

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY ~ WE BEGIN AN IN DEPTH STUDY ~ OF THE LETTER ~ THAT ~ JAMES WROTE.

▶▶ Need to establish a solid foundation

▶▶ Read twice a week

AUTHOR.

OTHER THAN IDENTIFYING HIMSELF AS A SERVANT, ~ NO DETAILS ~ AS TO HIS identity.

▶▶ 4 James in NT

▶▶ Strongest evidence for authorship = James, ~ the half brother of Jesus.

▷▷ Furthermore, ~ the widespread opinion of the early church: ~~ James, ~ half brother.

▶▶ Pseudonymous

▷▷ This theory ~ begins with the assumption ~ that a pseudonymous letter ~ ¶¶

↳↳ would have been accepted as authoritative ~ in the ancient world.

→→ Studies are challenging this premise. ¶¶ 1/10

▷▷Furthermore, ~ it is not likely that a forger ~ (regardless of his motives) ~ ¶¶

↳↳would have identified himself as "James" ~ without being more explicit ~ as to which James.

→→A forger ~ would not want to leave any loose ends ~ that would prompt further inquiry.

JAMES THE MAN.

▶▶Unbelief

▶▶Conversion

▶▶Leadership

▶▶Flavius Josephus, ~ first-century historian, ~ records that James was martyred in a.d. 62.

ONE OF THE THINGS WE SHOULD NOTICE FIRST IN VERSE 1, ~ WAS THAT JAMES ~ did not trade ~ on who is Brother was

DIDN'T EVEN MENTION IT.

▶▶How he described himself in [verse 1](#).

▷▷A servant ~ of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WE FIND HERE ~ AN EXAMPLE ~ ¶¶

▶▶of no longer regarding Jesus according to the flesh, ~ which Paul talks about in [2 Cor. 5:16b](#). ¶¶ 2/10

▷▷ Even though we once regarded Christ ~ according to the flesh, ~ we regard him thus ~ no longer.

▶▶ We see it here ~ in James 1:1, ~ and also in 2:1, ~ where James refers to Jesus as ~ our Lord Jesus Christ."

LIKE PAUL, ~ JAMES PREVIOUSLY HAD ~ A COMPLETELY INADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE ~ of who Jesus is.

▶▶ After the resurrection, ~ James knew ~ Jesus was the Messiah, ~ the Son of the living God.

▶▶ The One ~ who was to make all things new, ~ and ~ to whom ~ ¶¶

▷▷ all people ~ must be called to respond ~ in the obedience of faith.

▶▶ At one time ~ James thought of Jesus ~ merely from a human point of view.

▶▶ How differently, ~ he knew him now.

▷▷ Good question to ask ourselves.

↪↪ By which point of view ~ do I view Jesus?

IN ADDITION, ~ BY REFERRING TO HIMSELF AS A SERVANT, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ James is putting himself on an equal footing ~ with all believers, ~ including being human.

▷▷ 15x, ~ brothers and sisters.

▷▷ Human: ~ 3:1, ~ "we all stumble in many ways." ¶¶ 3/10

FURTHERMORE, ~ IN THE NT, ~ THE TERM SERVANT ~ IS USED AS A TITLE ~ FOR Christian leaders.

▶▶ So we see James' authority as well here.

SO, ~ PACKED INTO THIS TERM ~ SERVANT, ~ we see James' ~ humility ~ equality with us, ~ and ~ authority.

DATE.

IT IS LIKELY THAT JAMES WROTE THIS LETTER ~ BETWEEN A.D. 45 AND 48.

▶▶ It is probably ~ the earliest ~ of the writings of the New Testament.

THIS BEING THE CASE, ~ JAMES' LETTER, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ and we'll come back to this a number of times, ~ James' letter ~ can hardly be seen ~ as an argument ~ ¶¶

▷▷ against Paul's letter to the Romans, ~ which was written later.

↪↪ Faith and works.

ROMANS, ~ HOWEVER, ~ IS NOT ~ A REFUTATION OF JAMES.

▶▶ It is apparent from ~ Paul's relationship with James ~ and his recognition of James ~ ¶¶

▷▷ that Paul held James ~ in high regard.

TOGETHER ~ PAUL AND JAMES GIVE ~ THE FULL DIMENSION OF FAITH. ¶¶ 4/10

▶▶ Paul wrote about ~ inner saving faith ~ from God's perspective.

▶▶ James wrote about ~ outward servicing faith ~ from man's perspective.

▷▷ The true seed of ~ saving faith ~ is verified ~ by the tangible fruit of ~ servicing faith.

CONTINUING TO ESTABLISH A SOLID FOUNDATION, ~~ TALK ABOUT ~ the historical setting.

IN VERSE 1, ~ JAMES SAYS ~ HE'S WRITING ~ TO THE TWELVE TRIBES ~ IN THE dispersion.

▶▶ It can be translated this way as well.

▶▶ To the twelve tribes ~ scattered ~ among the nations.

▶▶ James probably ~ wrote this letter from Jerusalem ~ during his tenure there ~ as the leader of the church.

BASED ON THE EXPLICIT REFERENCE ~ TO FAITH IN CHRIST ~ IN ~ 2:1, ~ ¶¶

▶▶ James was addressing Christians.

▶▶ And the manner of address, ~ To the twelve tribes ~ scattered ~ among the nations, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ along with ~ the Jewishness of the letter ~ almost certainly indicate ~ that these Christians ~ were Jews.

▶▶ Being the earliest NT letter, ~ remember ~ the first believers were Jewish. ¶¶ 5/10

FURTHERMORE, ~ THE ORIGINAL RECIPIENTS ~ ¶¶

▶▶ were probably among the rank-and-file believers ~ that were driven out of Jerusalem ~ by their persecutors.

▶▶ They eventually scattered ~ as far as Phoenicia, ~ Cyprus, ~ and Antioch.

▷▷ Acts 8:1b (CSB), ~ On that day ~ a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, ~ and all except the apostles ~ were scattered ~ throughout the land of Judea and Samaria.

▷▷ 11:19-21 (CSB), ~¹⁹ Now those who had been scattered ~ as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen ~ made their way as far as ~ Phoenicia, ~ Cyprus, ~ and Antioch, ~ speaking the word to no one except Jews. ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳²⁰ But there were some of them, ~ men from Cyprus and Cyrene, ~ who came to Antioch ~ and began speaking to the Greeks also, ~ proclaiming the good news ~ about the Lord Jesus. ~ ~ ¶¶

→→²¹ The Lord's hand was with them, ~ and a large number who believed ~ turned to the Lord.

THE LETTER IS ~ TO THESE BELIEVERS.

▶▶ But also for us

▶▶ Important distinction

▷▷ You adulterers! ~ Don't you realize ~ that ~ friendship with the world ~ makes you an enemy of God? ¶¶ 6/10

AS PART OF A ~ SOLID FOUNDATION, ~ WE SHOULD LOOK AT THE BOOK ~ at a glance.

JAMES ~ IS THE NT ~ "BOOK OF PROVERBS."

▶▶ It is the only NT book ~ that falls into the form known as ~ wisdom literature.

▷▷ Genres

▶▶ Again, ~ James is the only NT book ~ that falls into the form known as ~ wisdom literature.

▷▷ It is arranged mainly ~ into small units ~ but contains ~ some larger proverb clusters on a common theme.

▶▶ James' overall purpose ~ is to instill ~ correct thinking ~ and right behavior ~ in believers.

▶▶ His stance ~ is practical, ~ and an appropriate subtitle for the book ~ would be ~ "Faith That Works."

▶▶ Even though the book begins like a letter, ~ the rest of the book ~ ¶¶

▷▷ does not have the format of a letter ~ but rather ~ that of a collection ~ of wisdom sayings.

ALSO INCLUDED IN A SOLID FOUNDATION ~ SHOULD BE A NOTE ABOUT STRUCTURE.

THERE IS NO STRUCTURAL UNITY IN JAMES ~ IN THE SENSE ~ of a single line of argument.

▶▶ Contrast Paul in Colossians ¶¶ 7/10

▶▶ To attempt ~ to relate one brief unit of proverbs to the next one ~ ¶¶

▷▷ as though James had a continuous line of thought ~ will produce ~ tenuous ~ connections.

▶▶ We therefore ~ need to look ~ for other types of unity, ~ in order to understand the book properly.

▶▶ We can identify at least two.

▷▷ 1st, ~ the book as a whole ~ is unified by the format ~ of the anthology of proverbs.

▷▷ 2nd, ~ if we take 2:26 ~ as the theme verse, ~ faith apart from works is dead, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ the book itself, ~ with its abundance ~ of observations and commands, ~ ¶¶

→→ is a catalog ~ of the works that faith should produce.

▶▶ Can be outlined according to units of proverbs.

ALSO IN ESTABLISHING A SOLID FOUNDATION, ~ WE SHOULD NOTE ~ ¶¶

HOW JAMES GOES ABOUT ~ ACHIEVING HIS GOAL OF INSTILLING WITHIN US ~ ¶¶

▶▶ right thinking and correct behavior.

THE MOST PERVASIVE TECHNIQUE JAMES USES ~ IS THE PROVERB.

▶▶ A proverb being ~ a concise, ~ memorable statement ~ of a general truth. ¶¶ 8/10

NEXT IN FREQUENCY ~ IS JAMES' USE ~ OF DIRECT COMMAND.

▶▶ In fact, ~ there are more than 50 imperatives in James.

▷▷ More commands ~ than any other NT book.

▶▶ This abundance of commands ~ is a signal ~ that James ~ has ~ a practical bent ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and is interested in action ~ rather than ~ mere belief ~ ¶¶

↪↪ as the distinguishing characteristic ~ of Christians.

AND HERE'S SOMETHING ELSE WE SHOULD INCLUDE ~ IN ESTABLISHING A SOLID foundation.

AND THAT IS, ~ THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ~ JAMES ~ and Jesus' sermon on the mount.

▶▶ Many parallelisms exist ~ between ~ James' letter ~ and the Sermon on the Mount in [Matthew 5-7](#).

▶▶ James did not actually quote the Lord's words, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ but he obviously ~ had internalized Jesus' teachings ~ and reproduced them ~ with spiritual depth.

▶▶ Two examples.

▷▷ 1st, ~ [James 4:4](#) and [Matt. 6:24](#). ¶¶ 9/10

↪↪James 4:4, ~ You adulterous people! ~~ Do you not know ~ that friendship with the world ~ is enmity with God? ~~ Therefore ~ whoever wishes to be a friend of the world ~ makes himself ~ an enemy of God.

↪↪Matt. 6:24, ~ No one can serve two masters, ~ for either ~ he will hate the one ~ and love the other, ~ or ~ he will be devoted to the one ~ and despise the other. ~~ You cannot serve God and money.

▷▷And 2nd, ~ James 5:2 and Matt. 6:19.

↪↪James 5:2, ~ Your riches have rotted ~ and your garments are moth-eaten.

↪↪Matt. 6:19, ~ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, ~ where moth and rust destroy ~ and where thieves break in and steal.

▶▶Look for in reading.

CONCLUSION.

THAT FINISHES OUR FOUNDATION WORK.

▶▶Hopefully, ~ that will be a great help to you ~ as we go through James ~ and ~ as you read James.

LET'S PRAY 10/10