

JAMES (59-1)**JAMES: THE BIOGRAPHY OF A SERVANT OF GOD
CHRIST'S BROTHER AND
THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH'S FIRST PASTOR**

This morning we are starting a new study. Open with me to the first book written in our New Testaments, the book of James. To best help us start this study I did a personal interview with James this week. Please listen as he talks to us this morning.

Good morning my brethren in Christ Jesus, our exalted Lord and King.

My name is James; I am a servant of God and of my big brother while He was on earth - Jesus Christ. I was not always such a follower of Christ. Let me tell you my story . . .

I grew up in a devout Jewish home with a saintly mom, a sickly dad (who died when I was young), three brothers, two sisters and a PERFECT HALF BROTHER. What a difficult thing it is to live with the Son of God. I never got along well with my oldest brother. He was always right, He was never wrong, never bad, and He was never mischievous or impatient. He never argued, stewed or fought. He was kind, humble, generous and hard working. He seemed to never sleep. Whether or not he worked late in dad's carpentry shop. He always was up before the family. In fact He would come in just before breakfast each morning from outside. We could tell He had been out there quite a while. Mother always would just look at Him with such wistful and wonder filled eyes.

When He spoke which was seldom compared to us whose words filled the small house in Nazareth. When we sat at table so well made by Jesus my big brother, His words seemed to sweep all of us along. He always was so amazing, saying things that defy explanation. He was so profound and yet easily understood. All us boys would leave the table saying "Yeah, that just what I would have said." Although we could not resist His wisdom, we hated His words. The older we got they pierced our souls and irritated us to the bone!

I remember the last day He was home. It was the day the small door leading to the carpenter's shop closed for the last time. Gone would be the hours of wonder filled talks the local folks had enjoyed with the kindest man they ever had met. No more would the wide eyes of children be seen looking wistfully off as stories from the Scriptures of David and Elijah and Moses came alive. When He taught it seemed to all of us that He had been there and had witnessed those events Himself and knew those heroes of our faith personally.

I remember that day when our meek and lowly Carpenter brother headed toward the Jordan, He had to wind His way through the crowds. Our cousin John the Baptist was preaching at the River's edge to people gathered from all over the Land. A group of

scowling Pharisees were standing off to the side as the Baptist's fiery words aimed at them told of their utter viper like lack of contrition that was excluding them from his baptism of repentance. Looking back at the crowds John was struck by the serenity of One confidently striding to the waters edge. As he looked into the eyes of my brother he experienced what we had growing up with Jesus. For John the Baptist it was the first time in any man he had seen such purity, such holiness and living truth. To us watching it was almost funny, immediately the same lips of the Baptist that denied the wicked and proud Pharisees now were disqualifying himself. In the presence of Jesus John saw his own sinfulness. But after a protest, John yielded to His Master that day and baptized the Christ.

After Jesus was baptized it thundered or something. All of us knew it was really unusual. My brother was never the same. Looking into the distance He headed straight out into the barren rocks of the Judean wilderness desert. He just disappeared for over a month after that. It was like His life at our hometown and in His little carpenter's shop was done. We wondered why He left mom all alone.

When He did finally return we picked on Him mercilessly because He was still home with mom. We all fell in love with our childhood sweet hearts. He never dated or even looked with anything but kindness and respect upon women. Many would have longed for such a man as a husband. But with His work supporting mom and those long early morning walks He did every day, marriage was never an option. . .

Those early walks Jesus always had taken as I grew up at home had always intrigued us boys, we had even used to try and find Him. Once we did. I'll never forget that morning. When we came up on Jesus, He was looking straight up into the sky, talking in such a wonderful way to someone we never saw. He called Him Father, must be He really missed Joseph or something we thought. After that we never tried to find Him out there again.

But back to that last day at home. We hounded Him to go to the Feast at Jerusalem and show Himself if He were some prophet or something. And you know what? He did. He started to walk through the Land up and down. Soon crowds in the hundreds, then into the thousands and finally into the tens of thousands following Him, hanging on every word. We were told that He had fed them all from a tiny lunch basket, that He healed blind and crippled folks, and so much more - but didn't believe it. Stories have a way of growing. Stories about Jesus my big brother were LEGENDARY . . .

Time flew by, three years or more. I was married, we had our first child. It was in there some time that Jesus had come to speak in His hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4). None of us ever moved far away from Mary our mother. We stayed there working in Nazareth. When He first came back everyone loved Him again, just like in the carpenter's shop. It was kind of neat to have all the town excited that my strange brother was coming. Well all that changed. You see after He read from the Scriptures He began to speak to us as if He had written those words. We all became quite uncomfortable. There were murmurs and finally some of the less inhibited of the town jumped up. They actually grabbed Jesus and in a frenzy of rage half dragged and half carried Him up to the edge. Our

home town has a spring fed well and edge of a cliff that falls so far that we all were warned to never get near it. They were going to kill Him. I cried out "Stop!" But their fury was unstoppable. Then it happened before my very eyes . . . He serenely looked at me with eyes of sadness and then just kind of evaporated. The mob was shocked, I ran to tell mom and what do you think I saw, it was Him, walking far down the road headed to Capernaum.

I couldn't shake the sermon He said or that strange power He wielded so gently. I started following at a distance. Never like one of those hot-headed fishermen like James and John and Peter and Andrew. No, I was not a disciple yet. It was a few weeks latter just before Passover. Mom said she had to go to Jerusalem. I couldn't let her walk alone. So, I left my wife and little ones with the family and set out with mom. My younger brother Jude came to. Mom said we had to hurry something awful was happening. She said Jesus told her He was going to die.

Well, the rest is unforgettably etched upon my soul. Each step along the hard packed paths of the hills and then up to Jerusalem were filled with sights and sounds of my brother. It all started to fit. Dad's stories to us about angels and wise men following a bright star, shepherds who saw lights and listened to angels and mom's first child. Joseph always spoke to Jesus differently, never as a son. Almost like a best friend. Then the Temple story when Jesus was 12, the Baptism when Cousin John shouted that Jesus was the Lamb of God and now mom saying He was going to die, at Passover.

We arrived in time to see it all. He was in Jerusalem still preaching, the religious leaders hatefully attacked Him. They were so skillfully put down by His words. But then it happened. I saw Him bound by the Romans; He had been horribly beaten, and now staggered through the streets. They used the dreaded death machine on Him. He was crucified, bleeding and gasping for air. I watched it all. It runs together now in my soul.

But, let me finish. I am no longer His little brother. You see, at the Cross I too believed. After He rose the Scriptures record, He appeared to Peter, the Apostles and to James (I Cor 15). That's me. And now I am James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

You have just met James. There are four men named James in the New Testament. This one was the brother of Jesus in Mark 6:3 (one of four brothers and two sisters) who rose to the place of pastoring the church at Jerusalem. He is profiles in Acts 12:17, 15:13-21, 21:18; Galatians 2:9-10. In his short letter of 108 verses there are no less than 50 commands. As he writes he addresses his comments to the believers who have left Jerusalem perhaps because of Paul's persecution. These believers are called "brethren" 18x and "beloved" 3x. James reflects his "Jewishness" in the usage of "synagogue" and "Lord of Hosts". His words also carry a flavor of the Proverbs and blend with Jesus words from the Sermon on the Mount. Paul teaches that faith receives the free gift of God's righteousness. James agrees and states that faith will also reflect God's free gift of righteousness! Thus it is a faith that works.

James reflects a good grasp of the Old Testament Scriptures. He refers to four personalities (Abram, Rahab, Job and Elijah) as well as frequent allusions or references

to the Pentateuch (all five books), Joshua, I Kings, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and at least 7 of the 12 Minor Prophets.¹ James also draws allusions from the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus (15x) and Wisdom of Solomon (12x).

The Sermon on the Mount is never quoted but like reminiscences of special times it is alluded to continually. Note James/Matthew 1:2/5:10-12; 1:4/5:48; 1:, 5:15/7:7-12; 1:9/5:3; 1:20/5:22; 2:13/5:7, 6:14-15; 2:14-16/7:21-23; 3:17-18/5:9; 4:4/6:24; 4:10/5:3-4; 4:11/7:1-2; 5:2/6:19; 5:10/5:12; 5:12/5:33-37.

Want to grow in your spiritual life? James takes us to the heart of the life we are to live in Christ. Listen to just a summary of the topics he teaches about, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

1. confession of sin
2. prayer
3. wealth - right and wrong usage
4. temptation
5. swearing
6. murmuring
7. patience
8. judging
9. submission to God
- 10.worldliness
- 11.the origin of strife
- 12.rich and poor
- 13.wisdom
- 14.joy in trials
- 15.heavenly vs. earthly wisdom
- 16.tongues
- 17.teachers
- 18.faith and works
- 19.justification
- 20.God's law
- 21.liberty
- 22.impartiality
- 23.true religion
- 24.regeneration

James FAITH List

1. FAITH IS ENDURING TRIALS 1:2-8
2. FAITH IS UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING TEMPTATION 1:12-18
3. FAITH IS RECEIVING THE TRUE WORD 1:19-27
4. FAITH IS SEEING LIKE GOD DOES: IMPARTIALLY 2:1-13
5. FAITH IS LIVING LIKE JESUS DID: DOING GOOD 2:14-26 (as Jesus did Acts 10:38)
6. FAITH IS TAMING THE TONGUE 3:1-12

¹ Scroggie, James, p. 296.

7. FAITH IS RECEIVING WISDOM FROM ABOVE 3:13-18
8. FAITH IS SEPARATING FROM THE WORLD AND SUBMITTING TO GOD 4:1-10
9. FAITH IS PATIENTLY WAITING FOR CHRIST'S TIMING 5:7-12

Someone has said that the book of James is very similar to a recipe for Christian Maturity.

First preheat the oven (trials).

In a bowl put in wisdom (1:5), add faith and works (2:17) this is important because faith without works is like dead yeast, it will be inactive and not produce life.

Then add marinated or tenderized tongue (3:17).

Strain out any selfishness floating to the top (4:10).

Wait patiently basting all the while with prayer (5:8).

Devotion (up), Demonstration (out) and Dedication (in).

James 2:1 uses a colorful word for "partiality". This word combines prosopon "face" with lambano "receive" to make proso-polampsia which means to "receive face" or to be partial. As justice is portrayed as a blindfolded woman so God says He is impartial. So should we show such impartiality. This word is used three other times in the New Testament. In Romans 2:11 as God says no human face sways His perfect judgment. In Ephesians 6:9 where Paul says God rewards slaves and free impartially. And finally Col. 3:25.

James 5 God watches if you pay your debts, wages

Four Spiritual Flaws:

Satan is in an all out attack to make you and me think wrongly about God! We hear God speak in Revelation 1:15 and his voice as the sound of many waters. (KJV) Will you listen to that voice this morning? As He speaks to us through the pages of His Word. His Voice as Creator in Genesis 3, Calling for Submission/Fellowship:

I. SATAN'S FOUR SPIRITUAL FLAWS: (Gen. 3)

- A. Doubt God's Word v. 3a "hath"
- B. Doubt God's Goodness v. 3b "not eat"
- C. Doubt God's Authority v. 4 "not die"
- D. Doubt God's Plan v. 5 "eyes open"

II. GOD'S FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS:

- A. TRUST His Word Ps 119:89 "forever settled"
- B. REST in His Goodness Ps 73:1 "God is good"
- C. SUBMIT to His Authority James 4:7 "Submit to God"
- D. FOLLOW His Plan Pr. 3:5-6

FIVE CROWNS

In Glory all will shine in varying degrees of splendor [I Cor. 15:40-42]. We all will be happy servants [Mat. 20:1-16] of One Lord:

1. The Steadfast Racer that resists all Disqualifiers gets the Unfading Crown in I Cor. 9:25-27. This is for mastering our old nature.
2. The unselfish Worker who faithfully wins souls gets the Crown of Honor in I Thess.2:19; Phil 4:1.
3. The Victorious Warrior who faithfully watches for Christ gets the Crown of Righteousness in II Tim. 4:8.
4. The Example to the Flock who faithfully shepherds gets the Crown of Glory in I Peter 5:3-4. This is for feeding the flock.
5. The Faithful Witness who is loyal unto death gets the Crown of Life in Revelation. 2:10; James 1:12. This is for enduring trials.

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BAPTISMAL CHALLENGE HOLY SPIRIT IN JAMES

JAMES 4:5

Holy Spirit jealously desires us:
Identify with Christ = IDENTIFICATION
Yield to Christ = CONSECRATION
Follow Christ = DEDICATION

James 4:7-10

Submit to God = OBEY GOD'S TRUTH
Resist the Devil = RESIST GOD'S FOES
Draw near to God = PURSUE GOD'S PRESENCE
Clean up = REPENT
Humble in presence = BOW TO GOD'S

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Spiritual warfare series: part two "The attitude of resistance"

God has a formula in his word to secure our victory over the hosts of darkness. That formula is as simple as:

1. Submit to God, James says in ch. 4.
2. Sink into Christ Paul says in Ephesians 4-6.
3. Stay awake Peter warns in I Peter 5.

As you sit seemingly safe in this of solitude, music and worship an incredible war is raging outside the realm of mere mortals.

The grotesquely deformed son of the morning has turned his malignant gaze earthward and is in the throes of an all out attack!

With numberless hordes of supernaturally empowered spirit creatures, the father of lies, deceit and trickery has masqueraded his true self into a comic book cartoon-ish existence. Only those who have been devoured or who believe God's Word can fully appreciate the enormity of his horrific wickedness. Satan.-

1. causes suffering acts 10:38
2. has the power of death Hebrews 2:14
3. inspires wickedness john 13:2
4. enters unsealed humans john 13:27 a blinds unprotected minds 11 Cor. 4:4
5. robs people of the truth mark 4:15
6. energizes counterfeit Christians 2 Corinthians 2:13-16
7. opposes God's servants as he hinders them 1 Thessalonians 2:18
8. resists them Zechariah 3:1
9. buffets them 2 Corinthians 12:7
10. tests them Luke 22:31
11. accuses them Revelation 12:9-10

We have already seen in our first look at spiritual warfare, that the very center of the issue is our Lord Jesus Christ. He has a three -fold attack on the adversaries:

1. His purpose was to destroy the works of Satan. I John 3:8
2. His sacrifice triumphed over all the celestial and terrestrial (Romans 8:38-39) hosts of darkness. 11 Corinthians 2:11-14
3. His word is always sufficient psalm 19; 119; 11 timothy 3:16-17; 11 peter 1:3-4.

Turn with me as we close this evening to James four.

The question of spiritual victory is the question of authority. To whom or what you submit shows your spiritual health and determines your eternal destiny.

Examine your self closely tonight and see- under which authority are you placing yourself:

1. Personal ambition? V. 1-3, 6
2. Social acceptance? V.4
3. Pursued holiness v.5-17 is an actively pursued way of life that exhibits:
 - A. Submitting v.7a
 - B. Standing v.7b
 - C. Seeking v.8a
 - D. Scrubbing v.8b
 - E. Saddening v.9
 - F. Sanctifying v. 10