

JAMES AT A GLANCE

Main Theme: Real faith produces genuine works.

Key Section: 2:14-20, "Faith, if it has no works, is dead . . ."

Key Terms: Faith, Works, Doers and Brethren.

Key Verse: 1:22

Chapter One Sections:

- Greeting (v.1)
- Trials of Life (vv.2-12)
- Temptations to Sin (vv. 13-18)
- Response to Scripture (vv.19-21)

Author: James, the half brother of Jesus.

Background: The difficult circumstances of the scattered saints of that day caused many to drift spiritually.

Characteristics: James has been called "the Proverbs of the New Testament." The book contains many practical, straightforward encouraging words that place emphasis upon the importance of balancing right belief with right behavior.

Destination: Christians "dispersed abroad" in the first century. (1:1).

Era: Between A.D. 45 and 50. James is the earliest of the New Testament books.

Two thoughts seem to be clear. (1) James was not writing to any single church but to the Christian community in general. The book seems to be addressed to Jewish Christians. (2) The aim of the book was to encourage holy living in the midst of temptations and trials to which the Jewish Christians were exposed.

Character:

- Authoritative in its approach and practical in its focus.
- Strongly emphasizes and parallels the teachings of Jesus, especially in the Sermon on the Mount.
- Places more focus on the results of faith and the demonstration of faith.
- Explains the varied dimensions of faith (1) a mature faith (2) a working faith (3) a controlling faith (4) a growing faith (5) a responsible faith.

Mature Faith:

Will enable you to find joy through trials – Chapter 1:2-4

Will seek wisdom through prayer – Chapter 1: 5-8

Will avoid sin through commitment – Chapter 1:12-15

Will honor God through thanksgiving – Chapter 1: 17-18

Working Faith:

Will be evident in a controlled tongue – Chapter 1:26

Will be apparent in compassion for the “orphans and widows” – Chapter 1:27a

Will lead one to keep “unstained by the world” – Chapter 1:27b

Will lead us to show courtesy to every person – Chapter 2:1-9

Will lead us to consistency in our faith – Chapter 2:10-13

Will lead us to commitment of living under His control – Chapter 2:14-24