

Faith in Action: A Study of James

A Real Faith for a Real Life

James 1:1-8

Introduction

1:1

It seems clear therefore that the author is James, the half brother of the Lord, who became the recognized leader in the Jerusalem church. This conclusion is supported by the authoritative tone of the letter and by the marked similarities in Greek between this epistle and the speech by James recorded in Acts 15.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The high quality of James's use of koine Greek has long been compared to that of Hebrews. It may be judged of a more literary quality than that of the Gospel of John and does not indulge in the personalized expressiveness found in Paul's letters. When James quoted or alluded to the Old Testament, he used the Septuagint (LXX), a pre-Christian Greek translation (cf. 2:8–11, 23; 4:6; 1:11; 2:25; 5:4, 17, 20). James's vocabulary and frequent use of syntax affected by the Hebrew underlying the LXX are evident throughout his letter. At significant points in chaps. 2–3, knowledge of the LXX would have been necessary for a precise understanding of James's original meaning.

James

James addresses especially Jewish Christians (and probably any other Jews who would listen) caught up in the sort of social tensions that eventually produced the war of A.D. 66–70 (see comment on Acts 21:20–22). Although the situation most explicitly fits James's own in Palestine, it also addresses the kinds of social tensions that were spreading throughout the Roman world (1:1).

The IVP Bible Background Commentary

Undoubtedly the background for the concept of being the Lord's slave or servant is to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. For a Jew this concept did not connote drudgery, but honor and privilege. It was used of national Israel at times (Isa 43:10), but was especially associated with famous OT personalities, including such great men as Moses (Josh 14:7), David (Ps 89:3; cf. 2 Sam 7:5, 8) and Elijah (2 Kgs 10:10); all these men were "servants (or slaves) of the Lord."

The NET Bible First Edition Notes

Faith in any reality

1:2-4

Though James' command was direct and forceful, he did not preach at his audience. He identified with them. He addressed them warmly as "my brothers." This mode of address is characteristic of the epistle. He used this familiar form no less than 15 times. James' direct commands are coupled with deep compassion.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary

Faith regardless of chaos

1:5-8

**Our trust in Christ
is not developed absent of challenge
but by applying trust
in the midst of challenge.**

Questions for Application

- Q1. How can our faith be tested today?
- Q2. What is your default attitude when you experience challenges in life?
- Q3. Describe a time you have asked for wisdom and God did not provide.
- Q4. How can we have confidence in our prayers?