

DRAFT

HOLY BIBLE,

a Commentary on

The General Epistle of

James

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## Lesson 1 [TOC](#)

### Chapter 1 Introduction to The General Epistle of James The Author

*1 ¶ James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.*

“James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” There are two apostles of this name. One was the son of Zebedee and the brother of the beloved apostle John (Matt 4:21<sup>1</sup>, Matt 10:2) He was of the inner trio of disciples. Peter, James, and John, that saw Christ on the mount of transfiguration (Matt 17:1<sup>2</sup>, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28) This James the son of Zebedee, however was martyred by Herod in Acts 12:1-2<sup>3</sup>. So the author here is likely the other apostle, James the son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:3<sup>4</sup>, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13) If this is the same son of Mary and brother of Jose (Matt 27:56<sup>5</sup>, Mark 16:1, Luke 24:10) he was called James the less in Mark 15:40<sup>6</sup> As such, James would be the cousin of Jesus, (called his brother in Matt 13:55, Mark 6:3<sup>7</sup>) because this Mary was the sister or sister in law of Mother Mary. (John 19:25<sup>8</sup>) (For Mary and Mary

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- 1 Matt 4:21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.
  - 2 Matt 17:1 ¶ And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,
  - 3 Acts 12:1 ¶ Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.
  - 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.
  - 4 Matt 10:3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;
  - 5 Mt 27:56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.
  - 6 Mark 15:40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;
  - 7 See the extended argument below on these references.
  - 8 John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and

to be blood sisters seems unlikely, so it has been speculated that she was sister in law to Mother Mary, thus Cleophas would be either Joseph's brother, or Mary's brother. The latter unlikely because Joseph was listed as legal heir of Mary's father Heli in Luke 3:23, and this was common practice when there were no other sons in a family.) If our author, James the son of Alphaeus is this same brother of Joseph and cousin of Jesus then one must contend that his mother, Mary, was actually the husband to Cleophas according to John 19:25. This is done, rather casually, by saying that Alphaeus and Cleophas are the same names with differing Greek, Aramaic and or Hebrew spellings.

Many good men still contend that James is the blood brother of Jesus. The author here contending that James is the cousin of Jesus, while it is evidenced that he was his brother in Matt 13:55-56, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?" and Mark 6:3 "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and of Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him," is not meant to twist or deny Scripture nor lend comfort to the Catholic error on this point. The word for brother, *αδελφος* *adelphos*, specifically means "from the same womb", but in general could mean from the same father or from the same ancestry. It is often used for cousins as well as blood brothers interchangeably, there being no direct Greek equivalent for cousin<sup>9</sup>. For the Catholics who try to hyper extend this usage and illogically imply that Mary the mother of Jesus was a virgin to death, for their un-Biblical doctrine

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his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

9 Luke 1:36 says that Elizabeth was Mary's cousin using the word *συγγενης*, *suggenes*, which specifically means of the same kin or related by blood, ... or cousins. This word could have clarified the James to Jesus relationship but it was not generally used in a list of male family names where *αδελφος*, *adelphos*, was used.

attempting to deify Mary, Matthew 13 and Mark 6 still leave Juda and Simon and all of his sisters as blood brothers of Jesus. It may be established here that James and Joses were cousins to Jesus, but that still leaves Juda and Simon as likely blood brothers and sons of Mother Mary, contending the sloppy and unbiblical Catholic tradition that Mary remained virgin for life. Mary and Joseph obviously had other children, half-brother to Jesus, whose father was Jehovah God. There is no reason to contend that Mary and Joseph did not have other children after the only begotten Son of God was conceived and birthed from her womb. In Matthew 3 it is recorded: “<sup>31</sup> ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. <sup>32</sup> And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. <sup>33</sup> And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? <sup>34</sup> And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! <sup>35</sup> For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” (Matt 3:31-35) Here, it is clear that James the less, the son of Alphaeus, one of the 12 chosen apostles, the author of the Epistle of James, was not standing without with Mary and Jesus' blood brethren, but was seated with Jesus' disciples and thus called 'my mother and my brethren'. James the less, the son of Alphaeus was by all accounts the cousin of Jesus.

Also, in Luke 6:16 there are two Judas' named as apostles; a Judas (not Iscariot) is named as a *brother* of James the *son* of Alphaeus, and this too is likely a cousin relationship. There will be those still offended by distancing James the *son* of Alphaeus from a blood brother relationship to Jesus, or by resolving that Alphaeus is the same name as Cleophas, or by the contention that Jesus even had other blood brothers and sisters via Mother Mary, that they contrive to be a perpetual Virgin Mary, but the author, having explored all alternatives, is reasonably content with this resolution.

In any event, and with a definite kinship to Jesus, James the author of this epistle is the same Pastor of the Church at Jerusalem. Peter sought him out after his release from prison in Acts 12:17. He was the Jerusalem Church spokesman concerning the Gentile treatment in Acts 15:13<sup>10</sup> and 21:18<sup>11</sup>. In 1 Cor 15:7 Paul calls James out special when he recalls the appearances of Christ to the apostles. Paul also singles out James as special and separate from the other apostles when he tells of his personal salvation testimony, and therein he again mentions James' kin relationship to Jesus (Gal 1:19<sup>12</sup>). In Gal 2:9 James, Cephas, and John are called out as pillars in the Church at Jerusalem, and in verse 12 it is mentioned that James had sent out a delegation from Jerusalem. Lastly we see James is listed as a reference in the Epistle of Jude, where Jude, likely brother of Jesus, writes "*Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:*" (Jude 1:1) This James, powerful and Godly Bishop-Pastor of the Church of Jerusalem, now writes the precious epistle that lies before us.

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10 Ac 15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

11 Ac 21:18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

12 Ga 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

## Lesson 2 [TOC](#) The Outline and the Trial of Faith

2 ¶ *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*  
3 *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*  
4 *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

As what is probably the first letter written from an apostle to believers, and from a pastor to his scattered flock the words “*My brethren*” are precious. This introduction of 3 main points for his letter is blunt and not protracted:

- 1) fall into divers temptations vr 2
- 2) If any of you lack wisdom vr 5
- 3) the brother of low degree vr 9

It is interesting that the introduction of these points also contain most of the meat to be presented on these points. This puts us in pearl for teaching all that he says on each point. Rather than following the structure that most outlines use, lets explore the scheme that James uses to interweave these truths of.

Consider James' concern that his scattered flock was going to suffer persecution and trial of their faith. He addresses this topic in James 1:2-4 and 12-16 arranged thus:

2 ¶ *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;*  
3 *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*  
4 *But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

12 *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*

13 ¶ *Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

14 *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust,*

*and enticed.*

*15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

*16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.*



### Lesson 3 [TOC](#) The Pursuit of Wisdom

James' second topic of interest was that his scattered flock would continue in the pursuit of wisdom. In his structure of his epistle he has an extensive introduction on the subject then some finer points about how to grow in wisdom. The topic is presented in verses 5-8 and 17-27

*5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.  
6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.  
7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.  
8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

*17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

*18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*

*19 ¶ Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:*

*20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

*21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

*22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

*23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:*

*24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.*

*25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

*26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.*

*27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*



**Lesson 4** [TOC](#)  
**Concerning Respect of Persons 1:9-11, 2:1-13**

- 9 *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:*  
10 *But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.*  
11 *For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.*
- 2:1 ¶ *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.*  
2 *For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;*  
3 *And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:*  
4 *Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?*  
5 *Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*  
6 *But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?*  
7 *Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?*  
8 ¶ *If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:*  
9 *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.*  
10 *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*  
11 *For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.*  
12 *So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.*  
13 *For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*



## Lesson 5 [TOC](#) Justification of Faith 2:14-26

James has finished dissertation of the initial outline that he presented. He has treated very specifically for his scattered flock 1) the trial of faith, 2) the pursuit of wisdom and 3) the respecting of persons. It appears to be his coverage of this last topic that initializes this provocative discussion about justification of faith.

Consider that James, the senior pastor of the Church at Jerusalem, where thousands were received into membership, had a justifiable concern that 'chaff' not be admitted into membership. C.H. Spurgeon, pastoring in London, where thousands were added to the Church, warned that when many are being saved and added, there is a concern that some unconverted souls get added. He also warned that when very very few are being added, a 'we will take anybody we can get' attitude prevails and false professions are added. He was more familiar with the former than the latter. James shows this same concern here. He outlines some methods which justify faith.

Consider that Paul, in Romans chapter 4 uses the same example that James uses here, Abraham's faith. Without getting confused understand that two separate subjects are under consideration and two separate definitions of justification are in play. Justification is either a Demonstration (James 2) or a Declaration (Romans 4); an act or a condition; Do not mix the two distinct definitions here.

**jus·ti·fi·ca·tion** (jŭs'tə-fī-kā'shən) *n.* **1.a.** The act of justifying. **b.** The condition or fact of being justified. **2.** Something, such as a fact or circumstance, that justifies: *considered misgovernment to be a justification for revolution.* See Synonyms at **apology**.

**jus-ti-fy** (jūs'tə-fi') v. **jus-ti-fied**, **jus-ti-fy-ing**, **jus-ti-fies**. --tr. **1.** To demonstrate or prove to be just, right, or valid: *justified each budgetary expense as necessary; anger that is justified by the circumstances.* **2.** To declare free of blame; absolve. **3.** *Theology.* To free (a human being) of the guilt and penalty attached to grievous sin. Used only of God.

Notice in these definitions the two distinct uses of this word and then note that Paul, in Romans, is discussing God's declaring us justified. James is here explaining the justification of ones faith, i.e. the proof that it is real. Paul uses Abraham to show God's declaration of his righteousness premised on his faith. James uses Abraham to show that his faith showed up in his works, his offering of his only begotten son. In play here are two uses of the word justify and two illustrative uses of the Abraham's faith. Surely Paul had a copy of James epistle, and had this section in mind when he penned Romans Chapter 4.

Consider also that when James penned this exhortation to the saints scattered abroad, there was no apostate sacramental system in place. That system had it's infancy in the mind of Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, North Africa (AD 354-480) His ideas of total depravity, infant baptism and baptismal regeneration were embryo for the apostate doctrines of Catholicism and then Calvinism. James here is not talking about conversions occurrence but conversions demonstration. Not declaring justification but demonstrated justification. Not salvation by works but works that demonstrate a salvation occurred.

Consider then his superb coverage of subject at hand, how does true conversion show up in a person.

*James 2:14 ¶ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?*

- 15 *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,*  
16 *And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*  
17 *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*  
18 *Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.*  
19 *Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.*  
20 *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?*  
21 *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*  
22 *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?*  
23 *And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.*  
24 *Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*  
25 *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?*  
26 *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

## Lesson 6 [TOC](#) Be Not Many Masters 3:1-18

- 3:1 ¶ *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*
- 2 *For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.*
- 3 *Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.*
- 4 *Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.*
- 5 *Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!*
- 6 *And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.*
- 7 *For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:*
- 8 *But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.*
- 9 *Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.*
- 10 *Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.*
- 11 *Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?*
- 12 *Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.*
- 13 ¶ *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*
- 14 *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.*
- 15 *This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*
- 16 *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*
- 17 *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*
- 18 *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.*





**Lesson 7 [TOC](#)**  
**Lusting and Waring 4:1-17**

1 ¶ *From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*

2 *Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.*

3 *Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

5 *Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?*

6 *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

7 *Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*

8 *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

9 *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.*

10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

11 ¶ *Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*

12 *There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?*

13 *Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:*

14 *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

15 *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.*

16 *But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.*

17 *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*

## Chapter 5 Go to now

1 ¶ *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.*

2 *Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.*

3 *Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.*

4 *Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.*

5 *Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.*

6 *Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*

7 *Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.*

8 *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

9 *Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.*

10 *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.*

11 *Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*

12 ¶ *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.*

13 *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*

14 *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*

15 *And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

16 *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*

17 *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.*

*18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

*19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;*

*20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*