

**STUDIES OF THE
GENERAL EPISTLES
OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Dr. Carson K. Fremont

STUDIES OF THE GENERAL EPISTLES

THE PLACE OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Dr. Merrill Tenney notes that, in the beginning, the persecutions against the Christians and the preaching of the Gospel not only came from the Jews, but the Roman Government itself seemed to both tolerate and treat kindly and fairly the Christians in every place. Herod, who ruled in Palestine and who was seeking to please the Jews by opposing the Christians, would be the exception. In general, Rome's policy was tolerance of various religious groups AS LONG AS they did not act in conflict with the claims and rules of the state.

We find that the apostles themselves both practiced and taught that Christians were to respect and obey "the king" and all in civil authority. (SEE: Romans 13:1-7; I Timothy 2:1, 2; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-17). The only exceptions would be when they disobeyed the Jewish authorities on the basis of OBEYING GOD RATHER THAN MAN. This would be when the orders of the authorities went against their Christian consciences (SEE: Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29-32) and they would chose to accept persecution and imprisonment rather than compromising their obedience to God.

However, toward the beginning of the sixth decade (60-65 A.D.), the attitude of the Roman government had begun to change. Even in the early 50's, Priscilla and Aquila and others had been forced to leave Rome and settle in other places, though later some returned again to Rome (SEE: Romans 16:3-5).

At that time, the strong beliefs of the Christians began to stir the suspicion and contempt of the Romans. The Christian belief in the coming judgments of God and the overthrow of existing governments also created misunderstanding and hatred. In other words, the time came when the Christians seemed to be a threat to the Roman government and the Romans felt that strong action needed to be taken against them to stop the spread of Christianity. The severe persecutions under Nero came as a product of this deep suspicion and growing hatred of Christianity.

This change in attitude by the Roman Government stirred fear and apprehension in the Christians and necessitated strong reassurance from God that, no matter what steps civil governments might take against them, they were in the hands of the Lord. They also needed strong teaching to prepare them for life under such growing hatred and persecution. As we note in I Peter 2:3-17, their peaceful obedience to the rule of government over them was not to change, but their faith was to be spiritually strengthened and their eyes were to be focused on both the trusted value of their relationship with the Lord and their glorious hope for the future.

THE COMPARISON OF THE GENERAL EPISTLES WITH PAUL'S EPISTLES

1. **There are several distinctive features about these General Epistles that distinguish them from the Pauline Epistles.**
 - A. **Whereas most of the epistles written by Paul were written to specific local churches in various parts of the Roman Empire, these General Epistles, with the possible exception of II and III John, are written to a more general audience. Other than knowing whether the addressees were Jews or Gentiles, we know little about the specific people these General Epistles reached or the exact areas where they lived.**
 - B. **Whereas most of the epistles written by Paul deal with specific situations and needs/problems of the people to whom he was writing, the General Epistles deal with the broader questions of the Christian life and the problems Christians were facing in the societies in which they live.**
 - C. **Whereas most of the epistles written by Paul deal with the doctrine of salvation, its means and its implications, the General Epistles put heavy emphasis on the PROOFS of salvation and whether or not PROFESSING Christians truly POSSESS God's salvation.**
 - D. **Whereas most of the epistles of Paul were written before the great persecutions that began in the mid-60's, and were able to deal with life in the periods of the great expansion of the spread of the Gospel from 30-60 A.D., most of the General Epistles were written during and after these great persecutions began and deal with how to live triumphantly in the midst of such persecutions.**
 - E. **Whereas most of the epistles of Paul were written when the preaching and following of the Gospel was still pure in its doctrinal content (the Pastoral Epistles would be the exceptions), most of the General Epistles were written when heresies and serious departures from the faith had already taken hold on the minds and hearts of many and had to be seriously dealt with.**
2. **There are also differences when we compare THE BACKGROUND of Paul with THE BACKGROUND of those who wrote the General Epistles.**
 - A. **Whereas Paul had ties with the Jerusalem Church but was not really from there or was part of it, the General Epistles were written by men who were either leaders of the Jerusalem Church or were a vital part of it. Their teaching reflects this. Paul, in fact, as an apostle to the Gentiles, was sometimes in conflict with the leadership of the Jerusalem Church (SEE: Acts, chapters 15 and 21:17-26; Galatians 2) and had to defend himself against their criticisms and accusations.**

- B. Whereas Paul was not directly personally connected with the Lord and had not sat under his teaching in His earthly ministry, all of the writers of the General Epistles either had family relationship with the Lord or were His disciples during His earthly ministry. Although Paul does emphasize that he had seen the Lord in the vision he saw on the Road to Damascus (SEE: Acts, chapter 9) and considers himself just as worthy an apostle as any of those who had actually been with the Lord in his earthly ministry, his lack of involvement in His earthly life and ministry does make a difference in the teaching Paul gives in his epistles.**
- C. Whereas Paul had been a violent opposer of the Lord and of the preaching of His Gospel before his conversion, and had to be saved out of that, the writers of the General Epistles were all supporters and believers in the Lord either during his earthly ministry or in the beginning days of the Church. It is acknowledged that James and Jude, the half-brothers of the Lord, may not have actually been saved until after His resurrection, and had had some questions about his teaching and ministry before that time (SEE: Mark 3:21-35; John 7:1-5, 7-9), but they had never opposed Him.**

INTRODUCTIONS AND STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE GENERAL EPISTLES

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

- 1. The Epistle of James is traditionally ascribed to James, one of the four half-brothers of the Lord who are named in the Gospels. This James, though converted very late in the ministry of the Lord (or perhaps early in the life of the Jerusalem Church after Pentecost), became a leader in the Jerusalem Church and seems to have been the chairman of the council there that met to debate important decisions and to decide the future direction of the work (SEE: Acts 15).**
- 2. Of the four half-brothers of Jesus, named in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, only James and Jude became famous and wrote books of the New Testament. We do not know what happened to the other two brothers and the two sisters.**
- 3. Contrary to the teaching of the Catholic Church, James and his brothers were born of Mary and Joseph after the birth of the Lord. They are named in the**

4. **It seems clear that James may not actually have been converted until after the resurrection of the Lord (SEE: John 7:2-8). He may have been converted during the post-resurrection period and was then one of the 120 believers who met together in Acts, chapter 1 as they waited for the sending of the Spirit.**
5. **James seems to have kept a close connection with Jewish customs and even seemed to defend the belief common among many in the Jerusalem Church that both Jews and Gentiles were to be under the Jewish Law. (SEE: Acts 15; Galatians 2:11-21). He seems to have been among those Jews who felt uneasy about Paul's beliefs about freedom from the Law and Paul's teachings to the Gentiles (SEE: Acts 21:17-26). Perhaps this attitude in James came from his fear that Paul's converts might be tempted to be lax in their Christian lives if they were not regulated by the Law.**

THE ADDRESSES OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

1. **In the opening verse of chapter 1, James clearly states that he is writing to the "twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad." This could only refer to those Jews whose ancestors had been taken captive by the invaders and carried to far lands.**
2. **Though many of those carried into captivity had chosen to return to Palestine when permitted, many others chose not to return but desired instead to settle permanently in the lands where they had been taken.**
3. **Many of these who were dispersed throughout the areas of Asia and Europe would return to Jerusalem only for special feasts and then would return to their places of "dispersion" to resume life there.**
4. **It seems likely that James is assuming that those to whom he is writing are Christians. Even though he is writing early in the Church age, there would be many Jews who had heard the Gospel in returning to Jerusalem for a feast and then had gone back to their place where they had been dispersed. Many would be lacking proper teaching in living their Christian lives and would need this teaching from James. They also would need encouragement in facing trials and persecutions as Christians.**

THE MAIN EMPHASIS AND THEME OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

- 1. Because he seems to emphasize WORKS in the Christian life, many misunderstand his teachings in this epistle by saying that he believed that works would also help save a person from sin.**
- 2. It is important to understand, therefore, that he and the other writers of the General Epistles were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write their epistles and were mainly dealing with the PROOF of relationship with the Lord rather than the MEANS of having that relationship. Such teaching is vitally necessary in God's inspired Word, and agrees with the teachings of Romans 6, I Corinthians 8-10 and Galatians 5 where there had been misunderstandings about GRACE (SEE: Romans 5:20, 21 and Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 4:21-31 and 5:1,13, 16)**
- 3. His approach therefore supplements the teaching of Epistles such as Romans, Galatians and Ephesians, which emphasize the MEANS of coming into that saving relationship with the Lord, and is not contrary to the teachings of these epistles.**
- 4. His teachings are intensely practical as he applies them to the daily situations of life that believers face, and emphasizes the ways true believers would spiritually react to those situations.**
- 5. Dr. Merrill Tenney suggests that "The True Standards of (Christian) Living" might be the simplest way to define the theme of the epistle.**

THE PLACE OF THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

- 1. In our study of the Book of Acts, we note that James was not only a leader in the Jerusalem Church, but he also spent most of his life there. Every time the Jerusalem Church is mentioned, James is presented as active in its ongoing life and witness.**
- 2. Though others of the leaders of the Jerusalem Church traveled and ministered throughout Asia, with Peter even going as far as Corinth, it is possible that James never traveled outside the city of Jerusalem in any major ministry that he might have had.**
- 3. It is most likely, therefore, that the Epistle of James, written early in the Church Age, 45 A.D. and written to the Jews of the Dispersion, was written from Jerusalem itself and that James continued to serve the Lord there and died there.**

THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

1. The nature of the Epistle of James indicates that it was written early in the life of the Church. This is especially seen in the fact that the Law seems to be the center of the moral teaching of the Epistle and that the author is very closely related to teaching concerning the Law.
2. We also note that the emphasis of the Epistle is upon the Jews. This seems to indicate that the Gospel had not yet widely spread among the Gentiles. Paul's first missionary journey, which made an impact on the Gentiles and greatly changed the direction of the witness of the Gospel, did not begin until 45 A.D.
3. Most Bible scholars believe that this was the earliest of all of the books of the New Testament, perhaps written as early as 45 A.D.

THE OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

THE NATURE AND STANDARDS OF TRUE CHRISTIAN LIVING

I.	Introduction	1:1
II.	The Nature of a True Christian	1:2-27
	A. One who accepts his circumstances in life	1:2-12
	B. One who accepts his responsibilities before God	1:13-18
	C. One who controls actions and walk before God	1:19-27
III.	The Proof of True Faith in One's Life	2:1-3:12
	A. Treating others without partiality	2:1-13
	B. Works as the surest proof of one's faith	2:14-26
	C. Spiritual control of the tongue	3:1-12
IV.	The Application of True Faith to Life	3:13-5:18
	A. The source and evidence of spiritual wisdom	3:13-18
	B. The use of spiritual wisdom in daily walk	4:1-10
	C. The use of spiritual wisdom in evaluating others	4:11,12
	D. The use of spiritual wisdom in considering our lives	4:13-17

- E. The use of spiritual wisdom in dealing with riches 5:1-6
- F. The use of spiritual wisdom in waiting on the Lord 5:7-11
- G. The use of spiritual wisdom in language we use 5:12
- H. The use of spiritual wisdom in prayer for needs 5:13-18
- V. Conclusion: Rescuing a fallen one 5:19, 20

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

THE NATURE AND STANDARDS OF TRUE CHRISTIAN LIVING

I. INTRODUCTION

1:1

- A. As noted before, the one writing this epistle is not James the brother of John, who was killed very early in the church age, but is James the half-brother of the Lord. He probably was not converted until after the resurrection of the Lord, but later became one of the main leaders in the Jerusalem Church. As the leader of this key mainly Jewish Church, his authority would be recognized by these scattered Jews. Therefore he does not have to identify himself other than using his name.
- B. In introducing himself, James uses a description of himself (“a servant/bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”) that Paul also used in some of his epistles (SEE: Romans, Philippians and Titus). This term gives the idea both of the humble way the writer regards himself in the service of the Lord (like a slave of the Lord) and of the humble attitude of heart that he has in writing this epistle. It speaks of the absolute authority the Lord has over him and of his complete submission to that authority.
- C. The addressees are the Jews scattered throughout Asia and other places whose ancestors were taken to those far places by the invaders. Many of these Jewish ancestors then chose not to return to resettle in Jerusalem when they were permitted to do so by later rulers.
- D. These would be Christian Jews for there is no indication in the text of the epistle that any part of this epistle is intended to be evangelistic in nature. Although they are Jewish Christians, many of them would be tempted to adopt some of the questionable ways of the Gentiles in their churches (SEE: Romans 14; I Corinthians 8) by turning against all of the strict teachings of their Jewish backgrounds and practicing daily patterns of life that would bear little

resemblance to their Jewish heritage. James writes to correct and guard them against this temptation.

II. THE NATURE OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN 1:2-27

A. One Who Accepts His Circumstances in Life 1:2-12

- 1. Like the Apostle Paul, these Christian Jews would be cut off and persecuted by their fellow Jews once they truly believed in Christ and took an open stand for Him. Those who formerly were their friends and associates would now treat them as enemies and would even take every opportunity to express their hatred both of the Lord and of these followers of His.**
- 2. The “trials” he refers to several times would not only be the persecutions they would face because of their faith and stand for Christ, but could also refer to the difficulties of living as Christians in the ordinary challenges and circumstances of life in that non-Christian society in which they lived.**
- 3. Whether these “trials” involved persecution or just the difficulties of living in their non-Christian communities, the “testing” of their faith required endurance and faithfulness on their part. Only through such endurance could they truly be complete in Christ.**
- 4. They were to completely accept their new stand for the faith and the circumstances it permitted to come into their lives.**
- 5. There were several specific circumstances that he deals with in this section.**
 - a. He deals with the circumstances of those who are undergoing trials in their Christian lives and who might be tempted to give up their stand for the Lord. Rather than giving up, they are to accept the endurance that the Lord brings into the lives of those who are being so tested. 1:2-4**
 - b. He also deals with those who seem to live in doubt without any real wisdom in living their Christian lives. They are to depend on God for their wisdom in living their lives and are to seek that wisdom with faith. We note that he will return again to the subject of the wisdom we need in living our Christian lives in the section 3:13 to 5:11. 1:5-8**
 - c. He deals with those who are affected in various ways in matters of material possessions as they live in this world. Those in both extremes of circumstances, whether rich or poor, are to depend on God and not to make possessions the main concern of their lives. The one in very poor circumstances is to rejoice and the one with very many possessions is to be humbled. 1:9-11**

- d. He returns again to those who live under trials and points to the rewards he will receive from the Lord for persevering under these trials. This reward will be an incentive to them to go on for the Lord. 1:12

B. One Who Accepts His Personal Responsibility Before God. 1:13-18

- 1. In these verses, he is mainly teaching our responsibility to overcome sin and temptation in our lives and the reasons why we might be defeated in this area of our lives. We are to accept this responsibility and act on it.
- 2. We are not to blame God for the sin and the temptation, for God is holy and has nothing to do with sin, but we rather are to lay the fault on ourselves for yielding to it. It is our own lust and desires that open the door to these things.

C. One Who Controls His Actions and Walk Before God 1:19-27

- 1. The first action he deals with is that of **ANGER**. He points out that possible anger in the life of the Christian is to be kept under spiritual control and that the anger of man does not bring righteousness into the life of the Christian. It can deny him that righteous life before God. 1:19, 20
- 2. They are to decide on personal **SEPARATION** from sin and wickedness (SEE: I John 2:15-17), and are to humbly receive and live by the Word that is implanted in their hearts by God. 1:21
- 3. Not only are they to receive the Word, but they are to be **DOERS** of the Word rather than just hearers of it. 1:22-27
 - a. To be a hearer of the Word but not a doer of it is self-deception. He uses the illustration of the man who looks in the mirror but then forgets what he has seen of his own image. 1:23, 24
 - b. The man who both knows the Law of Liberty and earnestly follows it in his Christian life by becoming an “effectual doer” of it, will truly be blest of God as he lives in this world. 1:25
 - c. Tongue control (SEE: James 3:1-12) would be an illustration of being a doer of the Word rather than just a hearer. 1:26
 - d. Reaching out to others in need, with complete unselfishness, and remaining unstained by the world are other examples of doers of the Word. 1:27

III. THE PROOF OF TRUE FAITH IN ONE’S LIFE 2:1-3:12

A. Treating Others Without Partiality 2:1-13

1. In this passage, he is dealing with the very human tendency to favor certain ones over others, especially when some may be more important to us in life.
2. He begins with the warning that the Lord in whom they have faith is worthy of a better response to others in their lives than that of favoritism. 2:1
3. He uses the illustration of a very important man coming into their church at the same time as a very poor man. SEE ALSO: I John 3:17-20, the example of a brother in need.
 - a. In the eyes of God they are equally important and loved, and He Himself shows no favoritism in the way He regards them or treats them. In Romans 1:18-3:18-5:21 and Ephesians 2:11-3:11, there is the emphasis upon the equal unworthiness of all of mankind before they are saved and their absolute equality and oneness in the Lord after they are saved.
 - b. On the human level, it is difficult for us to see others as God sees them, and so we will always be faced with this temptation to favoritism. In this illustration, it is easy to see why we also might be tempted to favor a rich and important person over a person who is poor and who would have little place in society.
4. This example also reminds us of other reasons why we might favor certain ones over others. In New Testament churches where there was a mixed assembly of Jews and Gentiles, there would be the temptation to favor Jews over Gentiles. The same would be true when both masters and slaves were part of the assembly of believers.
5. Today, we might not have these forms of diversity, but there will always be some differences between members of today's assemblies of believers. The warning of this passage is just as important for us to heed as it was for them.

B. Works as the Surest Proof of One's Faith 2:14-26

1. The passage opens with the teaching that FAITH that is not accompanied by works as the PROOF of that faith is completely empty and without meaning or validity. He uses the illustration of a person who claims to have faith but does not reach out to the brother who is hungry (SEE: I John 3:17-20) to show that there might be doubt whether that person has ever really had faith. 2:14-17
2. He goes on to teach that people have a right to expect us demonstrate our faith by our works. They also have the right to question our faith when works are absent. 2:18-20
3. There has been some misunderstanding over the use of Abraham as an example of faith accompanied by works. This is due to the fact that Abraham not only had faith, but his life demonstrated the presence of that faith. 2:21-23

- a. **The misunderstanding leads some to conclude that Abraham's righteousness and acceptance before God was based on the combination of faith with works rather than on faith alone.**
 - b. **This wrong conclusion is denied in every other place where the faith of Abraham is taught. Romans, chapter 4 and Hebrews 11:7-17 clearly teach that Abraham was accepted by God solely on the basis of his faith, and that the works that he did were a PROOF of that faith rather than the means of his acceptance by God.**
 - c. **Even the offering of his son mentioned in Hebrews 11:17 was a proof of his faith. Genesis 22:12 shows that this offering of his son PROVED to God that Abraham really feared God and was submissive to Him in everything rather than being a means of establishing his relationship with God.**
- 4. He closes this section by stressing the deadness and questionable nature of a faith with no works. SEE ALSO: Romans, chapter 6; Galatians, chapters 5, 6; Ephesians, chapters 4-6 and Colossians, chapters 3, 4. 2:24-26**
- C. Spiritual Control of the Tongue 3:1-12**
1. **The problem of controlling the use of the tongue is a frequent subject in the Scriptures. SEE: Psalms 34:13; 39:1; 141:3; Proverbs 20:19; Matthew 11, 18-20; Romans 1:29; I Timothy 5:13 and James 1:26. In these passages, there is great emphasis upon the guarding of the tongue so that it does not become a cause for sin, and also avoiding those who misuse the tongue through gossip.**
 2. **This passage in James, chapter 3 is the strongest passage on the subject of the tongue in the Scriptures, and its dangers in the lives of God's people.**
 - a. **The passage opens with a warning that we are not to aspire to be teachers of others because the tongue of the teacher is especially examined by God and comes under His possible judgment. There is the danger that the tongue of the teacher may utter error and may fail to express things in the ways God wants them to be expressed. The teacher therefore is most open to danger in the use of his tongue, and has responsibility to examine and control his tongue. 3:1, 2**
 - b. **In the next verses, he points out that the tongue is a small part of our bodies and is apt to be ignored as a source of danger in our lives and testimonies as Christians. He compares the tongue with the bits in the mouths of horses, the rudders on ships and small fires to show that these, though small, can vitally affect the outcome for the horse, ship and forest. 3:3-5**
 - c. **He goes ahead to teach the spiritual difficulty we face in bringing our tongues**

under control because of their nature and tendency to be used sinfully. 3:6-8

- d. He closes this section by showing one way that God's people wrongly use their tongues, as they speak in blessing God at the same time they are speaking in evil ways about men who are made in the image of God. Such use of the tongue is not acceptable to God and is a sin before Him. 3:9-12

IV. THE APPLICATION OF TRUE FAITH TO LIFE 3:13-5:18

- A. The source and evidence of spiritual wisdom. 3:13-18
1. Spiritual wisdom comes only from God, and God has the right to expect that the one who uses it will use it with good behavior. 3:13
 2. Ungodly behavior in the one who professes to have spiritual wisdom is not from God but is sinful and satanic in nature and produces sinful results 3:14-16.
 3. He then lists the qualities that give evidence of true spiritual possession and use of wisdom from God. These qualities are: purity, a peaceable nature, gentleness, easy to be entreated (reasonable to deal with), full of mercy and good fruits, without disputes (wrangling) and without hypocrisy. 3:17
 4. The sowing of the seed that produces righteousness (the Gospel and further Scriptural teaching) will be done in peace. 3:18
- B. The use of spiritual wisdom in daily walk. 4:1-10
1. He uses strong language to identify why we have troubles both in our daily walk and in our relationships with others. 4:1-6
 - a. The main source of our problem is that what we do is often done for the satisfying of our own desires rather than for spiritual purposes. This affects also our prayer life. 4:1-3
 - b. He further identifies the problem as friendship with the world in acting according to our own desires ("lust"), and this puts us at enmity with God and His working in our lives. SEE: I John 2:15-17. 4:4, 5
 2. He then gives the solutions to these two serious spiritual problems that affect our daily walk and lives before God. 4:6-10
 - a. We are to approach God humbly to receive His sustaining grace 4:6
 - b. We are to submit our lives to God. 4:7

- c. We are to resist the Devil. SEE: Ephesians 6:10-17. 4:7
 - d. We are to draw near to God and He will draw near to us. 4:8
 - e. Our hearts are to be clean and pure before Him. 4:8
 - f. We are to have sober and concerned hearts before Him 4:9
 - g. We are to have a humble attitude and approach to God. 4:10
- C. The use of spiritual wisdom in evaluating others. 4:11, 12
- 1. In teaching against speaking against one another, the context indicates that he is speaking of JUDGING one another in an evil way rather than just speaking words against someone else.
 - 2. In Matthew 7:1-5. the Lord had addressed this same subject and was probably mainly dealing with the judgmental attitudes of the Pharisees who could find fault in almost anyone, but the principles He teaches about judging can apply to any relationships.
 - 3. The main word of caution in these verses in James in this matter is that God Himself is the final judge, and that we are unworthy to judge others Rather than judging others, we are to concentrate on obedience and walking rightly in our own lives.
- D. The use of spiritual wisdom in considering our lives. 4:13-17
- 1. He emphasizes the importance of completely depending upon God concerning the timing and circumstances of our lives rather than worrying about our lives, seeking to make all of our own plans for our lives and being proud of living our lives in this way. 4:13-16
 - 2. He teaches that overall, in this dependent relationship with God, we are to pay close attention to the way God speaks to us through our consciences and are to obey the way He deals with us in touching our consciences. SEE: Romans 14:5, 14, 23. 4:17
- E. The use of spiritual wisdom in dealing with riches. 5:1-6
- 1. In this passage, he is not so much condemning the possession of riches as he is condemning the use of those riches
 - a. The riches of those he addresses are not being used for the good of others but rather they are used for their own selfish purposes and are therefore despised by God as being worthless and sinful in their use of them. They are corrupted.

- b. Rather than being happy in possessing them, the rich are to “weep and howl” because of the judgment that will surely come upon them.
- 2. These rich men have used their lives, perhaps through the very gaining of these riches, to oppress others so that they might gain from the misery and suffering they have inflicted on others.
- 3. These rich men have also lived sinful and wanton lives and this will lead them to future destruction at the hands of God.

F. The use of spiritual wisdom in waiting on the Lord’s coming. 5:7-11

- 1. These Christians are not only going through suffering in their own lives, but they are depending on the SOON coming of the Lord to take them out of all that they are going through. This has led them to having an impatient and complaining spirit in waiting on Him.
- 2. Though the Lord could come at any time, God does not tell when that time will be, and Christians are to be patient in waiting for this event to take place. It is possible that it might not happen in any of their lifetimes (or ours, for that matter), and that does not change the spiritual approach they are to have concerning that event.
- 3. Even if their waiting produces more suffering and difficulties in their lives as they live on this earth, they are still to have the same patience and right spiritual attitude in their lives.
- 4. The compassion and mercy of God will be sufficient to take them through, just as it has been sufficient for those in past ages. SEE: II Corinthians 12:8-10

G. The use of spiritual wisdom in the language we use. 5:12

- 1. The phrase he uses, “do not swear”, is not referring to vile language that they might be tempted to use, but rather it has to do with the taking of an oath before others or before authorities to establish the truth of what we say.
- 2. He is teaching the importance of being absolutely honest and trustworthy in what we say, so that we don’t have to express ourselves through taking an oath in order for people to believe what we say. The very fact that we state something should be proof enough that we are telling the truth and can absolutely be believed. Honesty is one mark of a true Christian.
- 3. We also note the teaching on the subject of honesty in such passages as Psalms 58:3, 101:7, Proverbs 12:22, 19:9, and Colossians 3:9. Being completely honest, both in word and deed is part of having a character that is recognized for its absolute INTEGRITY. SEE: Psalms 26:1.

- H. The use of spiritual wisdom in praying for needs. 5:13-18
1. In this passage, he is first setting forth a certain procedure that the church is to use in dealing with sickness. The sick person is to call for the elders of the church to come and anoint him and to pray over him so that healing may come. This passage is not teaching that they will perform a miracle on him, but rather that they will join their hearts together in praying over him. This is a procedure that many churches still follow today. 5:13-15
 2. He is also teaching that prayer that is offered to meet certain needs is to be made from righteous hearts. If there is sin (Psalms 66:18) in the hearts of those who are praying, those sins are to be confessed and dealt with and then the person can pray and expect God to hear and answer that prayer. 5:16-18

V. CONCLUSION 5:19, 20

- A. In his conclusion, he deals with the need to be concerned with the spiritual needs of others. Christians are to be used in turning those who have strayed into sinful ways back to right relationship and fellowship with the Lord.
- B. In having such a ministry on behalf of other Christians, great spiritual results can come in the life of the one who has been corrected and turned back again to spiritual ways.
- C. It is on this spiritual note that the Epistle of James ends.
- D. OVERALL, he has shown what the real PROOFS of salvation are and how these are to be manifested in their lives. He has challenged them to stop merely claiming that they are Christians and to start SHOWING the presence of Christ in their lives by their lives and conduct.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

1. Peter as one of the inner circle of the original group of disciples of Christ (Peter, James and John) (SEE: Mark 5:37; 9:1-13), and one of the main spokesmen

and leaders of the Jerusalem Church, would have been a logical choice by God to write such an epistle and then to follow it with a second and final epistle.

2. We also know that he traveled and ministered widely throughout Asia and even went as far as Corinth, where Paul had started the work, where he must have ministered for a time (SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1 and 3). In the case of Corinth, he had such influence and was so widely respected that there even grew up a following after him. Perhaps without any sin or fault on his part, this following of his helped to completely divide that church.
3. Therefore, as a widely recognized spokesman for the Lord and leader of the Church, Peter would also have had the authority to both write these inspired writings and to command obedience to what was written as he addresses those "scattered throughout....." the various places in Asia.

THE PLACE OF THE WRITING OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

1. There has been much dispute about the place where his epistle was written. The dispute centers on the question as to whether Peter ever lived or died in Rome.
 - a. Charles John Ellicott, in his Layman's Handy Commentary on the Bible, emphatically states that the traditional teaching on Peter's stay and death in Rome is absolutely correct. He not only believes that the "BABYLON" Peter refers to in chapter five, vs. 13 is speaking of the City of Rome rather than the ancient Babylon, but he also fully supports the Catholic tradition that Peter, together with Paul, was the founder of the Roman Church (and was therefore also the first POPE of the Catholic Church).
 - b. Merrill C. Tenney, in his book New Testament Survey, believes that Peter did reach Rome on his journeys and may have died there, BUT that he did not come to Rome before 60 A.D., as confirmed by both Acts and Romans 15. He therefore had nothing to do with the founding/co-founding of the Roman Church or had any ministry there over a period of time either alone or as a coworker with Paul.
 - 1) While it is possible that the "BABYLON" of I Peter 5:13 does refer to the Babylon on the Euphrates, since there was a Jewish settlement and later a Christian settlement there, there is no evidence that Peter ever ministered there. Tenney believes that the name Peter gives to it was the mystical name the Christians used to refer to Rome as having all of the evil of the ancient City of Babylon.
 - 2) Peter's reference to John Mark in 5:13 seems to Tenney to place him in Rome at the time of the writing of this epistle, since Colossians 4:10 places

Mark in Rome with Pau (61 A.D.) and there is no evidence that Mark ever went to the ancient Babylon.

- 3) He also cites patristic (from the church fathers of the first two centuries) evidence that Peter was in Rome at the end of his life.**
- c. We also note in Peter's second epistle, written just before he died, that he warmly refers to Paul and his writings (II Peter 3:14-16). Some feel that this may indicate that they were in close communication with each other in Rome at the time of the writing of II Peter.**
- d. THERE ARE MANY OTHERS, however, who believe that Peter not only had never been in Rome, but that he also could not have been imprisoned and killed there.**
 - 1) One of the main evidences for this is the fact that Paul himself never mentioned Peter in any of the five epistles he wrote from Rome during his imprisonments there. These would include Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon written during his first imprisonment (58-61/62 A.D.), and II Timothy, written just before he died in 65/66 A.D. If Peter had helped found the Roman Church, or was in Rome at any time while Paul was there, or even was in prison awaiting death in Rome while Paul was also there, Paul's failure to mention him in his writings would not be understandable.**
 - 2) In Acts, chapter 28, when Paul arrived in Rome as a prisoner (58 A.D.), there is no mention at all by Luke of Peter being there or of any contact there between Peter and Paul. Rather, it seems that Paul, from an apostolic standpoint, is alone there in the preaching of the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles.**
 - 3) Paul and Peter had never done a joint work together in Asia or Eastern Europe, though Peter apparently went to Corinth AFTER Paul had labored there for more than a year and a half (SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1 and 3). Paul was also in disagreement with Peter's stand concerning Judaism and the Law (SEE: Galatians 2:11-21) and had disputed openly with him about it, so it seems unlikely that Paul would have been willing to do a joint work with him.**
 - 4) Paul also had strong convictions about not working where another was also working (SEE: Romans 15:15-25...especially vs. 20) and it is unlikely that he would have worked in Rome if Peter was working there also. In Romans 15, in fact, he seems to indicate that the Roman Christians have had no apostolic help at all in the city itself and that they needed him to be there with them.**
 - 5) Since Mark was from Asia and went back and forth from there to Rome to see Paul, and, as many believe, Peter had a close relationship with him in Palestine and had even supplied many of the facts Mark deals with in the Gospel of**

Mark, Peter's reference to him in II Peter 5:13 would not necessarily mean that Peter was with Mark in Rome.

- 6) If Peter never worked or lived in Rome, the only remaining question would be concerning the origin of the believers in the City of Rome and in the surrounding area who greeted Paul when he landed in Italy near Rome as a prisoner (SEE: Acts 28:13-15).**
 - a) Some of these could have come from the conversions on the Day of Pentecost when they might have come back to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost and heard and responded to the Gospel preached on that day. Acts 2 mentions many different language groups and areas represented among those who heard the Gospel on that day and responded. Some doubt this possibility because of the distance involved, and feel that is unlikely that Roman Christians were also there at Pentecost.**
 - b) These believers might also have come from the work of Priscilla (Prisca) and Aquila who had originally lived in Rome, had been forced by the government to leave Rome for Corinth, and then finally had left Asia and had gone back to Rome to establish a church in their house (SEE: Romans 16:3-5, written in 56 A.D.). The church they established in Rome might well have reached outside the City of Rome itself to evangelize in nearby towns.**
 - c) Some might have been Paul's converts in western Asia or in eastern Europe who then went to Italy and Rome to live and witness for Christ.**
- 7. If this epistle (and II Peter as well) was not written from Rome, then it is not clear where the city would be where Peter wrote it.**
 - a) While it could have been written from Palestine itself, it seems more likely that Peter was in some other city of Asia to the north or northwest of Palestine. He could even have been in a city of Asia Minor along the Aegean Sea.**
 - b) The text itself suggests that it was the City of Babylon itself (5:13), but that reference simply could have been Peter's way of comparing the conditions of another wicked city in Asia to the total depravity found in that ancient city.**

THE ADDRESSEES OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

- 1. The main question would be whether these who are "scattered abroad" are the Jews of the Dispersion or whether they are Gentiles.**
 - a. It could certainly be said that this description of the addressees could apply to the Jewish people who were scattered to all parts of Asia and Europe by the**

invasions and captivities they had faced in past centuries, and who had never returned to their homeland.

- 1) While some of the Jews who had been taken captive had returned to the Holy Land (SEE: The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah) and helped resettle it again, it seems that most of the scattered Jews found homes in the lands to which they had been taken and remained there with only occasional trips back to the Holy Land to celebrate some of the Feasts of the Old Testament.
 - 2) As noted before, the Epistle of James, written by the half-brother of the Lord who had become a major leader in the Jerusalem Church, is directed toward these dispersed Jews.
- b. However, the nature of these two epistles of Peter is very different in content and emphasis from the Epistle of James.
- 1) James is emphasizing the spiritual implications and moral side of the Law of Moses and bases much of his teaching on the Law in bringing those things to the remembrance of the readers. The Epistles of Peter hardly refers to the Law of Moses.
 - 2) The Epistles of Peter, like the Epistles of Paul, emphasize instead the universal truths of what it means to belong to the Lord and how they are to live in their relationship with Him. He also emphasizes the trials and tribulations they are facing and how they are to act and react in the presence of these.
 - 3) It is clear, therefore, that these two epistles are universal in their teaching, and could include and be of help to both Jews and Gentiles, but their lack of Jewish-related emphasis indicates that their main purpose is to teach the scattered Gentiles in all the cities of the Asian area.
- c. It is safe to say, therefore, that these epistles are written to the scattered Gentiles throughout the Asian and Eastern European regions.

THE PURPOSES AND NATURE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

1. There are two **GENERAL PURPOSES** for the writing of this epistle that could also apply to the writing of II Peter as well.
 - a. Because these two epistles were written at the beginning of the terrible persecutions under Nero, and the second one, in particular, was written just before Peter himself died under that great persecution (66 A.D.), one great general purpose of these epistles is to prepare them for the great trials and sufferings they are shortly to go through for the sake of Christ.

- 1). **His words of encouragement and instruction in both epistles will help them understand both the attitudes and the manner of conduct they are to have in their lives during those terrible times.**
 - 2) **For their encouragement, he uses the example of Christ Himself in His suffering, and shows how willingly and faithfully he endured suffering for the sake of their salvation. (SEE: I Peter 4:1, 2). His example, and what it means for them, will help them go on for Him.**
- b. A second general purpose for these epistles is to deal with the basics of their Christian lives as Paul had taught in the latter part of many of his epistles. SEE: Romans, chapters 12-15; Galatians, chapters 5, 6; Ephesians, chapters 4-6; and Colossians, chapters 3, 4.**
- 1) **Many of them would have had little opportunity to be properly disciplined after their conversions, and may at this time even have had no trained leaders to teach them further in their Christian walk and growth.**
 - a) **There would be danger that they would both fail to understand clearly their responsibilities in their new relationship with the Lord, and also would be tempted to go astray in their fellowship with Him and their daily following of His teaching and will for their lives.**
 - b) **There is a strong comparison of these two epistles written by Peter with Paul's Epistle to the Romans where Paul had to deal with the most basic truths of the Christian life. (SEE: Romans, chapters 6-8 and 12-16). Much of Peter's teaching closely parallels the teaching of Paul in that epistle.**
 - 2) **The nature of these two epistles would therefore mainly be to encourage the scattered believers in their faith and stand for the Lord in the midst of growing trials and persecutions, and to reassure them of their hope in the Lord.**

THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

1. **From the nature of the contents of this epistle, it seems clear that it was written rather late in the life of Peter. It would have been written when Peter had already labored for many years for the Lord, and now he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to share some of the lessons he had learned from the Lord and to give some warnings to the new generations of Christians.**
2. **It seems likely that it may have been written about the same time as Paul wrote the Prison Epistles. Peter was not in prison himself at this time and was still in**

active ministry, but was continually facing opposition to the ministry the Lord had given him and was predicting that very serious persecutions would break out in the future.

3. The possible date for the writing of this First Epistle of Peter would be around 60 or 61 A.D., the same dates as the writing by Paul of the Prison Epistles.

THE OUTLINE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

SALVATION: ITS BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. INTRODUCTION	1:1, 2
II. The Benefits of the Salvation Given to Believers	1:3-12
III. The Responsibilities of the Salvation Given to Believers	1:13-5:11
A. The Demands of Salvation For Holiness in Life	1:13-21
B. The Expected Changes Salvation Brings	1:22-2:12
C. The Changed Relationships Salvation Brings	2:13-3:13
D. The Conduct and Attitude of the Saved in Suffering	3:14-4:19
E. The Effects of Salvation on Church Life	5:1-11
IV. CONCLUSION	5:12-14

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

SALVATION: ITS BENEFITS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1:1, 2 |
|------------------------|---------------|
- A. The **AUTHOR** simply identifies himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." As one of the very first disciples the Lord called, we know that Peter was not only appointed for leadership, was given the full authority of a leader by the Lord and was used that way in the early church, but we also know that Peter

had a very special relationship with the Lord that distinguished him even from the other disciples/apostles.

1. Very often Peter was singled out for special attention by the Lord and shared with the Lord some of his most intimate experiences in ways that most of the other disciples did not.
 - a. When the Lord went up on the mountain for the experience of the TRANSFIGURATION, for instance, only Peter, James and John were permitted to go up there with him. (SEE: Luke 9:28-35) When they went into the Garden of Gethsemene for Jesus to pray before his arrest by the soldiers, the same three were taken with the Lord to share that experience with Him. SEE: Mark 14:33-42.
 - b. On many occasions, he would address Peter directly, challenging him concerning his own devotion to the Lord or about some future happening in the life of Peter. SEE: Matthew 16:17-19, 21-23; Mark 14:26-31; John 21:15-22.
2. Peter would also often act as the spokesman for the other disciples when addressing the Lord. SEE: Matthew 16:13-16; Luke 9:18-21.

B. The question concerning the identity of the addressees of this First Epistle of Peter has already been dealt with. The main thing to note is that this was addressed to these Gentile believers in a general way WHEREVER they were. This letter would be shared perhaps from district to district and might even be used all over Asia and parts of Eastern Europe. 1b

C. In the second part of the introduction, he first speaks of their relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, and then closes it with a blessing that is very similar to the ones that Paul used in most of the introductions to his epistles....that the sustaining grace of God and His peace in their hearts may be theirs in the fullest measure. 1c,

II. THE BENEFITS OF SALVATION GIVEN TO BELIEVERS 1:3-12

*****WE NOTE that Paul had opened two of his epistles with lists of the BLESSINGS/BENEFITS the believers had enjoyed in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

1. In I Corinthians 1:4-9, he lists the blessings the Corinthians had in receiving the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. Even though they had wickedly and selfishly misused these gifts, there is still the recognition that God had intended blessing in the giving of them and wanted to bestow those blessings on them if they were willing to obey Him in using them.

2. In Ephesians 1:3-14, he lists all the blessings believers have been given in their saving relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. All of these blessings to true believers have come through Christ, and believers owe everything, therefore, to Him.

A. THE NATURE OF THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION. 1:3-9

1. "CAUSED US TO BE BORN AGAIN TO A LIVING HOPE" vs. 3

- a. This new birth would be the same subject Jesus addresses with Nicodemus in John 3:1-21. It would be spiritual in nature and would not be the natural progression of human life and effort that Nicodemus had envisioned. The idea of Nicodemus would be based on following the Law of Moses so perfectly that he would be qualified to enter God's heaven with God's approval.
- b. Paul had had the same approach to God before he was saved on the road to Damascus. He speaks of this in Philippians 3:4-6 and 7-10, where, from the standpoint of a devout Jew and follower of the Law, he had achieved, from a human standpoint, everything that anyone could achieve by background and self-effort. However, to be accepted by God he had had to put everything aside that he had formerly depended on and come to Christ by faith.
- c. Peter now is led to teach that this new birth is:
 - 1) According to the plan (foreknowledge) of God (vs.2) (SEE:Rom.8:29)
 - 2) By the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit (vs. 2)
 - 3) According to the mercy of God (vs. 3) (SEE: Ephesians 2:8, 9)
 - 4) Assured by the resurrection of Christ from the dead (vs.3). SEE: I Corinthians, chapter 15.
 - 5) By the Word of God, and the teachings, the directions and results taught in the Word of God (vs. 23)

2. "TO OBTAIN AN INHERITANCE WHICH IS IMPERISHABLE AND UNDEFILED" vs. 4

- a. The "inheritance" that he speaks of here is not only the forgiveness of sins and the righteous standing before God (SEE: Romans 5:1, 2) that comes to the person who has trusted Christ, but it has to do with the eternal life and reward in heaven that awaits the one who belongs to Christ. (SEE: John 3:14-36)

- b. It can also refer to membership in the family of God and all the blessings and benefits that that relationship brings to true believers in Christ as they live in this world. (SEE: Ephesians 2:11-3:21)
 - c. It (SEE: Ephesians 1:11, 12) also can refer to the wonderful privilege/ministry/responsibility we have in this world of representing and bringing glory and honor to the one who has saved us. (SEE: John 3:30-34; 15:16; Ephesians 1:11, 12; II Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 1:20, 21)
3. **"WHO ARE PROTECTED BY THE POWER OF GOD THROUGH FAITH"** vs. 5
- a. This protection we have in our relationship with Christ could refer to the complete assurance we have of our eternal security in that relationship, and the fact that nothing can take that salvation away from us. SEE: John 10:28-30; Ephesians 1:13, 14.
 - b. Though we believers will all face the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Corinthians 3:10-17; II Corinthians 5:9-11) to be judged for what we have done in the body, whether it be good or bad, that judgment will never be the judgment reserved for the lost, for our salvation is not based on any of our works or good deeds but entirely on the merits of Christ Himself and our faith in Him. SEE: Ephesians 2:8, 9.
 - c. The "POWER OF GOD" would most likely refer to the work of the Holy Spirit on our behalf Who first **DRAWS US** to the Lord (SEE: John 6:44), Who then **REGENERATES US** (SEE: John 3:3-7), Who **SEALS US** in our salvation (SEE: Ephesians 1:13) and Who then **INDWELLS US** (SEE: Romans 8; Galatians 5:16) to not only give us the continual assurance of our salvation but who also **EMPOWERS** us to live lives pleasing and acceptable to the Lord.
4. **"THAT THE PROOF OF YOUR FAITH.....MAY BE FOUND TO RESULT IN PRAISE AND GLORY AND HONOR AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST."** vs. 6-9
- a. Vs. 6 teaches that the trials and tribulations they are going through are one of the means God uses to **PROVE/TEST** their faith, and that this **PROOF** is precious in the sight of God and will bring great honor and glory to Him.
 - b. This **PROOF** of their faith also demonstrates and increases their love for Him and their joy in their relationship with Him even though they have not physically seen Him or are yet in heaven with Him.
 - c. If this **PROOF** is truly found in their lives, they will both honor and glorify Him in living on this earth, and it will also result in the approval of the Lord as they live here and then finally face Him (II Corinthians 5:9-11)

- d. **Their final reward in this relationship with Him is the final salvation of their souls, when they are with Him in heaven forever.**

B. THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANCIENT PROPHETS 1:10-12

1. **This section is important because the Christian Faith and Christianity itself is built upon solid Old Testament foundations and the work and Divinely inspired testimony of the prophets of the Old Testament. SEE: Acts 3:22-26.**
2. **In other words, the describing, defining and proclamation of the Christian Faith did not just begin when Christ Himself appeared and completed all His work on the earth of teaching, proving Who and What He is and then offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world and ascending back to glory following His resurrection from the dead. Rather, all of this was first taught and supported throughout the Old Testament Scriptures beginning with the earliest prophecy of Genesis 3:14, 15.**
 - a. **Everything that Christ did and His entire purpose and mission in coming into the world is taught in great detail by Old Testament Prophecy. Matthew notes this as he quotes again and again from the Old Testament as verification that all that Jesus did and taught was predicted long before.**
 - b. **It is from the Old Testament that we see clearly the TOTAL mission of the coming promised MESSIAH. He was first of all to be the SUFFERING SAVIOR and then was to be the RULING KING. The work of the Suffering Savior for the sins of the world had to precede His work as the Ruling King. SEE: Isaiah, chapter 53.**
 - b. **The failure of the Jews of that day and even modern Jews to see this DUAL ROLE of their promised Messiah made it difficult for them to accept Christ even when He so perfectly fulfilled every prediction and condition made about Him in the Old Testament. To accept Him as the Suffering Savior, for instance, would mean that their O.T. sacrificial system was once for all finished and that this Messiah was GOD'S LAMB offered for the sins of the world. SEE: John 1:29, 36.**
 - c. **To even admit that they needed such a sacrifice for sins would be difficult for them. Even more, trusting Him first as the Suffering Savior would also mean a delay in His triumphant reign as the Ruling King, leaving them under their cruel oppressors for an indefinite time.**
 - d. **Being under foreign rulers over a past period of many centuries also would cause the oppressed Jews to desire/emphasize only their need for a powerful reigning king who would once for all deliver them from these foreign rulers and**

make the other role of the Messiah to be of little or no importance in their thinking or expectations.

2. This section emphasizes that the Old Testament prophets did not themselves see the fulfillment of their prophecies, but that all that they said was in perfect conformity with the life and work of the Lord in which we (and they by faith) have partaken and profited.

III. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF SALVATION 1:13-5:11

A. THE DEMAND OF SALVATION FOR HOLINESS IN LIFE 1:13-21

1. We note that **HOLINESS** in life is not only a key Old Testament teaching, but it is also an important theme both in the teaching of the Lord and in most of the epistles of the New Testament.
 - a. The entire contents of the Law, as set forth in the Pentateuch, is based upon God's expectation that those who belong to Him will be disciplined in living holy and separated lives. We see this repeated again and again in the Book of Deuteronomy as he reviews and summarizes the entire Law to remind those who are about to enter the Promised Land of their obligations before God to please and honor him with their lives.
 - b. In the teaching ministry of the Lord, he even goes beyond the strict teaching of the Law of Moses to apply holiness not just to the **ACTIONS** of their lives, but also to the **THOUGHTS AND INTENTS** of their hearts. We see this, for instance, in both Matthew, chapters 5 and 6 where he goes far beyond what the strict Jewish leaders had been teaching. We see it again in his condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees, the strictest followers of the Law in Judaism, in Matthew, chapter 23.
 - c. In the Pauline Epistles, this is also one of the major themes of his writings. We see it, for instance, in Romans, chapters 6-8, where he emphasizes that the presence of true salvation in a person's life will also bring holiness and victory over sin. We see it again in such passages as I Corinthians 6:12-20 where the body as the Temple of the Holy Spirit, with its responsibility for holiness and purity, is emphasized. We see it again in I Thessalonians 4:1-8, where he emphasizes this in terms of "sanctification." Colossians 3:1-4 teaches the same truth. In almost every other epistle written by Paul, this is also a major theme.
 - d. In the study of the General Epistles, this is also a major theme throughout these books. This is especially true in such books as James, I Peter and I John where holiness and separation from the world is one of the major **PROOFS** that a person is really saved. SEE: James 1:13-27; I Peter 1:14-16; I John 2:15-17.

- e. **The Book of Revelations also includes this subject first as it applies to the seven churches (SEE: chapters 1-3) and then applies it to those who are to inherit their rewards and escape the final judgment of God.**
- B. THE EXPECTED CHANGES SALVATION BRINGS 1:22-2:12**
- 1. **"Fervantly love one another from the heart. 1:22-25**
 - a. **We note in such books as James and I John, that this is shown as one of the main PROOFS that a person has really been saved. If this is not present, then there might be some doubt as to whether such a person has ever known the Lord and His love. SEE: James 2:14-16; I John 2:9-11; 3:14-20.**
 - b. **We notice that he introduces vs. 23 with the word "FOR", which ties together the admonition with the following verses. This word introduces the subject of the New Birth in Christ. This indicates that this fervent love for one another is the natural and expected result of being born again.**
 - c. **As we look back to I Corinthians, chapter 13:1-7, we see that this is a primary manifestation of the Gifts of the Spirit. If this is absent, the many gifts of chapters 12-14 have little or no meaning.**
 - d. **"From the heart" emphasizes that this love is not be just an outward sign or superficial in nature, but is to come from the deepest part of ourselves and is to represent who and what we really are in the depths of our hearts.**
 - e. **The unchanging nature of the WORD OF THE LORD not only gives the assurance of God's instructions and promises through the ages, but it also indicates that His desires and expectations for us in our walk with Him have also never changed. Whether it has to do with our relationship with the Lord Himself, or with His people, or with our separation from sin and the world or any other matter that affects us in our Christian life and walk, His Word still speaks just as strongly and finally to us about these things.**
 - 2. **"Putting aside....long for....if you have tasted....." 2:1-3**
 - a. **The subject of SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD is a subject that is dealt with throughout the Old and New Testaments.**
 - 1) **The entire book of Deuteronomy is devoted to this subject and speaks of death and the curse of God SEE: Deut. 30:15-20) on those who do not respond to God's call for holiness and separation from the sins and temptations of the world around them in those who have relationship with Him.**

- 2) **The Prophetic books emphasize that the reason for the judgment and punishment of God on Israel, resulting in the defeat and captivity of the people of both of the kingdoms, was due to this lack of separation from sin and idolatry and lack of devotion to the Lord Himself.**
 - 3) **The Lord, throughout His earthly ministry, taught strongly that those who were oriented toward the world of sin in their personal lives could not be his followers. SEE: Matthew, chapters 5-7; Luke 9:23-26; 9:57-62; John 15:1-3.**
 - 4) **Throughout his epistles, the Apostle Paul emphasizes the same truths concerning holiness and separation from the world. SEE: Romans, chapter 6, 12-15; Galatians, chapters 5, 6; Ephesians, chapters 4-6; Colossians, chapters 3, 4; I Thessalonians 4, 5; I Timothy, II Timothy and Titus**
 - 5) **Hebrews also emphasizes this truth. (SEE: Hebrews, chapters 12, 13)**
 - 6) **This teaching is also found throughout the General Epistles. SEE: I Peter, chapters 2-5; I John 2:15-17.**
 - 7) **Revelations emphasizes this in chapters 1-3 where he is speaking to the seven churches of Asia.**
 - b. **In this passage from I Peter 2:1-3, he is basing this teaching against worldliness in the Christian life on the need for disciplined separation from the sins which affect relationships with other believers rather than just on the general sins of the world around them. He speaks of: malice, deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander. These are sins many Christians practice.**
 - c. **In answer to the worldliness that these sins bring, he shows them that those sins are to be replaced by a sincere love for the Word of God and growth in the Christian life. In other words, their focus is to change from the sins of the world to a sincere spiritual seeking after the Lord and spiritual walk that is pleasing and acceptable to Him.**
3. **Their spiritual standing as the basis for such action 2:4-11**
 - a. **They belong to the one who is the SPIRITUAL STONE/ROCK, and one Who is the only true and perfect refuge for their souls and their lives as they live in this world and prepare for eternity. 2:4-7a**
 - 1) **He is therefore a completely worthy and trustworthy refuge for them, and one whom they can completely trust with their lives.**
 - 2) **God rightly expects them to offer up SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE TO GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. To offer any less to**

Him would indicate that they do not love Him and appreciate all that He is to them as their spiritual STONE/ROCK.

- 3) As we compare this passage with Romans 12:1, 2, we note that the plea of those two verses in Romans is based on THE MERCY OF GOD. In that passage in Romans, chapter 12, he is saying: If all that God has done for you in Christ, in saving you and providing for your life ahead, means anything at all to you, you are to give Him all of your life and all that you can do in life.
- b. To those who do not believe, He is a hard, forbidding and judging STONE/ROCK OF STUMBLING. The reason why He has become that to them is that they are disobedient to Him and to the Truth about Him, and they refuse to find their refuge in Him. They are doomed to stumbling/being led astray/failing to find what He would do for them because of this, and someday will face the certain judgment of God. 2:7b-8
- c. They have not only found a sound refuge in the LIVING STONE/ROCK, but they also have a unique/special standing before God as the "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." 2:9, 10
- 1) Some would teach that such terminology could only apply to the Jewish people and that this is proof that this epistle is addressed only to the Jews and not to the Gentiles. They would deny that such terminology could ever, in any sense, apply to Gentiles.
 - a) However, the purpose and emphasis of this passage as a whole is not simply to bring them back to the Old Testament designations of the Jews as fitting such a description as a NATION, but rather its purpose is to apply such terms SPIRITUALLY to ALL of those who have relationship with God through Christ.
 - b) Without taking away from the standing/place the Jews still occupy in the present and future plan of God (SEE: Romans, chapters 9-11), this is simply emphasizing how important the relationship is that ALL believers have with God in Christ, and the unique position of those who belong to Him. It speaks of His pouring out of FAVOR AND BLESSING on believers. (SEE: Ephesians 1:3-14). They can be pleased to have such SPIRITUAL standing with God and such a unique relationship that distinguishes them from the unsaved.
- 2) I Peter 2:10 seems to confirm this interpretation of the use of these terms as applying to all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, as it repeats the truth of what Paul had stated in Ephesians 2:11, 12, when he pointed out that the Gentiles had been outsiders/seemingly excluded/without hope and without God in the world in Old Testament times. In I Peter 2:10 he is pointing out the same truth about the Gentiles. The terms he uses in v. 10 would not apply to the Jews.

d. He closes this section with an appeal to them to separate themselves from the lusts of the flesh and to maintain a strong spiritual testimony "AMONG THE GENTILES." 2:11, 12

- 1) The phrase "AMONG THE GENTILES" seems to some to again prove that this book was written to Jews rather than Gentiles. This interpretation would divide these people from the Gentiles on RACIAL rather than on purely SPIRITUAL grounds.**
 - a) The question would be whether the term "GENTILES" is purely a racial designation, distinguishing them from the Jews as a RACE, OR is it speaking to ALL believers who on SPIRITUAL grounds live in a wicked Gentile world and atmosphere that is full of temptations to sin.**
 - b) In the latter case, the term "GENTILE" would simply refer to the unsaved world and people around them and this term would distinguish this atmosphere and people from the Christians of any/every background to whom he is writing this epistle.**
- 2) Since the main emphasis of chapters one and two has been SPIRITUAL in nature, it seems likely that he is approaching the believers on a SPIRITUAL rather than a RACIAL basis, and that the latter interpretation is more correct. They are to live such exemplary spiritual lives in this wicked Gentile world and atmosphere that the unsaved people, among whom they live, may be vitally affected and perhaps even come to the Lord as a result. Whether or not the "Gentiles" would respond, they still were to live such lives so that they could not be blamed either by God or man.**

C. THE CHANGED RELATIONSHIPS SALVATION BRINGS 2:13-3:12

1. Their relationship with civil governments and rulers 2:13-17

- a. This passage very closely parallels the teachings of Paul in Romans 13:1-7 where Christians, living under cruel and oppressive government authority, were still commanded to "OBEY THE KING." In that passage, Paul is led to point out that kings and rulers are appointed by God (to keep order in society and to prevent lawlessness in its citizens) and that those who break civil laws would be working against God Himself. 2:13, 14**
- b. As has been previously pointed out, the only exception to such rules would be when the command of the king/ruler in society would go against the conscience of the Christian and would be against God's will and Word. This was the case when Daniel and his companions had to refuse to obey the Babylonian authorities in the O.T., and Peter and John had to refuse to obey the Jewish**

ruling authorities in the N.T. SEE: Daniel 3:1-15, 16-18; 6:1-23; Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29. They did not rebelliously resist the authority with force, but instead submitted themselves to suffer the consequences as they obeyed God, their higher authority.

- c. A key spiritual purpose of such obedience and submission to civil authority is to spiritually "SILENCE" the criticisms and foolishness of the unsaved. The unsaved would lose their basis for criticism of the Christians as they observe them living righteously and faithfully in society. 2:15
- d. He closes this passage with the admonition that their submission to authority would also apply to such submission in spiritual realms as well. This suggests submission to those in authority in the local church itself. (SEE: Hebrews 13:17) 2:16, 17

2. The relationship of slaves to masters 2:18-25

- a. This passage also closely parallels the teaching of Paul in Ephesians 6:5-9, Colossians 3:22-24 and Philemon, where slaves are to conduct themselves as Christians no matter what their conditions might be in that situation or how they are treated. In the case of Onesimus, he is being sent back to make things right with his master, Philemon, though he could be severely punished.
- b. Many of the slave owners would not have been Christians, and so such instruction would have been especially difficult for slaves to accept. In the case of Philemon, who was a Christian, Paul is able to exhort him to give Onesimus the treatment that God would expect a Christian to give. (SEE: Philemon, vs. 8-19)
- c. In I Peter, Peter seems to be dealing with slaves who are laboring under unsaved masters in the harshest possible conditions. Still, there is to be no compromise or excuses used for not acting as true Christians even in these harsh circumstances. In modern times, the principles involved in this instruction could apply to employers who are unjust and unfair in their treatment of workers. 2:18-20
- d. He closes this section by using the EXAMPLE OF CHRIST in suffering and how He acted and reacted when treated so badly at the time of his trial and crucifixion. In His case, He was absolutely SINLESS in His nature and GUILTLESS in regard to the accusations against Him. All of this is not only an EXAMPLE to us, but it is also our motivation to conduct ourselves in an exemplary manner because of the purpose for that suffering of Christ in dying for our sins and making possible our salvation. In the light of our total unworthiness before God and our own straying so far from Him, this action

and **EXAMPLE** of the Lord has special significance for us.
2:21-25

3. **The relationship of spouses to each other. 3:1-7**
 - a. **This section very closely parallels the teachings of I Corinthians 7:10-17, Ephesians 5:22-33 and Colossians 3:18, 19, where Paul deals with the relationships of spouses in various situations.**
 - 1) **In Corinthians 7, he deals with the possibility of a Christian having an unsaved spouse and the conduct and purposes of living for the Lord in such a circumstance. When a Christian was married before being saved, the question is raised as to whether that Christian should divorce the unsaved spouse now that he or she has been saved. The answer, of course, is no. The godliness of the saved spouse, whether man or woman, can be used of the Lord to bring that one to the Lord.**
 - 2) **In Ephesians and Colossians, he is dealing with spouses who are saved and are to have the right attitudes and conduct toward each other. The emphasis in these two passages is living in the right roles in the marriage relationship, with the wife in a sweetly submissive relationship with her husband, and the special responsibility of the husband to be the tender and sacrificial leader in the home that the Lord requires. As a submissive wife, she is also to give him deep respect and honor.**
 - b. **In this passage in I Peter 3, vs. 1-6, Peter deals with the conduct and testimony of a wife who is either married to an unsaved man OR to a disobedient and not very spiritual man. The teaching on her conduct in such a situation is very strict as her quiet and humble spirit in the Lord is emphasized. The teaching of these verses is that such a spirit and Godly manner of walk will be God's means of dealing with her husband's spiritual needs and bringing him into right relationship with the Lord.**
 - c. **Then, in vs. 7, he deals with the attitude of the husband toward his wife and the way he is to regard and treat her. We note that, whereas Ephesians 5:33 had emphasized the respect and honor the wife was to show to her husband, this verse emphasizes the tender care of his wife and the high honor and respect the husband is to give to the wife. It is interesting to note in this verse that the quality (or lack of it) of this treatment and honor and respect for his wife will either be a help or a hindrance in his prayer life.**
4. **The relationships of believers with all others 3:8-13**
 - a. **This passage is dealing with the attitudes, conduct and testimony we are to have with all others, whether they are Christians or not. As we walk in this**

world, we will have many meetings with people and all of these contacts with others are to be honoring to the Lord as our lives are molded and shaped and controlled by His Spirit.

- b. The qualities that God desires us to manifest in our lives emphasize a humble, dedicated and unselfish walk in this world, so that we are not striving with others or seeking to exalt ourselves. We are also to be centered on the needs of others and how these needs can be met with our help.
- c. He emphasizes that we will be tested in all kinds of circumstances, including evil treatment by others, but the spiritual qualities of our lives and our response to the circumstances we face or endure should not change.
- d. He also reminds us that it is God who sets the standards for our walk and conduct in this world, and He is the one who is also continually testing and examining us. Right conduct and His approval of our lives brings blessing to us and we are more than compensated by Him for all that we endure for His sake in our relationships with others.
- e. In vs. 13, he closes with the reminder that righteous and spiritually controlled behavior will also be protection for us.

D. CONDUCT AND ATTITUDE OF THE SAVED IN SUFFERING 3:14-4:19

- 1. We note that one of the last things the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of before He was crucified was that they should expect to go through persecution and trials in their lives and work for Him. (SEE: John 15:18-25). He taught that the message they would preach would not be welcome and that the people of the world would hate them and seek to cause them trouble in order to hinder and stop them in their work.
- 2. We also note that the Book of Acts is full of references to the trials and tribulations that the followers of the Lord went through as they carried the Gospel farther and farther into the parts of the Roman Empire. (SEE: Acts, chapters 3-8; 13-21) These trials began immediately after the Day of Pentecost as Peter and John carried the Gospel to the entire city of Jerusalem and its surroundings. We read of the martyrdom of Stephen, the scattering of the believers under persecution, the killing of James and the multiple times Paul was beaten and opposed as he sought to reach other areas (SEE: II Corinthians 4:7-12; 11:22-33).
- 3. In II Corinthians 4:8-11 and 11:23-33, Paul tells of all the sufferings he had gone through for the sake of Christ. He uses this to show that he is completely dedicated and unselfish in his service for Christ and is willing to give up himself for the sake of the Lord. In presenting these facts, he is answering his Corinthian critics, who had questioned his standing as an apostle, his motivations for serving the Lord and even his personal integrity.

4. As we come now to the text of I Peter 3:14 to 4:19, we note several important spiritual truths that are emphasized:
- a. True suffering should come only when a person is truly righteous and spiritual rather than for some fault or evil in their lives. If a person suffers as a result of sin or some fault in him, that suffering does not merit the approval of God and is not worthy to be counted in that person's life. Suffering for righteousness sake is also the only way such suffering will win the respect and attention of the unsaved and the approval of God. Therefore, there is to be spiritual preparation for the suffering that comes as the Lord has His proper place in our lives and our commitment to Him is renewed. 3:14-17
 - b. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our example in suffering. Though completely innocent, he underwent suffering far beyond anything we could possibly experience, and it was suffering for our sakes. He suffered willingly and according to the plan of God for our salvation. His example, therefore, also gives us needed encouragement as we ourselves undergo suffering. As His suffering brought final victory and renewed glorification, so our suffering will also benefit us and result in spiritual results. 3:18-22
 - c. The spiritual preparation for suffering includes separation from sin and purity of life, with the sufferers being completely committed to the will of God. He reminds them that they are no longer a part of the sinful "Gentile" world and that the people in that realm will not understand their stand for holiness and willing endurance of their sufferings. Those in that "Gentile" realm, who have lived their lives in sin, will be judged by God. 4:1-6
 - d. He also deals with how they are to live their lives as they prepare for the suffering to come. 4:7-11
 - 1) They are to be completely spiritual in their daily walk, are to have right relationships with others and are to use the Gifts of the Spirit given to each of them to the fullest extent in their relationship with others and in the work of God.
 - 2) We note that this is the fourth major time that the Gifts of the Spirit are spoken of in the New Testament. We found this subject also discussed in Romans 12:3-8; I Corinthians, chapters 12-14 and Ephesians 4:1-16. The Lord had only briefly mentioned Tongues in Mark 16:17. In each of these major passages, the subject is approached according to the need of the people. The section in I Corinthians is the longest section dealing with this subject and was mainly given by God to correct wrong and selfish practices in the Corinthian Church.

e. He closes this section by dealing with the attitude they are to have concerning the coming suffering. Either they will have a negative attitude that comes from resentment and perhaps even blaming God for what is happening, or they will have an attitude of rejoicing for the privilege they have of sharing the sufferings of Christ. 4:12-19

- 1) In suffering, they are not to be ashamed, but are to joyfully and willingly undergo it.
- 2) He seems to indicate in 4:17, 18 that permitting His people to suffer is a means God uses to cleanse the Church and to bring it into conformity with His will and purposes. Is this the same as the "chastizing" of Hebrews 12:5-13 that is presented as being for the GOOD of His people?

E. THE EFFECTS OF SALVATION ON CHURCH LIFE 5:1-11

1. Effects on the Elders/Pastors of the churches 5:1-4

- a. This is one of several passages in the New Testament that deal specifically with this office in the Church. SEE: Galatians 6:6; I Timothy 3:1-7; II Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17.
- b. We note that the emphasis in these related passages is FIRST of all on the spiritual qualifications and spiritual responsibilities of those who occupy this office. THEN, the emphasis is upon the conduct of the elders/pastors and the kind of example and influence they are to others. FINALLY, these passages also emphasize the respect that is due the elders/pastors, and the importance of submission to their leadership in the local church. While the believers are to treat them spiritually, the responsibilities of these leaders are also great.
- c. This passage in I Peter 5:1-4 is especially emphasizing the MANNER of their conduct in the leadership of the local church.
 - 1) They are to be strong and effective leaders but are not to be dictators.
 - 2) They are also not to have a greedy spirit in their work, but are to do their work willingly and joyfully (and sacrificially, if need be).
 - 3) Overall, they are to be strong spiritual examples to the members of the flock over which they exercise leadership.
 - 4) There is reward for them, but they will have earned it only if they have truly been the spiritual leaders and examples that God requires them to be.

2. Effects on the younger men of the church 5:5

2. Peter also refers to MARK, the cousin of Barnabas, who is known to have visited Paul in prison in Rome in 61 A.D. during his first imprisonment. (SEE: Colossians 4:10, 11). They assume that this means that Mark was also seeing Peter at the same time in Rome, though nothing Paul says would indicate this.
- B. On the positive side, Paul's reconciliation with Mark, as indicated in Colossians 4:10, 11, after the bitter controversy over Mark between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41, is a sign both of the maturity of Mark in the work and also an indication that Paul had been too harsh and unforgiving in Acts 15 and has now changed his attitude toward Mark.
 - C. He also states that the teaching in this book represents "THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD" and exhorts them to stand firm in it. This would mean that the teaching on GRACE is not just important for salvation. Rather, everything about GRACE is important to them.....His saving grace, His sustaining grace, His calling/leading grace and His grace in giving gifts to His people.
 - D. He closes this book with his desire that all of them will have peace. This is not peace WITH God (SEE: Romans 5:1), but the peace OF God in their hearts (SEE: Philippians 4:6, 7, and the introductions to most of Paul's epistles) in their daily lives. It is true that many Christians, though they are saved and have no fear of eternal punishment and separation from God, seldom have real peace in their hearts in their daily lives. They live in a constant state of worry and fear. However, it is God's desire for all Christians that this PEACE might be in their hearts and He has provided for the provision of that by the Holy Spirit.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

1. Some of the early church fathers doubted that Peter wrote this epistle, though they accepted its teaching as important to the life and practice of the churches. We note that some of the same ones also doubted that II and III John were written by John the Apostle, but believed that these two epistles also contained important teaching. These doubts may simply mean that these epistles were not as widely distributed in that period of time as some of the others, and the lateness of their being widely available led to these doubts.
2. As we examine the text of II Peter, it is clear that this epistle contains biographical material that is in perfect accord with the life and experience of

Peter.

- a. **He speaks with feeling of being cleansed from old sins. 1:9**
- b. **He alludes to his approaching death (1:13) which had been predicted by the Lord Himself. SEE: John 21:18, 19**
- c. **He cites his witnessing of the Transfiguration of the Lord and the effect it had on his life. 1:16-18 SEE: Luke 9:28-36**
- d. **He mentions a previous epistle he had sent to the same destination. 3:1**
- e. **He also mentions Paul as a beloved coworker. 3:15, 16**
- f. **Overall, there is nothing in this epistle about which Peter would not have been concerned and been led to expound on. As a leader of the church, his own writing of this epistle would lend authority to its teachings.**

THE ADDRESSEES OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

1. **The addressees of this epistle could well have been the same Gentile Christians he had addressed in his first epistle. The main difference would have been that they would not just have been Gentiles in every place who then were undergoing difficulties in taking their stand for the faith before outsiders, but the readers in this epistle were those who were being tempted to false teaching from WITHIN their own fellowships of believers.**
2. **The strong admonitions to these believers would be similar to those given in I, II, III John and Jude, where they are not to be detracted from the Truth they have received even when the false teachers are those who seek to be their leaders.**

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

1. **The peril confronting the churches at that time (65-67 A.D.) was that of doubtful stands for the faith and serious error arising from the false teachings of those who professed to be leaders in the work of God. 2:1**
 - a. **The nature of this false teaching seemed to have mainly involved a denial of the redemption and Lordship of Christ. This led them to an abandonment of all moral standards and a bold assertion of their own rights in their spiritual ignorance.**
 - b. **If this false teaching were to go unchallenged, it would lead to even further departures from the faith, and would destroy all the work that had been carried**

out after the coming of the Spirit and the spread of the Gospel through Peter, Paul and others.

2. These dangers would then increase after the death of Peter and would be a major problem to be dealt with in the epistles written close to the end of the century and in the centuries that followed.
3. Dr. Tenney therefore points out that II Peter was designed as a stimulus to loyal and unwavering faith in the Truth they had been taught, and as a challenge for them to take a stand against all who would seek to introduce error and would seek to change that Truth. Peter is pointing out that when false teaching comes from within the body of believers, it has to be dealt with from within by believers who take a stand and refuse to compromise the Truth.

THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

1. There are several indications in the epistle itself that point to a possible date for Peter to write.
 - a. Peter shows that he has knowledge of some of the epistles that Paul had written (SEE: 3:14-16) Though he had been in Corinth and was undoubtedly familiar with the writings of Paul to the Corinthian Church, he seems to speak of Paul and his writings with knowledge of other epistles written by Paul as well.
 - b. Peter also believes that the time of his death is very near and that he is prepared for it (SEE: 1:13-15). He had not expressed this in his first epistle when he was free to come and go as he pleased and was still in active ministry. Now, he seems to be a prisoner and realizes that the prediction of the Lord concerning his death is about to come true (SEE: John 21:18, 19). As Paul was a prisoner very near death in Rome in II Timothy (SEE: II Timothy 4:6-8), and wrote II Timothy just before he died, so Peter is bringing his ministry to a close and preparing for death somewhere in Asia or eastern Europe and is writing this closing epistle.
2. Assuming that Peter died under the persecution of Emperor Nero, it would also be true that he died about the same time as Paul and that he wrote this epistle in 65 or 66 A.D.

THE OUTLINE OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

STANDING FAST IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

I. INTRODUCTION	1:1
II. THE NATURE OF THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD	1:2-21
III. THE ATTACKS ON THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD	2:1-22
IV. THE VALUE OF STANDING FAST IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD	3:1-16
V. THE FINAL CHALLENGE OF STANDING FAST IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD	3:17, 18

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

STANDING FAST IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

- I. INTRODUCTION** **1:1**
- A. In his first epistle, Peter simply introduced himself as an Apostle. In this second epistle, however, he now uses the phrase that Paul had used several times in introducing himself (SEE: Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; and Titus 1:1), and James had also used (SEE: James 1:1), a “BOND SERVANT/SLAVE OF JESUS CHRIST”. This gives the idea of his humble view of himself in the service of the Lord. Though he has authority as an Apostle, he considers himself absolutely under the authority and control of the Lord. This expression of humility carries with it the idea that he does not consider himself better than anyone else. He had not always been so humble, so perhaps it is his approaching**

death and appearance before the Lord that caused him to adopt this humbler approach.

- B. He also introduces himself as an APOSTLE, which gives the idea of the authority God has given him, and the authority with which he now writes and gives instructions. They are to carefully heed the instructions that he is sharing with them, for they come from the Lord. Paul uses the same approach with the Corinthians and others, lest they should not take very seriously what he is led to write by the Holy Spirit, thinking that they can ignore it if they wish.

II. THE NATURE OF THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD 1:2-21

- A. True Knowledge is From God and is Centered in Christ. 1:2-4
 - 1. We compare this list of things that God has given us in Christ with Ephesians 1:3-14, where we find a long list of the BLESSINGS we have in Christ. In that passage, all that we have in the way of spiritual attainments and results has come through the Person and Work of the Lord.
 - 2. We note the things he emphasizes about this True Knowledge.
 - a. It is the source of sustaining grace and peace in our hearts when our hearts are centered in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. There can be no True Knowledge if the Father and Son are not the heart of that knowledge. 1:2
 - b. It is also the source of His Divine power being present in our lives, as this knowledge is the center of our faith and attention in daily living. 1:3
 - c. This knowledge has also given us a full understanding and experiencing of His precious promises concerning our lives and our relationship with Him. 1:4
 - d. It has also brought us into relationship with Him, and has enabled us to escape from the corruption of the world that comes by lust. 1:4
- B. It is Sufficiently Important to Stir Us to Grow in Spiritual Qualities. 1:5-9
 - 1. He begins this passage in a way similar to how Paul had begun the plea of Romans 12:1, 2. The approach in each case is: if these things have been experienced by you and mean anything at all to you, you will take the actions that He desires from your lives and will be all that God wants you to be.
 - a. In the case of Paul, he has based this plea on the MERCY OF GOD. MERCY had been the subject of the entire section from Romans 1:18 to 11:36 as Paul has taught that in themselves they were entirely unworthy before God and

hopelessly lost in sin, but that, through the Mercy of God, they now stand in Christ and have everything that He offers through Him.

- b. In Peter's case, this plea is based on all that God has given us in Christ, and is similar to Paul's approach in Ephesians 1:3-23 where Paul first lists all of the **BLESSINGS** we have in Christ Jesus and then follows this with a prayer that they might respond to these blessings with spiritual desires and growth.
2. Paul also had emphasized certain ways that their relationship with Christ would manifest itself in producing spiritual qualities in their lives. We see this in such passages as Ephesians 4:32-5:2; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-12; 3:12-16; and I Timothy 6:11.
3. Peter now teaches the **QUALITIES** that are to be added to their faith. Without building upon the foundation of their faith, none of these qualities can be manifested.
 - a. **VIRTUE/MORAL EXCELLENCE.** They are to live righteously and this is to be a manifestation and a characteristic of their lives before others.
 - b. **KNOWLEDGE.** He is speaking here of **SPIRITUAL** knowledge, centered in the Lord, rather than referring to the adding of more knowledge of the world around us. We note that this is also his final plea in II Peter 3:18, where he pleads with them that they would grow in the "grace and **KNOWLEDGE** of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - c. **TEMPERANCE/SELF CONTROL.** Other passages teach us that it is by the indwelling Spirit of God that we are controlled in our daily lives and conduct. **SEE:** Galatians 5:16. With His help, we are not under the power and domination of the evil one and are enabled to live consistent spiritual lives.
 - d. **PATIENCE/PERSEVERANCE.** **SEE:** I Corinthians 15:58. This gives the idea of going on without wavering either in beliefs or conduct until the very end of our lives. Jude emphasizes this same steadfastness in holding the Truth.
 - e. **GODLINESS.** This is the teaching that we are to manifest not only the presence of the Lord in our lives (**SEE:** II Corinthians 5:14, 15; Philippians 1:20, 21) but are also to manifest in our lives His holiness and character and evidence that we have a relationship with Him and are His followers.
 - f. **BROTHERLY KINDNESS.** **SEE:** Ephesians 4:32; James 2:1-7; 1:14-18; I John 3:14-19. This is showing to others the presence of the Lord in our lives by reaching out to each other in things we do for each other and in meeting each other's needs.
 - g. **CHARITY/LOVE.** **SEE:** I Corinthians 13:1-7; Ephesians 5:1, 2; I John 2:9-11.

This is the genuine heart feeling we have for others that manifests itself in the way we regard them and the way we treat them.

C. True Knowledge Will Bring these Spiritual Qualities God Wants. 1:10-12

- 1. It is through possessing this True Knowledge, and being wholly committed to obeying and following its teachings, that God will bring the spiritual results and qualities that He plans for our lives.**
- 2. In these verses, he is also emphasizing the diligence with which they are to seek and follow the True Knowledge that God makes plain to them. The purpose for this diligence is to make sure that what they believe and follow is really going to produce the eternal results that they are seeking.**
- 3. In chapter 2, he will begin to speak of the false teachers that are appearing, but the proper approach to the True Knowledge of God by these believers will keep them safe from these and guarantee their eternal destiny and happiness.**
- 4. In writing these warnings to them, he is not doubting their faith but he wants to be sure exactly where they stand in the Truth and that they are holding fast to the Truth that they have believed.**

D. Peter's Legacy and Its Warnings That Peter Will Leave Behind. 1:13-15

- 1. As he writes this epistle, Peter is indicating that his death is imminent and that his writings to them and the testimony of his own life are like the legacy that he is leaving behind for them.**
- 2. It is not only urgent that he share his instructions and warnings with them at this time, but he reminds them that after his death they will be able to read and study what he has written as a constant reminder to them of all that he shared with them.**

E. The Divine Source and Authority of the Truth Peter Shares. 1:16-21

- 1. This passage is one of several dealing with the DIVINE INSPIRATION of the Scriptures. The other main passage dealing with this is II Timothy 3:14-17, where Paul teaches the same important truth about the source of the Scriptures. It is interesting to note that these two men are not distinguishing between what they themselves are writing and the rest of the Scriptures.**

2. Peter goes ahead to teach that the Prophets and writers of the Old Testament were also Divinely inspired by God to speak and write down what they shared. None of those men of the Old Testament were writing their own ideas or opinions, but were guided and guarded by the Holy Spirit in everything so that what they wrote is absolutely authoritative and the Truth of God.
3. We therefore know that this Divine inspiration came through the work of the Holy Spirit who taught them exactly what they should record so that it perfectly expressed what God wanted them to say with no possibility of mistakes or errors. This would be equally true throughout the Bible.
4. As noted above, both of the men, Peter and Paul, who write about this, assume that the people to whom they are writing know that their own writings are just as much inspired by God by the Holy Spirit and are just as much to be taken as the Word of God by those who read and study their writings.
5. As we study the Word of God today, we can clearly see the absolute unity of the entire Bible, with every part fitting together perfectly and with no possible contradictions at all between one part and another. Each book and section of the Bible has its own purpose and perfectly fits into the whole. There is no part that could be left out or is less important than any other part.
6. As we study His Word, there are no new revelations from God to add to it (SEE: Revelation 22:18,19), so there is no further INSPIRATION of men by the Holy Spirit to write new things. Rather, the Holy Spirit, indwelling our hearts, now ILLUMINATES our hearts to help us understand God's Word.

III. THE ATTACKS ON THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

2:1-22

A. The Rise of False Teaching From Within the Churches.

1. From the early days of the spread of the Gospel, we see that there had been false teachers within the churches. We see this in Acts 11:1-3; 15:1-29 and 21:17-26 (32-56 A.D.) where some were seeking to force Gentiles under the Law. We see this in Galatians, chapters 1-4 (48 A.D.), where Judaizers had come into the churches telling them that they had to include the Law in their faith. We see this again in I Corinthians 15:12 (54 A.D.) where some had been denying the future resurrection of the dead.
2. Beginning in the early 60's and continuing down to the end of the century when John wrote his final epistle, Revelation, there had been a bold and arrogant rise of false teachers in the Church, attacking every major doctrine that was important to the faith they held. These were not just teachers on the outside seeking to lure the followers of the Lord from their devotion to the Truth, but were some of their own number posing as believers. As members of

some of these assemblies of believers, it is possible that some of the believers themselves might even admire them because of their clever teachings and ways.

3. We find warnings against these false teachers in a number of different books written during this period of time. SEE: I Timothy 1, 6, 7; 4:1 (64 A.D.); Titus 1:10-14 (64 A.D.); II Timothy 4:3, 4 (65 A.D.); I John 2:19 (85 A.D.); Jude, vs. 3, 4 (85 A.D.); Revelation 2:14, 15 (95 A.D).
4. These many warnings indicate that these false teachers were everywhere, and perhaps were growing in number, and so were a cause of major concern to leaders like Paul, Peter, John and others. If the believers in the churches did not take a firm stand against them, they could destroy the faith of the believers and the pure stand for the faith of the churches.
5. In this second chapter of II Peter, Peter devotes the chapter both to warnings concerning the teachings and nature of these false teachers, and also to the methods they will use to deceive the believers.
 - a. He first states the danger that is ahead of these believers in the entrance of these false teachers **AMONG THEM**, and what the intentions and actions of these false teachers will be. In this verse, he also emphasizes that their false teachings are not simple matters, for they go all the way in denying the Truth, even to the extent of questioning the Truth concerning the Lord. Vs. 1
 - b. He then speaks of the reality that many will follow their teachings among the weaker brethren of the churches. No matter how they are warned, there will always be some who are attracted to false teachings when they arise. In II Timothy 4:3, these people are described as those with “itching ears,” who are not satisfied with simply following the Truth and shutting out everything that is contrary to that Truth, but have an interest in listening to every kind of teaching that comes along. Vs. 2
 - c. Their method of these false teachers will be to cleverly and convincingly use false words to teach and exploit the believers. Vs. 3
 - d. He then speaks of how God had had to deal with false teachers in the Old Testament through His judgments, and how He protected His people. Vs. 4-8
 - e. He asserts the absolute ability of God both to protect His people from such temptations and also to deal with those who seek to lead them astray. Vs. 9, 10
 - f. He continues by speaking of the extreme sinfulness of the nature of these false teachers, and the extent to which they will go to lead God’s people astray. They are not only compared with the worst of the false teachers of the Old Testament (Balaam), but they follow the vilest sins in their lives. They have completely separated themselves from all Truth. Vs. 11-19

- g. These people are completely without excuse. **SEE: Romans 1:20.** They have had complete access to the full knowledge of the Truth of God, but have deliberately and willingly turned from it to their false teaching, and have dedicated their lives both to following these false teachings themselves and also to leading others astray. **SEE: Romans 1:32.** God's judgment on them will be especially severe. **COMPARE WITH: Hebrews 6:4-8: 10:26-35. Vs. 20-22**
6. We can see how these teachings and warnings about false teachers apply today to the false teachings of the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnessess and others who have full access to the Truth of God taught in the Word of God, but who have deliberately turned aside from the Truth into their false teaching. Their actions in following their teachings and leading others astray in it also mirrors the actions of the false teachers in the time of Paul, Peter and others.

IV. THE VALUE OF STANDING FAST IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

3:1-16

- A. There will be mockers who will come and will question such things as the Second Coming of the Lord and other teachings these people have received from both the Prophets and the Apostles, but the teachings of these mockers is far overshadowed by the reliability of the Word that we have of the work of God and how He accomplished all that has been done in the world. **3:1-7**
- B. We can also completely trust the **TIMING** of the Lord in bringing events to pass which He has promised.
1. We are to be patient as we know that He will bring to pass in His will all that has been promised in spite of what the mockers may say in their doubts. In His good time, the Day of the Lord will surely come to pass. **3:8**
2. God's purposes, in delaying His coming, will only be fulfilled when, in His mercy and grace, He has brought the Gospel to everyone He desires to reach and they have come to repentance and salvation. **3:9**
- C. The **DAY OF THE LORD** will bring with it judgment by God and destruction as well as the fulfillment of His promises. **3:10**
- D. As we wait for that day to come, we are to guard ourselves so that we are everything in our lives and conduct that God wants us to be. **3:11**
- E. He reminds them that the **DAY OF THE LORD** will not only bring judgment and destruction of the old, but will also bring the new heavens and new earth which we are to inhabit as His people. **3:12, 13**
- F. In the light of this truth, as we look for His coming and its purposes and results,

we are to live in in this world in holiness and blamelessness as we wait for this important event to take place, and are to regard the patience and timing of the Lord as part of our salvation. 3:14, 15a

- G. In closing this section, he cites PAUL as another one who is to be completely believed and has taught the same truth. He points out that, in the teaching of Paul and himself, there are some things hard to understand and therefore these things are subject to distortion by some even as they treat the rest of the Scriptures with the same false approach. 3:15b, 16

V. THE FINAL CHALLENGE OF STANDING FAST IN THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD 3:17, 18

- A. In this final challenge to these believers, he exhorts them not to be carried away by the false teachers who are wicked and unprincipled. Rather than this they are to be on their guard in the faithful stand they take in their faith and walk before the Lord. 3:17
- B. He brings them back to the basis of this faithful stand which is their relationship with and walk with the Lord Himself. His closing exhortation is that they are to devote themselves to Him by growing in His grace and knowledge. The Lord Himself had stressed this maintenance of a close relationship with Himself in His final teachings in John 15:4-6. This would be a key to their success in doing His work. 3:18

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

1. We know from history that John the Apostle, the brother of James and the son of Zebedee, was the longest living apostle. Apparently, he had a life of fruitful ministry for the Lord. Some believe that he lived as long as 95 A.D. and wrote his final book, the Book of Revelation, only a short time before he died as a Roman prisoner on the Island of Patmos. . He died with an clear testimony.
2. John had a long history of relationship with the Lord. Very early in the ministry of the Lord, he and his brother James were called away from their fishing trade to become disciples of the Lord. Matthew 4:21, 22; Mark 1:19, 20. Except for the one time in John 21:1-8, when they returned to fishing at the suggestion of Peter, he and his brother followed the Lord without wavering.
3. Very early in their relationship with the Lord, John, together with his brother and Peter, became the ones especially favored by the Lord. They were taken, on

a number of occasions, to places to be alone with the Lord and to experience special fellowship with Him. We see this in Mark 14:32-41 and Luke 9:28-36.

4. After the resurrection and ascension of the Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit, he and Peter became two of the main preachers for the Lord in Jerusalem, and were especially brought under persecution from the Jews. SEE: Acts, chapters 3-5. They were also considered to be leaders in the church and were sent, for instance, to examine the work that Philip had done in Samaria. SEE: Acts 8:14-25.
5. We do not hear a great deal about the ministries of John after Paul began his missionary journeys, but the three epistles he wrote, I, II and III John, and the Book of Revelation seem to indicate that he had a very broad influence among the believers and the churches of Asia. This would seem to indicate that he had traveled and ministered widely in that area in later years.
6. Some of the early church fathers wondered whether or not he had written all of the books that bore his name. However, comparisons between the five books attributed to him would indicate that the same person had authored them all, and that their contents would perfectly fit the character and nature of John. The early doubts about his authorship could have come because several of them came to be widely known and used only many years after his death.

THE ADDRESSEES OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

1. The opening statement in this epistle, I John 1:1, which refers to things seen and heard and experienced in the life of the author, presupposes that the Gospel of John had already been written and that perhaps the same people who received that Gospel were also now reading this first epistle written by John.
2. John is therefore led by the Spirit to build upon the Gospel of John, so that the readers fully understand not only the importance of relationship with the Lord but also their responsibilities in that relationship.
3. Most Bible teachers believe that this epistle, and all of the other writings of John, were addressed to people beyond just the Jewish believers. Rather, they were sent to the people and churches of Asia, mostly Gentile in background and nature, to fully inform them of all that the Lord had done and the spiritual relationship they were to have with Him. This is especially seen in the Book of Revelation which is specifically addressed to the seven churches, but these things would apply to the other books written by John as well.

THE NATURE AND PURPOSE FOR THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

1. The Gospel of John was written to set forth clearly the Deity of Christ and how one could both have relationship with Him and walk in Him. The emphasis of I John seems to be different, however. While the Gospel of John emphasizes HOW to have relationship with the Lord, this first epistle of John emphasizes the PROOF of that relationship with Him, to help the readers determine whether those who PROFESS salvation really POSSESS that salvation by the evidence that comes from their lives.
2. This epistle does not deny the true MEANS of our salvation as some would claim, for there is a brief passage on the means of our salvation in chapter 5:11-13. Rather, it examines how we may have CERTAINTY that we have a true faith and relationship with Him. This is brought out in the many PROOFS that the epistle states are necessary to give us full assurance of our salvation.
3. John is maintainng that if a person “SAYS” that he has truly been saved and yet has no PROOF of that salvation in his life and walk in the world, then it may be doubtful that that person has truly trusted the Lord and come into relationship with Him.
4. We can therefore state that the main purpose for the epistle is to give professing believers the CERTAINTY that they have truly been saved. This will stop them from making superficial statements about their salvation which have no real basis as far as their hearts are concerned, and which give them no real eternal acceptance with God. Rather, it will force them to examine themselves “whether they be in the faith.” SEE: II Corinthians 13:5

THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

1. From the nature and contents of the epistle, it seems certain that it was written rather late in this first century. It also seems certain that it was written sometime after the deaths of Peter and Paul. It appears that the persecutions under Nero had ceased and that other problems now faced the churches of Asia and Europe.
2. Most Bible teachers believe that the Gospel of John and the three epistles that John wrote were all written around 85 A.D. They were written while John was still free and active in ministry, and express the burden that he had to keep the church solidly based on the TRUTH and free from all error.

THE OUTLINE FOR THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

*ADAPTED FROM DR. MERRILL TENNEY, N.T.SURVEY, P.379

THE PROOFS FOR TRUE SALVATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1:1-4 |
| II. Proving True Salvation Through Walking in the Light | 1:5-2:29 |

III. Proving True Salvation Through Living in Love	3:1-4:21
IV. Proving True Salvation Through Making Certain of our Faith	5:1-12
V. Proving True Salvation by Using Prayer to Meet the Needs of Ourselves and Others	5:13-17
VI. CONCLUSION	5:18-21

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE PROOFS FOR TRUE SALVATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| I. INTRODUCTION | 1:1-4 |
|------------------------|--------------|
- A. In this introduction, John is giving a testimony of his own personal experience of living and working with the Lord during the entire period of His ministry on the earth, including His death, burial and resurrection.**
 - B. The importance of this personal testimony (SEE ALSO: The purposes for the entire Gospel of John) are NOT ONLY to prove Who the Lord is by His teachings and claims about Himself (SEE: The Gospel of John, chapters 3-10), all the proofs that He gave during His earthly ministry concerning His Divinity by the works that He did (SEE: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke), the validity of the salvation that He brought and the confirmation of all of this by the Father Himself in His three public declarations from heaven (SEE: Luke 3:23; 9:35 and John 12:38), BUT ALSO to establish John's own place as a valid and authoritative witness of all of this so that there would be no possibility of any error, doubt or misunderstanding by the readers of what he is sharing with them in this epistle. SEE ALSO: II Peter 1:16-18.**

C. We note John's background with the Lord:

1. His early call to follow the Lord by leaving his fishing profession for the spiritual task of becoming a "fisherman for men." Mark 1:19, 20
2. His favored and intimate relationship with the Lord Luke 9:28-34
3. His witnessing of all the main miracles of the Lord Luke 9:11-17
4. His hearing of all that the Lord claimed and taught about Himself John, ch. 2-12
5. His intimate knowledge of the salvation the Lord made possible and came to bring John, ch. 3-10
6. His intimate knowledge of the standards set by the Lord for the Christian life John, ch. 13-17
7. His personal verification of the three confirmations by the Father concerning Christ's Deity. SEE: Luke 3:23; 9:35; John 12:38.
8. His experiencing of the dealings of the Lord with the needs, weaknesses and failures in his own life. SEE: Luke 9:46-54; 22:24; John, chapter 13.

D. Therefore, when he speaks of having "heard, seen, looked at and touched" the things that happened when the Lord was on the earth, he would be one of the most highly qualified to speak of these things and to apply the truth of them to his readers.

E. He is now sharing with these readers his own position in relationship with the Lord and earnestly desiring that they would make his heart glad both by their saving faith and their complete obedience to these teachings.

**II. PROVING TRUE SALVATION BY WALKING
IN THE LIGHT**

1:5-2:29

A. Failure to walk faithfully in the Light proves the falsity of any claims to salvation.

1:5-7

1. When Christ has come into our lives, there are changes that take place in our lives. One of the main changes that comes is that we are no longer oriented toward our old relationship with the family of Satan (SEE: Ephesians 2:1-3) and the darkness that that relationship involved, and are now oriented toward the Lord and the Light that He brings into our lives.

2. When a professing believer continues to walk in the darkness of the old life and relationship with Satan and his family, with no interest in walking in the Light, it casts doubt on his salvation. SEE: Romans 6:1-14; Colossians 3:1-3
- B. Constant acknowledging of our sinful needs and being cleansed from sin proves we are walking in the Light. 1:8-10**
1. When a person is truly saved, he will have a deep concern about the daily sins that he commits and how they affect his life and his relationship with the Lord.
 2. He will not permit those sins to accumulate in his life over a period of time, hurting his relationship and fellowship with the Lord. Rather, he will daily deal with them by confessing them and having them cleansed from his life. SEE: John 15:1-3; I John 1:9.
 3. Daily dealing with those sins also helps him to desire to live more righteously before God and to avoid the daily temptations he faces by choosing to leave the sins they present and to live righteously in relationship with the Lord.
- C. Depending on the work of Christ in constantly dealing with our sins proves we are walking in the Light. 2:1, 2**
1. One of the ministries of the Lord, now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, is that of constantly interceding on our behalf before the Father. SEE: Hebrews 7:25.
 2. His intercession has to do with the daily temptations we face, and the daily sins we commit. For the one who has truly trusted Him as Savior, these are already covered/forgiven by His shed blood (SEE: I John 1:7), and, as this passage suggests, this is constantly brought to the attention of the Father by the Lord.
 3. We therefore have confidence that our relationship with Him in salvation is an eternal one and that even our daily sins that hinder our fellowship with Him, as we confess them and live in right relationship with the Lord, are taken care of by Him and our fellowship with Him is maintained and enriched.
- D. Walking in obedience to His commandments and following His example proves we are walking in the Light. 2:3-8**
1. The Lord, in his final instructions to His followers (SEE: John, chapters 14-16) emphasized this truth several times. In John 14:21-24, He speaks of obeying His commandments as a proof our love for Him. In John 15:10, he speaks of our obedience to His commandments as a certain means of abiding/living in His love. In John 15:12, he uses loving one another as an example of obeying

Him. In John 15:14, he says that obedience to His commands maintains their friendship with Him.

- 2. In this section, vs. 3-8, John is emphasizing that our obedience to the commands of the Lord is a proof of our salvation. When someone says that he is saved, but has no concern for obeying the Lord Who saved him, it casts doubt on his salvation and God will deal with him. SEE: Deuteronomy 30:15-20.**

E. Our strong and demonstrated love for others proves we are walking in the Light.

2:9-11

- 1. This is also a teaching that the Lord emphasized in his final discussions with His followers in John, chapters 14-16. We see this in John 15:12 and 17, where He seems to not only discuss their relationship with each other but with all who would believe in Him.**
- 2. In this section in I John and in much of the next major section in I John, 3:1-4:21, this will be one of the major themes, with the emphasis upon love for others as a proof of salvation. He will greatly expand on this theme with even stronger emphasis on it as one of the main PROOFS of our salvation.**
- 3. The importance of this repeated emphasis is that if a person is claiming to be saved and walking in the Light, but has no love in his heart for others, then there is doubt that he has ever truly been saved.**

F. He commends the different groups of men for their strong stand and evidence of walking in the Light.

2:12-14

- 1. It is interesting that his entire emphasis is upon men. This does not indicate a superiority of men over women or a lack of equality between them, but it does indicate that the leadership of the work is the responsibility of men, and it is important that they are models of demonstrated spiritual faith and conduct.**
- 2. His reference to “little children” perhaps has to do with new Christians rather than literally talking about small children of a young age. From the time they first trust Christ, they are to demonstrate their relationship to Him in their life and conduct before others.**
- 3. We also note that he speaks both of younger and older men and is commending all of them for their faith and conduct. He also speaks without criticism of any of those whom he is addressing and this speaks of a generation of faithful Christians and leaders he is leaving behind as he finishes his life. If these have come as a result of the work he has done, it also speaks well of his faithful and spiritual work for God.**

G. Living lives of separation from sin and the world of sin proves that we are walking in the Light.

2:15-17

1. We note that this is a subject that is discussed in a number of the New Testament epistles. For instance, Paul emphasizes this truth very strongly in Romans, chapter 6, Galatians, chapters 5, 6, Ephesians, chapters 4, 5, 6, and Colossians, chapters 3, 4. James and Peter also emphasize this truth in their epistles.
 - 2, Before a person becomes a Christian, there would be strong love for the world of sin and an attachment to it. After that person finds new life in Christ, however, that love and attachment is to be broken and forsaken, and a new love and attachment is to take its place. The center of that new love and attachment is the Lord Himself and the holiness of life that comes with belonging to Him.
 3. The teaching of this passage is very clear that, if there is no change in this love and attachment to the world and its sins when a person professes to know the Lord, that person has probably never known the love of the Father in salvation.
 4. It is true that this strong teaching might cause some to doubt their salvation when there has been even the slightest lapse in separation from sin into lives of holiness before God.
 - a. The same danger of misunderstanding might come from the study of Romans 6:1-7 if it is taken out of its context, for that passage speaks of being dead to sin and seems to suggest that it is impossible for a saved person to commit sin anymore.
 - b. The passage in I John, chapter 2, is not denying the presence and problem of daily sins that need to be confessed and dealt with. SEE: John 15:1-3; I John 1:9. Rather, it is dealing with the general condition of the life of the person who professes to be saved, and the fact that the lives of many professing Christians have little evidence of holiness and relationship with the Lord in them.
- H. He notes the rise of anti-Christ, and how many of them have come from their own number. 2:18-23a
1. These people are representatives of Satan himself, but are not the same as the BEAST who will arise in Revelation, chapter 13, who will arise to rule the earth for three and a half years before the coming of the Lord who will finally rule and reign. Literally, they are the “against Christ” people, acting as agents of Satan himself in seeking to hinder or destroy the faith of people.
 2. We note that some of these had actually been members of their assemblies, claiming to be one with them in Christ, but they went out FROM them to deny

the Lord and oppose Him. They were like the Judaizer pretenders of Galatians, chapter 1-4, who were pretending to be one with the Galatian Christians but who were teaching them a false Gospel related to the Law of Moses rather than the true Gospel of the finished work of Christ given to us as a gift of God's GRACE through FAITH alone.

- 3. Their denial in this section in I John, chapter 2 is a specifically a denial of WHO He is in His Deity. The denial of His Deity would also deny His eternal power, ability and authority to accomplish our salvation, and all of His work on our behalf in His present place at the right hand of the Father. If he is not truly God the Son, then His life and death have no eternal universal meaning or value for us and we have no savior from sin or eternal salvation.**
 - 4. We can therefore understand why Satan would especially attack this particular truth concerning the Lord, so that he can undermine the BASIS/FOUNDATION for our faith in Him as our Savior. Later, we will see that John warns against some who are even denying His coming into the world, but the question concerning His DEITY is at the heart of the efforts of Satan through his followers to undermine His Person and Work.**
- I. Strong unwavering faith and a righteous stand before others in our relationship with the Son is a proof of our walking in the Light. 2:23b-26**
- 1. Strong unwavering faith is a constant theme in the New Testament. SEE: John 8:31; 12:5:9; Acts 13:43; I Corinthians 15:58; Colossians 1:23; I Timothy 4:16.**
 - 2. As we can see in the first part of vs. 23, this strong unwavering faith and stand for the Lord is the only answer to the dangers they face of yielding to the teachings of the anti-Christ and leaving the Truth they had been following. In vs. 26, John points out that the maintenance and protection of their faith is the reason for his strong teaching, and that this teaching will help both warn and guard them in their stand for the faith.**
 - 3. In this passage, he uses the phrase. "abide in the Son," which is similar to the phrase the Lord had used in John 15:-4-6.**
- J. Abiding in Him and living righteously proves to God and other people that we are walking in the Light. SEE: John 15:4-6. 2:27, 28**
- 1. These two things are closely connected. Anyone who is truly abiding or living in close relationship with the Lord will also live a righteous life. To claim to be in such a relationship with Christ but not showing it in righteous living would be a contradiction. The reverse would also be true concerning those who claim to live righteously but have no close relationship with the Lord in their daily lives.**

- b. **Romans 15:1-4 uses the example of the Lord in not pleasing Himself in making possible our salvation by the sacrifice of Himself, to teach us the necessity of PLEASING OTHERS rather than ourselves. This means that we would be willing to give up our own desires and habits for the sake of not offending anyone else.**
 - c. **Romans 15:5-7 uses the example of Christ accepting us as hopeless lost sinners, to teach us the necessity of ACCEPTING one another no matter how difficult that might be.**
 - d. **Ephesians 4:32 uses the example of God forgiving us our sins because of Christ, to teach us that we also are to FORGIVE one another.**
 - e. **Ephesians 5:2 uses the example of the love of Christ, to teach us that we are to LOVE one another with a true heart love. We note that in the section on husband-wife relationships in marriage, beginning in chapter 5, vs. 22, His love is also the example for the husbands to follow in their love for their wives.**
 - f. **I Peter 4:1, 2 uses the example of the sufferings of Christ to teach us that we also are to be willing to SUFFER as we live in the flesh.**
 - g. **I John 3:16 uses the example of Christ laying His life for us to teach us that we are also to be willing to lay down our lives/make any possible sacrifice for the brethren.**
2. **In these verses, we have the example of the greatness of the love of the Father in permitting us, who were hopeless lost sinners and enemies of His before we were saved, to be called the sons of God and to have before us a glorious future.**
 3. **Therefore, the example of His great eternal love for us should motivate us to live righteously before Him and also to show love to others.**

B. The example of the HOLINESS of the Father 3:3

1. **In the light of all that He has done for us in bringing us into relationship with Himself, and in the light of the fact that the one Who has accomplished all this is perfectly holy, we also should be concerned that we strive for holiness in our own lives so that our lives may bring praise and honor to Him in thanks and gratitude for all that He means to us.**
2. **The basis for this challenge for us to follow His example of holiness in our own lives reminds us of the basis for the dedication of our lives given in Romans 12:1a, where God pleads with us on the basis of the MERCY that God has**

poured out upon us in saving us from our hopeless lost condition and bringing us into an eternal relationship with Himself.

C. Holiness in our lives is one of the proofs of our salvation. 3:4-10a

- 1. The main purpose for the coming of the Lord into the world was to deal with sin in mankind. Sin had separated mankind from God and caused them to be considered the enemies of God. SEE: Romans 5:1. This sin could only be dealt with by the sacrificial death of the Lord on the Cross (SEE: II Corinthians 5:21), making it possible that mankind could be saved and made righteous by coming to the Father through Him. SEE: John 14:6; Acts 4:12.**
- 2. Having been saved and having been given a righteous standing before God, it is important for Christians to recognize and accept that God is not satisfied just to cause mankind to have a righteous standing before Him in salvation.**
 - a. I John 3:8 teaches that the Lord came into the world not only to save us from our sins, but also to deal with the whole matter of sin in the world. He came to also to defeat the devil and to destroy His works.**
 - b. I John 3:9 goes on to teach that IF “His seed is in us” we are to share His purpose in resisting sin and the attempts of the Devil to lead us astray.**
 - c. I John 3:10 concludes by teaching us that it is this righteous stand of God’s people that distinguishes them from Satan and his works. Where this righteous stand is not present, then this distinction is lacking and their salvation is in doubt.**
- 3. He thus demands that this righteousness also be a characteristic of the Christian life as God’s people set their lives on a path of righteous living before God.**
- 4. In this portion of Scripture, John is dealing with the possibility that some professing Christians are standing on what they believe is their righteous standing before God in salvation without any concern at all for the righteousness of their daily walk before Him.**
- 5. Such an attitude of indifference to their responsibility before Him in living righteous lives may be an indication that they were never really saved at all. Romans 6:1-6 emphasizes the idea of “HOW CAN WE who are dead to sin live any longer therein?” Galatians 5:13 seems to point to the same danger.**
 - a. This idea in Romans 6 is the thought that a true Christian could not possibly have such an attitude of indifference to God’s expectations for him so that he feels free to go on living in sin. In genuine salvation, such an attitude would be removed from him so that he would be incapable of entertaining it. Rather, he would be conscious of the need to be holy and would seek that rather than sin.**

- b. Again, the idea here is not “sinless perfection” as some teach, but it is the idea that the true Christian is not satisfied with the presence of sin in his life and is continually dealing with any sin that comes into his life (SEE: John 15:1-3; I John 1:9) and is striving to live righteously before God with the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit in his life. SEE: Galatians 5:16**
- D. True love in our hearts for others proves our salvation. 3:10b-21**
- 1. Having introduced this subject of our love for others in chapter 2, vs. 10, 11, he now goes into a deeper discussion of it as one of the proofs that we are truly saved.**
 - 2. This entire teaching is based on the fact that God in His love made possible our salvation and that the love of Christ now dwells in our hearts and brings us under His control, causing us to devote our lives to Him. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14 15; Philippians 1:20, 21**
 - 3. We notice how strongly he opens this section concerning our love for others as he compares those who do not love others with the children of the Devil and those who do not belong to God at all.**
 - a. He uses the example of Cain who murdered his brother to describe professing Christians who have no love for the brethren. His meaning is that not loving the brethren is like committing murder in our hearts. SEE: Matthew 5:21-26; I John 3:10b-15. We either love them or hate them. Lack of love causes us to stand judged before God. There is no ground in between.**
 - b. The Lord had used the same comparison in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:21-26 when he spoke of those who were angry with their brother. He is saying that murder is not just an act that is committed but that it begins in the heart when there is hatred or anger against another person. In the eyes of God, both the act and the heart attitudes are condemned. The only way to be right before God is to be reconciled with the brother so that all anger and hatred is gone and our hearts are clean before Him.**
 - 4. He goes on to describe how love for others expresses itself.**
 - a. He speaks of the way the Lord had laid down his life for us to save us from our sins and uses this illustration to teach that we also should be willing to make any sacrifice on behalf of others, no matter what it might cost us. 3:16**
 - b. He also uses the illustration of a person in need before another Christian whose heart is closed against Him. He is teaching that such a Christian could not possibly have the love of God in him. SEE: 3:17. We note that James used**

a similar illustration in James 2:14-18 to show how empty a profession of salvation would be when compassion is lacking for the need of another person.

- c. He stresses that true love is not simply some profession that we speak with words, but it demonstrates itself in DEEDS. Where the words stand alone without the deeds to validate them, there is no true love present. SEE: 3:18.
- d. He teaches that we are to be tender to the speaking of our consciences in the matter of determining whether or not we have true love for others. If our consciences are tender, God will speak to us in our consciences. This will help us to determine whether or not our love for others is genuine and is pleasing in His sight. SEE: 3:19-21.

E. Obedience also proves our salvation

3:22-24

- 1. As noted before, in His final instructions to his disciples before He was tried and went to the Cross, the Lord put special emphasis upon obedience to God and the Lord Himself. SEE: John 14:21, 23, 24; 15:10, 12, 17. He emphasized that this would be a proof of their relationship with Him and their love for Him. SEE ALSO: I Samuel 15:22, 23, where Saul wanted to offer animals to God rather than to obey Him.
- 2. He emphasizes that two of the main commandments from God are that we have true faith in the Lord and that we love one another. The Lord had stressed these same two truths in His discussions with the Pharisees. SEE: Mark 12:28-33. The Lord had called them the heart/the summing up of the Law when challenged by a Scribe.
- 3. Throughout the Scriptures, obedience before God was to be from the heart rather than being just mere assent to what God commanded and expected of His people. Heart obedience will also prove itself by actions.
 - a. God not only emphasized whole hearted devotion to the Law and obedience in giving His Law to Israel (SEE: Isaiah 57:15; 66:2, 4), but He wanted that devotion and obedience to deeply affect their entire lives.
 - b. The Psalmist reaffirms this again and again in Psalms 119, when he uses phrases such as “with my whole heart,” “I long for” and others to express his approach in understanding and following the Law of God.
 - c. Israel was following the practice that so many Christians today follow of going through all the FORMS of obedience but never really obeying from the heart so that TRUE holiness would be present in their lives. SEE: Isaiah, chapter 58. The Israelites, in this the passage from Isaiah, chapter 58, protested to God that they were faithfully following all the forms of the Law and wondered why God did not seem to accept this approach and bless them. God answered them

that these forms they claimed to be following never really led to a righteous stand before God that revealed itself in their actions in the world. Therefore, the forms had no value and were rejected by God.

4. In this teaching, we can therefore see the close connection between **OBEDIENCE** and **LOVE** for others and why the subject of obedience is inserted into this discussion. Obedience will always lead to righteous actions rather than just relying on some affirmation of our innocence in any matter before God. In this case, love for others is the action that God requires, and is the proof of true obedience.

F. The rise of false teaching and the need to spiritually test everything 4:1-6

1. False teaching can come in many forms. It can not only distort what we are to **BELIEVE** but also how we are to **ACT** as we live in this world. Satan is a clever foe, and if he cannot teach us falsely in one way he will do it in another. There are, therefore, many Christians who are very orthodox in their beliefs, refusing to compromise those beliefs in any way, but who have been led astray in their conduct and manner of life as they live in this world.
2. It is the distortion that false teaching brings to the way we **ACT** that gives this section its close connection with the subject of the love that we are to show to others. Satan, if he can't lead us astray in what we believe, causes us to have a sense of contentment in simply "resting" in our theological beliefs, and takes away any sense of urgency of proving the presence of those beliefs in our relationships with others. Either way, he has led us astray and gained for us the disapproval of God.
3. In this passage, though it can also apply to our actions, he seems to be emphasizing that we are to **TEST** first concerning what others are seeking to teach us to **BEIEVE**.
 - a. In I Corinthians 12:10, we note that the ability to test/distinguish spirits is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the body of believers. Different ones in the assembly of believers will have different gifts, and so only certain ones will have this particular gift.
 - b. In this passage, he seems to be teaching that **ALL** teaching is to be continually tested to see if it is true or false. This indicates that even leaders might be tempted to stray into some false teaching. This was probably true in the churches of the New Testament and is certainly true today. The process of testing is go on continually. No departure from the Truth should be ignored, for even seemingly insignificant errors in teaching can lead people astray.

- c. **The false teaching in this passage is centered in the PERSON of Christ. The false teachers are either changing the Truth about Him into a lie or they are denying Him altogether. False teachers today have the same problem in regard to the PERSON of Christ. They can accept everything else about Him except that He is the Divine Son of God. They are willing to admit His fame as a teacher, leader, example and others things, but not that He holds the unique place of authority, ability and power as the Divine Son of God.**
 - d. **Such false teachers are not only to be rejected, but they are also to be treated as unbelievers and people of the world of the Devil. There can be no compromise with them by permitting them to remain in the body of believers to see if they will change. They pose a grave danger to the other believers and their continued presence and influence is not to be tolerated.**
 - b. **We note again that, in considering this form of false teaching, if the true PERSON of Christ is attacked and convincingly denied, the entire foundation for the Christian faith and salvation would be destroyed in the hearts and lives of those who follow and proclaim such false teaching. There would no longer be any basis for hope for relationship with God and for eternity with Him in their lives.**
 - c. **This false teaching would also bring a state of hopelessness in the lives of those they influence. In rejecting the central truth of God's plan of salvation, the Deity of Christ, there be no possible solution to the need of their sinful hearts.**
 - d. **Their clever influence on others would also bring doubt even to the hearts of sincere Christians if this teaching were permitted to continue in the assembly.**
 - e. **Therefore, the Truth concerning His place as the Divine Son of God must be vigorously defended and false teachers strongly dealt with. The entire body of believers must be united in such action, for Satan is clever enough to enlist some of the believers to defend those who are false teachers on the basis of their family ties, their friendships and other bases.**
- G. Love of others follows God's own example and prepares for judgment. 4:7-21**
- 1. **This passage is the fourth major discussion of this subject concerning love for others.**
 - a. **In chapter 2, vs. 10, 11, he had introduced the subject by emphasizing that it is not enough just to verbally proclaim one's own faith and salvation. If that profession is not accompanied by love for others, then the faith and salvation is questionable.**
 - b. **In chapter 3, vs. 1-3, he had emphasized again the love of God for us by teaching that even His permitting us to be His children and for us to be called**

the sons of God is an evidence and an example of the unlimited love that He has for us.

- c. In chapter 3, vs. 10b-21, he had again emphasized this subject by teaching that our love for others is based on the love that Christ demonstrated for us in laying down His life for us as a sacrifice for our sins.**
 - d. In this fourth section dealing with this subject, his emphasis will be on love as part of the very NATURE OF GOD. Those who truly belong to Him will also have love as part of their nature as well. Having such love as part of their nature wins them the approval of God and prepares them for the coming judgment of Christians. SEE: II Corinthians 3:10-15; 5:9-11.**
- 2. We see how this section carefully examines this argument concerning the nature of those who claim they belong to God.**
- a. Those who love others belong to God because God Himself is love, 4:7, 8**
 - 1) It is important to note that loving others does not replace or precede true heart faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the basis for loving others.**
 - a) Some unsaved people who show love for others in their daily lives, even more fervently than some Christians, might be tempted to draw this wrong conclusion by declaring that loving others is all they need before God and is the proof of God's acceptance of them.**
 - b) To the contrary, true love for others must be built upon the foundation of saving faith in the Lord, and the work of regeneration and molding that He does in our lives in that saving relationship with Him by the Holy Spirit.**
 - 2) This passage is teaching that, for professing Christians who believe they have been saved from their sins through Christ, love for others is the proof that they truly belong to God. It is not their own human love that is the proof, but it is the evidence of the love of God working in and through their lives in reaching out to others in love that is the real proof of this relationship with Him..**
 - b. God proved His love by giving His Son for us, 4:9, 10**
 - 1) He had first introduced this Truth of the love that God has demonstrated for us in the giving of His Son as a means of testing the love in our own hearts in John 3:16. In that passage the greatness of God's love and the example and challenge it presents to us is set forth.**
 - 2) In Philippians 2:5-8, this giving of His Son, and all that it involved (the steps he had to take as the Divine Son of God in coming down from heaven to be in**

human form , and the sacrifice of Himself for our sins), is set forth as an example of the way we are to treat each other in the body of believers.

- 3) In this passage, I John 4:9, 10, he is showing that God's love in giving His Son for us is the greatest possible example and demonstration of love. It was demonstrated without any love on our part for Him being involved in making possible our salvation and deliverance from sin and its penalty. It was entirely of God's with no worthiness or response from us in our hopeless lost condition. It is only when His love has reached us and indwells us that we love Him.

c Loving others proves that we fully appreciate what He has done, 4:11

- 1) The love and Mercy of God toward us in all that He has done for us in making possible our salvation is the basis for our expressing our thanks and appreciation for what He has done by dedicating ourselves completely to Him.
- 2) The constraining/controlling/motivating love of Christ that has brought Paul into God's salvation and has deeply touched his heart leads him to dedicate himself to living completely for the Lord in II Corinthians 5:14, 15 (SEE ALSO: Philippians 1:20, 21) As pointed out before, this is also the basis for the plea of Romans 12, 1, 2.
- 3) This truth is something that applies to the lives of all Christians as they recognize what His love has done for them, and respond to it with deep thanks to God and commitment of life to Him.

d. Loving others is proof that God abides/lives in us, 4:12, 13

- 1) God by His Holy Spirit lives in the life of every Christian. He comes there to dwell at the very instant of salvation (SEE: Romans 8:9) and makes His presence known through the work that He does in our lives in meeting our deepest needs.
- 2) For a professing believer to have His presence in his life but not to demonstrate that presence in the way he lives and conducts himself in his daily life would raise the question whether that person really belongs to Him at all.
- 3) This demonstration in daily life of His presence in us will express itself in many ways, but one of the most important ways would be that we would manifest His abiding love in us through our love for others. In other words, His love will flow out through our lives to others. This seems to be Paul's teaching in II Corinthians 5:14, where he teaches that it is the indwelling love of Christ that motivates/drives him on in his life and work for God and gives him a deep love for the Corinthians and others.

e. Open confession of the Person and work of the Son proves

that we are abiding/living in the Father,

4:14, 15

- 1) In chapter 3, vs. 23 he had stressed that fully believing in the Name of the Son is a proof of our obedience to Him. This also seems to be the meaning of the phrase “confess” in Romans 10:9, 10, where it seems to emphasize the change in life and testimony that comes through true faith in Him. We can therefore say that confessing Him, as taught in these two verses in John, chapter 4, begins with our strong faith in Him that changes our lives and our testimony.
- 2) In these verses, however, we are not only to believe in Him in the depth of our heart faith, but we are also to take a stand for Him and fully confess Him before others in our daily lives as proof of our relationship with Him.

- a) The Lord had emphasized the same truth as He set forth the standards for those who wanted to be qualify as His followers in Luke 9:23-26. In vs. 26, he speaks of those who are ashamed of Him before others and how He Himself will be ashamed of them at His coming.

- b) Peter and John understood and experienced what it would cost them in taking an open and unashamed stand for the Lord in Acts, chapters 4, 5. It not only meant hatred and open opposition from those Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, but it also meant that they would experience imprisonment for

His

sake. Jesus had promised this, in fact, in John 15:18-25, and the disciples both understood this teaching and accepted it as one of the conditions for following Him.

- c) Paul, in Romans 1:16 speaks of His open and unashamed stand for the Lord and for His Gospel. In Paul’s life, from the very beginning of His relationship with the Lord (SEE: Acts, chapter 9), taking such an unashamed stand for the Lord would mean facing the hatred and open opposition of many to whom he would seek witness for the Lord. It would include beatings and imprisonment and many other hardships. SEE: II Corinthians 4:7-12; 11:22-33. In spite of all of this, he took his stand without hesitation and wavering.

- 3) Such an unashamed stand for the Lord in confessing Him openly is not to be resented or treated as something unfair or unjust that God has laid upon us, but is to be done joyfully in the light of all that He has done for us and means to us. These evidences of His love for us in our lives far outweigh anything that we might experience for Him. SEE: Philippians 1:12-18; 4:11-13.

6. Abiding/living in love prepares us for our coming judgment,

4:16-18

- a. This coming judgment of Christians is clearly distinguished from the final judgment of those who are lost in their sins. That final judgment of the lost, taught in Revelation 20:11-15, identified there as “THE GREAT WHITE THRONE” judgment, is only for those who have died in their sins without

ever trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin. No Christian will have any part in that “GREAT WHITE THRONE” judgment, no matter how much they may have failed in their Christian lives to please Him and live for Him after they came into saving relationship with Him.

- b. However, all Christians will face judgment before the Lord Himself. Besides this passage in I John 4:16-18, The judgment of Christians is taught in such passages as I Corinthians 3:11-15, where Paul is putting special emphasis upon the judgment of WORKERS for God such as Apollos and himself, and II Corinthians 5:9-11, where Paul emphasizes the judgment of ALL Christians in this judgment.
 - 1) This judgment is called “THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST” in II Corinthians 5:10, when we will face the Lord Himself in judgment as those who belong to Him in salvation.
 - 2) It follows the coming of the Lord in the RAPTURE when all of God’s people will stand before the Lord in heaven and be judged. From all of the relevant passages dealing with the Rapture, this judgment will take place in heaven itself during that seven year period of time when the tribulation is going on on the earth. Contrary to the teaching of some, we will not be on the earth during that time of tribulation but will be caught away/caught up before it begins and will be in heaven with the Lord. SEE: I Thessalonians 4:13-17.
 - 3) At that judgment we will be judged “for what we have done in the body whether it be good or bad.” SEE: II Corinthians 5:11. The purpose of this judgment is NOT condemnation or the denial of our eternal place in heaven with Him, but it has to do with the examining of the lives we have lived. Then we will experience the approval or disapproval of the Lord (SEE: I Corinthians 3:13-15; II Corinthians 5:9) and will receive from Him, based on that examination, the rewards we deserve from His hand at that time.
 - 4) I John 2:28 and 4:18-20 make it clear that we are to so live our lives as we live in this world so that we will be fully prepared for that judgment and will, at that time, receive the commendation of the Lord and our proper rewards.
 - 5) Both of these passage in I John indicate that some will not have lived their lives in obedience to the Lord and with His approval, and will not welcome His coming for them in the Rapture as they should. I John 2:28 indicates that some will even “shrink back in shame from Him at His coming,” even as they are being caught up to meet Him in the clouds with other believers.
 - 6) It also seems clear that that judgment will mean more for us than just rewards. Not only will much of what we seek to present to Him at that time be considered worthless and disposed of (SEE: I Corinthians 3:13, 15), but some

will feel the clear disappointment of the Lord in the way they have lived and conducted their lives on the earth, and this disappointment will grieve them.

- a) Paul seems to indicate this as he urges the Corinthians in I Corinthians 3:12-17 to not exalt him in their comparison of him with other leaders and teachers, because he wants to have a clear conscience and stand before the Lord in that judgment, and not feel His displeasure at that time.
- b) Even while he was living on the earth, he feared that God might disapprove of his life and work before he would die and SET HIM ASIDE with no further entrusted ministry. SEE: I Corinthians 9:24-27.

7. Failure to love others is a denial of our love for God 4:19-21

- a. He concludes his study of the love that we have in our hearts for others as a proof of our salvation by pointing out that we cannot divide our love for God from our love for others. If love for others is absent, then love for God is also not there.
- b. While it is true that we cannot have true heart love for others without first partaking of the love of God and having His love in our hearts, he is emphasizing that having the love of God truly in our hearts will automatically bring forth love for others.
- c. In other passages he has emphasized that GOD IS LOVE and has poured out His love to us in sending His Son and then in saving us from our sins. It is His will that the love He has poured out ON us should be poured out THROUGH us as we extend that love to others. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14.
 - 1) Love is part of His nature and, when we are born again and come into relationship with Him, we partake of His nature and everything He stands for. This does not mean that we have His attributes or are equal in any way with Him, but it does mean that His QUALITIES will be a vital part of our lives.
 - 2) Because we partake of His nature in regeneration, His nature will also vitally affect our lives and change us from our old sinful ways. Our old sinful ways brought hatred and broken relationships with others (SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1-4. where Paul had been led to challenge the Corinthians to examine themselves whether they were really in the faith because of this lack of love among them and their bitterness toward Paul himself. SEE: II Corinthians 13:5, 6.
- d. Therefore, the question here is not whether people lacking love for others have LOST their salvation which they once had. Salvation is eternal once we have TRULY been saved. SEE: John 10:28-30. The question would be whether or not they have EVER been saved at all. Love for others is a valid proof of our

relationship with God in salvation. When that proof is lacking, then we may well doubt that we have EVER been saved.

- e. We recognize that, as we live in this world, we will not live perfectly and will often fail to meet the standards that God has set for the Christian life. This failing will sometimes include lack of full love for others. Deep genuine love for others is to be our goal, however, and we should grow in our love for others just as we grow in our love for the Lord Himself in our relationship with Him. Our lack of perfection in meeting all of God's standards should never be an excuse for not desiring genuine heart love for others, and seeking God's help in finding and experiencing it continually in our lives as we live in this world.

IV. PROVING TRUE SALVATION THROUGH MAKING CERTAIN OF THE FAITH ONE HOLDS. 5:1-13

- A. The unchangeable and eternal TESTIMONY OF GOD concerning the Truth as the only basis for our faith and the danger of departing from this final and unchangeable set of Truth. 5:1-10

1. This TESTIMONY is centered in the Lord Jesus Christ and is exact in its teaching concerning WHO and WHAT He is as the Divine Son of God. It also includes His purpose for coming into the world, the full extent of the WORK He has accomplished and how we are to regard and respond to Him.
2. Any change at all in proclaiming and following the full contents of this TESTIMONY, no matter how slight or insignificant that change might seem to us, destroys its pure nature and its significance for us. In fact, the efforts by those who seek to change it in any way make them disobedient to God and puts them in the realm of being false teachers.
3. Thus, we can see that disobedience to His commands is not just disobedience in the CONDUCT of our Christian lives after we are saved, but it first involves disobedience in what we accept and set our hearts on as the FOUNDATIONS for our faith found in this TESTIMONY He has given us. This does not take away from the importance of our walk and conduct before God and others AFTER we are saved, but it renders all of that useless if that walk and conduct is not solidly based upon this foundation.
4. When the Lord Jesus Christ, in His final instructions to His followers in John, chapters 14-16, emphasized their obedience to all that He had taught them, He also was emphasizing their strict obedience to the contents of their faith as well as to their walk before Him in their relationship with Him.
 - a. In the Gospel of John, for instance, the Lord had clearly set forth (SEE: John, chapters 1-10) WHO and WHAT He is and the WORK that He would accomplish to make possible their eternal salvation and relationship with Him.

This spiritual teaching came from the Divine Son of God Himself and was to be accepted completely.

- b. Though others in that day had rejected His teachings, His followers dared not follow opposers even to the slightest degree. Their complete acceptance of ALL that He had taught, concerning both faith and conduct, would be proof of their love for Him and their relationship with Him.**

B. The contents of this eternal Testimony of God. 5:11-13

- 1. Very specifically, he sets forth the exact contents of this Testimony that God has given to us.**
 - a. It is built upon the Person of Christ as the Divine Son of God who has the power, authority and ability to perfectly meet our need for forgiveness of our sins, our salvation from those sins and our eternal relationship with Him. This has nothing to do with our worthiness before God or our own ability to have these results apart from Christ Himself. 5:11**
 - b. This eternal salvation, with all that it includes, comes when we exercise our own responsibility by responding to the Testimony with true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and only means of salvation. SEE: John 3:16, 36; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 16:31, 32; Ephesians 2:8, 9. 5:12**
 - c. This also means that we have left every other possible means that we have ever sought or followed to accomplish this result, and are relying solely on Him.**
- 2. It is only by this strict obedience to the Testimony God has given that we can have complete assurance (“that ye may KNOW”) of our salvation. To follow it less strictly is not only a completely false approach to salvation but it also would leave us with doubts concerning salvation and our eternal future. 5:13**
- 3. We note in Revelation 2:2, 13 the commendation of God and the rewards He will give for those who have faithfully followed His Truth without wavering even though they might fail him in other ways and have to be corrected.**

V. PROVING TRUE SALVATION BY EFFECTIVELY USING PRAYER FOR MEETING THE NEEDS OF OURSELVES AND OTHERS 5:14-17

- A. In dealing with the subject of effective prayer in meeting the needs of ourselves and others, he is dealing with one of the many possibilities that our salvation opens for us when we have True faith in the Lord. The use of effective prayer is a possibility that is often neglected by Christians.**
- B. In James 5:13-18 we are taught that prayer by Christians on behalf of others can be a means of bringing healing to the SICK PERSON. It must be a prayer**

of faith and must be from the hearts of those who pray, but it can bring results in the condition of that person for whom we pray.

- C. In this passage, I John 5:14-17, he is teaching that those who are used to pray for others should be spiritual Christians themselves so that their prayers will be heard by God. SEE: Psalms 66:2. Their fervent prayer, coming from clean and approved hearts and lives, will have favor with God.
1. In giving this teaching, he is not denying the need for that person to accept his own responsibility before God to truly repent of the sin and to do all that repentance demands in his life.
 - a. Our prayer is not a substitute for the person exercising his own responsibility before God and doing what he is supposed to do to gain forgiveness and restoration to right fellowship with God.
 - b. In true repentance, there is first the recognition of the sin, then the confession of the sin that brings the forgiveness of God to that life and finally the abandoning of the sin that was committed so that it will not be committed again.
 - c. We recognize in this teaching that if the person himself is finally, after all our prayer on his behalf, not willing to accept his full responsibility, then our prayer will not prevail in his life.
 - d. Our prayer is directed to God on behalf of the person who may not yet realize his need or come yet to the place where he will do something about it.
 2. Rather, he is teaching that fervent and effective prayer will HELP bring that person to the point of repentance and then HELP him do all that he is supposed to do in repentance to bring the forgiveness of God.
 3. This prayer may begin before that person actually is ready to acknowledge his need and do something about it. When he is ready to respond, the prayer on his behalf then follows through the whole matter of repentance and restoration in the life of that person until it is complete.
 4. This entire teaching emphasizes the burden that we are to have for each other and our heart willingness to respond to ANY need in the lives of our brethren. It is this heartfelt response to their needs that proves that we truly love them.

VI. CONCLUSION

5:18-21

- A. He concludes the epistle by summarizing all that had been discussed as he reminds them that if they truly belong to the Lord and possess His salvation,

their lives will be changed so that in life and conduct they will no longer live in the realm of Satan but will be devoted to holiness and strict obedience to God and His commandments.

- B. His whole purpose in being inspired by God to write to them has been to bring them into true relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, so that their lives completely conform to that relationship both in their faith and conduct. It is now their responsibility to strictly heed these teachings.

THE EPISTLES OF SECOND AND THIRD JOHN

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR OF SECOND AND THIRD JOHN

1. As previously noted, some of the early church fathers doubted that John the Apostle had written these two epistles. Their doubts were based on the fact that these two epistles were not generally known and distributed until many years after the death of John.
2. However, not only does the style and nature of these two epistles perfectly fit with the style and nature of the other books John had written (the Gospel of John and I John), but the late general appearing of these books does not take away from their authenticity. They simply took longer to be widely read and gathered together with other books of the Canon of the New Testament.
3. We conclude therefore that the Apostle John wrote both of these epistles. Though his purpose in writing them seems different from that of I John, John is meeting the urgent need of his day to combat the rising false teaching that characterized this last part of the first Century.

THE ADDRESSEES OF THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN

1. Dr. Tenney points out that these epistles are more personal than I John, for they seem to be directed to individuals or to single churches rather than to a broad group of Christians and churches.
 - a. In II John, he speaks of the “elect lady” as the one to whom it is addressed. Rather than this literally being a woman, this could refer to a single local church, which had been brought to the attention of John as they faced the danger of false teachers.

- b. In III John, he refers to a pastor or leader named Gaius as the one to whom it is directly addressed. We presume that Gaius was the pastor of a local church and also was to share its contents with the church whose problems were being discussed in this epistle. Gaius could also use it to admonish his flock in their toleration of bad conduct.**
- 2. We assume that these addressees were also mostly Gentiles in some area of Asia known to John and of special concern to him. As the last living Apostle, he felt a special burden to keep them straight in their beliefs and walk before the Lord before his generation would pass away.**

THE PURPOSES FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN

- 1. We note that the purposes for the two epistles are different.**
 - a. II John is mainly concerned with the false teachers that were beginning to plague the church at that time. In I John, he had dealt somewhat with these false teachers, warning against some of their main errors, but in II John he takes a very stern approach to even welcoming them or showing any kind of warmth to them. From the beginning there had always been false teachers (SEE: The Book of Galatians), but at this point in time, they were bolder in attacking even the Person of Christ rather than just attacking the true salvation He had come to bring.**
 - b. In III John, he is mainly concerned with how the church is handling their affairs and conducting itself rather than with theological matters. He notes the bad attitude of one of the main men in the church and the way they had treated faithful workers for the Lord.**
- 2. The main thing to note about both of these epistles is that they are facing the problems of the day, both theological and practical, and are warning against a departure from the teaching and standards that had been passed on to them.**
- 3. Both of these epistles reflect the theological and practical problems faced by the church of today, and their teaching is just as relevant for the church today as it was for the church of that day. We face the same enemy of the truth, Satan, who will continually seek to distort the Truth and lead people astray. He will work in the hearts of the unsaved as well as God's own people to hinder the work of God.**

THE OUTLINE OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

CHRISTIAN FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH

I. SALUTATION ON BEHALF OF THE TRUTH	Vs. 1-4
II. FOLLOWING THE TRUTH AS PROOF OF THE LOVE THAT THEY PROFESS	Vs. 5, 6
III. WARNING TO GUARD THEMSELVES AGAINST THOSE WHO DENY THE TRUTH	Vs. 7-11
IV. JOY CAN ONLY COME THROUGH THE TRUTH	Vs. 12
V. CONCLUDING GREETING	Vs. 13

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

CHRISTIAN FIDELITY TO THE TRUTH

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| I. SALUTATION ON BEHALF OF THE TRUTH | VS. 1-4 |
|---|----------------|
- A.** As noted before, the phrase, “the elect lady”, may not at all refer to a literal woman as some teach. Rather, it more probably refers to a single church to whom he is writing and whom he gives this title of “elect lady”. Thus, Paul, in Philemon, I and II Timothy and Titus, is the only one actually addressing his epistles to individuals. 1a
 - B.** Therefore, as it also seems to be true in III John, where he addresses his epistle to a man called Gaius, this epistle is not generally directed to all of the Gentile churches in the area but is specifically designed to meet the needs of one particular church that has come to his attention as one going through spiritual problems that need to be dealt with.
 - C.** Five times in these three and a half verses, he repeats the phrase “TRUTH.” This will be the entire theme of this short epistle, approached in various ways.
 - D.** His reason for the emphasis upon this theme is clear. If they have everything else in their lives but are not firmly standing upon the TRUTH, they have nothing at all to stand on in their lives. If they permit anyone to rob them of the TRUTH either by denyiug it or changing it in any way, they will lose everything dear to them in their relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

- E. The TRUTH is therefore to be their main focus, and is something that they are both to love and to be absolutely faithful to. They are both to stand in it and defend it with all their hearts.
- F. In preparation for the strong teaching he will give them in vs. 7-11 on the subject of defending the Truth by dealing strongly with the false teachers among them, he points out that only SOME (SEE: vs. 4) of them are following the Truth. He would have liked to have commended the whole church, but he cannot do that because the church is divided between those following the Truth and those who are not. This serves as a rebuke to this church.
- G. As we noted in the study of I John, we see the authority that John has in writing the strong words of this epistle, and the respect they are to have for the way he expresses himself as well as his right to believe that they will have a complete willingness to obey what he says.

II. FOLLOWING THE TRUTH AS PROOF OF THE LOVE THAT THEY POSSESS. VS. 5, 6

- A. The love that he refers to here is not just the love that God has shown to them in the sending of the Lord to save them from their sins and the bringing of their hearts to Him. Rather, it is the love of the Lord, in and through their hearts as Christians, working to give them a sincere love for others.
- B. As we have noted before, Paul speaks of the working of this LOVE in his own heart in motivating him to devote Himself completely to the Lord Jesus Christ, living for Him and making Him the absolute priority in his life, and to preach the Gospel that the Lord has entrusted to him. SEE: II Corinthians 5:14, 15
- C. The presence of His love in our hearts will also cause us to follow the Truth that He gives us without compromise or wavering. Any compromise or wavering would be a proof that perhaps His love is not even in our hearts and that we are not saved.

III. WARNING TO GUARD THEMSELVES AGAINST THOSE WHO DENY THE TRUTH VS. 7-11

- A. He first speaks of the numbers of those who are deceivers in their day and identifies their main denial of the Truth that they proclaim. Later, he will speak of the deceivers in their very midst that they will need to strongly deal with, but, as he introduces the presence and work of these people to them, he first is emphasizing that they come from the world and are present everywhere in the world. Their origin is Satan's own realm, and they work as His agents in going everywhere deceiving people. SEE: Matthew 4:1-11, where Satan was tempting the Lord; 7:15-18; Ephesians 2:1-3; 6:10-18; and I John 1:18, 19.

- B. Their main denial of the Truth is not just a denial of His Deity. Rather, it now centers on a denial of His very coming into the world. Vs. 7. SEE I John 2:4.**
- 1. The number of years that had passed in the Church Age and the situation of these believers made the rise of this false teaching possible.**
 - a. We note that these readers in this church lived many years after the birth and ministry of the Lord on the earth, and His death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to heaven again, 4.B.C. to 30 A.D.**
 - b. Few of the readers would even have been alive during those years of the earthly life and ministry of the Lord. Perhaps none of them who would have lived during those years had ever seen Him during that earthly ministry. Being Gentiles living in other parts of Asia, they would have had no opportunity to even be in the places where He appeared.**
 - 2. The work of the deceivers was to put doubts in their minds concerning all that was accomplished through the purposes and work of the Lord that John and others are teaching them. The easiest way to do this was simply deny that there had ever been such a person living in this world and to demand some proof of His very existence.**
 - 3. Paul, in I Corinthians 15, written twenty-four years (54A.D.) after His death, burial, resurrection and ascension back to heaven, was faced with the same problem as he speaks of the proofs that supported the Gospel, including the fact that, of the 500 people who had seen Him at one time following His resurrection, the majority of those were still living when Paul wrote this epistle.**
 - 4. Historically, the GNOSTICS and other false groups had arisen by this time, and their distortions of the Truth were widely accepted by many people. These people had difficulty accepting the full Truth concerning the Lord, but they were willing to accept versions of His PERSON and WORK that might seem more reasonable to them. They had a FORM of the Truth but not the Truth itself and devoted themselves to following these false teachings.**
 - 5. We notice the strong teaching he gives in dealing with these people. vs. 9-11**
 - a. To even welcome them or to tolerate them in the name of LOVE, even with the sincere aim of bringing them into the Truth, as some today would argue, would put the believers directly under their influence and open the possibility that the believers could be easily led astray.**
 - b. The believers were to treat them as coming from Satan himself, serving as his deceiving agents, with no connection at all with God or with His Truth. Vs. 7, 9**

- c. Rather than such an approach of toleration, the believers were to strongly and completely reject these deceivers, show no welcoming spirit toward them and were to turn away from any possible contact with them.
- 6. If any one rejected the teaching that John was giving them and persisted in an approach of toleration of these deceivers, John warns them that they are making themselves participants in their evil deeds. Vs. 11
- 7. In the light of the numbers of false cults today (Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, 7th Day Adventists and others), with new ones coming forth all the time (New Age Movement and others), we can see clearly the application of this teaching to the believers and churches who sincerely love and follow the Truth today. A very strong approach is necessary to those deceivers we face today, even though some in the so called "evangelical" world might strongly disagree with us and pursue a different course.

IV. JOY CAN ONLY COME THROUGH THE TRUTH

VS. 12

- A. We note that, in following with all our hearts these teachings and the Truth that God has given us, we open the way to have true JOY in our relationship with the Lord. There can be no JOY from the Lord for those who compromise His Truth or refuse to take a stand on it.
- B. Following His Truth with all our hearts may seem to be difficult and may even cut us off from the approval and friendship of well-meaning but erring fellow Christians, but having true JOY from the Lord is to be our main desire and nothing is to tempt us to forsake that desire.
- C. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself had taught the same thing in John 15:11, where He made it clear that their strict obedience to ALL that He had taught them (SEE: John, chapters 14-16) would bring His joy to their lives and that that joy would be spiritually complete in their lives.
 - 1. We note the wide range of teachings the Lord had given them both during His entire ministry and in this final meeting with them before His crucifixion, recorded in John, chapters 13-17. In these chapters, the teachings had included: servitude on behalf of others (chapter 13), their love for Him (chapters 14, 15), the work of the Holy Spirit in and through them in the future (chapters 14-16), their daily walk with Him (chapter 15, vs. 1-10-16), their complete devotion to Him and submission to any persecution they might have to go through for Him (chapter 15:18-25) and other teachings.
 - 2. In that section, Jesus is dealing with disciples who seem to not be as spiritual as they should have been after three and a half years of close association with Him, and there was need to strongly warn them about the nature of His

standards for them and what following Him would both require and would mean in their lives.

V. CONCLUDING GREETING

Vs. 13

- A. In his conclusion, as he had done in vs. 1, where he addressed the church as “THE ELECT LADY,” he again uses the feminine term to speak of the church from which he is writing. He calls that church “THE CHOSEN SISTER.”**

- B. John has not yet been imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos as he will be when he will write the Book of Revelation in 95 A.D. Therefore, he is in close association with a local church in the place where he is dwelling. He might even be the pastor of that local church. From his conclusion, it seems that he is even writing these things to the needy church with the full knowledge and encouragement of the people in his own church.**

THE OUTLINE OF THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE CONDUCT OF THE LOCAL CHURCH TOWARD WORKERS FOR THE TRUTH

- I. COMMENDATION TO GAIUS FOR WALKING IN THE TRUTH** **Vs. 1-4**

- II. THE PROPER APPROACH OF THE CHURCH TO THOSE WHO VISIT WITH THE TRUTH** **Vs. 5-8**

- III. THE EVIL APPROACHES OF SOME TO WORKERS FOR THE TRUTH** **Vs. 9-11**

- IV. THE FAITHFUL LABOR OF ONE WORKER FOR THE TRUTH** **Vs. 12**

- V. CONCLUSION AND BLESSING** **Vs. 13, 14**

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

**I. COMMENDATION TO GAIUS FOR WALKING
IN THE TRUTH**

Vs. 1-4

A. In writing to this Christian brother named Gaius, it is not clearly stated exactly what position he occupied in his relationship with the church that will receive this epistle and act upon its teachings.

1. It seems most likely that Gaius is the pastor of the church and perhaps has alerted John to the major problem that he faces in the church as their pastor. COMPARE: I Corinthians 1:11, where a spiritual woman, Chloe, had alerted Paul to the dissension in the Corinthian Church over the personalities of their teachers, Peter, Paul and Apollos.

2. Gaius himself seems to be a very spiritual man, who is faithfully following the Truth, but he has shown a weakness in dealing with the major problem and is appealing to John for help.

3. From vs. 4, it seems that he might even have been a convert of John's, as John refers to him as one of "my children," and so they have a very close relationship.

B. The problem that has arisen, and which will be the heart of the teaching of the epistle, is that one of the members, Diotrophes, who perhaps is a prominent leader in the church, has shown an evil attitude toward workers who visit the church for ministry. He also has forcibly enlisted others in his evil actions against these workers for God.

C. We notice first that John uses the word "TRUTH" six times in this short epistle. SEE: Vs. 1, 3, 4 8, and 12. This phrase had also been used extensively in his epistle of II John.

1. In II John, the phrase mostly had been used to describe the body of REVEALED TRUTH that God has given us, that is centered in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. That body of revealed Truth is God's final revelation and is unchanging. Any departure from that body of Truth, even in the slightest degree, means that the person who departs from it is a false teacher and has no real relationship with the Lord.

2. In III John, however, without denying the necessity of holding fast to that body of Truth that God has given, and of taking a strong stand on it without compromise or wavering, he now turns to the way believers CONDUCT themselves in holding to that body of Truth.

- a. This is his main focus as he writes to the church. There seems to be no problem in that church in believing and holding to the body of Truth, but some in that church, led by Diotrophes, are bringing that body of Truth into disrepute before others by their evil CONDUCT.
 - b. Unless this problem can be settled, their testimony in proclaiming that body of Truth will be hopelessly marred and the proclamation of the Truth will suffer.
3. Thus, the body of Truth itself and the conduct of those who profess to hold to that revealed Truth cannot be separated. If a person professes to hold to that body of Truth, but does not show it by his conduct, his profession has no meaning and he probably has never been saved.

II. THE PROPER APPROACH OF THE CHURCH TO THOSE WHO VISIT WITH THE TRUTH

Vs. 5-8

- A. In this passage, he sets forth four spiritual principles/standards they are to follow in their treatment of the brethren who come/are sent to minister to them in their church.**
1. They are to conduct themselves **FAITHFULLY** in the way they receive them and treat them while they are with them. This gives the idea that they are to treat them as those who belong to the Lord and as those who are living in strict obedience to His commands and standards. It also gives the idea of doing this steadfastly without wavering, so that their treatment of the brethren is consistent and pleasing to the Lord. They are also to welcome them with respect and submission to the teachings they have come to share. **Vs. 5**
 2. They are to show genuine **HEART LOVE** for them. No matter what the message might be that these brethren bring, including correcting them for some fault in the church, this love is to be never failing. **Vs. 6**
 - a. We note that Paul had to continually appeal for the heart love of the Corinthians in his second epistle to them. He had had to give them some very stern rebukes and instructions in the first epistle he wrote to them. The result was that they only partially obeyed him and adopted a spirit of bitterness, criticism and lack of love toward him. **SEE: II Corinthians 10:8-10; 11:1-21; 12:11-21.**
 - b. No matter how tenderly and lovingly preachers of the Word share the Word of God with His people, they are still required by God, in His use of them, to preach the full Truth without compromise. No matter difficult the teaching might be for the people of God to accept, they are to have humble and loving attitudes in listening and responding to it, without resenting or turning against

the one who has shared the Word with them. These pastors and workers are sent there by God for the care of their souls, and are to be treated as such with respect and honor. SEE: I Thessalonians 5:12, 13; Hebrews 13:17.

3. They are to send them on their way, after their ministry among them has been concluded, **IN A MANNER WORTHY OF GOD.** Vs. 6
 - a. This gives the idea that the believers will have fully accepted the purpose of the ministry these men have had among them and the teaching they have shared, have the right attitude and love toward these faithful men and have no regrets or bitterness as they bid them farewell.
 - b. Because these believers share the very nature of God in their salvation and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, His nature will be manifested (SEE: Philippians 1:20, 21) in their lives by the way they conduct themselves in the treatment of these workers. If there is no such manifesting of the character of God, then they face the displeasure of God Himself.
4. Besides these manifestations of the presence of the Lord in their lives, they are also to help with the material needs of these workers by **GIVING THEM SUPPORT.** SEE: Philippians 4:10-13.
 - a. As those who would go from church to church in their ministry for God, these men would often lack proper support. If they had no “sending” churches that regularly supplied these financial needs, it would be the responsibility of each church to which they ministered to have a part in supporting them. SEE: Luke 10:7
 - b. Therefore, it would not be enough to simply wish them the blessing of God but not to actually give to them according to their needs. SEE: James 2:14-18; I John 3:17. That would be like a denial of their relationship with the Lord who gave everything for us.
5. None of these teachings mean that the workers themselves would be excused by God if their approach and attitude in coming is wrong, if they have a greedy rather than a sacrificial spirit in coming or if their manner of conduct in ministering to the church is less than spiritual. Apparently, none of those John has sent to them were guilty of any of these things, so it is the people themselves who would bear the full responsibility for the way they receive and treat them. It is the people of the church themselves who are to change in their attitudes and conduct rather than the workers who visit them.

III. THE EVIL APPROACHES OF SOME IN THE CHURCH TO THOSE WHO VISIT WITH THE TRUTH

Vs. 9-11

- A. Although only one man, Diotrophes, is actually named as one who is sinning against the visiting workers, he indicates that others are also involved in this sin. He has, by threatening some of the others with expulsion if they do not join him in his evil treatment of the workers, gained a following in the church and these others help him in his evil actions.**
- 1. As noted before, he is apparently a leader in the church with some authority over other members. Since Gaius seems to be the pastor, this man might be one of his deacons who, in a strong minded and willful way, wants to rule over the church, even making himself more of a leader than the pastor himself.**
 - 2. Was this same emergence of strong willful leaders also true in the Corinthian Church (SEE: I Corinthians, chapters 1-4) where the congregation was divided into three or four groups following some of the different men who had ministered among them? Was it also the influence of these same strong willful leaders in II Corinthians, that caused the people to lose their respect for Paul and treat him badly?**
 - 3. Others in the church seem to fear him though they may not willingly become part of his following. However, in yielding to the threats and pressure he put upon them. rather than to the clear teachings and standards God had set before them for personal and church life before Him, they are equally guilty.**
- B. His actions are evil and John seems to regard him as he would an unsaved man who has invaded the church and is trying to lead the believers astray. Vs. 11b**
- C. His actions, according the standards God has laid down in other passages (SEE: Romans 16:17, 18; I Corinthians, chapter 5; II Thessalonians 3:6, 7, 10, 11, 14, 15; I Timothy 4:1-4; Titus 1:9-14, 16; II Peter 2:1-3, 9, 10), mean that he will have to be disciplined and cast out of the church.**
- 1. Discipline for this particular type of sin is taught in II Thessalonians 3:14, 15; Titus 1:1, 2, 16; 3:10, 11; and II Peter 2:9, 10. In Titus 3:1, 2, for instance, we are taught that we are to be subject to rulers (leaders in the church as well??) and are not to malign or slander anyone, but it does not defend false teachers. The other passages deal even more specifically with those who cause division and trouble in the church.**
 - 2. The discipline called for in all of the above passages is that they are not only to be strongly rebuked but they also are to be put out of the church so that the believers are separated from them and will no longer be under their influence.**
 - a. Such strong discipline is to be done in love with the possibility of restoration of brothers and sisters in the Lord IF there truly has been repentance leading not only to forgiveness from God but also a complete abandonment of the sin that**

caused their expulsion from the church in the first place. SEE: II Corinthians 2:6-11; Galatians 6:1; and II Thessalonians 3:15.

- b. With false teachers, however, who give no evidence, either in their teaching or in their conduct, that they have any relationship with God at all in salvation, the expulsion would have to be permanent. Their being permitted ever again to be a part of the fellowship of believers would be extremely difficult, for they were in the fellowship through deception previously, and might seek to return to it on the same basis by only pretending to repent and abandon their false teaching. It would be difficult to ever trust them again.
- c. For men like Diotrophes and others like him who have strong overbearing personalities, and who have used those personalities to help them in their sinful ways, it might also be difficult and unwise to EVER permit them to return to the fellowship of believers UNLESS there is a complete humbling of their hearts before God and the believers. This would mean a complete and heart felt submission to the Lord and to the authority of the church leaders, a complete change in their attitudes and manner of life and a willingness to belong to the fellowship of believers humbly with the possibility that God would never again permit them to occupy a position of leadership.

IV. THE FAITHFUL LABOR OF ONE WORKER FOR THE TRUTH

Vs. 12

- A. He names one faithful man named Demetrius, who is highly commended for his faithfulness and apparently has a good testimony among them. It is not completely clear in this passage whether Demetrius is a visiting worker or whether he is simply a faithful and spiritual member of their own congregation who has not yielded to the evil attempts of Diotrophes, and is standing as a faithful example to the other believers concerning spiritual walk before God and spiritual relationships with other believers.
- B. If this is indeed a faithful and spiritual member of their own congregation, this high commendation is shared to point them to someone in their midst who would be a true EXAMPLE to them of someone taking a faithful STAND for the Lord and then WALKING in the Truth in the way he conducts himself just as John himself does. They should follow such a one rather than the evil man, Diotrophes, among them.

V. CONCLUSION AND BLESSING

Vs. 13-15

- A. In his conclusion, John speaks of the fact that he is planning a visit to them shortly. This means that he is writing from a place not too far away and is in a position to come and deal with the problem that they have as well as to encourage them in their stand for the Lord. Vs. 13, 14**
- 1. This reminds us of Paul's own intention to come and visit the Corinthians (SEE: II Corinthians 12:20-13:3) shortly after the writing of that epistle. Paul also had the same purposes in his heart for visiting them that John expresses in these two verses, vs. 13, 14.**
 - 2. Both John and Paul were in positions of great authority as Apostles, If the problems the churches they wrote to were not straightened out and the members of the congregations walking obediently and correctly before the Lord when they arrived, they would have the authority to take strong action when they would be among these believers. This action was what they intended, if necessary. Their warnings of their coming would be a means of the believers examining their own individual hearts to see where they stood with the Lord. SEE: II Corinthians 13:5, 6.**
- B. He shares with Gaius a short benediction. Vs. 15**
- 1. We note a number of different benedictions in Paul's epistles, including the Book of Hebrews.**
 - a. SEE: Romans 16:25-27; I Corinthians 16:23; II Corinthians 13:14 (where the Trinity is named); Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:23, 24; Philippians 4:23; Colossians 4:18b; I Thessalonians 5:23, 28; II Thessalonians 3:16, 18; I Timothy 6:21c; II Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:15c; Philemon, vs. 25; and Hebrews 13:20, 21.**
 - b. We note that many of Paul's benedictions are very brief, where he simply fervently hopes that the PEACE of the Lord may be with them, but all of them carry with them his love and tender care for them and his deep desire that they would faithfully be obedient to the teachings they have received through him from the Lord.**
 - 2. This closing benediction of John follows the pattern of the brief words that Paul had used several times, when John desires that God's PEACE should be with them. This PEACE is not "peace WITH God" that is necessary in salvation, but is "the peace OF God" (SEE: Philippians 4, 6, 7) that God gives to Christians who are in right relationship with Him and walking in complete trust in His presence and guidance in their lives in all circumstances. Though he has had to speak strongly to them, he has still written with deep love and concern for them in his heart.**

3. Some have wondered why this particular benediction is used in this epistle of John but not in the first two that he wrote.
 - a. Since this epistle is addressed to a church leader, it could well be that this prayer for PEACE for them is especially centered on Gaius himself who might personally be very discouraged and lacking in peace of heart because of the sin in the church. John could be saying to him that, no matter how difficult the circumstances might be that he faces as a pastor, the Lord can still give him daily peace and contentment in his service for God.
 - b. We note Paul's own testimony concerning his sharing of the Lord's PEACE and contentment in the worst of circumstances. SEE: Philippians 4:10-13, where Paul was in prison under very difficult circumstances, was somewhat shut off from the friends and fellow workers that he had been able to freely see when he had lived in a hired house in Rome (SEE: Acts 28:30, 31) and had had his circumstances made even worse by the critical preaching against him of some of the brethren. SEE: Philippians 1:13-18.
 - c. In John's own life, as we see his attitude toward his own situation and life in these three epistle, it seems that he enjoys perfect peace in the Lord in spite of some of the difficulties that he himself might be going through. It seems, therefore, that John's own peace of heart in his circumstances would be a worthy example to a church leader such as Gaius.
- C. He closes this epistle with greetings from "the friends." He does not name these "friends", but it seems that they would be known to Gaius and perhaps their names were not necessary. The friends he refers to in the church itself whom Gaius is to greet would be the faithful ones who have not followed the evil man and his followers.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

- 1. We do not hear anything about Jude in the Book of Acts or in any of the epistles of Paul and others in the New Testament, but he is spoken of by name in the Gospels as a brother of the Lord. SEE: Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3.**
- 2. In the Gospels he is introduced as a son of Mary the mother of Jesus. This means that he, together with three others, was one of the half brothers of Jesus. It is written that there were four half-brothers, whose names were given, and at least two half sisters of Jesus born to Mary after the birth of the Lord (SEE: Matthew 13:54-56; Mark 6:3). James, a leader in the Jerusalem Church and one of the writers of the New Testament, was also one of these.**
- 3. As was true with James, it seems likely that he was not converted until after the resurrection of the Lord. During the lifetime of the Lord he seems to have been a doubter (SEE: John 7:3-8) and may even have been among those brothers who came with Mary to take Jesus away because they thought that he might have been deranged (SEE: Mark 3:20-22). Jesus had to rebuff them on another occasion when they came with Mary to see him (SEE: Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35). They also seemed to mock him and his ministry (SEE: John 7:1-8)**
- 4. It seems likely that both he and James, his brother, were among the 120 followers of the Lord mentioned in Acts, chapter 1. They may have been converted in the post-resurrection period. Whether he ever became a main leader in the Jerusalem Church we do not know. He was respected enough, however, that God chose him to write this Epistle of Jude.**

THE ADDRESSEES OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

- 1. Though he was part of the Jerusalem Church and probably had no major ministry of his own outside of Jerusalem, if this epistle was written after the fall of Jerusalem, as many believe, then it would have been addressed to believers, both Jew and Gentile, in other parts of Asia.**
- 2. We do not know the exact destination of this epistle, for its contents deal with problems in every part of Asia affecting the churches in this later period of time. If we knew his own location at this time, we might know his addressees. Since Jerusalem had been destroyed in 70 A.D., it seems sure he was not there.**

THE THEME AND PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

- 1. Dr. Tenney notes that a comparison of the contents of the Epistle of Jude with the second and third chapters of II Peter seems to indicate that there was some connection between these two books. This does not mean that their epistles were**

written at the same time, but it does indicate that Jude deeply respected Peter and the other apostles and followed their teaching faithfully. He may even have had access to II Peter so that he was familiar with its contents and God inspired him to include the warnings Peter had given also in his own inspired epistle.

- a. In vs. 3, 4, he seems to issue the same warning that Peter had given concerning those who have come into the churches from the outside with false teaching. SEE: II Peter 2:1-19.
 - b. In vs. 17, 18, he quotes directly from II Peter 3:3 and attributes this quote to the “apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” and the warnings they had given concerning the danger of the coming of false teachers.
2. Jude himself states that his main purpose in writing was to urge his readers “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.”
 3. The churches had other needs at that time, but their main need was to guard themselves against the false teaching which characterized this latter part of the first century. If that false teaching had been permitted to prevail, then the churches could have been totally spiritually corrupted and the work of spreading and following the Gospel could have been destroyed.

THE DATE FOR THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

1. Because the contents of this epistle seem to indicate that he had a close connection, in writing this epistle, with Peter, some have believed that he might have written it before Peter died in about 66 A.D. However, it seems more likely that he had seen the contents of Peter’s epistles AFTER Peter had died, and that he had been affected by them.
2. Most Bible teachers believe, therefore, that he wrote his epistle as late as 80 A.D., in the period of time after the fall of Jerusalem. This means that he was active and writing in the same period of time when John wrote the Gospel of John and his three epistles.
3. We do not know when he died. It seems from history that, in the period from 90-95 A.D., only John the Apostle was still living, so Jude may have died shortly after writing his epistle.
4. There is also no clear evidence that he was ever imprisoned by the Romans and died in their custody. Such imprisonment is possible, but Jude seems to give no hint at all of it in his epistle and he did not go down in history as a martyr.

THE OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

DEALING WITH THE CRISIS OF APOSTASY

I. SALUTATION	Jude, 1, 2
II. THE CRISIS OF APOSTASY	Jude, 3, 4
III. EXAMPLES AND WARNINGS OF HISTORY	Jude, 5-7
IV. THE CHARACTER AND SINS OF THE APOSTATES	Jude, 8-16
V. ADVICE FOR GUARDING THEMSELVES	Jude, 17-23
VI. CLOSING BENEDICTION	Jude, 24, 25

THE STUDY OF THE TEXT OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

- I. SALUTATION** **Jude, 1, 2**
- A. Jude introduces himself both as a BOND SERVANT/SLAVE of the Lord Jesus Christ, and also as the brother of James, the half-brother of the Lord. Vs. 1a**
- 1. His brother James had also used this title of being a bond-servant or slave of the Lord. This was a title that Paul had also used frequently in such epistles as Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:1 and Philemon, vs. 1. In Philemon, vs. 1, Paul altered this introduction slightly by using the phrase “A PRISONER of Jesus Christ,” which could refer to his actual imprisonment in Rome but which carries the far broader emphasis that it is FOR THE SAKE OF Jesus Christ, under whose authority he is completely submissive, that he is there.**
 - 2. Neither he nor his brother James had the position or authority of being APOSTLES, but James is the most frequently named leader of the Jerusalem Church, and it seems likely that Jude also occupied some important post in the Jerusalem Church. Therefore, he would be both well known and respected by those to whom he is writing, and they would be willing to accept the fact that God had chosen to inspire him by the Holy Spirit to write this epistle. Such acceptance would be essential if these teachings are to be believed and followed.**
 - 3. Because of his family relationship with the Lord and the position he most likely occupied in the Jerusalem Church, he can write with authority as God inspires him by the Holy Spirit to pen these admonitions and instructions to his readers. He therefore does not need to defend his right to be so used by God to write an epistle to these readers. They would accept his authority without question.**

B. The addressees of this epistle are not easy to exactly identify. Vs. 1b

- 1. Jude had spent the early part of his life in his home country of Galilee, and then, after the Church Age began in 30 A.D. and until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., in Jerusalem itself working with a Jewish church for the next 40 years. He was not known as an evangelist and so perhaps did not leave Jerusalem during the dispersion of the Christians because of persecution in Acts, chapter 8.**
- 2. However, whereas James had written specifically to the Jews of the dispersion, the contents of Jude's epistle seems to be broader in nature and would include both Jews and Gentiles. There are those who believe that his addressees are those residing on the eastern side of Asia rather than throughout the Asian area. This seems likely since there is no evidence that he traveled widely so that he would be known all over Asia.**
- 3. We note his statement concerning the spiritual nature of the addressees, "James, to them that are SANCTIFIED by God the Father, and PRESERVED/KEPT in Jesus Christ, and CALLED..."**
 - a. "James, to them that are SANCTIFIED/CALLED by God the Father."**
 - 1) The phrase "SANCTIFIED," as translated in the King James Version, literally means TO BE SET APART. In the Christian life, in its general use, it refers to being set apart from the world of sin unto holiness before God.**
 - 2) In this context, however, it could refer to being set apart/called apart in SALVATION from our lost condition to a righteous standing before God and eternal life. If this is the correct understanding of the use of this phrase, its emphasis would be on salvation itself rather than upon a holy walk in the Christian life. This being set apart in salvation, of course, should lead also to sanctified WALK in the Christian life. SEE: Romans 6:1-7:7; Galatians 5:1-26; Ephesians, chapters 4-6; Colossians 3:1-8; I Peter 1:13-16; and I John 2:1-6.**
 - 3) Some versions (e.g. NASB) include the phrase "BELOVED IN GOD THE FATHER," which would emphasize the full extent of God's love for us in saving us, and the tenderness of His relationship with us as we walk in our salvation. Many question whether this phrase was in the original epistle that Jude wrote, but its truth is certainly something that is very dear to us as we walk daily with Him in salvation.**
 - b. "PRESERVED/KEPT in/for Christ Jesus."**

- 1) This phrase refers to the **SECURITY** of our eternal relationship with the Lord in salvation once we have truly come into relationship with Him through repentance and heart faith in Him as our Savior from sin.
- 2) We see this taught by the Lord Himself in John 10:28-30, where He speaks of those who are His sheep and the impossibility of them ever losing that relationship with Him by being taken out of either His hand or the Father's hand. In His earlier conversation with Nicodemus (SEE: John 3:1-21), the Lord had emphasized that Nicodemus could only be saved by faith in HIM and not through any of the works that he had accumulated and depended on.
- 3) We see this again in such passages as Ephesians 1:14; 4:30 where the finality and eternal nature of our salvation is assured through the regenerating and SEALING work of the Holy Spirit.
- 4) This preservation in the Lord emphasizes the truth that we are altogether saved by the Grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ entirely apart from any works or merit of our own.
 - a) Neither BEFORE we were saved did our good works bring merit to us so that we could GAIN our salvation, nor AFTER we are saved can we KEEP IT through good works or merit of our own.
 - b) Rather than such assurance being a license to sin, as some claim, those who do not live according to His will and standards of holiness in their Christian lives after they have been saved will face the JUDGEMENT SEAT OF CHRIST (SEE: I Corinthians 3:10-15; II Corinthians 5:9-11) BUT will never stand before the GREAT WHITE THRONE of God in the final judgment of the Lost. SEE: Revelation 20:11-15.

C. "MERCY UNTO YOU, AND PEACE AND LOVE, BE MULTIPLIED. Vs. 2

1. This opening blessing for the readers is very similar to the one that Paul used to open most of his epistles. SEE: Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:2; I Timothy 1:2; II Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; and Philemon, vs. 3.
2. This could have been a very common greeting that Christians gave each other when they would meet, and Jude is led by God to include it in his epistle. Also, he could have been familiar with some of Paul's writings where it was used, and the Lord led him to include this also in his epistle.
3. Since he is writing to Christians, all three of these phrases would not be referring to salvation itself, but rather to the ongoing supply of these three things by God in their lives as Christians by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- a. **MERCY.** They gave already experienced the **MERCY AND GRACE OF GOD** in salvation, but now need His daily strength in their lives in living their Christian lives and facing the hardships and difficulties that Christians faced in that day. We see the promise of this, for instance, when Paul had a great physical difficulty in his life that was a great trial to Him. **SEE: II Corinthians 12:7-10.** God would not remove this problem from him, but promised him the **GRACE/STRENGTH** to go through life with it.
- b. **PEACE.** This phrase is used in three different ways in the New Testament. In **SALVATION**, they already have peace **WITH** God (**SEE: Romans 5:1**), but they have an **ONGOING PERSONAL NEED** in their lives for the peace **OF** God (**SEE: Philippians 4:6, 7**) which would be that continual quietness of heart and freedom from worries and fears that God gives to His people as they live their Christian lives, even in the worst of circumstances. He uses it in a third way in **Romans 12:18**, when he commands them to have peace in their relationships **WITH OTHERS**, both Christians and non-Christians. In this passage, he seems to be applying this phrase to the daily strength they need in living the Christian life and facing the difficulties of life.
- c. **LOVE.** Again, they have already experienced the love of God in their salvation (**SEE: John 3:16; Ephesians 1:4c, 5**), but God also continues to pour out His love upon Christians as they live their Christian lives, as we experience His continual blessing and favor upon our lives. **SEE: Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 1:3-14; 5:29.**

II. THE CRISIS OF APOSTASY

Jude, 3, 4

- A. Originally, Jude had had a burden to share with them about their “common salvation” (**SEE: Titus 1:4**), the one that is based on a fixed set of Truth and is shared by all true believers, but now he is especially burdened because of the rise of so much false teaching in that day.
 - 1. If that false teaching, which has gotten in among them, would not be strongly opposed and rooted out from among them, they would leave the fixed Truths of their “common salvation” and depart into teaching that would deny that very “common salvation” in favor of a false set of teachings that would give them no hope or true foundations on which to stand. Therefore, strong action must be taken and the problem must be taken care of.
 - 2. Therefore, Jude, rather than elaborating on their salvation itself and their responsibilities toward God in living their Christian lives, which is the pattern, except for Galatians, of most of the epistles of Paul, is led to direct his instructions to dealing with this urgent need and danger they were facing, brought on by the clever teachings of the abundance of these false teachers.

- B. We note that, except for James (written very early in the Church Age, 45 A.D.), all of the other General Epistles, written either in the late 60's or after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., also put great emphasis upon the rise of the false teachers and the threat they are to the Truth that God has revealed.**
- 1. As noted, all of the other General Epistles, were written in that period of time in the late 70's and 80's following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Because they were under persecution from the Romans rather than from the Jews, the Christians were under great stress and might look for new ideas and approaches to their faith to encourage them and help them through these times.**
 - 2. As noted in the study of some of the other epistles in this set of the General Epistles, it is a NEW GENERATION OF CHRISTIANS who are now responsible for carrying on the "faith once delivered unto the saints."**
 - a. Whether they were Jews or Gentiles, few of that new generation had ever actually seen the Lord in the flesh or had directly sat under His teachings.**
 - b. Their knowledge of the overall Person and Work of the Lord came only from the writings and teachings of the Apostles and early followers of the Lord, whose witness they might be tempted to question at times because of the astounding nature of the Truth included.**
 - 1) Their questioning of these writings and teachings might come because of the human difficulty they would have in accepting as truth all of His miracles, the claims He made about himself and even the purpose and results of His death on the Cross.**
 - 2) His Deity would also be a stumbling block to them from an intellectual point of view. This Truth would be something that, though difficult to completely explain, would require strong faith.**
 - c. As is also true today with the new generations, false teachers would find a fertile field in which to plow and plant their devilish teachings, and would find many who were looking for something more modern and exciting to follow than the old ways and the eternal Truth. These would willingly follow them.**
 - d. Such followers would feel that they still were following the Truth as defined for them by these false teachers, but actually they would have departed from it, even when their deviation from it would seem very slight. SEE: Galatians 1:6-9, where the Judaizers had cleverly led the Galatians astray.**
 - e. Therefore, loyalty and strict adherence, without compromise or change, to the final and absolute Truth would not always characterize some in that new generation.**

- C. Before he even identifies the nature of the false teaching, he challenges them to be willing to take a strong stand for “the FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints.”
1. The phrase “FAITH” that he uses here is not referring to the personal trust that we put in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, or even the faith that we have in the daily Christian life to trust God to meet our daily needs and to walk close to Him, but it is referring to that SET OF TRUTH that God has given to us that is the only basis/foundation for our salvation, our daily walk before Him and our correct understanding of His will and purposes for our own lives and for the world itself.
 2. That SET OF TRUTH will not make our decisions for us or replace our own responsibilities in walking in separation from the world of sin and daily living for Him, but it is the only basis for our lives in any of these areas and must be defended.
 3. There were probably many so-called “Christian leaders” in that day, from this new generation, who would resent and teach against anyone taking such a strong absolute and unchanging stand for the Truth, and might even label such people “arrogant” and “divisive” when strong holders of the Faith would even be willing to separate from those who were not willing to take such a strong stand. The same would be true today as many in the “EVANGELICAL” realm resent and even despise strong and outspoken “FUNDAMENTALISTS” who take such a stand.
 4. We accept that a strong stand for the Faith, as commanded in Jude, must be taken in love and without any bitterness or hatred on our part, so that nothing in our MANNER of taking such a stand would detract from the spiritual responsibility we have for that stand and the results that we hope to gain.
 - a. Our MANNER must meet God’s own standards, for a wrong MANNER of taking such a stand would meet His judgment. SEE: Paul’s loving but forceful stand for the faith in such epistles as II Corinthians, Galatians and I and II Thessalonians. SEE: I Thessalonians 1:5b; 2:1-12.
 - b. There is danger that such a stand might be taken on the basis of PRIDE, SELF EXALTATION or REPUTATION BUILDING rather than being taken for pure reasons that would be approved by God. If any of those three factors enter into our taking such a stand, then we are rightly judged to be wrong and have not brought the cause of Christ any benefit by the stand we have taken.
 5. As suggested, such a strong stand, lovingly and rightly taken, might have to lead to total separation in fellowship and labor from those who themselves may still believe the Truth but who will not take such a stand, and who willingly walk with those who have departed from “THE FAITH” or compromise it in one

way or another. In America, the Philippines and other countries, some of the most spiritual and most influential movements on behalf of THE FAITH have had to be carried out with such separation, and God has blessed those steps of separation.

6. Though some do not like the use of this term, the term “CONTEND”/ FIGHT for the FAITH is an important part of this challenge. This is the idea that we are not only to personally believe and follow such a stand, but we are also to SPEAK on behalf of this stand and deal with those who are not willing to take it. Such a strong stand leading also to possible separation from others will most often be misinterpreted and resented by many, but, as stated before, providing it meets God’s standards for the MANNER in which we do it, God will be pleased with it. That approval of God is what must count most with us.

D. Unless they were WILLING to go examine themselves concerning their own strict adherence to believing completely that one true and final FAITH that was not only from God but was eternal and absolutely unchanging in nature, and then would be also willing to absolutely stand on it and defend it, none of Jude’s other teachings on the subject would benefit them.

E. The false teachers, who were actually part of their assemblies (“crept in unawares”), were seeking to lead people astray in two areas. Vs. 4

1. First, they were seeking to change or deny altogether that set of Truth that God had once for given to His people to believe and follow. Their main attack on that Truth, as pointed out earlier, centered on the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ, although other areas of this set of Truth had also come under their attacks. If they could successfully deny and lead others astray concerning this central Truth about the Lord, then the rest of the Truth would become meaningless to those who would be led astray.

2. Second, they were attacking the strict standards of holiness and separation from the world that God had given for His people to follow in their relationship with the Lord. The two themes are related. If they were to follow the teaching of these false teachers, leaving the Truth would open the door for Christians to feel justified in living freely in any vile sins they might choose. SEE: Romans 5:20 and 6:1-8; 14:1-15:7; I Corinthians, chapters 8-10; Galatians 5:1-13; 16-26.

III. EXAMPLES AND WARNINGS FROM HISTORY Jude, 5-7

A. THE FIRST PURPOSE of this section is to show these believers that false teaching concerning true FAITH and PRACTICE has always been present whenever God’s people have sought to obey the Truth and please God.

1. He uses a number of **HISTORICAL EXAMPLES** to illustrate this point. We note that, in these verses, he uses exactly the examples that Peter had used in II Peter, chapter 2, and draws the same conclusions concerning them, indicating that God may have given Jude access to Peter's final epistle and then inspired him to adapt these examples to his own challenge for this church.
 - a. **THE SINS AND APOSTASY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. Vs. 5**
 - 1) In the wilderness journey, when God had delivered them from Egypt and sent them on their way to their "promised land", the people of Israel rebelled many times against God.
 - a) Some of these rebellions involved discontent with **THE WAY** God was leading them and providing for their needs. **SEE: Exodus, chapter 17**, when they lacked water; and **Numbers, chapter 11;1-9**, when they remembered the food of Egypt and despised the food God was giving them.
 - b) Some of these rebellions involved actually rebelling against the **AUTHORITY** of God and God's servant, Moses, over them. **SEE: Numbers, chapter 12**, where Aaron and Mirium rebelled; **Numbers, chapter 13**, the rebellion of the people when they spies were sent; **Numbers, chapter 14**, where they wanted to select their own leaders and return to Egypt; and **Numbers, chapter 16**, when Korah led a rebellion.
 - c) Some of these rebellions involved complete departure from God and their worship of Him, and a turning aside into the most pagan kind of idol worship. **SEE: Exodus, chapters 32, and 33.**
 - 2) In no case had God failed them. He had perfectly kept His promises to them and had prepared a wonderful future for them, as His people, in their own land under His care. He would, without fail, perfectly meet all their needs and they would never need to fear their enemies, for, in His power, he would defeat all of them.
 - a) He had continually reminded them that these promises were **CONDITIONAL** and were based on their complete acceptance of His supremacy over them and their absolute devotion and obedience to Him. **SEE: Deuteronomy 30:15-20.**
 - b) In the light of all the benefits they had in belonging to Him and having that special relationship with Him as **HIS PEOPLE**, these conditions should have been no problem to them and they should have completely devoted their lives to following them without question or complaint.
 - c) They also knew the penalties for breaking these conditions God had laid down for them, and turning away from Him.

- 3) Throughout their history, once they had settled in the “promised land”, the people of Israel continued to rebel against Him. Not only the people but also their leaders were involved in these rebellions. SEE: The period of the Judges; Saul’s rebellion in I Samuel, chapters 13, 15; Solomon’s rebellions in I Kings 11:1-8; the rebellions of the northern Kingdom of Israel, beginning with Jeroboam in I Kings, chapter 12, leading to their captivity under Assyria in 722 B.C.; and the final rebellions of the southern Kingdom of Judah in II Kings, leading to their captivity under Babylon and Persia, beginning in 606 B.C..

b. THE REBELLIONS OF THE ANGELIC BEINGS.

Vs. 6

- 1) We note that the purpose of the existence of angels was that they might serve God in heaven and earth and carry out His purposes in this service for Him. Had some of them not rebelled, this service for God for the entire angelic host could have continued.
- 2) Before the Creation of the world and all that in them is, some of the angelic beings, led by Satan/Lucifer himself, rebelled against God. They sought to take away His authority over them and even to exalt themselves to His own level and beyond. Many believe that this is also taught in such passages as Isaiah 14:12-15 and II Peter 2:4, with Babylon as the example in Isaiah 14 of how Satan himself thought of his importance and sought to exalt himself.
- 3) These angelic beings, after they were cast out of heaven, began their evil work on the earth with the first man Adam, and have worked through all the ages since to try to defeat the purposes of God for mankind and to hinder the relationship of mankind with God.
- 4) Until their final judgment and eternal punishment by God, they will continue to work in the world to enslave mankind in sin and keep them from coming to God. Satan even sought to tempt the Lord Himself, (SEE: Matthew 4:1-11) and his temptations are continually facing us, even in the Christian life
- 5) Their freedom now to work in the world does not take away from the absolute control that God has over the affairs of men. Rather it speaks of God working out his own timing in their final judgment and condemnation.

c. THE REBELLIOUS CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Vs. 7

- 1) In the time of Abraham, these were the wickedest cities in the world, indulging in every possible type of moral sins known to mankind. They were so wicked that Abraham refused to accept the easier living conditions that the Jordan River Valley would have afforded him, and chose instead to remain in the central areas of Canaan when he was given the choice. SEE: Genesis 13:9.

2) We note that LOT was tempted by these cities (and their sins?) when he parted from Abraham. He not only chose the Jordan River Valley in which to settle, but he also chose to enter Sodom and live there with his family. His children were also affected by the sins of those two cities. Though the New Testament speaks of him as “righteous Lot” and “that righteous man” in II Peter 2:7-9, Lot was still wrong in the steps he took and in his involvement in the life of that wicked city.

B. THE SECOND PURPOSE of this section is to point out to them that the judgment of God always falls on those who are involved in this false teaching, though such people may feel very secure and arrogant in going ahead with leading others astray, as though God does not care.

1. In each of the three illustrations he uses from HISTORY, the judgment of God was their reward for their wickedness. SEE ALSO: II Peter 2:4-8.

a. God, in His great love and compassion for them, only tolerated the rebellions and waywardness of the PEOPLE OF ISRAEL for hundreds of years before He brought upon them His judgment. In His love for them He chose to plead with them over several centuries before He finally determined, after the sins of King Manasseh that he would permit even Judah to be led away captive.

1) At first, His judgment on them consisted of plagues and other calamities that sometimes destroyed great numbers of people each time to warn them and bring them back into right relationship with Him. For a time they would be warned by these, would respond and would obey Him.

2) When they built the GOLDEN CALF in Exodus 32, he considered destroying the entire nation and beginning afresh with Moses, but this judgment of God was not carried through after the fervent prayers of Moses (SEE: Exodus 32:11-13) in that chapter. At that time, He also considered letting them go on with success into the promised land, but would remove His Presence from them. Again, Moses intervened in prayer. SEE: Exodus, chapter 33:12, 13.

3) When they finally rebelled at the time of the sending of the spies, (SEE: Numbers 13), in spite of the prayer of Moses on their behalf (SEE: Numbers 14:13-19) God judged them more strongly and caused them to wander in the wilderness until a full forty years had passed and that generation had completely passed away. SEE: Numbers 14:20-24. Again, He had considered destroying them completely and beginning again with Moses (SEE: Numbers 14:11, 12) but then changed to the judgment of causing that older generation to wander in the wilderness until they died.

- 4) In the time of the Judges, God did permit their enemies to rule over them, but then always delivered them and restored His blessing to them by raising up wise judges to rule over them.
- 5) Throughout the history that followed the Judges, they went through one rebellion after another until God finally sent both the northern Kingdom of Israel (722 B.C.) and the southern Kingdom of Judah into captivity (606 and 586 B.C.). This was like a final judgment on the nation of Israel.
- 6) In every case, the judgments they received were fully deserved, and the reputation and holiness of God was upheld as an example and warning to all future generations. In no case, could the compassion and love of the Lord for them be called into question. Rather, the judgments He permitted were for the purpose of teaching them and bringing them into a true relationship with Him.
 - b. In the case of the **REBELLIOUS ANGELS** who are led by Satan himself, God first cast them out of heaven so that they would have no more relationship with Him. Then, He will finally judge them at the final judgment (SEE: Revelation 20:10-15) when Satan and his followers (SEE: Jude, vs. 6b) and all of the unsaved of all the ages will be judged and cast into hell. It is true that He is permitting them to practice their evil here on the earth at this time, but they know that their end will finally come and His judgment on them will be accomplished.
 - c. In the case of **THE CITIES OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH**, God punished their wickedness by bringing complete destruction both upon the entire populations of these cities and also upon the cities themselves by raining down His punishment from heaven until they were destroyed. SEE: Genesis 19:24, 25.
2. His emphasis is clear that God's judgment will also be upon those involved in the false teaching in the churches of that day, and upon all of those of the entire New Testament Age who teach or follow false teaching either within or outside the assemblies of believers. The teachers and their followers in the **CULT GROUPS OF TODAY**, for instance, will be among those whose judgment from God will surely come because of their departures from the Truth and their devilish and zealous efforts, with complete dedication to their false teachings and to their task of enlisting others to follow them.

IV. THE CHARACTER AND SINS OF THE APOSTATES Jude, 8-16

- A. In the first section of this passage, he speaks of the extreme pride and arrogance of these false teachers as they try to assert their authority even over angelic beings. Their purpose seems to be to impress upon those they are seeking to lead astray that they are people of great power and authority in

spiritual realms and that this power and authority has come to them from God in dreams and visions. Therefore, their evil teachings must also have come from God and are to be accepted.

Vs. 8-13

- 1. This proud and arrogant stand they take defies spiritual authorities in the church and even God Himself, but they are arrogant enough not to be concerned about this or the judgment of God that will surely come upon them.**
 - 2. Like Balaam, Korah and others, they are doing this for both material gain and attainment of personal standing of leadership and power before others. As they gather around them those they have deceived, this power and authority increases to their own glory and earns the praise of men who follow them.**
 - 3. In describing these false and evil teachers, he not only compares them to the worst animals and the worst possible situations in life, but he also warns these true believers that these men are participating arrogantly with them in the most sacred things in the church such as their “love feasts” (the Lord’s Table?)**
 - 4. Since these evil men are working AMONG them in the assemblies of believers, they are both to be recognized for what they are and strongly dealt with by those who follow the Truth. It is those who deeply care about the Truth itself, the purity of their assemblies and the sacredness before God of their gathering together who will have to do something about them.**
- B. He quotes from ENOCH, from the “seventh (generation) from Adam”, who predicted the rise of these false teachers and their judgment by God. Vs. 14, 15**
- 1. We do not know where he found this teaching in the writings of that day, since it is not in the text of the Old Testament itself, but God, in inspiring him to write, has directed him to record it for these believers to whom he is writing. It is therefore a reliable quotation.**
 - 2. The main emphasis of this quotation is that, no matter how secure these false teachers might feel in their evil teachings in opposition to God and His Truth, the full judgment of God will finally come upon them. At that time, the full extent of all they have done will be revealed and dealt with by God in this judgment. Their followers will also be judged by God. This warns even those who are simply being tempted by their teachings that they dare not go any farther in listening to them.**
- C. He closes this section with a final description of these evil teachers. As they attend the assembly and seek to lead astray those who are following the Lord, they manifest every kind of evil conduct. This proves that they have no relationship with God in salvation and are to be rejected as members of the assembly.**

V. ADVICE FOR GUARDING THEMSELVES

Jude, 17-23

- A. This is a section dealing with how these true believers and followers of the Truth of God can spiritually protect themselves and maintain the approval and blessing of God upon their lives. Unless they spiritually approach this matter of the false and evil teachers with the right approach, they too might fall prey to their teaching. SEE ALSO: I Timothy 6:20, 21.**
- B. He gives them two clear instructions that they are follow in guarding themselves.**
- 1. They are to REMEMBER/CONSTANTLY/CALL TO MIND the warnings given by the Apostles in the earlier days of the Church Age concerning the danger of the rise of the false teachers everywhere and at every point in time, and their methods and conduct that would identify them.**
 - a. These false teachers would surely come in every period of time and generation, and their coming should be expected as a grave danger to the church. As the history of that 1st Century records, churches that might have been following the Truth faithfully at a certain time could be led astray and fail through these evil teachers at another time.**
 - 1) SEE: Revelation 2:14, 15, where the Church at Pergamus, once a sound and a pure church, has permitted false teachers to come in and deceive the people.**
 - 2) SEE: Revelation 2:19-24, where the Church at Thyatira is commended for the good things that have characterized that church in THE PAST, but now they have tolerated the woman named Jezebel who is leading them into every kind of false teaching. This seems to be an illustration of how evil these false teachers are rather than speaking of a literal woman leading them astray.**
 - 3) SEE: Revelation 3:8-11, where the Church of Philadelphia is also highly commended for everything they have always stood for, but now they are being assaulted by followers of Satan against whom they must take a stand. It is not clear if any of these followers of Satan have actually gotten into the church or whether they are doing their evil teaching outside the assembly of believers.**
 - b. At an earlier time, the Churches of Galatia, established between 45 and 47 A.D. by Paul, had easily been led astray by the Judaizers who had come into those churches after Paul's departure, with clever teaching concerning the Law of Moses and the obligation of the believers in the churches to follow it.**
 - c. Still in the early days of the Church, even the Church at Corinth, a church that had been established by Paul in about 51 A.D and was a church that had been thoroughly taught and guarded by three of God's servants thereafter, men who were still living, had to be strongly warned about those in the church who**

were denying the resurrection of the believers at the coming of the Lord. SEE: I Corinthians 15:12.

- d. Therefore, these true believers and followers of the Truth, living in the latter days of that first century, are not to take these false teachers for granted but are to be alert and active in taking a stand for the Truth and against those who deny it. SEE: Jude, vs. 3b.
2. They are not just to believe the Truth that God has given, “the FAITH once for all delivered to the saints,” but they are to be BUILT UP IN THAT FAITH so that they are spiritual enough both to follow it and defend it. Vs. 20-23
 - a. We know from the teaching of the Lord himself that maintaining a right relationship with the Lord and growing in Him is essential in living a spiritual life and having victory over the temptations and false teachings being faced. Unless they are in the right relationship with the Lord in their daily lives (SEE: John 15:1-10-16), such victory over sin and false teaching will not come.
 - b. In this passage, he lists four essentials in their walk with the Lord. These will help protect them against the evils of their day. Vs. 20, 21
 - 1) There is to be continual growing/BEING BUILT UP in their most holy faith. This has to do with gaining more and more understanding of the Truth it contains, growing in their love and loyalty to it and concentrating on it to the exclusion of everything else that might oppose it or weaken their faith in it.
 - 2) They are to constantly be “PRAYING IN THE HOLY SPIRIT”. This would help them in their fellowship with the Heavenly Father and their total reliance on Him in their lives, in their daily walk and in their stand for the Faith.
 - 3) They are to keep themselves in the LOVE OF GOD. This could be interpreted as teaching that, as they have been saved through the mercy and grace of God in pouring out His love upon them, they are to constantly walk in that love and be completely dependent upon it in their Christian lives even as they were in their salvation. Whether in salvation or in their Christian lives, they accept that they are completely dependent upon the mercy and grace of God bestowed in His love.
 - 4) They are to wait expectantly/with deep desire for the eternal life that the Lord Jesus Christ has given them. This could refer to the fact that they do not need to fear death if the eternal life they have through Christ is completely real to them and has become a high priority in their lives. Some feel that it could also refer to the Coming of the Lord.
 3. As they follow these instructions for being BUILT UP in their own Christian lives, as they believe and follow the FAITH that God has given, they are also to

encourage and assist others who might be tempted or who are actually in danger from the false teachers that have come. Vs. 22, 23

- a. First, they are to show care and great compassion for some who may have **DOUBTS**. Such people need stronger Christians to come along side them and help them. **SEE ALSO: Romans 15:1; Galatians 6:1.** This encouraging and helping of weaker brothers is often taught and is one of the major responsibilities of stronger Christians. In the teaching of this epistle, our love and compassion may keep them from falling into the errors of those false teachers.
- b. Second, they are to take drastic steps to **RESCUE** others that may already have fallen into the trap of listening to the false teachers and are in grave danger of going farther with these evil teachings. He speaks of **“PULLING THEM OUT OF THE FIRE.”** We cannot force them to remain in the Truth or to reject the false teachers, but we can take every step possible to help them see the grave danger they are facing and to escape from it.

VI. CLOSING BENEDICTION

Jude, 24, 25

- A. Though only four of the General Epistles close with a benediction, I and II Peter, III John and Jude, many of the other epistles of the New Testament include one or more of them in the final chapters. **SEE: Romans 16:20, 24, 25-27; I Corinthians 16:28, 34; II Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:23, 24; Philippians 4:23; I Thessalonians 3:11-13; 5:23, 28; II Thessalonians 3:5, 16; Hebrews 13:25; I Peter 5:14b; II Peter 3:18b; III John, vs. 15a; Jude, vs. 24, 25.**
- B. There were two **MAIN PURPOSES** for these closing benedictions in the epistles.
 1. The main purpose for these benedictions, in spite of the problems the writer has had to deal with in the text of each epistle (**SEE: I and II Corinthians**), was to assure the readers of the **LOVING CONCERN** the writer had for them, and his deep burden and prayer that they would correct the problems in which they were involved and go on victoriously with the Lord. This loving concern was the greatest motivation in his life in writing to them rather than anger or bitterness.
 2. Another important purpose was to exalt the Lord and His place and authority in their lives. We see this especially in Jude, vs. 24, 25, where the entire benediction is one of exaltation and praise for the **PERSON AND CHARACTER** of God. The readers needed this type of benediction, for the problems in Jude meant that many of them lacked true respect for God and had abandoned His Truth in favor of the false teachings of the evil men who had come among them.

C. WE NOTE THE CONTENTS OF THIS BENEDICTION.

- 1. The first part, vs. 24, exalts the POWER AND ABILITY OF GOD to keep them from falling into the errors with which they are faced, and to enable them to be able to stand before God blameless, unashamed (SEE: I Corinthians 3:11-15; 9:27) and joyful in Him.**
 - a. We know that it is by the indwelling Holy Spirit of God that we are kept and empowered to overcome evil teachings and actions, and to live our lives to the glory of God. SEE: John 14:16, 17; Romans, chapter 8; Galatians 5:16.**
 - b. We note, however, that the Epistle of Jude is emphasizing that the help of God in our lives is not a substitute for our own responsibility before God to resist and turn away from evil teachings and actions that come before us.**
 - c. The promise in vs. 24 does not contradict this. Rather, the emphasis of vs. 24 is upon the fact that, even when we have assumed full responsibility for our own response to the teachings and standards God has set before us, we cannot have victory by our own efforts. It is only through the help of the Spirit that the victory can come. SEE: Romans 7:7-25, where the man was in total defeat in his own strength in spite of his sincere efforts and commitment to victory.**

- 2. The second part, vs. 25, exalts the PERSON OF GOD.**
 - a. The emphasis upon this is necessary to cause us to take God seriously in our lives, to live in His FEAR and in complete submission to Him and to follow Him and His Truth to the very end no matter what others might teach or do.**
 - b. From the contents of this benediction we can see that it is important to not just receive teaching and to be commanded to follow it faithfully. If this is our only motivation in following the teaching we receive, in dire circumstances or when others are not faithful to it we will be tempted to either compromise it or give it up altogether. Several things must accompany this teaching if we are going to commit our lives to it and take a stand on it no matter what circumstances we might go through or how others might react to it in their own lives.**

- 1) We recognize that these teachings and standards and teachings come from the Almighty God Himself and are not the works of men. Therefore, these teachings and standards carry with them the AUTHORITY AND WILL of God Himself. To ignore or disobey them makes us subject to His judgment and its consequences. Therefore, we dare not ignore, change or abandon them.**

- 2) **We also recognize the worthiness of the Almighty God to be followed and absolutely obeyed. No one else has this place of respect and honor in our lives, and so we would never doubt that we can completely trust Him with our lives and with all that we have and are before Him.**
 - 3) **We also recognize our responsibility to totally submit our selves to the Almighty God and to His authority and will in everything. We are to do this from the depths of our hearts. Without this submission, we cannot please Him or gain His favor and blessing.**
- c. **Even with all of this being true, there is no guarantee that we will actually submit our lives to the Almighty God and devote ourselves completely to following and obeying Him and the teachings of His Word.**
- 1) **We note how Israel could so easily turn aside from Him in their wilderness experience no matter how He revealed Himself or what He did for them. SEE: Exodus, chapters 18-34, when Israel was camped around Mt. Sinai and the PRESENCE AND GLORY OF GOD was on the mountain in their view. It was in this setting that they turned their backs on God and made the golden calf in Exodus, chapter 32. No wonder God wanted to completely destroy the nation and begin again with Moses. SEE: Exodus 32:9, 10.**
 - 2) **We see in JUDE and also in the churches of today, how God’s people could so easily turn their hearts and lives away from Him and follow their own evil teachings and ways.**
 - a) **Even after many years of being saved, many Christians show little growth in their spiritual lives in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and in their “growth and knowledge” of Him. SEE: II Peter 3:18.**
 - b) **As weak and untaught Christians, evidencing little desire to read and study the Word of God themselves, this leaves them open to strange teachings and practices to which they can easily yield their lives.**
 - c. **Therefore, from the study of Jude, it is clear that neither the PERSON OF GOD nor the TRUTH OF GOD will change. God has once for all completed and set apart His Word as the final and only authoritative statement of His Truth. It may neither be added to or taken away from. SEE: Revelation 22:18, 19.**
 - d. **Who would seek to either deny or change any part of God’s Word is not opposing man but is opposing God himself.**
 - e. **Therefore, the responsibility belongs entirely to us concerning what we will do with these unchanging teachings and challenges to our lives.**

- 1) We can choose to remain completely true to them, living by them and defending them against those who seek to deny or change them, There will be a price to pay for taking such a strong stand for the faith. While God Himself will approve of what we do and pour out His blessing and favor upon us in this stand for His Truth, the world around us, including some who claim to name the Name of the Lord and be His followers, will resent that stand and will make every effort to destroy our reputation.
- 2) The alternative would be that we would be willing to compromise with those who seek to deny or change His Truth.
 - a) While we ourselves might still privately hold fast to His Truth and base our own personal faith and lives upon it, we would say nothing about those who deny or change it, and would refuse to join in in any disciplinary action against them if they are part of the assembly of believers. This would permit the false teachers to have their own way in leading others astray.
 - b) Such a tolerant attitude would even win the friendship and respect of these false teachers for such a “tolerant and loving” attitude toward them and their denial of the faith. However, we would win the disapproval of God and would incur His judgment for our failure to hold fast to His Word, whatever form that judgment might take.

STUDIES IN THE GENERAL EPISTLES

Professor: Dr. Carson K. Fremont

Course Syllabus

COURSE TEXTBOOK:

The only textbook for the course will be the Bible itself. Through the required and careful reading of each of the General Epistles, the section by section examination of the teachings of each epistle, both in personal study and in class study, and the help of the Holy Spirit in understanding what is read and taught, the students can gain a clear understanding of the teachings of each of the epistles.

It is to be noted that only the King James Version of the Bible will be permitted and used in class study. Students, in their own personal study of these epistles, may consult other more modern versions of the Scriptures (e.g. NASB, NIV, etc) in English (or even versions of the Scriptures in the Greek language) to more clearly understand the language and phrases found in the KJV that are difficult to understand or are no longer in use in the English language today.

Class materials may be distributed in class from time to time to supplement the notes taken by the students themselves. These may provide additional background information on the text of Scripture under consideration at any one time.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The weekly class study in the course will be a verse by verse study of each epistle, and will follow the detailed outline of each epistle as taught at the beginning of the study of that epistle. It is noted that sometimes the detailed outline of an epistle may be adapted from a suggested outline by Dr. Merrill Tenney in his book **NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY**. Changes in these outlines have been made in line with Dr. Fremont's own convictions concerning the understanding of the correct divisions and contents of each epistle. Other than this adaptation of outlines from Dr. Tenney, no other text or commentary will be used.

PURPOSES AND GOALS OF THIS COURSE:

The main purpose of the course will be to demonstrate to the students that students of the Scriptures who are willing to spiritually and correctly approach God's Word as they compare Scripture with Scripture, can, with the help of the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit, faithfully study the text of any book of the Bible and receive understanding.

Another major purpose for the course is to lead the students into the conviction that the study of God's Word is a lifelong process and a responsibility that only begins as they study any part of it in a course such as this. They must be willing, through their entire lifetimes, to daily devote themselves to intense personal Bible study, and to apply His teachings first to their own lives and then to teach his Word also to others.

It is to be emphasized that this approach does not rule out the profitable use of commentaries and other helpful materials in the future study of the student, to help the student more completely understand and teach the Word of God, but it recognizes that there are many situations where these are not available, or even are not completely reliable, and that students of the Bible must still learn to rely mainly on the Holy Spirit as their teacher and illuminator of what they personally study.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

By the end of the second full week of study in the course, each student will be required to have read the entire set of the seven General Epistles through one time carefully. Students will be asked to confirm that they have met this requirement.

After the second week of study, as preparation for each class session, students will be given brief and simple assignments which they are faithfully to complete before that next class period begins. These may include either reading assignments or written assignments that are to be handed in and graded by the Professor.

At the discretion of the Professor, frequent quizzes may be given to test both the faithfulness of the students in completing their assignments, and also to test their understanding of the material they study personally and in class sessions.

Except when this course may be taught as a short-term module, there will be a mid-term exam and a final exam. Before each major exam, a list of study questions will be given to the students to give them some direction in preparing for the exams.

It is also expected that faithful class attendance, close attention to the teaching and class discussions of each period and the faithful taking of notes in each session will be required. Class attitude on the part of each student will also be closely observed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

As already stated, the main resource will be the Scriptural text of each epistle being studied.

In addition, reference will be made in the class sessions to parallel passages of Scripture that shed further light on the portion of the epistle being studied.

Other authors and teachers may be referred to from time to time, but their opinions and interpretations of a passage will be evaluated for the fidelity of these authors and teachers to the actual meaning of the passage being studied.