

James – a brief introduction to the man

The name is **Jacob** (later Latin pronunciation → James)

There are 5 of them mentioned in the NT

1, son of Zebedee (apostle) – John's brother – martyred AD 44

2, son of Alphaeus (an apostle)

3, father of Judas (not Iscariot)

4, the less or little

5, the half-brother of Jesus



Jacob (James) – a brief introduction to the man



He had brothers and sisters who didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah until after the resurrection (John 7:3-5) Mark 3:21
He saw a special appearance of Jesus after (1 Cor. 15:7)

He became a leader in the church in Jerusalem and played a crucial role in the conference/council in Acts 15 – the Jew-Gentile issue of church membership/fellowship

He formulated the Letter to the gentile believers in Acts, and previously also a letter to Jewish believers (this one)

Nicknamed James the Just, and also Camel knees

Martyred AD 62 in Jerusalem – he was attacked while there was no Roman governor for a short period.

Jacob (James) – a brief introduction to the letter



It is possibly one of the first NT letters (AD 40-45) (although it took some time to be accepted). Martin Luther, the reformer had issues with it, falsely thinking it contradicted Paul's writings.

It is addressed in general to early Christian Jewish house churches outside Israel – facing temptations to assimilate, compromise their faith and behaviour in a gentile environment.

General issue for all times – living for God in the world.



Jacob (James) – a brief introduction to the letter
His style...



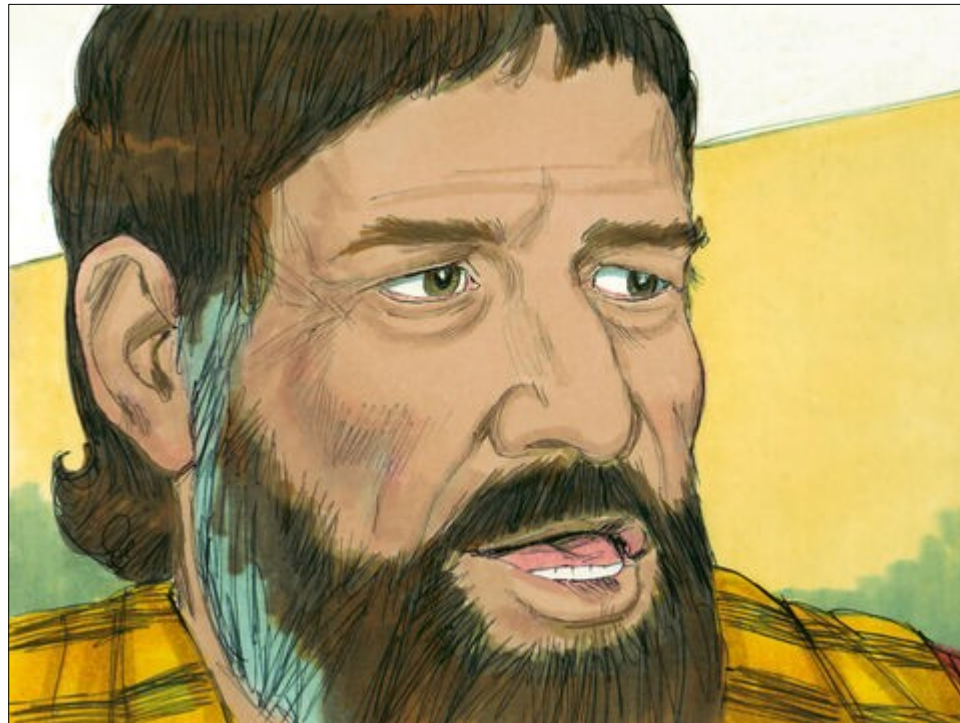
Prepare for straight talk



James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

A humble introduction

He claims no favours as Jesus' half-brother



A servant/slave

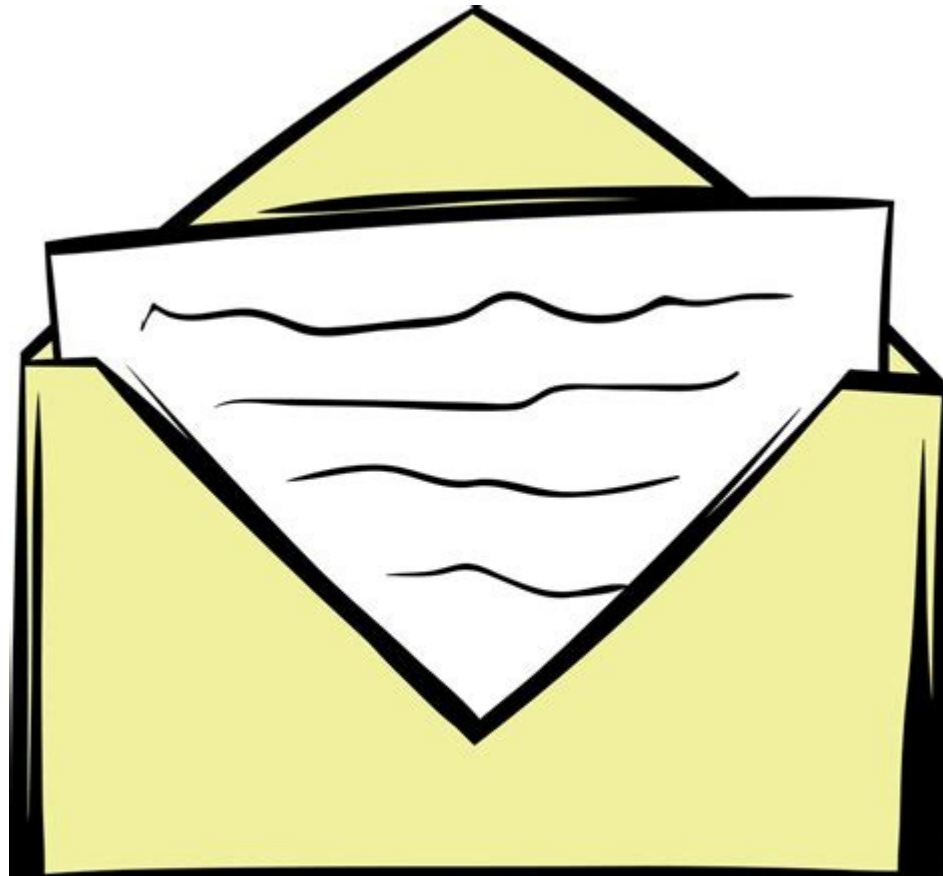
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations..

It was addressed to scattered Jewish communities
Specifically to Messianic believers



Greetings.

It was the usual introduction of a letter greeting then.



'rejoice'

Consider it pure joy, my brothers,
whenever you face trials of many kinds,

Strange contrast (rejoice - greeting)

Joy and trials

Consider – it requires prayerful thought assessment

Trials come in all sorts

Why count it pure joy?

There's a reason



because you know that the testing of your faith
develops perseverance.

God allows it because it has a purpose

Tested faith brings character – perseverance

Biblical examples? Eg. Joseph

Personal examples?

How does it work?

You survived with God's help and grace

'be strong in the Lord' ...



Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

It's part of God's growth plan for you and me

The Final objective: a mature balanced believer in the Lord Jesus Christ

Enabled to handle other trials because of what you learned in how to cope and overcome by God's grace
Not lacking – no gaps ?



If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God,
who gives generously to all without finding fault,
and it will be given to him.

Wisdom is a necessary essential

If ? There is no question about it we all lack wisdom naturally. The God given ability to do the right thing in the right way at the right time, for the right motives.

Go to the source – God

He doesn't mind

He is generous.

He won't find fault – he appreciates your acknowledging your need

It's a promise –

if you come this way you will receive.



But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt,
because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea,
blown and tossed by the wind.

There are conditions that need to be present
Faith (that God is able and willing to help you)
Not doubt (cf. the doubting father in the gospels)
It casts a bad reflection on God's character.

A seaside illustration – a
doubting person is like a wave
in a turbulent sea – all over
the place – that's what doubts
do to you but faith stabilises.



That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

A broken relationship means no connection to the Lord, the grace giver.

In 2 minds coming or going?

It inevitably affects your actions – confused

So trust in the Lord with all your heart ...



The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position.

A trial of circumstances ?

Humble circumstances ?

Social status, financial problems,

They are to be faced with a different kind of thinking

Take pride in his high position?

He's a brother – part of God's family

Child of God – the King

Access through prayer to grace at work.

Consider/value/appreciate your high position?



But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position,

The trial of wealth ?

In getting it and protecting/keeping it and using it

Proverbs – self sufficiency (cf. the rich fool)

Appreciate his low position (common to us all)

It and we won't last -

We are simply stewards of what we 'have'.

Glad to recognise your dependence on God daily

In him we live and move and have our being.



because he will pass away like a wild flower.
For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant;
its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed.

We bring nothing into world
And we can't take the 'stuff' out.
Go round the garden and see... a wild flower
You didn't plant it – it just happened to be there
The hot sunshine quickly kills it (riches can burn too)
A human created in God's image – burned and
destroyed in this severe world



In the same way, the rich man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

It won't last and neither will the rich man

Time will take its toll

Examples in bible? Ecclesiastes – Solomon's lament



Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial,
because when he has stood the test,

Trials come in all sorts - **persevere** – keep on going
(depending on God's grace, with all your heart
strengthened by prayer, fellowship and faith)

The trial will end.

The test complete – he survived – and stood the test



he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

The great objective of perseverance:-

The reward of grace – the crown of life

Eternal - quality and length

There are present and future benefits (blessed)

Because of God's unshakeable promise

To those who LOVE him. Affection and committent



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whenever you face trials of many
kinds,

