

James – “Faith that is not energized by works...will become useless...”

#19 in series "Words of God to You"

April 26, 2009

1. Author – “James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...” [1:1a]

Probably the half-brother of Jesus, leader of the Jerusalem church.

Note Acts 12:17, 15:13, Galatians 1:19, I Corinthians 15:7

2. Date – 45-48 A.D.

- No mention of Jew/Gentile controversy, thus likely before Jerusalem Council [48-49 A.D.]
- The theology of the letter is profound – but undeveloped, so likely early.
- According to Josephus, James is martyred in 62 A.D., so not written after that time.

3. Destination – “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad...” [1:1b]

- Possible reference to Jewish believers “scattered” during persecution of Acts 8:1, 11:19.
- James, the first leader of the Jerusalem church, is shepherding his flock “by mail”.

4. Purpose – “to encourage believers toward proper behavior in times of testing...”

- James is extremely pastoral – more frequent imperatives than any other NT document!
- Probably a series of sermons pieced together and sent out as an instructive letter.

5. Outline –

Prologue – The value of testing [1:1-18]

Theme – Qualities needed in testing [1:19-21]

Testing and true hearing [obedience] [1:22-2:27]

Testing and speech [3:1-18]

Testing and Anger [4:1-5:6]

Ultimate relief from testing: Christ’s return! [5:7-12]

Closing instruction – dealing with testing in body life [5:13-20]