

Studies in James

Key verse: James 2:17.

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Study one



Big Idea: Saying you are a Christian is easy being a Christian is hard.

Overview

James is the first of seven letters written to a general audience rather than to a specific church.

The letter is addressed to the 'twelve tribes of the Dispersion' which is a reference to the Jewish Christians who were scattered abroad. But we could understand 'dispersion' to mean the 'new Israel', Christians from

all nations. The letter covers a wide range of issues regarding Christian conduct and gives practical guidance as to how to behave.

The most likely candidate as the author of the letter is James, the brother of Jesus, who became the leader of the church in Jerusalem, Acts 12:17, 15:13ff, 21:18. The letter was written around 60AD and reads a bit like the wisdom literature of the Old Testament book of Proverbs.

The big idea of the letter is that 'faith apart from works is fruitless'.

Although we are justified or declared righteous before God by **Faith alone**, true, justifying faith is never alone. It is a living faith which ignites within the believer irrepressible good works and expresses itself in active devotion to Christ as Lord and obedience to him and his cause.



STUDY

One of the best ways to get a feel for a letter is to read it through from beginning to end in one go. Over term four we will work through the letter section by section but for this overview study simply read through the whole letter of James and make notes on what you find interesting, complex, confusing or challenging. And below is a rough break down of the sections of the letter.

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| 1:1-18. | Dealing with temptation. |
| 1:19-27. | Receiving God's word and doing God's will. |
| 2:1-13. | Snobbishness and the royal law of love. |
| 2:14-26. | Against an inactive faith |
| 3:1-12. | Control of the tongue. |
| 3:13-18. | Earthbound and heavenly wisdom. |
| 4:1-12. | Dealing with dissension and worldliness among Christians. |
| 4:13-5:11. | Warnings to the rashly confident and the callous rich; counsel and encouragement to the oppressed. |
| 5:12-20. | Miscellaneous pastoral remarks; with emphasis on the place and power of prayer. |

PRAYER

What can you pray about arising from this study?



**For next week
Read
James 1:1-18**