

## Bible Overview

### More letters

James

1 Peter

2 Peter

1 John

2 John

3 John

Jude

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#### James

**Author:** James

**Time:** A.D. 43–50

**Summary:** The letter is a very practical review of the Christian faith in the life of a believer. Addressing the everyday problems of temptation, listening, favouritism, faith, taming the tongue, submission, patience and sickness, James gives clear and encouraging advice on how to advance in godliness. It is not directed at any particular church, but rather to Jewish believers in general.

#### Key verses:

"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (1:22).

"Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (2:17).

#### 1. Trials and temptation 1:1–18

#### 2. Faith in action 1:19 – 5:12

- a) Hearing and doing what is right 1:19–27
- b) Favouritism forbidden 2:1–13
- c) Faith without works is dead 2:14–26
- d) Taming the tongue 3:1–12
- e) Submitting to God and his wisdom 3:13 – 4:17
- f) Warning to rich 5:1–6
- g) Perseverance in suffering 5:7–11
- h) The effectiveness of the prayer of faith 5:13–20

#### 3. The prayer of faith 5:13–20

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## 1 Peter

**Author:** Peter

**Time:** A.D. 60

**Summary:** This letter was a general letter written to Christians in Asia Minor to help build a joyful hope in the face of persecution. After confirming the grace of God in giving salvation to the chosen, Peter commands submission to authorities — despite persecution. He also shows that enduring suffering for Christ holds the promise of life forever.

### Key verses:

"If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed . . . If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name" (4:14,16).

#### 1. Introduction 1:1–2

#### 2. The hope of salvation 1:3–12

#### 3. God's requirements for life 1:13 – 5:11

- a) Being holy as God's people 1:13 – 2:12
- b) Submission to authorities 2:13–25
- c) Living for God 3:1 – 4:11
- d) Suffering for being a Christian 4:12–19
- e) Instruction to different groups 5:1–11

#### 4. Final greetings 5:12–14

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## 2 Peter

**Author:** Peter

**Time:** A.D. 66

**Summary:** Peter encourages the Christians to be sure of salvation by putting true doctrine into practice and dealing with false teachers. The letter is written to encourage Christian growth, while fighting wrong doctrine and false teachers.

### **Key verse:**

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance" (3:9).

**1. How to make one's salvation sure 1:1–11**

**2. Peter's reason for writing 1:11–21**

**3. False teachers: their behaviour and end 2:1–22**

**4. The day of the Lord 3:1–22**

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## **1 John**

**Author:** John

**Time:** A.D. 85 – 95

**Summary:** This letter was probably written as a circular letter to several communities who faced a common problem — probably the beginnings of the Gnostic heresy. John wants to restate the importance of leading a moral and sinless life, avoiding the false teachings which would lead them away from the grace of Christ, their advocate and atoning sacrifice. John repeatedly encourages them to love one another and to hold their faith in the Son of God.

### **Key verse:**

"My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence— Jesus Christ, the Righteous One" (2:1)

**1. Introduction 1:1–4**

**2. Walking in God's light 1:5 – 2:14**

**3. Warnings about the world and antichrists 2:15–27**

**4. God's love for his children and their response 2:28 – 5:21**

a) Christians are children of God and should love 2:28–3:24

b) Test the spirits 4:1–6

c) God is love 4:7–21

d) Love for God's son gives life 5:1–21

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## 2 John

**Author:** John

**Time:** A.D. 85 – 95

**Summary:** During the early growth of the church, the gospel was spread by travelling preachers. Preachers could also travel spreading different teachings. This letter is addressed to "an elect lady" who is advised not to have fellowship with those teachers who bring wrong doctrine. The ideas of love, truth, and obedience are emphasised.

**Key verses:**

"I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands" (v 5,6).

1. Introduction 1–4

2. Love defined 5–6

3. False teachers and antichrists 7–11

4. Conclusion 12–13

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## 3 John

**Author:** John

**Time:** A.D. 85 – 95

**Summary:** John had sent brothers with letters to one of the churches but a leader, Diotrephes, refused to accept the brothers or the letter they carried. The letter commends Gaius for welcoming these brothers and also warns Diotrephes.

**Key verse:**

"I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (v2)

1. Greetings to Gaius 1–8
  2. Criticism of Diotrephes 9–11
  3. Praise of Demetrius 12
  4. Conclusion 13–14
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**Jude**

**Author:** Jude

**Time:** 70 – 80 A.D.

**Summary:** Jude wrote his letter to reaffirm and combat the danger of false teachers within the church. Using examples from history he emphasises the trouble such teachers can cause and reminds his audience of the need to fight for the truth they had received.

**Key verses:**

"In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit" (v 18,19)

1. Introduction 1–2
  2. Godless men - their sin and ultimate doom 3–16
  3. Exhortation to perseverance 17–23
  4. Doxology 24–25
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