



A Scenic Overlook

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James

Most people today are not interested in a Christian message that tells them where they are going, but rather one that touches them where they are living. In the book of James, we find such insight and instruction. Faith, in James, is explained in light of life and works. For this reason, this book has been called *The Practical Epistle*. It enables us to understand how to live life from the perspective of "spiritual surefootedness."

James was the half brother of Jesus and did not believe in Jesus as his Savior until later in life. John 7:3-10 tells us His [Jesus] brothers did not believe. 1 Corinthians 15:7 includes a specific appearance of Jesus to James after the resurrection. He was among the 120 in the Upper Room prior to Pentecost and then a significant leader in the early church. Acts 1:14; Galatians 3:12; Acts 15

The letter of James is written to Hebrew believers/Jewish Christians who were scattered around and beyond Palestine. These early Christ-followers were under fire and struggling with many issues regarding how to live out their faith. James provided a core of instructional material and a path of wisdom for each to understand and follow.

Central Message

But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. —James 1:22

James is a book of applied theology. It is consistent with all biblical orthodoxy, but demands that true orthodoxy results in orthopraxy!

James is Christianity in shoe leather.

It is walking faith, not just talking faith.

James is a book that helps us face life and find purpose.

Alan B. Stringfellow provides the following perspective:

Paul speaks of justification before God.

James speaks of justification before man.

Paul says we are justified by faith. Eph. 2:8-9

James says we are justified by works. 2:24

Paul stresses the root of justification.

James stresses the fruit of justification.

The theme of the book could be entitled, "The Proofs of True Faith in Christ."

Critical Texts

- The Anatomy of Sin (1:12-18)
- The Reality of Faith (2:14-26)
- The Tragedy of Tongues (3:1-12)
- The Remedy for Pride (4:6-10)
- The Authority of Prayer (5:13-18; 4:1-4)