

Jesus is “only begotten” of God (John 1:18), as the widow of Nain⁴ had an only son (Luke 7:12) and Jaírus an only daughter (Luke 8:42). But “firstborn” occurs in the true sense all through the Septuagint (cf. Genesis 27:19, 32; 43:33; Deuteronomy 21:15), where there were other children.

The inscriptions show it in the true sense. The New Testament instances of “firstborn” are all strictly correct from this standpoint, even Colossians 1:15 and Romans 8:29. “Firstborn” implies other children. Besides, the natural meaning of Matthew 1:25 leads to the same conclusion.

The theory (brother or half-brother theory) that Jesus and James were sons of the same mother, Mary, may be said to hold the field against the others. In fact, it is most likely that both of the other theories grew out of the desire to secure a greater imaginary sanctity for Mary under the impression that she was more holy if she bore only Jesus and did not live as wife with Joseph.

But this is contrary to all Jewish sentiment, and certainly there is nothing in the Gospels to countenance this notion but much to contradict it. We conclude, therefore, that James, the author of the epistle, is the brother of Jesus.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE IN NAZARETH. We must think of the family circle at Nazareth as composed of five brothers (Jesus, James, Joseph, Simon, Judas in Matthew 13:55) and the “sisters.” Every implication is that they all passed as sons and daughters of Joseph and Mary in the usual sense. The order implies also that while Jesus was the eldest, James came next among the brothers. Unfortunately, the names of the sisters are not given.

⁴ “Ναῖν (*Nain*): This town mentioned in Scripture only in connection with the visit of Jesus and the miracle of raising the widow’s son from the dead (Luke 7:11).” (W. Ewing, “*Nain*,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956], III:2111.



The author of the epistle is gifted with imagination and shows knowledge of the apocryphal books, especially the wisdom literature of the Jews. But he is a thorough Jew in his outlook and literary method, so much so indeed that it is contended by some that James wrote the epistle originally in Aramaic, an unlikely supposition. The widespread diffusion of Greek in Palestine amply accounts for the author's grasp of the language.

The epigrammatic and picturesque style is due to the writer's individuality, his environment, and his reading. His vocabulary is rich in words about fishing, husbandry, and domestic life, as one would expect.

A man of the force and position of James could easily broaden his acquaintance with the position of James could easily broaden his acquaintance with the Greek tongue as the years went by. The Greek is pure Koine, with few Hebraisms, though the tone is distinctly that of the Old Testament. He speaks like a prophet of old in the service of Christ. There is no doubt that James came to be a man of culture in a real sense.

He probably married early, as it was the custom of the Jews for men to marry at the age of eighteen. Paul expressly states that the brothers of the Lord were married (1 Corinthians 9:5).

We do not know, of course, the age of James when Jesus began his ministry. In all probability he had already married and had a home of his own in Nazareth. The sisters probably married and settled in Nazareth also (Mark 6:3).

We have no mention of the rest of the children going to Jerusalem when the boy Jesus was taken (Luke 2:41-52). Indeed, it is rather implied that they were not in the company, but this does not mean that James did not have his turn to go at the age of twelve and afterward.



There is no reason to believe that James grew up to be a Nazarite, as Hegesippus quoted by Eusébius alleges: “He is distinguished from others of the same name by the title “just,” which has been applied to him from the first. He was holy from his mother’s womb, drank no wine or strong drink, nor ate animal food; no razor came to his head, nor did he anoint himself with oil or use the bath. To him only was it permitted to enter the “Holy of Holies.” The evident legendary details here deprive the statement of real value except as witness to his genuine piety and to the esteem in which he was held by the people generally.

Hegesippus adds: “His knees became hard like a camel’s, because he was always kneeling in the temple, asking forgiveness for the people,” a description of his life in Jerusalem after he became a Christian.

At any rate, like Joseph his father, he grew up to be a just man and came to be known as James the Just.

LEADERSHIP IN THE JERUSALEM CHURCH. If he was disqualified from being one of the twelve, he was not debarred from liberty to serve. In fact, he was a practical apostle in Jerusalem along with the rest. The twelve kept secrets from James. He gradually won his way to the love and confidence of all the great church in Jerusalem is recognized by Paul on the occasion of his visit to Jerusalem on his return from Damascus, for he says: “I saw none of the other of the apostles—only James the Lord’s brother” (Galatians 1:19 [NASB]). Here Paul treats him as an apostle and practically calls him so.

It is clear from Paul’s reference in Galatians 1:18 that Peter responded heartily to Paul’s advances after once opening his heart to him. They had a delightful fifteen days together. It is not likely that James, being a legalist, held aloof from Paul throughout. This is wholly gratuitous.

(End JAS25-01. See JAS25-02 for continuation of study at p. 11.)

James, the brother of John, has been killed by Herod Agrippa I. Peter has been thrown into prison but has been released by the angel of the Lord in response to the prayers of the church assembled in the home of Mary, mother of John Mark (Acts 12:12). Peter goes to the house and tells the astonished group: “Tell these things unto James now clearly occupies a position of leadership in the church. Peter himself apparently leaves the city for the time being (Acts 12:17). There are already “elders” (Acts 11:30) in the church at Jerusalem. We do not know what the position of James is, but certainly it is one of great honor and leadership. The apostles, since James could not be one of the twelve who were charged with the general work of evangelization, may have been glad for James to be in charge at Jerusalem. Certainly he proved himself fully equal to the task.

James maintains the position of leadership in Jerusalem throughout the narrative in Acts. He is evidently the president of the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:14–21).

He is in charge of the church when Paul visits Jerusalem the last time (Acts 21:18): “Paul went in with us into James; and all the elders were present.” He possessed the confidence of this great Jewish church, the mother church at Jerusalem, and had the ear of the non-Christian Jewish world in a way hardly true of any other disciple of Jesus. Jews would listen to James who would not heed Simon Peter.

THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE. The epistle of James probably was written shortly before the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:14–21), most likely just before, that is, about ad 48 or 49. There is no room here for an extended discussion of the proof of this statement.

On the whole, the weight of the argument is toward the conclusion that James wrote the epistle before the Conference and without reference to the Judaizing controversy.



Paul in Galatians and Romans may very well have in mind a misuse of what James in chapter 2 says about faith and works, which misapprehension he seeks to correct.

The epistle must be placed either between ad 40 and 50, before the Judaizing controversy arose, or in the middle of the second century, after it had died down. The early date has the best of it, in my opinion.

If this date for the writing of the epistle is correct, we have no difficulty in seeing how James could have written it so early. Already about ad 44 we saw his leadership in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17).

No man in the apostolic circles at this period had the ear of the Jewish Christians as did James. This is seen further in the fact that he is asked to preside over the Conference in Jerusalem to settle the issues raised by the Judaizers against the work of Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles. The epistle, therefore, seems to come in at this state of the career of James and is the chief expression left of his mind and life.

CHAMPION OF PAUL AT THE CONFERENCE. I cannot enter upon a formal discussion of the many questions in dispute concerning this great event in the apostolic period. I can only briefly sketch my own interpretation of the part played by James on this occasion.

In brief, it is here maintained that in Galatians 2:1–10 Paul gives report of the private interview with the leaders in Jerusalem after the first public meeting (Acts 15:3f; Galatians 2:2) was adjourned because of the violent opposition of the Judaizers (Acts 15:5). In this private conference Paul, though anxious to win the public support of James and Cephas [Peter], and John, “the reputed pillars” (Galatians 2:9), yet was not willing to compromise the great issue at stake, “our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 2:4) and “the truth of the gospel” (Galatians 2:5).

Paul reveals a certain amount of embarrassment in his references to the three great leaders in Jerusalem, as is manifest in the long and broken sentence in verses 6–10. He roundly asserts his independence of them and affirms that they imparted nothing to him (Galatians 2:6).

It seems clear that some of the more timid brethren were quite disposed to surrender to the Judaizers for the sake of peace and in particular to agree that Titus, a full-fledged Greek convert in Paul's company, should be circumcised. But Paul gave the "pillars" to understand that he would not have peace on those terms. It is quite possible that James, here mentioned before Peter and John as the real leader of the group had not till now clearly understood Paul's true position.

The Judaizers have in all probability counted on James to take their side against Paul, "but contrariwise, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the circumcision they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision (Galatians 2:7–9). Now the coast is clear, and Paul is sure of victory in the open Conference.

In the second meeting of the general Conference James evidently presides and sums up the situation in favor of Paul, after Peter (Acts 15:7–12) has shown how they had already agreed to Gentile liberty in the case of Cornelius and his household.



James, with due deliberation (Acts 15:13), concludes (15:1–21) with a pointed endorsement of Peter’s speech and acceptance of the work at Caesarea and among the Gentiles generally as a visitation of God. He clinches the whole matter by showing that the prophets (see Amos 9:11f.) agree with this position that the Gentiles are to be saved. “Wherefore my judgment is,” he says as the president of the Conference, practically offering a resolution for the vote of the Conference, “that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God” (Acts 15:19). He has put the matter in a very happy form. Surely Jewish Christians could but rejoice to see Gentiles “turn to God.”

James proposes the writing of an epistle to the Gentile Christians to this effect, with the added warning “that they abstain from the pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.”

It is at least open to question whether “what is strangled” is genuine here, since it is wanting in Codex Bezae, ¹ Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Cyprian, as also in 15:28. If so, the prohibition is against idolatry (idol feasts), murder (blood), and immorality (fornication), the great vices of heathenism. But with the text as it stands, “things strangled,” we seem to have a concession to the Jewish ceremonial law and to Jewish prejudices on that point. James is not uneasy about Moses, for he is read in the synagogues every sabbath (Acts 15:21), a reference to the habit of the Christians still to worship in the Jewish synagogues (cf. James 2:2).

¹ Codex Bezae occupies a unique place for several reasons. In the first place, as a bilingual manuscript, with a Greek text and a Latin version on facing pages, it provides a valuable insight into the reception of the Gospels and Acts in the western Christian tradition. The Latin version it contains is one of the small handful of manuscripts which are the most important witnesses to the development of a Latin version before Jerome's famous Vulgate of 382. Secondly, it provides a strikingly different form of text to that preserved in almost every other manuscript, and to the printed Greek text and the translations derived from it. These differences consist in the Gospels in frequent harmonization of the text and in Acts. <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-NN-00002-00041/1> [2d paragraph].



The “wisdom” of James is manifest in this masterly address, which held conviction to such an extent that the resolution of James was carried unanimously by the body of “the apostles and the elders, with the whole church” (Acts 15:22), a remarkable outcome when the bitterness of the Judaizers is considered and a distinct tribute to the influence of James. We may assume that the Judaizers were silent, since they saw that they were hopelessly defeated.

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The epistle which was sent to the church at Antioch (15:23–29) embodies the ideas of James and was probably written by him, since the style is like that of his speech and the epistle that bears his name. The letter expressly disclaims responsibility for the conduct of the Judaizers at Antioch (15:24), pointedly condemns their behavior, commends “our beloved Barnabas and Paul” (vv. 25f.), refers to the messengers Judas and Silas, claims the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the stand for Gentile freedom (v. 28), and repeats the stipulations in the speech of James about the special Gentile sins (v. 29).

James is a champion of the Pauline doctrine of grace as opposed to works. It is interesting to note the phrase “the perfect laws of liberty” (James 1:25).

It is difficult to see how, after this Conference, James and Paul could misunderstand or oppose each other. As we shall see, the real explanation of the apparent conflict between James 2 and Romans 3 is quite other than this unnecessary hypothesis. James is now given the great weight of his character and influence among the Jewish Christians to the endorsement of the work of Paul among the Gentiles.

James is a Jewish Christian but not a Judaizer. He does not wish to impose the burden of the Mosaic ritual upon the Gentiles, though he still observes it himself, as do the other Jewish Christians, including Paul.

MISUSE OF THE NAME OF JAMES. In Galatians 2:11 Paul speaks of a visit of Peter to Antioch, apparently sometime after the events recorded in Galatians 2:1–10. If it were before the Conference, Peter's conduct at Antioch would be largely relieved of the charge of cowardice. But on the whole, we must follow the order of time as given by Paul. We do not, however, know whether this visit of Peter was before the breach between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark (Acts 15:36–41) or after the return of Paul from the second tour (Acts 18:22 f.).

BEFRIENDING PAUL ON HIS LAST VISIT. F. J. A. Hort² thinks that Paul entered the city “with much precaution and avoidance of observation” (Acts 21:16). At any rate, the brethren received him gladly (Acts 21:17), and on the next day Paul made a formal call on “James; and all the elders were present” (Acts 21:18).

So here James is still at the head of the work in Jerusalem as at the Conference. The apostles were present then as they seem to be absent now.

THE STORY OF HIS DEATH. Clement of Alexandria³ says that James the Just “was thrown from the gable [of the temple], and beaten to death by a fuller with a club.”

² **Fenton J. A. Hort** (born April 23, 1828, Dublin—died Nov. 30, 1892, [Cambridge](#), Cambridgeshire, Eng.) was an English New [Testament](#) scholar who produced, with [Brooke Foss Westcott](#), a major critical text of the Greek New Testament. Hort was known for his theological depth and knowledge of the writings of the early Church Fathers. This work served as the basis for the New Testament portion of the English Revised Version of the Bible (1881).

³ *Full Latin name* **Titus Flavius Clemens** c. 150–c. 215. Regarded as a founder of the Alexandrian school of theology and greatest of the Christian apologists of the 2d century, laid groundwork for melding of Christian and Hellenistic thought. (*Merriam-Webster's Biographical Dictionary* [Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Inc., Publishers, 1995], 224).



Hegesippus gives a long and legendary account of the death of James to the effect that the people of Jerusalem who called James “the Just” were so enraged when he bore witness to Jesus as the Son of man that they flung him down from the gable of the Temple, stoned him, and a fuller clubbed him. “And they buried him on the spot by the temple, and his monument still remains by the temple.”

But Josephus gives an entirely differenced and much more credible narrative of the death of James, placing it about ad 62 or 63.

He charges the Sadducees through the high priest Ánanus, with the death of James and adds: “Ánanus, therefore, as being a person of this character, and thinking that he had a suitable opportunity, through Festus being dead, and Albinus still on his journey (to Judaea), assembles a Sanhedrin of judges; and he brought before it the brother of Jesus who is called Christ (his name was James) and some others, and delivered them to be stoned, on a charge of being transgressors of the law.” So he won a martyr’s crown. He was called “the Just.” He had accused the wicked rich of killing “the righteous one” (James 5:6).

The readers. “The twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion” naturally refers to the Jews who are scattered in the Gentile world outside Palestine.

The technical term διασπορά (*diasporá*) occurs in only two other places in the New Testament (John 7:35; 1 Peter 1:1). The term “twelve tribes” in James merely means the Jews as a whole in the dispersion, for the tribes were not preserved in a distinctive way outside of Palestine.



Doubtless, modern Jews are simply a blend of all the twelve tribes. At the time when James wrote, the Jews were very numerous in all the great commercial centers of the world, such as Alexandria, Antioch, Babylon, Ephesus, Miletus, Pergamum, Rome, Thessalonica. But it is more than probable that James has in mind chiefly the Eastern dispersion in Babylonia and Mesopotamia, as Peter (1 Peter 1:1) addressed the Western dispersion. But it is more than probable that James has in mind chiefly the Eastern dispersion in Babylonia and Mesopotamia, as Peter addressed the Western dispersion.

[James] does not conceal his view of Jesus. In the very first verse he speaks of “the Lord Jesus Christ,” and these words give His human name Jesus, His title Christ (Messiah), and His lordship (deity). Besides, in 2:1 James speaks of Jesus as the object of faith and of worship.

The Occasion. The picture drawn in the epistle is that of Jewish Christians of the poorer classes, with a small number of richer brethren (1:10), struggling for life in the midst of a social and economic environment that was utterly unsympathetic, not to say hostile. The process of adjustment was difficult and perilous. There were perils to the individual and to the church life, and James shows real mastery of the situation that confronted the Jewish Christians in the middle of the first century in their scattered regions where they were found. He writes to them in a firm tone but with manifest understanding and sympathy.



CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE. The author, as already shown, writes in the smooth and easy Koine of a gifted and cultivated Jew of Palestine. One does not have to say with Patrick that James had a wide knowledge of classical Greek. He may never have read a line of “classical” Greek, but he knew well the current Greek of his day and used it with fine skill. It is not a labored production and is in no sense artificial. The author is full of the Old Testament and writes like one of the prophets; yet he has a firm grip upon the essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The book forms a fine link between the Old and New Testaments. James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, understands the Old Testament and loves Moses still. He seeks to interpret Christianity more fully on its ethical and social side to the Jewish Christians of his time, who are in sad need of help, beset as they are by Jew and Gentile, and with an imperfect grasp of the new gospel.

They find in this epistle just what they need to make practice correspond to profession, to square life with creed. The lesson is still needed today.

3. The third writer we will consult is **Douglas J. Moo**. He is the Kenneth T. Wessner Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School in Wheaton, Illinois. I will cite excerpts from his book, *The Letter of James*, published in Grand Rapids, Michigan, by the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., in 2000:

I. THE LETTER IN THE CHURCH. *The Letter of James* is not addressed to a single church but to “the twelve tribes scattered among the nations” (1:1). The general address led early Christians to categorize James, along with the similarly vaguely addressed 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude, as a “general” or “catholic” (in the sense of “universal”) Letter. James was not finally recognized by both the eastern and western parts of the church until the fourth century.

The Letter of James was, of course known and used by many Christians long before then. The *Letter* is first mentioned by name early in the third century. But ancient Christians were in the habit of quoting from books and using their content without naming them. So determining how early James was used in the early church depends on identifying places in early Christian literature where the teaching of James is cited or referred to.

But such an identification is not always easy since much of what James teaches is traditional. Origen (är'-e-jen),⁴ Christian writer and teacher, was one of the Greek Fathers of the church. He is the first to cite James by name. He attributes the *Letter* to James, “the apostle,” and cites the *Letter* as Scripture. In the Latin translation of Origen’s works, the author is more explicitly identified as “the brother of the Lord.”

Calvin accepted the full apostolic authority of *The Letter* and argued that Paul’s and James’s perspectives on justification could be harmonized so as to maintain the unity of Scripture. Calvin’s approach to James is standard among the community of believers. And it is surely the right one. With a better appreciation of the Jewish background against which James is writing and the benefit of distance from the battles Luther was fighting, we can both value the distinctive message of James and see how that message can be harmonized with the message of Paul. James has his own contribution to make to our understanding of Christian theology and practice. That contribution provides an important counterweight to the potential imbalance from reading Paul alone. The early Christians who, under the providential guidance of God, accorded to James canonical status recognized the inherent value of James in this regard.

(End JAS25-02. See JAS25-03 for continuation of study at p. 21.)

⁴ Órigen (185–254 AD). Christian writer and teacher. One of the Greek fathers of the church; head of the catechetical school in Alexandria (c. 211–232); later founded the school in Caesarea. (*Merriam-Webster’s Biographical Dictionary* (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Inc., Publishers) 1995), 785.

II. NATURE AND GENRE. First, the book's opening words identify what follows as a Letter. *The Letter* was a very broad literary category in the ancient world, encompassing everything from brief notes of information and request to long argumentative discourses.

Absent from *James* are the customary greeting, references to fellow workers, and travel plans that mark many ancient and New Testament *Letters*. Also missing are references to specific people, places, or situations in the body of *The Letter*. Where James does refer to a situation, he casts it in a vague, even hypothetical manner.

It was for these reasons that early Christians classified James as a "general" *Letter*: one written to the church at large rather than to a specific church or group of churches. But while *The Letter* does not single out individuals or places, it pretty clearly reflects a specific set of circumstances that would not be true of people living just anywhere. Most scholars agree, therefore, that James addresses a specific church or, more likely, group of churches.

The Letter is the form in which James has transmitted general admonitions concerning their situation. James is therefore more a "literary" than a personal letter; the closest parallel to it in the New Testament is perhaps 1 John.

A second feature of James that would immediately impress the ancient reader is the degree to which James borrows from traditional teaching. Two kinds of sources figure especially often in *The Letter*. First, James depends more than any other New Testament author on the teaching of Jesus. It is not that James directly quotes Jesus.

It is, rather, that he weaves Jesus' teaching into the very fabric of his own instruction. Again and again, the closest parallels to James's wording will be found in the teaching of Jesus—especially as recorded in *The Gospel According to Matthew*. And the topics he addresses as well as the particular slant that he takes on these topics mimics Jesus' own emphasis.

Second, *The Letter* also betrays a striking number of similarities to the words and emphases of a certain segment of Hellenistic Judaism, represented to some extent by the Alexandrian philosopher Philō, but especially by the apocryphal book *Sírach* and the pseudepigraphal book, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

Recent scholarship, influenced by modern literary techniques and insights, has reopened the question of structure with a vengeance; and we will consider this matter more carefully later. But the very number of suggestions for the outline of *The Letter* betrays the very point we are making here: *The Letter* has no obvious structure, nor even a clearly defined theme. Moral exhortations follow closely upon one another without connections and without much logical relationship.

These three facets of the letter led Martin Dibelius [*Dibálēus*] to classify the letter as παραένεσις *paraénesis* [Note: to exhort, advise, to speak of, praise, commend, counsel; a hortatory composition (*The Compact Edition of The Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. II, p. 451)].

And because Dibelius wrote one of the most influential modern commentaries on James, his view of the nature of *The Letter* has found a good number of adherents. The ancient genre of paraenesis, according to Dibelius, was characterized by four factors that make it a perfect fit for James: (1) a focus on exhortation; (2) a general rather than specific situation; (3) the use of traditional material; and (4) loose organization.



But the popularity of Dibelius's [*Dibálēus*] approach to *The Letter* has waned considerably in recent years. Scholars have cast doubt on the whole idea that there was an identifiable *genre* such as *paraenesis* [*paraenesis*] in the ancient world. Modern scholars are far more inclined to find important motifs and themes that bind the apparently diverse exhortations of James together.

Taking the place of paraenesis as probably the most popular genre identification of James is wisdom.

Indeed, many contemporary scholars insist that *paraénesis* should be seen as one component of wisdom literature. The latter speaks directly about wisdom in a central passage (3:13–18; cf. also 1:5), and the brief, direct, and practical admonitions found at many places in *The Letter* resemble the style of wisdom books from the Old Testament (e.g., *Proverbs*) and the intertestamental period (e.g., *Wisdom of Solomon*).

Moreover, some of the concerns of James are also key concerns in these wisdom books (e.g., speech, dissension, wealth and poverty). But the issue of wisdom is not at all central to the book as a whole; and most of *The Letter*, in fact, does not consist of the brief proverbs familiar from wisdom books. Much depends on how broadly we understand “wisdom”; contemporary scholarship has a tendency to subsume a great deal under that rubric.

Suffice it to say here that only a very broad definition of “wisdom” would enable us to categorize James as a whole as wisdom; and we are not convinced that so broad a definition is justified.

III. AUTHOR. A. The Case for James the brother of the Lord.

The writer of *The Letter* identifies himself simply as “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1:1). The Greek name it translates, Ἰάκωβος (*lákōbos*), occurs forty-two times in the *New Testament* and refers to at least four different men.



Three of them are mentioned in one verse, Acts 1:13. James, the brother of the Lord, ... is mentioned in the *Gospels*, but he became a follower of Jesus only after the resurrection (*cf.* 1 Corinthians 15:7 and John 7:5).

He attained a position of leadership in the early church (Acts 12:17), where we find him dialoging with Paul about the nature and sphere of the gospel ministry. None of the other Jameses mentioned in the New Testament lived long enough or was prominent enough to write *The Letter* we have before us without identifying himself any further than he does. Christians have traditionally identified the author of *The Letter* with James the brother of the Lord.

A well-known James must have written *The Letter*, and the brother of the Lord is the only James we know of who fits the profile. Proof is, in the nature of the case, unavailable. But several circumstances about *The Letter* at least corroborate this conclusion.

First, *The Letter* has a few suggestive similarities to the wording of the speech given by James of Jerusalem, the brother of the Lord, at the Apostolic Council (Acts 15:13–21) and to the letter subsequently sent out by him to Gentiles in northern Syria and southern Asia Minor (Acts 15:23–29).

The epistolary “greeting” occurs in James 1:1 and Acts 15:23, but in only one other place in the New Testament; the use of “name” (ὄνομα [*ónoma*]) as the subject of the passive form of the verb “call” (καλέω [*kaléō*]) is peculiar, yet is found in both James 2:7 and Acts 15:17.

The appeal, “listen, my brothers,” occurs in both James 2:5 and Acts 15:13; and several other less striking similarities are also found.

Second, the circumstances reflected in *The Letter* fit the date and situation in which James of Jerusalem would be writing. We sketch some of these circumstances in the section that follows.

