

JAMES: A LEADER IN JERUSALEM

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: ?? From Roy H. Enoch (10-23-1994).
- B. There are five James mentioned in the NT.
 - 1. James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John was an apostle. He was beheaded by Herod Agrippa I (Ac. 12:2).
 - 2. James, the son of Alphaeus, is an apostle and always mentioned 9th in the list of apostles.
 - 3. James the less, Mark 15:40, is called the son of Mary (not the mother of Jesus) and the brother of Joses.
 - 4. James the father of Judas, is mentioned twice in the NT (Lk. 6:16; Ac. 1:13).
 - 5. James the brother of Jesus always heads the lists of His brothers (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3).
- C. Jesus' brothers and sisters are only briefly mentioned (Mt. 13:55-56; Mk. 6:3).
 - 1. In the 3rd and 4th centuries when the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary was beginning to be taught, it was argued these were not the children of Mary.
 - a. Some claimed that these were children of Joseph by an earlier marriage.
 - b. Others explained that they were merely cousins.
 - c. Both of these explanations are forced and not the normal meaning of the words.
 - 2. The NT seems to indicate that Mary and Joseph had children after the birth of Jesus (Mt. 1:25; 12:47; Jn. 2:12; Ac. 1:14).
- D. This study:
 - 1. The brothers of the Lord.
 - 2. How James was a leader of the church in Jerusalem.

I. THE LORD'S FAMILY DID NOT BELIEVE IN HIM DURING HIS PERSONAL MINISTRY.

- A. They sometimes interrupted His preaching and teaching to speak with Him and He did not place them above His disciples (Mk. 3:31-35 cf. Mt. 12:46-50; Lk. 8:19-20).
- B. Toward the end of His ministry His brothers did not believe that He was the Messiah (Jn. 7:5).
- C. They did believe after His resurrection.
 - 1. They were with the disciples assembled in the upper room (Ac. 1:14).
 - 2. Paul tells us that James saw the Lord after His resurrection (1Cor. 15:7).
 - 3. Paul also said that the Lord's brothers took their wives along as they traveled preaching the gospel as did the apostles (1Cor. 9:5).

II. JAMES BECAME A LEADER OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH.

- A. When Paul wrote Galatians, probably before the Jerusalem conference, he referred to James as an apostle (Gal. 1:19).
 - 1. This may be using the word in a general way as Luke refers to Barnabas and Paul (Ac. 14:14).
 - 2. James was not one of the twelve, but neither was Paul.
- B. While Paul was at Antioch, "certain men came from James..."
 - 1. They had great influence, even over Peter (Gal. 2:11-12).
 - 2. We do not know whether these were the same ones mentioned in Acts 15 (Ac. 15:1).
 - 3. The letter from the Jerusalem church denied sending them (Ac. 15:24).
- C. In Galatians, Paul also refers to James as one of the pillars (Gal. 2:9).
 - 1. This seems to have been Paul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion and was probably the one mentioned in Acts 11:29-30.
 - 2. This would have been just before their missionary journey that established the churches of

Galatia.

- D. At the Jerusalem Conference, just after the first missionary journey, James seems to be the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Ac. 15:6).
 - 1. "And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them:..." (Ac. 15:7).
 - a. Peter described how God had chosen him to first preach to the Gentiles (Ac. 15:9).
 - 2. Then Barnabas and Paul spoke (Ac. 15:12).
 - 3. James rendered a decision from the church, and sent a letter to the churches (Ac. 15:19-21).
- E. Several years later when Paul brought the contributions from the Gentile churches of Greece and Asia, James still seems to be the leader of the Jerusalem church (Ac. 21:17-21). Paul reviewed their work (Ac. 21:19).
 - 1. These leaders claim that of the "many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are ALL zealous for the law."
 - 2. This may have been more characteristic of James and the elders than of All Jewish believers.
 - 3. Anytime we say "Everybody thinks this way," or "Everyone does this" we are inaccurate.
 - 4. There seems to be strong justification for the suspicion of prejudice against Paul.
 - a. When the seven days of the Feast of Pentecost were almost over, some stirred up the crowd with a false charge against Paul (Ac. 21:27-29).
 - b. It is difficult to create that kind of uproar if there is not some bias against the person.

III. JAMES' DEATH WAS ALSO AN ACT OF GREAT PREJUDICE.

- A. Josephus tells of the death of James in ANTIQUITIES OF THE JEWS, Book 20, Chapter 9. (30-35 years after James' death)

At the death of Festus, Nero sent Albinus to be procurator of Judea, and Herod made Ananus, the son of Ananus High Priest. He was of the sect of the Sadducees and severe in judging those who offended them. Before Albinus got there, "he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called X, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed to the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done;..."
- B. EUSEBIUS' ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, Book 2, Chapter 23 gives another account of the death of James. (325AD)

"But the Jews, after Paul has appealed to Caesar, and had been sent by Festus to Rome frustrated in their hope of entrapping him by the snares they had laid, turn themselves against James the brother of the Lord,...Conducting him into a public place, they demanded that he should renounce the faith of X before all the people; but contrary to the sentiments of all, with a firm voice, and much beyond their expectation, he declared himself fully before the whole multitude, and confessed that Jesus X was the Son of God, our Savior and Lord. Unable to bear any longer the testimony of the man, who, on account of his elevated virtue and piety was deemed the most just of men, they seized the opportunity of licentiousness afforded by the prevailing anarchy and slew him....in the words of Clement that he was thrown from a wing of the temple, and beaten to death with a club."
- C. After the death of James, the Jerusalem church became more strict in following Jewish tradition and was finally destroyed.

CONCLUSION.

- A. James was nicknamed "the just" because of his godly, devoted life.
(What spiritual term would best describe each of us?)
- B. James continued to tolerate Gentile Xians, but seem to be very committed to the Law and its customs.

- C. He seemed to be almost a buffer between the zealous "law-keepers" and the Gentile Xians.
- D. He died in about 62AD, and was probably in his late 50's.
- E. He was a godly man who had great influence on the church.