

James

Breakdown

- James the Just (as he was called) was a brother of Jesus, but he did not become a believer until after the resurrection. James became the leader of the Jerusalem church, and he wrote this letter to Jewish Christians scattered across the world.
- James is probably the oldest book of the New Testament, likely written around 45 A.D. before the first council of Jerusalem in 50 A.D. (Acts 15). James was martyred in approximately 62 A.D.

Main Points

- James gave us the ultimate description of the relationship between faith (what we believe) and works (what we do). Faith is not just an abstract idea or belief, but it is a tangible force that we should put into practice.
- Jewish Christians were used to following the Mosaic Law, but James wrote that no one is justified by the works of the law. Perfectly keeping all the various laws and rituals is impossible, and James reminded them that breaking even the tiniest part of the law made them guilty of all of it because the law is one entity and breaking one part of it is the same as breaking all of it. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can be saved by believing in Him, but that doesn't mean that what we do is no longer important. Faith comes first, then works follow. If the works do not follow, then faith was not there to begin with.

Did you know?

- The epistle of James has only 5 chapters which are made up of 108 verses. Out of those 108 verses, 60 of them include directives (commands) of things James told us we should be doing as believers in Jesus.
- James gives us a picture of what someone who is truly religious would look like. What three things did James say that person would do?
- James gave two great examples of Old Testament characters who followed up their faith with actions. What two Old Testament people did James talk about?
- James talked about a part of the body that is untamable, evil, and filled with deadly poison. What part of the body was he talking about?
- James said that many people consider themselves wise, but there are two different types of wisdom. What are the two types of wisdom, and how does James describe each one?
- James told us that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. What did James say would happen if we humble ourselves before God?

Further Thought

- According to James, "faith without works is dead". What are some ways we can add works to our faith?
- James said that anyone who is friends with the world is an enemy of God. How can we live in this world, but not become friends with it?
- James told us that "the prayer of a righteous person has great power". What does it mean for a person to be righteous, and what can we do to be sure we are considered righteous?