



High School Teacher

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Applied Christianity— Studies in James

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1 The Life of James

Scripture: Mark 6:3; Acts 15:13; 1 Corinthians 15:7;
Galatians 2:9

Aim: By the end of the lesson the student will understand the background of James, the man God used to write this book.

NOTE: This is not a traditional help for the teacher; instead, it is a day-by-day guide to aid the teacher in lesson preparation. Use of this guide will assure that the teacher is prepared and that adequate lesson material is available for the class time allotted.

The help for the teacher will be integrated with the student lesson material. The preparation time suggested is ten to fifteen minutes each day for five days. Each section of the lesson material is covered in one of the preparation days. This will allow the teacher, whether a professional or a novice, to be prepared to present each lesson with a minimum of effort.

The key to success is the regular and consistent use of the material. It is vital that the teacher devote a small amount of time each day to lesson preparation.



Daily Plan

Introducing the Lesson

1. Read the Scripture passages for this week's lesson. Read the **Text Commentary** section of the Teacher's Help. Make a note of any parts you don't understand, or of passages that might provoke questions from the class.

2. Read the “Start Here” section of the Student Quarterly. Consider the following questions to use in the introduction of your lesson.
 - A. Who are the best known apostles? Why?
 - B. How many men named James appear in the New Testament?
3. Look up any articles or references you can find on the life of James. Consult your church library or ask your pastor for help.
4. Write at least two good declarative sentences you can use to begin your lesson.
5. Pray and ask the Lord to guide you in your further preparation.



Explaining the Scriptures

1. Read over the Bible passages used for the text of the lesson one more time. Refer to the notes you made on Day 1 concerning any part of the text that is difficult to understand.
2. Read the “Take a Closer Look” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions for use in presentation of the lesson material.
 - A. Where can we find direct information about the life of James?
 - B. What is the best commentary on the Bible?
 - C. What are the names of the half brothers of Jesus?
 - D. Why were surnames, or last names, introduced?
 - E. How were the first surnames formed?
 - F. When was James saved?
 - G. Why did Jesus’ earthly family have a skeptical attitude about his ministry?
 - H. How did God use James’ knowledge of Hebrew Law?
 - I. What great decision did James give as recorded in Acts 15?
3. Use any reference materials you have available to answer any questions you may have discovered from your reading of the text verses.
4. Pray about what you have learned and about your further preparation for this lesson.



Applying the Material to the Lives of the Students

1. Once more read over the Bible passages used as the text of the lesson.
2. Read the “Perspectives” section of the student quarterly. Consider the following questions for class discussion.
 - A. Why is it important to know that Joseph and Mary had other children?
 - B. What would Peter’s name have been in English?
 - C. What would James’ name have been?
 - D. Why is it important that we learn something about the men who wrote the Bible?
3. Write down a specific lesson you have learned from your studies that you want to be certain to share with your class.
4. Pray about what you have learned and about your further preparation to teach.



Making Positive Changes in the Lives of My Students

1. Read again the Bible passages used as the lesson text.
2. Read the “Building Blocks” section of the student quarterly. Choose some of the following questions to challenge your class members to make changes in their lives based on their understanding of the Bible.
 - A. What are the four rules of Bible Interpretation?
 - B. What languages were used to write the Bible?
 - C. How are words like boxes or containers?
 - D. Briefly explain your understanding of the process of inspiration.
3. At this point be sure to have answers to all the questions suggested here and in the lesson material. If you have any other matters that you want

to discuss with your class, note them now so that you can research them before class time.

4. Pray about the lesson material asking God to lead you in your further preparation.



Taking the Lesson Material into Our Future

1. Read once more the Bible passages used as the lesson text. Remember the best way to learn the Bible is to study the Bible.
2. Read the “Springboard” section of the quarterly.
3. Are there students in your class who, like James, may have doubts about who Jesus was and what Jesus did? Don’t be confrontational, but present an opportunity for open and frank discussion of spiritual problems.
4. Present the plan of salvation. Those who are lost need to hear it and those who are saved need to be reminded of it.
5. Discuss some of the ways doubts arise and show how giving in to doubt will rob us of our opportunities to serve the Lord.
6. Make your own brief outline of how you intend to use your class time.
7. Gather any materials you will need for the class and organize them as you intend to use them.
8. Read over the Scriptures for next week’s lesson.
9. Pray again, asking God to guide you and prepare your heart to teach His Word.

Text Commentary

We do not know the exact ages of the family of Joseph and Mary. We do know that Jesus was the eldest son of Mary and that the other four half brothers of Jesus were born later. It is possible that several years separated these children’s ages. But we do know that for most of His life, Jesus lived and worked alongside Joseph and his half brothers in Nazareth.

It must have been evident to them that Jesus was different. He was always the sinless Son of God and He behaved that way throughout His life. At an early age, we see the wisdom of Jesus as He disputed with the elders in the Temple at the Passover. This is recorded in Luke 2:42-52. This revealing passage gives us a glimpse into the early life of our Lord. He was only twelve years old at this time, but He was quite able to take care of Himself and to match His intelligence against the very best scholars in the land. But as we read in verses 49-52, the parents of Jesus did not understand about His future ministry. They did then realize that He had to be about His Father's business.

James grew up in this household and was at first doubtful about the reality of what His half brother was doing as a preacher and teacher. But after the resurrection, James accepted Jesus as his personal Savior and went on to become a great servant of the Lord, even writing the book that bears his name. No wonder this book is about practical Christianity.

For your personal study, here are the Bible references to the five men in the Bible named James:

1. James, the son of Zebedee, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. James' father was a fisherman; his mother, Salome, often cared for Jesus' daily needs (Matt. 27:56; Mark 15:40, 41). In lists of the twelve apostles, James and his brother John form a group of four with two other brothers, Peter and Andrew. The four were fishermen who lived on the Sea of Galilee. Their call to follow Jesus is one of the first recorded events after the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20).

This James is never mentioned apart from his brother John in the New Testament, even at his death (Acts 12:2). When the brothers are mentioned, James is always mentioned first, probably because he was the elder. After the resurrection, however, John became the more prominent, probably because of his association with Peter (Acts 3:1; 8:14). James was killed by Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, sometime around AD 42-44. He was the first of the twelve apostles to be put to death and the only one whose death is mentioned in the New Testament (Acts 12:2).

James and John were a spirited and headstrong element in Jesus' band of followers because Jesus nicknamed them "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). On one occasion (Luke 9:51-56), when a Samaritan village refused to accept Jesus, the two asked Jesus to call down fire in revenge, as Elijah had done (2 Kings 1:10, 12). On another occasion, they earned the anger of their fellow disciples by asking if they could sit on Jesus' right and left hands in glory (Matt. 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45).

James was one of three disciples, Peter, James, and John, whom Jesus took along privately on three special occasions. The three accompanied Him when He healed the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51); they witnessed His transfiguration (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28); and they

were also with Him in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37; Mark 14:33).

2. James, the son of Alphaeus. This James was also one of the twelve apostles. In each list of the apostles he is mentioned in ninth position (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).

3. James the Less. This James is called the son of Mary (not the mother of Jesus), and the brother of Joses (Matt. 27:56; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10). Mark 15:40 refers to him as “James the Less.” The Greek word used is *micros* and can mean either “small” or “less.” It could mean James the smaller in size, James the younger or James the less well-known.

4. James, the father of Judas. Two passages in the New Testament refer to a James, the father of Judas (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). Judas was one of the twelve apostles; he was the last to be listed. This is not the same man as Judas Iscariot.

5. James, the brother of Jesus. James is first mentioned as the oldest of Jesus’ four younger brothers (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3).

One important thing to note is that there is a teaching that states that Mary was a perpetual virgin. This arose sometime in the third and fourth centuries. As you can easily see, the Bible is clear and plain in this matter. Joseph and Mary had other children after they were married. This should be pointed out to your class.

After Jesus’ crucifixion, His half-brother James became a believer. Paul indicated that James was a witness to the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:7). James is even called an apostle (Gal. 1:19) though he was not one of the original twelve.

Following the death of James the brother of John, James the half-brother of Jesus emerges as a leader in the church in Jerusalem. His brothers also became believers and undertook missionary journeys (1 Cor. 9:5). But James remained in the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9). He was an expert in Hebrew law and advocated respect for the law (Acts 21:18–25), but he did not use it as a weapon against Gentiles. Paul indicated that James endorsed his ministry to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:1–10).

The decree of the council at Jerusalem, recorded in Acts 15:12–21, cleared the way for Christianity to become a universal religion. Gentiles were asked only to abstain from things polluted by idols, from immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. The intent of this decree was immensely practical and reflects the wisdom that we will find in the pages of the book of James. It asked the Gentiles to observe certain practices that would offend their Jewish brethren in the Lord and harm their Christian fellowship. But these practices would not represent a real sacrifice for any Gentile believer.

Paul portrays James as a man who was personally devoted to Jewish tradition but flexible enough to modify it to admit Gentiles into Christian

fellowship. This is the man who most likely was the author of the Epistle of James in the New Testament.

Answer Key

Answers given in this section apply to questions in the *High School Journal*.

Start Here

1. Five
2. Authors write them or publishers and editors solicit them.
3. God inspired men to write what He put into their hearts.

Take a Closer Look

Mark 6:3, “Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.”

Galatians 2:9, “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.”

Perspectives

1. The other children of Joseph and Mary
2. History—surnames—last names
3. Son of
4. James Josephson

Building Blocks

Who is speaking? To whom is he speaking? When is he speaking? What is being said? These can be discussed in class.

Springboard

1. No, just the contrary, he expects us to walk in the light.
2. It will be with us throughout eternity.
3. Because these truths will never pass away, even when Heaven and earth do.
4. After the resurrection of Jesus