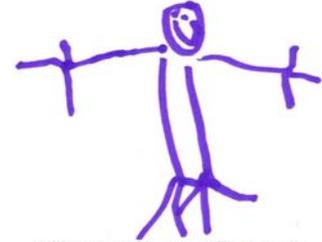


James 1:1 – What’s your perspective?

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

If you were to draw a self portrait, what would it look like?
Each of us has a different self perspective.

What is perspective? Things look differently when you change your position. We each have different “views” of ourselves and others.



Self portrait by Camille Martin

1. Who was James?

a. How other people saw James:

i. Brother of Jesus

- (1) Taught by Mary & Joseph and grew up with Jesus (Matt 13:55; Mark 6:3) .
- (2) Sibling rivalry?
- (3) Probably did not believe in Jesus before the resurrection (Mark 3:20-21).
“For even his own brothers did not believe in him” (John 7:5).

ii. Disciple

- (1) Witnessed Jesus after the resurrection (1 Cor 15:7).
- (2) Leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15, 21).
- (3) Resolved the dispute over Gentiles in the church (Acts 15).

iii. James the Just (or Righteous). See Eusebius, *Church History*, 2.23; Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.9.1 § 200-201.

- (1) James was recognized as a righteous man even by Jews outside of the church.
- (2) A man with caloused knees – like a camel – from many hours at prayer.
- (3) He was martyred for his faith in Jesus – thrown from the pinnacle of the temple and beaten to death with a fuller’s club (a fuller is a person who washes clothes).

b. How James saw himself:

i. What did James not say about himself?

- (1) James makes no boast of personal piety.
- (2) James does not even admit that he is Jesus’ brother.

ii. What did James say about himself?

(1) Servant of God = “Slave of God.”

- (a) Paul (Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; Phil 1:1) refers to himself as a “slave of God.” Jacob (Gen 32:10), Joshua (Jdg 2:8), and David (Ps 89:3) are all called “slaves of God.”
- (b) Servant implies that one could quit working for one master and then get another job. Actually, slaves were property. “Slave” in American history implies a demeaning position. This is not necessarily the case in the ancient world. Slaves could be doctors, teachers and even leaders.

(2) Servant/Slave of the Lord Jesus Christ

- (a) Jesus is not just James’ older brother, he is Lord and Christ!
- (b) Lord = *kurios*. *Kurios* was used to translate YHWH, the name of God in the OT.
- (c) Christ = Messiah, annointed one. Israel’s hopes rested on a future descendent of David who would conquer her foes and restore her fortunes.

- c. How do you view yourself?
 - i. Carpenter? Contractor? Student? Librarian? Wife? Secretary? Pastor? Son? Mother? Father? Daughter? Teacher? Husband? OR
 - ii. Servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ?
- 2. To whom was James writing?
 - a. James is a “catholic epistle.” Catholic (with a little “c”) = universal. The letter’s also known as a “general epistle.” This means that it was not addressed to any particular congregation.
 - b. James addresses his letter with a different “spin.”
 - i. Twelve tribes scattered among the nations:
 - (1) Twelve Tribes: The organization of Israel since the Exodus... Jacob had twelve sons and the twelve tribes were their descendants.
 - (2) Scattered: Because of Israel’s sin, she faced punishment at the hands of the Assyrians and the Babylonians who deported her people and scattered them throughout the ancient world. (See Deut 4:27, etc.)
 - (3) Israel still hoped for the renewal of twelve tribes:
 - (a) When Israel is restored it will be divided into twelve tribes again (Isaiah 49:6; Ezek 48-49).
Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name’ (Neh 1:8–9).
 - (b) The Jews at Qumran (in the Dead Sea Scrolls) believed in a final end-time battle, with Israel’s armies organized into twelve divisions.
 - (c) Jesus states the disciples will judge the twelve tribes:
Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt 19:28).
 - (d) The 144,000 of Revelation 7 is based on 12,000 faithful times twelve tribes.
 - ii. From James’ perspective, his audience stands at an important time in history.
 - (1) They are part of what God is doing in history to restore his people to their proper place.
 - (a) They are between judgment and restoration.
 - (b) Michael Card says it well, “We belong to eternity, stranded in time.”
 - (c) 1 Peter 1:1 – “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect, strangers in the world, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia.”
1 Peter 2:11 – “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.”
 - (2) This restoration is bigger than Israel’s twelve tribes. It is a restoration of all creation (Jas 1:18).
- c. How do you view your world? How do you view your fellow Christians?
 - i. We are a part of God’s plan to restore his people, and to restore all of creation!
 - ii. We are strangers, scattered in a foreign land.
 - iii. We await our gathering together as the people of God.