

The Book of James BI406

Study Pack

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**THE BOOK OF JAMES
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STUDY PACK 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JAMES

By Dr. Stringer

“These devotional studies in the Epistle of James are the result of a twofold desire in the writer’s heart. First, I have been looking forward for some time to a closer study of this little book for personal spiritual profit and growth in grace. As a minister of God’s Word, I always anticipate passing on to others those lessons learned. Secondly, for some time I have had a growing conviction that this epistle has been greatly neglected. Now if these studies will make any contribution whatever to the spiritual growth of some, or if they will awaken in others an interest in a portion of God’s Word that has passed into near-oblivion, I shall consider my effort worthwhile.

Although we praise God for the contributions that have been made to the world through men like Martin Luther, it is to be regretted that his influence upon many has not always been for good. In terming the Book of James “a veritable epistle of straw, and destitute of evangelic character,” he is responsible for turning many away from this portion. But the Epistle of James is not an epistle of straw; rather it is an epistle of strength. It is not destitute of evangelic character but rather characteristic of the evangel.”

~~ Lehman Strauss ~~

I. DATE

James is usually thought of as having been written before the Council of Jerusalem.
This would give it a date of _____.

II. AUDIENCE

James is addressed to the _____.

III. THEME

The theme is clearly “_____”.

It is a book about living faith, a book of Christian ethics.

There are _____ in 108 verses.

IV. HUMAN AUTHOR

Most commentators believe that James was the half-brother of the Lord Jesus. Respected Reformation commentator Thomas Manton disagreed. He believed that James the Lessor was the author. That is also the position of the Roman Catholic Church. Lehman Strauss sums up the debate over the human author well:

“The human author of this epistle is not easily distinguished from several other New Testament men of the same name. The Scriptures speak of not less _____ . These are: (1) the son of Zebedee (Mark 1:19); (2) the son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18); (3) “James the less” (Mark 15:40); (4) one referred to as one of Jesus’ brothers (Mark 6:3); (5) “James the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:19); and (6) the brother of Jude (Jude 1). Upon checking the above Scriptures, one can clearly see that these six can actually be reduced to three if we regard two and three as the same person, and four, five, and six as the same person. Three men called *James* remain: James, the son of Zebedee; James, the son of Alphaeus; and James, the Lord’s brother.

Now the question arises as to which of the three wrote the epistle. James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, could not be the author since he was killed with the sword by Herod before the Epistle was written (Acts 12:2). Some claim that James the son of Alphaeus wrote the Epistle. But how then could he be called the brother of our Lord? The Roman Catholic Church would be inclined to favor James the son of Alphaeus since it would support their invention of the perpetual virginity of Mary. This writer believes that children were born to Joseph and Mary after the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Luke 2:7 our Lord is spoken of as Mary’s first-born son, implying that others might have been born later. Also, the account in Matthew suggests that Joseph and Mary entered into natural marriage relations after the birth of our Lord (Matt. 1:18, 25). We believe that the author of our Epistle was a brother to our Lord, _____.”

V. THE MAN JAMES IN THE SCRIPTURE!

- A. James was the half-brother of Jesus, Matthew 13:58; Mark 6:3.
- B. He rejected the claims of Jesus during his earthly ministry, Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:21, 31-35, John 7:3-9.
- C. He became _____ of the resurrection, I Corinthians 15:7.
- D. He presided over the Council in Jerusalem, Acts 15:13-21.
- E. Paul met with Peter and James as the leaders of _____, Galatians 1:19, 2:9.
- F. Paul presented the offering he brought to the Church at Jerusalem to James, Acts 21:18-25.

VI. JAMES THE MARTYR!

According to the writings of Josephus in the *Antiquities of the Jews*, James was noted as a godly man. He spent so much time in prayers that his knees became as hard as _____
_____.

According to Josephus and the early historian Eusebius, the Pharisees provoked a mob to throw James off the pinnacle of the temple. He survived the fall but the mob then beat him with clubs and splattered his brains all over the ground.

Jerome referred to James as the 13th apostle.

VII. THE TITLE

The book is commonly known as the General Epistle of James. The title was in use in ancient times.

James is referred to as a general epistle because _____
_____.

VIII. THE CANONICITY OF JAMES

James was not included in some of the earliest lists of the canon. Famed teachers like Eusebius and Martin Luther questioned whether it was really Scripture. However the vast majority of believers have always accepted the book.

IX. JAMES AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

There are many statements in James that are comparable to statements in _____
_____.

1:2	Matthew 5:10-12
1:4	Matthew 5:48
1:5	Matthew 7:7
1:9	Matthew 5:3
1:12	Matthew 7:14
1:20	Matthew 5:22
1:22	Matthew 7:24
2:5	Matthew 5:3
2:10	Matthew 5:19
2:13	Matthew 5:7
3:10-12	Matthew 7:15
3:6	Matthew 5:22
3:18	Matthew 5:9
4:4	Matthew 6:24
4:10	Matthew 5:5

4:11-12	Matthew 7:1-5
5:2	Matthew 6:19
5:10	Matthew 5:19
5:12	Matthew 5:33-37

X. THE TWELVE TRIBES

The statement “the tribes scattered abroad” in verse 1 completely refutes the cultic teaching of _____.
There are no lost ten tribes of Israel.

The Scriptures plainly declare that the captives, who returned to Palestine under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, represent the entire nation of Israel. They are called _____ (Ezra 2:2 and 59; 7:13; 9:1; Nehemiah 7:7 and 73; 8:17); _____ (Ezra 2:70; 8:25; 10:5); and _____ (Ezra 3:1; 6:21; Nehemiah 2:10; 8:17). The land and the nation are called Israel (Ezra 7:10; 10:1,2,10; Nehemiah 7:61; 10:33; 11:30).

Some would wonder how the returning captives could be said to represent the entire twelve tribes. The leadership of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were the leaders (along with the Levites) of the return from exile (see Ezra 1:5). In reality, members of the northern ten tribes had been uniting with Judah during the entire time of the Divided Monarchy.

Cyrus had offered the chance to return to Jerusalem to all of God’s people. The leaders of Judah and Benjamin led the return, but it included all those “raised up by the Spirit of God” (Ezra 1:1-5).

From the beginning of the separation of the two kingdoms, the godly were appalled at the paganism of the northern ten tribes and kept moving to the Southern Kingdom. There were representatives of Ephraim and Manasseh who dwelt in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 9:3). These Israelites, including representatives of the birthright tribe, Ephraim, identified with the Southern Kingdom (1 Kings 12:17). The Lord recognized that many of Israel were in Judah and Benjamin (2 Chronicles 11:3).

The priests and Levites that were originally spread among all 12 tribes moved to the Southern Kingdom after opposing Jeroboam’s apostasy (2 Chronicles 11:13-15). As a result, those that loved the Lord, _____, looked to Judah and strengthened the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (2 Chronicles 11:16-17).

During the reign of godly King Asa, many of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon came to the Southern Kingdom because they saw that God’s hand was on Asa (2 Chronicles 15:8-9).

By the time of good King Jehosaphat, the “_____” were identified with and operating out of Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 19:8). During the time

of Hezekiah, reference is made to both the children of Israel and Judah dwelling in the cities of Judah (2 Chronicles 31:5). During the time of Josiah, long after the northern ten tribes had been taken captive, reference is made to the “children of Israel that were present” keeping the Passover (2 Chronicles 35:17).

The Northern Kingdom constantly decreased as the Southern Kingdom increased. This was primarily a result of the godly leaving the Northern Kingdom to identify with the Southern Kingdom. Originally the Northern Kingdom could field an army of 800,000 (2 Chronicles 13:3) but by Ahab’s time it was called “two little flocks of kids” (1 Kings 20:27). The forces of the Southern Kingdom constantly grew:

- 180,000 under Rheoboam (1 Kings 12:21);
- 400,000 under Abijah (2 Chronicles 13:3);
- 580,000 under Asa (2 Chronicles 14:8);
- 1,160,000 under Jehosaphat (2 Chronicles 17:13-19).

When the Southern Kingdom went into captivity, _____
_____. When it returned to Palestine, _____
_____.

After the Northern Kingdom is carried away and dispersed, the Southern Kingdom is called Israel (2 Chronicles 31:1-6, 8, 20; 34:6-7, 9, 33; 35:3, 17-18, 25).

At the time of Christ, Anna the prophetess, was clearly identified as being of the tribe of Ashur (Luke 2:36). Nathaniel was plainly called an Israelite (John 1:47).

When Jesus preached in Galilee, He was declared to be “in the borders of Zebulon and Nephthalim.” It was declared that this fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 9:1-2 that light would be brought to Naphtali and Zebulon (Matthew 4:12-16).

When James wrote to the Jewish believers who had scattered after persecution (Acts 8:1, 4), he addressed them as “the twelve tribes scattered abroad” (James 1:1-2).

Paul called his nation “_____” in Acts 26:7.

John the Baptist was sent to Israel (Malachi 1:1; 3:1). He went to the Jews in Judea (Matthew 3:1-5; John 1:19). He turned “many of the children of Israel to God” (Luke 1:16), but the Jews were the only ones to whom he preached.

Christ called the Jews to whom he personally preached the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24). He told his apostles to go only to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and they ministered to the Jews of Palestine (Matthew 10:6).

Christ called the cities of Judah the “cities of Israel” (Matthew 10:23).

Nicodemus is called a ruler of the Jews, but Christ called him a master of Israel (John 3:1, 10). In these and many other passages Christ clearly uses Jews and Israel interchangeably.

Matthew calls the Jewish leaders who murdered Christ the children of Israel (Matthew 27:9; 28:15). The Book of Acts calls the same men: “men of Israel,” “elders of Israel,” and “all the people of Israel” (Acts 2:22, 36; 3:12; 4:8-10; 5:21).

X. ADDITIONAL DETAILS

There are 408 verses and 2,309 words in the book of James