

Salt Church
James 1:1-4
Valuable Suffering
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The Fruit of Salvation

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Introduction (James)

Author

- There are four “James” mentioned in the scripture that could be the author of this letter.
 - Luke 6 gives a list of three of the four possible men.

Luke 6:12-16

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³ When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴ Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, **James**, John **(They are always listed together except for James’ death in Acts)**, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, **James son of Alphaeus** **(Also known as James the lessor)**, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶ **Judas son of James**, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Matthew will give us the fourth James.

Matthew 13:55

55 “Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother’s name Mary, and aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?”

- This James is the half-brother of Jesus and you will notice that he is listed first which indicates that he was the oldest listed.
- He is mentioned again by Paul in Galatians 1.

Galatians 1:18-20

18 Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. 19 I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord’s brother. 20 I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.

- James, the Lord’s brother is not called or listed as an Apostle but he is clearly acquainted with the leadership of the church.

The \$50 question is “which one of these 4 James’ is the author of the book of James?”

- It is very unlikely that James the father of Judas that is mentioned in Luke 6:16 is the author of this book.
 - We say this because this is the only time that he is mentioned in the Bible.
- James son of Alphaeus who is one of the original 12 disciples is most likely not the author as well.
 - The reason scholars do not credit him with the authorship of this book is that he is really not mentioned throughout the New Testament.

- He becomes known as “James the lesser” most likely due to his young age and the rise of James the brother of John and later the prominence of James the half-brother of Jesus.
- **Our next possibility is James the brother of John.**
 - John and James were nicknamed the sons of thunder.
 - This gives us insight as to their personalities prior to coming to Christ.
 - It is this same James that is included in the leadership of the disciples.
 - Peter, John, and James were often separated by Jesus and given the privilege of special instruction from our Lord.
 - It is Peter, John, and James that witness the transfiguration of Jesus on the Mt. of Olives.
 - James (the brother of John) would be the strongest candidate for the authorship of this wonderful letter if it were not for one very important fact.
 - He was murdered for his faith prior to the writing of this book.

Acts 12

12 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. ² He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

- This happened around 44 AD.
 - The book of James was not written until approximately 45-49 AD.

- With this knowledge it leaves us with only one choice.

Most scholars believe that the book of James was written by the half-brother of Jesus. (James the just)

- Those that struggle with that decision argue that James never identifies himself as the brother of Jesus.
- They also claim that James the brother of Jesus was uneducated and could not have written such a studious letter.
 - Meaning his knowledge of the Greek and of the Hebrew were beyond an uneducated mans ability.

Few things:

- **2 Timothy 3:16-17 ¹⁶ *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.***
 - **So, it really doesn't matter if James is uneducated for the One that authored this letter contains all knowledge.**

(Next) We must remember where James and Jesus grew up.

- Nazareth, (where Jesus and His siblings grew up) was a trading center of commerce.
 - People from all over the place came to buy and sell goods.
 - It was also a military outpost.
 - This tells us that there would have been people who spoke Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.

- Therefore we can logically conclude that it would not have been odd that a man like James could have known multiple languages.
- **We also have the Jewish historical record of James' death recorded by Josephus.**
 - According to Josephus, James the brother of Jesus was thrown from the top of the temple for refusing to stop preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - It is also recorded that when he hit the ground with shattered legs he stood upon his knees and continued to preach the gospel at which time the religious leaders stoned him until he was dead.
 - All this was recorded in 62 AD.
 - The reason we believe that this letter was written before 50 AD is due to the fact that James does not mention any of the issues with the Gentiles.
 - He also refers to meeting in synagogue and not as a church.
 - Those things come around 50 AD.

More important things you need to know:

- James was not a believer until the resurrection of Jesus.

Matthew 12:46-50

⁴⁶ While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”

48 He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” **49** Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. **50** For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

- **Why would Jesus say that?**

- Because His mother and his brothers were not doing the will of His Father.
 - Meaning they were not believers yet.

John 7 gives us more insight:

John 7:3-5

3 Jesus’ brothers said to him, “Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. **4** No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” **5** For even his own brothers did not believe in him.

So, when did it change for them and particularly for James?

- Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. **6** After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still

living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, (then to all the apostles,) (this means not the two other James that are listed as Apostles) ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

Then we must ask the question:

- *Why James?*
 - Why is it important to the Apostle Paul and the Holy Spirit to mention James the brother of Jesus?
 - Because James is going to become a leader within the church. (Gal. 2)

Galatians 2:9-10

⁹ James, (he is listed 1st which tells us something about his position within the leadership) Cephas and John (Notice that James and John are not listed together, why? James the brother of John is already in Paradise), those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. ¹⁰ All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

- *Notice that James is listed first*
- This is after the murder of John's brother James.
 - Clearly, we see the prominence that James the brother of Jesus has within the church.
 - This continues in Acts 15

Acts 15:12-21 (James speaks as the leader of the church)

¹² The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³ When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

*¹⁶ “After this I will return
and rebuild David’s fallen tent.*

*Its ruins I will rebuild,
and I will restore it,*

*¹⁷ that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who bear my name,
says the Lord, who does these things’—*

¹⁸ things known from long ago.

¹⁹ “It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. ²¹ For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

- Clearly, James is a leader among leaders.
- Even the great Apostle Paul recognized James (who is not an Apostle) as the leader of the church. (**Acts 21**)

Acts 21

*¹⁷ When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. ¹⁸ The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see **James**, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.*

One more thing before we get to our text:

- The book of James is the 1st New Testament book recorded on paper.
 - This does not mean that it was the 1st thing taught to the church.
 - In fact, many believe that this letter is based upon Jesus' sermon on the mount.
 - There is no doubt that the unbelieving James heard his brother's teaching about what a child of God is really like.
 - Those beatitudes set into motion the wheels of his heart and ultimately led to him becoming a child of God.
 - Many believe this letter is the result of what he remembered from that day.

Theological point of view:

- **James is not concerned with how salvation happens.**
- He is working from a point of view that salvation has already happened therefore this letter is addressed to **followers of Jesus Christ**.
 - This is good for us as we just finished Romans which covered the process of salvation thoroughly.
- **James' focus is on the fruit of salvation.**

- What does a Christian look like, act like.
 - How does a Christian process life
 - and the difficulties of trials, tribulation, and suffering.

Some have said that James is not concerned with salvation and therefore does not teach any great theological truth.

- This is not a true statement.
 - James is deeply concerned with salvation.
 - His whole point is this:
 - You can believe all of the theological truths known to man **but if your life does not yield the fruit of someone who has been saved by grace alone through faith alone** then you are no different than Satan and his demons.
 - **For they know** that He was born of a virgin birth.
 - **They know** He lived a sinless life.
 - **They know** that Jesus died on the cross for our sins.
 - **The know** He rose from the grave on the third day.
 - **They know** that the Bible is true.
 - **They know** that Jesus now sits at the right hand of God.
 - **They know all of that!**
- **But what do we know?**

- Salvation is not offered to Satan or the demons.
 - Therefore, there is no fruit of salvation in their lives.
 - **They claim the truth of Jesus**, we see this throughout the gospels.
 - But there is no fruit of righteousness.
 - James will sum it up this way, **“Faith without works is dead.”**

Now, with all of that settled in our minds we can move onto today's text.

James 1

1 James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

- In the Greek it is “a doulos of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”
 - Doulos is a type of servant.
 - It is a servant that was **born into slavery**
 - No doubt James saw himself born into this type of servanthood when he experienced his **new birth in Jesus Christ.**
 - A doulos is not only born into slavery but he is also completely dependent upon his master.
 - He is fully devoted to his master voluntarily.
 - **He is a lifer, meaning he will never seek his freedom from his master.**
- This is why James identifies himself in this way.

- He doesn't want us to see him as Jesus' brother but rather he wants us to see him as a bond servant to his master.

We continue:

To the twelve tribes who are in the Dispersion: Greetings.

- At this point in the history of the church, most of the church is made up of Jewish converts.
 - So, James writes to them as Jewish brothers in Christ.
 - Much of the Jewish historical records (as it relates to the tribes and their locations) had been destroyed by Rome thus James addresses them as those that had been dispersed.

² Consider it all joy, (From chair; cheerfulness, Calm delight -- gladness, be exceeding joy(-ful, -ous).

my brothers, when you encounter various trials,

- ***Who says things like this?***
 - Right away James attacks the way Christians should process life and various trials that come with it.
 - He says “**various trials**” in the Greek, the root word for various means multi-colored.
 - Meaning trials can come from many origins.
- ***Why would a Christian consider it all joy?***
 - I think it is important to remember that all of our trials and suffering have purpose as Christians.
 - Before you came to Christ, you suffered without any hope and your suffering had no purpose.

- You say, “***Pastor that does not bring me any comfort because suffering is still suffering.***”
- True but doesn’t it bring you some joy to know that **God the Father is the one who controls the suffering?**

Romans 8:28

*²⁸ And we know that in **all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.***

- So, from this point of view we can agree that our suffering will be used to make us more like Jesus and will be used for the glory of God.
 - Nowhere in the scriptures will you find a promise of a pain free life, **even if you put your faith, hope, and trust in Jesus.**
 - In fact what you find is a promise of more suffering 2 Timothy 3:12.
 - **This should not be news to the Christian.**
 - We know we are missionaries in this life and place.
 - We live in a culture that celebrates sin and unrighteousness.
 - The world is going to hate anyone who sheds light on sin and darkness.

Therefore, James says consider it pure joy.

- To suffer is to be human
 - To suffer for the cause of Christ is to be Christian.

So, what is the motivation for considering it all joy?

³ knowing that the testing of your faith brings about perseverance.

- Everything that is good and valuable in your life has been tested.
- The diamonds that you purchased at a very high price were tested by the jeweler to ensure it quality and legitimacy.
- The car or truck you drive was tested prior to you being able to buy it.
- Gold is tested with fire to remove all of the impurities.
- Marriages are tested with all kinds of trials and if it remains it will be made stronger.
 - ***Testing reveals quality, strength, and weakness.***
 - ***One day Jesus will test every work that the Christian has done. (1 Corinthians 3)***

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³ their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. ¹⁴ If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames.

What's your point Pastor?

- My point is that our works will be tested by the Lord.

- This testing will reveal the real motivation of our works as well as our reward or loss.
- This does not determine our salvation for that is the gift of God to an undeserving people.

Here is another very important truth!

- Those that are truly in Christ will persevere.
- They will not walk away from the faith.
 - And the trials and the tribulations that come will only strengthen their walk and faith in the Lord.
 - Do you remember what Jesus said in John 10?

John 10:25-29

²⁵ Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. **(He is talking to the religious leaders of the day)** The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me, ²⁶ but you do not believe because **you are not my sheep**. ²⁷ My sheep listen to my voice; **I know them**, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; **no one will snatch them out of my hand**. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; **no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand**. ³⁰ I and the Father are one.”

- Perseverance/endurance is a fruit of salvation!

The Greek word that is translated “perseverance” is hupomeno.

- It is also translated as endurance.
 - It means **hopeful consistency**.

- Why would it be important that we would have **hopeful consistency**?

Listen to what Jesus has to say about perseverance/endurance.

Matthew 24:12-14

¹² And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

- This hopeful consistency is critical because it reveals who is a child of God and who is not a child of God.
 - **But here is the thing:**
 - It only shows up through testing.
 - This really sheds some light on the false teaching of the “healthy/wealthy doctrine.”

We close today with this final instruction from our inspired brother James:

⁴ And let perseverance have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- What sets Christians apart from the rest of the world is not our pain and suffering.
 - ***What sets us apart is our hopeful consistency which is rooted in our faith in Jesus Christ.***

This hope has come because we know that no matter what comes we are securely held in the hands of both the Father and Son. (***Amen!***)

