



THE IRON ROD

Hold to the rod, the iron rod; 'Tis strong, and bright, and true.
The iron rod is the word of God; 'Twill safely guide us through.



March/April 2023

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES

The Epistle of James (), with those of Peter, John, and Jude, is termed catholic. Ecumenius gives the following reason: "These epistles are called catholic, universal, or circular, because they were not written to one nation or city, but to believers everywhere."

Yet as these Epistles had some difficulty at first to get into general circulation, but at last were everywhere received, it is more likely that they obtained the term "catholic" from the circumstance of their being at last universally acknowledged as canonical; so that the word "catholic" is to be understood here in the same sense as "canonical."

Who the writer of the Epistle in question was is difficult to say; all that we know certainly is, from his own words, that his name was James, and that he was a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus. Two persons of this name are mentioned in the New Testament: James the son of Zebedee, called also James the elder; and James "the less" or the "little one," called the son of Alphæus, and brother of our Lord. Michælis leans to the opinion that James the son of Zebedee was the author. Other great authorities ascribe it to James, called the brother of our Lord, who was president, or bishop, of the church in Jerusalem. Even allowing this opinion to be correct, it is not agreed in what sense James is called our Lord's brother, there being four or five different opinions concerning the meaning of this term. From Matt. 13:55-56 we learn that there were four persons called brethren of our Lord: "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" Now it is generally allowed that the James here is the author of this Epistle, and the Jude or Judas mentioned with him the author of that which stands last in this collection. But with respect to the meaning of the term "brother," as here used, it will be necessary to state the opinions of learned men:

1. It is supposed that these were children of Joseph, by a former marriage; this is a very ancient opinion, as there is nothing improbable in the supposition that Joseph was a widower when he married the blessed Virgin.

2. They are supposed to have been children of Joseph and his wife Mary, all born after the birth of our Lord. This is an opinion extremely probable.

3. That they were called our Lord's brethren because children of Joseph by the wife of one of his brothers, who had died childless and whose widow Joseph took, according to the Mosaic law, to raise up seed to his deceased brother. This is very unlikely because, in this case, it would have been only requisite for Joseph to have had one male by his brother's wife; but here we find four, besides several sisters.

4. That Cleophas, called also Alphæus, married a sister of the blessed Virgin, called also Mary, by whom he had the above issue; and that these were called brethren of our Lord, from the common custom among the Hebrews to term cousins "brethren." The first and second of these opinions appear to me the most probable.

The Epistle itself is entirely different in its complexion from all those in the sacred canon; the style and manner are more that of a Jewish prophet than a Christian apostle. It scarcely touches on any subject purely Christian. Our blessed Lord is mentioned only twice in it, chap. 1:1; 2:1; but it has nothing of His miracles or teaching, of His death or resurrection, nor of any redemption by Him. It begins without any apostolical salutation and ends without any apostolical benediction. In short, had it not been for the two slight notices of our blessed Lord, we had not known it was the work of any Christian writer. It may be considered a sort of connecting link between Judaism and Christianity, as the ministry of John the Baptist was between the old covenant and the new. There is neither plan or arrangement in it; but it contains many invaluable lessons which no serious person can read without profit.

Well, that's enough for this time around. I hope you enjoy this and the following discussions. I pray that they are helpful to you in your endeavors in studying the scriptures.

Before you speak ...

T - is it True? H - is it Helpful? I - is it Inspiring?

N - is it Necessary? K - is it Kind?



It's what's on the inside not what's on the outside. Be gracious.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY CORNER

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. (James 1:5)

NOTE: All verses quoted from the Bible are from the Authorized or King James Version (KJV). Other references are from the Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. These books of Scripture are the Standard Works of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

And thou shalt speak unto all that are wise hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to consecrate him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. (Exodus 28:3)

Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. (Deuteronomy 4:6)

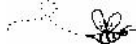
And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. (1 Kings 4:29)

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With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding. (Job 12:12)

The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment. (Psalm 37:30)



The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever. (Psalm 111:10)

To him that by wisdom made the heavens: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Psalm 136:5)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. (Proverbs 1:7)

For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:6)

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed. (Ecclesiastes 8:1)

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; (Isaiah 11:2)

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. (Isaiah 29:14)

Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: (Jeremiah 9:23)

And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: (Daniel 2:21)

Eternity, Atonement, Sacrifice, Truth, Exhilaration, Resurrection

BIBLE TRIVIA

1. Who burned Joab's barley field just to get his attention?
2. Who burned the Philistines' grain by tying torches to the tails of foxes?
3. What king of Babylon burned Jerusalem?
4. What Cannanite city was burned down by the men of Dan?
5. What Israelite had his goods burned after he had been stoned to death?
6. What nation burned David's city of Ziklag?
7. What king committed suicide by burning down his palace with himself inside?
8. What judge killed about a thousand people when he burned down the tower of Shechem?
9. What Israelite city was burned up by Pharaoh?
10. What tribe of Israel sacked Jerusalem and burned it?

WORD -- Write, Observe, Relevant, Declare

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children. (Matthew 11:19)

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? (Mark 6:2)

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33)

h.o.p.e. = hold on, pain ends

HYMNS OF FAITH

JESUS, THE VERY THOUGHT OF THEE

Hymns 1985, #142



Jesus, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see
And in thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the mem'ry find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Savior of mankind!



O hope of ev'ry contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek!



Jesus, our only joy be thou,
As thou our prize wilt be;
Jesus, be thou our glory now,
And thru eternity.



Questions About the Bible

1. Where did David go after being anointed king over Israel? (2 Samuel 5)
2. Who built David a house?
3. Why did David inquire of the Lord?
4. What was David able to do?
5. What did the Lord tell David to do when the Philistines came again?
6. Why did David and thirty thousand "chosen men of Israel" go to Gibeah?
7. Why did Uzzah die? (See also D&C 85:8)
8. Why did David put the ark in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite?
9. Why did David take the ark to the city of David?
10. What did David do when he had finished offering sacrifices?

Questions are taken from *A Reading Guide to the Old Testament* by David H. Mulholland, published by Deseret Book Company, 1989

Do not ask God what He can do for you,
but Ask God what you can do for Him.