

Hello. /We will begin the 17<sup>th</sup> lecture on “An Introduction to the New Testament.” /Today we will study **James**. /First, we will take a look at the author of James.

/Up to this point, we have briefly studied the author of the Pauline epistles and the authors of the Gospels. /The author of James, as written in James 1:1, is James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

/At least four people with the name “James” are found in the New Testament. /The first James is James son of Zebedee, who was one of the twelve apostles. /This James, son of Zebedee, played an important role from the twelve apostles, but he was martyred early on. Acts 12:2. Therefore, it is difficult for us to say that this James is the author of James.

/The second James is another one of the twelve disciples, James son of Alphaeus. /The third James is Judas’ father James. /Because the New Testament does not say much about these two people, they are not considered to be the author of James.

/Then which James do we have left? /We have Jesus’ younger brother James who was a leader of the early church of Jerusalem. /He played a very important role in the early church.

/However, some people argue that this James is not the Lord’s younger brother James. /They say this because the book of James does not mention the family relationship between the Lord and James. James is also written in very sophisticated Greek. Taking these things into account, they say that Jesus’ brother James is not the author of James.

/However, because James does not write on the basis of his relationship to Jesus but from the position of a servant of Christ who boasts and bears witness about the gospel, it is natural for him not to assert his family relationship with Jesus.

/According to recent studies, Greek was widely used in the 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestinian region, and Jews were familiar with the Greek language. Therefore, we can come to the conclusion that it is possible for James to have written this epistle.

/Moreover, scholars who study the New Testament say that the Greek writing in James is similar to the writing in Acts 15, where we find James’ sermon in Greek. When we look at these things, we can argue that the author of James is Jesus’ younger brother James.

/James is a New Testament figure who did not receive much attention. People paid the most attention to Peter out of Jesus’ disciples. The Catholic Church was especially interested in Peter.

/The religious reformers turned their attention to the Apostle Paul’s doctrine that said, “Salvation by faith.” /Concerning the name James, people usually remembered Jesus’ disciple James son of Zebedee. They usually did not think of Jesus’ brother James when they heard the name.

/We also have James son of Alphaeus, who is also called James the Less. /However, the Lord's brother James held very important responsibilities in the early church. In Acts 15, where we find the Council of Jerusalem, we see James playing a leading role in the meeting.

/James did not believe in Jesus during the time of Jesus' public life, but he encountered the risen Christ and was present with the crowd that was waiting for the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. /The author of James is this James.

/In James 1:1, James greets the twelve tribes in the Dispersion. /Considering that fact that James was a leader of the Jerusalem Church, we can speculate that he wrote the epistle in **Jerusalem**.

/When he says, "To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion," James is speaking metaphorically of the entire church of Christ, which has become the true Israel in Christ. /Like the expression in 1 Peter 1:1, such sayings are meant for all Christians who live as exiles longing for their home.

/Thus, the recipients of the book of James are clearly all believers who are in Christ. /Despite this, James does not disregard his people, the Jews. /Acts 11:19 says that the word was spoken to no one except Jews as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, which tells us that the early church continued to care about the Jews.

/In the book of James, James mentions Old Testament figures, such as Abraham, Rahab, and Elijah. He appeals to the recipients by naturally and comfortably quoting the Old Testament.

/Here we see a reflection of James' Jewish background and his interest in the Jews. /The aspects of society and the economic situation reflected by the book of James show us what Palestine was like at that time.

/For example, in chapter 4, we learn about the merchant who goes to a faraway place to earn a profit. In chapters 2 and 5, we learn about landlords who exploit the poor. Such examples are a reflection of Palestine at that time.

/James wrote this epistle in Jerusalem, where he was active. /There are two major opinions as to the **time period in which James was written**. /Some people say that it was written "in the early or mid-forties."

/Others say James was written in the early sixties before James was martyred. This would be a point in time when the Apostle Paul's teachings would have to some extent spread throughout the church.

/According to the claim that James was written in the early forties, James probably would be the earliest New Testament book to be written.

/But let us consider the fact that James emphasized that true faith comes with works. Paul taught the doctrine of “salvation by faith alone,” but as time passed, believers conceived misconceptions about this doctrine. We believe that James wrote this book to correct their misunderstanding. Taking this into consideration, we think that the latter argument, the claim that James was written in the early sixties, is more likely to be correct.

/Now we will study the **content and theme** of James. /In some ways, James is more like a sermon than it is an epistle. /Excluding the greeting in James 1:1, James does not follow after the format of the ancient epistles.

/Furthermore, James is made up of 108 verses, and around 60 of these verses use imperative verbs. Frequently, the book directly calls on readers by their title. For example, it says, “My dear brothers.” We see a lot of rhetorical questions as well. Observing these things, we see that the epistle has the form of an epistle, but as a sermon, it actually focuses on practical aspects.

/James includes many proverbs like the ones that are found in the book of Proverbs of the Old Testament. The content of the book includes details and themes that seem to have come from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.

/Because of these points, out of the New Testament books, James is most similar to the Old Testament’s Wisdom Books. /Of the many important subjects, James first deals with the trials and ordeals Christians face.

/James 1:2 says, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.” /The trials the believer encounters are a testing of faith, and the testing of faith produces steadfastness, which makes us perfect and complete. James encourages us to go forth to God and ask him for wisdom so that we may overcome the trials.

/It tells us to ask in faith, with no doubting. /Moreover, James is certain that every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights.

/Therefore, there is no need for us to be greedy. /As it says in 3:14-16, we should not have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in our hearts. /What causes quarrels and fights? They come from our passions.

/Greed will not give us anything. /Murdering, being jealous, and fighting will not give us anything. We need to remember that we will receive only when God allows it, and we need to be steadfast as we pray to God.

/That is the message of 4:1-4. /Chapter 5 continues to talk about prayer. /5:11 teaches us to remember the steadfastness of Job and to be steadfast and pray in every difficult situation.

/5:15-16 says, “And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your

sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

/The prayer of a righteous person has great power. We are encouraged to learn from Elijah’s prayer.

/The **second important theme** of James is the relationship between faith and works. /In terms of faith and works, people misunderstood James as contradicting Paul’s view.

/For example, James 2:17 says, ‘Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 2:24 says, “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.”

/But what does the Apostle Paul say? In Galatians 2:16, Paul declares, “Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.”

/Because of these things, people thought James and Paul had different thoughts on this subject. /However, they completely misunderstand James’ point of focus. /The **saving faith** that Paul talks about is true faith that is received through being united with Christ and receiving all of his grace.

/Paul says that faith alone can save while he holds a pessimistic attitude towards works and the law. There is a reason for this. When Paul was preaching the gospel to the Gentiles at the time, Judaists, bringing the issues of festivals and food into the church, argued that in addition to believing in the gospel of the cross of Christ, people must keep the terms of the law to be saved.

/However, this is not the gospel. This is legalism. The Apostle Paul condemned this belief. /How are people saved? We are saved only when we believe in Christ.

/But some people of the early church had misconceptions about this doctrine of receiving salvation through believing in Christ as Savior. In other words, some people turned to extreme ways.

/Some Christians were completely separated from the moral laws and commandments of the Old Testament. These people had nothing to do with the law. They further claimed that Christians could live however they want because regardless of their way of life, they are saved.

/If this is true, then believing in Jesus is but a notion or simply knowledge. James called this faith of intellectually acknowledging Jesus the “faith of demons.”

/He rebuked this faith. James 2:19 says, “You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!”

/Faith isn't simply agreeing in thought or intellect. /Faith does include the element of intelligence, but for it to be a faith of true salvation, there must be complete agreement with this knowledge and complete trust.

/Consequently, good works and a life of obedience must always accompany true faith. /They always appear as proof of true faith. /If a person does not display good works or obedience, then we may have to be suspicious of whether the person's faith is a faith that receives true salvation.

/James 2:14 says, "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?" /The Bible says that Abraham's faith was justified by his works.

/The Bible thus tells us that his faith was made complete by his works. /The reason is faith without works is not true faith that leads to salvation. /Rahab the prostitute displayed her faith by her works.

/In the way a body without a soul is dead, faith without works is dead also. /We are aware of the three uses of the law. /What does the law do? First, the law uncovers sin and condemns.

/The law is a mirror that reflects to us our sin and the consequences of our sin, which are death and misery. The law also helps us find our Savior when we ask the question, "Where is the one who can save me?" /Here, the law functions as a private teacher.

/The second use of the law is civil use. /God's absolute standard becomes the standard for the world that has lost its absolute standard of good and evil. God gave us the law so that the world would not head towards extreme corruption.

/Third, the law is a guide that teaches us how we who are saved are to live as God's people. /Calvin called these things "The Three Uses of the Law."

/James is emphasizing these things. If Christians say they believe in God, that they are saved, but do not speak or act like a believer, then we can say they have a "dead faith."

/James did not teach "salvation by works." /Rather, he taught that if we have true faith that counts us as righteous, then proof of this faith is seen in the works that follow.

/This is perfectly in line with Jesus' teaching. Matthew 7:26-27 says, "And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

/When we look at it this way, James and Paul did not have contradicting thoughts or conflict over this issue of faith and works. /James talks about several subjects as he emphasizes the subject of a believer's works.

/James first emphasizes the importance of a believer's "words." /James 1:19 says, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." 1:26 reads, "If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless."

/A believer's "words" can cause big problems for himself and for others. 3:1-12.

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/When dealing with actions and obedience, James puts an emphasis on serving and helping the poor, orphaned, and widowed. /James 1:27 says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." 2:2-4.

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/James also teaches us that the world and material things are important subjects that are related to actions. 4:4.

/Furthermore, 5:1-6 reminds us of how seeking the things of the world, how piling up riches, is meaningless before God.

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/James insists on the restoration of true cleanliness and pure godliness. /Because of James' faith and outstanding godliness, he was called "James the Just."

/James the Just more clearly shows us the qualities of a truly just person. He encourages us to be steadfast when we encounter trials, seek God's help, and pray so that we may keep our faith.

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/This concludes the 17<sup>th</sup> lecture on "An Introduction to the New Testament." /Thank you.