

James

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 July 2022

Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[0 : 00] Good morning everybody. All right, everybody staying dry? Yeah.

It was, I don't know what it was like up here, but in Cedarville, it's a nice good thunder last night. It was a great storm.

I like the thunder, as long as it's not right on top of you. Or knocks out your power.

Or knocks out your power. Even that could be fun sometimes. Fun lasts for about an hour and then it's not fun anymore. Well, we've been going through talking about the scriptures and all that, and I thought, well, let's, I kind of ran out of material.

So I thought, well, what's next? So let's go through the book of James. That's a good book of the Bible that there's a lot of controversy around it.

[1 : 13] You know, what's up with the book of James? And we'll start with this. So James is actually a book that Martin Luther was unsure of.

Even during the time of the Reformation back in the 1500s, 1600s, I guess mostly the 1500s is when Martin Luther was around. You know, there were still questions about, you know, which books of the Bible should be part of the biblical canon.

And I can't remember that video actually talked about when the canonical books that we recognize today were established. And it was quite a while ago.

I mean, this was maybe 1500 years ago. But Martin Luther, who was, who came up with this, he didn't come up with a concept.

We'll say he rediscovered, right? Justification by faith. That's the thing that he's known for is rediscovering, if you will, from the Bible, this idea of justification by faith and by faith alone.

[2 : 28] But when he read James, he found things in there that just did not seem to line up with what he was seeing, especially from the writings of Paul.

And so at one point he called the book of James an epistle of straw. And why, you know, what does that mean? Well, you don't use that term, I don't think, a lot today.

But if you think about biblically, the Bible talks about building on wood, hay, stubble versus what? Rock, stone, you know, things that are sustainable.

And so I think that's what he meant. And so he was, throughout his life, I think kind of wavered on the canonicity, if you will, of the epistle of James.

I think James belongs in the Bible, for sure. But this is one of those books where we have to be careful about rightly dividing.

[3 : 32] And so we're going to look at that. So if you look at a chart of books in the Bible in categories, we have in the New Testament, well, you have two big categories, right, Old Testament and New Testament.

In the New Testament, we have the Gospels. And then we have what people will call the Pauline epistles. And then the rest of the ones that aren't Pauline, they'll just call the general epistles.

That's what people would typically call them. Why do they call them general? Well, because they're not Pauline. Paul ended up writing, right, wrote most of the epistles.

And so we can identify his epistles with his name. But the rest, there's just, I can't remember how many, four or five that are, are actually probably more than that, because John wrote three, that are just general.

They're not from Paul. They're from everybody else, the other apostles. But I don't think that's a clear enough descriptor. We recognize that there's a difference in the viewpoint, or we might call it dispensation, right, of the different books in these different letters.

[4 : 48] And so we have the Pauline letters, but then the rest, I think it's appropriate to call them kingdom epistles. Kingdom epistles. Because they have to do with the Gospel of the kingdom.

And we'll be digging into that. If you open up to the book of James, I plan to just get through one verse in James today.

So, but we're going to look at a bunch. Because with a book like this, context is really important. And when you look at context, you have, sometimes we just think about the immediate context. You know, the verses before, the verses after. But we have a greater context that we need to look at. This book of James, who was James?

Who was he writing to? Where does he fit in into the storyline? And that's what we're going to do today. So, verse 1 says this, James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[5 : 51] And so there's a lot there. Oh, and to the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad. Greetings. Some people might get confused if they're not familiar with the Bible.

They think, oh, this is a letter written to James. Right? Because that's how we start our letters, right? We start with who it's written to. Back then, you would start with who you are.

You know, today we sign our name at the end and we tell you who's writing at the very end. But in the biblical era, that was not the case.

So this is a book written by James. So the few things we're going to start with. So we're going to ask the question, who's James? Who is James?

But the first thing that we're going to look at is the name James itself. Now, if you have a text with some Greek in it or if you're familiar with Greek at all, you'll notice something about this word, this word that's translated James.

[7 : 04] That's the Greek word, Yakobos. Yakobos. It's actually just a transliteration in Greek from Hebrew.

And it's actually the word, Jacob. Jacob. And that's interesting, the word Jacob. And so really, this book of James would probably more accurately be translated as the book of Jacob.

The book of Jacob. Has anybody ever heard of the book of Jacob? No. Nobody ever talks about the book of Jacob. We hear about the book of James. And if you hear somebody talk about the book of Jacob, you'd be really confused, right?

But this is actually the book of Jacob. The book of Jacob. And well, why is it called the book of James then? If the Greek references Jacob.

And I just looked, did a little bit of research, but evidently the first person to translate this name Jacob as James was Wycliffe.

[8 : 16] And we learned more about him watching that video. And he was one of the first, might even consider the first, to translate the Bible into English.

Now, I have heard in the past that what was the very first kind of popularized English translation. It was called the King James Bible, right?

And it's still around today. It's still the most popular English translation. And I've heard that, well, the reason the book of James is called the book of James is because, well, we wanted to kind of give a little gift or honor in some way King James, who was the one who authorized the King James version of the Bible.

I don't think it was originally called the King James Bible. It was originally called the authorized version. It was authorized by the King. But later on it became referred to as the King James Bible. But it was actually Wycliffe who lived quite a bit before, you know, maybe 150 years or 200 years before King James. But that was a popular English name.

[9 : 27] And he ended up using it. Why? I don't know that anybody, anybody really knows. But a few, just a few comments, more comments on that.

If you go to the book of Matthew, we'll look at Matthew chapter one.

The very beginning of the New Testament. It says the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Verse two, Abraham begot Isaac and Isaac begot Jacob.

And we know who Jacob is, right? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The patriarchs, the early patriarchs that founded Israel. Did you know that the Greek word used here for Jacob in Matthew one verse two is the same word used for James?

It's the same word here. Here it's translated Jacob, which is appropriate because it provides continuity between, you know, two back to the Jacob of the Old Testament.

[10 : 38] But in the book of James and in the other parts of the Gospels, the book of Acts, it's translated as James. If we go down just a little bit further to the 16th verse, we're still looking at genealogy.

We get to the end of the genealogy. This is a genealogy going from Abraham to Jesus Christ. But towards the end of this genealogy, it says, and Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who was called Christ.

So Joseph's father was Jacob. And it's the same name that's translated James. So we have the patriarch Jacob.

Joseph had a father whose name was Jacob. Jacob was actually a fairly popular name. Back then, we find many instances of that name.

There are three other besides the Jacob the patriarch and besides Jacob, the father of Joseph.

There are three more. And we'll consider which of these three wrote the book of James.

[11:47] We're pretty sure it wasn't Joseph's father. We have probably one of the more well-known in the Gospels is James, the son of Zebedee.

Right? And who was James's brother? He had a brother. John. James and John. They were called the sons of thunder. Sons of thunder. And so James and John, the sons of Zebedee.

Again, his name, his actual name was Jacob. We also have another disciple of the twelve disciples whose name was James.

Sometimes we forget that. There were actually two James that were disciples of Jesus. Now, James, the son of Zebedee, gets most of the attention. But there was also another James, James, the son of Alphaeus.

He just gets a couple of mentions in the Bible. But again, his name was Jacob. And then there's another James.

[12:55] James, the brother of Jesus. And some people, you know, there are some Christians that didn't know, they don't know that Jesus had brothers.

But it's right there in the Bible. In fact, let's look at Matthew chapter 13. And towards the end of chapter 13.

Let's start at verse 53. Now, it came to pass when Jesus had finished these parables that he departed from there. When he had come to his own country, he taught them in their synagogue so that they were astonished and said, Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? So James had four brothers.

And then he mentions, they mentioned that he had sisters as well. Jesus had brothers and sisters. In some way we might say, well, really they were maybe just half brothers and half sisters.

[14:09] But he had brothers and sisters by his mom Mary. So we have these three James.

So which one of these three wrote the book of James? Well, it seems pretty clear that it was, even though he doesn't identify specifically, that it was James, the brother of Jesus.

Now, how, why is that, why does that seem evident? Well, James, the brother of John, we know was actually killed pretty early on in the book of Acts.

If we go to Acts chapter 12.

We'll start with verse one. Acts chapter 12, verse one. Now about that time, Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

[15:20] And so James was, was the first of the 12 to be killed. There may have been other, we call them martyrs today.

There may have been other martyrs before then. But I think this is, well, I'm sorry. This is, we know that Stephen, right, was martyred. So he, he definitely wasn't the first, but he was the first apostle that we know of that was killed.

So, you know, with him being killed so early, it's unlikely that he would have, that he would have written a letter. What about James, the brother of Jesus?

Well, there's also James, the son of Alphaeus, but we don't hear much about him. But James, the brother of Jesus, we actually do hear quite a bit about. Some people might wonder, well, where is that?

You know, besides that verse that we just read. But if we go to, let's see. Let's go to Acts 15, just a few pages over.

[16:37] And we'll just briefly touch on this and then we'll go over this a little bit in more detail in just a moment.

But James seemed to be one of the leaders and a very prominent, if not the most prominent leader of the church in Jerusalem.

And we see that in a couple of places, but here specifically in the book of Acts, where Paul goes to, goes to Jerusalem to try to hash out some controversy that he's having with, with other Christians that are teaching his converts.

And he wants to clear some things up with the church in Jerusalem. And so he goes to Jerusalem and has this major council.

And we read, let me see if I can find it. Here in, they have a discussion.

[17:48] And then in verse, let's see, verse 13. And after they had become silent, so before this, Peter, he got up and he talked about him going to the house of Cornelius.

But then afterwards, after Peter spoke and they had a discussion, James answers and he says, men and brethren, listen to me. Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.

And then he continues on. We'll actually get more into this in a second. But he seems to be kind of leading this whole discussion. And so he was a leader in the church.

So it seems that the James who wrote this book of the Bible was likely this James, the brother of Jesus, who had a leadership position in the church.

So let's start. Let's look at another question. If we look again at James 1 verse 1, it talks about who wrote this.

[18:50] But we're also going to look at who it was written to. And he says, to the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad, to the 12 tribes which are scattered abroad. The 12 tribes. Who's that a reference to?

The Jews. Yeah, the Israelites. There were 12. There were 12 tribes. And there are a couple places in the Bible, I didn't write them down, where that term, 12 tribes, is used as a reference, not to count anything, but as just a reference to the Jewish people in general.

It's interesting. I was looking at some of the commentaries on this verse. And a guy named Albert Barnes, he had a lot to say.

But then at the very end, he said this. He said, the phrase, the 12 tribes, became almost a sort of technical expression to denote the people of God, the church.

And so he's trying to make a case that when James says, I'm writing to the 12 tribes, that he's writing to the whole church, Jew and Gentile.

[19:56] And he just stops right there. And I thought, well, why would you say that? Is there any evidence? And he didn't provide any. Which I can imagine why, because there isn't really a reason.

There's no place in the Bible where Gentile people, Christians or not, are ever referred to as the 12 tribes or Israel or anything like that. So this is James, the brother of Jesus, writing to the 12 tribes. And then he adds a little bit of an additional descriptor to the 12 tribes scattered abroad. Let's talk about that for a while. So this word scattered is a Greek word diaspora or diaspora.

Maybe you could pronounce it. And that just means, we might say in English, dispersion. Though we don't use that word commonly, but we do say something like disperse, which means scattered. You know, you disperse something, you scatter. It's like scattering seed. You disperse things, you can scatter seed. And so he's talking not just to any Jew, to Israel in general, but he's talking to specific Israelites, those who have been scattered.

[21:11] What does that mean? Well, that's actually a common phrase, not just used by Christians, but used by Jews, too. So if you Google or search the word Jewish dispersion or Jewish diaspora, then you'll see exactly what James is talking about here.

The diaspora were Jews who were scattered outside of their own land. They were living among the Gentiles.

And that started way back. Well, the very first time was the Babylonian captivity when the Israelites were taken captive.

And they were dispersed. They were taken out of their land. And they were just dispersed among the other Gentile nations or territories. And that happened not only back then, but it has happened throughout time since then.

The Jews have come back and then they persecuted again and dispersed. And even to this day, there are Jews who are considered part of the dispersion, the diaspora, who live in Russia or other parts of Europe.

[22 : 24] And those Jews aren't in their land. They're not part of the Jewish nation. They are citizens of other nations, but they continue to maintain their identity, their Jewish identity, which is absolutely incredible.

There has never been any other people group in the history of the world who has been taken out of their land and integrated with another nation who have maintained their identity. Never. They are always assimilated.

Exactly right, John. They're always assimilated and they take on the identity of the nation in which they live. And that makes sense, doesn't it? You would eventually, you know, people come, this country is a country of immigrants.

So many people have come to this country. And for a generation or two, usually, right, they will maintain the identity of their nation of origin.

China, Poland, Germany, what was the German? Yeah, the Germans. And so they will maintain their language, their culture, their diet.

[23 : 30] But it doesn't usually take more than a couple of generations and those things quickly start to die off. And that is, that makes total sense, right?

And as much as people try to maintain their old identity, you know, their old customs and culture, it typically does not last. With the Jews, that has been not the case.

And it has to do with, really, God's law and what he commanded. It doesn't mean that all Jews have maintained their identity. Some have not. But so many have, especially those who have been faithful to keep the law of Moses as was commanded to them.

Anyway, that was somewhat of a bunny trail. But this diaspora, this dispersion, James is talking, he's writing a letter not to Jews in Jerusalem, but to Jews who live out among the Gentiles.

And this is an important part of the context of what we're reading. Let's read a little bit more about this in the book of Acts. So Acts chapter 2, we'll go back to Acts chapter 2.

[24 : 47] And this is the day of Pentecost. And it talks about the Holy Spirit coming into that upper room and tongues of fire being over their head. And they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And then verse 5 says this, And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And it goes on and on. It talks about how these Jews who were from every nation heard these disciples, specifically speaking in tongues.

It says this, Some people have the idea that on the day of Pentecost that all these people that heard these disciples speaking in tongues were just, you know, a conglomerate of other nations, Gentiles.

But no, these were all Jewish people. They were Jewish people. Some of them were proselytes. They became Jews, even though they weren't born Jews. But most of them were born with Jewish blood in their veins.

But they lived in other nations. And they had an identity with those nations. They spoke the language of those nations in which they were from. But during the Feast of Pentecost, many of them would make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and be there for that feast.

[26 : 52] And that's what was happening here in the Book of Acts. And so, this is a description of scattered Jews.

They lived out in Phrygia and Pamphylia and Egypt and Cappadocia and Mesopotamia and all these different places.

But they came and made a trip to Jerusalem. They spoke the languages of those cultures. So, this is just an example.

Let's look at a few more. So, Acts chapter 8. We'll turn over a few pages. Acts chapter 8. And this is describing Saul, who later became Paul, and his persecution of the church.

Now, Saul was consenting to his death. This is right after the martyrdom of Stephen. At that time, a great persecution arose against the church, which was at Jerusalem.

[27 : 51] And they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles. And that word scattered is that word, the root word, dispersion.

They were dispersed. They were scattered. Just like the Jews of old, who were taken away captive. These, through persecution, decided they fled on their own. They weren't taken captive, but they fled because of the intensity of the persecution.

And then, if we turn over a few more pages to Acts chapter 11. It says there that many of the Jews left, but the apostles themselves, they stayed in Jerusalem.

The leaders did. And then we read in chapter 11, verse 19.

Now, those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen. So, even though this is a few chapters later, it basically is a continuation. There was the martyrdom of Stephen.

[28 : 55] Then a persecution arose. Many of the Christian Jews scattered to other parts of the region. Now, those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

And so, these Jews that had, these Christian Jews that had scattered went to other nations to live. And they had this good news about Jesus Christ.

The word that Jesus Christ had taught them to teach other people. And they shared it among other dispersed Jews who were already living in these nations. Who maybe had never heard of Jesus. Jesus. Jesus mainly, you know, stayed in Israel, right? And so, these became missionaries. We would call them missionaries today.

They were persecuted. They didn't go necessarily to be missionaries. That wasn't their intent. They left because of persecution. But they ended up becoming missionaries.

[30 : 08] Now, we know from the book of Acts that there's this, this guy named Paul and he starts a ministry. And God specifically calls him to go to the Gentiles.

He has this conflict in which he ends up going to Jerusalem. As we study the book of Galatians, the first chapter especially of Galatians gets into that quite a bit.

But this church council convenes in Acts chapter 15 with James, the brother of Jesus, really leading the meeting.

And so, we read from the book of Acts already in chapter 15, verse 13. And I'll just repeat it. It says, after this, they became silent. And James answered saying, men and brethren, listen to me.

How do we know this is James, the brother of Jesus? It could be James, the son of Alphaeus, right? How do we know? Well, let's look at Galatians. Turn over to Galatians.

[31 : 09] Paul provides some additional detail here.

Galatians chapter 2 and verse 9. Paul is talking about this time that he went up to Jerusalem to work out some differences.

Let's see. Where can I start? Verse 7. But on the contrary, when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter.

We'll skip verse 8 because it's parenthetical. Verse 9. And when James, Cephas, who was Peter, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

So, he was talking to the pillars were Peter, James, and John.

[32 : 23] But we know it wasn't James the brother of John because he had passed away by this point. Another thing to consider is Acts chapter 21.

And this will kind of wrap up a bit of the context here. So, to just kind of summarize the story here, we've got James the brother of Jesus, as far as we can tell, wasn't really a disciple of Jesus until after Jesus died and resurrected and ascended into heaven.

But at some point, he seemed to become a leader of the church. We see that in Acts chapter 15. But Jesus had told all of his disciples, I want you to teach everything that I've commanded you, make disciples, and all this.

God called, in the middle of Acts, Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles. And there was a conflict when Paul started preaching to the Gentiles and sharing the gospel with them.

But he ended up going to Jerusalem to meet with the leaders of the church. The big three were James, the brother of Jesus, Peter, and John.

[33 : 58] And when he went to them, they were able to come to an agreement. They ended up sending out a letter. At the end of chapter 15, we see that they sent out a letter to all these Gentile believers, letting them know, okay, we've come to an agreement.

We've decided you Gentile believers don't need to keep the law of Moses. Though we would suggest that you do these few things. They did say that.

And so, Paul's grateful. They sent some of the Jews actually to go deliver the letter. I think that was for veracity's sake. You can imagine if they just gave the letter to Paul and he went, they might

think, well, Paul, you just forged this letter or something.

So they actually sent some of the Jewish brethren along with him. And many actually ministered with him to the Gentiles. But Paul continues on into his second and third missionary journey, preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

Then in Acts 21, we find an important plot point. Acts 21. He returns to Jerusalem. This is for the last time before he's arrested and eventually taken to Rome.

[35 : 11] And let's see, where can we start? Acts 21. Yeah, 15, that's a good one. And after these days, we packed and went up to Jerusalem.

Also, some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Nassan of Cyprus, an early disciple with whom we were to lodge. And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

On the following day, Paul went in with us to James. And all the elders were present. So this was specifically going to James. He was really the leader, it seems, in Jerusalem.

And when he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. Paul was excited about all the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

And so he was sharing it with these leaders in Jerusalem. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord.

[36 : 18] So they were like, that's awesome, Paul. Great to hear. And they said to him, you see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law.

He's saying, you have done a great job among the Gentiles, bringing so many Gentiles to faith. And I want you to know, James is saying, that there are so many Jews in Jerusalem here who have also come to faith.

So you've been working out among the Gentiles, we've been working here among the Jews in Jerusalem. And we both had some measure of success, and we're both excited and sharing our stories.

But the interesting thing here is, he says, and they are all zealous for the law. Now that's kind of confusing. What is that? Christians, zealous for the law?

Now, when you read Paul's writings, is Paul excited about being zealous for the law? Not at all. We found the exact opposite.

[37 : 22] And that's really what the Jerusalem Council was all about. But one thing I think that a lot of people miss is the Jerusalem Council made it very clear that these Gentile believers don't need to keep the law. But was that the case for the Jewish Christians?

Not at all. They were still expected to keep the law. And that causes a lot of confusion for people. So he continues on.

But they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles. And so he's talking about a specific kind of Jew. A dispersed Jew. Part of the diaspora.

Saying, there's this problem. People have heard that, you know, we gave you a letter and we said, hey, it's great. You're going to go preach to the Gentiles.

They don't have to keep the law. They just have to trust in Christ. But now some people have heard that you're not just going to the Gentiles, but you're going to the dispersed Jews.

[38 : 20] To these people, to these Jewish believers and telling them that they don't have to keep the law either. And this is a problem, James said. I'll read this again.

But they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the custom.

And so specific, he's specific about circumcision. And is the Bible kind of muddy on whether Christians should be circumcised or not?

Or is the Bible abundantly clear about that? It's like abundantly clear that circumcision is not a requirement for believers, for Christian believers.

And then basically he says, I need you to do this thing for me to kind of prove to the believers here, to the leaders here, that you're not doing what people say you are doing.

[39 : 23] And so anyway, a lot happens here and it leads to Paul's arrest and on the story goes. So this provides context for the book of James.

Going back to James chapter one, verse one. James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad.

Greetings. And so James is writing a book. James is a Jewish believer in Christ, the brother of Jesus. And he's writing a book to Jews who are scattered.

And we know from the context of the history of what's going on. Now, we don't really know when James wrote this book. But it seems to me that it's likely that it's early on.

In fact, it seems to me that it's likely that James probably wrote this letter to the dispersion, to the people who were scattered, probably not too long after they were scattered, right?

[40 : 25] But it was very likely that he wrote this book before he even met Paul, before he even knew Paul, knew who he was. There's certainly no reference to Paul in this epistle of James.

And so James, his letter, by looking at this context, we can imagine, is just continuing to teach the things that all the Jewish Christians were teaching during this time in this period of Acts.

They were teaching what Jesus taught them to teach, the gospel of the kingdom. The king is coming. And what's the gospel of the kingdom?

You need to believe on the coming king, the Messiah, and believe that he's coming. You need to do other things. You need to continue to keep the law.

You need to become baptized in water. All these things. And so it was just a very clear continuation. And so as we read the book of James, and we start getting into the details, that's the context.

[41 : 34] And if we understand that context, then we won't become as confused and try to mix in some of the things that James is teaching and think, well, how do we make this fit in with what Paul is teaching?

But that's a mistake, right? We shouldn't, you know, most Christians don't do that with Moses, right? They don't say, well, what are the things that Moses taught about the dietary law or what kinds of clothes you should wear?

And let's mix that in with the teachings of Paul. Most, I won't say all, but most Christians make a difference, right? They make a difference between what Moses taught that the Israelites should do and what Paul taught that Christians today under the dispensation of grace should do.

But when it comes to these Jewish apostles, we'll call them, like James, a lot of times people don't make that difference. And we ought to.

Anyway, I'm going to finish there and open it up if anybody has any comments or thoughts. Marvis? Marvis? Marvis? Marvis? Marvis?

[42 : 43] Marvis? So, I don't know if I've understood, but when are you saying that the gospel ended up being just one program now, the grace of God, the church age that we're in?

Okay, that's one of the stickier questions. So, the book of Acts is a book of transition in it. You know, if you kind of just look at the big picture, there's a lot of focus on the 12 apostles and their ministry, especially Peter and John and James.

And as time goes on, there's this new guy, Paul. And then all of a sudden, these other guys, it's like you don't even hear about them anymore.

It's just like little bits. And it's all about Paul. So, that's kind of just this big picture. There's this transition, and you know, this, Pastor Marv has been teaching this for many, many years about the importance of this transition.

It's not always clear when the one ended. It's more clear when the gospel to the Gentiles, the gospel of the grace of God to the Gentiles, to the Jew and Gentile really, began.

[44 : 14] But when the other one ended, and it seems to me that there were promises made, especially to the apostles themselves, that they would sit on the 12 thrones, for example, in the kingdom.

So, it seems that there was a commitment for them to kind of take this thing all the way to its conclusion, to continue to preach this gospel of the kingdom.

But we know from looking specifically, well, in lots of places, but most specifically in Romans 9, 10, and 11, that God decided, because the Jews rejected the message about their Messiah, about their Messiah, that he would cut them off.

And so, this kingdom that was promised would not come to fulfillment. Not now, anyway. And instead, he would go to a different group of people. That transition period.

So, it seemed like there was a time period, we don't know how long, where two messages were being preached. The kingdom, which will eventually come.

[45 : 24] The kingdom will eventually be established, but not when it was kind of originally intended to, because of the rejection by the Jews. And this new message came about to Gentiles.

And today, and this is a mistake a lot of people make, today, if you are a Jew, God is not offering to make you his people through the law. It's not available right now. It will be in the future.

This kingdom will be promised. A lot of the promises in the Old Testament will kind of become available again. But today, if you are a Jew, if you have Jewish blood, the only opportunity you have to become the people of God is to basically become a Gentile.

And come to God as a Gentile through faith alone, not the law. So, I know that's not a very precise answer, but, yeah.

I was just wondering, though, as far as, like, the book that Paul did not write, James and so forth, do we know, were those all written before the switchover to grace alone?

[46 : 39] Some maybe, we know at least Peter, right, he actually mentions Paul. In fact, he mentions Paul and saying, some of the things that Paul writes is very hard to understand. So, we know that at least some were written after Paul.

And so, yeah, that is the case. But some of them we don't know when they were written. What makes it very difficult for people when they say, when you say, well, that doesn't pertain to you. And, you know, it's a religion in the New Testament. And it's very difficult to try and explain that. Yeah, it can be. It can be. Ron, you had something? Yeah, it's interesting that at the beginning of the past, when the one apostle killed himself, the primary concern was we have to have another apostle.

Right. John, the brother of James, or James' brother of John, when they killed him, they didn't replace him. And they didn't replace the others that were died from the martyrdom.

That's a really good point. Yeah. So, for those who couldn't hear, James, or Judas, right, Judas was, he killed himself.

[47 : 53] And he was basically no longer counted among the apostles. But a promise had been made to the 12. And so, in the early part of Acts, they decided they needed to replace him.

They needed a 12th apostle. And so, it was what, Matthias, right? And there was another candidate. I can't remember who it was. But it was Matthias who replaced Judas.

But it was because this promise was made to these 12 apostles. And as the other apostles died, they weren't replaced. Because the promise, you know, they were faithful, basically, right?

They were faithful. So... All right. Thanks, everybody.