

BIBLE TRAINING INSTITUTE

To proactively accelerate the spiritual growth of Grace Bible Church for the purpose of knowing God more intimately and becoming more effective servants of God in the world

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James

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Introduction to James

Title

✓ Greek = *Iakobou Epistole* (ΙΑΚΩΒΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ; “Epistle of James”)

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Introduction to James

WHO—Authorship

- ✓ James (1:1), one of the earthly (or half) brothers of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church

WHO—Audience

- ✓ To the dispersed Christian Jews in exile

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Introduction to James

WHEN

- ✓ Recommended date of AD 45–49
- ✓ Jerusalem Council (~ AD 49)
- ✓ Jewish Christians comprised almost all Christians at this time
- ✓ First New Testament book

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Introduction to James

WHERE

- ✓ Probably written from Jerusalem and then disseminated
- ✓ Context of the Exile of Christian Jews (Acts 8:1–3)
- ✓ Suffering at the hands of wealthy, Jewish taskmasters
- ✓ The Fundamentals of Faith

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Introduction to James

WHY

To challenge the Jewish Christians scattered across the Roman empire under the persecution of their Jewish kinsmen to live out God's wisdom in their daily lives with an enduring faith that values suffering, submits to God's ways and His Word, avoids favoritism of the rich, and harnesses the tongue as an instrument of blessing, all with a view to model Jesus Christ to their Jewish kinsmen.

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Introduction to James

HOW—Terminology

- ✓ Testing (or Trial, Temptation; 1:2, 12, 13 (4x), 14)
- ✓ Brother(s) (1:2, 9, 16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19)
- ✓ Faith (or Believe; 1:3; 2:1, 14 (2x), 17, 18 (3x), 19 (2x), 20, 22 (2x), 23, 26; 5:15)
- ✓ Endurance (or Endure; 1:3, 4, 12; 5:11 (2x))
- ✓ Wisdom (1:5; 3:13 (2x), 15, 17)

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Introduction to James

HOW—Terminology

- ✓ Mature (or Perfect, Complete; 1:4, 17, 25; 3:2)
- ✓ Sin (1:15; 2:9; 4:17; 5:15, 16, 20; 4:8)

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Introduction to James

HOW—Themes

- ✓ Proverbial
- ✓ Sermon on the Mount
- ✓ Living as a Kingdom Citizen to maximize godly living
- ✓ The maturing Christian is . . .
 - ❖ Patient in Testing
 - ❖ Practicing the Truth
 - ❖ Powerful over his Tongue
 - ❖ Peacemaker not a Trouble-maker
 - ❖ Prayerful in Troubles

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Introduction to James

HOW—Literary Structure*

- ✓ The Jews Dispersed (1:1)
- ✓ The Worldly Wisdom of Devaluing Suffering by Doubting (1:2–18)
- ✓ The Worldly Wisdom of Not Heeding God's Word (1:19–27)
 - ✓ The Worldly Wisdom of Favoritism for the Rich (2:1–13)
 - ✓ The Worldly Wisdom of Faith without Works (2:14–26)
 - ✓ The Worldly Wisdom of the Tongue (3:1–12)
 - ✓ God's Wisdom Versus Worldly Wisdom (3:13–18)
 - ✓ Humble Submission Unlocks God's Wisdom (4:1–10)
 - ✓ Living Out God's Wisdom with the Tongue (4:11–12)
 - ✓ Living Out God's Wisdom in Faith (4:13–17)
 - ✓ Living Out God's Wisdom in not Favoring the Rich (5:1–6)
 - ✓ Living Out God's Wisdom by Patiently Waiting for God's Word (5:7–11)
 - ✓ Living Out God's Wisdom by Valuing Suffering with Prayer (5:12–18)
- ✓ The Jews Reunited (5:19–20)

This chiastic outline is adapted from James Street's study of James, which can be referenced in his [Wordboard video on James](#). James Street's work in James was greatly influence by Dr. William Varner.

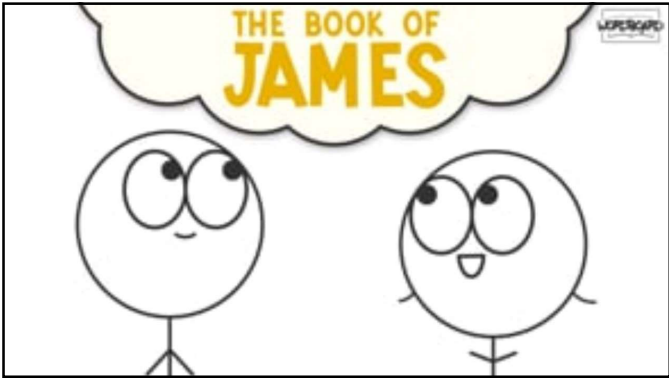
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Introduction to James

HOW—Interpretative Issues

- ✓ James 2:24—Justification by Works?
 - ❖ Contradiction to theology of Paul? (Eph 2:8 – 9)
 - ❖ Accompaniment to theology of Paul
- ✓ James 5:13–15 (Prayer of Healing?)
 - ❖ Supernatural power to elders?
 - ❖ Promise of physical healing?
 - ❖ Promise of emotional/spiritual restoration to the weak?
 - ❖ Promise of guaranteed physical healing to a repentant believer who have been under the Lord's discipline.

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