, along with admitting our wrongs against others and making amends, was another important part of getting to know God.

One of the most often-quoted passages regarding sin is found in 1 John, chapter 2.

1 JOHN 2:16

16 FOR ALL THAT IS IN THE WORLD, THE LUST OF THE FLESH, AND THE LUST OF THE EYES, AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE, IS NOT OF THE FATHER, BUT IS OF THE WORLD.

In this passage, John describes the three aspects of sin that recall the first and most earth-shattering temptations in all of Scripture. The first sin—the disobedience of Eve—was the result of her yielding to the same three temptations: the lust of the flesh (“good for food”); the lust of the eyes (“pleasing to the eye”); and the pride of life (“desirable for gaining wisdom”). Other key verses are listed below:

1 JOHN 1:3-10

3 THAT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD DECLARE WE UNTO YOU, THAT YE ALSO MAY HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH US: AND TRULY OUR FELLOWSHIP IS WITH THE FATHER, AND WITH HIS SON JESUS CHRIST.

4 AND THESE THINGS WRITE WE UNTO YOU, THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE FULL.

5 THIS THEN IS THE MESSAGE WHICH WE HAVE HEARD OF HIM, AND DECLARE UNTO YOU, THAT GOD IS LIGHT, AND IN HIM IS NO DARKNESS AT ALL.

6 IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM, AND WALK IN DARKNESS, WE LIE, AND DO NOT THE TRUTH:

7 BUT IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT, AS HE IS IN THE LIGHT, WE HAVE FELLOWSHIP ONE WITH ANOTHER, AND THE BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST HIS SON CLEANSETH US FROM ALL SIN.

8 IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NO SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES, AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US.

9 IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND JUST TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS, AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

10 IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NOT SINNED, WE MAKE HIM A LIAR, AND HIS WORD IS NOT IN US.

1 JOHN 2:1-2

1 MY LITTLE CHILDREN, THESE THINGS WRITE I UNTO YOU, THAT YE SIN NOT. AND IF ANY MAN SIN, WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS:

2 AND HE IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS: AND NOT FOR OURS ONLY, BUT ALSO FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

1 JOHN 2:5

5 BUT WHOSO KEEPETH HIS WORD, IN HIM VERILY IS THE LOVE OF GOD PERFECTED: HEREBY KNOW WE THAT WE ARE IN HIM.

1 JOHN 2:15

15 LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NEITHER THE THINGS THAT ARE IN THE WORLD. IF ANY MAN LOVE THE WORLD, THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM.

1 JOHN 2:27-28

27 BUT THE ANOINTING WHICH YE HAVE RECEIVED OF HIM ABIDETH IN YOU, AND YE NEED NOT THAT ANY MAN TEACH YOU: BUT AS THE SAME ANOINTING TEACHETH YOU OF ALL THINGS, AND IS TRUTH, AND IS NO LIE, AND EVEN AS IT HATH TAUGHT YOU, YE SHALL ABIDE IN HIM.

28 AND NOW, LITTLE CHILDREN, ABIDE IN HIM; THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE MAY HAVE CONFIDENCE, AND NOT BE ASHAMED BEFORE HIM AT HIS COMING.

1 JOHN 3:2

2 BELOVED, NOW ARE WE THE SONS OF GOD, AND IT DOTHTH NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE SHALL BE: BUT WE KNOW THAT, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS.

1 JOHN 3:6

6 WHOSOEVER ABIDETH IN HIM SINNETH NOT: WHOSOEVER SINNETH HATH NOT SEEN HIM, NEITHER KNOWN HIM.

1 JOHN 3:11

11 FOR THIS IS THE MESSAGE THAT YE HEARD FROM THE BEGINNING, THAT WE SHOULD LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

1 JOHN 3:18

18 MY LITTLE CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE IN WORD, NEITHER IN TONGUE; BUT IN DEED AND IN TRUTH.

1 JOHN 4:4

4 YE ARE OF GOD, LITTLE CHILDREN, AND HAVE OVERCOME THEM: BECAUSE GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU, THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD.

1 JOHN 4:15

15 WHOSOEVER SHALL CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD, GOD DWELLETH IN HIM, AND HE IN GOD.

1 JOHN 5:7

7 FOR THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR RECORD IN HEAVEN, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY GHOST: AND THESE THREE ARE ONE.

1 JOHN 5:13-15

13 THESE THINGS HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO YOU THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE, AND THAT YE MAY BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD.

14 AND THIS IS THE CONFIDENCE THAT WE HAVE IN HIM, THAT, IF WE ASK ANY THING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARETH US:

15 AND IF WE KNOW THAT HE HEAR US, WHATSOEVER WE ASK, WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE THE PETITIONS THAT WE DESIRED OF HIM.

To summarize this book, it is definitely a book of love and joy. It explains the fellowship we have with others and with Jesus Christ. It differentiates between happiness, which is temporary and fleeting, and true joy, which 1 John tells us how to achieve. If we take the words written by John and we apply them to our daily lives, the true love, commitment, fellowship, and joy we long for will be ours. John continues by telling us that we can all have that close, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. We have the witness of men who had direct and personal contact with Him. John is telling us that Jesus is right here with us in both the simple, mundane parts of our lives and in the complex, soul-wrenching parts as well. John testifies as a witness of his personal experiences that God became flesh and lived among men. That means Christ came here to live with us and He still lives with us. As He walked the earth alongside John, so does He walk through each and every day with us. We need to apply this truth to our lives and live as if Jesus were standing right next to us every second of the day. If we put this truth into practice, Christ will add holiness to our lives, making us more and more like Him.

Now let's study 2 John. In this letter, John explains the relationship between three distinct topics in the first five verses.

2 JOHN, VERSES 1-6

1 THE ELDER UNTO THE ELECT LADY AND HER CHILDREN, WHOM I LOVE IN THE TRUTH; AND NOT I ONLY, BUT ALSO ALL THEY THAT HAVE KNOWN THE TRUTH;

2 FOR THE TRUTH'S SAKE, WHICH DWELLETH IN US, AND SHALL BE WITH US FOR EVER.

3 GRACE BE WITH YOU, MERCY, AND PEACE, FROM GOD THE FATHER, AND FROM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF THE FATHER, IN TRUTH AND LOVE.

4 I REJOICED GREATLY THAT I FOUND OF THY CHILDREN WALKING IN TRUTH, AS WE HAVE RECEIVED A COMMANDMENT FROM THE FATHER.

5 AND NOW I BESEECH THEE, LADY, NOT AS THOUGH I WROTE A NEW COMMANDMENT UNTO THEE, BUT THAT WHICH WE HAD FROM THE BEGINNING, THAT WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

6 AND THIS IS LOVE, THAT WE WALK AFTER HIS COMMANDMENTS. THIS IS THE COMMANDMENT, THAT, AS YE HAVE HEARD FROM THE BEGINNING, YE SHOULD WALK IN IT.

John loves those who know the truth, because the truth “abides” in them. When two parties know the truth, love comes naturally. God the Father commanded that His children walk in truth. When you know the truth, obedience comes naturally. The commandment that God gave is not anything new: “love one another.” A sure sign of obedience to God is love for His church, and a sure sign of love is obedience to God.

John then warns that “many deceivers have gone out into the world.

2 JOHN, VERSE 7

7 FOR MANY DECEIVERS ARE ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, WHO CONFESS NOT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS COME IN THE FLESH. THIS IS A DECEIVER AND AN ANTICHRIST.

It is for that reason, Christians should watch themselves. They should beware of teachers who do not acknowledge Jesus’ human life and who deviate from the things He taught.

2 JOHN, VERSES 8-9

8 LOOK TO YOURSELVES, THAT WE LOSE NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH WE HAVE WROUGHT, BUT THAT WE RECEIVE A FULL REWARD.

9 WHOSOEVER TRANSGRESSETH, AND ABIDETH NOT IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, HATH NOT GOD. HE THAT ABIDETH IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, HE HATH BOTH THE FATHER AND THE SON.

Such people are dangerous: the church should not side with them, should not invite them in, and should not participate in their actions.

2 JOHN, VERSES 10–11

10 IF THERE COME ANY UNTO YOU, AND BRING NOT THIS DOCTRINE, RECEIVE HIM NOT INTO YOUR HOUSE, NEITHER BID HIM GOD SPEED:

11 FOR HE THAT BIDDETH HIM GOD SPEED IS PARTAKER OF HIS EVIL DEEDS.

John wrote this second letter to “the chosen lady and her children”—which may refer to a particular church leader, or perhaps metaphorically to a local church or group of churches. John refers to this lady’s “chosen sister” at the end of this letter which may be code for a greeting from the children of another woman, or members of another church or group of churches.

3 John is next in our study. This letter was probably written around AD 90 from the island of Patmos, where John was exiled at the time. It was written to Gaius, a leader of one or more churches in Asia Minor. The apostle had received a report of some difficulties caused by a man named Diotrephes, and John wrote to reinforce for Gaius the proper way to deal with the troubles.

While Gaius was dealing with certain troubles in his area, John wanted to direct him, not only in how to respond to the trials but also how to relate to those who proclaim the truth. As in 1 and 2 John, he is concerned with the issue of fellowship—with God, with

enemies of the gospel and, in the case of 3 John, with those who proclaim the truth. John wanted to ensure a warm welcome from the churches to those who traveled around preaching the gospel, offering them hospitality and a send-off “in a manner worthy of God.

3 JOHN, VERSE 6

6 WHICH HAVE BORNE WITNESS OF THY CHARITY BEFORE THE CHURCH: WHOM IF THOU BRING FORWARD ON THEIR JOURNEY AFTER A GODLY SORT, THOU SHALT DO WELL:

Troubles had come to the church in Asia. Diotrephes had taken control of one of the churches there and used his power to ban certain travelling missionaries from coming to the church at all. At one point, the church had seen something of a leadership quality in him and had placed him in charge, but now in the top spot, the power had gone to his head. He refused to welcome those traveling ministers of the gospel to preach and take rest with his church. And even worse, upon receiving an earlier correction from John, Diotrephes refused to listen.

3 JOHN, VERSE 9

3 I WROTE UNTO THE CHURCH: BUT DIOTREPHESES, WHO LOVETH TO HAVE THE PREEMINENCE AMONG THEM, RECEIVETH US NOT.

This troubling situation prompted John to write to Gaius, commending the believers for holding fast to the truth and doing so with a loving attitude. These Christians strove to make the gospel a reality in their lives through the way they treated one another. And John, in response to this good report about the behavior of these “rank and file” Christians, encouraged them to continue to love and support those visiting believers who gave of themselves and ministered in the churches of Asia.

Listed below are a couple of my favorite verses from 3 John.

3 JOHN, VERSE 2

2 BELOVED, I WISH ABOVE ALL THINGS THAT THOU MAYEST PROSPER AND BE IN HEALTH, EVEN AS THY SOUL PROSPERETH.

3 JOHN, VERSE 11

11 BELOVED, FOLLOW NOT THAT WHICH IS EVIL, BUT THAT WHICH IS GOOD. HE THAT DOETH GOOD IS OF GOD: BUT HE THAT DOETH EVIL HATH NOT SEEN GOD.

The last of the General Epistles is the Book of Jude.

JUDE, VERSE 1

**1 JUDE, THE SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST, AND BROTHER OF JAMES, TO THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED BY GOD THE FATHER, AND PRESERVED IN JESUS CHRIST, AND CALLED:
2 MERCY UNTO YOU, AND PEACE, AND LOVE, BE MULTIPLIED.**

Christians are called out of the world, from the evil spirit and temper of it; called above the world, to higher and better things, to heaven, things unseen and eternal; called from sin to Christ, from vanity to seriousness, from uncleanness to holiness; and this according to the Divine purpose and grace. If sanctified and glorified, all the honor and glory must be ascribed to God, and to him alone. As it is God who begins the work of grace in the souls of men, so it is he who carries it on, and perfects it. It is God who multiplies these blessings, but only to those who will receive them. It is to the weak as well as to the strong. Those who have received the doctrine of this common salvation, must contend for it, earnestly, not furiously. Those who have received the truth must contend for it, as the apostles did; by suffering with patience and courage for it. We ought to contend earnestly for the faith, in opposition to those who would corrupt or deprave it; who creep in unawares; who glide in like serpents. And those are the worst of the ungodly, who take encouragement to sin boldly, because the grace of God has abounded, and still abounds so wonderfully, and who are hardened by the extent and fulness of gospel grace, the design of which is to deliver men from sin, and bring them unto God.

JUDE, VERSE 5

5 I WILL THEREFORE PUT YOU IN REMEMBRANCE, THOUGH YE ONCE KNEW THIS, HOW THAT THE LORD, HAVING SAVED THE PEOPLE OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, AFTERWARD DESTROYED THEM THAT BELIEVED NOT.

Jude, in verses 6-13, points out that other unbelievers have been judged in God's timing. Outward privileges, profession, and apparent conversion, could not secure those from the vengeance of God, who turned aside in unbelief and disobedience. The destruction of the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, shows that none ought to presume on their privileges. They had miracles as their daily bread; yet even they perished in unbelief. A great number of the angels were not pleased with the stations God allotted to them; pride was the main and direct cause or occasion of their fall. The fallen angels are kept to the judgment of the great day; and shall fallen men escape it? Surely not. Consider this in due time. The destruction of Sodom is a loud warning to all, to take heed of, and flee from fleshly lusts that war against the soul.

False teachers are dreamers; they greatly defile and grievously wound the soul. These teachers are of a disturbed mind and a seditious spirit; forgetting that the powers that be, are ordained of God. As to the contest about the body of Moses, it appears that satan wished to make the place of his burial known to the Israelites, in order to tempt them to worship him, but he was prevented, and vented his rage in desperate blasphemy. This should remind all who dispute never to bring railing charges. Also learn hence, that we ought to defend those whom God owns. It is hard, if not impossible, to find any enemies to the Christian religion, who did not, and do not, live in open or secret contradiction to the principles of natural religion. Such are here compared to brute beasts, though they often boast of themselves as the wisest of mankind. They corrupt themselves in the things most open and plain. The fault lies, not in their understandings, but in their depraved wills, and their disordered appetites and affections. It is a great reproach, though unjust to religion, when those who profess it are opposed to it in heart and life. The Lord will remedy this in his time and way; not in men's blind way of plucking up the wheat with the tares. It is sad when men

begin in the Spirit, and end in the flesh. Twice dead; they had been once dead in their natural, fallen state; but now they are dead again by the evident proofs of their hypocrisy.

Dead trees, why cumber they the ground! Away with them to the fire. Raging waves are a terror to sailing passengers; but when they get into port, the noise and terror are ended. False teachers are to expect the worst punishments in this world and in that to come. They glare like meteors, or falling stars, and then sink into the blackness of darkness for ever. We have no mention of the prophecy of Enoch in any other part or place of Scripture; yet one plain text of Scripture, proves any point we are to believe. We find from this, that Christ's coming to judge was prophesied of, as early as the times before the flood. The Lord cometh: what a glorious time will that be! Notice how often the word ungodly is repeated. Many now do not at all refer to the terms godly, or ungodly, unless it be to mock at even the words; but it is not so in the language taught us by the Holy Ghost. Hard speeches of one another, especially if ill-grounded, will certainly come into account at the day of judgment. These evil men and seducers are angry at every thing that happens, and never pleased with their own state and condition. Their will and their fancy, are their only rule and law. Those who please their sinful appetites, are most prone to yield to ungovernable passions. The men of God, from the beginning of the world, have declared the doom denounced on them. Such let us avoid. We are to follow men only as they follow Christ.

JUDE, VERSES 14-19

14 AND ENOCH ALSO, THE SEVENTH FROM ADAM, PROPHESED OF THESE, SAYING, BEHOLD, THE LORD COMETH WITH TEN THOUSANDS OF HIS SAINTS, 15 TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT UPON ALL, AND TO CONVINCe ALL THAT ARE UNGODLY AMONG THEM OF ALL THEIR UNGODLY DEEDS WHICH THEY HAVE UNGODLY COMMITTED, AND OF ALL THEIR HARD SPEECHES WHICH UNGODLY SINNERS HAVE SPOKEN AGAINST HIM.

16 THESE ARE MURMURERS, COMPLAINERS, WALKING AFTER THEIR OWN LUSTS; AND THEIR MOUTH SPEAKETH GREAT SWELLING WORDS, HAVING MEN'S PERSONS IN ADMIRATION BECAUSE OF ADVANTAGE.

17 BUT, BELOVED, REMEMBER YE THE WORDS WHICH WERE SPOKEN BEFORE OF THE APOSTLES OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST;

18 HOW THAT THEY TOLD YOU THERE SHOULD BE MOCKERS IN THE LAST TIME, WHO SHOULD WALK AFTER THEIR OWN UNGODLY LUSTS.

19 THESE BE THEY WHO SEPARATE THEMSELVES, SENSUAL, HAVING NOT THE SPIRIT.

Jude continues by telling us that sensual men separate from Christ, and his church, and join themselves to the devil, the world, and the flesh, by ungodly and sinful practices. Sensual men have not the spirit of holiness, which whoever has not, does not belong to Christ.

JUDE, VERSES 20-23

20 BUT YE, BELOVED, BUILDING UP YOURSELVES ON YOUR MOST HOLY FAITH, PRAYING IN THE HOLY GHOST,

21 KEEP YOURSELVES IN THE LOVE OF GOD, LOOKING FOR THE MERCY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST UNTO ETERNAL LIFE.

22 AND OF SOME HAVE COMPASSION, MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

23 AND OTHERS SAVE WITH FEAR, PULLING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE; HATING EVEN THE GARMENT SPOTTED BY THE FLESH.

The grace of faith is most holy, as it works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, by which it is distinguished from a false and dead faith. Our prayers are most likely to prevail, when we pray in the Holy Ghost, under his guidance and influence, according to the rule of his word, with faith, fervency, and earnestness; this is praying in the Holy Ghost. And a believing expectation of eternal life will arm us against the snares of sin: lively faith in this blessed hope will help us to mortify our lusts. We must watch over one another; faithfully, yet prudently reprove each other, and set a good example to all about us. This must be done with compassion, making a difference between the weak and the willful. Some we must treat with tenderness. Others save with fear; urging the terrors of the Lord. All endeavours must be joined with decided abhorrence of crimes, and care be taken to avoid whatever led to, or was connected with fellowship with them, in works of darkness, keeping far from what is, or appears to be evil.

JUDE, VERSE 24

24 NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING, AND TO PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING JOY,

God is able, and as willing as able, to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory. Not as those who never have been faulty, but as those who, but for God's mercy, and a Savior's sufferings and merits, might most justly have been condemned long ago. All sincere believers were given Him of the Father; and of all so given Him He has lost none, nor will lose anyone. Now, our faults fill us with fears, doubts, and sorrows; but the Redeemer has undertaken for his people, that they shall be presented faultless. Where there is no sin, there will be no sorrow; where there is the perfection of holiness, there will be the perfection of joy. Let us more often look up to Him who is able to keep us from falling, to improve as well as maintain the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be presented blameless before the presence of his glory. Then shall our hearts know a joy beyond what earth can afford; then shall God also rejoice over us, and the joy of our compassionate Savior be completed. To Him who has so wisely formed the scheme, and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

JUDE, VERSE 25

25 TO THE ONLY WISE GOD OUR SAVIOUR, BE GLORY AND MAJESTY, DOMINION AND POWER, BOTH NOW AND EVER. AMEN.