

# OpenTheo

## James: The Man And His Book



### Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

In "James: The Man and His Book", Steve Gregg introduces the figure of James, the leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem and the brother of Jesus. Although not one of the twelve apostles, James' leadership and teachings helped shape Christian theology and practice. He wrote one of the earliest books in the Bible, drawing heavily on Jesus' teachings, and emphasized the importance of both faith and good works in salvation, which is a point on which he differed from the Apostle Paul.

### Transcript

I want to talk about the book of James and the man James, who wrote it today. James is one of those epistles we call general epistles because it's not addressed to a particular church. It's more broadly addressed to people in a region that probably had many churches and therefore talking to lots of people in lots of churches.

In this case, he's writing to Jewish people, Jewish Christian people. We see here at the beginning of his epistle, he says, James, a bond servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes, which are scattered abroad. Twelve tribes, obviously, refers to the twelve tribes of Israel.

That's not surprising because James in the book of Acts is the leader of Jewish Christianity after a certain point, at least after chapter 12 of Acts, so much so that Peter and Paul both defer to him, though he was not one of the twelve apostles. He was the brother of Jesus. It's perhaps remarkable that when he introduces himself in the beginning of his book, he doesn't say, James, the brother of Jesus.

That would be a strong temptation, I suppose, for someone who had that particular qualification. But he just, like other people who write books about it, he just calls himself a bond servant or a slave of God and of Jesus. Now, James probably was not particularly tempted to take on heirs as the brother of Jesus because he probably was a little bit ashamed that he didn't recognize Jesus until after the resurrection as the Son of God or as the Messiah.

We read that Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters. I say at least two because

his sisters are simply mentioned in the plural, so there's got to be at least two. There could be ten.

But that would suggest that Mary and Joseph had other children besides Jesus. Jesus, of course, not really being Joseph's child, but we could say stepchild or foster child or something. But Joseph and Mary apparently had some kids of their own, the oldest of which was James, the oldest younger brother of Jesus, being James.

This being, therefore, a half-brother since Jesus was not literally the son of Joseph. And the brothers of Jesus are named in Scripture, and they are James and Simon and Joseph and Jude, called Judas in the Greek form of his name. But I called him Jude because he is, believe me, the one who wrote the book of Jude.

The Jude who wrote the book of Jude simply called himself the brother of James. Neither of them called themselves the brother of Jesus. But there could have been some humility necessarily upon them because of the fact that we read in John chapter 7 that the brothers of Jesus didn't believe in him.

And the other disciples did, a lot of people believed in him, and they probably felt rather embarrassed later, when they did believe in him, to realize that they had been so slow on the uptake here. It says in John chapter 7, verse 1 through 5, it says, after these things, Jesus walked in Galilee, for he did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand, and his brothers therefore said to him, depart from here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works that you are doing.

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. Now, those words in themselves might not sound like they were unbelievers, but we're told in the next line, for even his brothers did not believe in him.

So we have to assume that these things they said to him were more or less kind of mocking him or deriding him, you know. So we hear rumors, you know, all kinds of fancy stuff. If that's true, why don't you go down to Jerusalem at the feast? There's a lot of people there, big audience.

You can make a big spectacle of yourself. And you know, you can maybe sympathize a little bit with them, because when they were born in the family, he was already there as the older brother. And they grew up with him in the house for possibly nearly 30 years.

And he didn't do any miracles. Jesus didn't do miracles when he was young. As far as you know, the first miracle he did was when he was 30 years old, when he turned water to wine.

And, and therefore, they'd seen him as an older brother, who was in all points, like, like

another older, any older, except probably better behaved than most. He obviously was a good kid. Jesus was obedient to his parents and so forth, the Bible says.

But so were most people in those days. In those days, if the son was too rebellious, he'd get himself stoned to death. So I think obedience and respect for parents was fairly commonplace.

And Jesus spent his younger years before his ministry in subjection to his parents. We read that in the last couple of verses of Luke chapter 2. So the other brothers grew up in the same household with an older brother who was a good man, a good boy, but not quite as exceptional as one would expect if he was a son of God or God or even the Messiah. To them, he was just Jesus, just brother Jesus.

And that being so, I think we would have to say that they, it never occurred to them when they began to hear rumors that he was working miracles, that this same person that grew up in the house with him was necessarily the Messiah. Anyway, so didn't Mary tell the others about that? I mean, Mary and Joseph certainly did about Jesus, his virgin birth and all that. But we don't know what they said.

All we know about that is that Mary treasured these things in her heart. So she may have kept it more or less to herself, not knowing exactly when the right time to reveal that would be. If Jesus hadn't revealed it, maybe she thought maybe I shouldn't either.

Just leave it to God and him to do it in their own time. In any case, or if Mary had told the other siblings the stories, they might have had their doubts. After all, who easily believes in a virgin birth? If you were the second child in the home and your mom always told me, well, I was a virgin when your brother was conceived.

He's like, right. You and dad, huh? Okay. So, I mean, for whatever reason, the brothers of Jesus were skeptical and even apparently cynical because they'd kind of speak to him this way.

If you really do these things, you're going to do it where there's a big crowd expect. And it says they didn't believe in him. Now they did come to believe in him.

However, we find them with the 120 or as, as being some of the 120 themselves in the upper room in Acts chapter one and verse 19, I believe it is or let's see. Verse 14, excuse me, uh, says talking about the disciples who were in the upper room waiting for the Pentecost. Verse 14 says, these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.

So on the day of Pentecost, the 120 in the upper room included Mary and her other children, which would include James, Joseph, Simon, Judas. And they obviously had become believers or else why would they be hanging out waiting for the Holy spirit? And we don't have to speculate too much on how they became believers because we read in

first Corinthians chapter 15, that Jesus, after his resurrection, uh, among the few appearances he made to people after his resurrection, there was a personal appearance to, to James. It says that in first Corinthians 15 and verse seven, when Paul is listing the various appearances of Jesus after his resurrection from the dead, he says, after that he was seen by James and then by all the apostles.

Now, James, of course, there's quite a few James is in the Bible and no surprise. James is the Greek form of the name Jacob. So Jacob was a fairly famous name in Israel's history.

Like he is Israel, you know? And so not surprisingly, many people named their sons James. And we have quite a few of them in the Bible. In fact, there were two of them among the 12.

There's James, the greater, which is this son of Zebedee. And there's James, the less son of Alphaeus. And then there's this James.

Now it's interesting that Paul would just say to James and not mention which James. It's because the James, the brother of Jesus that Jesus appeared to on this occasion was particularly famous in the time of the apostles later on. We read of him becoming really the main voice or the main leader of the church in Jerusalem and therefore of the Jewish church at large.

Obviously he's writing his letter to the 12 tribes that are scattered abroad. He's not just writing to the church in Jerusalem where he resided and which he oversaw. He's writing to the Jewish believers far and wide.

Now this one says, well, how do you know that he's writing to Jewish believers? He doesn't say anything about believers. He just says the 12 tribes, that would be Jews in general. And interestingly enough, James in Jerusalem became very popular and well-respected among even the unbelieving Jews.

There are many traditions about James. He came to be called James the Just because he was such a righteous man and righteous in the sense of keeping the temple law and the Torah. After all, he lived in Jerusalem where the temple was prominent.

He lived among Jews for whom the temple was the center of all their activities. It would have been very awkward for him to live in Jerusalem in that kind of an environment without having some involvement with the temple. We know they did.

Some people think that James and Paul were at odds with each other and they definitely had different emphases. Paul did not stress the need to keep the Torah or whatever. Paul didn't live in Jerusalem either.

He never lived in Jerusalem that we know of. He was sent out from the Church of Antioch into other places further out in the Gentile world and Paul did not live in a Jewish

environment, certainly not in Jerusalem, where everybody went to the temple. It would have been very much awkward to live in a town like that where everyone's Jewish and you're Jewish and you say you're devout, you're a Christian, but you don't go to the temple.

Now, whether the Jews in Jerusalem thought they needed to go to the temple or not, as it were, didn't understand that the temple sacrifices were defunct now, or whether they knew that and just thought, well, it does no harm. We'll keep our testimony okay here. Paul himself, who didn't keep the law religiously, said in 1 Corinthians 9 that when he's with those who are under the law, he lives as one under the law.

We even find Paul putting deeds to those words when he comes to Jerusalem in Acts chapter 21, his final trip to Jerusalem before he was arrested and carried away to Rome. Paul got to Jerusalem. He met with James and James said, listen, there's a lot of brothers here who are zealous for the law.

They've heard that you teach Jews not to circumcise their children. We know that's not true. To show them that's not true but that you revere the law, we'd like you to go to the temple with these four men we have in the church here who have a Nazarite vow.

They need to offer some sacrifices to close out their vow and why don't you go and pay the fees for it? And Paul did. When he's among those who are under the law, he acts like one under the law. Paul said that in 1 Corinthians 9. He said, however, when he's with those who are not under the law, he doesn't, which means he didn't have some kind of a moral obligation to keep the law.

If he did, he'd keep it even when he wasn't with the Jews. Devout Jews in foreign Gentile lands still kept the law even when they're among Gentiles, but Paul was not a law-keeping Jew by conscience. He kept the law when he was among Jews in a Jewish society in order to, as he said, so he might win the Jews.

He didn't want to put a stumbling block or an unnecessary offense before them. Now, James himself might have even had the same liberated understanding that Paul did. We don't know.

He didn't need to. He lived in Jerusalem. He lived among the Jews.

If Paul himself had lived in Jerusalem, he would have kept the law. That's what he says. That's his policy.

James had that policy, and we never know if he would have acted differently if he didn't live in Jerusalem because he lived his whole life in Jerusalem and died there. So it might be that the whole thought of whether you need to go to Temple or not as a Christian might never have even come up for consideration to Paul, or to James, excuse me, because he never was anywhere where that was questioned. Now, there was a Jerusalem

Council, which James presided at in Acts chapter 15, but that wasn't deciding whether Jews in Jerusalem should keep going to the Temple.

That was a question of whether Gentiles in other lands who got converted needed to be converted to Judaism and be circumcised, and that was decided against. James was in favor of the Gentiles not to be under the law, and he stood with Paul against the Judaizers on that point. But on the subject of whether Jews should keep the law, that was never very controversial.

Paul never challenged it. You notice when he came to Jerusalem, James said, there's Jews here, brethren, who hear that you're teaching Jews not to circumcise their children. Paul never taught Jews not to circumcise their children.

He taught Gentiles not to be circumcised. He wrote a whole book telling Gentiles if you get circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. You've fallen from grace.

Gentiles are not to follow the Jewish law as a means of religious duty, certainly. But Paul never addressed the question of Jews circumcising their children, even Jewish Christians. It was just not, that wasn't his field.

His field was to the Gentiles. The Twelve and James in Jerusalem, you know, the circumcision was their field. In Galatians chapter 2, it says that Paul met with them in Jerusalem after his conversion, and they agreed that Paul and his companions would be, preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and that Peter and his companions, which were in Jerusalem, preach to the circumcision of the Jews.

So Paul saw that as, you know, that's their realm. I'm not going to intrude and tell them how to do their ministry to the Jews. I'll just keep my nose out of that business.

I'm going to the Gentiles, and I'm not going to let them tell me how to do it to the Gentiles. And that's what the Jerusalem council kind of settled, that Paul had every right to do what he was doing, and go to the Gentiles and not require them to keep the law, not require them to be circumcised. But James and the disciples in Jerusalem might not have ever given it a second thought, you know.

They were circumcised already before they were Christians. They were, after all, Jews, and Jews, Jewish men are circumcised on the eighth day. So there was never, never a question ever, should Jews be circumcised? Well, Jews are already circumcised by being Jews.

And then, of course, they'd been raised going to the temple all the time, and becoming a believer in Jesus didn't automatically scream out, don't go to the temple anymore. You know, that's their religious habit. So like if a Roman Catholic, you know, they're raised a Catholic, but they're not really saved yet.

And they get saved, and they go back to the Catholic Church, and you know, to them, it means more to them than it did before, because they believe in God, and they believe in Christ. Now, someone might say, well, if they're Christian, they shouldn't go to the Roman Catholic Church. Well, that's not, that's not unambiguously clear.

I mean, why can't they go to the Catholic Church? Why can't they worship Jesus in that way, if that's the way they were raised? And I'm sure that the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, it was just the same. You know, there's a temple we've always, we've always worshipped there. It's the same God we're worshipping now.

The God we worship there is the Father of Jesus Christ, who's our Lord. So they just did it. And so we find James was respected even by the non-Christian Jews.

In fact, one of the church fathers said he was respected by all seven sects of the Jews. Now, I didn't know there were seven sects, but he, uh, what's his name? Uh, the guy's name is hard to pronounce. It's Haggisippus, or Haggisippus.

A church, one of the church fathers in the second century, he said that James the Just was, uh, well respected by all the sects of the Jews because he was a devout law keeper. Yeah, he was a Christian, but, but they couldn't say he just, you know, that he wasn't a good Jew, too. And so, and he mentions Pharisees and Sadducees and Essenes among the seven.

There's four others that I hadn't really, didn't, oh, he mentions the Nazarenes. That was actually, the church in Jerusalem was the Nazarene sect. They saw it as a sect of Judaism.

And just like the Pharisees and Sadducees tolerated each other as different denominations in Judaism, they apparently tolerated the Jerusalem church after a while as the Nazarene sect of Judaism. But, uh, and James as the leader. Uh, so he was highly respected.

Now, how he became the leader of the church in Jerusalem is hard to, hard to know for sure. There is a, one of the traditions of the church is that the apostles elected him to be. Another tradition is that Jesus, before his ascension, appointed James to be the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Now it's not necessarily that we know which, because an appointment by the apostles would be as good as an appointment from Jesus himself. The apostles had the same authority that Christ had after Jesus left. They had his authority.

So he was either made the leader of the church by the apostles' election or by Jesus' own appointment. Now, he is called an apostle, though he was never one of the twelve. Paul in Galatians, uh, chapter, uh, two, or is it chapter one? Let me, let me get this right here.

Paul talks about his, his first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion. Is it 118? Yes, it is. Thank you.

He says, then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and remained within 15 days, but I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. That's interesting. He says, I didn't see any other apostles except one, James, the Lord's brother, which he's obviously counting as an apostle.

Now that doesn't mean that James was one of the twelve. He was not, but neither was Paul. Uh, Paul and James both were unbelievers at the time that Jesus died and rose again and had never been his disciples, but both of them received private appearances from Christ after his resurrection.

And both of them converted on that occasion and both were actually apostles as well. Interestingly, James to head up the church to the Jews and Paul to head up the movement to the Gentiles and the other twelve, you know, they kind of, they kind of did their thing to mostly to the Jews initially and some eventually to the Gentiles. But it's funny that Jesus would select two men who were not part of the twelve that he had trained to kind of head up those two spheres of mission.

In any case, you don't really read of James doing anything in the early chapters of Acts. Uh, it's all about Peter and Peter and John. Usually there's a chapter there about Stephen.

There's a chapter about Philip, but still, it's mostly Peter. I mean, when in, in Jerusalem, the main preacher seems to be Peter and that's not surprising. He was the most outspoken when Jesus was on earth to the most outspoken of the apostles, sometimes not wisely, uh, but still temperamentally, you know, if someone's got to speak up, you can count on him.

He'll pop right up and talk. Fortunately, once he got filled in the spirit, he didn't say dumb things as much, but, uh, yeah, but you get the impression reading the first 11 chapters of Acts that Peter is actually the leader of the church in Jerusalem. If he's not recognized as the leader, he's at least the most outspoken and he may have been kind of the default leader.

But we read that in Acts chapter 12, Peter gets arrested by Herod after James, a different James, James, the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, uh, he was arrested and executed by Herod and then Herod arrested Peter. So two of the apostles, the first one to be martyred, which was James and the second one, Peter would have been the second martyr, are arrested by Herod, but an angel springs Peter out of jail in Acts chapter 12. Interesting.

He didn't spring James. I mean, this is just shows how things are different. You remember



when Peter and John and Jesus were walking on the beach and John chapter 21, how that, you know, Jesus is telling Peter what kind of death Peter's going to die to glorify God.

It says, and Peter looks over his John says, well, Lord, how about him? You know, what's going to happen to him? Like, you know, is it going to be better or worse than what I'm getting? I'm going to be crucified upside down. You're saying, okay, how about him? Is he going to get off easier than me? He doesn't say all that, but he just is implied. How about this man? And Jesus said, well, if it's my will that he remain until I come, what does that to you? You go and fall.

You come follow me. So in other words, yeah, one apostle gets one and another gets another. James, the brother of John got executed early on.

John, his brother seems not to have gotten executed at all. By tradition, he was dipped in boiling oil and it didn't hurt him. So he was banished to Patmos and eventually died a peaceful death in the church in Ephesus at a very old age.

Now, Peter, on the other hand, he didn't die as early as James, but he didn't live as long as John either. He was executed by Nero in the 60s, maybe between 64 and 68. But the point here is that James was not spared.

Here, James and Peter, both arrested around the same time by the same guy with the same end in view. And God lets James be executed, but he lets Peter have an angel spring out of jail and he escapes. But when Peter gets out of jail, in Acts chapter 12, we read that he went to the house of Mark's mother, where the disciples were having a prayer meeting.

And there they were praying and he comes and he talks to him and he shows that an angel sprung him from jail. And he says, I'm going away, but tell James. He says, tell the disciples and tell James.

And then it says he went to another place. And Luke doesn't know where it was, but he apparently left Jerusalem, had to hide out. He's a fugitive.

The king, you know, he's escaped from jail. He was going to be after him. So Peter goes off to some unnamed place.

Luke keeps it a secret and says, before he left, he said, tell James. Now that's interesting. It either suggests that James was the guy that Peter saw himself as answering to, you know, tell James I got to go in.

Or it may be that Peter had been the leader of the church up to that point, but knew that if things got sketchy, someone else might have to step in for him. And it may be that he and James had already discussed on an earlier occasion, you know, if I, if I have to leave,

you step up and James had agreed. So that when Peter leaves it, tell James, this is the time he's going to step up.

And after that, we, we don't find anyone leading the Jewish church in the book of Acts except James. And even there's, it's interesting because both Paul and Peter tended to defer to James. I mentioned that Paul in Acts 21, when he came to Jerusalem, he, he, he did what James asked him to do.

He, when he first came to Jerusalem before today, minister, he, he had a meeting with James. He got there one night and the next morning he met with James and the apostles. And James said, I want you to do such and such.

And Paul said, yes, sir. Now, Peter, who had been the apparent leader of the church until he fled, apparently recognized James now as the main guy. And there was a time that Paul tells us about in Galatians chapter two, when Paul was in Antioch.

Now I wouldn't be able to prove this, but that might be where Peter fled to because Peter and Paul were both in Antioch at this time. We know when Paul went there because the book of Acts tells us in Acts 11 of Barnabas bringing Paul to Antioch, but we don't know when or why Peter was there. It might be where he fled to.

That was in Syria, another country. So Herod wouldn't really be able to get him. But we do read in Galatians two that when Peter came to Antioch, he was kind of intimidated by James and the people who were sent from James.

We read in chapter two, verse 11 of Galatians. Now, when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, Paul says, because he used to be blamed for before certain men came from James. Peter would eat with the Gentiles, but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.

And he said, I rebuked him to his face. He was being hypocritical. Now notice Peter had no problem eating with the Gentiles when he's in the Gentile church in Antioch and Paul and Barnabas.

And those guys are kind of the leaders there who have no problem with Gentiles. But the Jerusalem church, this was before the Jerusalem council, I believe. And therefore it's before the Jerusalem church had decided that it's okay for Gentiles who are Christians not to be circumcised.

Now, devout Jews wouldn't eat with uncircumcised Gentiles. That's just the way that's part of their custom and their sensitivity. So Peter didn't have these sensitivities until the men from James, that is from the church in Jerusalem, which James oversaw, came to visit Antioch.

And then very quietly, Peter kind of just withdrew himself from eating with the Gentiles

and just ate with the Jewish brethren, apparently somewhat intimidated by what the church in Jerusalem would think of him if they knew he was eating with the uncircumcised. And so Paul, I mean, Peter even in this occasion seems to be cowed by the authority of James. Not that James would have criticized him, but if it was before the Jerusalem council, then it raises questions, I think it was, then it raises questions about whether James had thought it through yet, whether James and the Jewish church had even come to any opinion about Gentiles being okay without being circumcised.

That's what they met later about. And I'm quite sure that Galatians, where Paul's retelling that, was written before the Jerusalem council, because if it was not, Paul would have mentioned the Jerusalem council and that would have settled his issue. He wrote the book of Galatians to argue many different directions that Gentiles don't have to be circumcised to be saved.

He wouldn't have to argue that off if the Jerusalem council had already happened. He could just say, hey, I've got this letter from the apostles in Jerusalem. They say Gentiles don't have to be circumcised.

End of dispute. It's hard to know the order of events there, because Peter's dream is in Acts chapter 10, and he tells the Jerusalem church about it, because they're a little upset that he went to a house of a Gentile. He tells them about it in chapter 11.

And then we read, then chapter 11 kind of goes back to the time when Stephen was stoned, which is back to chapter 7. It says, after that, people went scattered and preached the gospel, including Antioch, the church of Antioch was founded. Yeah, but that's kind of a flashback, and it's kind of hard to know how all these things fit chronologically with each other. But Peter, the fact that Peter was willing to eat with uncircumcised believers in Antioch, probably suggests that his dream had been earlier.

Because if Peter was already that liberated in his thinking, then he might not have had the same response to the vision. They're like, oh Lord, I've never touched anything unclean. You know, you go into a Gentile's house, you're touching all kinds of things that are not kosher, you know.

And so my thought is that it's probably after Peter's dream. And the church had acquiesced to Peter when he said, what can I do? You know, the spirit came on them like it came on us, how could I not baptize them? But they still didn't discuss whether those people were to be circumcised or not. You know, that's what became controversial in Paul's ministry, and that's what the Jerusalem Council later was about.

Yeah, some of the chronology is not easy to tell, because Acts sometimes flashes back to earlier points, and then picks the story up. How far it goes before it gets back to the old point, we don't know. All right, so this we know about James.

Now, James's death is told two different ways. Interestingly, Josephus, who was not a Christian, but a Jewish historian, mentions James, the brother of the Lord, in his history and about his death. It's interesting because the Bible doesn't.

The Bible doesn't mention James's death. And therefore, what Josephus tells us must be from other historical information. He didn't borrow it from Scripture.

As far as we know, Josephus never saw a New Testament. Josephus is an Old Testament Jew, and he was raised in Jerusalem about the time the apostles lived. But he moved to Rome after 70 AD and didn't, you know, it's not likely that he ever saw a canonized New Testament group of books.

So what Josephus tells us is entirely independent of, say, what the book of Acts would say or whatever. And Josephus tells us one story about the death of James, which I'll read to you what he said. But then there's this other church historian from the second century named Hegisippus, if that's the right... I actually looked... I actually... I've always pronounced it differently, but I went online and said, pronounce Hegisippus.

I actually spelled out and the person pronounced Hegisippus. So I'm going to trust him on that. I would have thought it was Hegisippus or something like that.

It's spelled H-E-G-E-S-I-P-P-U-S. Hegisippus left a somewhat more lengthy account of James's death, but it differs from Josephus in some details. And therefore, we don't know if Josephus was more correct or if Hegisippus was more correct, but I'll read both.

This is the story of James's death. This is not right from the writings of Hegisippus. We only know of his writings from Eusebius.

Eusebius was a church historian in the around 323 or 325 AD, and he relates three different stories of the death of James. One is from Hegisippus. Another is from Josephus, and there's another one, but he thinks Eusebius believed that the one from Hegisippus was the most accurate.

So here's how he summarizes it. The Pharisees asked James to stand on the pinnacle of the temple on Passover and to speak and to dissuade the people from following Jesus. Now, obviously, James was not the least bit interested in dissuading people from following Jesus, but he was glad to have a podium on the top of the temple.

So he went up there, and they brought him to the top of the temple, and they shouted to him from below, O righteous one. You see, this was a Jew who was calling this Christian Jew a righteous one, because he was a very righteous man. By the way, he's also known as, besides James the Just, you may have heard, he had the nickname camel knees, because he prayed so much on his knees, his knees had large calluses, and they called him camel knees.

So the people shouted from below, O righteous one, in whom we are able to place confidence, the people are led astray after Jesus, the crucified one. So declare to us, what is this way, Jesus? James replied, why do you ask me about Jesus, the son of man? He sits in heaven at the right hand of the great power, and he will soon come on the clouds of heaven. They began shouting that the people, the ordinary people, began shouting, Hosanna to the son of David.

Realizing the awful mistake that they'd made, the Pharisees began crying out, O, O, the righteous one is also in error. They climbed to the temple top, as the people shouted, and when they reached the top, they threw James from the pinnacle of the temple to the court below, which is a pretty long drop, but he survived it, probably barely, but he was still living when he hit the bottom, and somehow he survived the fall and rose to his knees and began to pray for them. I beg you, O Lord God, our father, forgive them.

They do not know what they're doing. The Pharisees on the ground began to stone him as he prayed, while those from the roof rushed down to join the execution. One of the priests, however, a son of the Rechabites mentioned by Jeremiah, shouted, stop, what are you doing? The righteous one is praying for you.

But a fuller, that'd be a launderer, fuller is a person who does laundry, took one of his clubs that he used to beat clothing and struck James in the head, killing him with one blow. So, that's how Hegisophus describes the killing of James. He was stoned, but he was dispatched by a club after being thrown off the temple.

The guy had a hard day, it was a bad day for him, but it was also a good day for him. He must have landed on his knees. Yeah, if he landed on his knees, he had a lot of cushions.

That's a good one. Good point. So, but it was also a good day.

He went to be with the Lord that day. But that's how a church father in the second century describes his death. Now, Josephus actually tells the story a little differently.

He says, basically, what he teaches that there was the Roman procurator in Jerusalem was Portius Festus. And when he died, another procurator was sent from Rome. And while that other procurator was on his way from Rome, and his name was Albinus, the high priest, Ananus, decided to take advantage of the power vacuum there in Jerusalem, with one of the procurators dead and the other one on his way.

And that's so he arrested James and had him killed, which is a by the other tradition. But here's how this is the actual words of Josephus verbatim. Remember, Josephus was born in 35 AD in Jerusalem.

So I mean, that's like, three years after Pentecost, and the apostles are all there preaching in Jerusalem church in Jerusalem growing there when he was a boy, but he didn't become a Christian. He was, he just remained a Jew. Josephus wrote, Festus was

now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road.

So he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, that is, the high priest, Ananus, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who is called the Christ. Now, this is interesting, and whose name is James. It's interesting because Josephus mentions that James was the brother of Jesus, who was called the Christ.

Now, there's another passage in Josephus that talks about Jesus, but many people question because he talks about Jesus as the Christ when Josephus was not actually a Christian. But some people think that that other passage about Jesus is not authentic. I think it is, but this one, there's no reason to question.

He does not affirm that Jesus is the Christ of this, but he affirms there was a man named James who had a brother named Jesus, and that Jesus was thought to be the Christ. Kind of fits well with the story of the Gospels in that respect. It says, his name was James and some others.

He brought not James alone, but a few other Christians apparently with him, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. But as for those who seemed most equitable of the citizens, and such as were most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done. They also sent to King Agrippa, desiring him to send Ananus, the high priest who had done this deed, that he should act so no more, to send to Ananus that he should do this no more.

For that what he had done already was not to be justified. Nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, the new procurator, as he was upon the journey from Alexandria. Oh, I thought he's come from Rome, come from Alexandria.

And informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble the Sanhedrin without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, the priest, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done. On which, King Agrippa took the high priesthood from Ananus, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus the son of Damnius high priest.

So the high priest, according to Josephus, who had unjustly killed James, was removed because of that act of injustice. The Jews were not allowed to do that kind of thing. The Romans, when they conquered Palestine, took away from the Jews the right to execute their criminals.

This is something the Jews grieved over greatly, because they felt like they'd lost their sovereignty as a people of God. But it was nonetheless so. The Romans would not let them kill people.

That's why when Jesus was condemned by the Sanhedrin, they had to take him to Pilate. They couldn't just go out and kill him. They'd said he's worthy of death, he's blasphemy,

but they couldn't kill him because the Romans wouldn't let him.

So they had to get Pilate to prove it. They had to come up with totally different charges, totally made up charges that Pilate would care about. Pilate wouldn't care about blasphemy.

Pilate probably was a blasphemer himself. But they accused Jesus of saying he's a king, and saying that people should not pay tribute to Caesar, which Jesus never said, and things like that. So they made Jesus out to be a political adversary to Caesar, which made Pilate have to take notice and give him permission to have him in.

But they illegally did this to James, while there was the absence of a Roman procurer. So that's what we know about James. What year was that? Good question.

I'm glad you asked that. What year was that? According to Josephus, if it was in fact in the vacuum between Festus and Albinus, that would be the year 62 AD. Now the only thing that raises questions about that is that Hegisophus said that Vespasian, the Roman governor, immediately after James was killed, Vespasian came and besieged Jerusalem, came and attacked Israel and besieged Jerusalem.

Well, that happened in 66 AD. So whether Hegisophus means immediately, means like within a few years, or whether the timing is often one of these stories, I don't know. But yeah, so it's either 62 or maybe a little later.

Actually, among the many places I looked on this, I looked in Wikipedia, and they said, according to tradition, he was killed in either 62 or 69. I have not been able to find the tradition that says 69, but that might be based on the fact that Hegisophus said, well, a seizure of Jerusalem came. But that's a good question.

When was the book of James written? Well, it was written before he was dead. We don't actually know when he wrote it. It could be the earliest book of the Bible written, but it doesn't have to be.

If he died in 62, the earliest projected date, we'd say some of Paul's epistles were written before that. The earliest of Paul's epistles, I believe, was Galatians. And then 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

I believe those all were written within the lifetime of James. Though James, just because he died in 62, doesn't tell us when he wrote. He could have written in 52, for all we know.

We have no idea when he wrote. His epistle could be the earliest epistle in the Bible, and some people have thought it is, but there's no way to really prove it. Now, the thing about James' epistle that we need to say something about is that many people feel that James' epistle is in conflict with things that Paul wrote.

Luther was one who thought that. And Luther, of course, in the Reformation, was in conflict with the Roman Catholics over the issue of justification. Luther had been a Catholic monk up until the time he was a Reformer.

He didn't want to be a troublemaker, I don't think, but he read Romans. He actually was teaching Romans at a Catholic university. And as he did, he came to the conclusion that the just shall live by faith, justification by faith alone, not by works.

And so he began to teach that and write books about that. Now, the Roman Catholic Church taught that justification is not by faith alone. It's by faith plus works plus sacraments.

Catholics had seven sacraments that you had to do, or at least some of them, and you had to do good works and you had to have faith. So the Catholic Church had taught justification requires more. And Luther's view is, no, it only takes faith.

Now, that became obviously a very deadly conflict. Wars were fought over those two views after this. But Luther he was so much against the Catholic view, and he was so much a champion of this new emphasis, it's by faith alone, he tended to underrate the need for works at all.

Now, the problem he had with James, of course, is in James chapter two, James said, faith without works is dead. He writes a major part of chapter two, arguing that faith needs to have works too. Now, Paul has some statements in his epistles that like, we conclude a man is justified by faith apart from works.

And therefore, some see Paul and James as being in conflict. And Luther himself did not like the book of James, and he translated the Bible into German. And when he did, he put James near the end of it, and he called it, sometimes people quote Luther saying it's an epistle of straw, meaning of little work.

Actually, what he said, it's a right strawy epistle, which just means the same thing, I guess, but it's a strange word, strawy, I don't think we have that word in our language. Anyway, so Luther didn't like James's writings, because they were made, it sounded like maybe the Catholics had a little more validity than Luther wanted to suggest that they do have to do some good works too. Now, the Reformation, of course, and the whole Protestant movement, kind of sparked by Luther's writings and movement, which means that Protestants have for the past 500 years, argued strongly, we're justified by faith, not by works.

And I believe that's a true doctrine. I think James believed that too. But what both James and Paul believed, which many modern Protestants neglect, is that we are only saved by faith, but only a genuine faith.

There are faiths that are not genuine. There are people who pretend to believe, and they



don't. And there are people who believe, but not in a way that changes anything about their life.

The demons believe and tremble. James makes that point. You know, you say you have faith, but you don't have works.

Well, the demons believe and tremble. They don't, they're not saved. They got faith, but not the kind that saves a person.

Well, what kind saves a person? Well, that's just what James is saying, the kind that has works, the kind that changes the way you act. Works here doesn't mean Boy Scout merit badge type works. It means the way you live outwardly.

Your works are your behavior. And if you have faith, it'll show in the way you live, in your behavior. If you see someone who says, I accepted Jesus, but they still live as much sin, as much carnality.

They still have no heart for God. You've got every reason to doubt that they have faith. That's what James says.

Show me your faith by your behavior, and I'll show you my faith by my behavior. Now, did Paul agree with that or disagree with that? No, Paul fully agreed with that. Paul agreed that your faith produces works if it's genuine.

In fact, Paul said something that sounds very much like James in Galatians 5, 6. And by the way, Galatians is the epistle, maybe more than any other of Paul's that's written, say, we're not under the works of the law. But here's what Paul says we are under. In Galatians 5, 6, Paul said, for in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but faith working through love.

What counts with God? Faith. What kind of faith? Well, faith that works through love. The King James says, faith that works through love or faith working through love.

That if I have faith and it's working through love, that is works of love are produced in my life. If my life has changed, I now have that, what Jesus called the great commandment, loving my neighbor and it shows in my behavior. Well, then that's what counts to God.

A faith that does that. A faith that doesn't do that, Paul never had any use for either. Paul did not think that a person is justified by having just any old thing they might refer to as faith or believing any particular things.

A person is not saved by affirming a certain set of propositions. A person is saved by total submission to the truth that Jesus is Lord, that Jesus is the Messiah, he's the son of God. And that causes you to act differently.

Let me show you something Paul said in Romans 4. In Romans 4, Paul is talking about

justification here and about Abraham. He says about Abraham in verse 17, as it is written, I've made you father of many nations in the presence of him whom he believed God who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did, who contrary to hope in hope believed so that he became the father of many nations according to what was spoken. So shall your descendant be.

Now look at verse 19, talking about Abraham and not being weak in faith. He did not consider his own body already dead since he was about a hundred years old and the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God and being fully convinced that what he had promised, he was also able to perform.

And therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness. What was his faith? What do you mean? Therefore, therefore means for this reason, why was Abraham's faith accounted for? Because it was this kind of faith. It was all compelling.

It changed his whole perception of his destiny and his, and his identity. And God changed his name. Call yourself a father of a multitude.

I don't have any kids do it anyway. I'm going to make you thought, okay, I'm the father of multiple. I mean, it changed his whole self perception, the promise of God.

He believed it. He was fully persuaded. He wasn't shaken by the fact that it was physically impossible.

This is the kind of faith he had. And therefore it was counted to him for righteousness. So Paul's not saying that the kind of faith devils have, which doesn't change anything about their life for the better, but that would account for righteousness.

And James agrees with him. A faith that doesn't produce works is not a living faith. It doesn't save people.

So James and Paul were on the very same page when Paul in Ephesians two, eight and nine said, by grace, you are saved through faith and that not of yourself. It's the gift of God, not of works. Lest anyone should both.

His next line was for we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which he has for a day that we should walk in. God has created us in Christ for good works. In Titus chapter two and verse 14, Paul said that Jesus gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and sanctify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good works.

That's Paul talking. Paul never thought that works are not important, but he didn't think you'll be justified by your works. And neither does James.

James says you're justified by faith, but it's a faith that works just like Paul said. It's a faith that produces works. And if you have something you're calling faith and you don't have good works, you don't have that faith that saves you.

That's what James is getting at. And Paul would not disagree. I would say that James and Paul both believe one thing.

Paul placed, in some cases, more emphasis on one side of the equation. And James tried to counterbalance that. Maybe people who had read Paul or who had heard Paul had reached the conclusion wrongly, which Paul would not have endorsed.

That doesn't matter if we have good works. Oh, it does. Paul thought it mattered if we had good works and so did James.

And so James puts that out there for an emphasis. Now, I'm going to close, but I want to give you this wonderful handout that I made. I laboriously created this from scratch some time ago.

But when I say laboriously, it was a delight. It's a delightful study. This little handout here has four charts on it.

Two on one side, two on the other. And this is showing how much James depends on the teaching of Jesus. Especially the Sermon on the Mount.

James is a short book, but he has at least 25, in this little book of five chapters, at least 25 allusions to the Sermon on the Mount. He's got 10 of them that allude to the Beatitudes, which was the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. He's got another 15 that allude to other things in the body of the Sermon on the Mount.

And by the Sermon on the Mount, I mean Matthew 5, 6, and 7. There's a parallel to it in Luke 6. Some of what's in Luke 6 is there. The subject is in the left column. For example, I mentioned the Beatitudes describe wisdom from above.

We've got the Beatitudes there in Matthew 5, and these places for these different Beatitudes. In James 3, 17, it says, above is first pure, peaceable, full of mercy and good fruits, but blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure, blessed are the peaceful, and so forth, peacemakers. He actually, you know, the things that Jesus mentions in the Beatitudes are the things that James said are the wisdom from above.

And then in Luke's version of the Beatitudes, in Luke 6, 20, Jesus said, blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven. Well, James said in James 2, 5, has not God chosen the poor to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom? Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be heirs of the kingdom? As Jesus said, blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of heaven. And there's others all the way down here.

You've got the subject is in the left column. Then you've got the statements of Jesus in the next column. Then you've got the statement of James that basically is saying the same thing, in many cases the same words.

James actually quotes the Sermon on the Mount more than once. In one place he says, you know, do not swear at all. Let your yea be yea and your nay nay.

You know, don't swear by heaven and earth. Jesus said that in the Sermon on the Mount. James actually says it almost verbatim.

Now, so you've got this, in a sense, a dependency on the Sermon on the Mount. One could argue that James wrote this as a sermon to a second generation of Christians, using Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as his text. On the other side of the page, there's another chart showing allusions in James to other sayings of Jesus that are not in the Sermon on the Mount.

So, there are six different places that James alludes to other things Jesus said in other places besides the Sermon on the Mount. And then the last chart I've given you is statements that James has that are parallel to essentially identical statements, or very close, not quotations exactly, but the same information as you find in 1 Peter and 1 John. 1 Peter and 1 John have lots of overlapping material with James and with each other.

And so, this is for your own reading pleasure and study. I'm not going to take you through these things, but I think it'll greatly enrich your own study of the Book of James to see where he's quoting Jesus or expanding on what Jesus said in some cases. So, that little handout, I know those who are watching by Facebook are going to be tearing their hair out because you don't have this.

You don't have this. That's what you get for not being here, you see. Watching on Facebook isn't in all respects the same as being here.

So, anyway, if someone wants it, I'm sure I can arrange for you to get it.