

The Book of James: An Introduction

1. Context: Historical Background and Dating

New Testament Timeline

James 45-49	Philemon 60-61
Galatians 47-48	Ephesians 60-62
1 Thessalonians 50-51	Philippians 60-62
Hebrews 50-64	1 Timothy 62-63
Mark 50-55	1 Peter 62-65
2 Thessalonians 51	2 Peter 64-66
1 Corinthians 53-55	2 Timothy 65-67
Matthew 55-80	Luke - Late 60's (Some believe 70-85)
2 Corinthians 56-57	John 80-85 (Some believe 50-55)
Romans 55-57	1 John 85
Titus 57 (Some believe 62-63)	2 John 85-90
Jude 58-60	3 John 85-90
Acts 60	Revelation 92-95 (Some believe 64-68)
Colossians 60-61	

The Audience: Jewish Christians

James 1:1 ...to the twelve tribes who are scattered abroad

2. The Author:

Family:

Mark 6:3 Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they were offended at Him.

Galatians 1:19 But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

Authority:

Acts 1:14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

Acts 12:16-17 Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

Galatians 2:9 and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

3. The Purpose of the Writing:

- *“James gives us practical truths about what it means to be declared righteous by God. He gives us many clear insights on faith and walking in the truth. You might want to view this book as the New Testament version of Proverbs, for much of his writings speak of God’s heavenly wisdom that can transform us.”* TPT Commentary
- *“The author wrote to rebuke the shameful neglect of certain Christian duties. In doing so, he analyzed the nature of genuine faith and urged his readers to demonstrate the validity of their experience with Christ. His supreme concern was reality in religion, and set forth the practical claims of the gospel.”* New Spirit Filled Life Bible Commentary
- *“He tells his readers why he has written: it was to turn Christians who have erred back to the truth. He does not want to criticize, but to cover sins by bringing people to repentance. This call to repentance characterizes the letter and unifies the church, for it was James’s goal to speak to a church under pressure and call it to stand together against the force of the wagging tongue within and pressures from the world without.”* New Bible Commentary