

Scripture Reading:

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to **James 1, James 1** for our scripture reading today... We are in **James 1:1-8** for ...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

James 1:1-8

1 ^[a]James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes who are ^[b]dispersed abroad: Greetings.

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various ^[c]trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces ^[d]endurance. ⁴ And let ^[e]endurance have *its* perfect ^[f]result, so that you may be ^[g]perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵ But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and ^[h]without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸ *being* a ^[i]double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Introduction:

Good morning...Man, I always enjoy being here and preaching the Word....As I mentioned last Sunday night...Preaching is one of my life's greatest fears but preaching the Word is also one of my favorite things...Double edged sword...

It is good to be here this morning...I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving....I think for lunch I am going to have Thanksgiving meal #8...It's always great when you're so full you can't even get off the couch...

If you do not know who I am....My name is Byron RBadshaw and I am privileged to be the pastor here at Calvary Bible Church...

If you are interested in membership, then see me after the service today and I would love to speak with you regarding joining the church...

Thank you for being here this morning...Laurel and I believe Calvary greatest days are now and will be on the road ahead...We are excited to be here with you all...

Before we enter the text this morning, let us go to God in prayer...

(Let us Pray)

ME:

I greatly enjoyed our time in the Sermon on the Mount over the last 10 weeks or so...I was told recently that we started the Sermon on the Mount back on June 25th...that's 22 weeks walking through the text of the scripture...Very few churches here in Huntsville nor anywhere else for that matter spend 22 weeks walking through a text of scripture...

It is a tremendous honor to lead a church so devoted to the teaching and preaching of the scripture...

I personally found The Sermon on the Mount both refreshing and practically enlightening to my life and I hope you found value in it as well...

Transition: Today, we are shifting gears a bit...we are closing the chapter on the Sermon on the Mount and opening a new Chapter in a new book of the Bible...

Today we are starting our series in the Book of James...The Book of James has a unique place in my heart...It is the first book I ever taught through...I taught through is here as a 19 year old man in Room 9...I taught it to a group of 3 other students...Justin Low, Kenneth Xiques and Matt Cunningham...It is the first book I taught, first book I preached and the first book I ever memorized...It holds a special place in my heart and I hope you find it endearing also...

In our pursuit today to begin the Book of James, we will really only look at one verse...

Today, we will just be mainly covering James 1:1...Through James 1:1 and through extensive

research, I'd like to spend a whole sermon to just set up the stage...

So, Today's message may be a bit different...Today's message will reveal my inner nerd...My students at Southside called me a Bible nerd...I love not just teaching the deep truths of the scriptures but also teaching God's people how to properly think and interpret the scriptures for themselves...

So, Today's message is going to lean a little more in the intellectual world and a little less emphasis on the practical world...

Yet, my goal is not to expound knowledge...But even further My goal today is to set the stage for our subsequent weeks through the brief discussion of hermeneutics and thoroughly discussing the setting for the Book of James...

ME:

Yet As I began chewing on the introduction for the Book of James this morning...A thought kept popping into my mind...The thought of watching a play began popping into my mind...

Now, before you are weirded out by my random thought...I'd like to ask you a question....

How many of you have ever seen a live play before?

What are all the essential components of a good play?

A good script...

Quality actors...

Director

Producers

Nice and Proper Costumes...

I want you to think about something though...What is the one element of a play or even a movie that has drastic effect on our enjoyment yet that is often ignored?

The Setting, correct? Probably one of the most important elements of a play or movie is the setting...But the setting is usually the most ignored...

What are all the elements of the setting for a play?

Lights, Sound, Stage Props, Theater seats, temperature of the room, curtains, and all of these setting elements drastically affect a play's or movie's presentation...

Transition: Yet, We often ignore the setting and venture straight into the script or the characters the actors are conveying...

Because we oftentimes ignore the setting...and so we do not realize how important a good setting actually is to the telling of a good story...

Let me Illustrate the Importance of a Consistent Proper Setting:

There are many great stories, plays and movies with a great setting...

But perhaps the movie with the most vivid and important setting is the trilogy of movies called the Lord of the Rings...Think about the setting for those movies... It is the land of Middle Earth...It is a majestic place...It is full of beautiful snow capped mountains with enchanting waterfalls and lush green forests...

The mountains and the scenery allow us to transport ourselves to a fictional world...

Imagine with me the scene in the Two Towers where the evil Lord Saron is attacking Helm's Deep...10,000s of evil soldiers are attacking the Kingdom of Rohan at the Helm's Deep with the Kingdom aided by the Elves and Aragon, Legolas, and Gibly...

Now, imagine that scene...Picture that... Think about all the elements of the setting...Think about all those snarly disgusting looking orks...think about the swords, ladders, bows and arrows and the Medieval like catapults launching rocks at the Giant walls of Helms Deep...Now picture that...You got that image?

Transition: Now, let me demonstrate the importance of setting...

TURN: Now, what in the middle of that scene...what if Peter Jackson accidentally filmed a F-16 Jet Fighter sweeping down over his scene?

It would throw everything off, correct? It would completely change the entire feel of that scene and honestly of the entire movie...You would watch the entire rest of the movie traumatized for the suspension of disbelief is forever warped...

Transition: The setting for any play or movie is of supreme value...It allows us to enjoy and "interpret" correctly...**It allows us to correctly interpret** the script, characters, actors and directors...

Transition: Similarly, the setting for any Book of the Bible has equal importance... Setting the stage for a discussion of any Book of the Bible is supremely important...Because it allows us to interpret and apply the Bible correctly..

Friends, we as **Christians cannot interpret much less apply the scripture without first understanding a Book's setting...**

How can we as Christians expect to understand the central meaning of a Book or of a passage without first realizing its purpose, author, audience, occasion, date, Location of Writing and Character...

Transition: Understanding the setting of a Book of the Bible gives us a framework to both interpret and apply the scriptures accurately...

WE:

First, understanding the background and setting for a Book of the Bible is essential for

#1: Proper Interpretation

#1: In order to interpret we must first understand the setting and introduction of a Book...

In the world of Biblical hermeneutics, which is a fancy word for Biblical interpretation, one of the greatest obstacles to proper interpretation is the difficulty we have as modern readers to not read the Bible as a modern reader...

Listen, One of the most fundamental mistakes a modern reader of the Bible makes is to imagine that a particular verse or particular passage was written to you...

No...we must each realize through the setting of the Book or passage that any passage we see here in this Bible was not written to Byron Bradshaw...Paul never heard of Byron Bradshaw...

Every passage...Every word in the Bible was written by God through someone, to someone, who lived somewhere and was facing something...

In order to interpret the scriptures accurately we must first understand that **Every word of every passage in the Bible was written by God through someone, to someone, who lived somewhere and was facing something...**

#1: To properly interpret we must only understand the setting and background

#2: We must understand the biases we carry into the text itself...Unfortunately, many Christians never even realize their biases when they actually enter the text...

I call this modern reader bias as our interpretive lens...Our interpretive lens...Our interpretive lens are the biases that we look through when we enter the Biblical text...Every reader of the Bible for the last two millennia has had lens which they look through...

What are some of our interpretive lens or biases that fog our interpretation every time we begin to read the Bible?

Interpretive Lens #1: We read it as an American...We read the Bible as a 21st century American- We take our idea of liberty, our ideas of freedom (which are all great things to be taken lightly), and we take our ideas of prosperity and place is squarely upon the text of the Bible...We look at passages such as Ephesians 6 or even James 1:1 with slight bewilderment... Because our idea of liberty and freedom is different than every other persons in this world and in the Biblical world...

We read it as a Protestant...We read it as a Christian that has been influenced by the biases and thoughts of the reformers such as Martin Luther...

Martin Luther's pioneering spirit was a great thing...It freed us from the tyranny of absolute papal authority and the abuse of indulgences...But his desire to steer away James 2 when it

discusses the relationship between faith and works can disrupt our interpretation...

His influence almost makes us as Protestants to say that there is no relationship between faith and works...But friends there is a relationship between faith and works look at James 2 and Ephesians 2:8-10...

Now let me be clear...Works do not save...But because I am saved I do good works...

We read it as our age reflects...When I was younger, I saw everything in the Bible as something that was **ALWAYS ONLY** emotionally resonating and if it didn't then something was wrong with me...

Listen friends, every truth in the Bible should affect our emotions but it is also meant to resonate with our mind to activate our feet...

Summary of Bias: Listen Friends, watch this...Without first understanding the setting for each book and second understanding your own biases...then we can truly **NEVER fully interpret the scriptures accurately...**

Every time we enter the text we must first say, “Ok, what did God mean by this passage through Paul to the Church in Rome?” Then and only then should we ask, **“Ok What does it mean for me today?”**

This demonstrates that we must First interpret then apply...We must properly interpret first then properly apply second...

That is why every Sunday morning I spend extensive time exegeting the scripture before we even enter into application...

Listen to this...without first understanding the setting of a particular passage and second being aware of our biases...We will never truly be able to figure out how it then fits into our lives...

Transition: Now, after our extensive Hermeneutics lesson let us now enter the text and begin establishing the setting for the Book of James by establishing the author and audience through reading James 1:1...

Let us read James 1:1 together...

GOD:

Read James 1:1... “James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.”

A Bible Book setting includes 7 main items (Some academics include more or less) but the 7 are...: Author, Audience, Date, Occasion, Location of Writing, Purpose, Character...

And here in verse 1, He first establishes himself as the author, correct?

Author: So, the author is James... If you look here at the Greek of James 1:1...The Greek word for James is actually the Greek Word ,” ’Ιάκωβος” which does not sound like “James” but rather the Hebrew name “Jacob”

What people do not realize is that the name James is actually the same Hebrew name for Jacob...

Joke: So, sorry James Gauldin...I am not sure what to call you now...

But there is a problem with this name...The problem is which James is it? Because there are 3 main James’ mentioned in the New Testament...And two of them were Jesus’ disciples...

It could be James, the son of Alphaeus- Little is known of James son of Alphaeus other than that he was one of the twelve disciples...However, He is unlikely the author due to his lack of acknowledging his full name because of his lesser known status...

Then, there is James son of Zebedee- James the son of Zebedee was another disciple of Jesus but James son of Zebedee is an unlikely candidate for authorship because killed by Herod Agrippa 1 in Acts 12:2...

So, the only other candidate is James the brother of Jesus...The author of the Book of James was James the brother of Jesus...

But then we must ask the question...If the author of James was James the brother of Jesus...So then, Who was James the brother of Jesus?

#1: James is likely the oldest of Jesus’ brothers as he is mentioned first in Matthew 13:55, and Mark 6:3...

#2: He is also identified later on as the leader of the church in Jerusalem seen in Acts 15:12-21...

But before we discuss the audience...I’d like to point out something very interesting...James 1:1 is perhaps one of the greatest apologetic evidences for the legitimacy of Jesus...

Transition: So, the author of this epistle is Jesus oldest brother and the leader of the church in Jerusalem...James is actually a central figure in the early church...

Transition: But before we dive on to much...What was Jesus’ relationship in the Gospels to His younger brothers?

In the Gospels themselves, James and the rest of his siblings actually tease and make fun of Jesus...

Look at John 7:2-5, “² Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was near. ³ Therefore His brothers said to Him, “Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing. ⁴ For no one does anything in secret ^[a] when he himself seeks to be *known* publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” ⁵ For not even His brothers were believing in Him.”

So, in the beginning years, Jesus’ relationship with James his brother was contentious...James made fun of Jesus and was not a follower...

I can only imagine James growing up under the shadow of Jesus...Imagine what it was like to grow up with Jesus...

I can imagine Mary and Joseph saying when they were children, “Come on James can’t you be more like your brother Jesus? Of course, James is saying....”Well, Jesus is just always perfect...”

Transition: But 15 years later, let us notice the apologetic truth...notice with me how James’ thoughts of Jesus have changed...

Look back at James 1:1, “James, a bond servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...”

James calls himself a slave or “δοῦλος” of Jesus...James no longer contains animosity but has realized the truth...That His brother Jesus was Lord and Christ...That James is a servant...a bond-servant under the leadership of Jesus...

Marker in the Sand: Friends...I want to take a moment and I really want to slow down...I want each of us for the next 5 minutes put a marker in the sand of our minds...I want each of us to really listen to the truth of the simple phrase, “a bond servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ...”

Because this phrase contains perhaps the greatest apologetic evidence of the deity and legitimacy of Jesus...This phrase is an absolute Pillar of evidence for Jesus’ legitimacy...

One of the greatest proofs of the legitimacy of Jesus’ resurrection and proof that Jesus truly was Lord and Christ, the Savior of the world, is the fact that each of Jesus’ disciples proclaimed Jesus’ resurrection, proclaimed His Jesus’ Gospel and His legitimacy and even died for it...No one proclaims and dies for a lie...

Listen to this quote from Josh McDowell...Josh McDowell adds to this argument in his book *More than a Carpenter* in the Chapter titled, “Would you die for a lie?”...He says this...”One area often overlooked in challenges to Christianity is the transformation of Jesus’ apostles. Their changed lives provide solid testimony for the validity of His claims...The apostles went through the test of death to substantiate the veracity of what they were proclaiming. I believe I can trust their testimony more than that of most people I meet today, people who aren’t willing to walk across the street for what they believe, let alone die for it...”

But Think about this...Listen to this...How long did the disciples know Jesus? 30 years...How long did James know Jesus? 30 years...10 times as long...James saw Jesus grow up...James saw Jesus make tables, eat dinner with proper eating manner, James saw Jesus play and swim...

James has probably the most inside information on Jesus out of any author of any Book in the entire Bible...If anyone had the ability to devalue or destroy Jesus' legitimacy it was James...

Yet what does James call Jesus? **a bond servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ...**
(show Greek Slide)

James provides proof that Jesus was both Lord and Christ that all the claims of Jesus are true...His Gospel is true, His sinlessness is true, His status is true, His supremacy is true, Everything that is proclaimed of Jesus is TRUE...

Jesus IS "Lord" "κυρίου" meaning master or ruler...That Jesus is master over all creation...He is ruler over all the lives of his followers...In other words, by James saying "Lord" of Jesus he is saying...Jesus is boss...He is in charge...

James also uses "Christ"... which is the Greek word "Χριστοῦ" which is a HUGE deal for a Jew to see...James is telling every Jew around the world that Jesus is the Messiah they have been looking for since Genesis 3:15 and James is saying Jesus is the Christ the Messiah...The one you've searched for for 2 millenia...

That Jesus is the one that came to pay the penalty for our sin... That Jesus is the one that has fulfilled Isaiah 52 and 53...That Jesus is God's spotless lamb sent to pay the price for the sins of the world...

Transition: But I believe the Greek here in verse 1 is very interesting...It not only tells us that He is Lord and Christ...

Transition: But I think it gives us a third attribute that we miss in English...In order to discover the third attribute...I'd like to do some Greek analysis with you... **(Greek NT Slide)**

This is the Greek Word for Lord and Christ....and then you have Jesus... Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος...

But notice which other word has the same two ending letters as Lord Jesus and Christ?

It is the second word in verse 1...This is the Greek word "Theos" "God"...so what is the significance?

Based on the context...It seems best interpret the word "God" as also modifying Jesus...All three words: God, Lord and Christ are all attributive genitive adjectives...

In other Words...James Jesus' brother is saying this about Jesus...That Jesus is Lord, Christ and GOD....

That Jesus is not just a man...Jesus was not just his brother...**HE IS LORD, CHRIST** (Messiah) and GOD...

Think About It: Think about the significance of this statement...One of the greatest proofs we have for the deity and legitimacy of Jesus' claim to be both God, messiah and Lord is this very phrase...This phrase is perhaps one of the best apologetic proofs of Jesus' true identity...

James, Jesus' brother, knew him for 30 years since he was a young child and He proclaims the deity, Lordship and Christology of Jesus proving to each and everyone of us here today and for all people to come...

That Jesus is GOD, IS THE CHRIST, and IS LORD OF ALL....

Transition: So, all that to say is that James the brother of Jesus is the author...Let us look at our audience...Look back at verse 1

AUDIENCE:

Read James 1:1, "James, a bond-servant of Jesus who is God, Lord and Christ...To the twelve tribes dispersed abroad greetings..."

Who is his audience? Jews, right? Specifically Jewish Christians who are part of the "Diaspora"...James is specifically addressing all those Jews outside of Israel who are spread out amongst the Gentiles...

DATE:

When was this book written? Date? The Book of James is consider one of the earliest New Testament books written...We do not know the exact year written but due to its lack of reference for the Gentile/Jewish relations it is proposed to have been written before Paul's journeys and before his epistles. The date of writing was around 47 A.D.

LOCATION OF WRITING:

Where was it written? The Location of Writing is likely inJerusalem...The evidence for James penning this letter in Jerusalem is first because he was a leader in the church in Jerusalem...The second evidence is James' use of illustrations only present from the land of Israel such as the existence of salt and bitter springs, and the cultivation of figs and olives.

CHARACTER:

Now what is the character of the Book of James? Or in other words, what makes James unique?

I actually asked the question in staff meeting..."When you think of the book of James, what do you think of?" I got many good answers such as James 2:10, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all..."

What makes James unique to me is that James is “Blunt”...

James is blunt...He tells it the way it is...there are only 108 verses in the entire Book yet there are 54 commands...In other words...every other verse on average in the entire book has a command..

I think blunt but I also think practical...practical...The Book of James is super practical in nature...It actually reminds me some of the Sermon on the Mount...

I think also deeply theological...As seen in the very first verse...James is wildly theological...He discusses the relationship between faith and works, the nature of God- that God is perfect never tempted by sin, God is unchangeable and many other theological issues...

PURPOSE AND OCCASION FOR WRITING:

What is the Purpose for writing?

I believe James has three main purposes for writing his letter:

#1: To encourage Jewish Christians Living Amongst Gentiles

#2: To Instruct

#3: To Reprove

#1: To encourage: To encourage Jewish Christians living amongst Gentiles- Based on the text of the epistle alone...It seems that James is trying to encourage the dispersed Jewish Christians as they face trials...

From the text itself, these trials seem to include financial trials, unfair treatment from Gentiles, temptation, and even persecution for their faith... Evidence for James encouragement to endure trials is found in James 1:13, “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him.”

#2: To Instruct: In the midst of James’ theological treatises, James’ purpose is to instruct Jewish believers for proper belief and proper actions towards others...

#3: To Reprove: James also writes to reprove his audience...As I mentioned earlier, the Book of James has 54 Greek Imperatives or Greek commands...Each provide a reproof to correct their actions...James reproves them for their application of God’s Word, reproves them for playing favorites, for their inconsistency of their speech, the inconsistency of their behavior in chapter 4, their treatment of others and even their prayer life...

So, to do a bit of review:

Author: The Book is written by James or “Iakobos” the oldest brother of Jesus

The Audience: Jewish Christians living amongst hostile Gentiles...

Date: ~47 A.D. 23 years before the fall of the temple in Jerusalem

Location of Writing: James is writing from Jerusalem

Occasion: To address Jewish Christians as they face persecution and try to live out their new

faith

Purpose:

To encourage: To encourage persecuted and overwhelmed Christians to endure

To instruct: To provide theological and practical instruction to so many practical areas of life...

To reprove: To provide reproof or correction to improper action...

YOU:

Well, you may have gotten a bit more than you bargained for this morning...The purpose for the message today was to set the stage for the rest of our discussion...

My hope in this sermon is to allow the story of the Book of James to come to life...That every time you ever enter the text of James that you remember the surrounding background and issues...James wrote his letter to real people with real problems and real trials...

But I'd like to answer now, Why the Book of James? Why did I pick the Book of James to study next? And by answering this question...Let us also answer the question, "So What?" "What difference should the Book of James make in my life?"

My goals with the Book of James is three-fold

#1: To Notice Chinks in your armor:

James' practical nature allows us to look in the mirror at our spiritual lives and see holes or weaknesses in our Christian maturity...James addresses so many practical areas of the Christian walk...**It is my goal** that as we walk through the letter that you and I notice areas that need encourage, instruction or reproof

#2: To Take an Honest Look Within:

One of the reasons I love the Book of James is because it forces each of us to take an honest look within... One cannot truly read and study the Book of James without conviction...

#3: To Appreciate the purity of God's Word

Finally, the beauty of the illustrations and the beauty of the words themselves provide great wonder and vast appreciation. **My goal every week** is for each of us leave here encountering the Word, encountering God, encountering ourselves, and through these allow the Holy Spirit to transform us more in to the picture in Romans 12:1-2

WE:

As I close...Let me close today with a thought...

Let us venture into a dusty part of the New Testament not to add a feather to our cap but to add tools to our tool belt...

Let us venture into the Book of James with an open optimism looking within rather than putting up the defense of our ego...

Let us look sincerely at the depth and wealth of instruction found in the Book of James for there

are treasures in store for each one of us as long as we are willing to look upon the scriptures and look within ourselves...

Let us pray together