

JAMES

The Book of James

Theme: ▶ **Introduction to James**

A red ribbon graphic with a white, stylized letter 'A' on it, positioned in the top right corner of the page.

Three positions on James' relationship to Jesus.

1) They were step-brothers - **WRONG!**

Claim: Joseph, had a marriage prior to Mary and that he had children including James.

Rebuttal: The Bible does not mention any prior wife or children.

2) They were cousins - **WRONG!**

Claim: "Brothers and sisters" referred to in Matt. 13:55-56 is a narrow word, meaning; kin, clan or extended family.

Claim: Hundreds of years after Jesus, the Catholic Church leaders meet and claimed, that Jesus' mother Mary was ever virgin, *semper virgo*. (virgin before and after the birth of Christ)

Rebuttal: The Bible tells us that Mary and Joseph had many children together after Jesus was born. (Matt. 1:25)

3) They were half-brothers - **Most accurate reading of Scripture.**

Truth: Matthew 13:55-56 // Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"

Truth: Scripture that refers to the family of Jesus'. (Matt. 12:46) (Luke 8:19) (Mark 3:3) (John 7:1-10) (Acts 1:14) (Galatians 1:19)

Who wrote the book of James?

- James the brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55) and leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15).
- James was also known as: James the Just, Camel Knee and the Bishop of Bishops (e.g., Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 20.200–201; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 2.23).

When was it written?


- The epistle (letter) of James would have been written during the Apostolic Age of Christian history (the period of the Twelve Apostles), dating from the Great Commission of the apostles by the resurrected Jesus in Jerusalem until the death of the last apostle John (AD 33 - AD 120).
- Since James died in AD 62, martyred by the scribes and Pharisees, James was thrown from the summit of temple to be killed. However the fall did not kill him so they proceeded to stone him to death. James letter had to precede that date.
- The apostolic council in Jerusalem (AD 48–49) was as momentous occasion for the early Christian church, had James written his letter after the council met it would have surely been mentioned. Thus the letter was most likely written AD 40-45, making James the earliest epistle written.

Where was it written?

- James wrote his letter from Jerusalem, under Roman rule, to Jewish Christian house churches dispersed outside Palestine.

Why was this epistle (letter) written?

- The early Christian house churches were living in poverty and under heavy persecution, as their pastor James knew they needed Godly spiritual guidance.
- As a result of the troubles, conflict arose within the churches, some had fallen into a worldly lifestyle (James 1:27; 4:4) and had failed to put their faith into practice (James 1:19–26).

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- James uses The Word of God (Torah or Mosaic law) to teach and mend the social conflicts between rich and poor and the spiritual conflicts between members within the church. James rebukes his readers for their worldliness and challenges them to seek divine wisdom and get right with God.

What was written?

- James' primary theme is living out one's faith, being a doer and not just a hearer of the word.
- James teaches the readers of his letter that a faith that does not produce real life change is a faith that is worthless. (James 2:17)

From James' Point of View

» JAMES DISBELIEVED JESUS

- Mark 3:21 // And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."
- Mark 3:31-35 // And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. 32 And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you."
- Jesus' family was concerned: Jesus kept saying that he was God, Savior and Creator, that he was King, and his family was concerned.
- Christianity is founded on the claim that Jesus is God. Jesus claimed to be God (John 10:30) (John 8:58), His family initially doubted His claims.

» JAMES DOUBTED JESUS

- Mark 6:3 // Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joseph (Joses) and Jude (Judas) and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. 4 And Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."
- It would have been hard to see your son or brother as God.
- Jesus' family sarcastically challenge Him to takes His "works" to Judea, then the world. (John 7:2-5)

» JAMES WAS A WITNESS TO THE DEATH OF JESUS

- Jesus was crucified, murdered openly, publicly, shamefully because of his claim to be Deity.
- James' family was an eye witness to Jesus' horrific crucifixion. (John 19:25-27)

» JAMES SAW JESUS RISEN

- 1 Corinthians 15:3-7// Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.
- James' faith is solidified through the resurrection.
- You can fool a lot of people, but not a guy's mom, not a guy's brother. James saw it with his own eyes.
- James testimony for is credible, historical, and truthful.
- James now believes; "Jesus is God, he died for my sin, he rose to conquer sin and death, he's my God and Savior."

» JAMES JOINED THE EARLY CHURCH

Q: Who are the first converts? Q: Who's the first core group for the church plant?

- Acts 1:14 // Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, 14 All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.
- Jesus' mother and family worshipped Him as God. (They were devout Jews)



» JAMES THE APOSTLES - JAMES WAS A SPIRITUAL LEADER WITH AUTHORITY

- James and Jude become powerful pastors.
- These men have such authority that they wrote books of the Bible, James and Jude.
- The Jerusalem Council was overseen by Peter and James, by invite only.
- James had convening power and the respect of other Christian leaders.
- James addresses everyone in the council, teaching the old testament.
- Paul submitted to the authority of Peter and James. Galatians 1:18-19 // Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. 19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.
- Paul had great respect for James and Peter. Galatians 2:9 // and when James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and me, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.
- God works through spiritual authority.

CONCLUSION

- James is written largely to religious people who know a lot but they don't do a lot.
- James is moving readers from conviction to action, from belief to behavior.- James is saying, "I will show you my faith by my works."
- Jesus said the same thing - Matthew 5:16 // **In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**
- Jesus Christ is the glorious Lord, who inspires true faith and authentic works.

BECOME A BROTHER OF JESUS

- Mark 3:35 // **"For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."**
- The family of God is seen by the works of God. Romans 8:14 // For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
- I will show you my faith by my works. (James 2:18)