



Themes and Threads of the Holy Bible: General Letters and Revelation

Hebrews

Author: Unknown, but tradition is Paul

Date: 64-69 AD

To: Hebrew Christians

Superiority of Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3:19)

Priesthood (Hebrews 4:1-7:28)

Holy Place (Hebrews 8:1-10:23)

Triumph (Hebrews 10:24-12:13)

Endurance (Hebrews 12:14-13:25)

Key Verses:

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Hebrews 1:3).

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Have you ever considered enduring pain and agony as joy? Jesus did at the cross so we would not grow weary and lose heart in our faith. Recognizing His sacrifice, who could you reach with Christ’s message of restoration, throwing off the sin of pride and convenience?

James

Author: James, Jesus' half-brother, a leader in the Jerusalem church

Date: 49 AD

To: Jewish Christians residing in Gentile communities outside Palestine

True Religion (James 1:1-27)

True Faith (James 2:1-3:12)

True Wisdom (James 3:13-5:20)

Key Verses:

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2).

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27).

“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:26).

“Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

“Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins” (James 4:23).

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

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James is the New Testament's wisdom book. Read a chapter a day for the next month. Pray for the Holy Spirit to fill you with the wisdom of Christ for a specific conflict in your life. He will answer with discernment that can only come from Him. At the same time, make your muscles move with your prayers by asking God how you can help a widow, an orphan, or an organization that ministers to those in need.

1 Peter

Author: Peter

Date: 62-64 AD

To: Jewish Christians driven out of Jerusalem and scattered throughout Asia Minor

God's Word (1 Peter 1:1-2:8)

God's People (1 Peter 2:9-3:7)

God's Relationships (1 Peter 3:8-4:11)

God's Leadership (1 Peter 4:12-5:14)

Key Verses:

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

“These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed” (1 Peter 1:7).

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2:9).

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

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Open your list of contacts on your smartphone. As you go through them, ask God if there is someone you should contact to ask questions and listen to regarding their life. Pray for them. Since people listen to those who listen, at some point, they will ask you for the reason for your hope. Answer with gentleness and respect as you point them to Christ.

2 Peter

Author: Peter

Date: 67 AD

To: The church and all believers

Growth (2 Peter 1:1-15)
God's Word (2 Peter 1:16-21)
False Teachers (2 Peter 2:1-22)
Hope (2 Peter 3:1-18)

Key Verses:

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3).

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

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If God wants everyone to come to repentance and faith in Him, each fully-devoted follower must ask if they desire the same. Our actions will show how seriously we live out our passion for the lost. Schedule five minutes each day on your calendar to pray for a specific person who is outside a fully surrendered relationship with Christ. Ask God to use you to draw that person to new life in Him.

1 John

Author: John
Date: 70-90 AD
To: Multiple churches and all believers

God is Light (1 John 1:1-2:27)
God is Love (1 John 2:28-4:21)
God is Life (1 John 5:1-21)

Key Verses:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers” (1 John 3:16).

“Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:8).

“I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

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Do you have unconfessed sin in your life? Is there an act you have committed that has left you feeling guilty and unworthy of God’s grace? Whereas, guilt says, “I did wrong.” Shame says, “I am wrong.” God does not want to shame us. He wants to save us. In the quietness of your heart, agree with God about how you have fallen short of His design for your life. He will forgive you and make you new again.

2 John

Author: John

Date: 70-90 AD

To: Possibly a local church and all believers

Walking in Love (2 John 1-6)

Discernment Among Teachers (2 John 7-11)

Joy (2 John 12-13)

Key Verse:

“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love” (2 John 6).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Is there an area in your life where you are acting in disobedience to God? Do you have an unresolved conflict where you could make a choice to improve the situation? What would it look like for you to walk in obedience to God’s commands and walk in love?

3 John

Author: John

Date: 70-90 AD

To: Gaius, a church leader, and all believers

Walking in Truth (3 John 1-12)
Closing (3 John 13-15)

Key Verses:

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 4).

“Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but what is good. Anyone who does what is good is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has not seen God” (3 John 11).

Street Smarts for The Restoration Road

Who is the most influential person in your life? Can you identify ways that you imitate them? Perhaps, it is your tone of voice, your words, or your gestures and expressions. How could you actually imitate Christ?

Jude

Author: Jude, half-brother of Jesus
Date: 65 AD
To: Jewish Christians and all believers

Fight for the Faith (Jude 1-19)
Build Up (Jude 20-23)
Praise God (Jude 24-25)

Key Verse:

“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20).

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Do you frequent a gym to workout? In the same way you build your muscles, commit to building your faith through reading the Bible, praying, and risking with God by obeying His Spirit’s promptings every day. Set aside ten to fifteen minutes each morning to read a selected passage in the Bible, pray, and listen to God. You will begin to see every encounter as a divine appointment and complete every task as an act of worship.

Revelation

Author: John

Date: Possibly prior to 70 AD

To: The seven churches in Asia

Four Interpretations of Revelation (apocalyptic prophetic literature):

Futurist (everything after Chapter 3 awaits fulfillment)

Historicist (surveys church history)

Idealist, Symbolic, or Spiritual, (no single fulfillment; only principles and themes)

Preterist (fulfillment in past, shortly after time of writing)

Resulting End Time Millennium Views:

(1) Pre-millennial (second coming of Christ precedes a physical thousand-year reign by Christ on earth)

Historical

Dispensational

Pre-tribulation (Church Rapture before Tribulation)

Mid-tribulation (Church Rapture during Tribulation)

Post-tribulation (Church Rapture after Tribulation)

(2) Post-millennial (second coming of Christ comes after the millennium)

(3) Amillennial (no millennium)

Prologue (Revelation 1:1-8)

Churches Addressed (Revelation 1:9-3:22)

God in Majesty and Judgment (Revelation 4:1-16:21)

Final Judgment (Revelation 17:1-20:15)

New Heaven and New Earth (Revelation 21:1-22:5)

Epilogue (Revelation 22:6-21)

Key Verses:

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20).

“The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: ‘The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever’” (Revelation 11:15).

“Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done” (Revelation 22:12).

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Regardless of how we interpret Revelation, everyone can agree with the underlying theme that God wins. How could embracing that reality change your perspective of any conflict in your life?