

Jacob the Author and the Jacobian Community

KK Yeo

Johnson, 89-90. Whose Voice? How to hear that Voice?

I. Address and Salutation 1:1

A. 1.1 Ἰάκωβος θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δούλος ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαῖς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ χαίρειν.

B. Authorship: "Jacob, a slave of God and of the Lord JC" (1:1)

(1) James the son of Zebedee, brother of John, one of the Twelve, appears on all four lists of apostles (Matt 10:2; Mk 3:17; Lk 6:14; Acts 1:13)

(2) James the son of Alphaeus, also one of the Twelve (Matt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13); but obscure figure.

(3) James the little (ho micros), identified as son of Mary and brother of Joses (Mk 15:40=Matt 27:56; Mk 16:1=Lk 24:10), obscure also.

(4) James the father of Judas, appears in apostolic lists (Lk 6:16; Acts 1:13; but contrast Mk 3:18; Matt 10:3)

(5) James, "the Lord's brother" (Gal 1:19), who is a leader in the early Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18). Origen refers to author as "brother of the Lord" (Commentarium in Epistulam ad Romanos IV, 8)

By far the last the most prominent figure, who was martyred in 62 CE according to Josephus; this James here self-designation *as doulos*, apparent modesty and simplicity and yet with authority.

Also cf. the Greek of the epistle of James and the speech attributed to James the brother of Jesus in Acts 15:13-21.

C. Evidence in Paul (Johnson, 94-96):

1 Cor 15:7

Galatians: (1) Gal 1:19, (2) Gal 2:9, (3) Gal 2:11-14

D. Extracanonical Evidence:

Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 20:200

Eusebius's confusing account as he quotes Hypotyposes of Clement of Alexandria and Hegesippus about James' death

Gnostic writings: Gospel of Thomas 12; Apocryphon of James; Second Apocalypse of James; The First Apocalypse of James

Other Christian writings (Johnson, 103-106): Gospel of Hebrews, Protevangelium of James (c. mid 2nd cent), Pseudo-Clementine Literature

E. Scholars doubt the brother of Jesus because:

(1) the good Hellenistic Greek is classed with Hebrew, could James a Palestinian Jew have written it

(2) If James is brother of Jesus, why he did not mention it.

(3) Furthermore, James did not get into Canon until third century indicating no one in earlier church recognize this James. Next week's reading on reception.

F. Alternative theories:

(1) unknown James (Erasmus; Luther, Moffatt).

(2) pseudonymous (Kummel, James Hardy Ropes, Commentary, ICC, 1916; Martin Dibelius, *Hermeneia*, 1976; and Sophie Laws, Commentary, 1980).

G. Reasons for Early Dating (Johnson, 118-121):

1. James lacks classic sign of late, pseudonymous authorship.
2. James reflects social realities appropriate to a sect in the early stages of its life, not developed organization.
3. James' proximity to the spirit of Jesus' teaching and its obvious use of Jesus' saying (esp. Q that emphasizes wisdom and prophecy within eschatological judgment). See P.J. Hartin, *James and the Q Sayings of Jesus* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991).
4. James resembles Paul in language and perception.
5. Palestinian provenance

II. Audience: "to the twelve tribes scattered among the nations/diaspora" (1:1).

Διασπορά may refer to Jewish-Christian or Jews living outside Palestine (Jn 7:35, Mt 19:28 and Acts 26:7) or Christians living away from their true heavenly home (1 Peter 1:1, see Philo. Confusion of Tongues 17; On the Cherubim 34).

See western and eastern diapora in Bauckham 1990: 68-70.

Hypothesis:

James, the leading elder of Jerusalem church write this proverbial homily, an encyclical wisdom letter to them, Messianic Jews in western and eastern diaspora, should live the "faith of Jesus Christ" (Bauckham 20-21).

Sketching circumstances inductively: facing persecution (1:2-4), gathered in assemblies for decision-making (2:1-4) and prayer (5:13-16); they have leaders called teachers and elders (3:1; 5:14); ungodly rich (2:6; 4:13-5:6) were oppressing them (5:1-6); religion of some was becoming a superficial formality (1:22-27; 2:14-26); discriminatory practices revealed a lack of love (2:1-13); bitterness of speech (3:1-12); problems in community.