





## James

A letter telling Christians to live their lives in ways that demonstrate their faith in Christ.

**Author:** James (likely the brother of Jesus)

### In James – Jesus is He that matures our faith

James 4:10 "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up."

#### TEACHER: 5 CHAPTERS

Continuing in the "general," or also called the "universal" epistles. The 1<sup>st</sup> technically was Hebrews, as Pauline authorship is unproven. They are referred to as general epistles because they weren't written to any single church or person. It is widely believed among the protestant followers of Christ that the James who wrote this book, was James the ½ brother of Jesus Christ our Lord. Paul notes in 1 Corinthians 15:7, and Galatians 1:19, that he became a believer after he saw the resurrected Jesus. James then went on to pastor the church in Jerusalem. Peter mentions him in Acts 12:17, as well as Paul in Galatians 2:9. As I was researching this material, I noticed that Chuck Swindoll believes this was the 1<sup>st</sup> New Testament book written, and I agree that this and Matthew are the most likely to be the earliest New Testament books.

Josephus claimed that James was stoned by Ananus ben Ananus. Clement of Alexandria says he was thrown off the temple and when he didn't die, he was beaten to death with a club.

The letter of James was penned to the Jewish Christians of the diaspora probably around Acts 15 as a result of the Jerusalem Council, and about 15 years before the beginning of the Roman persecution under Nero, culminating in the Jewish war of 66-70AD.

Nero sends Vespasian to kill the rebellion, Josephus (the Roman Historian) leads the Jewish guerrilla forces. The Jewish fighters are defeated, and Josephus surrenders. The Jewish state collapses, and the Temple is destroyed in 70 AD. So here we are 15 years before the destruction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> temple and James the brother of Jesus is the head of the local church in Jerusalem. Let's read.

#### STUDENT:

CH. 1

From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Greetings to all God's people scattered over the whole world. (GNT)

#### TEACHER:

Reading this verse, who is this letter written to? Cross referencing this verse to Paul's exhortation that there is no longer Jew nor Greek, all of us. In verses 2-8, James encourages us to make the most of our trials. If we learn from our trials, we won't have to repeat them!

#### STUDENT:

<sup>2</sup>My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, <sup>3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>4</sup>But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. <sup>5</sup>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. <sup>6</sup>But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup>For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup>he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (NKJV)

TEACHER:

James next instructs the Christian to seek God 1<sup>st</sup>, not wealth, as wealth is “here today, gone tomorrow.”

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STUDENT:

<sup>9</sup> Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, <sup>10</sup> but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away. <sup>11</sup> For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

Next, the trials and temptations of life.

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STUDENT:

<sup>12</sup> Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. <sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

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STUDENT:

<sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. <sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. <sup>18</sup> Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

The conclusion then, foremost, should be to control our tempers. Self-control. Rather than anger and frustration at the trials of life, James writes to lay off wickedness and sin, so we may receive God’s word.

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STUDENT:

<sup>19</sup> So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; <sup>20</sup> for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (NKJV) <sup>21</sup> Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. <sup>22</sup> But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup> For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; <sup>24</sup> for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. (NKJV)

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STUDENT:

<sup>25</sup> But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

<sup>26</sup> If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless. <sup>27</sup> Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

Let's re-read that last verse (27). "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world." True religion. Pure religion. In chapter 2, James starts by warning against playing favorites.

STUDENT:

My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality. <sup>2</sup> For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, <sup>3</sup> and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," <sup>4</sup> have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him? (NKJV)

STUDENT:

<sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? <sup>7</sup> Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well; <sup>9</sup> but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. (NKJV)

TEACHER: James now builds on our growth by applying legs to our faith. Notice the progression so far.

1. Priorities. (chase God before wealth)
2. Purity. (get rid of the sin in our lives)
3. Controlling our tempers.
4. Receive the Word.
5. Help the widow and orphans with their troubles.
6. Don't play favorites.
7. And now we move on to doing good works.

STUDENT:

<sup>14</sup> What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? <sup>15</sup> If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, <sup>16</sup> and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? <sup>17</sup> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

STUDENT:

<sup>19</sup> You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! <sup>20</sup> But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar?

STUDENT:

<sup>22</sup> Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? <sup>23</sup> And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. <sup>25</sup> Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way? <sup>26</sup> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

So how do we reconcile the importance of "Justification by Faith" and "Faith without Works is dead?" Simple. We don't do good works to be saved, we do good works because we are saved. In chapter 3 James moves on to the mark of a true mature Christian. James says this is the standard of perfection! Taming the tongue.

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STUDENT:

CH. 3  
My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. <sup>2</sup> For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. <sup>3</sup> Indeed, we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. <sup>4</sup> Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. <sup>5</sup> Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

The secret to self-control? Start with your mouth. James said "*if anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.*" From verse 3.

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STUDENT:

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! <sup>6</sup> And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup> For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. <sup>8</sup> But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. (NKJV)

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STUDENT:

<sup>9</sup> With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. <sup>10</sup> Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup> Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? <sup>12</sup> Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

Paul then concludes the discussion with heavenly wisdom.

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STUDENT:

<sup>13</sup> Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. <sup>15</sup> This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. <sup>16</sup> For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. <sup>18</sup> Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

James is trying to teach us that personal growth has to start from with-in. That our prayers go unanswered and are weak because of our carnal nature. In chapter 4 James explains the turmoil in our lives, comes from the turmoil in our hearts. Our hearts are going toward God, but our bodies are running with the world.

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***"The turmoil in our lives comes from the turmoil in our hearts. Make up your mind" DH***

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STUDENT:

CH. 4

Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires* for pleasure that war in your members? <sup>2</sup> You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup> You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. (NKJV)

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STUDENT:

<sup>4</sup> Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup> Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

<sup>6</sup> But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

James gives us the solution in 3 exercises. 1. Humility.                      2. Do not judge.                      3. Do not boast.

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STUDENT: HUMILITY

<sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup> Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. <sup>9</sup> Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup> Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (NKJV)

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STUDENT: DO NOT JUDGE

<sup>11</sup> Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

<sup>12</sup> There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another? (NKJV)

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STUDENT: DO NOT BOAST

<sup>13</sup> Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; <sup>14</sup> whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup> Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." <sup>16</sup> But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

James closes the letter with a warning to the rich, for patience and perseverance, and helping each other, most of all, the suffering.

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STUDENT:

Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you*! <sup>2</sup>Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. <sup>3</sup>Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days. <sup>4</sup>Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. <sup>5</sup>You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter. <sup>6</sup>You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you. (NKJV)

STUDENT:

<sup>7</sup>Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. <sup>8</sup>You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

<sup>9</sup>Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! (NKJV)

STUDENT:

<sup>10</sup>My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. <sup>11</sup>Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

<sup>12</sup>But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment. (NKJV)

STUDENT:

<sup>13</sup>Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. <sup>14</sup>Is anyone among you sick? 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. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. <sup>17</sup>Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup>And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. (NKJV)

STUDENT:

<sup>19</sup>Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, <sup>20</sup>let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. (NKJV)

TEACHER:

Beautiful closing words from the brother of Jesus. Do you know anyone who has fallen? Find them.

NEXT LESSON 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> PETER

*Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.*

James 1:19



## GENERAL EPISTLES

Y L X R B F M Q K U J H P X X  
Z Q Q O U L W G Z E Y I S B L  
Y F V W S P Y S U Z O S G I P  
V Y G D U O E B L Z E V N E X  
E L O C D M S T R N T S R B D  
C O M M A N D M E N T S U J Z  
G H G J E L O V E R E E J T W  
V W L L G N I C U V N N H O J  
Q J I M A G I C E H T I A F V  
P D F I R S T R I S R L Y L C  
A I E O U I E G T D E O H C X  
E M F R O K O U L C P H C R R  
X D O N C D I A S P O R A Y H  
F E U G N O T R U T H D M X G  
B Y Q J E R U S A L E M G Z V

COMMANDMENTS  
DIASPORA  
DOCTRINE  
ENCOURAGE  
FAITH  
FIRST  
FORGIVENESS  
GOD  
GOOD  
HOLINESS  
HOLY  
HOPE  
INSTRUCTION  
JAMES  
JERUSALEM

JOHN  
JUDE  
JUST  
LIFE  
LOVE  
PERSEVERE  
PETER  
SECOND  
THIRD  
TONGUE  
TRUTH

## The James Ossuary

The purported ossuary (bone box) of James, the brother of Jesus, is back in the news, as questions concerning its authenticity continue to plague the world-famous relic. The James Ossuary, as it's come to be known, is a limestone bone box that bears an [Aramaic](#) inscription reading "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus."

Controversy—including charges of forgery—has surrounded this ossuary since the Biblical Archaeology Review first reported on the artifact in 2002.

The saga of the James Ossuary culminated in 2012 with the acquittal of Israeli antiquities collector

(and owner of the ossuary) Oded Golan

in a seven-year "forgery trial of the century," but the story isn't over yet. In "Predilections—Is the 'Brother of Jesus' Inscription a Forgery?" in the September/October 2015 issue of BAR, Hershel Shanks reviews the latest argument against the authenticity of the inscription.

The antiquity of the 20-inch-long James Ossuary itself is not questioned—it dates between the first century B.C.E. and 70 C.E., a period when the practice of ossilegium (the collection of the bones of a deceased person) was prevalent among the Jewish population. It is the inscription on the James Ossuary—a mere 20 letters written in [Aramaic](#)—that has incited years of debate. If real, the inscription would be the earliest written reference to Jesus. Because the ossuary was purchased with an unknown provenance from an antiquities dealer, the authenticity of the "brother of Jesus" inscription needed to be verified by experts.



*Although the famous "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" inscription on an ancient ossuary (bone box) has been authenticated by two world-class paleographers, not everyone is convinced that the inscription is authentic.*



The Aramaic inscription on the so-called James Ossuary reads "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." *Drawing by Ada Yardeni.*

The inscription, reading "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" has been authenticated by two eminent paleographers (specialists in dating, interpreting and authenticating inscriptions): André Lemaire of the Sorbonne and Ada Yardeni of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2003, however, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) appointed a committee of scholars to study the "brother of Jesus" inscription and report its findings. The committee concluded that the inscription was a forgery.

According to Dutch scholar Pieter van der Horst, who published an analysis of the IAA committee's report in his new book,<sup>1</sup> the IAA "appointed almost exclusively committee members who had already expressed outspoken opinions to the effect that the inscription was a forgery." Van der Horst observes that the committee members didn't abide by the IAA guideline "to arrive at the truth based on pure research only—without taking into account any other related factors regarding the collector, current gossip, rumors or prejudices," nor did they follow the directive that each scholar "should work in his own discipline."

The “forgery trial of the century” charging five people of running a massive forgery ring lasted seven years and included 138 witnesses, more than 400 exhibits and over 12,000 pages of testimony. Three paleographers were called to testify: André Lemaire, Ada Yardeni and Christopher Rollston, now of the George Washington University. When Rollston took the stand, he refused to give an opinion on the authenticity of the “brother of Jesus” inscription because he did not specialize in Second Temple inscriptions (the time of the ossuary).

“I only talk about what I am sure of,” Rollston said in court. “That is not my field.”

The trial concluded with the acquittal of antiquities dealer and James Ossuary owner Oded Golan and the other defendants on all charges of forgery (though Golan was convicted of minor charges, including trading in antiquities without a license).

“I thought that this was the end of the matter until the Easter season in 2015, when I watched an hour-long TV program on CNN regarding the ossuary and its ‘brother of Jesus’ inscription,” writes Shanks in his BAR article.

“Only one scholar addressed the question of the authenticity of the inscription—the same Christopher Rollston who could not express an opinion at the trial. Now he was prepared to opine on the authenticity of the inscription—for all of 33 seconds.”

What is Rollston’s reasoning for why the “brother of Jesus” inscription is a forgery? Is his judgment based on his predilection against unprovenanced inscriptions, as Shanks suggests? Learn more by reading the full article “Predilections—Is the ‘Brother of Jesus’ Inscription a Forgery?” by Hershel Shanks in the September/October 2015 issue of BAR.

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