

JAMES

INTRODUCTION

15 November 2019

5 chapters, 108 verses

Main themes: The Law for the believer, Wisdom, Brethren.

WHY JAMES IS A TROUBLESOME BOOK FOR MANY PEOPLE

1. James discusses the connection between faith and works in the believer's Christian walk.
 - a. People think James is contradicting Paul's teachings that salvation is by faith alone, not by works.
 - i. James teaches that salvation will be MANIFEST by works (not attained by works). And where there are no accompanying works, a person ought to examine themselves, whether they be in the faith (2 Cor 13:5).
 - b. People fail to distinguish between the Old Covenant of Law that God had with the nation of Israel— and the New Covenant of Grace that God has with the New Testament Church.
 - i. They fail to rightly divide God's word of truth (2 Tim 2:15) and reduce the book of James as being a Jewish book which is not for the church.
2. James 1:1 is addressed to "**the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.**" People read that and think that James is not writing to Christians.
 - a. They fail to account for the fact that the Jews (from all 12 tribes) were the very first Christian believers (Acts 2). They were scattered abroad before the invasion of Titus (70 A.D.). James is dated no later than 55-65 A.D.
 - i. More than a million Jews died in the siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., but no Jewish Christians died because they heeded Jesus' warning to flee when they saw the city compassed about with armies (Luke 21:20-21). (Twelve tribes scattered).
 - b. Others claim that James is writing to Jews who were outside of Jerusalem as a result of the Old Testament Jewish captivities by the Chaldeans and the Babylonians.
 - i. They forget that the Jews returned from captivity and rebuilt Jerusalem and all 12 tribes were present in Jerusalem when Jesus walked the Earth.

12 TRIBES WERE DWELLING AT JERUSALEM ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST (ACTS 2:1-31).

- Verse 5** Jews out of every nation under heaven were dwelling at Jerusalem. These were not visitors; they were residents. They had returned home at some point from various lands.
- Verse 14** Peter addressed the "men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem." They lived there.
- Verse 21** Peter preached the same salvation message to the Jews that Paul preached later (Rom 10:9, 13).
- 23, 24, 31** Peter preached the same gospel to the Jews; the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The first people to believe the gospel were the Jews dwelling in Jerusalem.
- Acts 8:1** Up to this point only Jews had been converted by placing their faith in Christ (Rom 10:13, 17, 1 Cor 1:21). The Bible calls them "**The church**" before Paul was ever converted. They were "**the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad**" because of persecution, which fulfilled Christ's commission (Acts 1:8). This matches James 1:1 perfectly. James is addressing these Jewish Christians.

James is writing to Jews because the gospel was not opened to the Gentiles until Acts 10. Those who claim that the **Body of Christ** didn't exist until it was revealed to Paul are not rightly dividing the word of truth. Saul of Tarsus (Paul) made havoc of the church (Acts 8:3). When Jesus met Saul on the road to Damascus, He said, "**Why persecutest thou me?**" (Acts 9:4). When Saul persecuted the church, he was persecuting **Christ's body**.

SOME CLAIM THAT JAMES IS WRITING TO UNSAVED PEOPLE

James 1:21 "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." This speaks of the ability of the word of God to save a soul. James isn't writing to unsaved people. Second Timothy 3:15 uses similar language, where Paul is writing to a saved preacher named Timothy.

ABOUT JAMES

Matt 13:55 He is the Lord's brother (Mark 6:3, Gal 1:19, 1 Cor 15:7). Mary had other children.

John 7:5 James didn't believe in Jesus at the start. Joseph (type of Christ) was rejected by his brothers (Gen 37:4, 11, 19)

Mark 3:31 James was outside the door, not counted by Jesus as one who did the will of God (Matt 12:50).

BRETHREN

James 1:2 James speaks to "brethren" in a spiritual sense. Temptations are not joyous unless you count your many blessings in Christ. He's not addressing these Jewish brethren according to the flesh.

THE LAW: Many Christians object to James because he speaks often of the law. What law, though?

1:23-25 The perfect law of liberty. He does not speak of keeping the law for salvation. He speaks of a new law of liberty that allows him to obey God and serve God and receive blessings as a result.

2:8-12 The New Testament believer knows what is right and what is wrong. Our works will be judged by the law of liberty. This will take place at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom 14:10). Works that were right will be blessed. Works that were wrong will be burned up (1 Cor 3:13-15). This is an incentive for reward, not a threat of punishment.

4:11-12 When you judge a brother instead of allowing God's word to be the judge, you're judging the law of God, not the brother.

WISDOM

1:5 God is the source of all wisdom. If you want wisdom, ask God.

3:13 A man's works (his Christian walk) will reveal his wisdom. It involves meekness (submission).

3:14-15 Earthly, sensual, devilish wisdom results in bitter envying and strife.

3:16-17 Wisdom from above will enable you to treat people right.
