

LESSON ONE: An Introduction to the Introduction of James

Est. 7 BCE	Jesus' Birth	Scholars estimate the birth of Jesus between 4 and 7 AD.
6	Context, Context, Context	
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4	2 Timothy 2:15 AMPLIFIED	
3	<i>Study and be eager and do your utmost to present yourself to God approved (tested by trial), a workman who has no cause to be ashamed, correctly analyzing and accurately dividing [handling and skillfully teaching] the Word of Truth.</i>	
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1	A. It is important to learn how to interpret and internalize (personalize) the Bible when you read and study it.	
0	B. Questions should be asked when studying the Bible.	
1 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was the intended audience of a writing? Not, “how” does it apply to me, but “does” this apply to me? • When was it written? • What can we know about the author? • Does the cultural context explain the meaning? 	
2		
3	C. It's important to understand the purposes (the “why”) the author had in mind for his writing such as:	
4	• Old Testament (meaning Genesis - Malachi here only) passages that speak of the New Covenant,	
5	• New Testament passages (meaning Matthew - Revelation here only) that reflect the Old Covenant,	
6	• Books which are primarily historical,	
7	• Books containing practical wisdom such as Proverbs,	
8	• Passages that bring correction of doctrine,	
9	• Passages that correct improper behavior,	
10	• Inspirational books of worship such as the Psalms and certain doxologies in various letters,	
11	• Prophetic books such as Isaiah and Revelation.	
12	D. Careful consideration should also be given to interpreting Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Since Jesus was a Jew born under the law and sent to minister to the Jews only. We need to understand His teachings in this context. Some of what He said reflected the Law of Moses. Some of His teachings could not be completely understood by those who listened to him until after the resurrection. Some of what He said <i>only</i> applied to those under the Law. Some of what He taught, especially those passages about how to relate to each other apply to us as well. One might consider these wisdom passages. For example, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,” and “Give and it shall be given to you”. Many other passages, such as those about faith, apply before and after the resurrection.	
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14	E. Of course, all Scripture is profitable for doctrine and correction but we need to examine it carefully to discern <u>if</u> it applies personally and if so, how.	
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16	F. Since the gospel of grace that Paul received and taught was not immediately revealed to the church in its entirety (salvation to the Gentiles justification by grace through faith), it is also crucial that we take into account the mindset of each author. We need to know what his current understanding of the New Covenant was by considering the historical timing of his writing. (This is the main point of our discussion in this lesson.)	
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21 1. Prior to the coming of Christ it was foretold to the Jews that God’s mercy would be extended to the Gentiles.^A
 22 *Amos 9:11-12*
 23 *“On that day I will raise up*
 24 *The tabernacle of David, which has fallen down,*
 25 *And repair its damages;*
 26 *I will raise up its ruins,*
 27 *And rebuild it as in the days of old;*
 28 *¹² That they may possess the remnant of Edom,*
 29 *And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,”*
 30 *Says the Lord who does this thing.*

30	Crucifixion/Resurrection/Day of Pentecost		Gospel is Preached Only to the Jews	
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34	PAUL’S Conversion	Churches of Judea don’	PAUL in Syria and Cilicia Receives the Gospel of Grace by Revelation (Gal. 1:11-2,	Paul is in Arabia & Damascus 3 yrs. then meets with Peter for 15 days in Jerusalem & meets James (Gal. 1:18-20)
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37	Gospel to the Gentiles ¹	PAUL/Peter ² PAUL/James ³		
38	Paul knew that he was called to minister to the Gentiles at his conversion, but according to accounts in Acts, it may be that he initially only ministered to the Jews the first 3 years while in Damascus (Acts 9:15, Gal. 1:11-17, Act 9:20-25)		PAUL in Syria and Cilicia Receives the Gospel of Grace by Revelation (Gal. 1:11-2,	
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46	BOOK OF JAMES to the Twelve Tribes (Jews)			

The Book of Acts is incredibly important, for its history, and also because it gives context to the Epistles, i.e. what did the Church and or Jews believe at the time that each epistle was written?
 2. Just as the Jews had not understood the prophecies of the Messiah completely they did not understand that salvation was also for the Gentile. For the first seven years of the Early Church, they ministered the gospel message ONLY TO JEWS. We know this because God had to reveal this truth to Peter by vision.

Acts 10:29, 43-47

²⁸ Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But **God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**

⁴³ To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, **whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.**”

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the **Gentiles** also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

¹ Peter receives a vision that the gospel is also for the Gentiles.

² Paul meets for 15 days with Peter after he’d been in Damascus three year.

³ Paul briefly met with James, the Lord’s brother and the author of James around the same time he met with Peter for 15 days.

A: Commentaries vary on estimated dates. We chose to adopt those given in the NKJV Nelson Study Bible instead of mixing sources.

Understanding the Revelation of the Gospel of Grace of God

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50	JERUSALEM COUNCIL ACTS 15: GENTILES NOT REQUIRED TO BE CIRCUMCISED OR KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES		PAUL'S 2 nd Missionary Journey	
51				
52	GALATIANS: Righteousness by Faith Not Law			
<p>The early Jewish leaders taught a different set of teachings to the Jewish Christians than Paul taught to the Gentile Christians. The early teachers, James in particular, thought the Jewish Christians were still under the Law to a great extent, and so his teachings reflect this view. The emphasis of the law was on what we do rather than on what we believe (Rom. 10:5-13)</p>				

The early Church turned the world upside down with a revelation of faith for salvation, Jesus was raised from the dead, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the miraculous power of God.

3. Peter was required to give and account of his actions. Acts 11:1-4, 17-19, 22, 25-26

Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. ² And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, ³ saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!"

⁴ But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning... ¹⁷ "If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

¹⁸ When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

¹⁹ Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, **preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.**

²² Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.

²⁵ Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. ²⁶ And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Notice that James wrote the earliest epistle 4-5 years before the Jerusalem Council. He wrote it to the Jews (the 12 tribes) understanding the revelation of Jesus Christ as Messiah, however, only to the Jews, and was still under the influences of the Law. He did not have the revelation Paul was soon to receive, that of justification by grace alone through faith alone not the works of the law.

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The primary teachings of the revelation of Paul, which were not clearly understood or taught to the Jews initially were: righteousness by grace through faith *apart from the works of the law*, complete forgiveness of *all* sin, that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and therefore of all the temple and ceremonial types and shadows, that there is one gospel for both Jew and Gentile making them one body with no differences between the Jews and Gentiles (or between men and women).

- Even though Paul knew that he'd been called to the Gentiles, it is likely that his first three years of ministry were only to the Jews in Damascus (Acts 9:15, Gal. 1:11-17, Act 9:20-25).
 - After his life was threatened there by the Jews, he fled to Jerusalem.
 - Very close to the time that Peter had his revelation of salvation to the Gentiles, Paul met with Peter 15 days (Gal. 1:18). It may have been that Peter shared his vision about the Gentiles with Paul.
 - Paul also met briefly with James the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:19).
 - Since it appears that Paul had not yet preached to the Gentiles (Acts 9:20-22), we do not believe that at this time he had received the revelation of the gospel of grace that he said Jesus revealed to him personally (since this would include the Gentiles).
 - Paul is sent to Syria and Cilicia for 11 years making a total of 14 years. It is likely that Paul received his revelation from the Lord sometime during these 11 years (**before the book of James was written and before the Jerusalem Council.**)
 - Toward the end of this time, Barnabas sought him out and they ministered to the Gentiles together.
 - Not until the Jerusalem Council which took place TWENTY YEARS after the resurrection and THIRTEEN YEARS after Peter's vision was it officially decided that the Gentiles were not required to be circumcised or keep the Law of Moses, only to abstain from any form of idolatry and sexual immorality.
- Acts 15:1-2, 4-15, 19-21*
And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ²Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

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Acts 15:1-2, 4-15, 19-21

⁴And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. ⁵But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

⁶Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. ⁷And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, ⁹and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. ¹⁰Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? ¹¹But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

¹²Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. ¹³And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: ¹⁴Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵And with this the words of the prophets agree.

¹⁹Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, ²⁰but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. ²¹For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

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12. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE COUNCIL

- a. No, the Gentiles believers were not required to be circumcised or keep the Law of Moses.
- b. Peter declared that God, ***“made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”*** ***This was a stunning statement.***
- c. ***He also said, “Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”*** ***Clearly since the issues were circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses, he was referring to the Law as the “yoke”.***
- d. Peter also made another stunning statement, ***“But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”*** **HOWEVER... (INSTANT MIXTURE)**
- e. Even James agreed that the Gentiles did not have to follow the Law of Moses, but oddly enough, even after Peter had said that both Jew and Gentile were saved the same way, and that God made no distinction between Jew and Gentile, and that the law was unbearable, James adds, ***“For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath,”*** This seems to still imply that the Law of Moses was essential at least to the Jews.
- f. Even though the Jerusalem council had made these public declarations the Judaizers continued to insist that the Gentiles must be circumcised and follow the Law in order to be justified. We know this because Paul spoke out against them in His letter to the Galatians after his second missionary journey, 2-3 years after the Jerusalem Council. ***Galatians 1:8-9***
But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

Understanding the Revelation of the Gospel of Grace of God

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70	Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem ☼ Church is Scattered	
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13. In Galatians we read of a rebuke to Peter that speaks volumes. Obviously, Peter didn't understand that there is one gospel for both Jew and Gentile. Paul declares CLEARLY that neither Jew nor Gentile were justified by keeping the Law.

Galatians 2:11-21

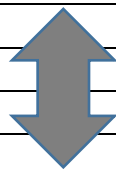

Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹² for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. ¹³ And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

¹⁴ But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?" ¹⁵ We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, ¹⁶ knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

¹⁷ "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! ¹⁸ For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. ¹⁹ For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

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14. In Galatians Paul write one of the most stunning statements of his day and time. The temple divided the High Priest from the other priests, the Jewish men from the Jewish women and children, and all the Jew from the Gentiles. In saying this Paul was not only speaking of equality in Jesus, but negating the way of the Law.

Galatians 3:24-29

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

15. About five years later, writing to both Jew and Gentile Paul spells out in no uncertain terms that both Jew and Gentile are justified by faith, not the law.

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 6:14

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

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16. Act 21 paints a frightening picture of just how deep the divide was between the circumcision (those who believed that not only the Jews were still under the law, but that Gentile believers should be circumcised and keep the law) and those like Paul who taught justification by faith apart from the law.

Acts 21:17-32

And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. ¹⁸ On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰ And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; ²¹ but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. ²² What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. ²³ Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. ²⁴ Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were

concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. ²⁵ But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality." ²⁶ Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

²⁷ Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, ²⁸ crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." ²⁹ (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) ³⁰ And all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. ³¹ Now as they were seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³² He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

Understanding the Revelation of the Gospel of Grace of God

SGF CELEBRATION

57	ROMANS: Righteous by Faith Not Law, Paul's desire for the Jews.		
58	ACT 21: Paul Submits to James to Appease Jews	↑	Paul Arrested in Jerusalem
59			
60		↙	PAUL IMPRISONED in Rome; Writes Philippians, Philemon Colossians, Ephesians
61			
62	JAMES EXECUTED by priestly authorities in Jerusalem		HEBREWS is thought to have been written by Paul sometimes prior to AD 64
63			
64	Nero's Persecution (bloody)		
65			
64	Nero's Bloody Persecution		
65			
66			
67	Peter and Paul Executed by Nero (according to tradition)		
68			
69			
70	Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem ✨ Church is Scattered		

17. Paul was warned twice against going to Jerusalem. The first time he was instructed not to go. Yet Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem to minister to the Jews there.

Acts 21:4

And finding disciples, we stayed there seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

18. In Caesarea Paul was warned by the prophet Agabus that he would be bound in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:10-11

And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

19. Paul was determined and continued to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:12-14

Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to

be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

20. The results were just as they'd been prophesied. Even though Paul "became as a Jew" to minister to them. Their hatred for the message of the gospel of grace—justification by grace through faith and not by law, caused them to reject him. **THESE WERE CHRISTIANS.**

21. The account of Paul's experience in Jerusalem leave room for much speculation. There can be **NO DOUBT**, that Paul taught justification by grace through faith, that he believed there was no difference between Jew and Greek. Commentators have much to say about it. There are three principle views:

View 1: Paul still practiced the law. In fact, this proves that He still believed the Law was in effect and that at least the Jews were still under the Law. (We obviously reject this view.)

View 2: Paul made the biggest compromise of his ministry by not standing up to James and the others. He should have stayed away from Jerusalem in light of the prophecies. He was as big a hypocrite as Peter had been in Galatia. (At a glance, it certainly looks like this, but Paul's stance on justification by faith should have prevented his compromise.)

View 3: Paul didn't believe He had to practice the law. He wasn't involving himself in Jewish practices in order to make himself right before God. He was only submitting to James out of respect for him as the head elder of the church in Jerusalem and with the hope of ministering to the Jews in Jerusalem. He may have been misguided in his actions, but his motivations were pure. **(This is our view.)**

22. Romans was written before Acts 21. It reflects Paul love for his Jewish kin.

Romans 9:1-5

I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, ² that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. ³ For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, ⁴ who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; ⁵ of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.

Romans 10:1-4

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Romans 6:15-21

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?" ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

¹⁸ But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

*"Their sound has gone out to all the earth,
And their words to the ends of the world."*

¹⁹ But I say, **did Israel not know?** First Moses says:

**"I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation,
I will move you to anger by a foolish nation."**

²⁰ But Isaiah is very bold and says:

**"I was found by those who did not seek Me;
I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."**

²¹ But to Israel he says:

**"All day long I have stretched out My hands
To a disobedient and contrary people."**

23. We can see from Paul's letters that he put no distinction between the Jewish Christian and the Gentile Christian. From His prison in Rome (after his experience in Jerusalem), he penned the book of Ephesians where he made this crystal clear.

Ephesian 2:11-22

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, ¹⁵ having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. ¹⁷ And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. ¹⁸ For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

¹⁹ Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Understanding the Revelation of the Gospel of Grace of God

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IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WRITING OF HEBREWS, JAMES, AND ACTS 21?

24. It is safe to conclude that due to its contents Paul wrote Hebrews. He wrote it to the Jews.

25. The time of the writing of Hebrews is more difficult to pinpoint, but commentators point out that if it was written to the Jews in Rome as is believed, then it was written before 64 CE before Nero's bloody persecution, perhaps while imprisoned in Rome (Heb. 10:34). According to FF. Bruce, "The view tentatively adopted in this commentary is that the epistle was written before, but not long before, the outbreak of persecution in Rome."

Hebrews 12:3-4

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed,

striving against sin.

26. We believe that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews after his distasteful experience in Jerusalem in response to their total lack of understanding that the temple worship was no longer valid. Throughout the book of Hebrews you hear him begging them to leave the Old Covenant worship based on Moses, angels, and priests, and turn instead to Jesus alone.

Hebrews 7:26-28

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷ who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. ²⁸ For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

Hebrews 8:13

In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Hebrews 12:25

See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.

Speculation: Might James have been executed by the priestly authorities in Jerusalem because he finally stood up to them instead of trying to appease them?

WE DETERMINE AND TEST OUR DOCTRINE BASED ON THE GOSPEL THAT PAUL TAUGHT.

We base this statement on the fact that Paul said if anyone taught any other gospel than the one he taught, that person was to be accursed. He repeated this statement to add emphasis.

Ephesians 3:2

Assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace (His unmerited favor) that was entrusted to me [to dispense to you] for your benefit, AMP

NASB if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you;

Romans 1:1

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 2:16

In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

Romans 16:25

Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

Galatians 1:11

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Galatians 2:7

But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised

2 Timothy 2:8

Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:

Acts 20:24

But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

It is worth our time to consider the historical and cultural timeline in order to understand why there seem to be discrepancies between what Paul taught and other Biblical writings which seem to emphasize law. James, for example wrote his letter with the understanding he currently held. The Jerusalem Council had not yet met when he wrote his letter. He likely held the view that every other Jew in Jerusalem held at that time and that was that the Gentiles needed "to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses" to be truly saved. After the Council, he likely adopted the view that many held, that yes, the Gentiles did not need to keep the Law of Moses or be circumcised, but the Jews still did.