



HEBREWS: JESUS CHRIST, OUR SUPERIOR SAVIOR
A SURVEY OF HEBREWS



The Heart of the Matter

Hebrews, although among the largest and most significant letters in the New Testament, remains one of the least appreciated. Profound, mysterious, deep, and sometimes difficult to understand, this book deserves our time and attention. Rich in Jewish history and filled with quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament, the study of Hebrews requires concentration plus a fairly firm grasp of how God revealed Himself to His people in ancient times. Those who master this book are keen students of such subjects as the priestly system, sacrifices, traditional Jewish feasts, and the tabernacle. Bedside reading, Hebrews is not. But for those who go to the trouble of working their way through these thirteen chapters, the investment yields rich and rewarding benefits.



Discovering the Way

1. Introductory Questions

We begin with four questions: Who wrote it? Who received it? Why was it written? And when was it written?

2. The Theme of Hebrews: Christ Is Lord

Christ is superior in every way: in His person (chapters 1-4), as our priest (chapters 5-10), and through all of life (chapters 11-13). Christ is sufficient in all experiences.



Starting Your Journey

Two great issues are addressed in Hebrews. First, our greatest need is to discover what God has said about our desires, issues, or struggles. Second, our greatest task is to align our lives according to what He has said.





God's Masterwork,
Volume Seven: The Final
Word—A Survey of
Hebrews—Revelation
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HEBREWS: JESUS CHRIST, OUR SUPERIOR SAVIOR A SURVEY OF HEBREWS

Hebrews

	Jesus C Superior in H		Jesus Christ: Superior as Our P		Jesus Christ: Superior for Life	
	Superior	Superior to: Prophets			Let us have:	-
•	Prophe			·	Faith to believe God	-
3	Angels		Old covenant (Mosaic sy	stem)	Hope to endure trials	- [:
9	Moses	- 1	Animal sacrifices	- 1	Love to encourage others	13
Prologue (4:4	The Sabba	ath	Daily offerings	- 1		
P	Other pries	sts				l id
		1		- 1		~
	CHAPTERS	6	CHAPTERS		CHAPTERS	
L	1:1-4:13		4:14-10:18		10:19–13:25	ĺ
Emphasis		Instructi	ion		Exhortation	
Key Words	"Much better tha	n" 1:4	"Better" 7:19		"Let us" 12:1	
Warnings	2:1-4	3:7-4:13	5:11–6:20	10:19	-39 12:25-29	
Theme		The absolute superiority of Jesus Christ				
Key Verse		4:14				
Christ in Hebrews	Jesus is the	Jesus is the absolutely superior revelation of God and our eternal High Priest (1:1-14; 3:1).				







James: A Plea for Authenticity A Survey of James



The Heart of the Matter

Although Martin Luther saw the letter of James as merely an "epistle of straw"—something lightweight and easy to dismiss—it stands to this day as one of the most practical and penetrating books in the Bible. Don't be fooled by its size. It may be small, but it's strong. It refuses to let the reader hide behind the walls of theological theory or intellectual faith. True faith produces authenticity. "No authenticity . . . no faith"—that's James's conclusion on the matter. James's letter may make us squirm, but it also makes us tear down our facades.



Discovering the Way

1. General Introductory Facts

Two main themes dominate in Scripture: the way to God and the walk with God. The book of James deals with our walk and focuses on one main point: if your faith is genuine, your walk will be authentic.

2. Questions Deserving Answers

To get a handle on the letter of James, we need to answer the following questions: To whom was the book of James written? Who was the apostle James? What was his major concern, or what is the book's theme? And how does the letter flow together?



Starting Your Journey

The message of James is similar to the message of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount: live your life in such a way that the world might see your good works and thereby glorify God.





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JAMES: A PLEA FOR AUTHENTICITY
A SURVEY OF JAMES

JAMES

Faith When stretched, it doesn't break.		When pressed, it doesn't fail.	When expressed, it doesn't explode.	When distressed, it doesn't panic.	
Deed	Authentic stability	Authentic love	Authentic control and humility	Authentic patience	
	Greeting Trials Temptation Response to Scripture CHAPTER 1	Partiality and prejudice Indifference and mere intellectualism Obedience and action CHAPTER 2	The tongue The heart The will CHAPTERS 3-4	Money matters Sickness Carnality and correction CHAPTER 5	
Background	The difficulties of life caused the scattered saints to drift spiritually, leading to all forms of problems—unbridled speech, wrong attitudes, doubt, strife, carnality, shallow faith.				
Characteristics	"The Proverbs of the New Testament," James contains many practical, straightforward exhortations. Emphasis is on importance of balancing right belief with right behavior. The book has many Old Testament word pictures and references.				
Theme	Real faith produces authentic deeds.				
Key Verse	2:17				
Christ in James	Jesus is the glorious Lord, who inspires true faith and authentic works (2:1, 14-26).				







1 PETER: HOPE FOR THE HURTING A Survey of 1 Peter



The Heart of the Matter

A quick glance at the first few verses of 1 Peter is enough to give us an understanding of Peter's message to his readers: "hope for the hurting." According to verse 1, the "hurting" were "those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout" vast regions of the Roman Empire. These Christians were objects of social ostracism, slander, mistreatment, and threats. They needed encouragement. Sitting on a powder keg of potential persecution, these believers were day after day "distressed by various trials" (1 Peter 1:6) and "tested by fire" (1:7). Peter wrote to help them endure suffering and, instead of facing it with grim, somber determination, face it with an attitude of joy! But how?



Discovering the Way

1. Background of the Letter

The recipients of 1 Peter were persecuted Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. The apostle Peter wrote to encourage and strengthen them.

2. Overall Content of the Letter

The letter of 1 Peter has a central idea: strength during times of suffering. But to understand this theme, we need to understand what the letter says, how the theme develops throughout the letter, and why the message is relevant today.



Starting Your Journey

During times of pain, four attitudes are worth remembering and emulating: rejoice rather than resent or retaliate; submit rather than fight or fume; glorify God not the pain; and humble yourself, don't defend yourself.







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1 PETER: HOPE FOR THE HURTING A Survey of 1 Peter

FIRST PETER

	Our Living Hope and Holy Life	Our Submission and God's Honor	Our Suffering and Christ's Suffering		
	"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1:3)	"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake" (2:13)	"Since Christ has suffered" (4:1)		
Salutation (1-1_2)	for the hope we claim (1:3–12) by our walk of holiness (1:13–25) for our new identity in Christ (2:1–12)	to the government (2:13–17) at work (2:18–20) like Christ (2:21–25) in the home (3:1–7)	Keep a good conscience (3:16) Share the sufferings and rejoice (4:13) Commit yourselves to God (4:19) Be humble (5:6) Cast your anxiety on God (5:7)		
	CHAPTERS 1:3-2:12	CHAPTERS 2:13–3:7	CHAPTERS 3:8-5:11		
Emphasis	Informing	Exhorting	Encouraging		
Grace	to go on	to live faithfully	to stand firm		
Норе	A <i>living</i> hope through Christ's resurrection (1:3)	A righteous hope through personal submission (2:15)	A <i>trusting</i> hope through faith (4:19)		
Theme	Holy living i	n a hostile world; hope in the midst of s	suffering		
Key Verses	1:3–5, 13–16; 2:21; 4:12–13, 19; 5:10–11				
Christ in 1 Peter	Jesus is the living stone rejected by men, who has become the Cornerstone of the church and the Shepherd of our souls (2:4-10, 25).				







2 PETER: BEWARE . . . BE READY!
A SURVEY OF 2 PETER



The Heart of the Matter

In 1 Peter, the apostle was concerned for the Christians who were scattered throughout the Roman Empire and undergoing suffering and persecution from enemies outside the church body. In 2 Peter, Peter dealt with the internal enemies—false prophets and other subtle adversaries—who twisted the truth. Of special interest to Peter were false teachings regarding the return of the Lord as well as our life of service and purity prior to that epochal event. The tone of 2 Peter is that of an urgent warning, urging all readers to beware . . . to be ready.



Discovering the Way

1. Some General Facts about 2 Peter

Second Peter is more difficult to read and understand than 1 Peter. Second Peter is strange and surprising, whereas 1 Peter is straightforward. Second Peter hides its theme rather than highlighting it as 1 Peter does.

2. Themes Interwoven through the Letter

Like an arrow, which is made up of feathers, a shaft, and a point, 2 Peter is made up of three themes.



3. An Overview of the Three Chapters

Second Peter divides easily into topics of moral corruption (chapter 1), doctrinal compromise (chapter 2), and prophetic concern (chapter 3).



Starting Your Journey

Second Peter points us toward HOPE: Heed what you already know; Open your eyes and ears; Pursue a godly lifestyle; and Expect Christ's return.





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2 Peter: Beware . . . Be Ready! A Survey of 2 Peter

SECOND PETER

Introduceis	Exhortation to Spiritual Maturity Answers question: How can I grow in grace and knowledge? (1:2–3)	Denunciation of False Teachers Answers question: What should I expect from so-called prophets?	Anticipation of Christ's Return Answers question: What sort of people ought we to be? (3:11)	
	CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	
Warning	Be pure! (1:4)	Be aware! (2:1-3)	Be diligent! (3:1-14)	
Reminder	1:12–13	2:21–22	3:1–2	
Promise	"You will never stumble." (1:10)	"The Lord knows how to rescue." (2:9)	"We are looking for new heavens and a new earth." (3:13)	
Perspective	Looking within	Looking back	Looking ahead	
Theme	Spiritual maturity as a remedy for	Spiritual maturity as a remedy for false teaching and a right response in light of Christ's second coming		
Key Verses	3:17–18			
Christ in 2 Peter	Jesus is the Morning Star, who rescues the righteous from temptation and reserves the wicked for judgment (1:19; 2:9).			







1 John: God's Life on Display A Survey of 1 John



The Heart of the Matter

It's easy to forget that John, one of Jesus's original twelve disciples, was responsible for five books that found their way into the New Testament. Of course, his most famous work is the gospel of John. Next in popularity is his lengthy and intriguing book of prophecy, Revelation. Sandwiched between the two are three lesser-known letters that reveal the heart and soul of this tender man of God. In this study, we will look at the first of the three books . . . a five-chapter letter that appears to be simple and uncomplicated yet, in reality, is both profound and complex. In John's gospel, he declared the *way* of life through faith in God's Son. In the epistle of 1 John, he emphasized the *nature* of that life as possessed by God's children.



Discovering the Way

1. Some Overall Facts Worth Remembering

John's three letters were all written around the same time—a time when heresy threatened the early church. To address this problem, John's first letter focuses on four purposes, with an emphasis on practical application.

2. An Overview of the Letter

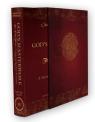
Following John's four purposes for the letter, he encouraged believers to exhibit a joyful life, a clean life, a discerning life, and a confident life.



Starting Your Journey

In an angry, dark world, the joyful Christian is a bright light. Let your light shine! In a sinful, lawless society, the clean Christian is a silent rebuke. Stay pure! In a whirlwind existence of deception and confusion, the discerning Christian is a calm refuge. Think straight! In an insecure, uncertain age, the confident Christian is a stabilizing force. Stand firm!





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1 John: God's Life on Display A Survey of 1 John

FIRST JOHN

	Walking with the God of Light		Re	Responding to the God of		Love
Prologo	Living in the Light	Staying in the Light	Practicing the Righteousness and Love of God		Loving Others as God Loved Us	Believing in Jesus
	CHAPTERS 1:5-2:11	CHAPTER 2:12–27	CHAPTERS 2:28-3:23	CHAPTERS 3:24-4:6	CHAPTER 4:7–21	CHAPTER 5
Fellowship with God Produces a	Clean life	Discerning life		Loving life		Confident life
Emphasis	Light	Truth		Love		Knowledge
Means	Obeying	Perceiving	;	Sacrificing		Believing
Christ	Advocate (2:1)	Holy One (2:20)	Son of Go	d (3:8)	Savior of the	world (4:14)
Purposes	That we may have fellowship and joy (1:3-4)	That we may not sin (2:1)	That we may deceived	,	That we may I have eterna	
Theme		Living in fellowship with	God, who is light	t and love		
Key Verses	1:5-7	1:5–7 4:10–			5:11-	13
Christ in 1 John	Jesus is the Word of Life, who is God come in the flesh to bring eternal life to those who believe (1:1; 4:2; 5:20).					







2 John: A Letter to a Lady A Survey of 2 John



The Heart of the Matter

John's second letter is much less lengthy and less complicated than his first letter—perhaps because it's a personal and private letter. John mentioned "truth" five times in this letter and "love" four times, and both are key to understanding 2 John. John's desire was that "the chosen lady" who received this letter would maintain a balanced perspective on life: love and truth . . . practice and doctrine . . . walking and standing . . . accepting and rejecting. Reading the letter aloud a couple of times will reveal the balance between truth and love—a balance greatly needed in our day of ridiculous and unbiblical extremes.



Discovering the Way

1. Four Questions to Answer

Who was "the elder"? Who was "the chosen lady"? What was the situation? Why is it still relevant?

2. An Analysis of the Letter

John's greeting and introduction is in verses 1–3. His exhortation, "walk in the truth," is in verses 4–6. His warning, stand against error, is in verses 7–11. His personal conclusion is in verses 12–13.



Starting Your Journey

Three abiding principles apply to our day. First, loving others is a basic expression of authentic Christianity, so continue to walk in love. Second, embracing the truth is equally essential, so continue to stand for the truth. Third, when error is detected our love must be kept within the boundaries of truth and discernment, so maintain that balance.





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2 John: A Letter to a Lady A Survey of 2 John

SECOND JOHN

	Introduction	Walk in Truth and Love!	Stand against Error!	Conclusion	
	Greeting Affirmation Encouragement	The lady's children The lady herself Love one another; walk in obedience	The circumstance (many deceivers) The warning ("Watch yourselves!") The instruction (strong but necessary)	Personal Farewell	
	VERSES 1–3	VERSES 4-6	VERSES 7–11	VERSES 12–13	
Emphasis	Encouragement t	nt to love and affirm Exhortation to b		be discerning	
Tone	Gracious	Concerned	Strong	Warm	
Personal Touch	l love you (1:1)	"I ask you" (1:5)	I warn you (1:8)	"I hope to come to you" (1:12)	
Theme	Loving others within the limits that truth allows				
Key Verses	1:5-6				
Christ in 2 John	Jesus, the Son of the Father, is the only way to the Father (1:3, 9).				







3 John: Three Men in a Church A Survey of 3 John



The Heart of the Matter

On only a few rare occasions does the New Testament lift the veil and allow us entrance into the inner and intimate workings of a particular local church. This letter is one of those choice moments . . . and we find the scene *most* interesting. Here are three men who are singled out by John for our observation and instruction. Gaius, Diotrephes, and Demetrius, while actual personalities in the early church, represent for us three different types in the church today. We'll find much that is practical for our churches today as we examine these fifteen verses together. Let's pay close attention to each of these three individuals. Not only will we see others portrayed in their lives, we may even see something of *ourselves*.



Discovering the Way

1. 2 John and 3 John Back-to-Back

John's second and third letters were written by the same writer during the same era, but they have different purposes and they were sent to different places.

2 John Contrasts 3 John Addressee

Problem

Need

2. An Examination of the Letter

John gave a word of encouragement to Gaius in verses 1-8, a word of confrontation against Diotrephes in verses 9-11, a word of affirmation to Demetrius in verse 12, and a word of farewell in verses 13-15.



Starting Your Journey

Three principles apply to our churches today. First, variety will always be present, so let's preserve it. Second, disunity must never be tolerated, so let's resist it. Third, as long as Christ is given the preeminence, we can face any challenge.



Tools for Digging Deeper



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3 John: Three Men in a Church A Survey of 3 John

THIRD JOHN

	Encouragement of Gaius	Confrontation of Diotrephes	Affirmation of Demetrius	Conclusion	
	Sickly (?) Obedient Hospitable Loving Supportive	Proud Rigid and negative Accusing "Church boss" complex	Good testimony Community Scriptures John	Letter is abbreviated John hopes to visit Shalom!	
	VERSES 1–8	VERSES 9-11	VERSE 12	VERSES 13-14	
Tone	Confirming	Denunciating	Endorsing		
Relationships	To the truth of God	With other Christians In the world		vorld	
Emphasis	Keep it up!	Stop it!	Good for you!		
Paraphrase	I love you, and I pray for you (1:1-2)	I call attention to your deeds (1:10)	I hear good things	about him (1:12)	
Theme	Holding to the truth with a loving attitude				
Key Verse	1:11				
Christ in 3 John	Jesus is the Name, for whose sake believers minister (1:7-8).				







JUDE: MANUAL FOR SURVIVAL A Survey of Jude



The Heart of the Matter

Someone has correctly tagged Jude's little letter with the title "The Acts of the Apostates." The primary apostates in the first century were the Gnostics, who embraced the incipient philosophy that matter is inherently evil and spirit is inherently good. Such heresy was on the rise, producing and cultivating the idea that because the flesh is evil, humans could do anything they liked, as no one is under any moral obligation in regard to his or her physical body. In that day, this disregard for physical restraint was called *antinomianism*—in our day, *hedonism*. Regardless of the title, this mind-set led to rebellion against authority, irreverence, presumptuous speech, and a lifestyle marked by unbridled license. Jude wrote his letter to defend the apostolic faith and to stir up his readers to do the same. The tone of the letter is polemic and its message is perfectly in league with our times.



Discovering the Way

1. Introductory Facts to Remember

Jude was the half-brother of Jesus, but called himself Christ's "bond-slave." The recipients were the "beloved in God"—believers under attack. The theme is "contend earnestly for the faith," and the letter was written in a pointed, nononsense style.

2. Key Questions to Answer

Why did Jude change his plan of topic (Jude 1:3-4)? What characterized the heretics (1:4)? How is the theme developed (1:5-23)?

3. Explanatory Reasons for "Contending"

We contend for the faith because of the false teachers' certain doom (1:5-7); because of their blasphemous tongues (1:8-10); because of their spiritual emptiness (1:11-13); and because of their godless deeds (1:14-16).



Starting Your Journey

Jude concluded his letter with four commands to obey. First, remember Scripture (1:17–19). Second, keep in the love of God (1:20–21). Third, have mercy on those who doubt (1:22). And fourth, save others (1:23).





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Jude: Manual for Survival A Survey of Jude

JUDE

	Greeting and Purpose	Exposure of False Teachers	Warnings and Commands to Christians	Benediction
	Mercy, peace, and love	Doom is certain	"Remember!" (1:17)	Our ultimate hope
	What to do:	Guilt is sure	"Keep yourselves!" (1:21)	Our infinite God
	Contend for the faith!	Spirituality is empty	"Have mercy!" (1:22)	
	Why: Certain persons have secretly slipped in.	Lives are godless	"Save!" (1:23)	
	VERSES 1–4	VERSES 5–16	VERSES 17–23	VERSES 24-25
Emphasis	Appealing	Revealing	Reminding	Praising
Tone	Personal concern	Bold exposure	Strong exhortation	Great hope
Directed to	Those "beloved in God the Father" (1:1)	Those who "indulged in gross immorality" (1:7)	"But you, beloved" (1:17, 20)	"The only God" (1:25)
Theme	Exposing false teachers and standing firm in the faith			
Key Verses	1:3, 21–23			
Christ in Jude	Jesus is our only Master and Lord, who will judge the false prophets at His coming (1:4, 14-16).			







REVELATION: GOD'S FINAL WORDS
A SURVEY OF REVELATION



The Heart of the Matter

Somewhere between frightening and mysterious—that's the book of Revelation. It is notoriously considered the most difficult of all the Bible books . . . completely unique, full of symbols, and awesome in scope. Regrettably, Revelation has occasionally become the playground of religious eccentrics, fodder for prophecy "fanatics" who seem compelled to find in Revelation a detailed end-times timetable—right down to the very day of the Lord's return. While the book is certainly a powerful declaration concerning God's plan for the future, in no way was it designed to predict each and every event of tomorrow. In this message we'll guard against reading into the pages of Revelation our own opinions and forcing the text to say what it's *not* saying. Instead, we'll examine what it does say and, at the same time, admit our human inability to grasp the whole scene.



Discovering the Way

1. Introducing the Book of Revelation

The writer was John, who was banished to the island of Patmos. Writing to seven churches in Asia Minor, the theme of the book is the unveiling of Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:1). Many misunderstand the book, leading to four primary views of interpretation.

2. Getting a Grasp of Revelation

The key verse is Revelation 1:19, which provides an outline for the whole book: the things seen (chapter 1), the things which are (chapters 2-3), and the things to be (chapters 4-22).



Starting Your Journey

At the conclusion not only of our study of Revelation but also of our study of God's Masterwork, we learn that God's Word is a reliable map to take us through the storms of life, that God's plan is a sovereign arrangement that replaces fear with hope, and that God's Son is the glorious Lord who deserves our allegiance and seeks our worship.





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REVELATION: GOD'S FINAL WORDS A Survey of Revelation

REVELATION

	"The things which you have seen"	"The things which are"	"The things which will take place." (Revelation 1:19)	
<u> </u>	Personal and Christ's letter biographical the seven chu		Christ as Judge (chapters 4-5)	
(1			The tribulation (chapters 6–18)	
:			The coming of Christ (chapter 19)	
Noh			The millennium (chapter 20)	
he /			The eternal state (chapters 21–22)	
" am the Alpha			The eternal state (chapters 21–22)	
a	CHAPTER	CHAPTERS	CHAPTERS	
	1	2–3	4–22	
Scope	History: look	king back	Prophecy: looking ahead	
Style	Dialog	gue	Observations and questions	
Scene	On ea	ırth	Shifts between earth and heaven	
Theme	Christ's future triump	Christ's future triumph over the forces of evil and His re-creation of the world for the redeemed		
Key Verses	1:7, 19; 22:12–13			
Christ in Revelation	Jesus is the coming King of Kings and Lord of Lords, who will return as Judge and King to usher in the kingdom of God on earth (19:11–20:6).			

