



JAMES, 1 & 2 PETER

JUNE 2020

Read on your own or with others,
which ever you prefer.

This leaflet is just a brief overview of the 'big picture' of these books. If you have been reading the Bible for some time you will be aware there is much more to them than you'll find here.

If you are new to reading the Bible don't worry too much if there are details you do not quite get at the moment - focus on the 'big picture'.

INTRODUCTION

These three books were written by two different human authors, yet as with the rest of the Bible, they were inspired by the same God (2 Timothy 3:16).

James was one of Jesus' half-brothers, a son of Joseph and Mary (be careful not to confuse him with James the disciple of Jesus and brother of John who we read about in the Gospels). From the book of Acts, we find out that James became an influential leader in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-18).

Peter was one of first people that Jesus called to follow him (Mark 1:14-20). He famously denied knowing Jesus at the time that Jesus was being tried and sentenced by the Jewish leaders. Yet, we are told also that Jesus gently restored him (John 21:15-19) and he went on to be used by God as an instrumental leader in the church until his death.

These three books are letters written to Christians living for Jesus in real life situations: people just like us. They show us the truth about Jesus and they encourage us to speak about him and live in a way that honours him.

JAMES

The letter of James is an encouragement to live wisely as God's people in this world.

The opening paragraph reminds us that the journey to wisdom is often painful (James 1:2-4) and wisdom is something we should pray for. We are also told that God loves to give us wisdom (James 1:5-7).

The rest of the book works out this call to wisdom practically in various areas of the Christian life. Some of the key themes of James include:

- Our attitude to money (1:9-11, 5:1-6)
- The relationship of faith and actions (1:19-27, 2:14-26)

- The use of words (3:1-12)
- The importance of humility (4:1-17)
- Patience in waiting for Jesus (5:1-12)
- The power of prayer (5:13-18)

1 PETER

This is the first of Peter's letters and it was written to Christians who were experiencing persecution. He writes to encourage his readers to keep going and to stand firm in Jesus as they face various trials.

As you read, notice how Peter first tells us something wonderful about Jesus and our salvation and then he applies that to action in our lives. Here are some of the encouragements he gives us:

- God has given you hope in Jesus (1:3)
- God has redeemed you in Jesus (1:18-19)
- God has made you into his people (2:9-10)
- Godly lives have an impact on those around us (2:11-12)
- Jesus suffered for you (2:23-25)
- Persecution is not unusual for God's people (4:12)

2 PETER

This letter appears to have been written near to Peter's death (2 Peter 1:15). He is concerned that the church will be firmly established in the truth (1 Peter 1:12) and face the future with hope in Jesus.

He writes because he does not want the church to be taken astray by the teaching of false teachers. He encourages them to:

- Grow in Jesus (1:3-11)
- Be wary of false teaching (2:1-22)
- Wait patiently and expectantly for Jesus to return (3:1-18)

ASKING THE QUESTIONS THE BIBLE WANTS YOU TO ASK

What does this book teach you about Jesus? (Luke 24:45-47)

What does this book teach you about yourself? (James 1:23 & 2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you encouraged? (2 Tim 3:16-17)

How were you corrected? (Romans 15:4)

What difference do the truths of this book make in your life (Matthew 7:24-27)