

*In search of...*



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# The Men Called James

The word "James" comes from the Greek word Iakobos and is used 42 times in the New Testament. Out of these 42 times there are four different men named James. Let's begin with the most obscure James.

Our first man called James is referred to as Judas Iscariot's father (Lk. 6:16; Acts 1:13 KJV says James is Judas brother). This is all we really know about this man.

Our second man called James is referred to as the son of Alphaeus (Mt. 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk. 6:15; Acts 1:13) and as the son of Mary (Mt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40; Mk. 16:1; Lk.

24:10). This man was one of the apostles and was called James the less (Mk. 15:40). The word "less" comes from the Greek word mikros which can mean one who is small or it can simply mean one who is younger. Either one of these meanings could apply to this James. I must admit it is possible that we have two different men named James here. However, I believe there is enough evidence to show that the above passages are referring to the same man. First of all, I must show that Mary and Alphaeus are husband and wife.

The only verse we have linking these two together is a vague one.

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Some scholars believe that the word "Clopas" is another name for Alphaeus. If this is the case, then this would mean they are indeed husband and wife and James the less is their son. If these are two different men, it doesn't really matter in the over all scheme of things. In either case we know very little about this James.

Our third James, who is also an apostle, is referred to as the son of Zebedee and is usually mentioned with John his brother (Mt. 4:21, 10:2, 17:1; Mk. 1:19, 29, 3:17, 5:37, 9:2, 10:35, 41, 13:3, 14:33, Lk: 5:10, 6:14, 8:51, 9:28,54; Acts 1:13). We also learn from these passages that James, John and Peter went along with Jesus by themselves and were privileged to witness many amazing things. His mother was named Salome which you can surmise by comparing Mt. 27:56 to Mk. 15:40 and 16:1. This James was the first apostle to be martyred under the direction of King Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:1-2). James was killed by the sword most likely by decapitation around 44 A.D.

Our fourth man named James was the half brother of Jesus (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3). At

first, none of Jesus' brothers believed in him (Jn. 7:5). But, after Jesus was raised from the dead and had ascended to heaven, his brothers had become believers. We learn this from the fact that they were gathered together with their mother, apostles and other disciples in prayer and supplication (Acts 1:13-14). Paul states that James saw Jesus after he was resurrected from the dead (1 Cor. 15:7). Paul also says he saw James in Jerusalem when he went to see Peter (Gal. 1:18-19). In addition Paul informs us that this James was married (1 Cor. 9:5).

Now that we have examined these four men that are called James, we need to turn our attention to some passages in Acts and Galatians that refer to James. I believe logic will show us that the James being referred to in these passages are all talking about Jesus half brother. In Acts 15 certain Jews began to say that the gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved and Paul disagreed. So, they were sent Jerusalem to bring the matter before the apostles and elders of the church. When they arrive Peter speaks out first, then a second man named James speaks in vrs 13 – 20. Since James is making decisions and judgments we can conclude he is either an apostle or one of the elders of that church. I believe that James was an elder and was speaking for the eldership just as

Peter was speaking for the apostles. Those who have examined James speech and vocabulary see many similarities in the book of James and they conclude this implies that the author of James and the James in Acts 15 are one in the same. We also have this event recorded in Gal. 2:1-10. In vrs 9 we see James, John and Cephas (Peter) were considered as pillars of the church. Also, in Acts 12:17 after Peter had escaped prison and made his way into Mary's house, he asked them to let James and the brethren know that he had escaped from prison. Logically this would be the same James in all these passages because they were in Jerusalem and James is singled out implying that he played a prominent role in the church (See also Acts 21:18).

We can logically narrow down which of the four men named James are most likely being referred to in these verses. First, we can eliminate Judas father. Second we can eliminate James the son of Zebedee considering he was killed (Acts 12:2) before any of these of events happened. We can also eliminate James the son Alphaeus or son of Mary based on the fact that ever time he is mentioned in the gospels he is always referred to as the son of Alphaeus or the son of Mary. There was always a distinction made so that no one was confused on which apostle James was being talked about. Not to mention the fact we only see this James mentioned in the gospels. This

James fits the time scale perfectly and the early writers such as Josephus and Hegesippus confirm that Jesus half brother was a man who stood out in the community and was martyred for proclaiming Jesus as the son of God. All these things strongly imply that James the half brother of Jesus is the man being spoken of in these passages. He also fits perfectly as being the author of James. Finally, the book of Jude ascribed to Jesus other half brother Jude says this "Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James ..." (Jude 1:1). It almost like Jude is using his brother James for validation. Once again, the best man that would fit this description is Jesus half brother.

It's always interesting to dig into the Word of God and study out such topics as these. I hope that this study has been helpful and will encourage you to study even more.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. (Please note that all scripture references are from the NKJ.)

Cougan Collins

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# Psalm Sixteen

S A O M N Y Z W T I J L D W Y R E J D L  
C C Z P G B Y P R E S E R V E C B I Y F  
N Z Z Z M N C L E N A Y R W D P I A X C  
R C S A I N T S J N K N X V B A E G F X  
X J S X U M O W O Z Y Q T V W X I Q T X  
Z H A M P G Z N I H C F V G V V M O T B  
X Y H A Y A X Y C O U N S E L M N K P A  
S V A V A L C Q E G T J C R V D Q U T H  
M S S M Q W O H S J P V N C H O S E N M  
Z M O I U A F S O Z R R B Q E M P V U O  
K Y R Y Q Y B A T X E F T Y A S D W W H  
I Z Z H U S M C Q X S T S W P H W Y Q Y  
K Z D C K O G B P W E D P Z A G Y N A N  
I Q Z C B R F I W H N M A J R F U N B J  
W G R P R R D I D J C T N C T I N I A L  
C I S B K O K E K B E G W M W O D K N X  
Z J Q H K W J X J D S S K R Z S N K D O  
X P L E A S A N T M U L T I P L Y Q O L  
K U Q A X Q X S V C B K Z E I X L Q N X  
F S Z V Y R E F V W T V Q C K N U B H H  
F G D L S P A T Y S Z E D E S S Z L L E

- “Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.” (vs. 1)
- “I have no good apart from you.” (vs. 2)
- “As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,” (vs. 3)
- “The sorrows of those who run... (vs. 4)
- ...after another god shall multiply” (vs. 4)
- “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;” (vs. 5)
- “The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;” (vs. 6)
- “I bless the Lord who gives me counsel” (vs. 7)
- “I have set the Lord always before me;” (vs. 8)
- “Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices,” (vs. 9)
- “For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,” (vs. 10)
- “...in your presence there is fullness of joy;” (vs. 11)