

THE BOOK OF JAMES

“*A Bond Servant*”

Scripture Reading: JAMES 1:1

-) **SLIDES 1-6**. Bible Jeopardy!
-) **SLIDES 7**. Read today’s Scripture text.
-) **SLIDE 8**. Today we begin a new expository Bible study. What is an expository study? An expository study is when we go through a book of the Bible verse by verse and uncover as many truths as possible. Book of GALATIANS in 47 weeks. And this new expository study will be in the Book of JAMES. And I have titled today’s message “*A Bond Servant*” (1:1).
-) I want to begin this new study by giving you some foundational truths about the author and the audience to which he writes.
-) **SLIDE 9**. It is almost unanimous among theologians that the James who wrote this letter is James the half-brother of Jesus Christ. Jesus had brothers and sisters? Yes. MARK 6:2-3.
-) Jesus had at least 4 half-brothers and at least 2 half-sisters that we know of. This quenches any belief that some religions have that Mary was a perpetual virgin. No she wasn’t.
-) And one of these half-brothers, James, was the author of the Book of JAMES. I’m sure it was an interesting experience growing up with Jesus as your older brother. Imagine that. The perfect brother. No wonder mama always liked Him best.
-) **SLIDE 10**. While growing up, these brothers (including James) had their doubts about their older brother Jesus. JOHN 7:2-5.
-) What they are saying here to Jesus is actually sarcastic. They obviously saw His miracles, but even they were skeptical about His true identity. All they knew was that he was their older brother who was certainly different.

-) **SLIDE 11.** But after the resurrection of Jesus, an interesting event occurred in the life of James. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:6-8.
-) This could have been a conversion moment in the life of James. We don't know for sure. But to know your brother was crucified, died, and was buried, and then you see Him alive appearing to you, this will have a profound impact on your life.
-) I'm convinced that it is very possible that James remembered many of the words and many of the actions of his older brother Jesus and put two and two together and believed.
-) **SLIDE 12.** At one time the apostle Paul returns to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem there are those in authoritative positions within this new entity called the church. GALATIANS 2:7,9.
-) **SLIDE 13.** The apostle John, written about here, the disciple whom Jesus loved, had a brother named James. Could this James written about here be the brother of John? No. By the time of this Jerusalem council here in GAL 2 (ACTS 15), John's brother James had already been martyred. ACTS 12:1-2.
-) **SLIDE 14.** Also when Paul returned to Jerusalem, we have further proof that James is the half-brother of Jesus. GAL 1:19.
-) **SLIDE 15.** Review what we know about James.
-) **SLIDE 16.** Who is James writing this letter to? JAMES 1:1. When James says he is writing to the "*tribes*," this means he is writing to the 12 tribes of Jacob (Jews) who saw the light and were converted to Christianity.
-) More than likely any Jews who were converted to Christianity after the resurrection of Jesus, were being persecuted by either 1) Jews who remained faithful to Judaism and/or 2) by King Herod who took pleasure in killing James, the brother of John.
-) Due to this persecution (or death), these new believers moved away—they dispersed. They left Jerusalem and Judea and went abroad, into Gentile territories.

-) And this letter written by James is addressed to those who defected from Jerusalem and the area of Judea.
-) **SLIDE 17.** How do we know this letter is addressed to believers? There are 15 instances in this letter where James refers to the recipients of this letter as “*brethren*.” And the word “*brethren*” is always a reference to fellow believers.
-) **SLIDE 18.** Review.
-) **SLIDE 19.** When did James write this letter? We know this from historical records. Herod’s persecution of Christians began in 44 AD. The Jerusalem Council was 49 AD. And James died in 62 AD.
-) Because the controversy settled at the Jerusalem council is not mentioned in his letter, it is assumed that this book is written between 44-49 AD. That would make this letter by James as one of if not the earliest NT book written.
-) So, now we know who James is, who he wrote this letter to, and when he wrote this letter.
-) **SLIDE 20.** JAMES 1:1. The last truth I want to uncover today is what James says about himself in verse 1. He says he is a bond servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
-) **SLIDE 21.** What is a bond servant? The Greek word that is used here is the word “*DOULOS*” which means servant, bond servant, or slave.
-) **SLIDE 22.** Webster. James is saying that he is a slave to God and a slave to Jesus Christ. Jesus is his master.
-) Let’s think about this for a second. Back in JOHN 7:5, James along with his other brothers were talking smack to Jesus about going up to Feast of Booths in Jerusalem. “*Go ahead. Show your miracles to everyone.*” The text tells us that they didn’t believe in Him.

-) And now James, one of the brothers who was talking smack, is now humbly considering himself a servant, a slave, a bond servant to his older brother Jesus. At some point in time, there was a change of heart for James.
-) And if this surprises you, maybe this will surprise you too. There is a small one-chapter book just before the Book of REVELATION. The Book of JUDE. Who wrote that book?
-) **SLIDE 23.** JUDE 1. If Jude is a brother of James, that makes Jude a half-brother of Jesus too. Jude was one of the other four brothers mentioned in MARK 6:2-3. So, we know that two of the four brothers saw the light and became Jesus-followers.
-) Imagine, that older brother that you ridiculed, that older brother that you probably thought mom liked best, that older brother who had crowds following Him and was gaining popularity around town, that older brother who had a questionable birth that caused people to talk and gossip, is now your master; your Lord; your Savior.
-) And now you are His bond servant; His servant; His slave.
-) As we go through this expository study of the Book of JAMES, I want us to consider what James may be recalling from what he remembers of the words and actions of his older brother Jesus. They certainly made an impact. James is now a bond servant to God and to his Lord and big brother Jesus Christ.

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