

“FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD”

The Letter of James

Who wrote The Letter of James?

The author of The Letter of James is the disciple of Christ who is identified in the New Testament as “the brother of the Lord.”

How did The Letter of James get its name and/or what does that name mean?

The Letter of James was named for its author, the disciple, James.

When did these events take place?

The Letter of James may be one of the earliest letters of the New Testament, possibly written as early as 45 to 50 A.D.

For more about The Letter of James:

See page 1341 in the [Fireside Catholic Youth Bible](#).

You can spot them a mile away. The guy who tells you, “Oh sure, I just love kids!” but cringes when a toddler grabs his pant leg to keep from falling or, the girl who tells you: “Money doesn’t matter!” but won’t volunteer at the soup kitchen or help out at the shelter because “the homeless” make her nervous and suspicious. It’s as if they are trying to live a double life, saying one thing while doing another.

James was all too familiar with these kinds of people. He gets right to this point in this letter written to the Jewish Christian communities living outside of Palestine. James’ message is clear. Actions speak louder than words! Yes, faith is important, and professing is where we all must begin. But faith is only fully demonstrated through our behavior. It’s clear when you read the book of James that he embraced what we would call traditional values. He writes about the courage developed out of perseverance and resisting temptation. He teaches us that everything in our lives is a gift from God and none of it, not even our next breath, should be taken for granted.

His most practical advice has to do with what we say and how we need to be careful about the words we use. He goes on to give us examples of how earthly position and possessions earn us nothing in the eyes of God. How we use our gifts will determine how God will judge us in the end. Lastly, James reminds the Jewish Christian community of the importance of prayer, especially over the sick.

After reading the Letter of James, ask yourself, “Am I living a double standard? Am I a hypocrite? Do I meet James’ call to holiness? Do my actions and my words reveal to the world that my life is dedicated to Christ? Would James be proud of me?”

Interesting Fact: James 5:13-15 is the clearest indication in New Testament Scripture that The Anointing of the Sick was practiced at a Sacramental level.

Bonus Point: Who was The Letter of James addressed to?