**Background of the book of James:**

**Author:** The author of James is obviously “James” (see James 1:1); however, we have the duty of identifying who James is. There were many James in the Bible. We read of James the son of Zebedee as being one of the earliest apostles chosen by Jesus (see Mk. 1:19) and the brother of John (Matt. 4:21). It was this James whose mother had asked Jesus if her two sons may occupy a prominent place in the kingdom of God (Matt. 20:20). This James was beheaded by Herod around the year 42-44 AD (see Acts 12:1-5) (likely well before the writing of a letter to those of the dispersion). We also read about James the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:2-4) and James the brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:54-58; Gal. 1:18-19). James the Lord’s brother appears to be one of the elders in the church in Jerusalem and a pillar in the church (see Acts 15:13ff; Gal. 2:9). Most seem to agree that it must have been this James; the brother of Jesus, elder and pillar in the church of Jerusalem that wrote this epistle.

**Date:** Dating James is very difficult. We know that the dispersion of Christians throughout the world occurred approximately 44 AD (see Acts 8:1ff). Clearly the destruction of Jerusalem had not yet occurred (70 AD). A broad range of the writing would thereby be 44 to 70 AD.

**Written to:** James 1:1 addresses the “twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion.” The apostle Peter also addressed his first epistle to specific brethren of the “dispersion” (see I Pet. 1:1). The word “dispersion” (diaspora) = “a scattering, as of seed; dispersion; in NT the dispersed portion of the Jews, specially termed the dispersion (cf. Jn. 7:35; James 1:1; I Pet. 1:1). Peter is clearly speaking of Christians in general (the elect of God - see I Pet. 1:1). The Greek diaspora is also found at John 7:35 in relation to Jesus leaving the Jews and going to the Gentiles to preach. James’ use of the Greek diaspora seems to refer to Christians in general who have been figuratively scattered as seed throughout the world.

**Why written:** Christians were being dispersed throughout the world (away from their homelands). They were being exposed to intense trials (James 1:1ff; I Pet. 1:6), they were falling in sin through weakness of the flesh (James 2 1:13-15, 21), and they were guilty of preferential treatment toward the wealthy in their assembly (James 2:6-7, 9). Furthermore there were brethren that were teaching a faith only doctrine (James 2:14 – 3:12). James tells us that some Christians were fighting with each other (4:1ff), filled with pride (4:6), gossips (4:11-12), and some had left God completely out of their life plans (James 4:13-17). James reveals the fact that many Christians had put their faith in the things of this world (James 5:1ff). This epistle is a wakeup call to the faithful of God. They needed to change their sinful ways. James sets out to reorient the Christians to their Hope and Objective Christians need to be reminded about Bible truths that they had previously learned. James’ audience needed to be refocused on the subjects of humility and patience. James’ sharp exposure of the people’s sins was intended to move them to shame that they may humble themselves before the eyes of God (James 4:6-10). The apparent intense persecutions that the disciples were undergoing were contributing to the brethren giving up their faith for sinful practices. James reminds the Christians that they are to patiently await the coming of Jesus (see James 5:7-8). Humility in the face of exposed sin and patience in the face of intense persecution was the only way one would see the end of their faith; a crown of life (James 1:12). The beauty of the book of James is that the author gives his readers a game plan to follow that they may overcome the trials of persecution, hardships, and sin. The Christian’s approach to life was to be with wisdom (James 3:13), humility (James 4:6), and patience (James 1:3; 5:7-11). Secondly, when Christians found themselves unable to endure their pain any longer they were encouraged to look to the examples of the prophets and Job (James 5:10-11). The “crown of life” (James 1:12), “salvation” (James 1:21), “justification” (James 2:25), God’s “grace” (James 4:6), “exaltation” (James 4:10), the Lord’s “mercy and pity” (James 5:11), and spiritual “death” (James 5:20) are all at stake. Now is the time to pray, confess, and be forgiven of sins committed(James 5:1-20)

*Information compiled from floralheightschurchofchrist.org*

**Spring Quarter 2013**

**Grades 7th – 9th**

**Later Epistles**

**(Hebrews, James, I, II Peter, Jude)**

Lesson 1 – James 1 Lesson 2 – James 2

Lesson 3 – James 3 Lesson 4 – James 4

Lesson 5 – James 5 Lesson 6 – I Peter 1

Lesson 7 – I Peter 2 Lesson 8 – I Peter 3

Lesson 9 – I Peter 4 Lesson 10 – I Peter 5

Lesson 11 – II Peter 1 Lesson 12 – II Peter 2

Lesson 13 – II Peter 3 Lesson 14 – Review

Lesson 15 – Hebrews 1, 2 Lesson 16 – Hebrews 3

Lesson 17 – Hebrews 4, 5 Lesson 18 – Hebrews 6

Lesson 19 – Hebrews 7 Lesson 20 – Hebrews 8, 9

Lesson 21 – Hebrews 10 Lesson 22 – Hebrews 11

Lesson 23 – Hebrews 12 Lesson 24 – Hebrews 13

Lesson 25 – Jude Lesson 26 - Review

**Proverbs 3:1-18** (NKJV)

**1** My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands;

**2** For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.

**3** Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart

**4** And so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

**5** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;

**6** In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

**7** Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil.

**8** It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

**9** Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase;

**10** So your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.

**11** My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction;

**12** For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.

**13** Happy is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding;

**14** For her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold.

**15** She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.

**16** Length of days is her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor.

**17** Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are peace.

**18** She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her.

**Lesson 1 – James**

**Text:** James 1

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** wisdom, desires, liberty

**Questions:**

1. Why can Christians count it all joy to fall into trials?

2. What does the testing of our faith produce?

3. What can we ask from God? What is the difference between your answer and knowledge? How do we ask? What are we if we do not ask this way?

4. In verses 9-11 contrast the lowly brother and the rich man.

5. How are we blessed if we endure temptation?

6. If God does not tempt us, then how are we tempted? What is the difference between temptation and being tested?

7. What does come from God?

8. What do you think it means to be swift to hear? Slow to speak? Slow to wrath?

9. What should we lay aside? What can save our souls?

10. We must be doers of the word and not just hearers. Explain the example of the man looking in the mirror.

11. According to verse 26 why is so important to bridle one’s tongue?

12. What are two aspects of pure and undefiled religion?

**Thought Question:**

Temptations and bridling our tongues are a life long struggle. How can you start at your age working to overcome these desires?

**Lesson 2 – James**

**Text:** James 2

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** partiality, mercy, faith, works

**Questions:**

1. Does the world show partiality between rich people and poor people? Is this how Christians should act? Give an example of another way to show partiality.

2. How can you love your neighbor as yourself?

3. How dangerous is it to do almost everything the Bible says?

4. Will those who show no mercy receive mercy?

5. Can we be saved by faith only? Can we be saved by works only? How is our faith demonstrated by our works?

6. Who is given as an Old Testament example of faith and works in verse 21? Describe how he showed faith and works.

7. Who else is given as an example?

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ without \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Thought Question:**

Think seriously about how you treat people that are poor and may not have many material blessings. How can you improve? How can you show others that you do not show partiality?

**Lesson 3 – James**

**Text:** James 3

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** rudder, envy

**Questions:**

1. What warning is given to teachers?

2. What analogy is stated between a bit, a rudder and the tongue?

3. Give examples from verse 6 of how powerful the tongue is.

4. Man can tame all creatures, but cannot tame the tongue. Does that mean we can never have control over what we say? Explain.

5. Give an example of a blessing and a cursing that can come from the tongue.

6. What is said about a spring, fig tree, and grapevine?

7. Where does envy and self-seeking come from?

8. Describe wisdom from above.

**Thought Question:**

Only God knows what is in our heart. Others know us by our actions and our speech. Tell how you can become a better person by changing your actions and speech.

**Lesson 4 – James**

**Text:** James 4

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** pride, covet, enmity

**Questions:**

1. Where do wars and fights come from?

2. How can we ask and not receive?

3. Can we be a friend with the world and a friend of God?

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to God and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the devil.

5. How does God draw near to us?

6. How are we lifted up?

7. Give an example of speaking evil of another.

8. Is it wrong to make plans for the future? What should be considered when making plans?

Thought Question:

Verse 17 is an important verse to always remember. Can you think of a time in your life when you did something even though you knew it was wrong? If you don’t want to discuss your example in class, try to think of an example in the Bible where someone did this.

**Lesson 5 – James**

**Text:** James 5

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** perseverance

**Questions:**

1. Is it wrong to be rich? According to verses 1-6 what can happen to a rich person’s possessions? How do some rich people act?

2. What analogy in verse 7 is used for being patient?

3. What should we not do against each other?

4. Who should we look at as an example of patience and suffering? Can you think of an example?

5. Who is the most known example of patience from the Bible? What did God show towards him?

6. What does letting your “yes be yes” and your “no be no” mean?

7. What should we do for those who are suffering? Cheerful? Sick?

8. Prayer is an important part of a Christian’s life. What example from the OT is given about prayer?

9. Should we give up on those who have wandered from the truth?

**Thought Question:**

Although you are young, there are still things you can do to help others in the church. Read over chapter five again and list tasks that you can do.

**Background of the Books of I and II Peter**

**Author**

I Peter 1:1 makes it evident that Peter is the author of the book that bears his name. Simon Peter was a fisherman by trade. He was called by Jesus to follow him at Matthew (Matt. 4:18-22). Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter indicating the rock like faith that he would represent (Jn. 1:35-42). Through his association with the Lord, Peter always seemed to be the first one to respond to situations. When Jesus asked his disciples if they would turn away from him as the multitudes did and he again spoke up first saying, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (Jn. 6:68). It was Peter that saw Jesus walking upon the stormy Sea of Galilee and requested to come to him upon the water (Matt. 14:28-31). Peter was the first to answer the Lord’s question regarding his identity saying, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). When Jesus said that he must die it was Peter who said, “Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men” (Matt. 16:22-23). When Jesus was transfigured before Peter, James, and John it was Peter that spoke up saying, “Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah” (Matt 17:4). Jesus tells Peter that he would deny him three times in one night (Matt. 26:34; Jn. 13:36-38). Peter responds by saying, “Lord, I will lay down my life for thee” (Jn. 13:37). Peter saw his Lord threatened and was willing to defend Jesus even if it meant death. Peter pulls a sword out and strikes off the ear of Malchus because of his deep convictions of who Jesus was (Jn. 18:10). However, as the night rolled by Peter was found to deny Jesus three times, as the Lord had predicted, and he wept bitterly due to his true love for the Christ (Matt. 26:75). Jesus loved Peter and would not let him forget his sin (Jn. 21:15-17). After Jesus was crucified it was Peter, on the day of Pentecost, who comes to the forefront of the apostles and preaches the first gospel sermon (Acts 2). After the Lord’s death Peter continued to make mistakes (Gal. 2:11ff). Later, Peter would become an elder in the Lord’s church (I Pet. 5:1ff). The reason most all of us can relate so well with Peter is that we see a man who loved Jesus deeply yet had sin in his life to deal with. He made mistakes like you and I do. Secular history tells us that Peter died a martyr’s death by being crucified. Due to his love and respect for Christ and self view of sinfulness he did not see that he was worthy of such a death and so requested that they crucify him upside down. Whether there is any truth to this story we know not at this time.

**Date of Epistle**

Peter writes nothing in his epistle that would help his readers date the book. Peter does record; however, the wide spread persecution taking place within the church. This could have dated the epistle anywhere from 33 AD (the approximate date that the church was established) to 68 AD (the approximate date of Peter’s death). Records of the disciple’s mistreatment for their faith indicate that it began immediately after the church was established (Acts 4:1; 8:1).

**The Epistle of I Peter**

Peter addresses Christians located throughout the region of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (I Pet. 1:1). These Christians were faced not only with suffering at the hands of Satan through his tempting vices (I Pet. 5:8-9) but they suffered physically by wicked men for their stand in truth. Christians did not suffer for doing what was wrong in society but for doing that which was right (I Pet. 1:14; 2:19; 3:13-18; 4:15-16). Their speech, activities, and goals differentiated them from sinners in the world (I Pet. 1:2; 2:12; 4:1-4). The world viewed Christians as “strange” because they did not practice the same sinful things as everyone else (I Pet. 4:4). In a world of sinful, corrupt, and defiled men the Christian stood out as an elect and royal priesthood (I Pet. 2:9). These royal citizens of the kingdom of God showed honor to all men, loved the brotherhood, feared God, and gave honor to the king of the land (I Pet. 2:17). They were all together Holy (I Pet. 1:15-16) and thereby beautiful on the inside (I Pet. 3:13-18; 4:15-16). Said state of being caused anger, jealousy, and bitterness to spring up in the hearts of the unbelieving and so they lashed out against the Christians. Jesus once said, “If the world hates you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (Jn. 15:18-19). Peter’s objective in this epistle is to motivate the Christians to endure the suffering of Satan and sinful men. Peter accomplishes the task of motivating the suffering Christians to endure by telling them that the end of all things is at hand (I Pet. 4:5-7), Christ is coming again (I Pet. I Pet. 1:7, 13; 4:13), and the Day of Judgment approaches (I Pet. 1:17; 2:12). Those who endure to the end shall experience glorification for all eternity (I Pet. 5:6, 10). Furthermore, Peter tells the suffering saints that brethren the world over have endured and gained the victory over Satan and sinful men (I Pet. 5:9). If others have succeeded so can you and I!

**II Peter**

Peter is the author of II Peter (II Pet. 1:1; 3:1-2). It is just as difficult to place a date on II Peter as it is to date his first. Persecution upon members of the body of Christ and the death of Peter are the only dates we have to go by in dating I Peter (between 33 and 68 AD). This second epistle was written sometime after the first (see II Pet. 3:1) and thereby at a later unspecified date. The audience is general; “them that have obtained a like precious faith” (II Pet. 1:1). Peter states the objective of this epistle at II Peter 3:1 saying, “This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind my putting you in remembrance.” Peter’s audience is admonished to remember (II Pet. 1:12, 13, 15) all the inspired apostolic writings that are designed to bring one to salvation (II Pet. 3:15). The primary life objective of every right thinking individual is to obtain the “divine nature” as a glorified saint of God (II Pet. 1:4). There were; however, false teachers during Peter’s day whose objective was directly opposed to such eternal bliss. The Apostle Peter reveals one particular damning doctrine of these false teachers in this epistle. Some false teachers were claiming that Jesus would not come again (II Pet. 3:3-5). To substantiate their claims they challenged their audience to look at the supposed claims of Jesus’ coming and the current date. Many years had elapsed since Jesus Christ had promised another coming to save the world from the consequences of sin (see Matt. 24:36). Seeing that Jesus had not yet come they concluded that he was not going to come (II Pet. 3:4). These false teachers made “merchandise” (II Pet. 2:3) of “many” (II Pet. 2:2) who were “unsteadfast” in their faith (II Pet. 2:14) and newly converted (II Pet. 2:18). The tactics of the false teachers was opinionated preaching (II Pet. 2:1) and railing at people who hold positions of authority as to stir up others against them (II Pet. 2:10-12). The more error that was put on the spiritual plate of the unsteadfast and new convert the more truth would be evil spoken of (II Pet. 2:2). Peter compares these erroneous teachers to Balaam in that they loved riches and honor more than truth (II Pet. 2:15-16). False teachers not only destroy their own souls but the souls of others (II Pet. 2:12). God views the false teacher as an unwanted animal that is put down in death (II Pet. 2:12). Peter makes it clear, God will not “spare” men or women who teach and oppose His divine truths (see II Pet. 2:4-5). This epistle is thereby a warning to the faithful child of God. Peter states, “Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own stedfastness” (II Pet. 3:17). Remaining steadfast in one’s faith is the key to “escaping the corruption that is in the world by lust” (II Pet. 1:4) and the error of “false teachers” (II Pet. 2:1). The apostle Peter thereby speaks of “diligence” (II Pet. 1:10; 3:14), “spiritual growth” (II Pet. 3:18), and obtaining “knowledge” (II Pet. 1:2, 3, 5, 8) as keys to spiritual survival.

**Lesson 6 – I Peter**

**Text:** I Peter 1

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** elect, dispersion, redeemed

**Questions:**

1. Find the places listed in verse 1 on a map.

2. List two or three of the spiritual blessings mentioned in verses 3-5.

3. What do believers encounter according to verse 6?

4. What is our faith compared to?

5. Read John 20:29 and compare that verse with I Peter 1:8,9.

6. Why are we to be holy? What does holy mean?

7. How are we redeemed?

8. When was our redemption planned?

9. How are we to love one another?

10. What scripture from the Old Testament is Peter quoting in verse 24?

**Thought Question:**

As a young person think about and discuss what various trials you many have to endure as you try to live a Christian life? Also think about what trials you think you may encounter as you grow into young adults.

**Lesson 7 – I Peter**

**Text:** I Peter 2

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** malice, cornerstone, revile

**Questions:**

1. What must we lay aside in order to grow?

2. What is the job of a cornerstone?

3. How is the chief cornerstone a stumbling block?

4. Do you think verses nine and ten are talking to Jews or Gentiles?

5. Who should Christians submit to?

6. Does it seem right to have to submit to a harsh master? What example should we follow if we end up in a job with a harsh employer?

7. What chapter in Isaiah does the last part of I Peter 2 remind you of?

8. What names are given to Jesus in verse 25?

**Thought Question:**

Verses 11 and 12 give us help in knowing how we should live before others. Give some practical examples of how you can do this. In other words, how can you show good works?

**Lesson 8 – I Peter**

**Text:** I Peter 3

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** chaste, antitype

**Questions:**

1. What instruction does Peter give to wives who may have unbelieving husbands?

2. What kind of spirit should a wife have? How will this help in converting her husband?

3. How should a husband dwell with his wife? What can happen if they don’t?

4. What instruction does Peter give the church in verses 8 and 9?

5. Verses 10-12 can be encouraging, but they can cause fear. Explain how this can be.

6. What must we be ready to do? Why?

7. What is the antitype of Noah and his family being saved from the flood?

8. Where is Christ now and who is subject to Him?

**Thought Question:**

In verse 9 Peter tells us we should not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling. Does the world teach the same thing? Is it human nature to get back at someone who has done evil to you? How can we overcome this?

**Lesson 9 – I Peter**

**Text:** I Peter 4

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** hospitable, manifold grace

**Questions:**

1. Because Christ suffered and these Gentiles are now followers of Christ they may also suffer. What will others think of them now that they have become Christians? Why?

2. Peter gives the church more warnings about how to act towards each other. What is mentioned in verses 8-10.

3. In what should God be glorified?

4. Peter talks more about suffering and the joy we should have because of it. Should Christians be surprised if they are persecuted? What should Christians do if they are persecuted?

5. God’s judgment is sure and just. What can the sinner expect when judgment comes?

**Thought Question:**

In chapter four we learn that we will serve as Christians and we will suffer as Christians. Sometimes it is easy to complain about both of these. How can we keep from complaining and giving God the glory for serving and suffering?

**Lesson 10 – I Peter**

**Text:** I Peter 5

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** compulsion, vigilant

**Questions:**

1. How should elders shepherd the flock? If they act in this manner what will they receive?

2. What should the younger people do? How about everyone?

3. What will happen to those who are humble?

4. God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but gives

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Why do we have to be sober and vigilant?

**Thought Question:**

The book of I Peter was written to encourage Christians to endure the suffering from the world and from Satan, and how to live as a righteous person in the world. List at least three ways you can accomplish being different from the world. Be specific and discuss how you have already done this in your young life.

**Lesson 11 – II Peter**

**Text:** II Peter 1

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:**

**Lesson 12 – II Peter 2**

**Text:** II Peter 2

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:**

**Lesson 13 – II Peter 3**

**Text: II Peter 3**

**Memory Work: Proverbs 3:1-18**

**Vocabulary:**

**Lesson 14 - Review**

**Background on Hebrews**

**Author:**

1 Though there is an impressive list of early Bible students that attributed the epistle to the apostle Paul (i.e., Pantaenus [AD 180], Clement of Alexander [AD 187], Origen [AD 185], The Council of Antioch [AD 264], Jerome [AD 392], and Augustine of Hippo in North Africa), there is equally an impressive list of those who disagree. Tertullian [AD 190] ascribed the epistle of Hebrews to Barnabas. Those who support a Pauline epistle claim that the apostle wrote the book in the Hebrew language for the Hebrews and that Luke translated it into Greek. Still others claim that another author wrote the epistle and Paul translated it into Greek. Lastly, some claim that Paul provided the ideas for the epistle by inspiration and that one of his contemporaries (Luke, Barnabas, Apollos, Silas, Aquila, Mark, or Clement of Rome) actually composed the epistle. The fact of the matter is that we just do not have enough clear textual proof to make a precise unequivocal judgment one way or the other. The following notes will refer to the author as ‘the author of Hebrews,’ whether that be Paul or some other.

**Is the Book of Hebrews an Inspired Work?**

Bible skeptics have questioned the authenticity (canonicity) of Hebrews simply because of its unknown author. There are three proofs that should suffice the reader of the inspiration of Hebrews as it takes its rightful place in the NT. First and foremost, when one reads the book, its doctrines coincide with all other OT and NT teaching. Secondly, history records a letter composed by Clement of Rome in AD 96 to the Corinthians in which he quotes from the book of Hebrews. Such indicates the fact that before AD 96, the book of Hebrews was accepted as authentic, authoritative, and inspired of God. Thirdly, the book of Hebrews is found in the NT of some of the most ancient NT compilations. The Peshito, or Old Syriac Version of the Bible that was written in approximately AD 150 had the book of Hebrews among the other NT books. Without a doubt, the book of Hebrews has taken its rightful place among the other 25 NT books.

**Date of the Epistle:**

When dating an epistle in the Bible, one looks to clues within the text itself to help determine a general date. “The frequent allusions in it to Judaism, with its ritual, as a still existing system, are such as to render highly improbable any date after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, AD 70.” With the destruction of Jerusalem came the destruction of the temple of God where the sacrifices were made by the Jews (cf. Heb. 10:11). The Hebrew text itself indicates that Jesus had already been raised from the grave (Heb. 8:4; 10:12). Secondly, the author of Hebrews encourages the saints addressed to grow in the knowledge of God as teachers in the NT church (cf. Heb. 5:12ff). All of this evidence indicates that the letter was written sometime after Pentecost (AD 34) and before the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD).

**Who are the Hebrews?**

The word “Hebrew” is first found in the Bible at Genesis 14:13 where Abraham is referred to as such. “Again ‘Abram the Hebrew’ (Gen. 14:13) may be ‘Abram who crossed the river,’ that is, the Euphrates (Josh. 24:2-3). Accordingly, the LXX translates ‘Abram, the Hebrew’ ha Ibhri, from abar, ‘to cross over.’ Apparently Abraham and his descendents received this label after the patriarch had crossed the Euphrates River at the beaconing of Jehovah God (cf. Gen. 11:31 – 12:5). This trip would have seen Abraham cross over the Euphrates River that was approximately 75 miles south of Haran as they made their way to Canaan. The word Hebrew came to be used to distinguish the Israelites from other nations. Interestingly, when an Israelite migrated into a foreign country and learned the Greek language they were, as a consequence, no longer called Hebrews but Hellenist. They were still Jews and Israelites, but not Hebrews. Apparently the word Hebrew then came to mean a Jew who had retained the Hebrew language rather than forsaking it for the popular Greek. Jews growing up in Grecian societies soon lost all contact with their native tongue and could not even speak the ancient language (cf. Acts 6:1; 9:29; II Cor. 11:22; and Phil. 3:5). The Hebrews, that this book is addressed to, were therefore Jewish Christians who had retained their ancient Hebrew tongue. The church in Jerusalem was known by earlier writers as the “church of the Hebrews” and it is thereby likely that the author of Hebrews is directing this epistle to that church.

**Purpose of the Epistle:**

The book of Hebrews is just as applicable to us today as it was to those Hebrews the book is addressed to. Apparently the Jewish Christians were being heavily persecuted by the non-Christian Jews to renounce Christ and keep the Mosaic Law (cf. Heb. 10:32ff). The overall theme of the book of Hebrews is that salvation cannot be obtained through any other means or sources than Jesus Christ. The author of Hebrews encourages the Jewish saints not to apostatize from the faith that once sanctified them.

**Lesson 15 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 1, 2

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** scepter, propitiation

**Questions:**

1. How did god speak in times past? How does He speak now?

2. Where is Jesus now?

3. In verses 5-13 many OT verses are repeated. Try to find where these verses are and who is saying them.

4. In chapter one the writer gives claim to who Christ is. List some of these claims.

5. Why must we give heed to the words we have heard?

6. Who do you think the “those who heard Him” are in verse 3?

7. Who was Jesus made a little lower than?

8. Chapter 2 verse 11 is a wonderful and comforting verse for us. Can you tell how?

9. What do you think verse 14 is talking about? Real flesh and blood?

10. What is the bondage that is being talked about in verse 15?

11. How does Christ aid those who are being tempted?

**Thought Question:**

There is a religion in the world today that believes that Christ is not the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Do you know what that religion is, and how Hebrews 1 and 2 refute that belief?

**Lesson 16 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 3

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** exhort, rebel

**Questions:**

1. What are some positions Jesus holds? Who appointed Him to these positions?

2. Who is Christ compared to in the first few verses?

3. In verses 7 – 11 the writer quotes from David in Psalms 95:7-11. OT references were effective when the apostles were talking to Jewish Christians. Why do you think this is? How can these verses be effective for us?

4. What should we do for each other?

5. What hardens us?

6. What is the rebellion spoken of in verses 8 and 15?

7. Why couldn’t the Israelites led by Moses enter the Promised Land? (two reasons)

Thought Question:

Question four asks “what should we do for each other”. Now that you know what exhort means, how is this done?

**Lesson 17 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 4, 5

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** gospel, diligent, discern

**Questions:**

1. What is still promised? What should we fear?

2. How was the gospel preached to the Israelites?

3. It is mentioned again that the Israelites couldn’t enter the Promised Land. Do we have that same chance of not entering our rest? What would cause that?

4. What is the word of God compared to? Where else do we see the word compared to this? *Hint: armor of God*

5. What does the word do?

6. It is mentioned again how Christ can sympathize with us. What should this allow us to do according to verse 16?

7. How are high priests appointed? Was Christ appointed the same way?

8. How did Christ learn obedience?

9. What is Christ the author of? How can we obtain this?

10. What does the writer accuse the Hebrews of? What should they be by now?

11. What does it mean by “need milk and not solid food.”

Thought Question:

Disobedience has been a problem since the beginning of time. List ways that your parents punish when you are disobedient. Do you have any suggestions for others to help them stay obedient?

**Lesson 18 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 6

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** elementary, oath

**Questions:**

1. What must Christians continue to do?

2. Is it possible for those who have become Christians to fall away?

3. What does the herb that bears fruit receive? What happens if it doesn’t bear fruit?

4. What good work is mentioned in verse 10?

5. What two things does it take to inherit the promises?

6. Why are the promises of God so trustworthy?

7. Where is our anchor to be cast?

**Thought Question:**

We know that it is impossible for God to lie and that is why we can always count on the promises He makes. In our lives we tend to make promises that we may not be able to keep. Name some ways we can avoid letting others down by making empty promises.

**Lesson 19 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 7

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** tithe, surety

**Questions:**

1. What was the job of a priest?

2. How does Jesus fit this description?

3. Read the account of Melchizedek in Genesis 14:17-20. What is different about him?

4. What tribe did the priests of the Israelites come from? What tribe did Jesus come from?

5. List differences in the Old Law and the New Law in verses 18-19.

6. List differences in the OT priests and our High Priest.

**Thought Question:**

Just like the priesthood from the OT earthly things do not last forever. We as a nation store up many treasures on earth. How can we as Christians living in a material society make sure our treasures are in heaven?

**Lesson 20 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 8, 9

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** sanctuary, obsolete, testament, testator

**Questions:**

1. Why do you think the writer talks so much about the priesthood, and our High Priest?

2. What is the true tabernacle that God erected?

3. Why would Jesus not be a priest if He were living on earth?

4. What do you think the better promises are mentioned in verse 6?

5. What prophet prophesied about the new covenant while the old covenant was still in effect?

6. What three things were in the Ark of the Covenant?

7. In verses 6-10 limitations to the earthly tabernacle are described. In verses 11-15 these limitations are taken away. By whom are they taken away and what are some of the differences?

8. What must there be to have remission?

9. Who will Christ appear to a second time?

**Thought Question:**

God had a pattern for the Israelites to follow as far as the tabernacle was concerned. Comparing that to the church today can you think of some examples God has given us to follow in order to worship Him as we should?

**Lesson 21 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 10

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** illuminated, perdition

**Questions:**

1. What could animal sacrifices not do?

2. What was God’s will concerning Christ?

3. What three things should we now do because of Jesus’ sacrifice listed in verses 23-25?

4. Who does vengeance belong to?

5. Why is it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?

6. In verses 32 – 34 the writer tells some details about those he is writing to. List some of these details.

**Thought Question:**

In verse 30 it is quoted “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” This comes from a passage in Deuteronomy when Moses is giving his last words to the Israelites before he dies. So many times we want to pay people back for wrongs they have done to us. What are some ways we can overcome this desire we have to get “revenge”?

**Lesson 22 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 11

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** faith

**Questions:**

1. Hebrews 11 is known as the “great faith” chapter. What is our first test of faith mentioned in verse 3?

2. List the things mentioned about these people by faith:

Abel: Enoch: Noah:

Abraham: Sarah: The Patriarchs:

Moses: Others mentioned in verses 30-34:

3. Verse six is a great verse to memorize. Can you put into your own words what it means?

4. Read verses 14 – 16. What makes these people special? Do we desire such a place?

5. In verse 35 – 40 people who we don’t know their names are mentioned. What kind of things did they suffer because of their faith?

**Thought Question:**

Often we read verses like verses 35 – 40 and we don’t pay much attention to them because it doesn’t seem real to us. However; we could face the same situations in our lifetimes. Think seriously about what you would do if you had to face some of these situations. What can we do to increase our faith so we will not give in to rejecting God.

**Lesson 23 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 12

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** chasten, profane

**Questions:**

1. How should we run the race? What is the race? What encourages us to do this?

2. What will keep us becoming weary?

3. Who does the Lord chasten? What is said about those who are not chastened?

4. What is our reward for being chastened? (vs. 10)

5. What must we do to see the Lord?

6. What must we look carefully for? (three things)

7. In verses 18-21 it talks about the fear the Israelites had at Mt. Sinai. Moses was even afraid. What mountain have we come to and how are we able to communicate with God?

8. Can we ever escape the words of God?

9. What is God compared to?

**Thought Question:**

This chapter talks about being chastened from God and how it is something we should be thankful for. That is a hard concept to grasp when you are a child being punished by your parents. Think of ways you have become a better person because of the chastening your parents have given you.

**Lesson 24 – Hebrews**

**Text:** Hebrews 13

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** covetousness, reproach

**Questions:**

1. What final exhortations does the writer give the Hebrews in verses 1-5?

2. What should we be able to boldly say?

3. What should we not be carried about by?

4. Who do you think the altar is in verse 10?

5. What is our sacrifice? (verse 15)

6. Who should we obey? Who do you think this is talking about?

**Thought Question:**

Sometimes we read over verses like verse 5 and don’t pay too much attention to them. We are warned many times to be content. This is a hard concept in today’s society. How do you deal with being content?

**Background on Jude:**

**Author:**

The author of the epistle of Jude is revealed in chapter one, verse one as Jude: the brother of James. James was a physical brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55) and later an elder in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; Gal.1:18). Note that Jude’s (Judas’) name is mentioned with James in Matthew 13:55 as the brother of Jesus. Neither Jude nor James were ever named as apostles (cf. Jude 1:17). Jude did not even believe in the deity of Jesus early on (Jn. 7:3-6). After the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus we find Jude assembling with the apostles in Jerusalem and participating in prayers (Acts 1:12-14). The only other bit of information about Jude is that apparently he was married (cf. I Cor. 9:5).

**Date of Epistle:**

The date and place of writing of this epistle is impossible to state due to a lack of information in the letter itself.

**Contents of Epistle:**

Jude had begun to write his audience about their “common salvation” (Jude 1:3); however, due to the current false teaching of ungodly men, Jude was compelled to write a letter exposing their true character. There is a striking similarity between the book of Jude and II Peter 2. Such a comparison helps us to make a clear judgment as to who Jude has in mind when he refers to the “ungodly” that “turn the grace of God into lasciviousness” (Jude 1:4). Jude has false teachers in mind. Jude exposes a precise distinction between the character of men who hold and teach error and those who hold to nothing but the truth. Jude describes false teachers with words that leave no doubt in his reader’s mind as to where he stands on the subject. False teachers have the potential to destroy the faith of individuals and churches (cf. Jude 1:12, 19). The ungodly work of these teachers must be challenged. Jude admonishes the faithful to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). We live in no different times today. The Christian who would deny the existence and work of false teachers is living a deluded life of self-imposed joy, peace, love, and non-confrontation. The word of God reveals the real world and real spiritual battles to be fought (cf. Eph. 6:10ff). Those who so choose to believe that there are no battles have surely been defeated. Let the faithful today stand up and gain the victory in this most violent and gruesome fight that we are in against the devil and his angels. The battle is to the death, spiritual eternity is at stake, and it is with Christ alone that the child of God will gain the victory over sin and death.

**Lesson 25 – Jude**

**Text:** Jude

**Memory Work:** Proverbs 3:1-18

**Vocabulary:** lewdness, apostate

**Questions:**

1. What is Jude’s concern in verses 3 and 4?

2. What three examples are given that should be a warning to us?

3. What three people are the false teachers compared to in verse 11?

4. What four things in nature are they compared to?

5. Who prophesied against them? Do you remember anything about him?

6. What are some attributes of false teachers?

7. Who words are we told to remember?

**Thought Question:**

What are some ways to protect ourselves against false teachers?

**Lesson 26 - Review**