

**JAMES: THE SHOE-LEATHER GOSPEL**  
**Introduction and Overview. Southside Baptist Church**  
**January 11, 2023. Bro. Josh Wilson**

**I. OVERVIEW OF THE LETTER OF JAMES**

**A. AUTHOR**

The author identifies himself as *“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”*

- Probably the half \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus (Mt. 13:55)
  - One of several brothers of Jesus and possibly the oldest since his name appears first in the list in Matthew 13:55
  - Four men in the NT share this name.
  - Could not have been the apostle James, who was the first apostle martyred (Acts 12: 1-2; c. AD 44)
  - The other two men named James had neither the stature nor the influence that the author of this letter has.
  - Jude could identify himself simply as “a brother of James” (Jude 1:1) because James was so well known
  
- An \_\_\_\_\_ in the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry (Jn. 7: 2-5)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ to Christ probably when Christ appeared to him in His risen body (1 Cor. 15:7)
  
- A humble servant of Jesus Christ (James 1:1)
  - When Peter was rescued from prison, he told his friends to tell James (Acts 12:17)
  
- Referred to by Paul as “the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:19) and a “\_\_\_\_\_” in the Jerusalem Church (2:9)
  - Paul, on his first post-conversion visit to Jerusalem, saw James (Gal. 1:19)
  - Paul did the same on his last visit (Acts 21: 18)
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ in the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:17; 15:13-22; 21:18-26)
  
- Presided over the council meeting at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 13-22)
  
- An \_\_\_\_\_ (Gal. 1: 19)

Church historians report that his knees were hard like camel's knees because of constant kneeling in prayer. He died as a martyr, stoned by order of Ananias, the high priest, c. AD 62 or 63

**B. DATE**

Most date the letter in the early 60's.

**C. RECIPIENTS**

The recipients are identified in 1:1 as "*the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.*"

- Some hold the expression refers to Christians in general, but it would more naturally apply to Jewish Christians.
- There's a \_\_\_\_\_ nature to the letter (i.e. use of the Hebrew title for God, "Lord Almighty", 5:4)
- Clear that those receiving the letter are Christians based on 2:1; 5:7-8
- Some suggest that these were believers from the early Jerusalem church who, after Stephen's death, were scattered far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Syrian Antioch.
  1. James' references to trials and oppression
  2. Intimate knowledge of the readers
  3. Authoritative nature of the letter
  4. James writes as a pastor to instruct and encourage his dispersed people in the face of their difficulties

**D. THEME**

- P \_\_\_\_\_, vital Christian faith which displays itself through "*good works of those who profess to have faith*"
- Tests for a genuine and living faith are examined like the book of Proverbs
- Martin Luther called the Book of James "a right strawy epistle."

**E. SPECIAL FEATURES**

- James is not a gathering of loose and unrelated moral teachings
- Reads very much like a number of sermon summaries, which are all related to the central theme of a genuine faith that works
- \_\_\_\_\_ allusions to the words of Jesus
- Many parallels to the Sermon on the Mount
- James, being a "country boy" from Galilee, has numerous references to \_\_\_\_\_
- Some refer to James as the "Amos of the New Testament"
- 108 verses in James.....54 commands to communicate the need for urgent action on the part of his audience

**F. KEY WORDS**

|                   |                  |         |
|-------------------|------------------|---------|
| Brothers-15 times | Works-10 times   |         |
| Faith-16 times    | Believe- 3 times |         |
| Trials/Temptation | Perseverance     | Perfect |

