

## Class Schedule

**Class:** James, 1, 2, &3 John  
**Day & Time:** Sundays from 11:00am to Noon  
**Beginning:** October 7<sup>th</sup>  
**Ending:** December 30<sup>th</sup>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Week</u>	<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Oct 7	1	James 1:1-20	Profit from Enduring Trials
Oct 14	2	James 1:21-2:13	Beware of Partiality
Oct 21	3	James 2:14-26	Faith without Works is Dead
Oct 28	4	James 3:1-18	Danger of an Unbridled Tongue
Nov 4	5	James 4:1-17	Overcome Pride with Humility
Nov 11	6	James 5:1-20	Wait for the Coming of The Lord
Nov 18	7	1John 1:1-10	Fellowship with God
Nov 25	8	1John 2:1-27	Dangers that Threaten Fellowship
Dec 2	9	1John 3:1-24	Walking in Fellowship
Dec 9	10	1John 4:1-21	The Test of Fellowship: Love
Dec 16	11	1John 5:1-21	The Victory through Fellowship
Dec 23	12	2John	The Mighty Power of God
Dec 30	13	3John	Job's Response & Epilogue

Instead of providing worksheets for this class, I want every student to take notes (thoughts, questions, and insights) and then create a summary of the section studied.

On the next page I have described how I would like you to take notes.

Lay out one page in a notebook or computer file as in the example below. Write your thoughts and any insights you discovered in the upper right portion of the page. Write any questions you think of on the upper left portion of the page. After you have filled in the upper two portions write out a summary of what the section is teaching.

**Steps for studying:**

1. Read the whole section through once without stopping or taking any notes.
2. Read through the section a second time, writing down notes as you go.
3. Looking at your notes and the reading write down any questions that arise.
4. Look over your notes and write out a summary of what the section is teaching.

Questions	Thoughts and Insights
Summary	

# JAMES

Faith without works cannot be called faith. Faith without works is dead, and a dead faith is worse than no faith at all. Faith must work; it must produce; mere mental assent is insufficient. Throughout his epistle to Jewish believers, James integrates true faith and everyday practical experience by stressing that true faith must manifest itself in works of faith.

## Author

The author of this letter identifies himself simply as James, “a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). The name was quite common; and the New Testament lists at least five men named “James,” two of whom were disciples of Jesus and one of whom was His brother. Tradition has ascribed the book to James, the brother of the Lord, and there is little reason to question this view, since the language of the epistle is somewhat similar to James’ speech in Acts 15.

This James is mentioned twice in the Gospels (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3), both times as one of the brothers of Jesus. Although he is not called a follower of the Lord until after the resurrection, he was probably among the disciples who obeyed Jesus’ command to wait in the Upper Room and who were there filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14; 2:4). When Peter left Palestine (Acts 12:17), James seems to have become the leader of the Jerusalem church.

It has been argued that the Greek of this epistle is too sophisticated for a Galilean such as James, but this assumes that he never had the opportunity or aptitude to develop a proficiency in *Koine* (“common”) Greek. As a prominent church leader, it would have been to his advantage to become fluent in the universal language of the Roman Empire.

## Date

According to the Jewish historian Josephus, James was martyred in A.D. 62. Those who accept him as the author of this epistle have proposed a date of writing ranging from A.D. 45 to the end of his life. However, several factors indicate that this may be the earliest New Testament writing (c. A.D. 46–49): (1) there is no mention of Gentile believers or their relationship to Jewish Christians; (2) the allusions to the teaching of Christ bear so little verbal agreement with the Synoptic Gospels that James probably precedes the composition of the Gospels; (3) James uses the Greek term for “synagogue” in 2:2 (NKJV: “assembly”) in addition to the term “church” (5:14), thus indicating a very simple church organization of elders and teachers (3:1; 5:14) which was patterned after the Jewish synagogue; and (4) James does not mention the issues involved in the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 (A.D. 49).

## Themes and Literary Structure

James is the Proverbs of the New Testament because it is written in the terse, moralistic style of wisdom literature. It is evident that James was profoundly influenced by the Old Testament as well as by the teaching of Jesus. Because of the many subjects in this epistle, it is difficult to outline. The outline used here is: the test of faith (1:1–18); the characteristics of faith (1:19–5:6); and the triumph of faith (5:7–20).

## Allusions to the Sermon on the Mount

The profound impact of the teaching of Jesus upon James is evident in the many allusions to His teaching, particularly the Sermon on the Mount. Sometimes called the “Amos of the New Testament” because of his concern for ethical integrity and justice, James peppers the 108 verses of his work with 54 imperatives in order to communicate the need for action on the part of his audience.

### James and the Sermon on the Mount

James	Sermon on the Mount	Subject
1:2	Mt 5:10-12 (Lk 6:22, 23)	Joy in the midst of trials
1:4	Matt. 5:48	God’s desire and work in us: perfection
1:5	Matt. 7:7	Asking God for good gifts
1:17	Matt. 7:11	God is the giver of good gifts
1:19, 20	Matt. 5:22	Command against anger
1:22, 23	Matt. 7:24-27	Contrast between hearers and doers (illustrated)
1:26, 27	Matt. 7:21-23	Religious person whose religion is worthless
2:5	Matt. 5:3	The poor as heirs of the kingdom
2:10	Matt. 5:19	The whole moral law to be kept
2:11	Matt. 5:21, 22	Command against murder
2:13	Matt. 5:7, 6:14, 15	The merciful blessed; the unmerciful condemned
2:14-26	Matt. 7:21-23	Dead, worthless (and deceiving) faith
3:12	Mt 7:16 (Lk 6:44, 45)	Tree producing what is in keeping with its kind
3:18	Matt. 5:9	Blessing of those who make peace
4:2, 3	Matt. 7:7, 8	Importance of asking God
4:4	Matt. 6:24	Friendship with the world = hostility toward God
4:8	Matt. 5:8	Blessing on and call for the pure in heart
4:9	Matt. 5:4	Blessing and call for those who mourn
4:11, 12	Matt. 7:1-5	Command against wrongly judging others
4:13, 14	Matt. 6:34	Not focusing too much on tomorrow
5:1	(Luke 6:24, 25)	Woe to rich
5:2	Matt. 6:19, 20	Moth and rust spoiling earthly riches
5:6	(Luke 6:37)	Against condemning the righteous man
5:9	Matt. 5:22, 7:1	Not judging—the Judge standing at the door
5:10	Matt. 5:12	The prophets as examples of wrongful suffering
5:12	Matt. 5:33-37	Not making hasty and irreverent oaths

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## OUTLINE OF JAMES

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**I. The Test of Faith 1:1–18**

- A. The Purpose of Tests 1:1–12  
 B. The Source of Temptations 1:13–18

**II. The Characteristics of Faith 1:19–5:6**

- A. Faith Obeys the Word 1:19–27  
 B. Faith Removes Discrimination 2:1–13  
 C. Faith Proves Itself by Works 2:14–26  
 D. Faith Controls the Tongue 3:1–12  
 E. Faith Produces Wisdom 3:13–18  
 F. Faith Produces Humility 4:1–12  
 G. Faith Produces Dependence on God 4:13–5:6

**III. The Triumph of Faith 5:7–20**

- A. Faith Endures Awaiting Christ's Return 5:7–12  
 B. Faith Prays for the Afflicted 5:13–18  
 C. Faith Confronts the Erring Brother 5:19–20
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### Paul and James Compared

Because of James's assertion in 2:24 that "a man is justified by works, and not by faith only," some church leaders (including Martin Luther) have felt that James contradicts the great Pauline teaching of justification by faith (cf. Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8). A careful reading of James and Paul reveals that the contradiction is only apparent. Paul, no less than James, realized that a genuine, living faith will issue in works of love and obedience (Gal. 5:6).

The difference between Paul and James lies in the fact that Paul attacks the problem of legalism, while James opposes libertines who felt that the quality of a Christian's conduct is irrelevant. For Paul, the question is how a genuine faith lays hold of the finished work of Jesus Christ—the contrast is between faith and works. For James, the question is how one demonstrates that one's faith is genuine—the contrast between a living and a dead faith.

### Faith Alive

James wants his readers to demonstrate in their lives the qualities of a living faith. Such a living faith is more than mere knowledge and assent—it includes heartfelt trust that endures and obeys God.

<b>Described as:</b>	<b>Results in:</b>
Tested (1:2, 3)	Patience (1:3)
Without doubt (1:6-8)	Answered prayer (1:5)
Enduring temptation (1:12)	Eternal life (1:12)
More than belief (2:19, 20)	Faith perfected by works (2:22)
Believing God (2:23-25)	Righteousness before God (2:23)
James contrasts living faith to dead, or empty, faith. Dead faith does not result in the transformed life that is characteristic of living faith. <sup>1</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Nelson Publishers, *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts: Old and New Testaments*, Rev. and updated ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1996).

# 1 JOHN

Advanced in years, John wrote this fatherly epistle out of loving concern for his “children,” whose steadfastness in the truth was being threatened by the lure of worldliness and the guile of false teachers.

## Author

Though this epistle does not state the name of its author, solid evidence suggests that it was written by John, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James (Mark 1:19, 20). Strong similarities between this letter and the Gospel of John substantiate the testimony of many early church fathers, including Papias, Polycarp, and Irenaeus, that both works are the products of John the apostle of Jesus. Both share many distinctively Johannine phrases, and the characteristics of limited vocabulary and frequent contrast of opposites are also common to both.

## Date

First John was probably written in Ephesus after the Gospel of John, but the date cannot be fixed with certainty. No persecution is mentioned, suggesting a date prior to A.D. 95 when persecution broke out near the end of the Roman emperor Domitian’s reign (A.D. 81–96).

## Themes and Literary Structure

Like 2 Peter and Jude, 1 John has a negative and a positive thrust: it refutes erroneous doctrine and encourages its readership to walk in the knowledge of the truth. John lists the criteria and characteristics of fellowship with God and shows that those who abide in Christ can have confidence and assurance before Him. This simply written but profound work develops the basis of fellowship (1:1–2:27) and the behavior of fellowship (2:28–5:21).

A major theme of 1 John is fellowship with God (2:28). John wants his readers to have assurance of the indwelling God through their abiding relationship with Him. Phrases emphasizing Christian certainty occur five times in this brief epistle.

Against false teachers who denied the reality of the incarnation by saying that Jesus only appeared to have a human body, John strongly affirms that the Son of God took to Himself a complete and genuine human nature (4:2, 3). The heresy John confronts here was a forerunner of second-century Gnosticism, which taught that matter is essentially evil and spirit is essentially good. This dualistic error caused the false teachers to deny the incarnation of Christ. The true God, they taught, could never indwell a material body of flesh and blood, and therefore the human body that Jesus supposedly possessed was not real.

Another prominent theme in this epistle is love—the word appears more than thirty-five times in the epistle. The apostle uses the example of Cain to illustrate what love is not: hatred is murdering in spirit, and it arises from the worldly sphere of death. John then uses the example of Christ to illustrate what love is: love is practiced in self-sacrifice, not mere profession. This practical expression of love results in assurance before God and answered prayers because the believer is walking in obedience to God’s commands to believe in Christ and love one another.

## The Quality of Love

### The Source of Love

God personifies love (4:8, 16)

God loves us (4:19)

God gave His Son for us (4:9, 10)

Christ laid down His life for us (3:16)

### The Effect of Love

We reflect God's love in the world (4:7)

We love God; we keep His commands (4:18, 19; 5:3)

We give our substance for others (3:17; 4:11)

We lay down our lives for others (3:16)

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## OUTLINE OF 1 JOHN

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### Part One: The Basis of Fellowship (1:1–2:27)

- I. Introduction 1:1–4**
- II. The Conditions for Fellowship 1:5–2:14**
  - A. Walk in the Light 1:5–7
  - B. Confession of Sin 1:8–2:2
  - C. Obedience to His Commandments 2:3–6
  - D. Love for One Another 2:7–14
- III. The Cautions to Fellowship 2:15–27**
  - A. Love of the World 2:15–17
  - B. Spirit of the Antichrist 2:18–27

### Part Two: The Behavior of Fellowship (2:28–5:21)

- I. Characteristics of Fellowship 2:28–5:3**
    - A. Purity of Life 2:28–3:3
    - B. Practice of Righteousness 3:4–12
    - C. Love in Deed and Truth 3:13–24
    - D. Testing the Spirits 4:1–6
    - E. Love as Christ Loved 4:7–5:3
  - II. Consequences of Fellowship 5:4–21**
    - A. Victory over the World 5:4, 5
    - B. Assurance of Salvation 5:6–13
    - C. Guidance in Prayer 5:14–17
    - D. Freedom from Habitual Sin 5:18–21
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## 2 AND 3 JOHN

Though among the briefest in Scripture, these two one-chapter books are of continuing relevance to the church. Second and Third John reflect similar circumstances and have similar contents: In each book the author warns against the divisiveness of false or self-serving teachers, and he offers encouragement to genuine believers. Particularly, 2 John cautions its readers about receiving heretics into their homes or churches, while 3 John encourages fellowship with Christian brothers.

### Author

In both 2 and 3 John, the author identifies himself as “the Elder.” This is not an argument against Johannine authorship of these epistles, since the content of these epistles reveals that his authority was far greater than that of an elder in a local church. The apostle Peter also referred to himself as an elder (1 Pet. 5:1).

The similarity of style, vocabulary, structure, and mood between 2 and 3 John makes it clear that these letters were written by the same author. In addition, both (especially 2 John) bear strong resemblances to 1 John and to the Fourth Gospel. Thus, the internal evidence lends clear support to the traditional view that these epistles were written by the apostle John.

### Date

The parallels between 2 and 3 John suggest that these epistles were written about the same time (c. A.D. 90). Early Christian writers are unified in their testimony that the headquarters of John’s later ministry was in the city of Ephesus, the principal city of the Roman province of Asia.

Second John is addressed to an “elect lady” and her children. Some scholars believe the address should be taken literally to refer to a specific woman and her children, while others prefer to take it as a figurative description of a local church.

Third John was occasioned by reports from an Asian church that a man named Diotrephes had seized power, had rejected the teachers sent out by John, and was expelling those in his church who wanted to receive them.

### Themes and Literary Structure

Second John has much in common with First John, including a warning about the danger of false teachers who deny the incarnation of Jesus Christ. John encourages the readers to continue walking in love but exhorts them to be discerning in their expression of love. The book may be divided into two parts: abide in God’s commandments (vv. 1–6) and abide not with false teachers (vv. 7–13).

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## OUTLINE OF 2 JOHN

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- I. Abide in God's Commandments 1–6**
    - A. Salutation 1–3
    - B. Walk in Truth 4
    - C. Walk in Love 5, 6
  - II. Abide Not with False Teachers 7–13**
    - A. Doctrine of the False Teachers 7–9
    - B. Avoid the False Teachers 10, 11
    - C. Benediction 12, 13
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## OUTLINE OF 3 JOHN

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- I. The Commendation of Gaius 1–8**
    - A. Salutation 1
    - B. Godliness of Gaius 2–4
    - C. Generosity of Gaius 5–8
  - II. The Condemnation of Diotrephes 9–14**
    - A. Pride of Diotrephes 9–11
    - B. Praise for Demetrius 12
    - C. Benediction 13, 14
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### The Life of John

In Acts 8:14, John is associated with “the apostles who were at Jerusalem,” and Paul calls him one of the “pillars” of the Jerusalem church in Galatians 2:9. Apart from Revelation 1, the New Testament is silent about his later years, but early Christian tradition uniformly tells us that he left Jerusalem (probably not long before its destruction in A.D. 70) and that he ministered in and around Ephesus. The seven churches in the Roman province of Asia, mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3, were evidently part of his ministry.

John's effective testimony for Christ led the Roman authorities to exile him to the small, desolate island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea (Rev. 1:9). The date of his release from Patmos is unknown, but he was probably allowed to return to Ephesus after the reign of Domitian.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas Nelson, Inc., *Nelson's complete book of Bible maps and charts: Old and New Testament [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1996.