

The Epistle of James Introduction

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Theme

James 2:17-20

17 In the same way, faith also, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

18 But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.”

19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

20 But are you willing to acknowledge, you foolish person, that faith without works is useless?

Theme

James 2:20

20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

Topics

- 1. James shares the value and necessity of faith in every aspect of the Christian's life - especially in view of the challenges of this life!**

- 2. James is going to talk about the character of faith and the purpose of faith in our lives.**
 - A. James deals in a practical way with the day-to-day living of the Christian life.

 - B. James applies the principles of God's Word to the everyday life of the man who wishes to please God.

 - C. If we want to be with God in eternity, we must walk with God on earth—the Epistle of James helps us to do so.

Topics

Rely on God's wisdom to apply it to your Christian walk of life.

Be a doer of the Word.

Display your FAITH in action in your Christian walk of life.

Outline of the Epistle of James

James uses Faith in:

1. The Trials of Life - 1:2-8
2. The Riches of the World - 1:9-12
3. Sin - 1:13-20
4. Obedience - 1:21-27
5. Partiality - 2:1-13

Outline of the Epistle of James

6. Works - 2:14-26
7. The Tongue - 3:1-12
8. Wisdom - 3:13-18
9. The World – 4:1-7
10. Submission - 4:8-10
11. Judging a Brother - 4:11-12

Outline of the Epistle of James

12. The Future - 4:13-17
13. The Greedy - 5:1-6
14. Patience - 5:7-12
15. Prayer - 5:13-18
16. The one who had fallen - 5:19-20

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

James 1:1

**1 “James, a bond-
servant of God and of
the Lord Jesus
Christ...”**

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

Moses was the slave of God (Deut. 34:5; Psa. 105:26; Mal. 4:4).

Joshua was the slave of God (Jos. 24:29).

David was the slave of God (2 Sam. 3:18; Psa. 78:70).

Paul was the slave of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:1).

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

James was the slave of God (James 1:1).

Jude was the slave of God (Jude 1).

The prophets were the slaves of God (Amos 3:7; Jer. 7:25).

Christian believers are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:18; 1 Cor. 7:22; Eph. 6:6; Col. 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:24).

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

There are three prominent men named James in the New Testament:

1. James the son of Zebedee, one of the three apostles closest to the Lord (Matt. 4:21; 10:2; 17:1-2; 26:36-37),
2. James the son of Alphaeus, (James the Less) also an apostle (Matt. 10:3),
3. James, the Lord's stepbrother (Matt. 13:55; Gal. 1:19).

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

1. Does not call himself an apostle - 1:1
2. James, the son of Zebedee, was murdered by Herod in A.D. 44. (This does not rule him out as the author, for conditions in harmony with the content of the book were present before his death. -“Date”) - Acts 12:1-2
3. Nothing is known scripturally of James the son of Alphaeus, James the less, after the establishment of the church.

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

4. James, the Lord's half brother, became prominent in the first century church. - 1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 1:14; Gal 1:18-19; Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13, 19; Gal 2:1, 9-10, 12; Acts 21:18

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

John 7:5

5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.

1 Cor. 15:7

7 then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

Matt. 13:55-56

55 “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

56 “And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then *did* this man *get* all these things?”

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

Acts 12:17

17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, “Report these things to James and the brethren.” Then he left and went to another place.

Who is the Author of The Epistle of James?

Acts 1:14

14 These all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with *the* women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Gal.1:18-19

18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days.

19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

To whom was the Epistle of James written?

James 1:1

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad:

Greetings.

To whom was the Epistle of James written?

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad"

Since the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, many of the Jews were scattered throughout different nations - Acts 2:5-11

Jewish Christians were scattered abroad among the Gentile countries. (Acts 8:4; 26:6-7)

To whom was the Epistle of James written?

James writes “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” (1:1). This salutation could be to all Jews of the Dispersion, those scattered from their homelands by the deportations which began with the conquest by Assyria.

James makes it clear he is writing to those who “hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory” (2:1).

“The twelve tribes scattered abroad” would be an apt reference to disciples scattered by the persecution which followed the stoning of Stephen (Acts 8:1-4; 11:19).

These were, as we are, “the Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10).

Date of the Epistle of James

It must have been written after the events of Acts 8:1-4, for the disciples were “scattered abroad” (1:1).

It appears to have been written after Acts 11:26. The name “Christian” was already in use (James 2:7; 1 Peter 4:15-16).

The evidence points to a date before the events of Acts 15, since there is no reference to the decision of the apostles and elders concerning the Gentiles and the law, even though James was the chief architect of that decision (Acts 15:13-21).

Date of the Epistle of James

The book does not directly deal with the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, although it specifically forbids partiality (2:1-9; Acts 10:34-35), and the disciples were still meeting in synagogues, or the author uses the Jewish name “synagogue” to refer to their meeting places (2:2).

A date around the time of the world-wide famine (A.D. 44) would fit, because of the reference to helping widows and orphans (1:26-27), a work for which James was particularly concerned (Galatians 2:9-10).

Parallel teachings in the Epistle of James to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew

James 1:2
2 Consider it all
joy, my brethren,
when you
encounter various
trials,

Matt. 5:10-12

10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

12 “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Parallel teachings in the Epistle of James to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew

James 1:5

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Matt. 7:7-12

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

8 “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

9 “Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone?

10 “Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?

11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

12 “In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

Parallel teachings in the Epistle of James to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew

James 3:6

6 And the tongue is a fire, the *very* world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of *our* life, and is set on fire by hell.

Matt. 5:22

22 “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell.

Characteristics of Faith

Trials show the value of our faith.

Difficult times reveal the strength of our faith in God.

Trials produce the character that God wants us to have.

We need to view a trial as our opportunity to purify our faith and reveal our trust in God.

Characteristics of Faith

Real faith submits to and obeys God.

Verbal faith is useless and dead. God is looking for us to have a trust in Him that will act upon our belief in God.

If we are unwilling to be obedient to God's laws, then we do not have faith and are lost.

Characteristics of Faith

Real faith will change our character.

We will not show partiality toward others based upon external judgments.

We will control our tongues and exercise humility.

We will believe in the power of prayer and rely upon the Lord to act on our behalf.