

James 1:2-3

- Our study will take us on a brief journey through each of the books of the Bible.
- Our aim: To impart perspective and the key to each book.
- Our construction: Key word; key verse; Key to Christ.

**James**

A. Means: Letter of James.

- a. There are four men called James in the New Testament, the father of Judas (not Iscariot), James the son of Alphaeus, James the son of Zebedee (sons of thunder) and James, Jesus' brother. The latter was one of the "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem (At.15:13ff) and is the most likely to be the author of this letter being familiar with the law of bondage that has given way to the "perfect law of liberty" (Jm.1:25) as espoused in that letter delivered to Antioch in Acts 15.
- b. The time is only 12-15 years after the cross (c.AD 46-49). Much work is required to convince the predominantly ex Jews to understand and accept the new law of "liberty" as opposed the Law of Moses (Jms.2). They were obviously beset with problems of character such as gossip, prejudice, and lack of humility.
- c. Five chapters dealing with development and response of faith. Faith that involves works, for faith alone is not enough as faith has always demanded Eg: Abraham's faith was justified by works at the altar (2:21). The power of faith to change the reassurance that it works. Don't let anyone fool you into believing that a justified faith is faith alone as John Calvin etc. have erroneously determined from Romans 3:28. Paul was comparing the law of liberty with the Law of Moses in that text. Besides, Jesus defines faith as the work of God in John 6:28-29 hence the requirement to be "doers of the word and not hears only" (1:22).

B. Keys to James:

- a. Key word: Faith especially the testing of faith that produces the patient and complete Christian.
- b. Key Verses: James 1:2-3 "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness" and 2:24, 26 "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead."
- c. Key Chapter: 1 - Testing and temptations are difficult; no wonder repentance is said to be the hardest command of all to get in order.
- d. Key to Christ: Christ and His Sermon on the Mount has 15 indirect references in James 1:2 (Mt.5:10-12); 1:4 (Mt.5:48); 2:13 (Mt.6:14); 4:11 (Mt.7:1-2); 5:2 (Mt.6:19) check them out to see if they fit you.

**I Peter**

A. Means: First letter from Peter.

- B. As the letter deals a great persecution it is suggested that the time would be that which was experienced AD 63-64 when Nero was Emperor of Rome. Despite those objectors who are constantly attacking the Bible's veracity, Peter is the author. Being a Galilean he would have been bi-lingual (Aramaic and Greek) and would have been well versed in the high quality Greek that this letter is composed of. Remember, he is one who fulfils II Peter 1:20-21 meaning the Holy Spirit assisted him to bear this message. Written to "strangers scattered" throughout Asia Minor to exhort them to suffer for the cause and to reinforce their faith that was constantly under attack. An example of this is found in 3:15-22 where baptism that is essential for salvation is reinforced by use of an illustration taken from the Genesis Flood that confirms just as the water saved Noah and his family so too "Baptism [ie full immersion in water as Jesus made no exception for Jn.3:3, 5 and John, Philip etc practiced Jn.3:23; Acts 8:36-39 GJW], which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." NB: it is not a physical cleansing but spiritual i.e. "conscience". This is damning evidence contra to Calvin's "faith alone" dogma which many try to defend, today.

- C. Keys to I Peter:
  - a. Key word: Suffering For the Cause of Christ.
  - b. Key verses: 3:15; 21 “but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you”; “Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”; 4:12-13 “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. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.”
  - c. Key chapter: Chapter 4 how to handle persecution in an acceptable manner..
  - d. Key to Christ: The Chief Shepherd (2:25; 5:4).

## II Peter

- A. Means: Second letter of Peter. AD 64
- B. Authored by Peter according to tradition but because there seems little external evidence to prove this the critics say he didn't even claiming it to be a forgery. Peter is dealing with false teachers who have introduced “destructive heresies” (2:1). To overcome this he says to look at the scriptures logically and recall how the “Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and reserve the unjust under punishment” (2:9) citing an example such as Balaam of forsaking the right way in favour of going astray (2:15). Further, the shrill of mockery has always abounded just look at the mockery of Noah who suffered for 120 years of preaching before the flood, yet God's timetable is not man's for to Him “a thousand years as one day” but “He is not slack concerning His promise” of destruction meaning it is inevitable in His own good time. Preach repentance before it is everlasting to late, for “what manner of persons ought you be in holy conduct and godliness” (3:11).
- C. Keys to II Peter:
  - a. Key word: Destructive False Teachers.
  - b. Key verses: 1:3 “His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue”; 3:9 “The Lord is not slow to fulfil his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”
  - c. Key chapter: 3 make no mistake, God will keep His promise and that you need to make sure you are in Christ to receive the blessings on judgement.
  - d. Key to Christ: Repent or perish Luke 13:3, 5.