

Study of the book of James

Introduction and overview

Out of 27 books of New Testament we have 21 Epistles / letters. Out of which there are 13 Pauline epistles and 8 General epistles.

There are 21 Epistles / Letters in NT	
Pauline Epistles – 13 (written by Paul)	General Epistles – 8 (written by various authors)
Romans	Hebrews (Author unknown)
1 Corinthians	James
2 Corinthians	1 Peter
Galatians	2 Peter
Ephesians	1 John
Philippians	2 John
Colossians	3 John
1 Thessalonians	Jude
2 Thessalonians	
1 Timothy	
2 Timothy	
Titus	
Philemon - Prison Epistle	

Letters/ Epistles –

- A. **Pauline Epistles** (Romans – Philemon) (Written to churches/ individuals. Churches at Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae, Thessalonica & personal letters to Timothy, Titus, Philemon)
- B. **General epistles** (Hebrews- Jude). (Written to Christians about salvation, truth, faith, love, obedience, written to Christians who are being persecuted, encouraging them to testify to the truth and live accordingly, warning about false teachers and doctrines)
(Authors – according to the names of the book except Hebrews)

Author :

1: 1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

4 leading candidates: Of the four men named James in the New Testament, only two are candidates for authorship of this epistle.

1. **James “the less” – son of Alphaeus** (Math 10:3, Acts 1:3) , one of the 12 disciples (Not much is mentioned in the Bible about this person and there is no claim in the early church that he wrote the letter.)
2. **James “the dad” father of Judas, not Iscariot** (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). Judas was one of the 12 disciples (Thaddeus). Apart from the fact that he is the father of an obscure apostle, nothing else is known about this James, rendering him a rather unlikely candidate as the author.
3. **James “the greater” – Son of Zebedee, brother of John the Apostle**, they were nicknamed sons of thunder; One of the 12 disciples; Top 3 disciples who were with Jesus (Inner circle : Peter, James and John) (Math 4:21)
He was beheaded by Herod, AD 44 (Acts 12:1,2). 21), but he was martyred too early to have written James.

This leaves only one possible candidate: James the brother of Jesus, also known as James the Just.

4. **James ‘the brother of Jesus’**: the oldest half brother of Christ, son of Mary & Joseph; and brother of Jude (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Jude 1). *Isn't His mother's name Mary, and aren't His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?" (Matthew 13:55).*

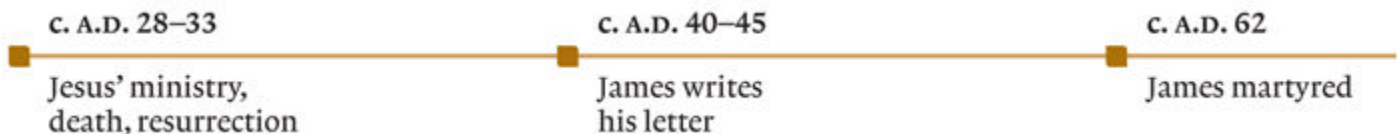
About the Author – James, the brother of Jesus

- James is one of several of Jesus' siblings, the half-brother of Jesus and the son of Mary and Joseph . Mark wrote, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Judah, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?" (Mark 6:3 also Matthew 13:55-56).
- James' name appears first in every list of siblings mentioned, which indicates that he was likely the oldest.
- Although this James was not one of the original Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:2-3), he was an important figure during the Apostolic Age.
- James was not a follower of Jesus during the Savior's time on earth (Mark 3:21–35; John 7:5). Had rejected Jesus as Messiah. (And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind." Mark 3:21 / For not even his brothers believed in him. John 7:5)
- Change of heart: After the crucifixion, James was one of the earliest witnesses of Jesus' resurrection (*1 Corinthians 15:7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.*)
- And he was part of the group of believers who prayed in the upper room for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.)

- Eventually became an apostle: *Galatians 1:19* Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas (Peter) and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.
- Became one of the key leaders in Jerusalem church: (see Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 2:12). First bishop of Jerusalem.
- James made the deciding speech (final consensus) at the Jerusalem Council (15:13–22). Delivered the ruling that Gentiles coming into the Christian faith were not required to be circumcised or to keep the laws of Moses. Supported and endorsed Paul's mission to bring Gentiles into the fold.
- Paul called James as one of the "pillars" of that church, along with Peter and John (*Gal. 2:9 and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.*)
- Also known as James the Just because of his devotion to righteousness
- He was martyred AD 62

James wrote with the authority of one who had personally seen the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:7), who was recognized as a pillar, an associate of the apostles (Gal. 1:19), and who was one of the key leaders of the Jerusalem church.

Date of Writing: The Book of James is probably the oldest book of the New Testament, written perhaps as early as A.D. 45, before the first council of Jerusalem in A.D. 50. James was martyred in approximately A.D. 62, according to the historian Josephus.



Features of Book of James:

- **Oldest book of New Testament** (First in Chronologically written order in NT – mid 40's) Gospels written late 50's and early 60's.
- **One of last 3 books to enter into New Testament canon – as they were disputed books (Hebrews, James, Revelation)**
- One of the most intensely practical books of the Bible, filled with memorable metaphors and illustrations. Most popular New Testament books in the church.

- The book of James has lots of practical instruction just like the book of Proverbs. (Control of temper, power of tongue, wisdom etc..)
- The word 'Lord of hosts/armies' (Jehovah Sabaoth occurs many times in the OT but only 2 times in NT. (Rom 9:29; James 5:4)
- The only book where we find the power of collective prayer (Call the elders...)
- The person who brings out the power of the tongue. (Tongue can either make history, change destinies, or destroy)
- Talks about receiving the word of God. Receive with meekness the implanted word. The word of God contains the power of God.
- Patience and Endurance

Purpose of Writing: The Book of James is directed to Jewish Christians scattered among all the nations (James 1:1). The recipients of this book were Jewish believers who had been dispersed, possibly because of Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7, AD 31–34), but more likely due to the persecution under Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12, AD 44). Persecution forced believers out of Jerusalem into Samaria, and eventually the far reaches of the Roman Empire.

- **Emphasis on the practical aspect.** You won't find explicit doctrinal statements like you do in Paul's letters. There needs to be a balance between knowledge of the Word and practice of the Word. An important verse in James, along with the entire New Testament, is James 1:22 when James writes, *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*

*So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.
James 2:17*

15 Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, 16 and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

"live out the gospel" / not just talk the talk but walk the walk / living faith not a dead faith

Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. Mathew 7:21

If your faith is real, it is living, if it is living then it is made manifest by works.

Outline of Study of James

1. Introduction / Salutation (James 1:1)

2. Part 2 – James 1:2- 1:18

- a. Trials and its purpose (1:2-4)
- b. Wisdom, Prayer & Faith /asking in faith without wavering (1:5-8)
- c. Poverty and wealth / nothing to boast (1:9-11)
- d. Trials and temptations/ rewards & blessing (1:12-18)

3. Part 3 – James 1:19-2:13; 3:1-12

- a. Listening and doing/ reception of God's word (1:19-27)
- b. Impartiality- warning against prejudice (2:1-13)
- c. Controlling the tongue (3:1-12)

4. Part 4 – James 2:14-26

- a. Faith and works (An active faith)
Understanding justification by faith and works

5. Part 5 – James 3:13-18; 4:1-10

- a. True wisdom from above (4:13-18)
- b. Drawing close to God in humility (4:1-10)

6. Part 6 – James 4:11 – 5:12

- a. Critical speech (4:11-12)
- b. Warning about self confidence (4:13-17)
- c. Wealth & Justice (5 :1-6)
- d. Patience & Endurance (5:7-12)

7. Part 7 – James 5:13-20

- a. Power of prayer (5: 13-18)
- b. Restoration (5:19-20)

James chapter 1 :1 (Salutation)

V 1. This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes”—Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings!

James uses a more customary salutation as ‘Greetings’ - Different from Paul’s greeting which is always ‘Grace & peace’ in all of his epistles.

James identified himself as “a servant of God (slave /bondservant) and of the Lord Jesus Christ” and not as the Lord’s brother.

Bondservant – In Greek it is Doulos (Deo- to bind) – slave, one who is in permanent relation of servitude to another, His will being altogether consumed in the will of the other.

James is writing to the “twelve tribes” — Jewish believers scattered abroad. The recipients of this book were Jewish believers who had been dispersed, possibly because of Stephen’s martyrdom (Acts 7, AD 31–34), but more likely due to the persecution under Herod Agrippa. Persecution forced believers out of Jerusalem into Samaria, and eventually the far reaches of the Roman Empire.

The Greek word for ‘**dispersion**’ is Diaspora (like seeds scattered in a field).