

## **James – A Portrait of Living Faith**

### **Lesson 1: Overview & Introduction (James 1:1)**

**Memory Challenge: James Chapter 1: 1-18...stretch goal (add verses 19-26).**

***James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad. Greetings.***

#### **Authorship:**

Who is this James?? Is this the apostle James? No.

The author of this epistle is the half-Brother of Jesus, the Son of Joseph,

Leader of Jerusalem Church

**Bible References:** Mark 3:14-19 and Luke 6:13-16 - list of the 12 apostles. Apostle James martyred in ~AD 42 (Acts 12:1-2). James the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:18-19, 2:9; Acts 12:16-17; 15:13, 21:17-18; and Jude 1).

Did James believe in Jesus during the early part of His ministry? No. (John 7:1-5).

Did James or his brothers understand who Jesus was or appreciate His ministry? No. (Matt. 12:46-50).

Was James or any of his brothers at the crucifixion of Jesus? No. (Mark 15:40, John 19:25).

Did James receive a special post-resurrection appearance by Jesus? Yes. (I. Cor. 15:3-8)

#### **Audience of James:**

To whom was this book written? 12 tribes scattered abroad

To whom does the “12 tribes scattered abroad” refer? Nation of Israel.

Was this book directed to all of Israel?? No see verse 2a. Jewish Christians.

#### **Date of Writing:**

Approximately what date is attributed to the writing of this letter from James? AD mid-40s

## **Characteristics and Theme of the Letter:**

The approach of James is practical, addressing life issues and struggles. It is often known as the Proverbs of the New Testament and the most Jewish of all New Testament books.

A major theme of James is **not** faith and works, **but** faith that works!

## **James as a Book of Wisdom**

Compare James 1:10-11 and Proverbs 11:28a.....James 1:19-20 and Proverbs 15:18....

James 3:2 and Proverbs 10:19

## **James as Prophetic Literature**

James can also sound like a prophet (perhaps Amos or Micah) when he begins to denounce sin. To rich and lawless oppressors, James says in James 5:1, 4-6. See Amos 5:11-12 (*you oppress the righteous and take bribes and you deprive the poor of justice in the courts..*) & Mic. 2:1-3.

**James as Teachings of Jesus**, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Consider:

Love of neighbor is a great command (James 2:8 and Matt. 22:39)

Self Exaltation leads to humiliation (James 4:6-10 and Matt. 23:12)

Moth and rust destroy riches (James 5:2 and Matt. 6:19)

Believers must rejoice in trials (James 1:2 and Matt. 5:11-12)

The goals of the righteous is maturity (James 1:4 and Matt. 5:48)

We are doers, not just hearers of the Word (James 1:22 and Matt. 7:24)

## **James as a Pastor**

James is much like a sermon, as he constantly is asking questions of the reader to engage them in self-reflecting thought. James addresses his readers/audience with abundant illustrations.

His goal is to promote and encourage a life consistent with genuine faith in Christ the Lord, i.e. a life of obedience. True believers will live obedient lives. They will order their lives under the will and word of the Lord. James says: Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up (4:10). That is the gospel of James.