

Toward a Better Understanding of James

LESSON TWO: Introduction and James 1:1

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CONTEXT OF WRITING

In order to understand the book of James it is **IMPERATIVE** that we consider not only the author and the audience, but the mindset of James and the church at the time James wrote it.

1. Most Bible scholars agree that James was one of the earliest “New Testament” (Matt-Rev) writings.
2. It was written to “the twelve tribes scattered abroad”.
3. It was written about 9 years after the gospel was given to the Gentiles through Peter.
4. It was written 4 years before the Jerusalem Council which concluded the Gentiles were not required to keep the law of Moses.
5. The mindset of the church at that time was that all were saved the same way, but the Jews were still expected to keep the Law of Moses.
6. It was written 6 years before the book of Galatians by Paul which would thoroughly reject that either group of believers were required to keep the Law.
7. It was written about 16 years before the book of Hebrews which urged the believing Jews to forsake the “obsolete” for the New.

30 CE	Crucifixion/Resurrection/Day of Pentecost	Gospel is Preached Only to the Jews	Jesus Appears to JAMES (1 Cor. 15:7)
31	Stephen Martyred		PAUL Persecutes the Church
32			
33			
34	PAUL’S Conversion	Churches of Judea don’t know Paul	Paul is in Arabia & Damascus 3 yrs. then meets with Peter for 15 days in Jerusalem & meets James (Gal. 1:18-20)
35			
36			
37	Gospel to the Gentiles		
38		PAUL in Syria and Cilicia Ministering to the Gentiles Receives the Gospel of Grace by Revelation (Gal. 1:11-2,)	
39			
40			
41			
42	Barnabas sent to Antioch		Barnabas sought Paul in Tarsus of Cilicia and brought him to Antioch of Syria to help him minister.
43			
44	James Mentioned as Leadership		
45			
46	BOOK OF JAMES to the Twelve Tribes (Jews)		
47		Paul rebukes Peter (Gal.2)	PAUL’S 1 st Missionary Journey
48			
49			
50	JERUSALEM COUNCIL ACTS 15: GENTILES NOT UNDER LAW, James Writes Letter to the Gentile Believers		PAUL’S 2 nd Missionary Journey
51			
52	GALATIANS: Righteousness by Faith Not Law		PAUL’S 3 rd Missionary Journey
53			
54	Paul in Ephesus		
55			
56	2 CORINTHIANS 12 “14 years ago” (42CE)		
57	ROMANS: Righteous by Faith Not Law, Paul’s Great Love for Israel		
58	ACT 21: Paul Submits to James to Appease Jews		Paul Arrested in Jerusalem
59		PAUL IMPRISONED in Rome; Writes Philippians, Philemon Colossians, Ephesians	
60			
61			
62	JAMES EXECUTED by priestly authorities in Jerusalem	HEBREWS is thought to have been written by Paul shortly before CE 64.	
63			
64	Nero’s Persecution		
65			
66			
67	Peter and Paul Executed by Nero		
68			
69			
70	Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem ☼ Church is Scattered		

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

1. James is commonly believed to be a son of Mary and Joseph, the half-brother of Jesus. Though some deny it, after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had marital relations and had children of them both.

Matthew 1:22-25

So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

2. James is named as one of Jesus’ brothers through Mary.

Matthew 13:53-58

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. ⁵⁴ When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? ⁵⁵ Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not His mother called Mary? And **His brothers James**, Joses, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶ And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?” ⁵⁷ So they were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.” ⁵⁸ Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

3. James did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah while Jesus walked on earth.

John 7:1-5

After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. ² Now the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. ³ His brothers therefore said to Him, “Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” ⁵ For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

4. Jesus appeared to His brother, James, after the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ **After that He was seen by James**, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

James and the other brothers did not believe in Jesus during His earthly ministry (Mark 3: 31-35; John 7: 1- 5). Yet we find our Lord’s brethren in the upper room praying with the disciples (Acts 1: 14). What effected the change from unbelief to faith? First Corinthians 15: 7 indicates that Jesus appeared to James after His resurrection! This convinced James that Jesus truly was the Savior, and he, in turn, shared this knowledge about Jesus with the other brothers. Wiersbe, Warren W. (2010-01-01). *Be Mature (James): Growing Up in Christ (The BE Series Commentary)* (p. 22). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

¹ This same Judas is generally agreed upon to be the author of the book of Jude.

5. James is first mentioned in a leadership role in the church about 14 years after the resurrection (around CE 44).

Acts 12:16-17

Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. ¹⁷ But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

*James became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. Paul called him a pillar in Galatians 2: 9. It was James who moderated the church conference described in Acts 15. When Peter was delivered from prison, he sent a special message to James (Acts 12: 17); and when Paul visited Jerusalem, it was to James that he brought greetings and the special "love offering" from the Gentiles (Acts 21: 18- 19). Wiersbe, Warren W. (2010-01-01). *Be Mature (James): Growing Up in Christ (The BE Series Commentary)* (p. 22). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.*

6. Before the Jerusalem Council, we have a very interesting scenario in which James' name is mentioned. Peter was the one who received the revelation that the Gentiles were not unclean and that salvation was not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles. However here we have Peter, who sat and ate freely with the Gentiles until "certain men came from James" came and he "feared the circumcision" (those who believed the Gentiles needed to be circumcised). Those who came from James refused to sit with the Gentiles (in compliance with the law), and Peter out of fear submitted to them...not just Peter, but Barnabas! Why were they so afraid of the circumcision? We need only look at the scene in Jerusalem recorded in Acts 21 to understand why. The Jewish Christians predominantly did not understand "the truth of the gospel". Paul publicly rebuked Peter in front of these Jews. Certainly this incident was relayed to James since he had sent them

Galatians 2:11-16

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.

7. It appears that James was presiding over the Jerusalem Council. After much debate as to whether or not the Gentiles had to "be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses", James had the final word on the matter, and wrote a letter to the Gentiles giving them the decision. No, the Gentiles were not required to keep the law. HOWEVER, it is apparent that at this time, James still believed that the Jews would still adhere to the Law. He was saying the Jewish believers did not need to be threatened by the Gentile believers. They still had synagogues where the Law of Moses was preached.

Acts 15:13-21

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And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: ¹⁴ Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

*¹⁶ 'After this I will return
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;*

*¹⁷ So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,
Says the Lord who does all these things.'*

¹⁸ "Known to God from eternity are all His works. ¹⁹ Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, ²⁰ but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. ²¹ For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

8. Eight years later, we still see the Jewish Christians zealously supporting the law and violently opposing any Jew who taught that they were not required to keep it.

Acts 21:18-23

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.

WHY IS JAMES CONTROVERSIAL?

1. Those who comment on the apparent difference in doctrine that James had in contrast with Paul vary as to what they believe to be the reasons.
 - **Extreme Views:** Some think James was a heretic because he contradicted Paul, and others reject all the teachings of Paul saying they contradict Jesus' teachings.
 - **"Balanced" View:** Others see Paul and James in agreement that Christians should have good works and not sin, but that they disagree as to how to arrive there, by emphasizing law and sin (James) or by emphasizing grace and faith (Paul), AND that the end (good works and not sinning) justifies the means (whether law or grace).
 - **Exclusion from Canon:** Some believe that James should not have been included in the Bible.
 - **Defining or Redefining:** Others tend to think James didn't really mean what it seems like he was saying; for example, that he knew we were saved by grace through faith alone, but he was really talking about a living faith verses a dead faith, and that he didn't really mean it when he said that we are not justified by faith alone.
 - **Historic Contextual:** Our position is that it is correct to examine any writing against the gospel Paul preached. James is not an exception. If James' teaching does indeed differ from Paul's, this needs to be addressed. It also reasonable to read it in light of the Early Church's and James' understanding of the gospel message at the time his book was written.

2. We won't get into detail in this lesson, but here are the key points that seem to contradict what Paul taught which we will discuss in future lessons.

	JAMES	PAUL
1	If you break one commandment of the ten, you are guilty of breaking all of them.	The Old Covenant which was based on the Ten Commandments is obsolete.
2	Faith cannot save us without works.	We are saved by grace through faith and NOT of works.
3	Faith without works is dead.	We've been created for good works.
4	Abraham was made righteous by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar.	Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.
5	We are justified by works, and not by faith only.	We are justified by grace through faith alone.
6	James refers to sinning Christians as "sinners".	Paul never called a believer who sinned a sinner. He called the "the righteous".
7	Christians who sin must repent from the error of their ways in order for their souls to be saved from death and their sins to be covered.	Of course, we stop sinning, but God is not holding our sins against us. We are saved by grace through faith, initially, during our time on earth, and ultimately at His return, not by repentance and confession of sins.

THE ONGOING DEBATE

James is one of the books which had a very hard fight to get into the New Testament. Even when it did come to be regarded as Scripture, it was spoken of with a certain reserve and suspicion, and even as late as the sixteenth century the reformer Martin Luther would gladly have banished it from the New Testament altogether. Barclay, William (2010-11-05). The Letters of James and Peter (The New Daily Study Bible) (p. 9). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

MARTIN LUTHER'S OPPOSITION TO JAMES' DOCTRINE

In his printing of the German New Testament, Luther had a contents page with the books set out and numbered. At the end of the list, there was a little group, separate from the others and with no numbers assigned to them. That group consisted of James, Jude, Hebrews and Revelation. These were books which Luther held to be secondary. Barclay, William (2010-11-05). The Letters of James and Peter (The New Daily Study Bible) (p. 9). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

"In sum: the gospel and the first epistle of St John, St Paul's epistles, especially those to the Romans, Galatians and Ephesians; and St Peter's first epistle, are the books which show Christ to you. They teach everything you need to know for your salvation, even if you were never to see or hear any other book or hear any other teaching. In comparison with these, the epistle of James is an epistle full of straw, because it contains nothing evangelical." Quoting Martin Luther by Barclay, William (2010-11-05). The Letters of James and Peter (The New Daily Study Bible) (p. 9). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

"The epistle of James however only drives you to the law and its works. He mixes one thing to another to such an extent that I suspect some good and pious man assembled a few things said by disciples of the apostles, and put them down in black and white; or perhaps the epistle was written by someone else who made notes of a sermon of his. He calls the law a law of freedom (James 1:25, 2:12), although St Paul calls it a law of slavery, wrath, death, and sin' (Galatians 3:23-4; Romans 4:15, 7:10-11)." Quoting Martin Luther by Barclay, William (2010-11-05). The Letters of James and Peter (The New Daily Study Bible) (p. 9). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

"In sum: he wishes to guard against those who depended on faith without going on to works, but he had neither the spirit, nor the thought, nor the eloquence equal to the task. He does violence to Scripture and so contradicts Paul and all Scripture. He tries to accomplish by emphasizing law what the apostles bring about by attracting man to love. I therefore refuse him a place among the writers of the true canon of my Bible." Quoting Martin Luther by Barclay, William (2010-11-05). The Letters of James and Peter (The New Daily Study Bible) (p. 9). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

"How then shall this single and isolated writer count against Paul and all the rest of the Bible?" Barclay, William (2010-11-05)." Quoting Martin Luther by William Barclay, The Letters of James and Peter (The New Daily Study Bible) (p. 9). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

OTHER COMMENTATORS

Some believe that Martin Luther was overreacting to James' letter due to the extreme view he was combatting, that of salvation by works.

In a sense, Luther had little choice. He was surrounded by men who said that good works could save you. He knew that God alone could save through faith alone, and his mission was to tell them. But Luther went too far, when he put James in the appendix to the New Testament. Neither faith nor works can be cut off and thrown away. James was taking aim at freeloaders, those who claimed to have no need for good deeds since they had faith. The reality is that if you have faith, works will naturally be a product. You cannot get rid of works just because they do not save you. You cannot sever the effect from the cause. Just as an apple tree will bear apples, so faith will produce good works (see [Luke 6:43, 44](#)).-Nelson's NKJV Study Bible.

Others see no conflict between James and Paul. They believe James simply meant that good works follow true faith, not that we are saved by works and that James was responding to some Jews who were still putting their faith in "their possession and knowledge of the law".

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Luther's objection to it ("an Epistle of straw, and destitute of an evangelic character") was due to his mistaken idea that it (Jas 2:14-26) opposes the doctrine of justification by faith, and not by works, taught by Paul. But the two apostles, while looking at justification from distinct standpoints, perfectly harmonize and mutually complement the definitions of one another. Faith precedes love and the works of love; but without them it is dead. Paul regards faith in the justification of the sinner before God; James, in the justification of the believer evidently before men. The error which James meets was the Jewish notion that their possession and knowledge of the law of God would justify them, even though they disobeyed it (compare Jas 1:22 with Rom 2:17-25). Jas 1:3; Jas 4:1, 12 seem plainly to allude to Rom 5:3; Rom 6:13; Rom 7:23; Rom 14:4. Also the tenor of Jas 2:14-26 on "justification," seems to allude to Paul's teaching, so as to correct false Jewish notions of a different kind from those which he combatted, though not unnoticed by him also (Rom 2:17, &c.).- JFB, A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.

THE POPULARITY OF THE BOOK OF JAMES IN THE CHURCH TODAY

1. The books of James is one of the most popular studies for churches and small groups because it gives instructions for living (which can be interpreted as wisdom for living or as laws depending on the teacher). Unfortunately, no consideration of James' current understanding of the gospel is taken into consideration in most instances.
2. The perspective of the writer is very similar to the consensus of beliefs held by the church today, that of "balancing" grace with law and faith with works. Thus it fits in well with the false doctrine currently held by consensus by many in the Church today; that is to say, that we are saved initially by grace through faith, but in order to continue in right-standing with God we must obey the law (not sins) and do good works.

WHAT DO WE CONCLUDE?

1. James, like all other books in the Bible, must be considered in light of its historical and cultural context.
2. His intended audience consisted primarily of believing Jews.
3. James' doctrines must be submitted to the test of being in agreement with the gospel Paul preached because he, in no uncertain terms, declared that any one teaching any other gospel than the one he taught, was accursed.
4. Where James' teachings *appear* to differ from Paul's, careful care should be taken in evaluating them.
5. James' letter was the first New Testament book. When he wrote it, he had only the Old Testament writings and what people remembered of Jesus' teachings. His first perspective of the gospel, as was the perspective of most, was that salvation was to the Jews only and later it was revealed that the Gentiles could also be saved. This perspective must be considered when considering his teachings.
6. James was written four years BEFORE the Jerusalem Council when it was determined that the Gentiles did not need to keep the law of Moses. Prior to this, it was assumed by most believing Jews that Gentiles should be circumcised and come under the law.

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7. Even though freedom from the law was granted the Gentiles, it was not clear from the council that believing Jews were also to be free from it.
8. Galatians was written 6 years after the book of James. Galatians states clearly that no believer is justified by law.
9. Paul wrote Romans 11 years after the book of James was written. It is considered the standard for Christian doctrine; that is, of justification by faith alone. James did not understand these teachings at the time of the writing of James.
10. We accept that James is included in the Canon, but insist that his writings be evaluated in context of the church's doctrinal understanding at the time he wrote it. Some of what James wrote were general words of wisdom found in many of the Proverbs and the teachings of Jesus. Since they are not in opposition to the full revelation Paul taught, they are of benefit to us today. However, because James did not yet have a full understanding of the gospel of justification by grace alone through faith alone both to the Jew and Gentile, his teachings must be studied in light of what Paul taught. Should there be a solid contradiction, the winning argument should be Paul's. We shall examine all of James with this perspective.

James 1:1

*James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:
Greetings.*

1. The book of James begins with "James". We have taken considerable time to examine the doctrinal perspectives of James and the Early Church. Now, let us consider the *person* of James.
2. James was one of Jesus' younger brothers. They played together and knew each other well. Little did he know that his big brother was the long-awaited Messiah.
3. We know that as adults when Jesus began to minister, James and his other brothers did not believe in Him. We can't help but wonder how James might have processed the fact that he'd heard that Jesus had performed miracles on multitudes, turned water into wine, and fed thousands of people at once.
4. Was James there at the cross? He might have been. Even if he wasn't, how might he have taken it when Jesus spoke to John that Mary would be his mother and John would be her son. After all, James and his other brothers were still alive. It would be up to them to care for their mom.
5. Imagine what he felt after his brother died. Even though he didn't believe in Him, certainly, it must have broken his heart to lose him in such a violent fashion. Surely he and his brothers and sisters be comforting their mother.
6. We know that Jesus appeared to James after his resurrection. Imagine the joy he would have felt, and the wonder! Consider the mercy and grace that was extended to Him. He had to instantly know that Jesus really was all he claimed to be. What joy this must have brought Mary that her children were believers in Jesus Messiah.

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7. As far as we know, James was likely well-versed in the Scripture as his parents were practicing Jews. We know he was present for some of Jesus' ministry and teachings, even though he didn't believe in Him while He was on earth. How does one process this information, that your big brother is God? All those years he never knew.
8. There is zero indication that James ever used the fact that Jesus was his brother in the flesh as any leverage in the church or that because he was His brother that it was assumed he would be an elder. Yet eventually, James became what appears to be the head elder over Jerusalem.
9. Imagine how he might have internalized the doctrines as they were revealed. At first, he likely thought that salvation was to the Jews only. Not all of the Jews appreciated this revelation as evidenced by those like Saul who sought to kill those perpetuating what He saw as blasphemy.
10. When it was revealed through Peter that salvation was also to the Gentiles, the impact must have been odd indeed. On the one hand, they all glorified God that the Gentiles were coming to God. On the other hand, he and others had to wonder how this would change things. We know, though, that for quite some time, many Jewish believers still separated themselves from the Gentile believers. Even those who did eat with the Gentiles were intimidated to separate themselves if other Jewish believers were around.
11. At the Jerusalem Council, imagine his thoughts. God was doing mighty miracles among the Gentiles, but some of the believing Jews were insisting that they had to be circumcised and keep the law in order to be really saved. At first, he might have inclined in that direction, but it became apparent that the wisdom of God would be that the Gentiles would be free from the law.
12. Yet, he was an elder in Jerusalem where most of the believers were Jews. They were still practicing their laws and customs, celebrating feasts, and the unbelieving Jews were still offering blood sacrifices and observing the sacrifice of Passover.
13. What would have been his thoughts when the rumors about what Paul was teaching reached his ears? Could it really be that Paul was teaching that both Jew and Gentile were not under the law, not just the Gentiles? We see in Acts 21, that it was James' goal to prove to the believing Jews that this information was not correct. Now, Paul never denies it to James or anyone in Jerusalem. How did he feel when his advice to Paul actually ended up getting him nearly killed?
14. He was there observing it all. For 32 years James faithfully followed Jesus. Did he receive a copy of Hebrews before he died? If he did, doubtless, it set him free to trust fully in Christ and let go of the Old Covenant. Might a new found freedom in Jesus be the last straw for the Jewish religious authorities who ultimately took his life? It might have been that Paul wrote his letter after James died out of respect for his roles as an elder in Jerusalem, or maybe it was why Paul did not admit he was the author so that it would not appear to be a division in the church. What we do know is that
15. James faithful to the end, died a martyr's death at the hands of those he sought to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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16. We write all of these things to help you develop a compassionate view of the man James. He was humble in that he called himself a servant of Jesus Christ and made no mention of their earthly relationship as brothers (which might have given him some status among other believers).
17. He wrote his letter shortly after it was revealed that the Gentiles could be saved but many years before Paul would write about the gospel of the grace of God. We must keep in mind his perspective as we study his writings.
18. He wrote to the Jewish believers with no view of saying anything to the Gentiles. His letter was that of correcting their behavior more than that of teaching doctrine.

There were many Christian Jews in Jerusalem who still held to the Old Testament law (Acts 21: 20). The temple and its services were still in operation, and the full light of the gospel of God's grace had not yet dawned. We who have read Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews might be prone to judge these early believers, but we must not. They were saved people, but they were still in the shadows of the law." Wiersbe, Warren W. (2010-01-01). Be Mature (James): Growing Up in Christ (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 22). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.

19. James wrote to the twelve tribes scattered abroad.

***Scattered abroad**—literally "which are in the dispersion." The dispersion of the Israelites, and their connection with Jerusalem as a center of religion, was a divinely ordered means of propagating Christianity. The pilgrim troops of the law became caravans of the Gospel [Wordsworth].²*

20. Though we tend to see him as a severe person based on some of his strong words in his letter, his greeting to them was one of joy and comfort.

***Greeting**—found in no other Christian letter², but in James (and the Jerusalem Synod's Epistle to the Gentile churches;) an undesigned coincidence and **mark of genuineness**. In the original Greek (*chairein*) for "greeting," **there is a connection with the "joy" to which they are exhorted amidst their existing distresses from poverty and consequent oppression.**³*

² James also used this greeting when writing his letter to the Gentile believers after the Jerusalem council. Indeed his letter was a comfort to them.

³ From: A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments.