

REL 1310 – Christian Scriptures

Hello and welcome to the weekly resources for REL-1310!

These resources are structured a bit differently from other online study guides on the Baylor Tutoring website because the content in these courses are organized largely around biblical histories and narratives. Please take a look at other weekly resources listed on our website for additional topics from Christian Scriptures throughout the semester. Your professor might be discussing these topics in a different order than presented here.

We also invite you to take a look at the group tutoring chart on our website to see if this course has a group tutoring session offered this semester.

If you have any questions about these study guides, group tutoring sessions, private 30-minute tutoring appointments, the Baylor Tutoring YouTube channel or any tutoring services we offer, please visit our website www.baylor.edu/tutoring or call our drop-in center during open business hours, M-Th 9am-8pm on class days, at 254-710-4135.

General Letters (plus Revelation)



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List of General Letters

- Hebrews
 - James
 - 1 & 2 Peter
 - 1, 2, & 3 John
 - Jude
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- James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1-3 John, Jude are called the **Catholic Epistles**.
 - Revelation is its own stand-alone book.

Hebrews

- Anonymous author
- Audience is Christians who are finding it difficult to continue in their faith.
- Likely a **homily** (sermon)
- Theme of Jesus being superior to all people, including prominent characters from the Old Testament.

James

- Written by James, the brother of Jesus.
- Audience is the descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel who had been spread all over the **diaspora** (area across the middle east where the Hebrew people had been spread after Israel & Judah were conquered in the Old Testament)
- Written as a teaching
- Themes of enduring trials, gaining wisdom, prayer, economic class struggles, speaking only good things, and actually practicing what is heard in the Bible.

1 Peter

- Tradition holds Peter wrote the letter.
- Addressed to exiles in the **Dispersion** (aka Jews in the diaspora)
- Addressed to churches that are being persecuted.
- Themes of importance of conversion, the people who are in the church are given the same privileges as Israel from the Old Testament, love for one another, placing your identity in Jesus, do not do things TOO different from the rest of the world so that you purposefully attract harassment.

2 Peter

- Peter's last instructions before his death
- Beware false teachers.
- Remain faithful to Jesus.

Jude

- Written by Jude, the brother of Jesus and James
- Warns against false teachers, called 'intruders.'

1, 2, & 3 John

- Written by 'the elder.'
- Addressed to a church that had theological fights about Jesus that led to division in the church.
- Emphasis on love and faithfulness

Revelation

- Written by 'John' while he was exiled on Patmos (likely either John, Jesus' disciple, or John 'the elder' from 1-3 John).
- Written as a 'word of prophecy.'

- Apocalyptic literature (includes dreams, symbols, numbers, end times, judgment, images of heaven)
- Written to churches who were compromising their identity in Christ to look more like Roman society.
- The book addresses 7 churches by name.
- Most of these churches were practicing worship of the Roman emperor.
- Content
 - o Greetings
 - o Vision of Christ exalted in heaven
 - o Messages to the 7 churches
 - o Visions of heaven and the end of time
 - o Visions of heaven's throne room
 - o Opening of 7 seals
 - o Blowing of 7 trumpets
 - o The dragon, the beast, and the Lamb
 - o 7 bowls of wrath
 - o Judgment of Babylon (Christian nickname for Rome)
 - o Victory of Christ, who brings in a new heaven and new earth
 - o Epilogue
- Themes of divine judgement, eternal peace, and salvation.
- Much of Revelation is very difficult to understand, since most of its images are written to be understood specifically by its Roman Christian audience.

Test your knowledge!

Answers are at the bottom of the document.

- 1) What do the authors of James and Jude have in common?
 - a. They avoided martyrdom.
 - b. They were foreigners in Judea.
 - c. They were both brothers of Jesus.
 - d. They are actually the same person.
- 2) Which epistle includes many prominent characters from the Old Testament?
 - a. Hebrews
 - b. James
 - c. 1 Peter
 - d. Jude
- 3) How many churches is the letter of Revelation addressed to? (This number shows up many times in the book.)
 - a. 5
 - b. 7
 - c. 12
 - d. 40

Answers: 1) c. 2) a. 3) b.