



# Update

August 2018

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## Commentary on the Book of James

As I explained in the last newsletter, I am writing an expanded commentary of the book of James as part of the curriculum I will teach in the fall session in the Bible Institute. My purpose is to weave in other scriptures and historical information to create better understanding. Remember to read this as a commentary instead of a literal translation. Your feedback is welcome.

### **(James 1:1 commentary).**

Hello brethren, this is James. Some of you receiving this letter may not know me personally, so don't confuse me with James the son of Zebedee or James the son of Alphaeus who were both apostles in the original twelve.

Yes, it is true, I am the half-brother to the Lord Jesus Christ—Jesus and I had the same mother, but not the same Father. When my brothers, Joses (Joseph), Simon, Judas, and my sisters and I were old enough (Matt. 13:55), we didn't know what to make of Jesus, He was different.

After His ministry began, Mother and some of us attended a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. Some said he turned water into wine, but we just didn't know—it seemed to us more like he was showing off. We would learn later He really did turn water into wine.

One time my brothers and I, in envy, chided Him because it looked like He was not going to the Feast of the Tabernacles. Our thinking was if He was so great, why didn't

He openly go and present Himself to everybody. (John 7:3-5).

Another time my mother, my brothers and I wanted to speak with Him, but we couldn't get past the crowd. When He was told we were outside and wanted to speak with Him, He said that His disciples were His mother and brothers. (Matt. 12:46-50). We didn't like that, didn't understand it, and were envious of Him. When it began to come through that He was the Son of God, my brothers and I just did not believe it! We grew up with this man and he appeared to be very human.

After the resurrection, all things changed; I spoke to Paul about this. (1 Cor. 15:7). Jesus appeared to me and when He spoke I experienced a transformation. He was no longer the earthy person I grew up with. He was the Lord of glory, He was Jehovah the true and living God talking to me. The love radiating from His eyes pierced my soul, and all my envy and confusion melted away. I readily surrendered to Him as my Lord

and my Savior. All my earthly ambitions melted into heavenly ambitions. After the resurrection and my family's transformation, my mother, brothers and I started meeting with the disciples in the upper room. (Acts 1:14).

I was all eyes and all ears as I heard Peter and the brethren discuss the Scripture. We were in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was given. We experienced the beautiful Spirit of unity which made us in one accord with each other. (Acts 2:1). The disciples told me that they knew a partial ministry of the Holy Spirit after Jesus breathed on them before His ascension (John 20:22), but we were astounded at a supernatural phenomenon of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

*(Since Mary, James and the family were meeting in the upper room, Acts 1:14, it is reasonable to assume James was present for this marvelous event.)*

There we were, sitting in His spiritual presence, when a sound filled the air like a high velocity wind blowing hard, but no wind moved our hair or ruffled our clothing. Suddenly flames of fire appeared on each person's head, and as the fire ascended up into the air, it divided like two tongues of fire. If we weren't already amazed enough, each person in the room began to speak in languages not our own.

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That same sound poured out into the streets near the temple. There were Jews from 14 different countries there to observe the Feast of Pentecost. They heard the sound and came running to find out what was going on. The crowd of several thousand were amazed and confused. They didn't know what to make of it. They heard us speak in tongues, but they were hearing a message of the wonderful works of God in their own language from back home. Some were honestly asking, what can this mean? But others were mocking, accusing us of being full of new wine—they said we were drunk and just babbling nonsense.

In previous days we had been hiding in the upper room for fear of the Jewish leadership, but Peter and the eleven as a group boldly stepped forward. Peter called for their attention, and when things quieted down he began speaking. He spoke boldly and with such power! I'll never forget it, there were 3,000 people born of the

Spirit of God that day!

After this empowering of the Holy Spirit, the church began to meet in various homes where all the brethren spread out to teach smaller groups, to eat together, and to observe the Lord's Supper. I began to share and later to teach also. As time went by Peter and other brothers traveled about in other parts of the country, but I stayed in Jerusalem.

People began to turn to me for advice and direction. It was a work of the Holy Spirit that eventually all the apostles looked to me as the leading moderator, with central headquarters in the church in Jerusalem.

Now, I write this letter to you as a willing bondservant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. I am like a servant in the Old Testament who was scheduled to be free after laboring for his Master for six years, but who loved his Master and chose to serve him for as long as he lived. The servant appeared before the town government to make it official. He put his ear to a

doorpost and had his ear pierced with an awl. That was a permanent mark signifying his decision to serve his Master for life. (Deut. 15:16-17; Ex. 21:6), I too have bowed my heart and vowed before the Lord God Almighty to be a willing servant to my Lord Jesus Christ as long as I live—I am glad to be His willing bondservant.

We too have passed through stressful times and persecution here in Jerusalem, and I am sharing with you what I have learned. I am writing on how to walk out your faith as a servant of God to all the believers in the 12 tribes of Israel who are scattered among nations. Greetings. (James 1:1). ✨

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## *Thanks!*

**A reminder:** If you want your gift to come directly to me, please mail it to the address on this newsletter. Make your check to "Calvary Commission" and you will receive a receipt for your tax-deductible gift at the end of the year.

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## 104 year old letters that impacted me

**M**artha has letters that her grandparents wrote to each other before they married in December 1914. We don't think of our ancestors as young, in love, or their relationship with Jesus. These sections are from letters written by Gus to Johnny Mae. Travel for them was by buggy or the local train, which could deliver their letters on the same day they were written. He was 31 and she was 24.

**September 13th, 1914:**

*Sweetheart, I am laboring mighty hard to get everything in shape so you can come home with me and live with me*

*after this year. It will be the greatest earthly pleasures that can come to me when I get everything fixed so I can bring you home, that we might live and die together. O what great happiness it will be when our hearts are knitted together in love. To love each other so well and to be so true to each other that we will be as one. May God bless and care for you.*

(They raised six children during the depression and modeled exactly what he wrote.)

**November 7, 1914:**

*My dear little Sweetheart, you ought to be here. I never was in such a meeting in my life. You would not have to go to*

*Pine Grove to hear people shout at the night services. There was at least 300 people. There are people here from Nacogdoches (40 miles was a long way then) and the grandest part of all of it to me was Robert. He just got under such conviction until he got up and come into the altar before the preacher ever preached. You could have heard him praying a quarter of a mile. And listen, Noomo Rudd was converted last night, and she sat there and just laughed and laughed. She was so happy until she could not be still. Besides, several others was saved. O it is a grand time up at old Neville now. ✨*

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