

**Introduction to James**  
**James 1:1; Hebrews 9:1-5**  
**“The Calling”**

**Introduction**

He was the senior pastor of the first church in Jerusalem. It is said that he spent such a great deal of time in prayer for the saints that his knees became calloused. So much, in fact, that to his friends in the church he was called “Camel’s Knees”. Because he not only preached with such conviction, but also lived what he believed, he was known by the church in Jerusalem as “James the Just”. He was the half brother of The Lord Jesus, Himself, but he never boasted of this claim to fame. Instead, he referred to himself as a “Doulos” or “Bond Slave” of The Lord Jesus Christ.

**“James, a servant (doulos) of God and of The Lord Jesus Christ.”** **James 1:1**

James had not always been a believer in Jesus. In fact, in his younger years, he had been quite the opposite. How anyone could have grown up in the same household with the sinless Son of God and not been able to see just Who He was is a living example of the very words of Christ:

**“No one can come to Me unless The Father Who sent Me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”** **John 6:44**

It is said that James was a devout Jew from his earliest days as a child. Perhaps it was difficult for him to see the leaders of his pure faith, the Pharisees, accusing his older brother of all manner of heresies, including being a servant of the devil (**Matthew 12:22-32**). Surely, if Jesus was truly The Son of God, then He would have been accepted by the leaders of the Jewish faith, would he not? It was agonizing questions, such as these, that probably drove James to believe that his older brother was mentally ill (**Mark 3:20-22**). He had no doubt witnessed the love and goodness of Jesus, juxtaposed against the scathing rebukes from the leaders of the Jewish Law, so this was the only possible reconciliation in James’ young mind. Jesus obviously wasn’t in league with the devil. James knew better, but since the Jewish leaders were so violently opposed to Jesus, then the only possible answer was that Jesus was mentally unstable. When it came to his brother, James had a serious “crisis of belief”, that was left unresolved over a long period of time.

Now, put yourself in James’ shoes. What would you have done. You were firmly convinced of your faith in Judaism, but you also look up to your older brother and wanted to see Him protected. Is it any wonder that James and his younger siblings came to “take charge” of Jesus before something bad happened to Him. James must have thought that he was saving Jesus’ life that day, when he tried to get Him and take Him back home. He could not have been more wrong. Unbelief will cause a person to do the exact opposite of what they should do. God’s ways are not our ways (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). Until James came to true faith in Christ, he was always bound to end up on the wrong side of the argument. His unbelief had blinded him to the truth, but praise be to God, all that was about to change.

As far as we know, James went right on to the very end of Jesus’ life as an unbeliever, till something very powerful drew him to faith in Christ. And just what was that something? The resurrection!

**“For I passed on to you as most important, what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas (Peter), then to the twelve. Then He appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. Then he also appeared to James, then to all the apostles.”** **1 Corinthians 15:3-7**

Did you see that? Jesus, after He had risen from the dead, made a special trip to visit His unbelieving brother, the one who had thought he was crazy! Isn’t that just like Jesus? He never gave up on James, though James had undoubtedly given up on Him. Nothing like a resurrection to change a

person's mind about certain things! James, from that day forward, was called and equipped to be a witness to the good news. He became not only a believer, but a **sold-out** believer on a mission. He had received his **Calling**, God's **Provision**, and The **Word** of God. He would never be found on the wrong side of things again. James had been sent out to preach, and he would never be the same.

### **The Calling of God**

The Book of *James* was written around 44 AD, making it the very first book written in the "New Testament" era. James, the pastor of the church at Jerusalem, wrote the book to Jewish believers who had left Judaism to follow Christ. James himself was a devout Jew. It is for this reason that I would like to refer back to the book of *Hebrews* as we begin our study in the book of *James*. I believe that there are three things that every pastor must have in order to be an effective minister of the gospel, and James was undoubtedly a great pastor. The three things every good pastor must have are perfectly illustrated for us as we look at the contents of The Ark of The Covenant.

**"Behind the second curtain was a tent called the most holy place. It had the gold altar of incense and the Ark of The Covenant, covered with gold on all sides, in which was a gold jar containing the manna, Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant."**  
**Hebrews 9:3-4**

The items inside The Ark of The Covenant, I believe, are symbolic; pointing to three things that every pastor must have in order to be effective. When a man is ordained into the ministry, he **must** possess each of these things or he will not succeed.

The first item we will examine is Aaron's staff that budded. You see, when God called Aaron to the priesthood, there were those in Israel who thought themselves to be more qualified. God commanded the heads of each tribe to lay down their staffs before the "tent of meeting", and God Himself would prove to them whom He had chosen (**Numbers 17**). Aaron's staff, made from the dead branch of an almond tree, sprouted and produced flowers and almonds (**Numbers 17:8**). In other words, the dead branch came back to life! Of course, this is a picture of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (also known as "the branch" - **Zechariah 3**), but it was proof of God's "calling" of Aaron to be his High Priest. After that day, no one could argue with the calling of God upon Aaron.

Anyone who would serve as a minister of the gospel must also have an unmistakable calling of God upon his life. No one can "call themselves" to ministry and be effective, although many of us have seen them try. God's calling upon a man's life is irrevocable (**Romans 11:29**). In **Ephesians 4**, we read that Jesus bestows spiritual gifts upon those that He chooses to be pastors.

**"And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into maturity with a stature measured by Christ's fullness."**  
**Ephesians 4:11-13**

So you see, when Jesus appeared to His brother James, it wasn't just a social call. It was a call to preach the gospel. James answered that call with a resounding "yes", and the same shall be required for every man, who surrenders himself to the preaching of the good news. It begins with the calling of God, and it is this calling that gives a man the authority to preach. Apart from the calling of God, no preacher has ever been successful in ministry. It does not matter how worthy, or unworthy, the world may perceive those who receive God's call, for the calling of God isn't based on human qualifications. God simply calls whomever He chooses. No one in their own strength is qualified to preach. God doesn't call the qualified, but rather, HE qualifies those He has called.

### **The Provision of God**

The second thing we find in The Ark of the covenant is a jar of manna. It represents the provision of God. When the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, God saw to it that their physical needs were met by providing manna each day for them to eat. He gave them just what they needed for each day, except on Fridays, when He gave them a double portion, so that they would not have to gather the manna on the Sabbath.

The manna itself is a picture of Jesus, Who came down from heaven to be our bread of life. He gives us exactly what we need each day, as we trust in Him. He has promised that if we seek Him first, then He will meet our physical, as well as, our spiritual needs. Christ IS our provision. He is our Manna from heaven. Every pastor must recognize that apart from Christ He can do nothing. He must also be persuaded to follow after Christ completely, putting the things of this world behind him, for it is impossible to serve both God and money (**Matthew 6:24**). Jesus has called us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him daily (**Luke 9:23**). Any one who would answer the call to preach the gospel must understand this completely. He must be willing to place his trust in Jesus to take care of his every need.

One of my favorite verses in all of scripture is **Psalms 37:25** written long ago by King David:

**“I have been young and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous abandoned or his children begging for bread.”**

You see, to those whom God calls, He also provides. It is His provision, in all things, that allows the pastor to concentrate on the preaching of God’s Word, while relying upon God Himself to take care of the rest. James could have never made it in the first century church at Jerusalem, with its many persecutions and peril from all directions, had it not been for God’s provision. No pastor can. But the good news is; we can trust in God, for **all** things. Even the very wisdom that is necessary to lead a congregation.

**“Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God — Who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly — and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from The Lord, being double-minded and unstable in all his ways.”** **James 1:5-8**

Can’t you just see old “Camel Knees” praying in faith and asking God for wisdom, as he encountered the many challengers that faced the first century church? James shows us just how to trust in the provision of God for our every decision. In his time, everything that he said or did could literally bring life and death consequences. James’ position as pastor of the first century church was crucial to the very survival of Christianity itself. Everything that James had to decide mattered; such as the acceptance of Gentile believers, and whether or not they had to submit to Jewish Law. Mishandling this decision could have irreparably damaged the fledgling Church forever (**Acts 15**). But fortunately, James didn’t rely upon his own wisdom to make such decisions. He got down on those old calloused knees and prayed for God’s provision. Any pastor who will be successful in ministry must do likewise. We need the calling of God, as well as, the provision of God. And that provision is but a prayer away.

### **The Word of God**

The third item we find within the Ark of The Covenant is the tablets of stone, otherwise known as The Ten Commandments. These represent the very Word of God. NO preacher will ever succeed in his ministry, unless he is firmly rooted in God’s Word. *The Bible* is the only relevant source of wisdom that is available to mankind. We don’t need dime store psychology. We don’t need manmade religious rules, rituals, and observances. What this world desperately needs is God’s Holy Word. Too many so-called “preachers” these days actually think that they can make a difference by either watering down God’s Word to make it more palatable, or disregarding it entirely in favor of some “feel good” theology that the

world wants to hear. While you most definitely can build up massive congregations using this type of teaching, what you cannot do is make any spiritual difference. God's Word has been given to us to convict hearts and bring people to repentance and salvation. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy to never stray from preaching the Word.

**"I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, Who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of His appearing and His kingdom: PREACH THE WORD; be ready in season and out of season; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves, because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear."**

**2 Timothy 4:1-3**

The Apostle Paul certainly got that one right, did he not? We live in a day of false teachings, led by so-called "teachers", who want to find a way to live like the world and still get to heaven. **There is no way like that.** We must speak truth to anyone who will listen. Jesus is The Way, the Only Way, and if we want to stand before The Father in Heaven cleansed and forgiven, then we must turn away from our sin and follow Christ. It is the only message that will bring hope to this lost and dying world. And do you know where you will find that message? In The Word of God! So, we must indeed "Preach The Word".

James knew this truth all too well. That is why, in his letter to his Jewish congregation, he admonished the people, not only to "hear The Word", but "live The Word".

**"But be doers of The Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."**

**James 1:22**

James wanted his congregation to fully comprehend that every true believer will strive to be obedient to God's Word. Too many these days have left the ministry because of sin. What this world needs are more people who will leave their sin, so that they can minister! Which one are you?

If James could stand here before us today, it would probably be a bit frightening, for he wasn't one that was known for pulling his punches. James believed in being a living sacrifice. He believed that every Christian ought to live like they have been set apart by God. And, if he were here today, he would give us this charge, to be effective, to go and take a stand for Christ, and make a difference. He would remind us of why we are here.

**"My brothers and sisters, if any among you strays from the truth, and someone turns him back, let that person know, that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."**

**James 5:19-20**

Let this be our charge.

And All of God's people said... **Truth!!!**