James*

James 1:1-5 (1) James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.
(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.
(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.
The short book of James is a moral, doctrinal and literary masterpiece and like those of Peter and the book of Hebrews, was written to the Christian Jews scattered around the Roman empire. Although James himself stayed in Jerusalem and according to Josephus, was martyred there in A.D. 62, he felt an obligation to all other believing Jews, wherever they were. What more can we know of James and his life from Biblical and historical accounts? The life of James is somewhat vague, but there are traces remaining. Mark and Matthew indicate that he was one of several children born to Mary and Joseph after the virgin birth of Jesus, turn with me to;
Matthew 13:54-58 (54) And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?
(55) Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?
(56) And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?
(57) And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in

his own house.
(58) And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.
Likewise James and the other brothers of Jesus showed Him no honor, which saddened Him, and while James grew up in the same house with Jesus in Nazareth, he was miles apart from the teaching and ministry of Jesus. James did not grow up a believer. Though Jesus and James had the same mother, Jesus was not the son of Joseph, as James was, but of God—a fact that would not fully sink into the mind of James until years later. It wasn't until after the resurrection of Jesus that James finally understood who his half brother really was. Throughout Jesus' ministry, His half brother James, along with the other three brothers, did not give Jesus the respect due Him. There was a time when they were opposed to Jesus' ministry. James was the oldest of the four "brethren" (James, Joseph, Judas, Simon), of whom John reports with touching sadness: For neither did his brethren believe in him (John 7:5). *It was one of the early and constant trials of our Lord in the days of His ministry that He was without honor among His fellow-townsmen, yea, among His own kin, even in His own house. James was no doubt saturated with the temporal and carnal Messianic misconceptions of the Jews, and impatient at the delay and unworldliness of his divine brother. The crucifixion most likely only deepened James doubt and sadness. By the opening of the book of Acts however, James the Lord's brother, had become one of the disciples. Among those in the early days waiting for the promise were the 11 Apostles of which two were named James, several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers. But James, the brother of Jesus, did not take up the vacancy caused by the death of Judas, because it was needful to choose a witness of Jesus who had accompanied Him from the time the Lord Jesus was baptized until He ascended into heaven, James had not, turn to;*

Acts 1:15-23 (15) And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)
(16) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.
(17) For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.
(18) Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.
(19) And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.
(20) For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.
(21) Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,
(22) Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.
(23) And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.
As seen here James was not selected, however, from Jesus' resurrection on, James gave himself entirely to God and soon became an important figure in the early Church. His role was so important that Peter told others to report to James about his miraculous release from prison (Acts 12:17). Next to Peter, stands James, the brother of the Lord, as the local head of the Church in Jerusalem and the leader of fundamental teachings of Christianity. That James soon became the leader of the Jerusalem church, is demonstrated by the fact that Paul met with him and the apostle Peter when he first went to

Jerusalem after his conversion. There is no evidence that James, the Lord's brother, ever became an Apostle. But as the leader in Jerusalem, James spoke with authority putting an end to an internal Church controversy over the circumcision of gentile believers (Acts 15:13-19). James appears as a conservative Jewish convert, yet recognizing Paul as the apostle to the Gentiles, thus giving him the right hand of fellowship, as Paul himself reports, and unwilling to impose upon the Gentile Christians the yoke of ordinances that were nailed to the cross. And according to the first-century Jewish historian Josephus; the Jewish high priest "assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus...whose name was James" *(Antiquities of the Jews, book 20, chapter 9). This would have been around 62 AD. But was this James also an apostle? While he is never named directly as such in the New Testament or historically, the argument has been made that his family relationship to Jesus accorded him a unique role. Paul who himself became an apostle, but was not of the 12, seems to indicate James' apostolic function when writing about one of his visits to Jerusalem. But scholars have suggested Paul was not suggesting that James, the Lord's brother, was an Apostle. But that Paul saw none of the apostles except Peter—and also James, the Lord's brother. This James was not one of the Twelve, but rose to great dignity and influence in the church at Jerusalem. He is called here the brother of the Lord, to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee (Matt 10:2), and James, the son of Alphaeus (Matt 10:3), who were of the Twelve Apostles. Paul met James on another occasion when he brought famine relief to Jerusalem from the churches outside Judea (Acts 21:18). The fact that James was leader in Jerusalem is attested by such extra-biblical sources as the second-century historian Hegesippus. He wrote that following the death of James, the Church chose another of Jesus' blood relatives, His cousin Simon or Simeon, to be leader—thus implying that up to*

that time James had held the post. When James wrote his epistle, his humility is evident by the way he described himself: James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:1). *James identified himself as the servant of Jesus rather than his brother. It is a fascinating testimony to God's grace that James, who had been an unbelieving brother of Jesus, wrote what is perhaps the first inspired book to believing Jews. And Paul, the chief persecutor of the early church, wrote the first epistle to believing Gentiles. James stresses the necessity of good works as evidence of saving faith which some say is the works of the law. But a careful reading of the text does not exhibit that conclusion, turn with me to;* **James 2:17-26** (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.

James 1:21-25 (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.
James gives the "requirement for faith" to be demonstrated in action, pointing out the needs of those members of the believing community who are going hungry. It is a form of hypocrisy to hear their pleas, express hope for their eventual nourishment, and yet do nothing practical to help. Faith must be justified by works. Without works faith is dead. One is not saved by the works of the Mosaic Law or by any meritorious works of their own. One is saved by faith that is justified by works, a doer of the word, not a hearer only. The perfect law of liberty covers all aspects of human behavior in principle, and James gives several examples of how belief should result in a changed, law-abiding behavior. Coming from a Jewish background, James was aware of the history of ancient Israel and its origins with the 12 sons of Jacob. That many of their descendants had been dispersed through captivity, persecution and migration explains his reference. James was writing to Church members descended from these tribes. The followers of Jesus in any age have one experience in common—they face trials of faith for a great purpose, and James addresses this at the outset of his letter, the trying of your faith worketh patience. Thus he contextualizes trying circumstances in the light of spiritual development. And if trials cause us to recognize our need for wisdom in dealing

with them, then we should ask God for such help in confidence. Let's turn to;
James 1:5-7 (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.
James further cautions against falling into the trap of blaming God for the difficulties we bring on ourselves by submitting to sin. God gives good gifts to His children, not the evil consequences of our own wrong actions. Thankfully, He is unlike fallible and variable humanity: He is "the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." We can rely on Him impeccably if we so choose according to;
James 1:12-20 (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.
(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.
James' emphasis on the practice of right living is found early in the letter. At the close of the first chapter he sets the tone for what will follow. He draws the contrast between natural human ways of behaving—slow to hear, quick to speak and quickly angered—which are unlike God's ways. Human anger cannot produce godly righteousness. It is the Word of God that instructs us in right ways. However, knowing is not enough, we must act on what we know to be right. Otherwise it is like looking at our image in the mirror, seeing what is wrong, and doing nothing to remedy what we find. Turn to;
James 1:22-25 (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.
James' audience was experiencing quarrels and strife. He asks where such problems originate. His answer is that they come from within the human heart that is frustrated by not getting what it wants—though too often it wants what it ought not to have. To achieve its ends it will murder fellowman or go to war. This approach has no possibility of bringing satisfaction. Even when they do ask God for things, they do not receive them because they are asking from wrong motivations. If they follow the world's ways to gain their desires, they can only be enemies of God, James exhorts them to become humble, submit to God, resist the devil—in sum, to change their ways, Let's turn to;
James 4:1-10 (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.
Apparently James was teaching no more and no less than what Jesus taught in the gospels. Jesus endured the crucifixion because He loved us and in so doing fulfilled the old law by; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (Col 2:14). *What was contrary to us?, the handwriting of ordinances. They have been blotted out, taken out of the way and nailed to His cross. The mission of James was evidently to stand in the breach between the synagogue and the church, leading the disciples of Moses gently to Christ. He was the most logical man for that purpose in that critical time of the approaching judgment of the holy city as long as*

there was any hope of a conversion of the Jews as a nation. When that hope vanished his mission was finished. According to Josephus, at the instigation of the younger Ananus, the high priest of the sect of the Sadducees, whom he calls, the most unmerciful of all the Jews in the execution of judgment, *Had James with some others as breakers of the law, stoned to death. However, James had recognized the deity of Christ (James 2:1) and the new birth of which all must be partakers that love the Lord and desire to be with Him, let's turn to;*
Mark 16:15-16 (15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
(16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.
While on earth, both before and after His crucifixon, Jesus secured and confirmed the ordinance of baptism (John 3:5, Mark 16:16). He accordingly has declared all men without distinction, who through faith, as obedient children, heed, follow, and practice what faith contains, to become a lawful heirs. How is this faith obtained? Faith in Christ is the effect of belief in His gospel, and submitting to baptism is the effect of faith; therefore, only those who first believe the testimony of God, by faith repent of their sins, confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and are baptized into His death for remission of sins, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel and it's call goes out to all, if you have not heeded it's call, will you do so now? Are there prayer requests for other reasons?, in either case come while we persuade with song.

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

In the News: "James, Son of Joseph, Brother of Jesus"
by Kyle Butt, M.Div.

From most of the pictures that you have seen of "the box," you might think that it was the size of a large coffin. Yet, at approximately 10 inches wide, 20 inches long, and 12 inches high, this box doesn't fit our modern idea of a coffin. In fact, it's more like a limestone Rubbermaid® crate than a coffin. At first glance, this "box" is not so unusual at all. During the first-century B.C., and continuing until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Jews used these containers to "rebury" their relatives. Generally, the bodies of the deceased were placed on a shelf or floor of a tomb; then, about one year after the original burial, friends or relatives would open the tomb, remove the bones, and place them in an ossuary. Occasionally, ossuaries contained the bones of multiple individuals. The outer decorations varied widely from one to the next. Some were bland, with no inscriptions, while others had carved designs or the names of the individuals buried therein.

The particular ossuary that has captured the world's attention boasts of no great decoration. In fact, a small, 7.5-inch Aramaic inscription is the only thing that sets it apart from the most boring of ossuaries. Yet, that tiny inscription not only has set it apart from other ossuaries, but also has set it apart from all other archaeological finds to date. That inscription reads: "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus."

The first question that arises is whether this is the James of the Bible. While there are at least two Jameses mentioned in the Bible to which this inscription likely does not apply, one James is mentioned who seems to fit the description quite well. Matthew noted in his gospel regarding Christ:

...He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?" (13:53-56).

According to Matthew, then, the Jews recognized Jesus as the brother of James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, and they also attributed at least two sisters to these brothers. Furthermore, Paul mentioned "James the Lord's brother" (Galatians 1:19). Apparently, this same James became a prominent leader of the Jerusalem

church (see Acts 15:13; 21:18-19; Galatians 2:9,12). Additionally, James the brother of Jesus very likely was the writer of the New Testament book by the same name. Secular sources also verify the idea that Jesus had a brother named James. Josephus wrote that the Jewish high priest "assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus...whose name was James" (20:9:1). The historian then proceeded to document that James was stoned.

Naturally, it first must be established that the ossuary is an authentic artifact from a time that would correspond to Jesus Christ and His brother James. In the premiere article about the inscription appearing in the November/December 2002 issue of Biblical Archaeology Review [BAR] André Lemaire detailed several facts that make a strong case for the inscription's authenticity. As an expert in ancient inscriptions, he stated: "This type of bone box is generally to be dated between about 20 B.C.E. [Before Common Era—KB] and 70 C.E [Common Era—KB].... Moreover, the cursive shape of three of the letters (dalet, yod and aleph) indicates an even narrower span of time: the last decades before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.—the exact period when James, the brother of Jesus, would have died" (2002, 28[6]:28). Hershel Shanks, the editor of BAR, had the ossuary's composition tested by the Israeli Ministry of National Infrastructures, which concluded that the limestone was used extensively "during the Second Temple period," and that no modern elements or chemicals had been used to "doctor" the box to make it appear old. In addition, the patina (dirt and other build-up on the box) passed the authenticity test (p. 29). As far as can be proven to date, the box has all the signs of authenticity. But can we conclude that the Jesus and James of the inscription are the identical characters of the New Testament writings? While the names of James, Jesus, and Joseph were common during the first century, they would not often have been found in the exact same sequence of relationship as on the ossuary and in the biblical text. Lemaire concluded that "there were therefore probably about 20 people" who would have fit the inscription (p. 33). Yet the odds narrow even more, since only rarely would a brother's name be included on an ossuary. In the November 4, 2002 issue of Time, David Van Biema reported that Lemaire

believes “there is a 90% chance that the James on the ossuary was the biblical brother of Jesus” (2002, 160[19]:72). In the original BAR article, Lemaire stated that the ossuary “very probably” documents Jesus the Christ.

There are voices of opposition to the suggestion that this inscription refers to Christ. Since the artifact was not retrieved from its original environment, it cannot be attributed to a specific location. In the November 4, 2002 issue of Newsweek, reporter Kenneth Woodward quoted Bruce Chilton of Bard College: “If you cannot say where an artifact was found and where it has been for nearly 2,000 years, you cannot pretend to draw lines of connection between the object and the people it might mention” (2002, 140[19]:48).

At present, we cannot be dogmatic about the ossuarial evidence, but we can state dogmatically that the name of Jesus Christ refuses to vanish into obscurity, and that His life, teachings, and personality continue to be the most influential of any human ever to walk the Earth.

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You may find this surprising, but there are many people in the world today who actually think that Jesus is nothing more than a fantasy figure that various secret societies created 2,000 years ago. Allegedly, His name belongs in the same fictional writings that contain such fairy-tale characters as Peter Pan, Hercules, and Snow White and the seven dwarfs. Gerald Massey, in his book, Gnostic and Historic Christianity, has "informed" us that "[w]hether considered as the God made human, or as man made divine, this character [Jesus—EL] never existed as a person" (1985, p. 22). Skeptics like Massey, Acharya (1999), and others believe that Christians have been deceived into thinking that there really was a man named Jesus, when, in fact, He never lived.

How do those of us who believe in the historicity of Jesus Christ respond to such allegations? Can we really know that there was a sinless, miracle-working, death-defying man named Jesus who lived upon the Earth approximately 2,000 years ago, or have we accepted His existence blindly?

Even though the New Testament proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus actually lived, it is by no means the only historical evidence available. Around the year A.D. 94, a Jewish historian by the name of Josephus mentioned Jesus' name twice in his book, Antiquities of the Jews. In section 18 of that work, Josephus wrote: "And there arose about this time Jesus, a wise man, if indeed we should call him a man; for he was a doer of marvelous deeds, a teacher of men who receive the truth with pleasure" (emp. added). Then, in section 20, Josephus documented how a man named Ananus brought before the Sanhedrin "a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others" (emp. added).

About 20 years later, Tacitus, a Roman historian, wrote a book surveying the history of Rome. In it he described how Nero (the Roman emperor) "punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called)." He went on to write that "their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilatus" (Annals 15:44, emp. added). Even though Tacitus, Josephus, and other historians from the first and second centuries A.D. were not followers of Christ, they did have something to say about Him—and they even verified

that Jesus was a real person Who was so famous that He even attracted the attention of the Roman emperor himself!

Another obvious reason to believe that Jesus was a real person is because our entire dating method is based upon His existence. The letters “B.C.” stand for “before Christ,” and the letters “A.D.” (standing for Anno Domini) mean “in the year of the Lord.” So when a history teacher speaks of Alexander the Great ruling much of the world in 330 B.C., he or she is admitting that Alexander lived about 330 years before Jesus was born.

Even though this is only a sampling of the evidence relating to the man known as Jesus, it is enough to prove that He was a real person, and not just some imaginary character. We do not accept His existence blindly—it is a historical fact!

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