

## James 1:1 – Brother James, the Just

**Introduction:** My little brother Joey knows I am imperfect!

**Central Message:** Christians put no stock in their heredity, their family, their flesh, or their religiosity when it comes to their salvation by their Lord and God, Jesus Christ.

### Why the Letter of James?

1. Blessing: Divine Wisdom from James to live the Christian life in light of the Gospel
  - a. Not to gain God, but to live for God
  - b. To gain understanding (**Proverbs 4:7**)
2. The Danger: All one might hear - Moralistic Commands
  - a. Sinners will not be saved by following biblical, moral imperatives; *Salvation by God's grace only!*

### Features of the Letter

1. Date of the Letter: Around 50 A.D.; decade after Jesus' death and resurrection (Insight into Early Christianity)
2. Features of the Letter:
  - a. James echoes the Sermon on the Mount (**Mat 5-7**)
  - b. The Lord commands and then gives a promise for obedience (**Example James 4:7-8**)
  - c. Not well received in History: Luther called it an Epistle of Straw – No explicit Gospel
  - d. Letter on Kingdom Living, in light of the Gospel

### James, the Man of God

1. Possibilities:
  - a. James, Son of Alphaeus (**Luke 6:13-16**)
  - b. James, Son of Zebedee (**Mark 3:14-19**)
    - i. Martyred under Herod in 44 A.D. (**Acts 12:1-2**)
  - c. James, brother of Jesus Christ
2. James' Authority and Leadership
  - a. Elder at Church of Jerusalem
  - b. James the Just – Fair, Integrity
  - c. We can know this is James, the Brother of Christ
    - i. Use of the word “greetings” (**Acts 15:22-23**)
    - ii. Use of the word “listen” (**Acts 15:13//Js 2:5**)
    - iii. How he explains conversion – “Turning” (**Acts 15:19//Js 5:19-20**)
    - iv. Use of the word “souls” (**Acts 15:24//Js 1:21**)

3. James is the half-brother of Jesus Christ (**Mark 6:3**)
  - a. Mary was not a perpetual virgin
4. James was an Apostle (**1 Corinthians 15:7, Gal 1**)
5. James' Humble, Self-Description: *Servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*
  - a. At one time James did not believe (**John 7:3-5**)
  - b. James' spiritual relationship to Jesus is more vital than his family relationship (**Mt 12:46-50, Jn 6:63**)
  - c. New Birth is of God Alone (**John 1:12-13**)
  - d. James calls himself a slave of his older brother
    - i. Christians are servants/slaves of Christ
    - ii. Christ purchased Us (**1 Corinthians 7:22-23**)
    - iii. We are slaves of Christ or this World

### Jesus, the God and Lord of James

1. Jesus is James' God – Jesus is equated to God
  - a. Early Christianity recognized the Deity of Christ
  - b. **See 2 Peter 1:1, Titus 2:13**
2. Jesus is James' Savior
3. Jesus is James' Lord: *Kurios* is the same title for Yahweh in the Old Testament
4. Jesus is James' Messiah: *Christos*, the Anointed One
  - a. The Father's appointed servant
  - b. Came to bruise the Serpent's head, who would be like Moses, who would fulfill the Law and Prophets
  - c. Came to serve by giving His life as a Ransom
5. Christians do not serve a Memory, but a Risen Savior

### Jewish Christians, the Recipients of James' Letter

1. James is a loving, Caring Pastor
2. *The Twelve Tribes* – Jewish Christians
3. *...of the Dispersion* – The scattered Jewish believers by Judean persecution (**Acts 8:1**)
4. He does not say, I am sorry this has happened, or it is the Devil – But you are blessed, because God tests you

### Judicious, Wise Maturity, the Basic Message of James

1. Be Mature, Perfect
2. Be Complete, Whole
3. **See James 2:22, 3:2**
4. Spiritual Stability through Practical Orthodoxy
5. How are we going to live for Christ the Lord?