

A dramatic scene of a forest fire. Tall, thin trees are partially obscured by thick, billowing white and grey smoke. Bright orange and yellow flames are visible, particularly on the left and right sides of the frame. In the foreground, there is a rocky, moss-covered ground with some green vegetation. A large, cut log lies horizontally on the right side. The overall atmosphere is one of intense heat and destruction.

JAMES

We will be a congregation who knows, honors, and reads the Bible.

“I grasp the story of the Bible, respect it as authoritative, know how to read it, and actually read it.”

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Deuteronomy
- 1+2 Samuel
- Nehemiah
- Psalms
- Isaiah
- Amos

- Matthew
- Acts
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Philemon
- James
- Revelation

- James is in the NT
- Written about AD45-60
- 66 books in the Bible, 39 OT + 27 NT
- The NT is organized with 5 “historical books” then 22 letters
- 13 letters were written by Paul
- After Paul are the “general epistles”

The Books of the Bible



Pope James? - Acts 7-15

- Saul organizes Stephen's martyrdom (7:58-8:1)
- Saul sees risen Jesus and has radical conversion experience (9:1-19)
- Paul accepted and endorsed by key disciples and sent home to Tarsus (9:30)
- Barnabas enlists Paul to plant one of the first multi-ethnic (Jew + Gentile) churches in Antioch (11:25-26)
- Antioch Church sends B&P out on first church planting trip (13:1-3)
- B&P so successful, there was mass influx of Gentiles into Christianity, presently a Jewish messianic movement (13:4-14:28)
- Caused a huge theological debate between team "faith alone" vs. "Jesus + ____" (15:1-2)
- Debate was so contentious, Church called first ever Council (15:3-35)

Acts 15:1-12

While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: “Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.” Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.

Acts 15:4-5

When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them. But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, “The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.”

Acts 15:6-7

So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows: “Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they could hear the Good News and believe.”

Peter, Preacher + Missionary

- Acts 2 – Preaches sermon at Pentecost
- Acts 3 – Preaches in the Temple
- Acts 4 – Preaches in front of Jewish leadership
- Acts 8 – Goes on mission trip to Samaria.
- Acts 9 – Goes on a mission trip from Lydda to Joppa
- Acts 10-11 – Goes on mission trip to Caesarea and preaches to Cornelius' family

Acts 15:8-11

God knows people's hearts, and He confirmed that He accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for He cleansed their hearts through faith. So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.”

Acts 15:12

Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

Acts 15:13-16,19

When they had finished, James stood and said, “Brothers, listen to me. Peter has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for Himself. And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted ... And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.”

James 1:1

This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am writing to the “twelve tribes” — Jewish believers scattered abroad. Greetings!

Mark 6:3 – Siblings of Jesus?

Then [the people of Jesus' hometown, Nazareth,] scoffed, "He's just a carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon. And His sisters live right here among us." They were deeply offended and refused to believe in Him.

Scripture by Jesus' Immediate Family

- Mary (mother) – Luke 1-2
- Jude (brother) – Jude
- James (brother) – James

Mark 3:20-21

One time Jesus entered a house, and the crowds began to gather again. Soon He and His disciples couldn't even find time to eat. When His family heard what was happening, they tried to take Him away. "He's out of His mind," they said.

John 7:1-5

After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting His death. But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, and Jesus' brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where Your followers can see Your miracles! You can't become famous if you hide like this! If You can do such wonderful things, show Yourself to the world!" For even His brothers didn't believe in Him.

John 7:5 - For even His brothers didn't believe in Him.

James 1:1 - This letter is from James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:1 - This letter is from Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

1 Corinthians 15:3-7

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, He was seen by more than 500 of His followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then He was seen by James and later by all the apostles.

Summary – Who is James?

- One of four biological brothers of Jesus
- Skeptic during Jesus' ministry
- “Slave” after seeing Jesus risen
- Most powerful man in the early church
- Highest leader at the Mother Church in Jerusalem
- Saved Church from potentially crippling split at its infancy
- Martyred for Jesus

James, the brother of Jesus

- As a regional leader, James writes a regional letter
- Not written to a specific church
- N.T. Wright calls it a “paraenetic encyclical letter”
- Draws heavily from Sermon on the Mount
- Main themes: (1) **suffering well** (2) **poverty and riches** (3) **speech ethics** (4) **intimacy w/God vs. friendship w/the world** (5) **nurturing healthy community**
- Driving Point? “True faith is listening AND doing”

James 1:22

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

James 2:14-17

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well" — but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do? So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

1:2 - When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

1:26 - If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

2:10 - For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws.

5:1-3 - Look here, you rich people: Weep and groan with anguish because of all the terrible troubles ahead of you. Your wealth is rotting away, and your fine clothes are moth-eaten rags. Your gold and silver are corroded. The very wealth you were counting on will eat away your flesh like fire. This corroded treasure you have hoarded will testify against you on the day of judgment.

**2:26 - Just as the body is dead
without breath, so also faith is dead
without good works.**

Key Theme – Suffering Well

1. Suffering is inevitable, even for committed Christians (1:2)
2. Maturity is inevitable for suffering Christians (1:2-4)
3. If you ask God for wisdom and depend on Him, He gives it (1:5-8)
4. Eternal reward is inevitable for suffering Christians (1:12)

James 1:2

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.

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James 1:2-4

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, **consider** it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is **tested**, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

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James 1:5-8

If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and He will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask Him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.

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James 1:12

God blesses those who patiently endure testing and temptation. Afterward they will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him.

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James 1:27

Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

James 3:7-10

People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!

James 4:7-8

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

James 3:17-18

But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

James 1:22

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.

James 2:18-20

But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds.” You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror. How foolish! Can’t you see that faith without good deeds is useless?