

Hebrews and the General Epistles

Hebrews, James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, and Jude

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Of the twenty-seven books that make up the New Testament, twenty-one are epistles. Additionally, letters can be found in Acts 15:23–29; 23:25–30 and Revelation 2–3 contains seven short letters addressed to churches in western Asia Minor. Thus, any reading of the New Testament necessarily involves a considerable engagement with letters. Beyond the thirteen letters attributed to Paul, which were either addressed to a specific branch of the church (1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians), multiple church branches in the same geographic area (Galatians and Romans), or to an individual (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon), there are eight additional letters in the New Testament. Seven of these eight letters are known by the designation “General Epistles.” In this context “general” has to do with the fact that these letters are generally open or “universal” (Greek καθολικός, *katholikos*) and addressed to Christians at large rather than to a specific branch or individual.¹ While this designation is mostly accurate, there are of course exceptions within this rubric: both 2 and 3 John are addressed to a specific group or person; furthermore, while Hebrews, strictly speaking, is not counted as one of the General Epistles, it is “general” in the sense that it is addressed to Christians as a whole and not to a specific group. In this chapter these eight letters will be briefly surveyed in canonical order with various issues being specially addressed, such as their authorship and date, audience and genre, and content as well.

Hebrews

Authorship and date

The authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a subject that has been in question since the second and third centuries AD. Readers of the KJV Bible will note that the title states, “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.” Yet missing is the typical Pauline salutation, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus of Christ . . .,” that followed the standard epistolary formula of his time, which included name and position.² Various reasons for associating Hebrews with Paul have been offered, such as the closing benediction conferring grace to the audience, references to the author being in bonds (10:34; 13:3), the greeting of “they of Italy,” and the mention of Timothy, Paul’s mission companion. The subscription following the end of Hebrews in the KJV New Testament also states that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written “from Italy by Timothy,” but one cannot necessarily assume that the Timothy in Hebrews is the same Timothy that accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys, since this statement is not corroborated in scripture and contradicts the author’s report in 13:23—“Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.”³ Thus, it appears that Timothy was going to join the author and then visit the originally intended audience of Hebrews.

In addition to the absence of any self-identifying salutation at the beginning of the work, arguments against Pauline authorship include differences in a more expansive vocabulary, refined grammar, and employment of different rhetoric (using elements such as alliteration, catchwords, and repetitions) as compared to the Pauline corpus.⁴ Absence of Pauline themes such as justification and sanctification, and the concentration on the high priesthood of Christ, which is missing from the Pauline Epistles, could also support a non-Pauline authorship. Other scholars have noted that the theme of the Resurrection is seemingly absent, and the understanding of faith differs from Paul’s.⁵ The most cited passage within Hebrews against Pauline authorship is: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him” (2:3), which scholars interpret as an indication that the author did not hear the gospel directly from Jesus but was a “second-generation” Christian, someone who had not had interaction with Christ but was taught by someone else.⁶ These reasons do not provide insurmountable evidence against Pauline authorship of Hebrews, just as none of the evidence supporting such an authorship is overwhelming.

Since the third century AD, various church scholars and leaders have advanced diverse opinions about the author of Hebrews with alternative authors put forward such as Luke and Barnabas, or even Timothy, Priscilla and Aquilla, Clement of Rome, a disciple of Paul who transcribed his oral teachings, or some well-educated Hellenistic Jew who was learned in the Septuagint and converted to Christianity.⁷ While not making a definitive statement about the Pauline authorship for the entire Epistle to the Hebrews, Joseph Smith did ascribe Hebrews 6:17 and 11:4 to Paul.⁸ Subsequent Latter-day Saint General Authorities have employed the phrase “the writer of Hebrews” when citing the epistle.⁹ For the Latter-day Saint, the value

of the text is the doctrine contained therein, not necessarily the authorship—whether it be Paul, Luke, Barnabas, or someone else.

Issues surrounding authorship also complicate the dating of Hebrews. A general date range of AD 60–100 has been proposed to account for various points of argument about the date of composition. D. A. Carson and D. J. Moo note that although the phrase “confirmed unto us by them that heard him” has been used to argue for a “second generation” of Christians, this should be understood generationally and not chronologically.¹⁰ The quotations of Hebrews in 1 Clement dated to ca. AD 96, based on a likely reference to persecutions under the Roman emperor Domitian, provide a date before which Hebrews could have been written. Further, if the Timothy mentioned in 13:23 is the companion of Paul in the New Testament, then the book would need to have been written in his lifetime, sometime during the second half of the first century AD. While some scholars have attempted to connect 12:4 (“Ye have not yet resisted unto blood”) to the persecution of the church under the emperor Nero around AD 64, such specific details cannot be gleaned from the text, especially considering the various persecutions that the church endured from the Jews and the Romans from its founding. The strongest evidence for an early date (pre-AD 70) for Hebrews comes from its discussion of sacrifice and ritual of the high priest in present-tense verbs (see 10:1–2), and although that is associated with the tabernacle within the text, the descriptions of these elements would have had strong correlates with the Jerusalem temple, which operated until its destruction in AD 70. If the temple was already destroyed by the time that Hebrews was written, Carson and Moo posit that the author would have likely mentioned the temple’s ruin and made different arguments about sacrifice in connection to Christ’s work.¹¹ Finally, while some have associated the high Christology of Hebrews, discussed below, with later works like Luke–Acts or 1 Peter, commonly dated after AD 70, the Christology presented in Hebrews is similar to that of epistles considered to be pre-AD 70, such as 1 Corinthians, Philippians, or Colossians. Overall, while the evidence allows a general date of AD 60–100, it is likely that Hebrews was written before the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in AD 70.

Audience and genre

Throughout this chapter, Hebrews is categorized as an epistle. Although the expected epistolary formula of salutation and addressees typical of most other New Testament epistles is missing, Hebrews closes with a benediction, personal remarks, and a farewell typical of epistles in the Roman era. The designation of the work as an epistle has been nuanced by several observations and analyses of the missive’s rhetorical structure. The rhetorical elements employed strongly suggest that the document is a sermon or group of sermons or teachings packaged as a letter to a particular, albeit unnamed, audience.¹² A number of locations have been suggested for the audience, including Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, Bithynia and Pontus, Caesarea Maritima, Colossae, Corinth, Cyprus, Ephesus, Samaria, or Rome, with the last locale having the most scholarly support. The polished Greek of the epistle strongly suggests that the audience was composed of native Greek speakers rather than people having

Greek as a second language, and thus the audience could have been located anywhere within the Eastern Roman Empire. Like authorship, the destination of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not meaningfully contribute or detract from the theological message of the work.

Without a salutation, the audience of the Epistle to the Hebrews must remain somewhat unknown.¹³ Despite this missing information, the original intended recipients were Christians who probably had some strong connections to Judaism either by being Jewish converts, having biological or cultural affinity, or being attracted to the ritual of the tabernacle as presented in the Septuagint. The author confronts the notion that these Christians would apostatize in the face of hardship. Regardless of their background, the author's purpose is to persuade the audience not to turn from Christianity toward Judaism or toward a more conservative Jewish Christianity but to endure hardship, recognize the superiority of Jesus Christ, rely on him as sacrifice and high priest, draw on the examples of faith found in the Old Testament, and avoid apostasy.

Content

The overarching message of Hebrews is the superiority of Jesus Christ above angelic messengers, human prophets, and the law of Moses with the attendant Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system. Christ's preeminence is repeatedly stressed throughout the document, warning its audience not to reject Christ in favor of other faith traditions.¹⁴ The opening (1:1–4) of Hebrews evinces a high Christology and affirms his place as the ultimate divine revelation. This is followed by a discussion of the Son being superior to angels (1:5–14). The author of Hebrews argues that Christ's incarnation and sufferings afford him not only the right to receive glory and honor as the "captain," or originator and founder, of salvation but also the right to act as a high priest and provide reconciliation to God and succor for the believer in the midst of temptation (2:9–10, 16–18). The positions of Moses and Jesus are contrasted, also with the intention of illustrating Christ's supremacy, by noting that whereas Moses was a faithful servant in the household of God, Christ as the Son occupies a higher position (3:5–6). Even the "rest of the Lord" promised in the Old Testament is regarded as less than the rest that Christ promises, a rest that will parallel that of God's, which can be understood as the culminating act in the Creation (3:7–4:10; Genesis 2:2–3).¹⁵

The writer of Hebrews then reasons that Christ embodies a higher priesthood, provides a superior sacrifice, and initiates a better covenant with better promises. Continuing a theme briefly mentioned before the discussion of Moses, the author relates that Christ is a great high priest who can empathize with the human condition, enabling believers to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, . . . obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (4:14–16). Christ's status as a high priest is elevated above the Levitical priesthood by virtue of being a high priest "after the order of Melchisedec" (5:6, 10). After warning against spiritual immaturity and apostasy and encouraging his audience to persevere considering God's promised covenantal blessings, the author of Hebrews, quoting Psalm 110 and Genesis 14:18–20, draws on the character of Melchizedek as he appears in biblical literature to

describe the nature of Christ's priesthood. In contrast to the historical figure of Melchizedek, who assuredly had an actual father and mother, likely had descendants, and had other relationships in his social context, Melchizedek as described in Genesis has no lineage: no father or mother is given for him there. After blessing Abraham and receiving Abraham's tithe in Genesis 14, nothing more about Melchizedek is related. Therefore, Melchizedek literally had no beginning and had no end (compare JST Hebrews 7:3), a concept noted by the psalmist in Psalm 110, describing how David's Lord is to be "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). Using this as a type, the author of Hebrews illustrates the eternal nature of Christ's priesthood. Since Christ was not from the tribe of Levi, he could not function as a high priest in a temporal sense within the tabernacle or temple. Yet in the spiritual sense, as the author of Hebrews shows, Christ's priesthood is eternal like that of Melchizedek's, and in this way he is superior to any of the earthly high priests that served in the tabernacle or temple.

This discussion of Melchizedek and the role of the high priest leads to a discussion of the permanency of Christ's sacrifice. In contrast to the sacrifices made under the Levitical system, his atoning sacrifice saves completely (Hebrews 7:25), and the sacrifices performed were a shadow of the new covenant and the new high priest (8:1–13). The superiority of Christ as both sacrifice and high priest is shown through the description of the Day of Atonement ritual in Hebrews 9. The author indicates that Christ's sacrifice of his own blood is borne by himself as the high priest into the heavenly tabernacle. Unlike an earthly high priest who would bring in the blood from sacrifices on the Day of Atonement, sprinkle the blood on the mercy seat on the ark of the covenant within the holy of holies, and then exit the most holy place, Jesus Christ entered the holy of holies in the heavenly tabernacle, presented his blood as a sacrifice at the mercy seat of God the Father, and then sat down enthroned at the right hand of the Father in heaven to serve as the believer's advocate. In this manner, Christ as sacrifice and high priest is continually present before the Father. The author then reinforces Christ's superiority in that the old sacrificial system foreshadowed Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

Following additional encouragement for the audience to continue in the Christian faith, the author of Hebrews then gives examples from scripture of people that maintain their faith in the face of adversity (11:1–40). The ultimate example of faith is Jesus Christ, who established the way to God by completing everything that was necessary for himself and believers to be able to return to the Father. The believer is further encouraged to consider trials a sign of discipline from a loving God. The writer of Hebrews then compares Zion to Sinai, encouraging his audience to continue steadfastly in the faith and serve God "acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (12:28).

The concluding chapter presents expectations for the readers of the document, including an injunction to follow the examples of those who brought them the gospel and other current leadership (13:1–8). Instead of the old sacrificial system, believers should now offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for what God has accomplished through Christ Jesus (see 13:9–16). The author closes with a request for prayer (13:18–19), a doxology (13:20–21), and some personal notes before giving a final benediction (13:22–25).

James

Authorship and date

The author of the Epistle of James identifies himself as “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). The author seems confident that readers will know who he is without further identification. The two most prominent people named James in the New Testament are the brother of John and the brother of Jesus. Although James the brother of John was an apostle, a member of Jesus’s most trusted inner circle (Peter, James, and John), and the first martyr among the apostles (Acts 12:2, ca. AD 44), the author of this epistle is typically understood to be James the Lord’s brother.¹⁶ The brothers of Jesus were not disciples during their brother’s mortal ministry (John 7:3–5). But the resurrected Jesus appeared to James (1 Corinthians 15:7), who eventually became a leader of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13; 21:18; Galatians 1:18–19; 2:9).¹⁷ It is possible that the Epistle of James was written during the mid to late 40s AD and was one of the earliest books of the New Testament to be written.

Audience and genre

The English name *James* translates the Greek name *Iakobos* (i.e. Jacob). James (or Jacob) addressed his epistle to “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (1:1). This may have been intended to recall the patriarch Jacob (Israel) addressing his twelve sons before his death (Genesis 49:3–27) as well as the scattering of their descendants by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. In this light, James addressed those who were reconstituted Israel (diaspora Jews) or new Israel (Jewish converts).¹⁸ As a leader of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, James would likely be viewed as having some authority over Jewish Christians in the diaspora. The Epistle of James is a sermon written in epistolary form. It begins like a typical letter, but it is addressed to a very general audience and contains none of the personal greetings we typically see in Paul’s letters.

Content

The first chapter of James contains a number of exhortations. The most noteworthy of these for Latter-day Saints is the one that inspired the young Joseph Smith to seek divine guidance: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (1:5).¹⁹ Another of these sayings defined in a practical way what it means to worship God: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” (1:27). The lack of reference to debates between gentile and Jewish Christians has persuaded some that this letter was written in the mid to late 40s AD, before church members began to deal with those issues.

The Epistle of James is probably most famous for its discussion of faith and works.²⁰ Some have viewed this discussion as a response to Paul’s doctrine of salvation through faith

and not by works (Ephesians 2:8–9). It would be more accurate, however, to understand this as a response to Christians who misinterpreted Paul’s usage of the word *faith* to mean mere belief apart from obedience.²¹ Paul himself responded to this kind of a misunderstanding: “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid” (Romans 6:1–2). Paul understood, rather, that true faith in Christ was sincere belief in him coupled with sincere effort to keep his commandments (Romans 2:1–6). Addressing this misunderstanding of Paul’s teachings, James reasoned: “Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works” (2:17–18).

Another important issue addressed in the Epistle of James is self-control, directed in particular at those who “offend” others with their words (3:2).²² James warned Christians: “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. . . . It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (3:6, 8). He taught that “the tongue is a little member” of the body that “boasteth great things” (3:5) and as a result “defileth the whole body” (3:6). James likened this tiny body part to horse bits that can “turn about their whole body” (3:3), ships that are “turned about with a very small helm” (3:4), and small sparks, for “how great a matter [i.e., a forest] a little fire kindleth” (3:5). He lamented that “out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing” and declared “these things ought not so to be” (3:10). Apparently there had been reports of “envying and strife” (3:16) among some groups of Christians. James encouraged these quarreling members to seek after “the wisdom that is from above” (3:17), which would fill them with “the fruit of righteousness” in order to “make peace” (3:18).

In addition, James discussed “wars and fightings among you” (meaning interpersonal rather than armed conflicts) that arose from “your lusts that war in your members” (4:1), meaning in the body. He had in mind those who broke the commandments that prohibited killing, coveting, and adultery (4:2–5) as well as those who “speaketh evil” against each other (4:11). In response, James exhorted those who participated in such conflicts to “submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (4:7) and to “draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (4:8).²³

James seems to be aware of a version of the Sermon on the Mount that is similar to the one recorded in Matthew 5–7.²⁴ In his famous sermon, Jesus acknowledged the commandment in Leviticus 19:18 to “love thy neighbor” and taught people to also “love your enemies” (Matthew 5:43–44). James encouraged his audience to “do well” by keeping this “royal law” to love your neighbor as yourself (2:8). Later, he also warned anyone who “judgeth his brother” (4:11) and “judgeth another” (4:12), meaning his neighbor. An even more explicit connection between the Epistle of James and the Sermon on the Mount is found in James’s counsel for Christians to “swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation” (5:12). This recalled the teaching of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount: “Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool. . . . But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Matthew 5:34–35, 37).

James concluded by encouraging his readers to follow the examples of Old Testament prophets. He reminded them that Job was “an example of suffering affliction, and of patience” (5:10). Specifically, James said that Christians should be patient, “for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (5:8). This explicit expectation of the imminent return of Christ, also seen in Paul’s earliest epistles (compare 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:13–18), is another reason for an early dating of the Epistle of James. Finally, James closed his epistle by exhorting his audience to follow the example of Elijah, whose prayers initially caused the famine but then brought lifesaving rain for the Israelites (5:17–18). Similarly, Christians should pray in behalf of those who are sick, for “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (5:16).

1–2 Peter

Authorship and date

Both 1 and 2 Peter claim to be written by Peter, who was “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1).²⁵ Some scholars doubt that Peter, an Aramaic-speaking fisherman from Galilee, would have possessed the skills necessary to write such sophisticated letters in Greek and quote from the Septuagint.²⁶ But it is likely that Peter knew at least some Greek from interacting with Gentiles for his fishing business in Galilee as well as from his decades of preaching to non-Jews both at home (Acts 10:19–48) and, according to tradition, in Rome. It is also possible that Peter, like Paul, employed well-trained, Greek-speaking scribes who helped construct and edit these letters into their final, polished form.²⁷ According to early Christian tradition, Peter was executed in Rome during the reign of Nero sometime between AD 64 and 68.²⁸ Therefore, 1 and 2 Peter would have been composed before that time.

Audience and genre

First Peter is addressed to the “elect” (1:2) who are “strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia” (1:1). There is no account of Peter visiting these locations in Asia Minor, but on the day of Pentecost he communicated with Jews “out of every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5), including those whose homes were in “Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia” (2:9). On that day of miracles, three thousand were baptized (2:41). It is likely that some of them were from Asia Minor and subsequently took the gospel back home. This would help explain Peter’s concern for those in this area.²⁹ Second Peter is addressed to faithful Christians: those who have received “precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (1:1). This epistle has much in common with an ancient farewell address, similar to the final words of Moses to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 31–33 or King Benjamin to the Nephites in Mosiah 2–5.³⁰ The two epistles begin like typical letters but are written to very general audiences and lack the personal greetings typical of Paul’s epistles; they are therefore categorized as sermons in epistolary form.

Content

Peter began by reminding his audience that the resurrection of Jesus Christ should provide for Christians a “lively” (i.e., living or vibrant) hope in a future “inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled” that awaited them in heaven (1 Peter 1:3–4).³¹ While on earth, however, Christians were to be “holy in all manner of conversation” (1:15), just as the ancient Israelites were commanded by the Lord, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1:16; compare Leviticus 11:44–45). This is made possible, explained Peter, through the Savior because of his atonement: “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1:18–19). Thus, Christians are “lively stones” and should become “a spiritual house” (i.e., a holy temple) with Jesus Christ as “the head of the corner” (i.e., the cornerstone, 2:5–7). And just as the Lord declared concerning his ancient covenant people, so he declared to his new covenant people their special status: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people” (2:9; compare Exodus 19:5–6).

Peter told his Christian audience that Gentiles “speak against you as evildoers” (1 Peter 2:12). Christians were sometimes accused of teaching and doing things that were against the laws or traditions of the empire (compare Acts 16:20–21). This may be why Peter then counseled his audience to “submit yourselves to every ordinance of man” (1 Peter 2:13). The phrase “ordinance of man” means a human institution, such as the government. This submission would also be to “the king” (i.e., the emperor) and to local “governors” (2:13–14).³² By being good examples of proper behavior toward government, Peter declared, Christians could “put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” who thought they were disloyal (2:15). Proper behavior should also extend to relationships within one’s own household, such as masters and servants (2:18), husbands and wives (3:1–7), elders and youth (5:5), and, in fact, everyone: “be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren” (3:8).

Peter then employed references to the suffering of Christ as a point of entry into his teachings concerning the postmortal mission of Christ. Just as Christ suffered for the sins of those who are unjust, so he also “preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient” (1 Peter 3:19–20). During the time in the spirit world between Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection, “the gospel was preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit” (4:6). Latter-day Saints are blessed with additional insights into these passages from a revelation in Doctrine and Covenants 138 given through President Joseph F. Smith in 1918.³³ According to this revelation, Christ did not personally preach to all the wicked spirits but appointed messengers from among the righteous spirits to spread the gospel message (Doctrine and Covenants 138:29–31).

By the time Peter wrote this epistle, Christians seem to have been suffering local persecution, for he reminded them not to consider it “strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you” (1 Peter 4:12).³⁴ Rather, persecuted disciples should “rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings” (4:13). Followers of Christ should be “happy” because they bring glory to their Savior through their

suffering (4:14). It is much better, explained Peter, that they remain true and “suffer as a Christian” rather than suffer as a result of sinful behavior (4:15–16). They should continue to do well as they “commit the keeping of their souls” to God (4:19).

First Peter concludes with Peter acknowledging that this epistle came to his readers “by Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you” (5:12). Silvanus was either the scribe whom Peter employed to write this epistle or possibly the emissary who delivered it. In addition, Peter sent greetings from “the church that is at Babylon” (5:13). Just as John in the book of Revelation, Peter seems to use the name *Babylon* as a code name for Rome (compare Revelation 16:19; 17:9). Finally, Peter sent greeting specifically from “Marcus my son” (1 Peter 5:13). This is very likely a reference to John Mark, whom Paul took as a companion on his first mission (Acts 12:25), and who, according to early Christian tradition, later became Peter’s companion while in Rome.

Second Peter contains features that have caused scholars to identify it as an ancient farewell address.³⁵ Peter anticipated that his death would be soon: “shortly I must put off this my tabernacle” (1:14). He declared that while he was still “in this tabernacle” (1:13), he would “not be negligent” (1:12) to give counsel, which he intended his readers to remember following his “decrease” (1:15). He reminded Christians of the “exceeding great and precious promises” given to them whereby they “might be partakers of the divine nature” (1:4), taken by some scholars as support for the doctrine of theosis (or deification).³⁶ To receive such sacred blessings, he encouraged his audience to “add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (1:5–7). Latter-day Saints recognize similar language in a revelation given to Joseph Smith Sr. (Doctrine and Covenants 4:6).

Peter exhorted his readers to make their “calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” (2 Peter 1:10), and “an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (1:11).³⁷ In connection with this, he recounted the eyewitness “of [Christ’s] majesty” he received on the Mount of Transfiguration as a heavenly voice bore testimony of the Son of God (1:16–18; compare Matthew 17:1–5). Peter then reminded his audience that, if faithful, they could also receive a “more sure word of prophecy” that would be to them like “a light that shineth in a dark place” (2 Peter 1:19). The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that this more sure word included personal knowledge that one “is sealed up unto eternal life” (Doctrine and Covenants 131:5).

This is followed by repeated warnings against wickedness, with comparisons to various stories from the past, such as the hosts of heaven who were cast out in the premortal existence (2 Peter 2:4), those who lived at the time of Noah (2:5), the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah (2:6), and the false prophet Balaam (2:15). Since the Epistle of Jude employs similar examples, they will be discussed below.

In the final chapter of 2 Peter, the apostle gave counsel concerning “scoffers” who will come forth “in the last days” (3:3). These individuals will make fun of Christians for their be-

lief in the second coming of Jesus Christ. They will mock: “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (3:4). While the words of Peter are certainly applicable to the modern day, they also were likely intended to instruct Christians of Peter’s own day or the immediate future. Early Christians sometimes described their own time period as “the last days.” For example, the writer of Hebrews taught his first-century audience: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in *these last days* spoken unto us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1–2; emphasis added). Likewise, Peter himself prefaced his first epistle by concluding that Jesus Christ “was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in *these last times* for you” (1 Peter 1:20; emphasis added).

Whether for first-century saints or for Latter-day Saints, however, Peter’s counsel is relevant. While he likely intended the numbers to be understood figuratively rather than literally, Peter reminded his readers that God’s eternal timetable is different from the timetable of mortals: “be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8). He reassured Christians who may have been concerned that Christ had not returned yet: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise [to return]” (3:9), but the Second Coming will happen as unexpectedly “as a thief in the night” (3:10). In the meantime, Christians should continue waiting faithfully for, looking forward to, and preparing for that glorious day (3:12–14).

In conclusion, Peter mentioned the writings of “our beloved brother Paul” (3:15) and admitted that “all his epistles” contained “some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [i.e., distort], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (3:16).³⁸ Earlier, Peter had warned his readers that “no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (1:20). It is significant to note from these references that by the time of the writing of 2 Peter, Paul’s epistles had already begun to be collected together and were being referred to as scripture.

1–3 John

Authorship and date

None of the three Johannine letters contain the name *John* in the text, and 1 John is actually anonymous (like Hebrews) since the author never explicitly identifies himself. Nevertheless, it begins with the first person plural “we” (1:1), wherein the author proceeds to make the point that he (along with others) is a personal witness of the Lord, whom all of them have both seen and touched (1:1). Thus, from the beginning the author claims to be a special witness of the Lord Jesus (1:1–5). Additionally, 1 John contains a number of places that parallel what is found in the Gospel of John (1 John 1:1–4 parallel John 1:1–18; 1 John 3:11–17, 23; 4:7–21 parallel John 13:31–35), and overall the styles of 1 John and the Gospel of John are very similar. Finally, already by the second century, early Christians had taken the author to

be the apostle John.³⁹ There are, therefore, good reasons to think that the apostle John was the source of this text.

In both 2 and 3 John the author identifies himself as the “elder” (*presbuteros*) in the first verse of each letter. The title could signify one of two possibilities: (1) the office of “elder” or “presbyter” within the early church or (2) a reference to his authoritative status and age. In 1 Peter 5:1, Peter also refers to himself as an “elder” and yet at the start of the same letter in 1 Peter 1:1 he refers to himself as an “apostle.” Thus, the use of “elder” does not necessarily preclude the author of 2 and 3 John from being the apostle John, whom many early Christians supposed was the author.⁴⁰ Furthermore, in 2 John 1:4–6 there is a distinct parallel with John 13:34–35 (and 1 John 2:7–10), which could further reinforce the idea that John was the source of these two letters. On the other hand, modern scholarship has tended to distinguish the author of 2 and 3 John from the author of the Gospel of John.

As with most books in the New Testament, dating the Johannine Epistles is educated guesswork. There is nothing explicit within any of the letters that allows for a precise dating, and ascribing any date(s) always relies on a series of assumptions and constructs. One such construct is that the parallels between 1 John and the Gospel of John are taken as evidence that the former relies on the latter. Thus, it is commonly held that 1 John was written after the Gospel of John. In general, these letters have been dated to the last three decades of the first century (ca. AD 70–100), with the majority of scholarship opting for the last decade of the first century. By the first half of the second century, 1 John had already been cited by at least two different Christian authors and was thought by them to have been written while John was residing in Ephesus.⁴¹

Audience and genre

Though 1 John is designated among the New Testament epistles, in its literary form it lacks the trappings of a letter: the author never explicitly identifies himself at the beginning, which is typical in actual letters, and there is no address or greeting at the beginning and no valediction or conclusion at the end (compare 1 and 2 John). Overall, 1 John reads more like a homily or, perhaps, even an essay that was written to deal with a few different problems that had emerged in some early Christian congregations.⁴² First John is addressed to those Christians who had stayed within the fold and who are called at various times “little children” (1 John 2:1, 12–13, 18, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21)—presumably people in fellowship with John and whom he regarded as his spiritual offspring.

Second John is addressed to the “elect lady and her children” (1:1). While this could be an actual woman and her children, the most common interpretation is that the “elect lady” refers to a local church and “her children” refers to its members. Thus, like certain of Paul’s letters, 2 John appears to be directed to a specific branch of the church.

In 3 John the letter is addressed to a man named Gaius (1:1), who was a member of a local congregation. While the exact identification of Gaius is unknown, the author calls him “beloved” (1:1); includes him among his “children” (1:4), which is perhaps the author’s

designation of Christians who were in fellowship (compare 1 John 2:1); and reports that Gaius has walked “in truth” (1:4). Second and 3 John are the shortest two texts in the New Testament, and both read just like an actual letter with the constituent parts (2 John: verses 1–3 address and letter opening, verses 4–11 body of letter, verses 12–13 valediction and letter closing; 3 John: verses 1–4 address and letter opening, verses 5–12 body of letter, verses 13–15 valediction and letter closing).

Content

First John begins with the author’s powerful witness of the Lord, specifically, that he has both “seen” and “handled” the Savior (1:1–3). This is immediately followed by an injunction that the true followers abide in “light” and have no part in “darkness” (1:5–7). Thus, the opening verses echo in various ways John 1:1–18, which discusses the incarnation by employing light and darkness imagery. First John continues with a discussion of sin and expiation, which comes through Jesus, whose “blood . . . cleanseth us from all sin” (1:7), who is an “advocate” (2:1; compare John 14:16), and who offered himself as a “propitiation for our sins” (2:2). Because of this, his followers can conquer and triumph over evil (2:12–17).

As 1 John proceeds, there is a preoccupation with certain people who “went out from us” (2:19). The context of this phrase suggests that these people had left both the fold of the faithful and had rejected the true faith in favor of adhering to different teachings regarding the person of Jesus. In this context these defectors are labeled “antichrists” on multiple occasions in 1 John (2:18, 22; 4:3), and once in 2 John 1:7, because they were denying (1) “that Jesus was the Christ” (2:22) and (2) that he had “come in the flesh” (4:2–3). Their denial that “he had come in the flesh” does not mean that they were contesting that Jesus ever actually existed, but rather that he actually had a corporeal body (i.e., flesh) during his ministry. Here it appears that this group was adhering to a form of what would later be called “docetism,” from the Greek *dokeō* (δοκέω) meaning “to suppose, seem,” and was alleging that Jesus only “seemed” or “appeared” to have flesh, while in reality he was just a spiritual being or phantasm during his lifetime.

What was at play in later conceptions of docetism was the belief that a divine being, such as Jesus, could not have had a corporeal body since this would necessarily imply that it would have been subject to pain, hunger, sickness, aging, and death. Thus, as Christianity spread in the second century, certain groups maintained that Jesus, a divine being, never had a physical body, only appeared as a phantasm, and never actually suffered and died. For these groups the central purpose of Jesus’s mission had nothing to do with his salvific act of atonement, as he could not have actually suffered and died, and so they asserted that Jesus brought salvation in another way—mainly through the secret “knowledge” (Greek *gnōsis*) that he imparted. While it is not clear that those who “went out from us” in 1 John had completely adopted docetism (or were espousing “knowledge” as the way to salvation), their beliefs apparently had docetic elements. Thus, 1 John makes it clear from the very first that the author had actually “handled” (1:1) Jesus, which means that Jesus must have had a corporeal

body and that those “antichrists” who had left the fellowship were in error. At the same time, the point is made in 1 John that it was the “blood of Jesus” that ultimately “cleanseth us from all sin” (1:7), highlighting the fact that Jesus both had a body (blood) and that his suffering and death enabled purification. A few verses later in 1 John 2:2 the point is made that Jesus offered himself as a “propitiation” for sin. The term translated “propitiation” is more clearly rendered “atoning sacrifice” and is from the Greek ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*), a term used in the Old Testament (LXX) in connection with the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 25:9; Numbers 5:8). Thus, Jesus’s salvific act was his atoning sacrifice that he could perform because he could suffer, bleed, and die, as he had a corporeal body.

First John continues with the theme of Jesus’s corporal body in 1 John 5, but this has been obfuscated somewhat because of a well-known interpolation in the King James Bible. In 1 John 5:7–8 the KJV reads as follows: “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” While these passages later evolved into a Trinitarian proof-text, with the erroneous insertion of “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (see chapter 39 herein), the actual reading for these verses is “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” The reference here to spirit, water, and blood is tied to the testimony of Jesus and the fact that he had a body; both “water” and “blood” are explicitly mentioned together in John 19:34–35, when Jesus’s dead body was on the cross and was pierced by the spear of the Roman soldier. Thus, a central theme of 1 John, in the face of those who had abandoned the faith and were denying the mortality and corporeality of Jesus, was that Jesus was mortal and had a corporal body, which enabled him to make an atoning sacrifice for sin.

Besides dealing with the recent apostasy, another overriding theme in 1 John is the subject of “love”—the Greek *agapē* (ἀγάπη). As in the farewell discourse of Jesus at the Last Supper and in the Intercessory Prayer in John 14–17, wherein “love” (*agapē*) becomes a hallmark of discipleship, so also in 1 John the attribute of love is the mark of a true disciple (2:10–11; 3:11, 14, 18, 23; 5:2). As 1 John concludes, there is an appeal to keep the true faith (5:1–13): Jesus is the Christ (5:1, 5); disciples must have love for each other and for God (5:2–3); and Jesus’s death brought salvation (5:6–12). In the epilogue (5:14–21), followers are reminded once again about Christ’s role in salvation; promised that if they pray, the Father will truly hear them; and told to keep themselves from idolatry.

Second John opens with “the elder” addressing “the elect lady and her children” (1:1) and expressing a hope that grace, mercy, and peace might abide in them from the Father and the Son (1:3). When the body of the letter opens in verse 4, the elder begins by commending the recipients since he has heard that they have continued to walk in truth (1:5–6) and that they have shown love to one another as they have been commanded (compare John 13:34–35). In verses 7–11, a warning is then given against deceivers, called antichrists, who were denying that Christ actually had a corporeal body while in mortality (see discussion above on 1 John), and an admonition is included that no one should associate with such people.

The letter concludes in verses 12–13, with the author expressing hope that he might soon be able to see the addressees personally, since he has much more to relate, and ends with a final salutation (compare 3 John 1:13–14).

Third John begins with “the elder” addressing an individual named Gaius, followed by a wish that Gaius might remain in health and prosperity (1:2). When the body of the letter commences in verse 3, the elder commends Gaius, just as he did the elect lady and her children (2 John 1:4), because he has heard that Gaius walks in the truth; the elder expresses joy on such account (3 John 1:4). In verses 5–8 Gaius is entreated to receive a group of traveling missionaries, with the author noting that Gaius’s charitable reputation precedes him and showing how Gaius’s charity would be helping with the work of evangelization. Proceeding to verses 9–11, the elder continues to encourage Gaius to show charity to the group of traveling missionaries by highlighting the negative example of a certain Diotrephes, who had not only refused the group but had also spoken malicious words against them and the elder. In verse 12 the elder commends a certain Demetrius, presumably the bearer of the letter, whom Gaius is to receive (compare Romans 16:1–2); and in verses 13–14 the elder concludes the letter by expressing hope that since he has much more to say, he plans to visit Gaius personally (compare 2 John 1:12–13). The letter ends with a salutation of peace (1:14).

Jude

Authorship and date

The author of the Epistle of Jude calls himself “the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James” (1:1). The Gospel of Mark records that Jesus had many brothers, two of whom were named James and Judah (Mark 6:3). Jude is traditionally identified as this Judah.⁴³ Later Christians remembered this brother of Jesus as Jude, rather than his Greek name Judas, possibly to avoid being associated with Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus (Mark 3:19). As stated above, the brothers of Jesus were not disciples during their brother’s mortal ministry (John 7:3–5). It is possible, however, that the resurrected Jesus appeared to his brother Jude, just as he had to James (1 Corinthians 15:7). Some have suggested that Jude was an apostle, but there is no solid foundation for such an identification.⁴⁴ Early Christian tradition holds that Jude was martyred ca. AD 65 in Beirut, within the Roman province of Syria. Whether or not this tradition is accurate, this epistle would have been written before Jude died.

Audience and genre

The Epistle of Jude was addressed to those who were “called” and “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ” (1:1). The identification of Judah the brother of Jesus as the author of this epistle suggests he became a figure of authority in the early church in the years following the death of Jesus Christ, just as did his brother James (Acts 15:13). This would help explain why Jude felt it was appropriate for him to write a letter of doctrine and counsel to a general audience of Christians. The Epistle of Jude is also a sermon written in

epistolary form because in spite of its beginning like a typical letter, it is addressed to a very general audience and contains no personal greetings similar to those we find in Paul's letters.

Content

Jude pled with his Christian audience to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (1:3). The primary concern for Jude seems to be apostasy from within the church membership: “certain men crept in unawares” (1:4).⁴⁵ Specifically, he called these individuals “ungodly men” who were “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:4). In verse 8, Jude called them “filthy dreamers” (i.e., claiming false revelation) who “defile the flesh” (i.e., practice immorality). They also “despise dominion” (i.e., refuse to follow counsel from their leaders) and “speak evil of dignities” (i.e., rebel against church leaders).

Jude likened the circumstances of these apostates to various stories from the past. First, he reminded his audience of the fate of the first generation of Israelites who perished as a result of their rebellion in the wilderness (1:5; compare Numbers 14:35). Next, he recalled how a third of the hosts of heaven were cast out because they followed Satan (1:6; compare Revelation 12:9).⁴⁶ Third, he evoked the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, whose inhabitants were destroyed for their immorality (1:7; compare Genesis 19:24–25). Fourth, in verse 11 he stated that the apostates have “gone in the way of Cain,” who killed his brother Abel (compare Genesis 4:8); run “greedily after the error of Balaam,” who went with Balak in order to curse Israel for money (compare Numbers 22:6–22); and will perish just as “Core” (or Korah), who rebelled against the authority of Moses (compare Numbers 16:31–33).

Interestingly, Jude referred to two examples that are not contained in our current Bible nor in latter-day scripture, but rather in other ancient Jewish literature (i.e., *The Assumption of Moses* and *the Book of Enoch*).⁴⁷ First, he mentioned the story of “Michael the archangel,” who disputed with the devil concerning “the body of Moses” and refused to accuse the devil but said, “The Lord rebuke thee” (1:9). This example reassured Jude’s audience that even though apostates may seem to escape punishment for the time being, the Lord will eventually punish according to his own timetable those who rebelled against him. In a similar line of thought, Jude also quoted from a prophecy of Enoch concerning the Lord’s coming “with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all” (1:14–15). It is noteworthy that Jude referred to these stories as authoritative, though they are beyond what is contained in the traditional Jewish or Christian canon of scripture.



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Notes

1. In certain quarters of Protestantism today, these epistles are sometimes called the “lesser epistles” since they are not regarded with as much theological esteem as the letters of Paul. This Protestant notion is largely the result of Martin Luther’s low appraisal of certain of these letters.
2. For a full discussion of numerous positions for and against Pauline authorship of Hebrews, including Latter-day Saint General Authorities since Joseph Smith, see Terrence L. Szink, “Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews,” in *How the New Testament Came to Be*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 243–59.
3. Scholars consider this subscription and others associated with the New Testament epistles as part of an apparatus attributed to Euthalius, bishop of Sulca in Egypt, who added to these texts to further aid the reader. Although the inclusion of this material into various manuscript traditions varies, a general date range of AD fourth to seventh centuries is likely. In referring to the accuracy of Euthalius’s work, Thomas Hartwell Horne noted that this man was “either grossly ignorant, or grossly inattentive.” T. H. Horne, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures* (London, England: T. Cadell, Strand, 1834), 2:76.
4. G. M. Burge, L. H. Cohick, and G. L. Green, *The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within Its Cultural Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 390–95.
5. Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth, and Content*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003), 284.
6. D. A. Carson and D. J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 604.
7. The earliest surviving manuscript of the Epistle to the Hebrews is dated to the third century AD and is placed among the Pauline Epistles after Romans. Eusebius preserved the statements of early church fathers such as Clement and Origen, who suggested that Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews but recognized the difficulties of that position. Clement proposed that owing to the similarities in Greek between Hebrews and Luke–Acts, Paul was the original author and the preserved Greek text is Luke’s translation (see Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.2). Origen suggested that one of Paul’s disciples took notes on his sermons and teachings and compiled them together into the current form of Hebrews, but he refused to speculate on the actual author: “But who wrote the epistle in truth God knows” (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.25.14). Tertullian considered Hebrews to not be Pauline in origin but thought that Barnabas had written the epistle. Both Jerome and Augustine influenced the church into considering Hebrews to be authentically Pauline, although Augustine varied in his opinion throughout his life. Reformation leaders like Calvin and Luther also opposed the idea of Pauline authorship of Hebrews, rejecting the long-standing Catholic tradition. Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 600–604.
8. In a letter to his son Silas Smith, Joseph discussed faith in the promises of God and drew on Hebrews 6:17–19, stating that “Paul said to his Hebrew brethren . . .” (“Letter to Silas Smith, 26 September 1833,” p. 4, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-silas-smith-26-september-1833/3>). Later, in teaching priesthood holders, Joseph Smith quoted Hebrews 11:4 and stated that Abel was sent from heaven to minister to Paul, indicating that Joseph attributed at least that portion of Hebrews to Paul (see “Instruction on Priesthood, 5 October 1840,” pp. 4–5, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/instruction-on-priesthood-4-october-1840/9>). He had previously discussed Abel’s plight as presented in Hebrews using the phrase “Paul in a letter to his Hebrew brethren” as part of a message to the Saints in Missouri published in *The Evening and the Morning Star* (“Letter to the Church, circa March 1834,” p. 143, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-church-circa-march-1834/2>).
9. See Szink, “Authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews” for a detailed set of references to General Authority use of “writer of Hebrews.”
10. Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 605.

11. Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 607; see also F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 20–22; and G. W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, Anchor Bible 36 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 261.
12. Bruce, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, 389.
13. The title “To the Hebrews” is found on the earliest extant manuscript dated to the third century AD (Chester Beatty P⁴⁶), and the second-century author Clement of Alexandria also referred to the work as “for Hebrews,” suggesting that the early church used this title as a reference that likely reflected an earlier understanding of the composition of the original addressees.
14. Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 597.
15. In its Genesis context, the “rest” that God enters on the seventh day of creation is not a period of inactivity; rather, “rest” for the deity as related to ancient Near Eastern thought, refers to the deity being enthroned in a temple after subduing chaos and establishing stability, peace, and order. J. H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 196–99.
16. Dale Allison Jr., *James: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), 3–31; and Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Letter of James* (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 92–110.
17. Gerald N. Lund, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, September 1975, 36–37. See also Thomas A. Wayment, “The Continuing Influence of the Family of Jesus in Early Christianity,” in *The Life and Teachings of the New Testament Apostles: From the Day of Pentecost Through the Apocalypse*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 134–56; and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, “The Family of Jesus,” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ: From the Transfiguration Through the Triumphal Entry*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 344–71.
18. Scot McKnight, *The Letter of James* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011), 59–68.
19. Steven C. Harper, *Joseph Smith’s First Vision: A Guide to the Historical Sources* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 26–27; and Craig K. Manscill, “‘If Any of You Lack Wisdom’: James’s Imperative to Israel,” in *Go Ye into All the World: Messages of the New Testament Apostles*, ed. Ray L. Huntington, Thomas A. Wayment, and Jerome M. Perkins (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 244–57.
20. Brian M. Hauglid, “‘As the Body without the Spirit’: James’s Epistle on Faith and Works,” in Huntington, Wayment, and Perkins, *Go Ye into All the World*, 276–89.
21. Mark D. Ellison, “Paul and James on Faith and Works,” *Religious Educator* 13, no. 3 (2012): 147–71. See also Brian M. Hauglid, “The Epistle of James: Anti-Pauline Rhetoric or a New Emphasis?,” in Holzapfel and Wayment, *Life and Teachings of the New Testament Apostles*, 157–70; and Stephen E. Robinson, *Following Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 82–85.
22. Charles Swift, “‘The Tongue Is a Fire’: The Symbolic Language of James 3,” in *Shedding Light on the New Testament: Acts–Revelation*, ed. Ray L. Huntington, Frank F. Judd Jr., and David M. Whitchurch (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 193–208.
23. David M. Whitchurch, “Discipleship and the Epistle of James,” in Huntington, Wayment, and Perkins, *Go Ye into All the World*, 258–75.
24. John W. Welch, “Echoes from the Sermon on the Mount,” in *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-day Scripture*, ed. Gaye Strathearn, Thomas A. Wayment, and Daniel L. Belnap (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 333–35.
25. Andrew C. Skinner, “Peter—The Chief Apostle,” in Huntington, Wayment, and Perkins, *Go Ye into All the World*, 187–219; and Brent L. Top, “Fallible but Faithful: How Simon the Fisherman Became Peter the Rock,” in *The Ministry of Peter, the Chief Apostle*, ed. Frank F. Judd Jr., Eric D. Huntsman, and Shon D. Hopkin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 1–12.
26. Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 15–16; and John H. Elliott, *1 Peter* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 118–30.

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28. Larry R. Helyer, *The Life and Witness of Peter* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 272–84; and Bart D. Ehrman, *Peter, Paul, & Mary Magdalene: The Followers of Jesus in History and Legend* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 84–86.
29. Judd, “Petrine Authorship of 1 Peter,” in Judd, Huntsman, and Hopkin, *The Ministry of Peter*, 248.
30. John W. Welch and Brent J. Schmidt, “Reading 2 Peter as a Farewell Text,” in Judd, Huntsman, and Hopkin, *Ministry of Peter*, 317–35.
31. Terry B. Ball, “Peter’s Principles: An Approach to the First Epistle of Peter,” in Huntington, Wayment, and Perkins, *Go Ye into All the World*, 222–23.
32. Eric-Jon K. Marlowe, “‘Honor the King’: Submission to Civil Authority,” in Judd, Huntsman, and Hopkin, *Ministry of Peter*, 283–96.
33. Scott C. Esplin, “Wondering at His Words: Peter’s Influence on Knowledge of Salvation for the Dead,” in Judd, Huntsman, and Hopkin, *Ministry of Peter*, 297–315; and M. Catherine Thomas, “Visions of Christ in the Spirit World and the Dead Redeemed,” in *Sperry Symposium Classics: The New Testament*, ed. Frank F. Judd Jr. and Gaye Strathearn (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 354–72.
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