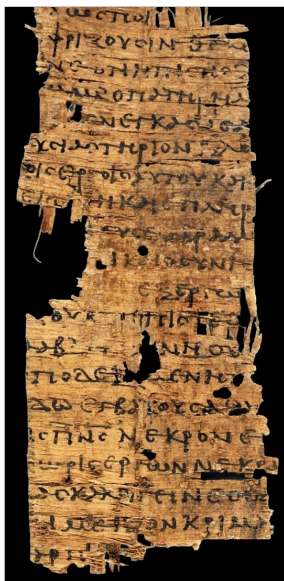


JAMES

Faith That Works

AUTHOR	James, the brother of Jesus and leader of the church in Jerusalem, 1:1 and Galatians 1:19. Many critical scholars think a later follower wrote in his name.
WRITTEN FROM	Jerusalem.
DATE WRITTEN	About AD 45 to 50, which may make it the first New Testament book written. Some say about AD 60, shortly before James was killed in AD 62.
WRITTEN TO	The twelve tribes scattered abroad, Jewish believers in Jesus living outside Israel, 1:1.
WHY HE WROTE	To show that real faith changes how you live, talk, spend and treat people.
KEY VERSE	James 2:17. Faith by itself, if it does not result in action, is dead.



AN EARLY COPY OF JAMES

Papyrus 20, copied in the early 200s AD and found at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt. This side holds James 2:19 to 3:2. Near the top is the word for shudder, the demons believe and shudder, 2:19. Lower down the word for dead, nekron, shows up twice: faith without works is dead, 2:26. It is kept at Princeton University. Papyrus 23, also from the early 200s, has a few verses of James 1. Public domain.

Historical Setting

After Stephen was stoned, many believers ran from Jerusalem and scattered, Acts 8:1 and 11:19. Most were poor. Rich landowners cheated them, dragged them into court and paid their workers late or not at all. Inside the churches there were fights, favorites and loose

tongues. James, the brother of Jesus, led the mother church in Jerusalem. He writes like a prophet and like Proverbs: short, sharp, practical. His letter has about 50 commands in just 108 verses, and it echoes the Sermon on the Mount again and again.

What Was Going Wrong

- DOUBTING.** Praying while doubting, like a wave tossed by the wind, 1:6 to 8.
- FAVORITISM.** The best seats for the rich, the floor for the poor, 2:1 to 9.
- ALL TALK.** Faith that says nice words but never helps anyone, 2:14 to 17.
- THE TONGUE.** Cursing, bragging and gossip, 3:1 to 12 and 4:11.
- FIGHTS.** Quarrels driven by jealousy and wanting more, 4:1 to 3.
- RICH OPPRESSORS.** Wages held back from the workers, 5:1 to 6.

The Idiot Proof Summary

James is the most practical book in the New Testament. It does not argue about big theories. It asks one question over and over: does your faith actually do anything? Real faith shows up in how you handle trials, how you treat the poor, what comes out of your mouth, how you plan your week and how you pray. James was Jesus' own brother, and you can hear Jesus' teaching all through it.

James at a Glance

- CH 1** **TRIALS AND DOING**
Count trials joy, ask for wisdom, and do what the word says.
- CH 2** **FAITH THAT WORKS**
No favorites. Faith without works is dead.
- CH 3** **THE TONGUE AND WISDOM**
A small fire, and the wisdom that comes from above.
- CH 4** **HUMBLE YOURSELVES**
Stop fighting, draw near to God, and say if the Lord wills.
- CH 5** **PATIENCE AND PRAYER**
Warning to the rich, wait for the Lord, pray for the sick.

Where Jesus Shows Up

- JAMES 1:1** James calls his own brother the Lord Jesus Christ, and himself His servant.
- JAMES 2:1** Our glorious Lord Jesus Christ.
- JAMES 5:7 TO 9** Be patient until the Lord's coming. The Judge is standing at the door.

What to Watch for in James

- MESSIANIC FORESHADOW** 2:25
- PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN SCRIPTURE** 5:17
- END TIMES PROPHECIES** 5:1-3, 5:7-9
- THE HEART** 1:22, 1:26, 3:14, 4:8, 4:17
- ARCHAEOLOGY** 1:1, 5:4
- DEMONIC** 2:19, 3:15, 4:7
- NOTABLE** 1:2-5, 1:12, 1:17, 1:19, 1:23-25, 1:27, 2:17 and 7 more
- JESUS SPEAKING** Words in red are Jesus speaking, or God the Father speaking from heaven.

Cool Stuff Most People Miss

JESUS' BROTHER

James did not believe at first, John 7:5. The risen Jesus appeared to him, 1 Corinthians 15:7, and he became a leader of the church.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT ECHOES

Let your yes be yes, 5:12, sounds just like Matthew 5:37, and James echoes Jesus' teaching many more times.

JAMES IS JACOB

In Greek his name is Iakobos, the same name as Jacob. English turned it into James.

LUTHER'S STRAW

Martin Luther called it a right strawy letter in 1522. See The Big Question pages.

What Happened Next?

James stayed in Jerusalem and led the church there, Acts 15 and 21. In AD 62 the high priest had him stoned. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote it down; see What Josephus Wrote. Eight years later the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. James' brother Jude wrote one more short letter, Jude 1.

THE HEART ARCHAEOLOGY NOTABLE

1

CHAPTER 1 IN 30 SECONDS

James skips the small talk. Trials? Count it joy, they build endurance. Need wisdom? Ask God, He is not stingy. Temptation does not come from God; it grows from our own desires. And do not just nod along to the Bible like a bobblehead. Do what it says.

A GREETING FROM JAMES // JUDE 1:1-2

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

To the twelve tribes of the Dispersion:

Greetings.

REJOICING IN TRIALS // PHILIPPIANS 1:12-20

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you encounter trials of many kinds, **3** because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. **4** Allow perseverance to finish its work, so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

5 Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. **6** But he must ask in faith, without doubting, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. **7** That man should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. **8** He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 The brother in humble circumstances should exult in his high position. **10** But the one who is rich should exult in his low position, because he will pass away like a flower of the field. **11** For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its flower falls and its beauty is lost. So too,

■ **JAS 1:1 [ARCHAEOLOGY]** A limestone bone box with the words James son of Joseph brother of Jesus, made public in 2002 → FIELD NOTES p.6

■ **JAS 1:1 [NOTE] WHICH JAMES?** Not James son of Zebedee, killed about AD 44, Acts 12:2, but James the brother of Jesus, Mark 6:3. He did not believe at first, John 7:5, but the risen Jesus appeared to him, 1 Corinthians 15:7. Most Protestants say he was a younger son of Mary and Joseph. The Orthodox say a son of Joseph from an earlier marriage. Catholics say a close relative, like a cousin. See What Josephus Wrote and The James Ossuary pages.

■ **JAS 1:2 [NOTABLE]** Trials test faith and build endurance, so you grow up complete, lacking nothing.

■ **JAS 1:5 [NOTABLE]** God does not scold you for asking. Ask in faith, without doubting.

■ **JAS 1:10 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← IS 40:6-8 p.-

the rich man will fade away in the midst of his pursuits.

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

GOOD AND PERFECT GIFTS

13 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when by his own evil desires he is lured away and enticed. **15** Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. **17** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, with whom there is no change or shifting shadow. **18** He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we would be a kind of firstfruits of His creation.

HEARING AND DOING

19 My beloved brothers, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, **20** for man's anger does not bring about the righteousness that God desires. **21** Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and every expression of evil, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save your souls.

22 Be doers of the word, and not hearers only. Otherwise, you are deceiving yourselves. **23** For anyone who hears the word but does not carry it out is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror, **24** and after observing himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. **25** But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom, and continues to do so—not being a forgetful hearer, but an effective doer—he will be blessed in what he does.

■ **JAS 1:12 [NOTABLE]** The prize at the end of the race is the crown of life God promised to those who love Him.

■ **JAS 1:17 [NOTABLE]** God is the Father of the lights, and unlike shadows that move, He never changes.

■ **JAS 1:19 [NOTABLE]** Three habits that would end most fights before they start.

■ **JAS 1:22 [HEART]** Do not just listen to the word and fool yourselves. Do what it says.

■ **JAS 1:22 [NOTABLE]** Hearing without doing is like looking in a mirror and forgetting your own face.

DEBATED · FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: MEDIUM · DEBATED

THE JAMES OSSUARY

JAMES 1:1 · GALATIANS 1:19 · MARK 6:3



The James ossuary and a close up of its inscription. Photos Paradiso, attribution license.

WHAT IT IS

A limestone bone box, about 20 inches long. On one side, in Aramaic, are the words: Yaakov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua, James son of Joseph brother of Jesus.

HOW OLD IT IS

Jews in Jerusalem used boxes like this from about 20 BC to AD 70. A year after a burial the family gathered the bones and put them in a bone box. The box is surely that old. The question is the writing.

THE BIG ANNOUNCEMENT

In October 2002 the French scholar Andre Lemaire announced it in Biblical Archaeology Review. It belonged to Oded Golan, an Israeli collector who said he bought it years before from a dealer. It was shown in Toronto, where it cracked on the way.

FORGERY OR NOT?

In 2003 a committee of the Israel Antiquities Authority called the inscription a fake, at least the words brother of Jesus. Golan was charged with forgery. After a trial that dragged on for years, the judge in March 2012 found him not guilty of forgery, but said that did not prove the inscription was real. Experts still disagree.

COMMON NAMES

James, Joseph and Jesus were all common names then. Scholars argue about how many men in Jerusalem could have had all three in their family, and about why a brother would be named at all.

WHY IT MATTERS HERE

If it is real, it may be the oldest object naming Jesus. The Bible itself already says James was the Lord's brother, Galatians 1:19 and Mark 6:3.

THE PATINA TESTS

Scientists studied the thin crust, called patina, inside the carved letters. Experts for the Israel Antiquities Authority said the patina in the words had been faked. Other experts, some called by the defense, said real ancient patina was in the letters and that cleaning had disturbed it.

THE TALPIOT TOMB IDEA

Some writers claimed the box came from a family tomb found at Talpiot in Jerusalem in 1980, which a 2007 TV film called the tomb of Jesus. Most archaeologists reject that tomb claim, and no one has proven the box came from there.

WHO JAMES WAS

James led the church in Jerusalem, Acts 15:13 and Galatians 2:9. Jesus appeared to him after rising from the dead, 1 Corinthians 15:7. Josephus says he was stoned to death about AD 62. See What Josephus Wrote in this book.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

Nobody knows where it was found. Even if every word is ancient, it might belong to a different James.

THE HEART NOTABLE

26 If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his heart and his religion is worthless. **27** Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

FROM HISTORY

WHAT JOSEPHUS WROTE

The Death of James, AD 62

JOSEPHUS, ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS 20:197 TO 203 ·

ACTS 15:13 · GALATIANS 2:9

WHO JOSEPHUS WAS

Josephus was a Jewish priest and general, born in AD 37. He fought the Romans, surrendered, and spent the rest of his life in Rome writing history. He finished his big book, *Antiquities of the Jews*, about AD 93. He was not a Christian.

WHAT HE WROTE

Here is the whole passage, *Antiquities* 20:197 to 203, in William Whiston's English translation of 1737. Words in square brackets were added by Whiston.

ANTIQUITIES 20.9.1

And now Caesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood, and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes that this eldest Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and who had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he

thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; 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 the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa], desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a sanhedrim without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damneus, high priest.

James the Just

ACTS 12:17 · ACTS 15:13 TO 21 · GALATIANS 2:9 · JOHN 18:13

WHO JAMES WAS

After Peter left Jerusalem, James led the church there, Acts 12:17. He gave the final word at the Jerusalem council, Acts 15:13 to 21, and Paul called him one of the pillars, Galatians 2:9. Early Christians called him James the Just. Hegesippus says he prayed so much that his knees became hard like a camel's.

ONE FAMILY OF HIGH PRIESTS

Ananus was a son of Annas, and Caiaphas was Annas' son in law, John 18:13. So the same family that put Jesus on trial had His brother killed about 30 years later. Ananus himself was killed in AD 68 during the Jewish war with Rome, Josephus says.

■ JAS 1:26 [HEART] A religious man who cannot control his tongue deceives his own heart.

■ JAS 1:27 [NOTABLE] James's definition of real religion: help the helpless and stay clean from the world.

OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW **NOTABLE****WHAT HAPPENED**

In AD 62 the Roman governor Festus, the one in Acts 25, died. Before the next governor arrived, the new high priest Ananus, son of the Annas of John 18:13, held a trial and had James stoned. Many Jews were angry, and King Agrippa II, the one in Acts 26, fired Ananus after three months.

IS IT REAL?

Almost all scholars, even skeptics, accept this passage. It is in every Greek copy, Origen knew it about AD 248, and the words who was called Christ sound like a Jewish writer, not a Christian. Josephus' longer passage about Jesus, Antiquities 18.63 to 64, is more debated; see Exhibit A, p.~.

ORIGEN'S MISSING LINE

Origen, about AD 248, said Josephus blamed the fall of Jerusalem on the killing of James the Just. No surviving copy of Josephus says that, so Origen may have mixed him up with another writer, or that line was lost.

THE LATER STORY

Hegesippus, a Christian writer about AD 170 quoted by Eusebius, tells it differently: James was thrown down from the temple, stoned, and finished off with a club, praying for his killers as Jesus did. The two stories do not fully agree.

WHY IT MATTERS

A writer who was not a Christian names Jesus, who was called Christ, and His brother James, and tells how James died, about 30 years after the cross.

a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. ³If you lavish attention on the man in fine clothes and say, "Here is a seat of honor," but say to the poor man, "You must stand" or "Sit at my feet," ⁴have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵Listen, my beloved brothers: Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised those who love Him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? ⁷Are they not the ones who blaspheme the noble name by which you have been called?

⁸If you really fulfill the royal law stated in Scripture, "*Love your neighbor as yourself*," you are doing well. ⁹But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

¹⁰Whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. ¹¹For He who said, "*Do not commit adultery*," also said, "*Do not murder*." If you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹²Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom.

¹³For judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

FAITH AND WORKS // GALATIANS 3:1-9

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? ¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶If one of you tells him, "Go in peace; stay warm and well fed," but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that? ¹⁷**So too, faith by itself, if it does not result in action, is dead.**

2

CHAPTER 2 IN 30 SECONDS

No VIP seating for the rich guy with the gold ring while the poor guy gets the floor. Love your neighbor as yourself. Then the big one: faith that never does anything is dead. Even demons believe in God, and they shudder. Abraham and Rahab showed their faith by what they did.

A WARNING AGAINST FAVORITISM

¹My brothers, as you hold out your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, do not show favoritism.

²Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and

■ **JAS 2:2 [NOTE] MEETING.** The Greek word is synagogue. These early believers still met like a Jewish synagogue.

■ **JAS 2:8 [QUOTES]** Direct ← LEV 19:18 p.~

■ **JAS 2:11 [QUOTES]** Direct ← EX 20:13-14; DT 5:17-18 p.~

■ **JAS 2:14 [NOTE] FAITH AND WORKS.** Does James disagree with Paul, Romans 3:28? See the two Big Question pages.

■ **JAS 2:17 [NOTABLE]** The heart of the book. See The Big Question pages on faith and works.

MESSIANIC FORESHADOW | DEMONIC | OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW | NOTABLE

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith and I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. Good for you! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ O foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is worthless? ²¹ Was not our father Abraham justified by what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that his faith was working with his actions, and his faith was perfected by what he did. ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ As you can see, a man is justified by his deeds and not by faith alone.

²⁵ In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute justified by her actions when she welcomed the spies and sent them off on another route? ²⁶ As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

3

CHAPTER 3 IN 30 SECONDS

Not many of you should become teachers. The tongue is tiny, like a horse's bit or a ship's rudder, but it steers the whole body, and one spark can burn a forest. We bless God and curse people with the same mouth. Real wisdom from above is pure, peaceful and gentle.

TAMING THE TONGUE // PSALM 64:1-10

¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

² We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to control his whole body.

³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can

guide the whole animal. ⁴ Consider ships as well. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot is inclined.

⁵ In the same way, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it boasts of great things. Consider how small a spark sets a great forest ablaze. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of wickedness among the parts of the body. It pollutes the whole person, sets the course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

DEBATED THE BIG QUESTION

FAITH AND WORKS

Did James and Paul Disagree?

JAMES 2:14 TO 26 · ROMANS 3:28 · GALATIANS 2:16 · EPHESIANS 2:8 TO 10

WHAT JAMES SAID

A man is justified by his deeds and not by faith alone, 2:24. Faith without deeds is dead, 2:26.

WHAT PAUL SAID

A man is justified by faith apart from works of the law, Romans 3:28. Both men use Abraham and the same verse, Genesis 15:6: Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, Romans 4:3 and James 2:23.

THE EARLY CHURCH

James was slow to be accepted. Origen, about AD 240, is one of the first to quote it by name, and Eusebius, about AD 325, listed it among the books some disputed. By about AD 400 it was in every major list. Augustine, about AD 413, said there is no fight: Paul means works done before faith, to earn it, and James means works that come after faith.

LUTHER'S STRAW

In his 1522 New Testament Martin Luther compared James to John, Romans, Galatians and 1 Peter and called it a right strawy letter, because he said it has nothing of the gospel in it. He moved it near the back. The straw line was

■ JAS 2:19 [DEMONIC] Demons believe — and tremble
■ JAS 2:19 [NOTE] THE SHEMA. You believe that God is one. This is the Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4, the creed every Jew said daily. Knowing the right facts is not saving faith. Demons know them too.

■ JAS 2:23 [QUOTES] Direct ← GEN 15:6; 2CH 20:7; IS 41:8 p. —

■ JAS 2:25 [FULFILLS] The scarlet cord in Rahab's window saved her whole household ← JOSH 2:18 · MEDIUM p. —

■ JAS 2:25 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← JOSH 2:4; 2:15 p. —

■ JAS 3:5 [NOTABLE] The tongue is small, but it can burn down a whole life.

■ JAS 3:6 [NOTE] HELL. The Greek word is Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, where kings of Judah once burned their children as sacrifices, Jeremiah 7:31. Jesus used the name for hell.

THE HEART DEMONIC

dropped from later editions, and Luther still quoted James in his sermons.

TRENT AND CALVIN

The Catholic Council of Trent, 1547, quoted James 2:24 and taught that justification grows through good works done by grace, and it rejected faith alone.

John Calvin answered that same year with a famous line: it is faith alone that justifies, but the faith that justifies is never alone.

TODAY

In 1999 the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church signed the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. They agreed that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ, not by our merits, and that good works must follow. They still disagree on some details. The next page gives every view.

The Case Each Side Makes

JAMES 2:14 TO 26 · ROMANS 4:1 TO 5 · GALATIANS 5:6 · PHILIPPIANS 2:12 TO 13

SHOWN, NOT EARNED

Most Protestants say Paul and James answer different questions. Paul asks how a sinner is made right with God: by faith. James asks what real faith looks like: it works. Justified in James means shown to be right, as in show me your faith, 2:18. Key verses: Ephesians 2:8 to 10 and Galatians 5:6. Best case: it keeps grace free and faith real.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORKS

Paul fights works of the law, like circumcision and food rules, used as a ticket into God's people. James means acts of love, like feeding the hungry, 2:15 to 16. Best case: the two men use the same word for different things.

ABRAHAM, THEN AND LATER

Paul points to Genesis 15, when Abraham first believed. James points to Genesis 22, years later, when Abraham offered Isaac. The later act proved the earlier faith was real, 2:21 to 23.

CATHOLIC

Justification begins by grace through faith and baptism and grows through good works done in grace. James 2:24 means what it says. Key verses: Galatians 5:6, faith working through love, and

Romans 2:6 to 7. Best case: it takes every word of James at face value.

ORTHODOX

Salvation is a lifelong journey of becoming like God, by grace, with our free cooperation. Faith and works are two sides of one life. Key verses: Philippians 2:12 to 13 and 2 Peter 1:4.

THE NEW PERSPECTIVE

Scholars like E. P. Sanders, 1977, James Dunn and N. T. Wright say works of the law in Paul mainly means the Jewish badges, like circumcision and food laws, so Paul and James are not even talking about the same works.

A REAL DISAGREEMENT

Some scholars, and Luther in his early years, think James and Paul really disagreed, or that James was answering people who twisted Paul's teaching. Best case: it reads both letters without forcing them to match.

WHAT ALL SIDES AGREE ON

We are saved by God's grace, not by earning it. Real faith never stays alone; it shows up in love for the poor, 2:15 to 17. Both Paul and James say so, Galatians 5:6.

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸ but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, this should not be! ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers, can a fig tree grow olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good conduct, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast in it or deny the truth.

■ JAS 3:9 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← GEN 1:26-27 p.-

THE HEART | DEMONIC | OLD TESTAMENT QUOTED IN THE NEW

NOTABLE

¹⁵ Such wisdom does not come from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.

¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, accommodating, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace reap the fruit of righteousness.

4

CHAPTER 4 IN 30 SECONDS

Why all the fights? You want what you do not have. Friendship with the world is a breakup with God. Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will run. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. And quit planning your year like you own tomorrow; your life is a mist.

A WARNING AGAINST PRIDE

¹ What causes conflicts and quarrels among you? Don't they come from the passions at war within you? ² You crave what you do not have; you kill and covet, but are unable to obtain it. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ And when you do ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may squander it on your pleasures.

⁴ You adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore, whoever chooses to be a friend of the world renders himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think the Scripture says without reason that the Spirit He caused to dwell in us yearns with envy? ⁶ But He gives us more grace. This is why it says:

*"God opposes the proud,
but gives grace to the humble."*

■ JAS 3:14 [HEART] If you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not brag about it.

■ JAS 3:15 [DEMONIC] Wisdom that is earthly, unspiritual, demonic

■ JAS 3:17 [NOTABLE] Eight marks of God's wisdom, the opposite of the jealousy and ambition in 3:14 to 16.

■ JAS 4:5 [NOTE] HARD VERSE. No Old Testament verse says these exact words. James may be summing up a theme, like God being jealous for His people, Exodus 34:14. It can also be read as the spirit in us yearns with envy.

■ JAS 4:6 [QUOTES] Direct ← PROV 3:34 p.–

DRAWING NEAR TO GOD

⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹

Grieve, mourn, and weep. Turn your laughter to mourning, and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

¹¹ Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. And if you judge the law, you are not a practitioner of the law, but a judge of it. ¹² There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor?

DO NOT BOAST ABOUT TOMORROW // PROVERBS 27:1

¹³ Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business, and make a profit." ¹⁴ You do not even know what will happen tomorrow! What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord is willing, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast in your proud intentions. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷ Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do, yet fails to do it, is guilty of sin.

■ JAS 4:7 [DEMONIC] Resist the devil and he will flee from you

■ JAS 4:8 [HEART] Purify your hearts, you double minded.

■ JAS 4:8 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← ZECH 1:3; MAL 3:7 p.–

■ JAS 4:10 [NOTABLE] The way up is down.

■ JAS 4:12 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← IS 33:22 p.–

■ JAS 4:14 [NOTABLE] So plan with if the Lord wills, 4:15.

■ JAS 4:15 [NOTE] IF IT IS HIS WILL. Paul said the same, Acts 18:21 and 1 Corinthians 4:19. Christians later shortened it to D.V., Latin for God willing.

■ JAS 4:17 [HEART] Anyone who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, sins.

PROPHECIES FULFILLED IN SCRIPTURE

END TIMES PROPHECIES

ARCHAEOLOGY

NOTABLE

5

CHAPTER 5 IN 30 SECONDS

Bad news for rich oppressors: your gold is rusting and the unpaid workers are crying out to God. Believers, be patient like a farmer waiting for rain; the Lord is coming. No swearing oaths. Sick? Call the elders to pray and anoint with oil. Elijah was a regular guy whose prayers stopped the rain.

A WARNING TO THE RICH // PROVERBS 23:1-5; 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

¹Come now, you who are rich, weep and wail over the misery to come upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and moths have eaten your clothes. ³Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and consume your flesh like fire.

You have hoarded treasure in the last days. ⁴Look, the wages you withheld from the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts.

⁵You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in the day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the righteous, who did not resist you.

PATIENCE IN SUFFERING // JOB 1:1-5

⁷Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer awaits the precious fruit of the soil—how patient he is for the fall and spring rains. ⁸You, too, be patient and strengthen your hearts, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹Do not complain about one another, brothers, so that you will not be judged. Look, the Judge is standing at the door!

■ **JAS 5:1 [PROPHECY]** Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon you; the wages of the reapers cry out → STILL TO COME - MEDIUM

■ **JAS 5:1 [NOTABLE]** James's stinging denunciation of the wealthy who oppress workers and hoard wealth in the last days

■ **JAS 5:4 [ARCHAEOLOGY]** A pottery letter from about 630 BC in which a farm worker at harvest begs an official to return the cloak taken from him → FIELD NOTES p.12

■ **JAS 5:4 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← DT 24:14-15; IS 5:9 p.-

■ **JAS 5:7 [PROPHECY]** Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord... the coming of the Lord is at hand → STILL TO COME

■ **JAS 5:7 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← DT 11:14; JOEL 2:23 p.-

¹⁰Brothers, as an example of patience in affliction, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹See how blessed we consider those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen the outcome from the Lord. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

¹²Above all, my brothers, do not swear, not by heaven or earth or by any other oath. Simply let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, so that you will not fall under judgment.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

¹³Is any one of you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises. ¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick. The Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power to prevail. ¹⁷Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸Again he prayed, and the heav-

■ **JAS 5:11 [ALLUDES TO]** Refers to ← EX 34:6; PS 103:8 p.-

■ **JAS 5:12 [NOTE]** NO OATHS. This echoes Jesus almost word for word, Matthew 5:34 to 37. Quakers and Mennonites refuse all oaths because of it. Others say it forbids careless swearing, not a sworn promise in court.

■ **JAS 5:14 [NOTABLE]** The New Testament instruction for healing prayer — elders, prayer, anointing with oil in Jesus's name

■ **JAS 5:14 [NOTE]** ANOINTING THE SICK. Catholics see a sacrament here, the Anointing of the Sick. The Orthodox practice Holy Unction. Pentecostals and many others still anoint with oil today. Cessationists say healing gifts ended with the apostles, but still pray for the sick.

■ **JAS 5:16 [NOTABLE]** The prayer of a righteous man has great power.

■ **JAS 5:16 [NOTE]** CONFESS TO EACH OTHER. Catholics and Orthodox use it in support of confession to a priest. Most Protestants read it as believers confessing to one another.

■ **JAS 5:17 [NOTABLE]** The great prophet was an ordinary man who prayed, 1 Kings 17 and 18.

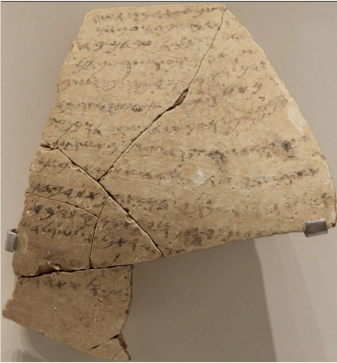
■ **JAS 5:17 [FULFILLS]** Elijah said there would be no dew or rain until he said so ← 1KI 17:1 p.-

■ **JAS 5:17 [NOTE]** THREE AND A HALF YEARS. 1 Kings 18:1 says in the third year; Jesus also said three and a half years, Luke 4:25. James and Jewish tradition add that Elijah prayed for it.

FIELD NOTES · ARCHAEOLOGY · CONFIDENCE: HIGH · FAR OLDER THAN JAMES

THE HARVESTER'S COMPLAINT

JAMES 5:4 · DEUTERONOMY 24:12 TO 15 · EXODUS 22:26 TO 27 · AMOS 2:8



The Mesad Hashavyahu ostrakon, Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Photo Paamei Elyon, CC BY SA 4.0.

WHAT IT IS

A broken piece of pottery with 14 lines of ancient Hebrew written in ink. It is a letter from a farm worker to the official in charge of a small fort.

HOW OLD IT IS

About 630 to 609 BC, in the days of King Josiah. The Israeli scholar Joseph Naveh found it in 1960 at Mesad Hashavyahu, a fort near the coast south of where Tel Aviv is today.

WHAT IT SAYS

The worker says he was harvesting and finished his work, but a man named Hoshayahu son of Shobai took his cloak. His fellow workers in the heat can swear he did nothing wrong. He begs the official to give his cloak back.

THE LAW BEHIND IT

God's law said if you take a poor man's cloak as a pledge, give it back before sunset so he can sleep in it, Exodus 22:26 to 27 and Deuteronomy 24:12 to 13. Pay a hired worker the same day, Deuteronomy 24:14 to 15. Amos 2:8 condemns people who lie down on cloaks taken in pledge.

WHY IT MATTERS HERE

James says the wages you held back from the harvesters are crying out against you, and their cries have reached the Lord of Hosts, 5:4. This little piece of pottery is a real harvester crying out, more than 600 years earlier.

WHAT IT DOES NOT PROVE

We do not know if the worker got his cloak back. The letter is far older than James and has nothing to do with him.

ens gave rain, and the earth yielded its crops.

RESTORING A SINNER

¹⁹ My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, ²⁰ consider this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

■ JAS 5:20 [ALLUDES TO] Refers to ← PROV 10:12 p.-
■ JAS 5:20 [NOTE] COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS. From Proverbs 10:12, also quoted in 1 Peter 4:8.