

## The Whole Bible: James - Revelation

### James

- James is considered a Wisdom book - like Psalms and Proverbs - in its style and format.
- Written for Jewish Christians who were being persecuted by following Jesus

**James 1:2-4** <sup>2</sup> **Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,** <sup>3</sup> for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. <sup>4</sup> And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- Discusses the relationship between faith and works

**James 2:17-24** <sup>17</sup> So also **faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.** <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe- and shudder! <sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"- and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup> **You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.**

- Opposing gospels? Nope. James's primary audience are Jewish believers, and he emphasizes the demonstration and fruit that comes from our faith. Paul's primary audience are Gentile believers, and he emphasizes the source of our righteousness and justification.

**Romans 3:28** <sup>28</sup> For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

**Galatians 2:15-16** <sup>15</sup> We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.

### 1 Peter

- This is a letter of encouragement to Christians who are hurting and suffering.
- Suffering is not random but is a part of God's plan for us. Peter calls believers to cling to our certain hope in Christ and to live righteously even in suffering.

**1 Peter 1:3-7** <sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. <sup>6</sup> **In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,** <sup>7</sup> **so that the tested genuineness of your faith- more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire- may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.**

**1 Peter 4:12-13** <sup>12</sup> Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you,** as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> **But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings,** that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

### 2 Peter

- Peter wrote this letter just before his execution.
- Encourages believers to live in holiness and godliness
- Warns of false teachers

**2 Peter 1:2-8** <sup>2</sup> May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. <sup>3</sup> His divine power **has granted to us** all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of **him who called us** to his own glory and excellence, <sup>4</sup> by which he **has granted to us** his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. <sup>5</sup> **For this very reason,** make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, <sup>6</sup> and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, <sup>7</sup> and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. <sup>8</sup> For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 1 John

- Calls Christians to true doctrine, obedient living, and fervent devotion.
- Addresses the relationship between faith and works

**1 John 2:3-6** <sup>3</sup> And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. <sup>4</sup> Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, <sup>5</sup> but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: <sup>6</sup> whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

## 2 John

- Warning against false teachers and a call to obedience

**2 John 1:6-9** <sup>6</sup> And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. <sup>7</sup> For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is **the deceiver and the antichrist**. <sup>8</sup> Watch yourselves, so that you may not lose what we have worked for, but may win a full reward. <sup>9</sup> Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.

## 3 John

- This letter is written to Gaius who is dealing with a troublemaker named Diotrephes.
- Steadfastness in the face of opposition

**3 John 1:5-11** <sup>5</sup> Beloved, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for these brothers, strangers as they are, <sup>6</sup> who testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God. <sup>7</sup> For they have gone out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. <sup>8</sup> Therefore we ought to support people like these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth. <sup>9</sup> I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. <sup>10</sup> So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.

## Jude

- Warning of false teachers who have "slipped in" to the church and were perverting the grace of God
- A call to persevere and contend for truth

**Jude 1:3-4** <sup>3</sup> Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you **to contend for the faith** that was once for all delivered to the saints. <sup>4</sup> For **certain people have crept in unnoticed** who long ago were designated for this condemnation, **ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.**

## Revelation

- The last book of the Bible that is highly symbolic
- Visions revealed to John of an unseen spiritual war between God and Satan
- Even though the imagery and symbolism may not be easy to understand, the main message of Revelation is simple - God, through Christ, triumphs and completely defeats Satan.

**Revelation 5:1-14** Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "**Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?**" <sup>3</sup> **And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it,** <sup>4</sup> **and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.**

<sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said to me, "**Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.**" <sup>6</sup> And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders **I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain**, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup> And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> **And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,** <sup>10</sup> **and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."**

<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice, "**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain**, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" <sup>13</sup> And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" <sup>14</sup> And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" **and the elders fell down and worshiped.**

- Jesus Christ came to the world as an inglorious and weak man on our behalf to redeem mankind. He is now highly exalted and full of glory.

**Revelation 1:12-18** <sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup> The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup> his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. <sup>16</sup> In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. <sup>17</sup> When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup> and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

- The end of a fallen world and the beginning of a GLORIOUS new creation

**Revelation 21:1-4** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

• **4 different approaches to interpreting Revelation:**

- Historicism - chapters 4-20 symbolize the chronological order of successive historical **events from the apostolic church to the return of Christ.**
- Futurism - chapters 4-22 are visions that represent chronological **events still future to us today.**