

# Study Guide: James 1:1

## Servitude, Identity, and the Scattered Church

*“James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings.”* (James 1:1, ESV)

### Section 1: James, the Humble Servant

**Key Insight:** James introduces himself as a “servant” (*doulos*), not as Jesus’ brother or a church leader, showing humility and total allegiance to God and Christ.

#### Study Questions:

1. Why do you think James chose “servant” over other titles he could have claimed (e.g., Jesus’ brother, leader of the Jerusalem church)?
2. The Greek word *doulos* means “bondslave”—a servant with no rights of their own. What does this imply about James’ view of his relationship with God and Jesus?
3. How do you typically introduce or define yourself (e.g., job, family role, accomplishments)? How might identifying as a “servant of Christ” first change your perspective?

#### Reflection:

- Consider a time when you leaned on your “credentials” or status. How might embracing servitude to Christ shift your priorities?

#### Scripture Connection:

- Philippians 2:5-7 – Jesus as the ultimate example of a servant. How does this connect to James’ self-description?

### Section 2: Jesus: Lord, Not Just Savior

**Key Insight:** James calls Jesus “Lord Jesus Christ,” a title packed with meaning: divinity (*Kurios*), humanity (*Iēsous*), and messianic fulfillment (*Christos*). His transformation from skeptic to disciple shows the power of encountering Christ.

### Study Questions:

1. Break down the phrase “Lord Jesus Christ.” What does each part (Lord, Jesus, Christ) reveal about who Jesus is?
2. Read John 7:5, where James didn’t initially believe in Jesus. What might have changed his mind (hint: see 1 Corinthians 15:7)? How does this encourage you in your own faith journey?
3. The video says, “If He isn’t Lord of all, He isn’t Lord at all.” Where in your life is Jesus more of a “Savior” than a “Lord”?

### Reflection:

- Think of an area where you’re hesitant to let Jesus be Lord. What’s holding you back, and how can you surrender it?

### Scripture Connection:

- Acts 2:36 – “God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” How does this affirm James’ view of Jesus?

## Section 3: The Scattered People of God

**Key Insight:** James writes to the “twelve tribes in the Dispersion”—likely Jewish Christians scattered by persecution, but also a picture of the global, exiled church. Dispersion doesn’t mean disconnection.

### Study Questions:

1. Who were the “twelve tribes in the Dispersion” in James’ time? How might this apply to Christians today?
2. The essay compares modern believers to exiles in a hostile culture. Where do you see this tension in your own life or community?
3. How does knowing you’re part of a larger, unified church—despite being “scattered”—bring comfort or challenge?

### Reflection:

- Identify a way you feel “scattered” or disconnected right now. How can you lean into the truth that Christ still holds His church together?

## Scripture Connection:

- 1 Peter 1:1-2 – Peter also addresses “exiles of the Dispersion.” What similarities do you see with James’ audience?

## Section 4: The Power of a Simple Greeting

Key Insight: James’ “Greetings” (*chairein*) is linked to *charis* (grace/joy), setting a tone of grace before addressing tough topics.

## Study Questions:

1. Why might James start with a word tied to grace and joy, knowing the challenges his readers faced?
2. The video notes that Christians often lead with “rebuke, suspicion, or tribalism.” Where have you seen this, and how can grace change that dynamic?
3. How could starting your interactions with grace impact your relationships—at home, work, or church?

## Reflection:

- Think of someone you’ve been quick to judge or correct. How can you offer them grace first this week?

## Scripture Connection:

- Ephesians 4:29 – “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up.” How does this align with James’ greeting?

## Final Takeaways and Application

1. If James calls himself a servant, so should we—no status tops servitude to Christ.
2. Jesus is Lord, not just Savior—He deserves full allegiance.
3. Being scattered doesn’t mean being abandoned; the church thrives under Christ’s reign.
4. Greet one another with grace—connection comes before correction.

## Application Questions:

1. Which of these takeaways hits you hardest? Why?
2. What’s one practical step you can take this week to live out James 1:1—whether in humility, surrender, unity, or grace?

**Prayer:**

“Lord, make me a servant like James, fully Yours. Rule my life as Lord. Unite me with Your scattered church, and teach me to lead with grace. Amen.”

**Group Discussion Starters**

1. Share a time when humility changed a situation for the better. How can we cultivate it as a group?
2. How do we balance being “in the world but not of it” as scattered believers today?
3. What’s one way our group can show grace to each other or our community this week?

