

10/23/88

Into To James

Tonight we want to begin our study of James by an introduction to the epistle in order to get some background that will aid us in our study of the book.

The epistle

- The epistle does not combat any heresy or false doctrines, so it is not polemic.
- Neither is it centered on major doctrines
- But it is an epistle full of exhortations to practical everyday living, dealing with the reality of life in the Spirit in contrast to the corrupt nature of man.
- The epistle is much like Amos of the Old Testament, therefore it has been called the Amos of the New Testament.
- Also it has been associated with wisdom literature such as Proverbs, where ethical implications are to be worked out in practical relations.
- There are also many similarities between James and the Sermon on the Mount.

<u>James</u>	<u>Sermon on the Mount</u> (Matthew)
1:2.....	5:10-12
1:4	5:48
1: 5	7:7-12
1:22	7:21-27
2:12-13.....	6:14-15
3:11-13	7:16-20

4:11-12 7:1-5
 5:1-3 6:19-21
 5:12 5:34-37

-The epistle is the first of seven called general or catholic epistles because they were not written to any specific church or person, except 2-3 John (1-2 Pet., 1, 2, 3 Jn., Jude and James)

I. The Style of the letter.

A. Reflects Jewish and Old Testament background

1. There are rhetorical questions. Ja. 2:4-5; 3:11-12; 4:4
2. It reflects acquaintance with LXX.
3. It has Old Testament examples like Abraham., Rahab and Elijah. Ja. 2:14; 25; 5:17

B Out of the 108 verses there are 58 imperatives.

1. James uses what is called duadiplasis, which is repetition of the leading word. Ja. 1:2-6, 12-15; 3:2-8
2. No real direct doctrine is taught, but packed with “compressed theology”, but doctrinal implications are throughout the epistle.

II. The author of the letter.

- A** James the author of this letter.
- 1.** He identifies himself as a bond servant of God. Ja. 1:1
 - a.** There are about eight James in the New Testament; of these there are only three that are possible
 - b.** James the son of Zebedee, brother of John. Matt. 4:21; 10:2; 17:1
-He was killed by Herod by the sword, Acts 12:2 around 44 A.D.
 - c.** James the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve. Matt. 10:3; 27:56; Mk. 3:18
 - d.** James the Lord's brother. Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3; Gal. 1:19
 - 2.** The evidence of the epistle and the scriptures confirm that James the Lord's brother is most likely the author.
 - a.** He appears to be the oldest of Jesus' brothers and sisters for he is mentioned first. Matt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3
 - b.** He is brother to Jude. Ja. 1:1
 - c.** He was a non-believer prior to the resurrection. Jn. 7:5
 - d.** Lord Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection. 1Cor. 15:7
 - e.** He was in the upper room at Pentecost. Acts 1:14
 - f.** When Peter was released from prison by the angel and went to the house of Mary, he was told to go tell James. Acts 12:17

- g.** Paul after 3 years in Arabia came to Jerusalem and saw Peter and James the Lord's brother. Gal. 1:18-19
- h.** Paul calls James, Peter and John "Pillars" of the church. Gal. 2:9
- i.** James seems to have been the head over Jerusalem by the first church council in Acts 15:13 as he affirmed Peter's witness regarding the gentiles, then letters were sent.
- j.** Paul returned after his third journey to Jerusalem and went to James. Acts 21:18
- k.** Paul says he was married. 1Cor. 9:5

III. The internal and external evidence.

- A.** The internal evidence.
- 1.** Strong Jewish background.
 - a.** The 12 tribes. Ja. 1:1, 12
 - b.** The synagogue. Ja. 2:2
 - c.** The Shema of Israel. Ja. 2:19
 - d.** Oaths are present. Ja. 5:16
 - 2.** Strong Christian understanding.
 - a.** The Lord Jesus Christ, the new birth, the honored name, faith and works and the coming of Jesus. Ja. 1:1a-b, 18; 2:7, 14; 5:7
 - b.** Some declare it is a Jewish document, other declare he is opposing Paul on work and faith, to their own error.

- c. Some declare it is pseudepigraphic, written under false name, which is unfounded.
- d. Probably written from 45-49 A.D. because there is no mention of Gentiles and could be the very first epistle.
- e. The word “greetings” Ja. 1:1 same as in Acts 15:23; 23:26-30, brethren Ja. 1:2; 2:5, as in Acts 15:13; Ja 2:7 is the same as Acts 15:17.

B. The external evidence..

1. Rome and Western Church.
 - a. The epistle was not admitted into the canon till 392 A.D., 3rd council of Carthage.
 - b. There were allusions in Clement 30-100 A.D.
 - c. Shepherds of Hermes conclusively is said to be dependent on James
2. The Eastern Church.
 - a. Found in Peshitta Syria 425, revisions of the Old Syriac.
 - b. 1st Father to quote James as scripture was Origen. (185-253 A.D.)
 - c. Accepted by Athenasius and declared to be holy writ 367 A.D.
 - d. Chrysostorn accepted James. (347-407)

- e. Jerome accepted James and placed it in the Vulgate.
- f. Luther opposed it in the reformation misunderstanding it with Paul’s teaching on grace alone.
- g. James is contained in the 4 Bible documents of the 4th century, 3 secondary uncials, 200 cursive manuscripts and numerous versions.
- h. Eusebius quoting Hegeseppus 180 A.D. called James “The Just” and said his knees were as camels from praying

C. James brotherly relation to Jesus.

1. Helvidian theory of 4th century declared sons and daughters of Mary and Joseph were Jesus half brothers seeing Joseph was their Father, scriptural.
2. Epiphonian theory 370 A.D. declared them to be sons and daughters of Joseph by a former marriage.
3. Hieronymian theory by Jerome refuted the Helvidian theory by saying they were really cousins to preserve the doctrine of Mary’s perpetual virginity.

D. Some objections.

1. Why didn’t James plainly say he was the Lord’s brother?

2. That there are only two references to Jesus' name. Ja. 1:1; 2:1
3. That there is no mention of the resurrection
4. That it was written in accurate Koine Greek of a cultured Jew.

(Wycliffe outline)

IV. Outline

* Running Phrase - "Testing of the believer's faith"

I. Salutation. Ja. 1:1

II. Trials. Ja. 1:2-8

III. Poverty and wealth. Ja. 1:9-11

IV. Trial and temptation. Ja. 1:12-18

V. Reception of the Word. Ja. 1:19-25

VI. True religion. Ja. 1:26, 27

VII. Social distinctions and "the royal law", Ja. 2:1-13

VIII. Faith and works. Ja. 2:14-26

IX. The tongue. Ja. 3:1-12

X. The two wisdoms. Ja. 3:13-18

XI. The world and God. Ja. 4:1-10

XII. Judging. Ja. 4:11, 12

XIII. Sinful self-confidence. Ja. 4:13-17

XIV. Judgment of the unscrupulous rich. Ja. 5:1-6

XV. Patience until Christ's return. Ja. 5:7-11

XVI. Oaths. Ja. 5:12

XVII. Prayer. Ja. 5:13-18

XVIII. Reclaiming the sinning brother. Ja. 5:19, 20