

From Skeptic To Slave

James 1:1

James Aims

- “Proverbs of the New Testament”
- Martin Luther: “a rather strawy letter”
- Strong language and heavy-handed comparisons
- Of the 108 verses in James, 50 of them are commands

JAMES

Faith	When stretched, it doesn't break.	When pressed, it doesn't fail.	When expressed, it doesn't explode.	When distressed, it doesn't panic.
Deeds	Authentic stability	Authentic love	Authentic control and humility	Authentic patience
	<u>Greeting</u> <u>Trials</u> <u>Temptation</u> <u>Response to Scripture</u>	<u>Partiality and prejudice</u> <u>Indifference and mere intellectualism</u> <u>Obedience and action</u>	<u>The tongue</u> <u>The heart</u> <u>The will</u>	<u>Money matters</u> <u>Sickness</u> <u>Carnality and correction</u>
	<i>CHAPTER</i> 1	<i>CHAPTER</i> 2	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 3–4	<i>CHAPTER</i> 5
Background	The difficulties of life caused the scattered saints to drift spiritually, leading to all forms of problems—unbridled speech, wrong attitudes, doubt, strife, carnality, shallow faith.			
Characteristics	“The Proverbs of the New Testament,” James contains many practical, straightforward exhortations. Emphasis is on importance of balancing right belief with right behavior. The book has many Old Testament word pictures and references.			
Theme	Real faith produces authentic deeds.			
Key Verse	2:17			
Christ in James	Jesus is the glorious Lord, who inspires true faith and authentic works (2:1, 14–26).			

James Frames

James Games

- Brother of John (Mt 4:21), son of Zebedee (Mk 1:19), martyred c. A.D. 44 (Acts 12:2) prior to the writing of the book of James
- Son of Alphaeus (Mk 3:18)
- James the Less (Mk 15:40)
- Father of Thaddaeus (aka Judas, not Iscariot - Lk 6:16)
- Half-brother of Jesus (Mk 6:3; Gal 1:19), half-brother of Jude (Jude 1)

James 1:1

- James,
- a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
- To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.
- Skeptic
- Slave
- Scribe

I. **Skeptic: When Your Brother Is The Savior, It's Hard To Believe (1a)**

James

James Is The Oldest Half-Brother Of Jesus

- **Matthew 13:55-57** ⁵⁵ 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?" ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household."

James Is The Oldest Half-Brother Of Jesus

- Galatians 1:19 ¹⁹ But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

James Didn't Believe In Christ During His Earthly Ministry

- **John 7:3-5** ³ So his brothers said to him, “Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. ⁴ For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world.” ⁵ For not even his brothers believed in him.

James And Family Actually Thought Jesus Lost His Mind

- **Mark 3:21** 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

- ³¹ 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.” ³³ And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴ And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

James Converted During Jesus' Post-Resurrection Appearance

- 1 Corinthians 15:7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.

James Had The Reputation Of Being Just

- Hegisippus: James was camel kneed because he prayed alone in the temple confessing the sins of his people so much that “from his excessive righteousness he was called the Just.” (recorded by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*)

II. Slave: When Your Savior Is Lord, It's Compulsory To Serve (1b)

a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Slavery Depicts Ownership

- Charles Spurgeon: “Where our Authorized Version [KJV] softly puts it ‘servant’ it really is ‘bond-slave.’ The early saints delighted to count themselves Christ’s absolute property, bought by him, owned by him, and wholly at his disposal.”

(“Eyes Right,” July 14, 1887, Sermon 2,058, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 34)
<https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/eyes-right#flipbook/>

Slavery Deflects Will

- John MacArthur: “The Gospel is not simply an invitation to become Christ’s associate; it is a mandate to become His slave.”

MacArthur, John F.. Slave: The Hidden Truth About Your Identity in Christ (p. 19). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

Slavery Demands Sacrifice

4 types of Roman slaves:

- The Mine Slave
- The Agricultural Slave (rural)
- The Household Slave (urban)
- Imperial Slave

David P. Nystrom (*A Youth Worker's Commentary on James*. Zondervan. Kindle Edition.)

Slavery Defines Humility

- Pride might have prevented James from being saved by his own brother
- But when we realize the depth of our sin towards God, the greatness of Christ's substitution for us on the cross, and the amazing reality of the resurrection, then we bow ourselves to Christ

Slavery [To God] Denotes Honor

- D. Edmond Hiebert: “It is possible that James, in presenting himself as a servant of his heavenly Master, had in mind the religious use of the term in Judaism. In the Old Testament, the expression ‘servant of the Lord’ was used as a term on honor and authority, of those who served God in a special way.” (*The Epistle of James*, p. 61)

III. Scribe: When Your Commands Are From God, It's Mandated To Transform

To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.

Apostle: James was mentioned by Paul as an apostle

- **Galatians 1:18-19** ¹⁸ 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.

Founding Member: James Was In The Upper Room At Pentecost When The Church Started

- **Acts 1:14** ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Pillar: James was among the “pillars” of the church

- **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,
- **Acts 12:16-17** ¹⁶ But Peter continued knocking, and when they opened, they saw him and were amazed. ¹⁷ But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, “Tell these things to James and to the brothers.” Then he departed and went to another place.

Presider: James Was A Moderator For The Church's First Major Conflict

- **Acts 15:1-2** But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” ² And after Paul and Barnabas had **no small dissension and debate** with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.

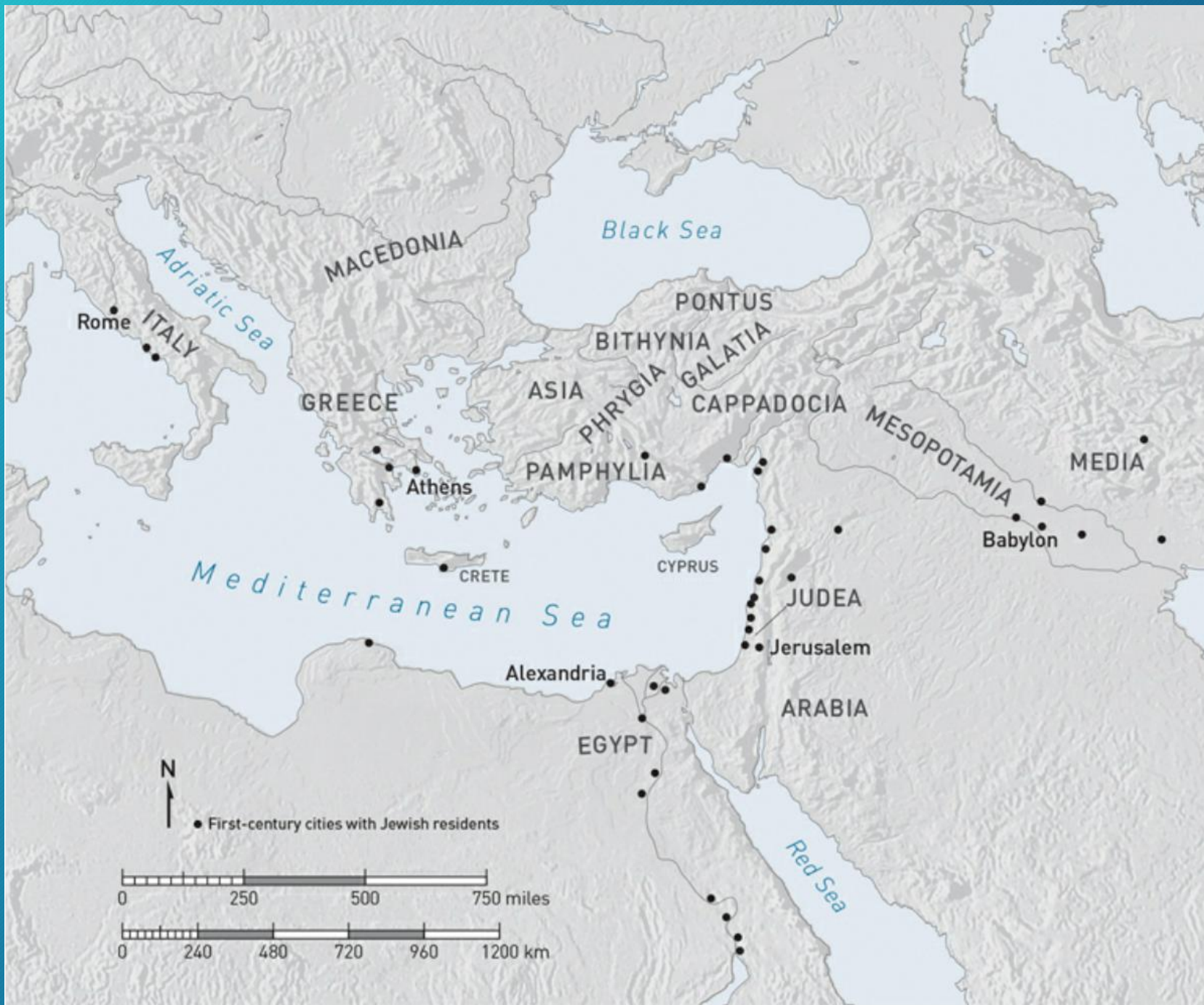
Presider: James Was A Moderator For The Church's First Major Conflict

- **Acts 15:13-19** ¹³ James replied ... ¹⁹ Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God,
- James listened then responded (Acts 15:13-14)
- Cited Scripture - Amos 9 (Acts 15:15-18)
- Rendered judgment that salvation is solely the result of the grace of God (Acts 15:19-21)
- Then circulated a letter to the churches about the decision (Acts 15:22-29)

Martyr

- A.D. 62-63
- High Priest Ananus (Sadducee) ordered his death.
- Throne off top of temple then beaten by club
- Forgave his murderers

The Audience



Purposes

- To comfort believers in tribulation and persecution (1:5)
- To prescribe what a “pure religion” is (1:27)
- To rebuke for practicing favoritism (2:1-13)
- To exhort believers to practice what they preach (2:14-26)
- To guard the tongue (3:1-12)
- To delineate what wise-living was (3:13-18)

Purposes

- To contrast a worldly life from a spiritual life (4)
- To warn the rich and pleasure seeking of the condemnation for ignoring God (5:1-6)
- To urge their patience (5:7-11)
- To gird their prayerfulness (5:12-18)
- To deal with sinning believers (5:19-20)

A Comparison of Paul and James on Justification and Works

Paul	James
Justification <i>by</i> faith	Justification <i>for</i> works
Faith as <i>producer of works</i>	Works as the <i>proof of faith</i>
Justification <i>before</i> God	Justification <i>before</i> man
Not by works	By good works
<i>Root</i> of justification	<i>Fruit</i> of justification
Against dead <i>works</i>	Against dead <i>faith</i>

(Norman Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the New Testament*, Baker Books, 2007, p. 265, 269)

D. The Date

- Early View: A.D. 45-48
- Later View: A.D. 60-62

Discussion:

- How awkward would it be for you to have Jesus Christ as a half-sibling? Why?
- What issue of pride prevents or formally prevented you from acknowledging Christ as your Lord and Savior?
- How could one who once mocked Jesus for claiming to be God change his/her mind?
- What is your reaction the link between being a Christian and a slave?
- How does your life reflect that Jesus is your Lord?