

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Eleven – Peter's Explanation – First Called Christians

The Book of James.

Date:

*James 1:1 “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:
Greetings.”*

Acts 11:19 “Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.”

As we can clearly see by the opening of James and the note in **Acts chapter 11**, the internal evidence dates this book at this approximate time.

In addition, it is one of only two inspired letters that bears the simple introduction of “**Greetings**”. The other is the inspired letter included in the context of **Acts chapter 15 (vs 23-29)**. This makes it the earliest letter of the New Testament.

Author: Several James are mentioned in the New Testament.

James the Less (also known as “*the son of Alphaeus*”) – **Mark 15:40; Luke 6:15.**

James the father of Judas – **Luke 6:16.**

James the brother of John (both Apostles of Jesus Christ) – **Acts 12:2** (where he is mentioned as being killed by Herod).

Finally, James the brother of Jude (**Jude 1**), one of the four brothers of Jesus – **Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3**. A pillar in the church of Jerusalem, along with Peter and John – **Galatians 2:9; Acts 15:12-21**. Listed with the disciples in Jerusalem prior to the Apostles receiving the promise of the Spirit – **Acts 1:14**. Later, traveling with a believing wife, preaching the Gospel – **1 Corinthians 9:5**. This James is our author.

Written to: “*To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*”

Based on the contents, it must also be recognized that these of Jewish decent are now Christians (**Acts 11:26**), and James obviously wants them engaged in the work of preaching the word with behavior to match.

Content: The book of James is one of only a few books in the New Testament that is difficult to outline. Topics are introduced, spoken of, practical solutions are offered, then on to the next topic (often several in a chapter, except **chapter 3**). It is very similar in nature to Matthews Gospel, in that, once the ministry of Jesus begins, Matthew moves from teaching to teaching, miracles, then to parables, back to teaching, more miracles etc.

With that said, the teaching is powerful!

James is practical instruction. As the topics are introduced, simple and powerful instructions are commanded. You cannot read James without knowing in every topic what to do to overcome any trouble in your service to the Lord.

The word “*Let*” is used to translate verbs that are imperatives in the Greek text. It is used to show English speaking Saints that these are not suggestions (1:4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 19, 3:13, 4:9, 5:13, 20.).

Suggested Outline:

1:1 – Introduction.

1:2-3 – Patience in trials.

1:4-8 – Asking God in Faith.

1:9-11 – Do not look at men by earthly standards.

1:12-17 – Temptation does not come from God.

1:18-25 – The word of truth.

1:26-27 – Pure Religion.

2:1-13 – Love your neighbor as yourself.

2:14-26 – I will show you, my faith.

Chapter 3 – The danger of an uncontrolled tongue.

4:1-6 – Where does conflict among you come from?

4:7-10 – Submit to God to overcome.

4:11-12 – Proper judgment.

4:13-17 – The Christian and time.

5:1-6 – Warnings to the rich.

5:7-12 – Patient endurance.

5:13-18 – Seeking God in times of need.

5:19-20 – Go after lost sheep.

James is easily understood in light of the teachings of Jesus to the Jews in preparation for the kingdom (there is great similarity in the language, James even quotes the Lord’s teaching in **Matthew 22:37-39**, and references it as the “**royal law**” – **2:8**). All references to ‘The Law’ are made in a cautionary tone, with great warning concerning being trapped by it.

Instead, there is a push to trust the “*word of truth*” (**1:18**) and the true “*Lawgiver*” (**4:12**), with a working faith (**1:22; 2:18**).