**Hebrews and James**

1. *Introduction*:

Written to Jewish Christians in the first century, these two books containing a total of 18 chapters are addressed to two different problems, both of which are relevant today.

2. *Authorship*:

The writer of Hebrews is not named in the book. The strongest tradition is that Paul wrote this letter to Hebrew Christians. Others have proposed that Barnabas or Apollos wrote Hebrews.

The author of James is the oldest half-brother of Jesus, also known as “James the Just.” He became a believer after the resurrection of Jesus and achieved a place of influence in the church at Jerusalem.

3. *Situation*:

The book of Hebrews is addressed to those who were tempted to let their Christian faith and commitment slip away in favor of the more convenient forms of their traditional Judaism. They are told that such a course would be spiritual suicide. The message of Hebrews is needed by every Christian today as he/she is faced with the overwhelming busy-ness of the present world which tempts us to “get out of the habit” of the practices of the Christian faith.

The book of James is a brief and particular letter addressed to the problems of a living faith–temptation, lust and sin; patience, wisdom and prayer; poverty, riches and respect of persons; faith problems are timeless. So is the Bible’s answer to them.

4. *Of Special Interest*:

-Hebrews has been called the fifth Gospel, for it tells what Jesus is now doing in heaven.

-James has been called “the Proverbs of the New Testament”.

-James alludes to nature more than any other New Testament book.

5. *A Brief Outline of Hebrews and James:*

Hebrews 1-4 Christ is supreme

Hebrews 5-8:13 Jesus the universal High Priest and mediator of the New Covenant

Hebrews 9-10 Christ the perfect sacrifice

Hebrews 11-13 The achievements of faith

James 1 Confront trials cheerfully

James 2 Consider all people equally

James 3 Control the tongue totally

James 4 Cleanse the mind completely

James 5 Cry out to God fervently

6. *June Reading Guide*

Week of May 30-June 5 Hebrews 1-5

Week of June 6-12 Hebrews 6-10

Week of June 12-19 Hebrews 11 - James 1

Week of June 20-26 James 2-5