

The Book of James

It is estimated that James wrote this letter sometime between A.D. 44 and 46 to Christian Jewish believers who were struggling with trials, prejudice and suffering.

BACKGROUND

It may be helpful to do some background research on the author of the epistle of James. Most scholars agree that he was likely a brother of Jesus. There were, however, up to six possible candidates.

MAKE CONNECTIONS

As you read, write down in order each new subject or idea that James is conveying. Progressing through the complete letter, go back and add further references. For example, the first subject is "facing trials of many kinds" in chapter 1:2. This subject comes up again in chapters 1:12 and 5:10-11.

APPLICATION

This letter from James is to the Christian Jews at that time. However, the letter really addresses human nature in general. Contemplate the relevance for today, how do we deal with trials, prejudice and suffering? How is it manifested?

TRUE RELIGION

James makes a very interesting statement in chapter 1:26-27, "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." NKJ

Where else in the letter does this principle apply? The word 'religion' may not be used, but the meaning will be there. Keeping this question in mind when reading all of scripture is very thought-provoking. This theme is very evident in the Old Testament. Aside from idolatry, not looking after orphans and widows was a major downfall for the children of Israel.

FAVOURITE VERSE(S):

Which verse or section of the letter is your favourite? Why?

DIFFICULT VERSE(S):

Are there verses or sections of the letter that are hard to understand? Write them down for further contemplation or discussion.

SUMMARY:

Which verses do you think best summarize the message James was trying to instill?