

## JAMES

### **BACKGROUND:**

The author is the half brother of Jesus, born to Mary and Joseph after the birth of Christ. He apparently did not accept the claims of Jesus until after His resurrection (I Cor. 15:7). He and his brothers were among the believers who awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Not long afterward James became an acknowledged leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts. 12:17; Gal. 2:9, 12), and he was a central figure in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

This letter, written to Jews living outside Palestine, is dated between A.D. 46-49 (before the Jerusalem Council) and may have been the earliest writing of the N.T. James was martyred in A.D. 62.

Unlike Paul, James says nothing about his personal circumstances. This is a formal and sometimes severe epistle full of imperatives (54 in only 108 verses). Tempering the harshness are 14 references to those he writes as "brethren."

The purpose of this work is not so much doctrinal as it is practical. James stresses that a genuine faith will produce real changes in a person's conduct and character, and the absence of change is a symptom of dead faith.

James emphasizes that faith without works cannot be called faith. Faith must work, it must produce, it must be visible. Verbal faith is not enough and mental faith is insufficient. Faith must move into action. True faith endures trials. It obeys God's word. It produces "doers." It harbors no prejudice. It controls the tongue. It acts wisely. It provides the power to resist the devil. And it waits patiently for the coming of the Lord.

Key Verses: (1:19-22 and 2:14-17).

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the

righteousness that God requires. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (1:19-22).

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (2:14-17).

While Paul writes of justification before God, James writes of the evidence of justification before men. Clearly, a profession of faith that produces no change is not saving faith. Though a man is saved by faith without works, the works will follow true salvation (Eph. 2:8-10).

*Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian?*

## **A BRIEF OUTLINE OF JAMES**

- I. The Test of Faith (1:1-18).
  - A. The Purpose of Tests (1:1-12).
  - B. The Source of Temptations (1:13-18).
- II. The Characteristics of Faith (1:19-5:6).
  - A. Faith Obeys the Word (1:19-27).
  - B. Faith Removes Discrimination (2:1-13).
  - C. Faith Proves Itself by Works (2:14-26).
  - D. Faith Controls the Tongue (3:1-12).
  - E. Faith Produces Wisdom (3:13-18).
  - F. Faith Produces Humility (4:1-12).
  - G. Faith Produces Dependence on God (4:13-5:6).
- III. The Triumph of Faith (5:7-20).
  - A. Faith Endures Awaiting Christ's Return (5:7-12).
  - B. Faith Prays for the Afflicted (5:13-18).
  - C. Faith Confronts the Erring Brother (5:19-20).

**HELPS:** Before turning to these, read prayerfully the Word of God, praying that the Holy Spirit will guide you and instruct you.

If you don't own a Bible dictionary, encyclopedia, atlas, or reference search, don't worry. They are all available on the link below.

[http://www.preceptaustin.org/2\\_corinthians\\_commentaries\\_3.htm](http://www.preceptaustin.org/2_corinthians_commentaries_3.htm)

This excellent website is full of helps including commentaries. You will find John MacArthur, Ray Stedman and John Piper along with Charles Spurgeon and the Intervarsity Press Commentary (Navigators) as well as Matthew Henry's Commentary.