

# New Testament Survey

## *Class 25: Introduction to the General Epistles*

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**General Epistles:** Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude

**Five authors:**

1. The identity of the author of Hebrews is uncertain
2. James, the brother of Jesus
3. Peter, the apostle
4. John, the apostle and author of the gospel
5. Jude, the brother of Jesus

**Unity in Diversity: The Story of the New Testament**

- Diversity does not imply contradiction
- Unity allows for differences in wording, concepts, focus, and emphasis

**Major Themes in the General Epistles**

- Proclaiming Christ (1 Peter 2:9)
- Persevering despite temptations to fall away (Hebrews 4:11)
- Persecution and suffering (James 2:6-7)
- Defending the faith from false teaching (Jude 1:3)
- Loving our brothers and sisters in Christ (3 John 1:5-6)

*What passages or concepts stand out to you from these epistles?  
What questions do you still have about them?*

17-Mar-24	Hebrews
24-Mar-24	James
31-Mar-24	-----NO CLASS-----
7-Apr-24	1 Peter
14-Apr-24	2 Peter
21-Apr-24	Letters of John
28-Apr-24	Jude
5-May-24	The Old Testament in the New Testament
12-May-24	Revelation
19-May-24	Our Future Hope

## The Indicatives and Imperatives of the Gospel

### Definitions:

- *Indicatives* are statements of fact. Gospel indicatives are statements of what God has already accomplished. They are the gospel promises which show that the foundation for our acceptance with God is through Jesus, not through our efforts.
- *Imperatives* are statements of command. They tell us what we should do. Now that God has acted decisively and reconciled us freely, we respond with love and the pursuit of holiness in our own lives. In response to what God has done, we put effort into becoming like Him.

Note: Indicatives logically precede imperatives, though they are not always written in that order.

### Examples:

#### In Hebrews:

- *Indicative*: “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14).
- *Imperative*: “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

#### In 1 John:

- *Indicative*: “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).
- *Imperative*: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7).

#### In James:

- *Indicative*: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:17–18).
- *Imperative*: “Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21).