

Band of Brothers

The Books of James and Jude

Detailed Outline from the Sermon on August 3, 2008

This is first time I've ever preached these two books together. It's fitting, since they are written by two of Jesus' brothers. They are half brothers, in a sense, since James and Jude are born of Joseph and Mary, while Jesus is born of Mary and the Holy Spirit. Both brothers, most agree, were holdouts during the life and teaching of Jesus. Then, after the resurrection, they came to the point of faith and became leaders in the early church. It's clear that both books are motivated by their desire to see Jesus, their brother, well represented, especially in light of people who have painted Jesus to be softer than he really was.

Book of James

Who is this James?

There is almost universal agreement – James is not the brother of the apostle John, but is the brother of Jesus who became the primary pastor of the Jerusalem church.

Here are the main themes:

1. Trials and Temptations. (1:2-8, 12-15, 5:7-12)
 - Rejoice when you encounter various trials. They build perseverance. They grow character.
 - Like one of Jesus' beatitudes, James says "blessed are you when you face trials."
 - Later, he says to be patient like a farmer waiting for crops. Stand firm; don't grumble (5:8). You can do this.

2. Rich and Poor (1:9-11, 1:16-18, 2:1-12, 5:1-6)
 - Those who are poor should take pride in their position. Those who are rich should be humble. Riches will pass away like a flower scorched by the sun.
 - Every good gift comes from above...especially the word of truth.
 - There should be no favoritism of rich over poor – which sounds so much like Jesus.
 - You rich, weep and wail! See how you've treated the people who've mowed your fields and harvested your crops; while you live in luxury and self-indulgence. Again, so much like Jesus.

3. Listening and Doing (1:19-27, 2:14-26)

- Be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.
 - Don't merely listen...DO!
 - Pure and faultless religion cares for widows, orphans and keeping ourselves unpolluted by the world.
 - Can faith be real without works that authenticate faith? James argues with the libertines.
 - Some people think that James conflicts with the teachings of Paul regarding salvation by faith alone. Not so. Paul is arguing against legalists who are trying to earn God's favor with religious activity. James is arguing with libertines who think that once faith delivers the benefit of forgiveness, then lifestyle doesn't matter. James and Paul are not fighting each other. They are fighting back to back against different enemies.
4. Taming the Tongue (3:1-12)
- The tongue is like a horse that needs a bit, a ship that needs a tame rudder, and a spark that can set a forest on fire.
 - The tongue is a restless evil...with it we praise God and curse men?
5. Humility and Arrogance (3:13-4:17)
- People who harbor envy and selfish ambition, who seem wise in the ways of the world – look out.
 - Wisdom from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruit.
 - So submit to God...loosen your friendship with the world's ways...grieve, mourn and humble yourselves...(4:10)
6. Confession and Prayer (5: 13-18)
- Are you in trouble? Pray.
 - Are you very sick? Call the elders for prayer and anointing.
 - Have you sinned? Confess to one another and enjoy the healing benefits of transparency and accountability.
7. One Thing to Remember (5: 19-20)
- Whoever turns a sinner from his ways (someone who wanders from the truth) will save him from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Book of Jude

1. So, who is Jude?
 - Also called Judas, Jude is the youngest of the 5 sons of Mary. (Jesus, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas as mentioned in Matt 13:55) He goes by the name of Jude, instead of Judas (wouldn't you?).
2. Why did Jude write this? (3)

- To battle the libertines...people who misinterpret Jesus to be soft on sin. Libertines believe that once God's mercy is established, then lifestyle doesn't matter. They tended to live in riotous ways, cheapening the grace of God and ignoring the teachings that lead to a lifestyle of noble service and restraint.
3. What is the problem? (4)
 - Grace as license. Because God's grace covers me, I now have a license to live in every self-indulgent way.
 4. What happens if we go that way? (5-10)
 - We're subject to God's discipline and judgments.
 - We pollute our own bodies.
 - We reject authority.
 - We slander celestial beings.
 5. Woes and Warnings (11-14)
 - From the Bible – Remember Cain? Remember those who rushed into Balaam's error? (In spite of God's warnings, they went into riotous lives and led others to do so.
 - From nature – People like this are like shepherds who feed themselves
Clouds without rain...trees without fruit...wild waves of the sea...wandering stars.
 6. What should I do? (17-23)
 - Heed the apostles' teachings. (17-19)
 - Build yourselves up in the faith. (20)
 - Pray in the Holy Spirit. (20)
 - Keep yourselves in God's love. (21)
 - Be merciful to those who doubt. (22-23)
 - Snatch others from the fire. (23)
 7. A tremendous benediction (24-25)

