

## Reading Plan

1. Read the book of James once per week in one sitting
2. Challenge: Read the book of Proverbs, in addition to James, once per week

## Physical Penman

1. Three possibilities proposed
  - a. James the son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of John, and one of the apostles ([Mt. 4:21](#); [Mk. 1:19](#); [Lk. 5:10](#); [Mt. 10:2](#); [Mk. 15:40](#) w/ [Mt. 27:56](#))
    - i. Could not be this James as he was murdered by Herod shortly after the church was established and before the book of James was written ([Acts 12:1-2](#) A.D. 44)
  - b. James the Less, son of Alphaeus, and one of the apostles ([Mt. 10:3](#); [Mk. 3:18](#); [Lk. 6:15](#); [Acts 1:13](#))
    - i. Could not be this James as he was an apostle and distinguished from the brethren (half-brothers) of Jesus who initially did not believe in Jesus ([Jn. 7:1-5](#))
    - ii. Not much is known about this James (beyond that he was an apostle) which weighs against him being the penman as will be seen in the next possibility
  - c. James, the half-brother of Jesus ([Mt. 13:55](#))
    - i. This is the James that wrote the book of James as he is the most reasonable choice
    - ii. Jude identifies himself as the brother of James ([Jude 1](#))
    - iii. Jesus' half-brothers did not initially believe in Him ([Jn. 7:1-5](#))
    - iv. After the resurrection of Christ, they believed ([Acts 1:14](#), [15:13-21](#), [Gal. 1:19](#), [2:9-12](#))

- v. This James was a pillar in the church and thus well-known ([Gal. 2:9](#); [Acts 15:13-21](#))
- 2. The book of James is inspired and thus the Holy Spirit is the author (cf. [2 Pet. 1:20-21](#); [2 Tim. 3:16-17](#); [1 Cor. 2:10-13](#))
  - a. “Though there exists some evidence admitting to the fact that the authenticity of the epistle of James was questioned by some at an early age, still there was also eventually a complete and unanimous recognition of its canonicity among those groups that closely studied such issues. James passed the test, and was therefore accepted as inspired Scripture. Actually, there are reasonable explanations for the later acceptance of this epistle. Eusebius himself (circa A.D, 265-340) explained that part of the problem was that few ancient writers had quoted from James. He and others placed their stamp of approval on the book, including Origen (circa A.D. 185-253), Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine. Suffice it to say that there is no real evidence available to question the authenticity of the Book of James. It belongs in the New Testament.” (Forehand, *James - An Introduction*, Denton/Schertz Lectures, pg. 11 pdf)

### Date of Writing

- 1. Between A.D. 40 to A.D. 62
  - a. Cannot be earlier than A.D. 40 due to the name Christian being given and blasphemed ([Jm. 2:7](#); cf. [Acts 11:26](#) A.D. 40)
  - b. Cannot be later than A.D. 62 due to a statement by Hegesippus (late second-century A.D. Jewish-Christian historian) of James being stoned to death in this year
  - c. A number of writers place the date at A.D. 61 including Horne, Lardner, Polyglot, Prettyman, and Campbell
    - i. This is the later date which is predicated upon it being written shortly before James’ death

- d. “Thus, it seems safe to guess that James was written between A.D. 45 and 49. Most students of the Bible would place the date at A.D. 48 or 49. If that theory is correct, then the epistle of James may have been the first New Testament book written.” (Forehand, *James - An Introduction*, Denton/Schertz Lectures, pg. 13 pdf)
- i. If James is the first book of the New Testament written, then it shows the chief concern of getting instruction on practical Christian living out quickly (cf. [Mt. 5:13-16](#))

### Central Theme / Purpose

1. “It has been referred to as ‘The Christian's Book of Proverbs.’ It has also been described as ‘The Gospel of Common Sense.’” (Forehand, *James - An Introduction*, Denton/Schertz Lectures, pg. 15 pdf)
  - a. The world needs a healthy dose of “common sense” but then so does the church (cf. [Mt. 7:21-27](#))
2. To teach practical Christian living regardless of when we live
  - a. Christianity is meant to be understood and applied ([Jm. 1:21-27](#); cf. [Acts 1:1](#))
  - b. “The chief aim of the writer was to encourage those to whom he wrote to endure patiently their trials, and to eliminate from their hearts and lives those serious defects which rendered them unChristian in nature.” (Woods, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, pg. 19)

### Audience

1. Addressed “to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” ([Jm. 1:1](#))
  - a. are scattered abroad (*en* G1722 *ho* G3588 *diaspora* G1290) “a scattering, a dispersion,” was used of the Jews who from time to time had been scattered among the Gentiles, [John 7:35](#); later with reference to Jews, so “scattered,” who had professed, or actually embraced, the Christian faith, “the Dispersion,” [Jas. 1:1](#), RV; especially of believers who were converts

- from Judaism and “scattered” throughout certain districts, “sojourners of the Dispersion,” [1 Pet. 1:1](#), RV.¶ In the Sept., of Israelites, “scattered” and exiled, e.g., [Deut. 28:25](#); [30:4](#); [Neh. 1:9](#).” (Vine 174)
- b. Must be a reference to Christians based upon context and with use of terms such as “brethren” and “brother” (cf. [Jm. 1:2](#), [5](#), [9](#), [19](#), [2:1](#), [7](#), [14](#), [3:1](#), [4:11](#), [5:7](#), [9](#), [12](#), [19](#))
    - i. Our brethren are those that do the will of God (cf. [Mt. 12:46-50](#))
  - c. The Gospel was first preached to Jews (cf. [Rm. 1:16](#), [2:9-10](#); [Acts 1:8](#), [11:19](#))
    - i. This would make the church comprised mostly of Jews at the beginning
  - d. After the conversion of Cornelius and his household, Gentiles were also converted to Christ ([Acts 10-11](#) A.D. 37-39)
    - i. “that worthy name by the which ye are called” ([Jm. 2:7](#)) is a clear reference to the name “Christian” which was not used until the Gentiles obeyed the Gospel ([Acts 11:26](#); cf. [Isa. 62:1-2](#))
  - e. The church is spiritual Israel today ([Gal. 6:16](#); cf. [Rm. 2:28-29](#))
    - i. Christ tore down the separating wall between Jew and Gentile and made them one in the church ([Eph. 2:11-18](#))
2. Due to the general nature of this epistle and previous statements, it seems most reasonable that it was written to the church regardless of Jew or Gentile (cf. [Gal. 3:26-29](#))
- a. That said, there are definite Jewish and Old Testament concepts throughout the epistle (cf. [Jm. 2:2](#), [8-11](#), [21-25](#), [4:11-12](#), [5:10-12](#), [17-18](#))
  - b. All Christians should benefit from a detailed reading, study, meditation, and application of the book of James