

## JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JESUS

Text: Matthew 13:54-58

INTRO: In our text & 2 other passages, the subject of our lesson is identified as James, the brother of Jesus. See Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19. Both these passages will be used later in this lesson. James is the English form of the Hebrew name, Jacob. James, the brother of Jesus is an important & interesting N.T. character.

Scholars are not all in agreement as to how many individuals named James are mentioned in the N.T., but virtually all are in agreement that the James who wrote the epistle James is the same individual known as James, the Lord's brother. Roman Catholic scholars and some others, insist that James, the Lord's brother, was more literally Jesus' cousin, & that he was one of the original 12 apostles. I believe the evidence is strong against that viewpoint.

### I. JAMES WAS A BROTHER OF THE LORD.

A. Jesus had at least 4 brothers & 2 sisters. (text)

B. Roman Catholic scholars seek to skirt the fact that Jesus had siblings because of their theory that Mary remained a virgin perpetually. Bible evidence is to the contrary..

Matt 1:24-25, Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him & took to him his wife, & did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

### II. EVIDENTLY, JAMES WAS AT FIRST RECEPTIVE TO JESUS.

John 2:11-12, This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, & manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

Perhaps James was there when Jesus preached His sermon on the mount. Many themes in the book of James correspond with that sermon.

### III. AS JESUS' MINISTRY CONTINUED, JAMES & THE OTH-

## ERS SOON BECAME ADVERSARIES OF THE LORD.

A. Most scholars believe Psalm 69:8 to be a Messianic prophecy: "I have become a stranger to my brothers & an alien from my mother's children." NOTE: The next verse is definitely Messianic & is quoted by both John & Paul. John 2:17; Rom. 15:3.

B. Jesus' family apparently began to believe that He had lost His mind. READ MARK 3:21, 31-35.

Mark 3:21, 31-35, But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind."...Then His brothers and His mother came, & standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. And a multitude was sitting around Him; & they said to Him, "Look, Your mother & Your brothers are outside seeking You." But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, & said, "Here are My mother & My brothers! For who-ever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

C. By the end of His Galilean ministry, His physical family had clearly become His adversaries.

Mark 6:1-6, Then He went out from there and came to His own country, & His disciples followed Him. And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, & Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, & in his own house." Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

D. As time for the crucifixion drew near, Jesus' brothers continued in disbelief.

John 7:1-6, 1 After these things Jesus walked in Gal-ilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him. Now the Jews' Feast of Taber-nacles was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

NOTE: While on the cross, Jesus charged the apostle John to care for Mary. Jesus' brothers were unbelievers, and John was His closest disciple & His 1st cousin.

E. Jesus could speak from personal experience: "And a man's foes will be those of his own household" (MT 10:36).

#### IV. A CONVERT TO THE LORD.

A. Sometime during the 53 days between Jesus' crucifixion & Pentecost, James became a disciple of Jesus. Luke tells us that the 11 apostles "continued with one accord in prayer & supplication, with the women & Mary the mother of Jesus, & with His brothers." (Acts 1:14).

B. Though he gives no details, Paul almost certainly tells us what caused James to change, 1 Cor. 15:7.

C. From what we see of the ability of James to influence & persuade, it appears that he was very influential with his other brothers.

#### V. A LEADER IN THE CHURCH OF THE LORD.

A. Paul refers to him as an "apostle," tho evidently he is not

using that term in its primary sense. “I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.” (Gal. 1:19).

1. James, the Lord’s brother was not one of the original 12 apostles & is clearly distinguished from them in Acts 1:12-14.
2. He was not qualified as a successor to Judas, Acts 1:22, because he was an unbeliever during most of Jesus’ ministry.
3. The word “apostle” as used in Gal. 1:19 basically corresponds to the term “witness.” He was an eye-witness of the resurrected Jesus, & was sent out to testify to what he had seen.

B. James clearly came to be a leader in Jerusalem church.

1. Peter sent word to him, Acts 12:17.
2. He was evidently an elder, Acts 15:4, 13-23.
3. Was numbered with the elders, Acts 21:18.
4. Paul referred to James as a “pillar in the church” (Gal. 2:9).

C. James was a preacher & received financial support from the church, as did his brothers. READ I COR 9:4-7, 14

D. Not an adversary of Paul.

1. Certain Judaizers “came from James” (Gal. 2:12)
2. But “Some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised & keep the law,’ -- to whom we gave no such commandment. (Acts 15:24).

## VI. JAMES REFERS TO HIMSELF AS A BOND SERVANT OF THE LORD, James 1:1.

A. James epistle was written about 45 a.d.

B. It is very similar in many ways to the letter sent by the apostles & elders of Jerusalem to the Gentile converts, Acts 15.

C. It also parallels the sermon on the mount in many ways.

VII. ACCORDING TO JOSEPHUS, JAMES WAS MARTYRED  
BY THE JEWS IN 62 A.D.

[The high priest] “assembled the sanhedrin of judges, & brot before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others. And when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned.”

Exton, PA, March 4, 1990

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, September 5, 1999

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, December 5, 2004