

## Through the Bible

### OT:

9/4 Law (Gen-Deut)  
9/11 History (Josh-Est)  
9/18 Poetry (Job-Song)  
9/25 Prophecy (Isa-Mal)  
10/2 OT Narrative  
10/9 OT Recap

### NT:

10/16 Gospels (Matt-Acts)  
10/23 Pauline Epistles (Rom-Phm)  
10/30 Catholic Epistles (Heb-Jude)  
11/6 Apocalyptic (Dan, Rev)  
11/13 NT Narrative  
11/20 NT Recap

## **Catholic Epistles (Heb-Jude)**

### **Catholic = universal**

- Catholic or General Epistles written to a general audience, not a specific person or church

### **Canon formation:**

- **Old Testament Canon:** The 39 books of the OT were recognized and existed during Jesus' time, so Jesus Himself confirms the OT canon.
- **New Testament Canon:** The 27 books of the NT were mostly recognized before 170 AD, fully affirmed by Athanasius in 367 AD, and confirmed by church councils before 400 AD.
- **Deuterocanonical Books:** The 12 additional books (often referred to as the Apocrypha) included in the Roman Catholic OT were officially recognized as Roman Catholic canon at the Council of Trent in 1546.

### **Criteria for canonicity:**

1. **Apostolic Authority:** Written by an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle.
2. **Self-Identification:** The book claims to be divinely inspired or the word of God.
3. **Widespread Recognition:** The early church recognized it as authoritative and used it in teaching.
4. **Theological Consistency:** The content is consistent with the overall teaching of Scripture.
5. **Historical Accuracy:** The content is inerrant and aligns with known historical facts.

### **Questions of canonicity:**

- **Hebrews:** Questioned for unknown authorship. Accepted for theological depth and widespread acceptance.
- **James:** Questioned for its emphasis on works. Accepted for authorship and widespread acceptance.
- **2 Peter:** Questioned for late authorship and style difference. Accepted for authorship, acceptance, theology.
- **Revelation:** Questioned for apocalyptic style and authorship. Accepted for authorship, acceptance, theology.

## **Hebrews**

**Author:** The author is unknown. Some early church fathers suggested Paul was the author, but others disagreed. The style, vocabulary, and theological points of Hebrews sound nothing like Paul. So most scholars don't think it's Paul, and we don't have any other idea. But the early church believed it was written by someone close to the apostles. It's written to an unknown audience, but an audience that has a deep understanding of the OT.

**Lesson:** Jesus, the superior High Priest and fulfillment of the Old Covenant, calls believers to persevere in faith.

**Key Verse:** "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2)

### **Outline:**

- **1-2 Jesus, the greatest revelation of God's word**

- 1. Jesus Reveals God's Glory and Power: God has spoken through His Son, who is superior to angels, perfectly revealing God's nature, glory, and power..
- 2. The Message of Salvation: We must pay attention to the message of salvation, for Jesus, made human, overcame death to lead many to glory.

- **3-4 Jesus, the greatest leader of God's people**

- 3. Jesus as Greater than Moses: Jesus is the faithful builder of God's house, urging believers to remain faithful and avoid hardening their hearts.
- 4. Promise of Rest Through Faith: The promise of God's rest remains, accessible through faith in Christ, our high priest.

- **5-7 Jesus, the greatest priest for salvation**

- 5. Jesus, the Appointed Savior: Appointed by God, Jesus is the source of eternal salvation, achieved through His suffering and obedience.
- 6. Encouragement to Mature Faith: Believers are encouraged to mature in faith, trusting in God's promises and the hope set before them.
- 7. A New, Eternal Priesthood: Jesus, in the order of Melchizedek, is a high priest forever, providing a better covenant through His endless life.

- **8-10 Jesus, the greatest fulfillment of God's covenant**

- 8. A New Covenant: Jesus mediates a new covenant based on greater promises, because He fulfills the old covenant.
- 9. Christ's Perfect Sacrifice: Christ's sacrificial death fulfills the requirements of the new covenant, purifying us and granting eternal redemption.
- 10. Call to Persevere in Faith: Jesus' once-for-all sacrifice calls believers to live by faith, supporting and encouraging each other.

- **11-13 Faith in Jesus, through hardship like those before us**

- 11. The Heroes of Faith: Faith is defined, and the heroes of faith are listed, showing trust in God's promises despite trials.
- 12. Endurance in Discipline: Believers should endure hardships as discipline, fixing their eyes on Jesus and living in holiness.
- 13. Final Exhortations and Blessings: Instructions for love, hospitality, holiness, and a final benediction.

## James

**Author:** James, aka Jacob, the brother of Jesus, who was a main leader in the early church in Jerusalem. He probably wrote the book before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 around 48 AD, making it the first NT book written. The style is wisdom statements, like proverbs.

**Lesson:** True faith produces godly actions, marked by wisdom, humility, and compassion for others.

**Key Verse:** "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (James 2:17)

### Outline:

- **1 Faith through trials**

- 1:1-4 Through trials, believers grow in joy and endurance, awaiting God's perfecting work.
- 1:5-11 God gives wisdom freely to those who ask in faith, while material wealth is fleeting and should not be our focus.
- 1:12-18 God does not tempt; temptation arises from our own desires, but God brings forth goodness and life through His truth.

- 1:19-27 True worship involves being slow to anger, applying God's word, and caring for others without worldly compromise.
- **2 Faith through works**
  - 2:1-8 Believers should avoid favoritism, treating all with equal love as heirs of God's kingdom.
  - 2:9-13 Showing partiality is sin, and we are to extend the same mercy we have received from God to others.
  - 2:14-26 True faith results in action, for just as a body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.
- **3 Faith through wisdom**
  - 3:1-5 The tongue is small yet powerful, and controlling our words helps control other areas of life.
  - 3:6-12 The tongue has destructive potential; though humanity can tame animals, only God can tame our words.
  - 3:13-16 True wisdom is demonstrated by humility and good conduct, while jealousy and selfish ambition lead to disorder.
  - 3:17-18 Godly wisdom brings peace, mercy, and sincerity, producing righteousness in those who pursue peace.
- **4 Faith through humility**
  - 4:1-3 Conflicts arise from selfish desires, which are best addressed through humble prayer rather than worldly passions.
  - 4:4-6 Friendship with the world is unfaithfulness to God, who gives grace to the humble but resists the proud.
  - 4:7-10 Submit to God, resist the devil, and pursue humble repentance to draw near to God.
  - 4:11-12 Judging others violates God's law; only God is qualified to judge, so we should refrain from speaking against others.
  - 4:13-17 We should not boast about our plans, as life is fleeting, and we should focus on living for God's will now.
- **5 Faith through patience**
  - 5:1-6 The rich who hoard and exploit others will face God's judgment, as their wealth will not endure.
  - 5:7-11 Believers are called to patience and endurance, following the example of the prophets, as we await Christ's return.
  - 5:13-18 Prayer is vital in all circumstances—whether in suffering, joy, or sickness—and believers are to confess and pray for one another.
  - 5:12, 19-20 Our words should be trustworthy, without oaths, and we should seek to restore those who stray from the truth.

## 1 Peter

**Author:** The apostle Peter wrote the book, with the help of Silas, to the churches in 5 regions near modern day Turkey. Silas was one of Paul's missionary partners who also co-wrote 1/2 Thessalonians. It seems Silas probably penned Peter's words since the letter is written in polished Greek, which you wouldn't expect from the uneducated fisherman Peter.

**Lesson:** Suffering believers are called to live holy lives, set apart by hope in Christ's promise.

**Key Verse:** "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." (1 Peter 1:15)

### Outline:

- **1:1-2:10 Godly representatives: chosen as temporary residents serving in obedience**
  - 1:1-5 The Church are sojourners chosen by the Father, cleansed by the Son, and prepared by the Spirit. In this new life, secured by Christ's resurrection, believers grow in faith and await an eternal reward.

- 1:6-12 Although believers face trials, they rejoice in their mission and the strength God provides. This faith, grounded in a centuries-old promise, allows them to know God with a joy that surpasses sight, rooted in the fulfillment found in Jesus.
- 1:13-16 Peter urges believers to focus on their new calling, prepare for action, avoid distractions, and live in holiness, set apart from the world's influences, as obedient children of God.
- 1:17-25 Believers should live with reverent obedience, aware of their eternal calling and freed from worldly desires. This commitment to God's Word brings a unique, sacrificial love for others that endures beyond this life.
- 2:1-3 Believers are called to let go of malice, deceit, envy, and slander, embracing God's word for spiritual growth, craving it as vital nourishment.
- 2:4-10 Chosen by God and rejected by the world, believers form a spiritual house with Christ as the cornerstone. They're now a royal priesthood, once without belonging but now precious members of God's family.
- **2:11-3:13 Godly relationships: demonstrating Christ's love through submission**
  - 2:11-17 As temporary residents on earth, Christians deny worldly desires, live honorably among non-believers, and submit to authority to glorify God, acting as His servants and showing love, respect, and fear of the Lord.
  - 2:18-25 Believers are called to submit to authority, even when unjust, following Christ's example of innocent suffering, which brings honor and reflects His patience and submission to God's will.
  - 3:1-6 Christian wives, like all believers, are called to submit as an act of obedience to God, cultivating inner beauty and gentleness, relying on godly examples and trusting God in all circumstances.
  - 3:7-9 Husbands are to honor their wives with understanding, respecting their shared faith and equality before God, fostering unity and forgiveness in their marriage and faith community.
  - 3:8-13 Believers are called to peace, refraining from harm, seeking reconciliation, and doing good, grounded in God's promise of blessing and fulfillment.
- **3:14-4:19 Godly suffering: the good work God does through our trials**
  - 3:14-22 In suffering, believers are blessed and share in Christ's testimony. They should be ready to defend their hope with gentleness, remembering Christ's own redemptive suffering for the salvation of others.
  - 4:1-6 Believers embrace suffering to resist sin and pursue God's will. Though the world may mock their righteousness, they live for God's approval, looking to eternal life.
  - 4:7-11 With the end near, believers prioritize focused prayer, fervent love, hospitality, and service, using their gifts to glorify God in everything.
  - 4:12-16 Expecting trials, believers rejoice in sharing Christ's suffering, empowered by the Spirit, and anticipating eternal joy. Suffering for sin is shameful, but suffering for Christ is honorable.
  - 4:17-19 God's judgment refines the Church, strengthening believers through suffering to trust in His care while they pursue righteous lives.
- **5:1-14 Godly leadership: humbly shepherding the church to resist the Devil**
  - 5:1-4 Peter exhorts church leaders to shepherd willingly, setting an example of sacrifice and humility, for they are entrusted with God's flock, accountable to the Chief Shepherd.
  - 5:5-7 Believers are called to humility, submitting to one another and to God, trusting Him to care for them as He exalts the humble.
  - 5:8-11 Peter urges vigilance against the devil, standing firm in faith, with assurance that God uses trials to perfect, strengthen, and establish believers in His grace.
  - 5:12-14 Peter concludes, acknowledging Silas and Mark, affirming the letter's purpose to encourage believers to stand firm in God's grace, with a final call to greet one another with love and peace.

**Author:** A few early church fathers thought someone else wrote 2 Peter under the pseudonym Peter. But the majority of the church has agreed on the apostle Peter as the author. The book may have borrowed some thoughts from Jude, and serves as Peter's goodbye before being martyred, warning of false teaching that will come when he's gone.

**Lesson:** Believers must grow in knowledge and guard against false teachings while waiting for Christ's return.

**Key Verse:** "**But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**" (2 Peter 3:18)

**Outline:**

• **1 Growth in Faith**

- 1: (1-4) Foundation in Faith: Believers receive grace and peace through the knowledge of Jesus, who has granted all they need for life and godliness.
- 1:5-7 Virtues to Pursue: A list of virtues (faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love) that build on each other and lead to spiritual growth.
- 1:8-11 Fruitfulness and Assurance: Growth in these qualities prevents spiritual barrenness and assures believers of their calling and election.

• **2 Warnings Against False Teachers**

- 2:1-3 Characteristics of False Teachers: False teachers are described as greedy and deceitful, exploiting believers with destructive heresies.
- 2:4-10 Examples of Judgment: Historical examples (e.g., fallen angels, the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah) are given as warnings of judgment against sin.
- 2:10-19 Corruption of False Teachers: False teachers are described as arrogant, sensual, and enslaved to corruption, leading others astray.
- 2:20-22 Their Fate: Those who fall back into sin after knowing the truth face a worse state, likened to a dog returning to its vomit.

• **3 The Day of the Lord**

- 3:1-7 Reminder of the Promise: Peter reminds believers of the promises given by the prophets and apostles, contrasting them with scoffers who deny the coming judgment.
- 3:8-9 God's Patience and Purpose: God's delay in judgment is due to His patience, desiring that all come to repentance.
- 3:10-13 Expecting the Lord's Return: Believers should live in holiness and godliness, awaiting a new heaven and earth.
- 3:14-18 Final Exhortations: Peter urges believers to be diligent, growing in grace and knowledge to remain steadfast against false teachings.

## 1 John

**Author:** The Apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, 1,2,3 John, and Revelation. 1 John doesn't name who it was written to. 1, 2, 3, John all share themes with the Gospel of John.

**Lesson:** Genuine fellowship with God is marked by love, obedience, and belief in Jesus as the Son of God.

**Key Verse:** "**Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.**" (1 John 3:18)

**Outline:**

• **1 Life is in the light**

- 1:1-4 Witness of the Word of Life: John testifies about Jesus as the source of life and fellowship.
- 1:5-10 Walking in the Light: True fellowship with God requires living in light, confessing sins.

- **2 Love is in obedience**

- 2:1-6 Obedience as a mark of faith: Receiving forgiveness, knowing God is demonstrated by obeying His commands.
- 2:7-11 Commandment to Love: Love for others reveals obedience to God.
- 2:12-17 Warning against Worldliness: Believers are cautioned not to love the world or its temptations.
- 2:18-29 Holding to Truth: John warns against antichrists, urging believers to remain faithful to Christ's teachings.

- **3 God's children live righteously**

- 3:1-3 Identity as God's Children: Believers are God's children and are called to purity.
- 3:4-10 Rejecting Sin: True children of God do not live in habitual sin.
- 3:11-24 Command to Love One Another: Genuine love involves action, reflecting God's love.

- **4 Know God in truth and love**

- 4:1-6 Testing Spirits: Believers are to discern truth from error.
- 4:7-12 God's Love Revealed: Knowing God is demonstrated by love for others.
- 4:13-21 Perfect Love and Assurance: Love removes fear of judgment, affirming our relationship with God.

- **5 Assurance of faith through obedience**

- 5:1-12 Faith in Jesus as the Son of God: Belief in Christ provides victory over the world.
- 5:13-15 Confidence in Prayer: Assurance of eternal life encourages bold prayer.
- 5:16-21 Protection from Sin: God's children are kept safe from evil and are called to avoid idolatry.

## 2 John

**Author:** The Apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, 1,2,3 John, and Revelation. 2 John was written to "to the elect lady and her children," referring to a local church. 1, 2, 3, John all share themes with the Gospel of John.

**Lesson:** Walk in truth and love, holding fast to Christ's teachings to avoid deception.

**Key Verse:** "And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: that we love one another." (2 John 1:5)

**Outline:**

- **v1-6 Walking in Truth and Love**

- v1-3 Greeting and Emphasis on Love: John greets the "chosen lady" and her children, commending them for their faith.
- v4-6 Command to Love and Obey: Truth and love are necessarily dependent on one another, you can't have one without the other. Walking in truth involves love and obedience to God's commands.

- **v7-13 Warning Against Deceivers**

- v7, 10-11 Identifying Deceivers: Believers must be cautious of those denying Jesus' incarnation.
- v8-9 Guarding the Faith: John warns against welcoming false teachers to protect the truth. We protect ourselves from deception by abiding in the sound doctrine of God.
- v12-13 Closing Encouragement: John expresses a desire to visit in person to strengthen their joy.

## 3 John

**Author:** The Apostle John wrote the Gospel of John, 1,2,3 John, and Revelation. 3 John was written to a believer and possible church leader named Gaius. 1, 2, 3, John all share themes with the Gospel of John.

**Lesson:** Show hospitality and support to those spreading the gospel, while rejecting divisive behavior.

**Key Verse:** "Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good." (3 John 1:11)

**Outline:**

- **v1-8 Encouragement for faithfulness**
  - v1-4 Commendation of Gaius: John praises Gaius for his commitment to truth.
  - v5-8 Support for Missionaries: Hospitality for fellow believers is commended as a mark of true faith.
- **v9-15 Condemnation for divisiveness**
  - v9-10 Critique of Diotrephes: Diotrephes is warned for his prideful and divisive behavior.
  - v12 Commendation of Demetrius: John endorses Demetrius for his faithfulness.
  - v13-15 Final Farewell: John looks forward to visiting Gaius in person.

## Jude

**Author:** Jude is short for Judas or Judah, the brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55 names Jesus's 4 brothers as James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, and 2 or more sisters). English Bibles abbreviate Judas as Jude to avoid confusion with Judas Iscariot. Little is known about Jude, or the audience of the letter. However, shorter letters like this were more common in the 1st century. Paul's long letters were unusual.

**Lesson:** Contend for the faith by resisting false teachers and building up your faith in Christ.

**Key Verse:** "Contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 1:3)

**Outline:**

- **v1-4 Call to contend for the faith**
  - v1-3 Introduction and Purpose: Jude urges believers to defend the faith.
  - v4 Warning against False Teachers: He identifies ungodly people who distort grace.
- **v5-16 Warning against ungodly men**
  - v5-7 Examples from History: Jude cites Israel, fallen angels, and Sodom as examples of judgment.
  - v8-16 Characteristics of False Teachers: False teachers are arrogant, divisive, and self-serving.
- **v17-25 Exhortations to persevere**
  - v17-21 Building up in Faith: Believers are encouraged to remain steadfast in prayer and faith.
  - v22-23 Helping the Weak: Show mercy to those wavering in faith, while guarding against sin.
  - v24-25 Doxology: Jude concludes with praise to God, who protects believers.