

**Agape House of Worship
Midweek Service & Bible Study**

**Book Study: Epistle of James
Part 1: Overview of Epistle of James**

**Date: Wednesday, October 12, 2022
Facilitator: Pastor Jide Lawore**

Breakdown of the Study of the Book of James		
Date	Topic	Key Texts
10/12/2022	Part 1 - Overview of the Book of James	Overview of the Book of James
10/19/2022	Part 2 - James 1:1-18	Responding to Suffering and Trials
10/26/2022	Part 3 - James 1:19-27	Listening, Doing & Speaking
11/2/2022	Part 4 - James 2:1-12	Warning Against Favoritism
11/9/2022	Part 5 - James 2:14-26	Relationship of Faith and Works
11/16/2022	Part 6 - James 3:1-12	Taming the Tongue
11/23/2022	Part 7 - James 3:13-18	Reacting with Wisdom
11/30/2022	Part 8 - James 4:1-12	Submitting Yourself to God
12/7/2022	Part 9 - James 4:13 - 5:6	Warning Against Boastfulness
12/14/2022	Part 10 - James 5:7-20	Patience and Prayer

Summary of the Book of James

The book of James has been called the “Proverbs of the New Testament”. Some call it the “Application of the Sermon on the Mount”. I would venture to say that it is basically a “guidebook” for the Christian life. It is direct, simple, practical and filled with valuable information that teaches us how to live and conduct ourselves in this world—and with others. We will take this powerful book precept by precept in this next weeks and trust that God will transform our lives through it.

Authorship

The author identifies himself as James (1:1) who is believed to be the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem council (Act 15). Four men in the New Testament have this name. One of them is Apostle James but the author of this letter could not have been the Apostle James, who died too early (A.D. 44) to have written it. The other two James had neither the stature nor the influence that the writer of this letter had.

James was one of several brothers of Christ, probably the oldest since he heads the list in Matthew 13:55. At first, he did not believe in Jesus and even challenged him and misunderstood his mission (John 7:2-5). Later he became a very prominent leader in the church:

- He was one of the select individuals Christ appeared to after his resurrection (1 Cor.15:7;).
- Paul called him a "pillar" of the church (Galatians 2:9).
- Paul, on his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem, saw James (Galatians 1:19).
- Paul did the same on his last visit (Acts 21:18).
- When Peter was rescued from prison, he told his friends to tell James (Acts 12:17).
- James was a leader in the important council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:13).
- Jude could identify himself simply as "a brother of James" (Jude 1:1), so well-known was James.
- It is believed he was martyred in AD 62 or 69 by being stoned to death by the Pharisees on order of High Priest Ananus ben Ananus.

Date

Some date the letter in the early AD 60s. There are indications, however, that it was written before A.D. 50 making it one of the earliest writings of the New Testament.

- The distinctively Jewish nature of the Book suggests that it was written when the church was still predominantly Jewish.
- It reflects a simple church order -- officers of the church are called "elders" (5:14) and "teachers" (3:1).
- There was no reference made to the controversy over Gentile circumcision.
- The Greek term *synagoge* ("synagogue" or "meeting") is used to designate the meeting or meeting place of the church (James 2:2).
- If this early dating is correct, this letter is the earliest of all the New Testament writings - with the possible exception of Galatians.

The Audience

The recipients are identified explicitly only in 1:1: "the twelve tribes scattered among the nations." Some believe that this expression refers to Christians in general, but the term "twelve tribes" would more naturally apply to Jewish Christians. Many believe that these were believers from the early Jerusalem church who, after Stephen's death, were scattered as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Syrian Antioch (Act 8:1; Acts 11:19). This would account for James's references to trials and oppression, his intimate knowledge of the readers and the authoritative nature of the letter. As leader of the Jerusalem church, James wrote as pastor to instruct and encourage his dispersed people in the face of their difficulties (see essay, p. 2539).

How does the Book of James apply to my life?

1. It gives practical wisdom to encourage Christians in a variety of life's circumstances.
2. It encourages Christians to persevere in humility, kindness, patience and wisdom.
3. It teaches the right relationship between faith and good works in the life of a Christian.
4. It serves as a how-to guide for Christians dealing with oppression and trials in the world.
5. It urges Christians to mature in their faith and provides advice regarding several areas of the Christian life.
6. It explains why trials and suffering happens in the lives of Christians and how to respond.
7. Its familiarity with Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount:
 - James 2:5 versus Matthew 5:3
 - James 3:10-12 versus Matthew 7:15-20.
 - James 3:18 versus Matthew 5:9.
 - James 5:2-3 versus Matthew 6:19-20.
 - James 5:12 versus Matthew 5:33-37

Conclusion

As mentioned, the book of James is a sort of how-to book for the Christian life. It provides practical, though provoking wisdom and advice as to how Christians should present themselves and live for and as an example of Christ in all areas of their life. It contains a lot of powerful verses and phrases that are widely quoted by believers all over the world. James is a widely recommended book for new Christians to read because it has such practical wisdom and instructions and is a book that all Christians will find valuable. I encourage you to study this book for yourself and you will be blessed by it.