

Outline of James by Chapters

James 1	Stand with Confidence
James 2	Serve with Compassion
James 3	Speak with Care
James 4	Submit with Contrition
James 5	Share with Concern

Author

The author of the book of James was likely the half-brother of Jesus. After Mary gave birth to Jesus she had 4 other sons (Mt.13:55; Mk.6:3). James is the English name from the Greek word (*iakobos*) which more literally is “Jacob”.

The author is NOT the apostle James (and brother of John) who was martyred in Acts 12. Jesus called James and John, “sons of thunder” (Mk.3:17). But this James is different. James, the writer, was not a believer until after the resurrection of Jesus (Mk.3:21,31; Jn.7:5). Jesus appeared to James personally after His resurrection (1Co.15:7). James was present with the disciples in the Upper Room (Ac.1:14). He was apparently married (1Co.9:5). Paul calls James a “pillar”, but he was not one of the 12 disciples (Ga.2:9). He was a prominent leader in the church in Jerusalem (Ac.12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Ga.2:12).

Time of Writing

James appears to be written before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 because he makes no mention of the debate over the Gentile mission. It is likely the first NT book to be written

JAMES

James is a potent letter that exhorts the early believers toward Christian maturity and holiness of life. He focuses more on the practice of faith than on its precepts. His emphasis on practical holiness shows how Christian faith and Christian love are expressed in a variety of situations.

between 45-50AD.

Recipients

James writes to the early Jewish believing communities who had to leave (*Diaspora*) the Jerusalem area because of persecution (1:1-2).

James used the term “brethren” and “Lord” throughout the epistle. Specifically he mentions faith in Christ (2:1).

Occasion of the Letter

It was obvious that the recipients were undergoing physical need and persecution (1:2-4, 12; 2:6-7; 5:4-14). There are several references to the rich oppressing these believers (1:9-10; 2:6-7).

JAMES OUTLINE	2	<i>Kinds of Temptation</i>	(1:1-16)
		<i>Kinds of Faith</i>	(1:17-2:26)
		<i>Uses of the Tongue</i>	(3:1-12)
		<i>Sources of Wisdom</i>	(3:13-18)
		<i>Spirits That Vie for Control</i>	(4:1-17)
		<i>Classes of Men</i>	(5:1-12)
		<i>States of the Christian</i>	(5:13-20)

During the time James led in Jerusalem, there was a famine, and believers were persecuted by Jewish leaders.

The book opens like a letter, but its format is more like Proverbs. It contains no references to specific individuals who were the original recipients. And there is no concluding benediction.

GENERAL LETTERS

BOOK	59
Ja.	
JAMES	
5	CHAPTERS

Genre or Style

The style is similar to Jewish wisdom teachers: (1) There is a loose structure by moving from one subject to another. (2) He injects 54 imperatives throughout the 108 verses. (3) He employs a supposed objector asking questions (2:18; 4:13). You can find the same approach in Malachi, Romans, and 1 John. The Rabbis used this same style of moving from one subject to another to keep the attention of the audience. They called it, “pearls on a string.” The flow of thought is not linear. Each statement stands on its own. But there are connecting themes and key words throughout.

He uses the word “perfect” (*teleios*) multiple times in the book. This “perfect” comes from God's “wisdom” which is another key theme. The aim of the epistle is to strengthen the faith of the believers in the face of persecution especially from rich overbearing Jews who opposed them.

James alludes to Jesus' words, especially from the Sermon on the Mount more than any other NT book.



CHRIST IN JAMES

- Jesus is the Lord of glory (2:1), and the Judge at the door (5:9)