

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2014: *The Book of James*
Lesson 1 “James, the Lord’s Brother”

Read for this week’s study

John 7:2–5; 1 Cor. 15:5–7; James 1:3; 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10; Matt. 7:24–27.

Memory Text

“ ‘You are My friends if you do whatever I command you’ ” (John 15:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. James, the Brother of Jesus
- III. James, the Believer
- IV. James and the Gospel
- V. To the Twelve Tribes Scattered Abroad
- VI. James and Jesus
- VII. Further Study

Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

A. The Man

1. Name: two of the Twelve; the Just
2. Title: servant (Jacob in the Old Testament)
3. Family
 - a) brother (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3)
 - b) step-brother
 - c) cousin (John 19:26-27)
4. Disciple after resurrection (Mark 3:21; John 7:2-3)
5. St. James’ Ossuary

B. The Leader

1. Pillar in the mother church (Acts 12:17; 1 Cor. 15:5-7; Gal. 2:9)
2. Presider at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:13-21)
3. Advocate of the poor
4. Respected outside the church (Josephus)
5. Killed on the order of the High Priest

C. The Book

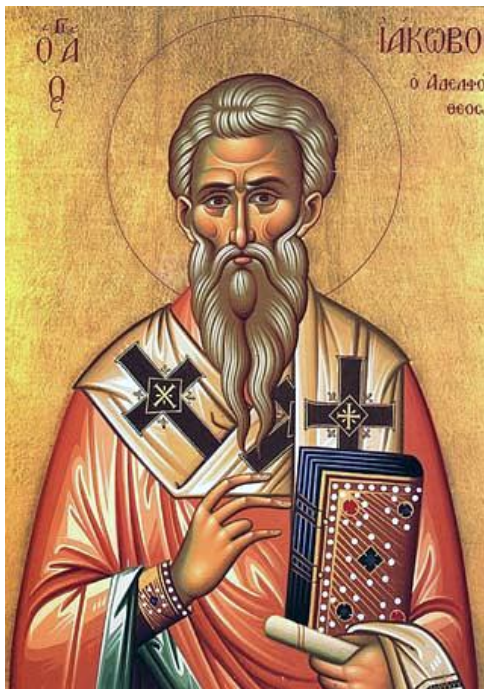
1. Souvenirs
 - a) Watch, codex
 - b) Christian, *diaspora*
2. First general NT letter
3. Proverbs of the NT
4. Handbook on practical Christian living

D. Teaching

1. Wisdom and humility
2. Perseverance and faithfulness
3. Similarities with Jesus' teaching
 - a) James 1:22 & Matthew 7:24-27
 - b) James 3:12 & Matthew 7:16
 - c) James 4:12 & Matthew 7:1

E. The Leader

1. Not inspired
2. An epistle of straw
3. Faulty heroes
4. Neglect and rediscovery



Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

James and Peter are part of what are known as the “catholic epistles”. Would that bother Protestants? It depends if you spell it with a capital “C”. See, the word “catholic” means “general”; the general epistles, not directed to a particular church, you see.

Is it established that this is the brother of the Lord, who wrote this letter? That would add something to it. Or is it just a tradition? Does anyone have recent information on that? It is a tradition, and a very interesting one, but no more than that. Have you ever done research on it, to satisfy yourself? The book still has authority, anyway. The Greek of James is not the kind you give a student in first year Greek, as you might give the Gospel of John, which is much easier. This is quite literary Greek, for advanced students. James even keeps the old formal word of greeting, which we translated in my version, “Greeting.” James 1:1.

I think it would be agreed that the theme of this book is that faith without works is dead. That is, practical Christian living is evidence of genuine faith. But why is it thought that James differs from Paul in this regard? It’s not long since we read Paul. Do you think Paul would disagree with James? They are often pitted against each other. You remember Luther didn’t have much regard for James. He said it was “an epistle of straw”. And he classed it with Jude and Hebrews and Revelation as very much in a secondary or third class, in the New Testament. Do you find any contradiction between James and Romans, for example? Look at Romans 2:13, just to remember back a little way. Romans 2:13. Paul says: “It is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.”

That’s a rather striking verse. Wouldn’t James agree with him? You claim to have faith, but your works don’t match your claims, then it’s a fraud. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 & 2 Peter and James*, recorded July, 1982 Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:* <http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

God does not force the will of any; hence He cannot lead those who are too proud to be taught, who are bent upon having their own way. Of the double-minded man—he who seeks to follow his own will, while professing to do the will of God—it is written, “Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” James 1:7. {PP 384.2}

James sought to impress the minds of his brethren with the fact that, in turning to God, the Gentiles had made a great change in their lives and that much caution should be used not to trouble them with perplexing and doubtful questions of minor importance, lest they be discouraged in following Christ. {AA 195.1}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

There are many who fail to distinguish between the rashness of presumption and the intelligent confidence of faith. . . . {RH, April 1, 1875 par. 1}

God has given man precious promises upon conditions of faith and obedience; but they are not to sustain him in any rash act. If men needlessly place themselves in peril, and go where God does not require them to go, and self-confidently expose themselves to danger, disregarding the dictates of reason, God will not work a miracle to relieve them. He will not send his angels to preserve any from being burned if they choose to place themselves in the fire. {RH, April 1, 1875 par. 4}

God gives sufficient evidence to every soul. He does not promise to remove every doubt, but he gives a reason for faith. And sufficient evidence was given to the Jews. {RH, January 24, 1899 par. 7}

Satan has ability to suggest doubts and devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue and mark of intelligence in them to be unbelieving and questioning, and quibbling. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and teachable spirit. All should decide from the weight of evidence. {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 10}

There is a real work to be wrought in us. Constantly we must submit our will to God's will, our way to God's way. . . . By beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are actually changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. We expect too little, and we receive according to our faith. We are not to cling to our own ways, our own plans, our own ideas. . . . Besetting sins are to be conquered and evil habits overcome. Wrong dispositions and feelings are to be rooted out, and holy tempers and emotions begotten in us by the Spirit of God. . . . {HP 107.3}

We have been taken as rough stones out of the quarry of the world by the cleaver of truth and placed in the workshop of God. He who has genuine faith in Christ as his personal Saviour will find that the truth accomplishes a definite work for him. His faith is a working faith. . . . We cannot create our faith, but we can be colaborers with Christ in promoting the growth and triumph of faith. {HP 109.5}

The faith that works by love and purifies the soul produces the fruit of humility, patience, forbearance, long-suffering, peace, joy, and willing obedience. {HP 109.6}

Truth is inspired and guarded by God; and it will triumph over all opposition. {AA 11.3}

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10), the final and full display of the love of God. {RC 196.2}

All who are consecrated to God will be channels of light. God makes them His agents to communicate to others the riches of His grace. . . . Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say, as upon what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot gainsay. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world.—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 141, 142. {ChS 21.4}

Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender our will and way to God, we will not work for God's love; we will obey the commandments of God because it is right to do thus. The disciple John wrote, "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19). The true spiritual life will be revealed in every soul who is doing service for Christ. Those who are alive to Christ are imbued with His spirit, and they cannot help working in His vineyard. They work the work of God. Let every soul think prayerfully, that he may act consistently.—Manuscript 120, Aug. 23, 1899, "Go, Work Today in My Vineyard." {TDG 244.6}