

## *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the HEBREWS*

**4. Theme.** The book of Hebrews consists essentially of a comparison with, and contrast between, the symbols by which God presented the plan of salvation to His chosen people in OT times and the reality of Christ's ministry on behalf of sinners since the cross. The experiences of ancient Israel under the typical system are set forth as a lesson and warning to Christians. Through the typical system and Israel's experiences under it, Paul seeks to develop a more complete understanding and appreciation of the ministry of Christ in heaven above. The following analysis of the comparisons and contrasts he draws between various aspects of the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries and priesthoods outlines the way in which the apostle develops this theme.

## *The General Epistle of JAMES*

**4. Theme.** This epistle is one of practical Christianity, showing what results or works a genuine, living faith will produce in the life of a disciple. Emphasized throughout is the contrast between the manifestations, effects, or results of true religion and those of false religion. This homiletical epistle is filled with beautiful and striking illustrations. The style is simple and direct, with the thoughts in groups clearly marked from one another, rather than arranged in any evident plan. James writes freely out of the fullness of his heart, touching upon subjects as they are suggested to his mind. There are many allusions to the Sermon on the Mount.

In this epistle there are many parallels to the writings of Paul (such as James 1:22; cf. Rom. 2:13), and to the writings of Peter (such as James 4:7; cf. 1 Peter 5:8, 9).

## *The First Epistle General of PETER*

**4. Theme.** Peter has a pastoral purpose in mind in writing this epistle. The warp into which the woof of his counsel is woven is the peril of persecution, the imminence of "the fiery trial" (ch. 4:12), and an awareness of the troubled times in which the believers were living. With that as a background he seeks to strengthen his readers' faith, to exhort them to blameless conduct, to exemplary citizenship, to loyal witness for Christ, and to effective preparation to meet their Lord. To help them attain these objectives he includes specific counsel for servants (ch. 2:18), wives (ch. 3:1-6), husbands (ch. 3:7), elders (ch. 5:1-4), and younger members of the church (ch. 5:5-9). Throughout the letter a tender spirit is linked to a firm sense of leadership, and both are sanctified by a lofty conception of Christ.

## *The Second Epistle General of PETER*

**4. Theme.** As with 1 Peter, the theme is pastoral. The writer exhorts his readers to continue growth in grace and in spiritual knowledge, that God's design in their calling and election might be fulfilled. In ch. 1 he encourages them by reference to his own experience and to the prophetic word. In ch. 2 he warns against false teachers. In ch. 3 a discussion of the scoffers' rejection of the promise of Christ's return leads to an affirmation of the certainty of the second coming and an exhortation to be ready for that great event.