

# The Epistle of James vs. Evolutionary Christology

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So-called ‘evolutionary’ approaches to a ‘High Christology’ posit that belief in the divinity of Jesus only arose after a long period of time, somewhere between the early second and fourth centuries AD. Contrary to these ‘evolutionary’ theories, I argue that archaeological evidence demonstrates that a High Christology existed in the early third century and that various New Testament letters evince a High Christology in the middle of the first century AD. In particular, I argue that the Epistle of James demonstrates the existence of a High Christology within a monotheistic Jewish context before the Jewish War, plausibly as early as ten to fifteen years after the crucifixion.

**Keywords:** High Christology, James, Lord, Blaspheming, Authorship.

Since it is unlikely that those who lived alongside the historical Jesus would radically misunderstand his teachings and self-image, anyone who denies that he saw himself as more than merely human is forced to introduce a period of time in-between Jesus and belief in his divinity (a so-called ‘High Christology’). This period of time must be sufficient for the evolution of a High Christology to plausibly take place in the absence of the sort of factors Christians believe shaped the Christology of the disciples (e.g. Jesus’ exulted teaching about himself combined with his fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, his miracles, exorcisms and resurrection from the dead, as well as the on-going religious experience of the early church).<sup>1</sup> To posit such an evolution is to embrace a so-called ‘evolutionary Christology’. The time period postulated needs to move belief in the divini-

ty of Jesus away from the Jewish roots of Christianity, because it is implausible to think that monotheistic Jews, like Peter, John, Saul, James, Mark or Matthew, would divinize Jesus without extremely good reason. As theologian Michael Green explains:

So jealously did they stick to the Second Commandment that the Jews fought to the death rather than allow the Roman military standards, with their imperial medallions, to enter the Holy City. So seriously did Jews take their monotheism that they would not take the sacred name of God (Yahweh) upon their lips... In other words, if you had looked the whole world over for more stony and improbable soil in which to plan the idea of an incarnation you could not have done better than light upon Israel!<sup>2</sup>

Dan Brown’s best-selling novel *The Da*

*Vinci Code*<sup>3</sup> (2003) popularised the idea that ‘High Christology’ was a late arrival on the theological scene, suggesting that divinity was foisted upon Jesus by a narrow vote of the Church council of Nicea in 325 AD.<sup>4</sup> In response, the agnostic New Testament (NT) scholar Bart Ehrman observes that aspects of Brown’s novel account – whether Brown himself believes them or not - are simply *fictional*:

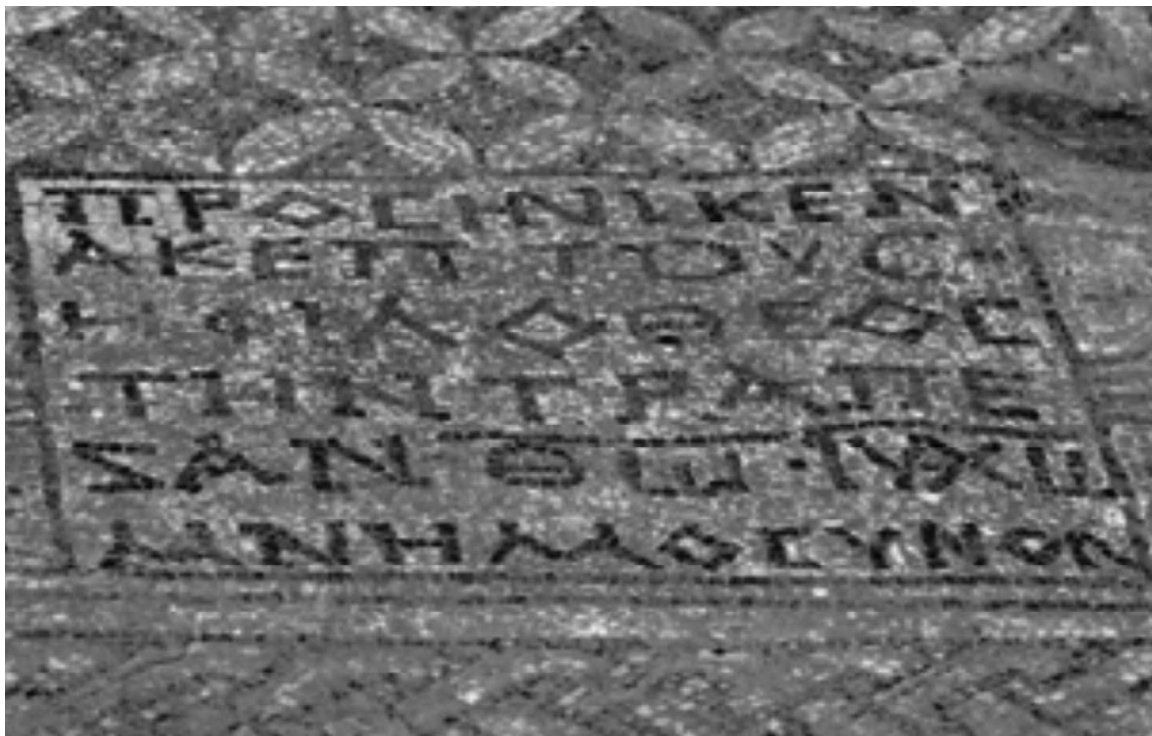
Constantine did call the Council of Nicea, and one of the issues involved Jesus’ divinity. But this was not a council that met to decide whether or not Jesus was divine... everyone at the Council - and in fact, just about every Christian everywhere - already agreed that Jesus was divine... The question being debated was how to *understand* Jesus’ divinity in light of the circumstance that he was also human. Moreover, how could both Jesus and God be God if there is only one God? *Those* were the issues... not whether or not Jesus was divine. And there certainly was no vote to determine Jesus’ divinity: this was already a matter of common know-

ledge among Christians, and had been from the early years of the religion...<sup>5</sup>

Indeed, there’s more than sufficient evidence *from archaeological finds alone* to bury the suggestion that no-one thought Jesus was divine until the fourth century council of Nicea.<sup>6</sup> For example, archaeologist Yotam Tepper and epigraphist Leah Di Segni have dated a Christian ‘prayer hall’, discovered in 2005 near Megiddo, to c. 230 AD.<sup>7</sup> Writing in *National Geographic News* Mati Milstei comments that, ‘Dating to roughly the third century, it is popularly accepted as the oldest church ever discovered.’<sup>8</sup> The remains primarily consist of a series of mosaics grouped around a stone plinth that once supported a table used for the celebration of communion. One of these mosaics displays a Greek inscription about the donation of the table:

‘The God-loving Akeptous has offered the table to God Jesus Christ as a memorial.’

Fig. 1.<sup>9</sup>



Vassilios Tzaferis, who argues that the Megiddo prayer hall dates to the second half of the third century, writes:

What Tepper... exposed is probably the earliest church ever discovered in the Holy Land (the excavators date it to the first half of the third century, around 230 A.D.) and one of the very few churches from this early period anywhere in the world - from a time before Christianity became the religion of the Roman empire in the early fourth century during the reign of Constantine the Great.<sup>10</sup>

As Charlie H. Campbell comments: 'This discovery at Megiddo demonstrates that a belief in Jesus' deity was already in place long before the fourth century.'<sup>11</sup>

Then again, the 'Alexamenos Graffito' is a stark piece of graffiti, discovered on a wall near the Palatine hill in Rome in 1857, which dates to 'c. AD 200'.<sup>12</sup> It depicts a man named Alexamenos, who stands with an up-stretched arm facing a donkey-headed figure on a cross. The implied messa-

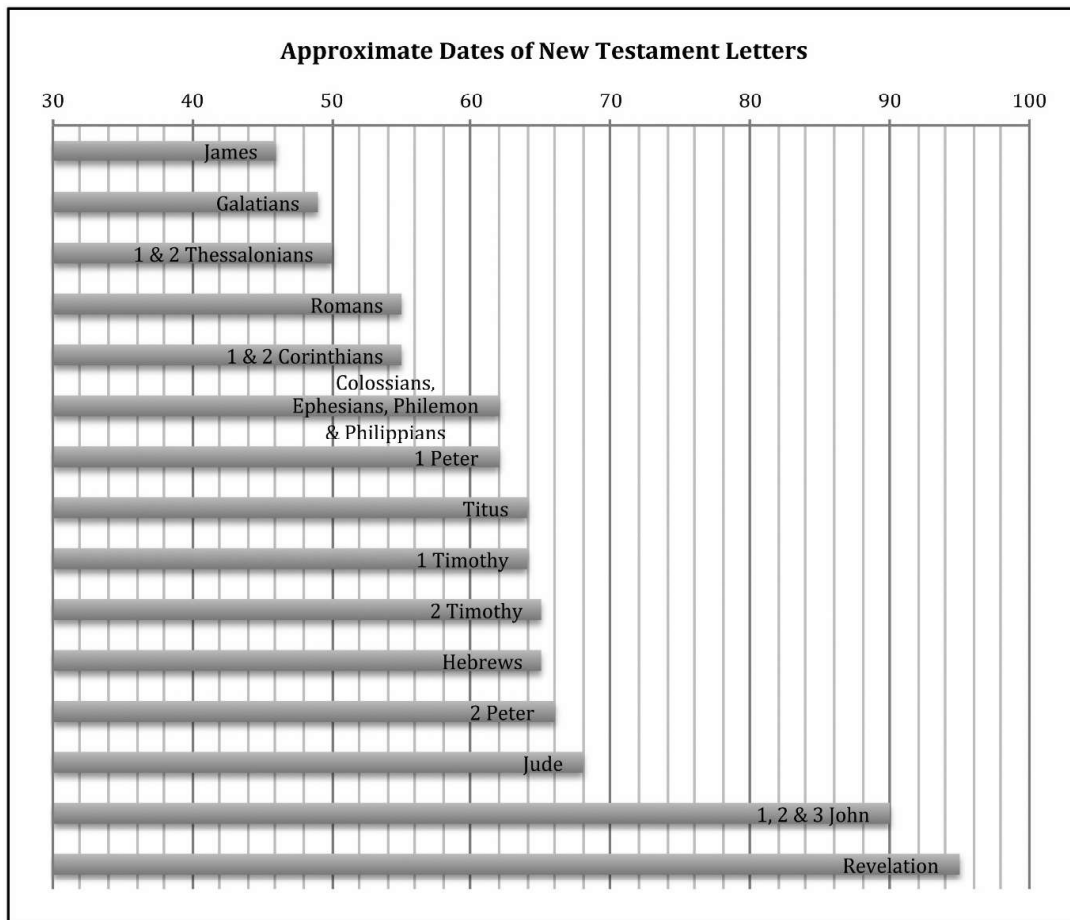
Fig. 2.<sup>14</sup>



ge is clear: the man on the cross is 'an ass'; but Alexamenos is perhaps even more stupid, for in rough-hewn scratches the picture is accompanied by the words: 'Alexamenos worships his god'. The only known crucifixion victim that Alexamenos might have worshiped is Jesus. Indeed, the late 2nd century Christian writer Tertullian tells of an arena worker in Carthage who had a picture ridiculing the Christian God by showing him with the head of a donkey.<sup>13</sup>

Whilst avoiding the extremes of *The Da Vinci Code*, atheist novelist Matthew Kneale asserts that 'in the first decades after his death, Jesus still appears to have been regarded by his followers – including Paul – as thoroughly human and not a god'<sup>15</sup>, but that 'By the early second century... Jesus had become fully supernatural.'<sup>16</sup> Jesus Seminar co-founder Robert W. Funk suggests a four-stage development within which Jesus went from being seen as a mere human being who became 'a son of God by virtue of his resurrection' to being thought of as 'pre-existent from the beginning' by the time of the Gospel of John towards the end of the 1st century.<sup>17</sup> Atheist John W. Loftus appeals to Funk's thesis to support his own claim that Christians gradually 'developed a higher, more glorified view of Jesus'<sup>18</sup> in a process of deification 'that took at least seventy years...'<sup>19</sup> We can call the end of this supposed seventy year process (just into the second century AD) 'the Loftus line'.

Belief in a gradually evolving Christology is flatly contradicted by an overwhelming mass of literary evidence to the contrary, not least amongst the New Testament letters (and not least amongst these letters in this respect are the letters of Paul), the approximate dates of which are shown in Figure 3.

Fig. 3.<sup>20</sup>

Luke Timothy Johnson observes that ‘Paul’s letters (and probably other epistolary literature such as James and Hebrews) provide first-hand evidence for the Christian movement in its first three decades.’<sup>21</sup> Reading these early Christian documents, it’s hard to see how the first century, Jewish followers of Jesus could have been any clearer in affirming belief in his divinity. For example: ‘the writer of Hebrews [c. 65 AD] addresses Christ thus: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (1:8).’<sup>22</sup> In Titus (c. 64 AD) Jesus is called ‘our great God and Savior’ (2:13). Philippians 2:9-11 (c. 62 AD) applies God’s words about himself in Isaiah 45:22-23 to Jesus: ‘at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess

that Jesus Christ is Lord...’ In 1 Corinthians 8:6 (c. 55 AD) Paul includes Jesus within the ‘Shema’, the sacred Jewish expression of allegiance to one God (found in Deuteronomy 6:4): ‘there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.’ In 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 (c. 50 AD) Paul *prays* to ‘our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus’.<sup>23</sup>

The 1st century literary Letter or ‘Epistle’ of James offers a particularly interesting case study in early High Christology. Halvor Moxnes, Professor Emeritus of New Testament Studies at the University of Oslo, incorrectly states that

the letter of James ‘has no references to Christ beyond the first verse.’<sup>24</sup> However, James not only refers in exalted terms to ‘the Lord Jesus Christ’ (James 1:1), but describing his readers as having faith in ‘our glorious Lord Jesus Christ’ (James 2:1, cf. 1 Corinthians 2:8 & Ephesians 1:17)<sup>25</sup> and talks to them about ‘the ones who are *blaspheming* the noble [beautiful] name of him to whom you belong’ (James 2:7, my italics).<sup>26</sup> Although the Greek *βλασφημοῦσιν* can mean speech that ‘speaks evil of’ or which ‘reviles’ non-divine persons, the context clearly favours taking the term as a reference to ‘blaspheming’ *in the strongest sense*<sup>27</sup> (and this is how the majority of English translations understand the reference<sup>28</sup>). In other words, James 2:7 is an indirect reference to Christ that exhibits a High Christology. Let us examine these references to Christ in more detail.

### Jesus is ‘Lord’

In light of the Jewish creed or *Shema* – ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one’ (Deuteronomy 6:4), Paul Barnett argues that by calling Jesus *Lord*, early Christians like James were:

identifying the risen and ascended Jesus with the Lord of the Old Testament. This is clear from Paul’s word’s, which echo but radically adapt the Jewish creed... “There is *one* God, the Father... and one Lord, Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 8:6). The *one* Lord of his Jewish faith Paul now redefined as the *one* Father and the *one* Lord.<sup>29</sup>

As Dean L. Overran explains:

By the time of Jesus’ birth, devout Jews avoided speaking the Hebrew name for God because the word was considered too sacred to be pronounced out loud. God’s name was composed of four Hebrew letters:

YHWH (*Yahweh*), known as the Hebrew Tetragrammaton. When Jewish believers referred to God, they used the Hebrew word *adonai* in speaking about or to God. Among Greek-speaking Jews, the Greek word *kyrios* was read out loud for the tetragrammaton (*Yahweh*).<sup>30</sup>

Linguistically, the Greek word *kyrios* could refer to *a* lord as well as to *the* Lord (i.e. *adonai* or *Yahweh*). However, Josephus reports that first-century Jews refused to address the Roman emperor as *kyrios* because they believed this term should only be applied to *Yahweh*.<sup>31</sup> Since the first disciples were Jewish, Overman argues that:

When the early church proclaimed that ‘Jesus is Lord,’ it was using *kyrios* in its most exalted sense. For example, the author of the first letter of Peter, writing in the early 60’s, ascribes to Jesus an Old Testament passage in which the term ‘Lord’ refers to the Hebrew *Yahweh*. In First Peter 3:15, the author writes: ‘... but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord (*kyrios*).’ (Careful study shows that ‘Christ’ in the New Testament always refers to Jesus.) This passage refers to Isaiah 8:13: ‘*Yahweh Saboath*, him you shall sanctify.’<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, James describes Jesus as not only ‘Lord’, but as ‘the Lord of glory’ (James 2:1). According to Douglas J. Moo: ‘This translation, which takes *doxes* as a descriptive genitive dependent on “Lord”, is probably correct. Paul describes Jesus similarly in 1 Corinthians 2:8 and James is fond of this type of genitive construction.’<sup>33</sup> To refer to Jesus in this way ‘suggests particularly the heavenly sphere to which he has been exalted and from which he will come at the end of his history to save and to judge (cf. Jas 5:9).’<sup>34</sup>

The application of ‘Lord’ to Jesus in the Epistle of James thus evinces a High Christology amongst first century Jewish Christians.

### Blaspheming the Noble Name

The Greek word *Χριστιανός* (Christianos) comes from *Χριστός* (Christos), meaning ‘anointed one’, plus an adjectival ending borrowed from Latin to denote adhering or belonging to (as in slave ownership). The Septaguent translation of the Old Testament used *Χριστός* to translate the Hebrew word *Mašiah* (messiah), meaning ‘[one who is] anointed.’ So, Christians are those who are called upon by the name of, belong to and/or are slaves of Jesus ‘the Christ’ where ‘Christ’ is ‘the noble name of him’, i.e. Jesus, to whom Christians adhere or belong. The NLT translation of James 2:7 makes this explicit: ‘Aren’t they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear?’

Several Bible translations contextually link James’ description of the Christian belonging to the noble name with the Christian practice of being baptized into the name of Christ:

- Don’t they blaspheme the noble name that was pronounced over you at your baptism?’ (HCSB)
- Is it not they who blaspheme the noble name that was invoked over you?’ (NABRE)
- Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?’ (NRSV)
- Aren’t they the ones who scorn the new name—“Christian”—used in your baptisms?’ (The Message)

Christians originally described themselves as ‘followers of “the way”’ (cf. John 14:6,

Acts 19:9, 19:23, 22:4, 24:14, 24:22 and perhaps Romans 3:17 & 9:31). The term ‘Christian’ began as ‘outsider language’:

- Tacitus informs us in his *Annals* (15:44) that the Emperor Nero blamed the 64 AD Great Fire of Rome upon those ‘whom the crowd called Christians’.
- The letter known as 1 Peter, written in Rome, shows (cf. 1 Peter 4:16) that the crowd’s terminology had been appropriated by at least some in the Jesus-following community by c. 62 AD.<sup>35</sup>
- Luke reports Herod Agrippa II teasing Paul the Apostle c. A.D 61 by saying: ‘In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?’ (Acts 26:28, ESV).
- Indeed, Luke notes that ‘the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.’ (Acts 11:26.) The context here suggests that the term ‘Christian’ was already in use by critics of ‘the way’ c. 46 AD.

Hence James’ talk of ‘the noble name of him to whom you belong’ is clearly a reference to the term ‘Christian’ (i.e. ‘One who is a slave of Christ’) being used as a term of abuse, and it follows that James’ reference to ‘the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong’ (James 2:7) is a reference to people blaspheming Jesus Christ.

There are two reasons to think that James understands this to be blasphemy in the fullest sense of the term. First of all, James 2:7 echoes several Old Testament passages that speak of humans being ‘called upon’ by *God’s name* (cf. Deuteronomy 28:10; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 4:1 and Amos 9:12). As Heinrich Meyer observes:

The expression τὸ ὄνομα ἐπικαλεῖται ἐπὶ τινά is borrowed from the O.T., where it often occurs, and in the sense that one becomes the property of him whose name is called upon him; particularly it is said of Israel that the name of God was called upon them.<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly, in Luke's report of The Council at Jerusalem (c. 48/49 A.D.), James uses the Septuagint translation of the prophet Amos to the effect that 'the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things.' (Acts 15:17.)<sup>37</sup> Thus James 2:7 puts Jesus Christ into the position of the Old Testament God.

This conclusion is re-enforced by James' elliptical Jewish style:

the omission of all mention of the name, which would have come in very naturally, betrays Jewish usage; as Taylor truly remarks... 'A feeling of reverence leads the Jews to avoid, as far as possible, all mention of the Names of God. This feeling is manifested... in their post-canonical literature, even with regard to less sacred, and not incommunicable Divine names. In the Talmud and Midrash, and (with the exception of the Prayer Books) in the Rabbinic writings generally, it is the custom to abstain from using the Biblical names of God, excepting in citations from the Bible; and even when Elohim is necessarily brought in, it is often intentionally misspelt...'<sup>38</sup>

Indeed, the International Standard Version of James 2:7 footnotes 'the noble Name' with the comment 'i.e. God', while The Voice translation makes the connection explicit within the text: 'Aren't they the ones mocking the noble name of our God, the One calling us?'

## The Authorship of James

A consideration of the authorship of the Epistle of James isn't a pre-condition for the fruitful discussion of either the publication date of the letter or the significance of its Christology, but it is helpful. So-called 'liberal' scholarship attributes the Epistle to an admirer of James writing under a pseudonym<sup>39</sup> between 80 and 100 AD. In favour of this view scholars from Erasmus to Joseph F. Kelly<sup>40</sup> have argued (with what appears to be a measure of condescension, if not outright prejudice) that the Greek of the letter is too good to be plausibly attributed to a Galilean Jew. It has also been suggested that the mention of 'elders' in James 5:14 reflects a church leadership more advanced than existed prior to the fall of Jerusalem. Catholic theologian Scott Hann responds to these arguments:

scholarship continues to produce evidence that Galilee was thoroughly bilingual during the NT period (Aramaic and Greek), so the ability of a Palestinian Jew, especially one who was intellectually gifted, to write in excellent Greek is far from impossible (e.g., the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus was educated in first-century Jerusalem and acquired an impressive command of Hellenistic Greek, as well as classical Greek literature). Second, unless one disregards the Book of Acts as a witness to history, it is clear that a hierarchical system of leadership (with 'elders' or 'presbyters') had emerged well before the end of the first century (Acts 14:23; 20:17; cf. 1 Peter 5:1-2).<sup>41</sup>

Sophie Law confirms that 'it is no longer possible to assert with complete confidence that James of Jerusalem could not have written the good Greek of the epistle, since the wide currency of language in

Palestine is increasingly appreciated.<sup>42</sup> Craig S. Keener points to ‘excavations showing that most of Galilee was not as backward as was once thought’ and to ‘the widespread use of amanuenses (scribes) who might, like Josephus’s editorial scribes, help a writer’s Greek. This last point would be especially appropriate for the leader of the mother church, in the one overwhelmingly Jewish city that also provided advanced education in Greek works (cf. the Greeks in Acts 15:23-29).’<sup>43</sup> Besides, as Alec Motyer points out: ‘Artistic skills and exceptional abilities owe nobody an explanation. Time and again they arise where least expected.’<sup>44</sup> In sum, ‘the arguments proposed for later dates [and thus non-traditional authorship] lack impressiveness.’<sup>45</sup>

Note that, even if it were correct, the liberal dating of the Epistle nevertheless permits it to stand in contradiction to the Council of Nicea thesis advanced within Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code*, and that the lower end of the liberal date-range is likewise incompatible with Loftus’ theory of an evolving Christology that took at least seventy years to attribute divinity to Christ.

### James of Jerusalem, Son of Joseph and Brother of Jesus

There’s a strong cumulative case for attributing the Epistle to James the brother of Jesus Christ:

Fig. 4.

Epistle of James	James in Acts 15
Listen, my beloved brothers	Brothers, listen
the noble name of him to whom you belong	the Gentiles who bear my name
my beloved brethren	our beloved Barnabas and Paul

*Local Knowledge:* James of Jerusalem obviously fits the geographical situation of the Epistle:

James lived in Jerusalem... and his readers are probably to be found in the regions just outside of Palestine along the coastline to the north, In Syria and perhaps southern Asia Minor. Several allusions in the letter, most notably the reference to the ‘earlier and latter rains’ (5:7), seem to confirm this location; for only along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea do the rains come in this sequence.<sup>46</sup>

*Jewishness:* The highly Jewish nature of the Epistle, including its reverence for the Jewish Law and the book of Proverbs, is consistent with the background of James the brother of Jesus.

*Linguistic Links:* There are some linguistic similarities between the epistle and both the speech of James at the Council of Jerusalem reported by Luke in Acts 15 and the letter subsequently sent under the authority of James that is recorded in Acts 15:23-29.<sup>47</sup>

*Unanimous Testimony:* On the one hand, early church fathers such as Athanasias, Cyril of Jerusalem, Eusebius and Origen unanimously attributed the Epistle of James to James the brother of Jesus. No alternative author was ever suggested in ancient times.<sup>48</sup>



*Argument by Elimination:* On the other hand, the other men by the name of James known from the NT are generally thought not to have been prominent enough to write an authoritative general Epistle:

Two men of this name were among the apostles of Jesus: James son of Zebedee (Mk 1:19; 3:17) and James son of Alphaeus (Lk 6:15; Acts 1:13)... but most scholars think it improbable that either one wrote the Letter of James – the former was martyred in A.D 44, probably too early to have been the author (Acts 12:2) and very little is known about the latter... Instead, scholars through the centuries have given preference to a third figure of the apostolic age: James of Jerusalem, also known as “the Lord’s brother” (Gal 1:19).<sup>49</sup>

*Authorial Prominence:* The lack of any qualifying designation specifying *which* James is writing the letter indicates that no further explanation was needed: ‘the opening self-description of James as a “servant of the Lord Jesus” (Jas 1:1)... presupposes that he is already known to his readers and feels no need to assert his authority or credentials.’<sup>50</sup> Unlike the other James known from the NT, James the brother of Jesus certainly would fit the requirement for a James who needs no introduction.<sup>51</sup> Peter H. Davids agrees that ‘In truth there was but one James in the early church who was well enough recognized to be able to use such a simple greeting and that was James the son of Joseph...’<sup>52</sup>

In sum, ‘All the characteristics of the letter support the traditional attribution of it to James the brother of the Lord.’<sup>53</sup> Thus Alister McGrath concludes that: ‘The letter of James was probably [written by] James the brother of Jesus...’<sup>54</sup> Many other NT scholars concur.<sup>55</sup>

### Dating the Epistle of James According to its Author

Hegesippus’ account of Jesus’ death, as recorded by Eusebius, tells us that James was stoned to death for refusing to renounce his faith in Jesus. James’ martyrdom is independently confirmed by the first century Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities* XX.9.1) in a manner that enables us to date the event to 62 AD.<sup>56</sup>

Archaeological corroboration of this date comes from the mid 1st century chalk ossuary (or ‘bone box’) recognized in 2002 as bearing the Aramaic inscription ‘Ya’akov bar Yosef akhui di Yeshua’: ‘Jacob, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus’ (in English Jacob = James).

New Testament scholar Ben Witherington comments that: ‘If, as seems probable, the ossuary found in the vicinity of Jerusalem and dated to about AD 63 is indeed the burial box of James, the brother of Jesus, this inscription is the most important extrabiblical evidence of its kind.’<sup>57</sup> According to Hershel Shanks, editor in chief of the *Biblical Archaeological Review*: ‘this box is [most] likely the ossuary of James, the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, than not. In my opinion... it is likely that this inscription *does* mention the James and Joseph and Jesus of the New Testament.’<sup>58</sup> Historian Paul L. Maier likewise concludes that ‘there is strong (though not absolutely conclusive) evidence that, yes, the ossuary and its inscription are not only authentic, but that the inscribed names are the New Testament personalities.’<sup>59</sup>

Professor Camil Fuchs, a statistician from Tel Aviv University, has argued that ‘with a confidence level of 95 percent, we can expect there to be 1.71 individuals in the relevant population named James with a father named Joseph and a brother Jesus.’<sup>60</sup> Moreover, as Joseph M. Holden and Norman L. Geisler explain:

Of those ossuaries bearing an inscription, almost all speak of the deceased occupant's father, and occasionally of the person's brother, sister, or other close relative if that person is well known. The rare presence of the sibling's name (Jesus) would indicate that Jesus was a very prominent figure.<sup>61</sup>

They also report:

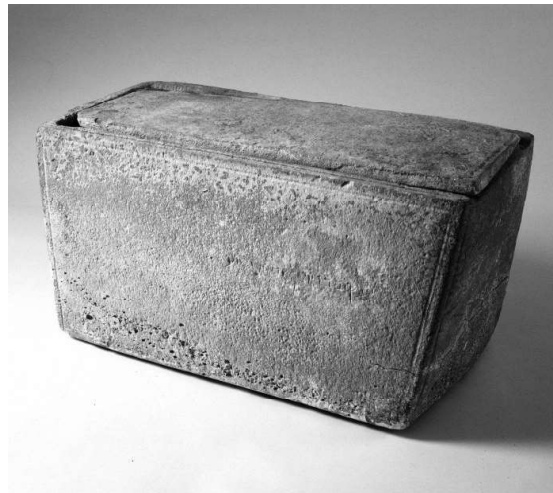
Experts have confirmed the presence of microbial patina on the ossuary and on both parts of the inscription: 'James, the son of Jospheh' and 'brother of Jesus,' demonstrating the unity and antiquity of the inscription... this patina is generally deemed ancient... The world's leading expert in biogeology and the patination process, Wolfgang Krumbein of Oldenburg University in Germany, affirmed that the patina on the ossuary and inscription most likely reflects a development process of thousands of years... researchers from the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto confirmed that the patina within the letter grooves is consistent with the patina on the surface of the ossuary; thus legitimizing the entire inscription's antiquity. According to expert paleographers Andre Lemaire and Ada Yardeni, who authenticitated (and dated) the inscription based on the shape and stance of the letters, the Aramaic is fully consistent with first-century style and practice.<sup>62</sup>

In 2014, a peer-reviewed paper in the *Open Journal of Geology*<sup>63</sup> validated the authenticity of the James ossuary inscription. First, the authors show that the patina on the ossuary contains various minerals that result from the biogenic activity of microorganisms over a long period of time, demonstrating the antiquity of the ossuary. Second, they show that the patina on the ossuary continues gradational-

ly into the engraved inscription, that striations on the ossuary (made by falling roof tiles) crosscut the letters and that dissolution pits are superimposed over several letters of the inscription. This evidence shows that the inscription is not a recent addition to an ancient ossuary. Finally, 'wind-blown microfossils (nannofossils and foraminifers) and quartz within the patina of the ossuary, including the lettering zone, reinforces the authenticity of the inscription.'<sup>64</sup>

If James the brother of Jesus is indeed the author or James' letter, then it must have been written before his death. Moreover, because James writes to 'the twelve tribes scattered among the nations' (James 1:1) the letter must date from long enough after Jesus' crucifixion for the Christian belief in his resurrection and divinity to have spread a fair way: 'The Epistle must have been written, therefore, sometime between the late A.D. 30s and the early A.D. 60s.'<sup>65</sup>

Fig. 5. The James Ossuary. <sup>66</sup>



### Dating the Epistle of James Apart from its Author

There are good reasons for dating the Epistle of James prior to the Jewish War (which began in 66 AD) quite apart from

consideration of the letter's authorship. Hann observes that 'Evidence within the letter is generally supportive of an early date.'<sup>67</sup> John Drane concurs that 'a number of facts suggest very strongly that it belongs to an early period of the church's life rather than a later one.'<sup>68</sup> For example:

- There are signs of James in *The Shepherd of Hermas* (c. 85-140 AD)<sup>69</sup> and in the first letter of Clement (often dated to 96 AD but possibly as early as the 60's AD).<sup>70</sup>
- In favour of the early date are the striking simplicity of church organization and discipline, the fact that Christians still met in the synagogue (Jas. 2:2), and the general Judaic tone.<sup>71</sup> Hann concludes that the Letter of James comes from 'a time... before Christianity and Judaism had irrevocably distinguished themselves from one another...'<sup>72</sup>
- Drane notes that 'much of the imagery of James is clearly Palestinian. The mention of "autumn and spring rains" (5:7) would have meant nothing at all in other parts of the Roman empire, while the agricultural practices mentioned in the preceding verses are of a type that disappeared for good in Palestine after AD 70, but which were widespread in the days of Jesus.'<sup>73</sup>
- Keener states that 'The situation depicted in the letter best fits a period before A.D. 66...'<sup>74</sup>

Given just the above data, we might agree with Peter H. Davids in dating the Epistle of James to the mid 60's AD.<sup>75</sup> However, there's more evidence to take into consideration.

For example, Douglas J. Moo points to 'the absence of any reference to the controversy between Jew and Gentiles, particularly with respect to the "ritual

law".'<sup>76</sup> James shows no awareness of the Acts 15 council (c. A.D 48/49), 'which would have been relevant to his theme had it already occurred.'<sup>77</sup>

Noting similarities between parts of James' letter and teachings of Jesus reported in Matthew's gospel, Drane argues:

The most likely explanation is that the writer of James knew these sayings of Jesus in a slightly different form than they now have in the New Testament gospels... and the fact that some of this teaching has a more primitive form in James than it does in Matthew might imply that James has access to it at an earlier stage than the writers of the gospels.<sup>78</sup>

According to Davids:

No other letter of the NT has as many references to the teaching of Jesus per page as this one does. It is not that James quotes Jesus directly, although he sometimes does (see in 5:12), but he normally simply uses phrases and ideas which come from Jesus. His readers would have memorized much of the Lord's teaching, so they would recognize the source. Most of these phrases come from the teaching of Jesus now in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7) or Luke's Sermon on the Plain (Lk. 6).<sup>79</sup>

Johnson likewise notes 'James's speech is shaped by the sayings of Jesus. And when we realize that the form of some of the more certain allusions is simpler than the redacted form of the sayings found in the Synoptics, then we appreciate that James may be very close indeed to the formative stage of the Jesus traditions.'<sup>80</sup> Moreover: 'the use of an early form of the Jesus tradition suggests that the letter of James was written either before the composition of the Synoptic Gospels, or at the very least before their version of Jesus' teachings

became standard.<sup>81</sup> At this juncture, the dates of the synoptic gospels become relevant to our thinking about the date of James' letter. Although I don't have room to examine the dating of the synoptic gospels here, I believe there are good arguments for dating Luke to c. 61 AD and Matthew to c. 61-63 AD.<sup>82</sup> These arguments add to the case for dating James to within two-to-three decades after the crucifixion. Indeed, the parallel between James 1:6 and Mark 11:23-24 suggests James was written prior to the publication of Mark's gospel, which I would place c. 49 AD.<sup>83</sup> Even on a more 'standard' dating of Mark (c. 65-75 AD<sup>84</sup>), this point alone would still place James early in the second half of the first century.

Moo observes that 'The general social conditions in the Near East in the middle of the first century also correspond with the situation presupposed in James.'<sup>85</sup> For example, the merchants who ranged far and wide in search of profits (4:13-17) and the wealthy, often "absentee" landlords who exploited an increasingly large and impoverished labour force (5:1-6) were familiar figures.<sup>86</sup> Another familiar feature of the times were the Zealots, who sought to win freedom for Israel by violent means: 'Some scholars, in fact, think that James 4:2 – "you desire and do not have; so you kill" – may refer to zealot partisans who had brought their violent ideology into the church.'<sup>87</sup>

Professor Barry D. Smith argues from the relationship between the Letter of James and the Letters of Paul:

Paul must contend with Jewish believers who determined that gentiles should submit to the Law as a condition of final salvation; because of James' authority in the Jerusalem church, his opponents use portions of the Letter of James in sup-

port of their position. This forces Paul to correct their erroneous extrapolations from the letter, and, in so doing, sometimes to appear to be in direct opposition to James, the leader of the Jerusalem church. (It is probable that the Letter of James quickly reached Antioch, where Paul resided, from Jerusalem.) ... On the assumption that Paul had read the Letter of James before he wrote his Letter to the Galatians and Letter to the Romans... the *terminus a quo* [for the publication of James' epistle] is some time before 48, when Paul probably wrote the Letter to the Galatians...<sup>88</sup>

Finally, Smith argues that:

If James wrote his letter before 48 A.D, then the persecution that he mentions in the present tense as still occurring (see Jas 1:2-12) could be the result of the persecution of the church instigated by Herod Agrippa I, who executed James the son of Zebedee (Acts 12)... In addition, it is possible that the references to helping the poor who are hungry and naked (see Jas 2:1-17) could be inspired by the fact that there were Jewish believers who were suffering deprivation during the famine that occurred c. 45-46.<sup>89</sup>

As Luke Timothy Johnson observes: 'Everything in the letter and everything lacking from the letter help confirm the impression that this social world was one shared by a leader of the Jerusalem church and Jewish messianists of the diaspora during the first decades of the Christian movement.'<sup>90</sup> Scott Hann likewise argues that James comes from 'the earliest decades of the Church, i.e. at a time when the mission field of the gospel was still concentrated in Israel and its environs...'<sup>91</sup> According to Paige Patterson: 'many scholars are convinced that James is the first book of the New

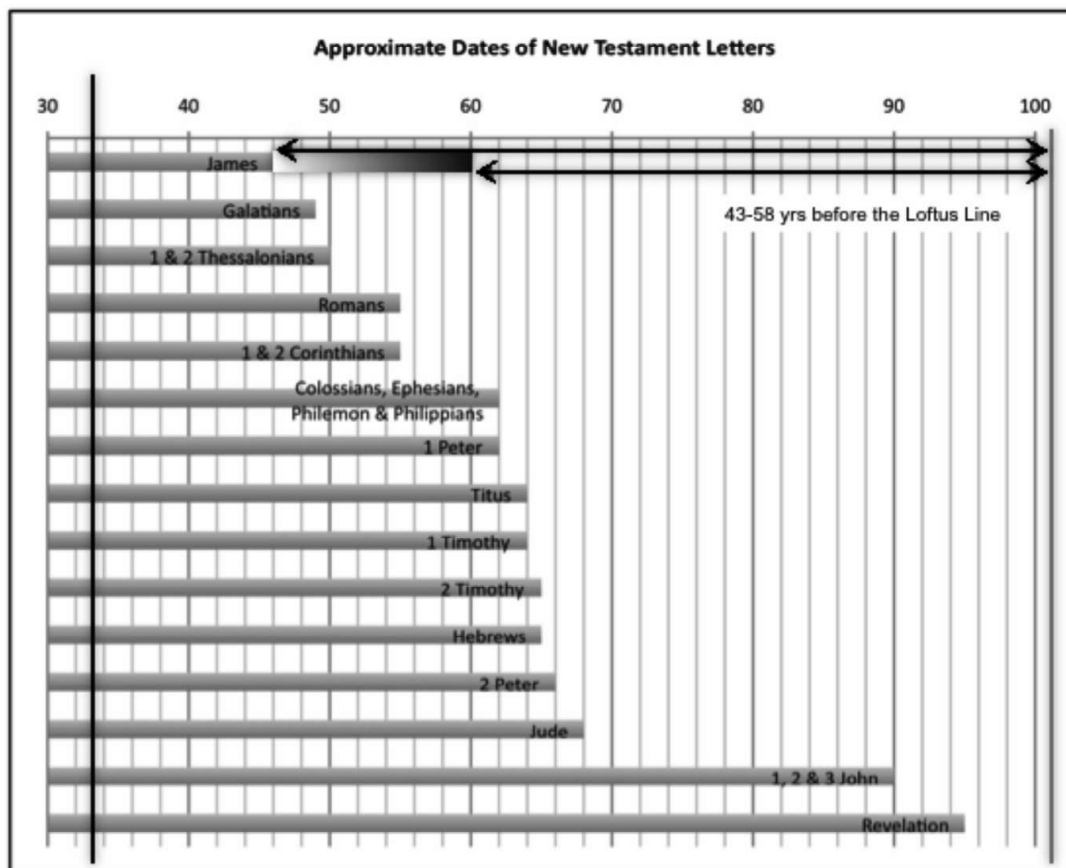
Testament to be written, some dating it as early as A.D. 48.<sup>92</sup> Liberal theologian John A.T. Robinson thought James was written c. 47-48 AD.<sup>93</sup> Henry Thiessen dated James from 45 to 48 AD.<sup>94</sup> According to Kendell H. Easley: ‘the epistle is likely to be dated between 44 and 49, with the year 45 being a reasonable estimate . . .’<sup>95</sup> It seems to me that the preponderance of evidence indicates Douglas J. Moo may well be correct when he concludes that James was written ‘around 45-47.’<sup>96</sup> As Phil Fernandes and Kyle Larson conclude: ‘A date of 45 AD for James’s epistle is not extreme.’<sup>97</sup>

**Conclusions**

The author and audience of the letter known as the Epistle of James were 1st

century Jewish monotheists who nevertheless considered Jesus Christ to be divine. The evidence favours the traditional attribution of authorship to James of Jerusalem, the (half) brother of Jesus. This attribution both makes the High Christology of the letter all the more startling and suggests a publication date before AD 62 (when James was martyred). Even apart from the evidence for James of Jerusalem being the author, there’s every reason to date the Epistle and its Christology to before the Jewish War of AD 66-70 (i.e. within 33 years of the crucifixion). Indeed, there’s good evidence for Alister McGrath’s conclusion that James was written no later than ‘the late 50’s or early 60’s.’<sup>98</sup> There is some reason to think that Douglas J. Moo may well be correct

Fig. 6 shows the plausible range of dates herein argued for the Epistle of James, some 12-27 years after the crucifixion and 43-58 years before the end of century ‘Loftus line’ for the evolution of a high Christology:



when he concludes that James was written at ‘around 45-47.’<sup>99</sup>

Of course, the author of James must have arrived at his opinion about Jesus at some time before he wrote. Likewise, the recipients of the Epistle obviously arrived at their belief in the divinity of Jesus, and were suffering the abuse of being called ‘Christians’, at some time before the Epistle was sent to them. Since the intended audience were ‘scattered among the nations’ (James 1:1), sufficient time must have passed for the gospel message – including the belief that Jesus was divine – to have gone out from Jerusalem, where Christianity originated, to the then current geographical spread of this Jewish-

Christian Diaspora. These factors plausibly push the High Christology reflected in James’ letter back by several years. Indeed, since the balance of evidence suggests that the Epistle of James was published c. 45-47 AD, and since belief in the divinity of Jesus must pre-date the Epistle, our data plausibly evinces a High Christology *within ten to fifteen years of the crucifixion*. At the very least, the Epistle of James demonstrates the High Christology of Jewish Christians *before the Jewish War*. Either scenario excludes the sort of evolutionary Christology proposed by the likes of Brown, Funk, Kneale and Loftus.<sup>100</sup>

## Notes

1. See Peter S. Williams, *Understanding Jesus: Five Ways to Spiritual Enlightenment* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2011).
2. Michael Green, “Jesus in the New Testament” in Michael Green (ed.) *The Truth of God Incarnate* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1977), 40.
3. (New York: Anchor Books, 2003).
4. cf. Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, 232-233.
5. Bart D. Ehrman, “What was the council of Nicea?” [www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2005/06/What-Was-The-Council-Of-Nicea.aspx](http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Christianity/2005/06/What-Was-The-Council-Of-Nicea.aspx). [Accessed 17 May 2016].
6. cf. Peter S. Williams, “Archaeology, Jesus and the New Testament” <http://podcast.peterswilliams.com/e/archaeology-jesus-and-the-new-testament-1415879310/?token=000f381bf8ed408be9f0aee7d7860f7b>. [Accessed 18 May 2016]
7. cf. “Prison Makes Way for the Holy Land’s Oldest Church” *Biblical Archaeological Society*, [www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-places/prison-makes-way-for-the-holy-lands-oldest-church/](http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-places/prison-makes-way-for-the-holy-lands-oldest-church/); Yotam Tepper, *A Christian Prayer Hall of the Third Century CE at Kefar ‘othnay (legio): Excavations at the Megiddo Prison 2005* (Israel Antiquities Authority, 2006); Edward Adams, “The Ancient Church at Megiddo: The Discovery and an Assessment of its Significance” *The Expository Times* (2008: 120:62, <http://earlychristianwritings.com/info/Megiddo-TheExpositoryTimes-2008.pdf>). [Accessed 17 May 17, 2016].
8. Mati Milstei, “‘Oldest Church’ Discovery ‘Ridiculous,’ Critics Say” *National Geographic News*, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2008/06/080613-old-church.html>. [Accessed 17 May 2016]
9. Megiddo prayer hall mosaic, image from Peter S. Williams, *Digging for Evidence* (Christian Evidence Society, 2016), credit unknown. I have converted the Greek over-lining to underling.
10. V. Tzaferis, “Inscribed to ‘God Jesus Christ’: Early Christian Prayer Hall Found in Megiddo Prison”, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 33.2 (2007).
11. Charlie H. Campbell, *Archaeological Evidence For The Bible* (Carlsbad, CA: AlwaysBeReady, 2012), 119.
12. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 96. cf. Peter S. Williams, *Digging for Evidence*; H. Wayne House, ‘Alexamenos Execution Graffito’ [www.hwhouse.com/images/8.ALEXAMENOS\\_CRUCIFIXION\\_GRAFFITI.pdf](http://www.hwhouse.com/images/8.ALEXAMENOS_CRUCIFIXION_GRAFFITI.pdf). [Accessed 17 May 2016].
13. cf. Alexander Roberts et al., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. III: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 31.
14. Wikimedia Commons, [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jesus\\_graffito.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jesus_graffito.jpg). [Accessed 17 May 2016].
15. Matthew Kneale, *An Atheist’s History of Belief* (London: Vintage, 2014), 106.
16. *ibid*, 125.
17. Robert W. Funk, *Honest to Jesus* (New York: Harper, 1996), 279-296.

18. John W. Loftus, *Why I Became An Atheist: A Former Preacher Rejects Christianity* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2008), 329.
19. *ibid*, 330.
20. Chart draws upon data from various sources, including: *NIV Thompson Student Bible* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Kirkbride Bible Company, 1999), *The Apologetics Study Bible* (Nashville, Tennessee: Holman, 2007) & Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014).
21. Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus* (New York: Harper One, 1997), 87.
22. Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1996), 337-338. c.f. F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 59-60; Edward William Fudge, *Hebrews: Ancient Encouragement For Believers Today* (Abilene, Texas: Leafwood, 2009), 52-53; H.W. Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1977), 47.
23. cf. Tom Schmit, "The Contribution of 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13 to a Pauline Christology" <http://ttschmidt.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/1-Thess-3-and-Pauline-Christology.pdf>. [Accessed 17 May 2016].
24. Halvor Moxnes, *A Short History Of The New Testament* (London: I.B. Tauris), 34.
25. cf. <http://biblehub.com/james/2-1.htm>. [Accessed 17 May 2016].
26. cf. <http://biblehub.com/text/james/2-7.htm>. [Accessed 17 May 2016].
27. cf. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2012), 102; <http://biblehub.com/greek/987.htm>. [Accessed 17 May 2016].
28. cf. <http://biblehub.com/parallel/james/2-7.htm> & [www.biblestudytools.com/james/2-7-compare.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/james/2-7-compare.html). [Accessed 17 May 2016].
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30. Dean L. Overman, *A Case for the Divinity of Jesus*, 21-22.
31. Dean L. Overman, *A Case for the Divinity of Jesus*, 22.
32. Overman, *A Case for the Divinity of Jesus*, 23.
33. Douglas J. Moo, *James*, 92.
34. *ibid*, 92-93.
35. On the dating of 1 Peter cf. Edmund Clowney, *The Message of 1 Peter* (Nottingham: IVP, 2010); Wayne A. Grudem, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: 1 Peter* (Nottingham: IVP Academic, 2009), I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis & Ian Paul, *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters & Revelation* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011); Daniel G. Powers, *New Beacon Commentary: 1 & 2 Peter, Jude: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 2010).
36. cf. [www.studydrive.org/commentary/james/2-7.html](http://www.studydrive.org/commentary/james/2-7.html). [Accessed 17 May 2016].
37. cf. <http://johnmarkhicks.com/2013/05/10/james-interprets-amos-911-12-acts-1513-18/> [Accessed 17 May 2016] & Michael A. Braun, "James' Use of Amos at the Jerusalem Council: Steps Toward a Possible Solution of the Textual and Theological Problems", [www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/20/20-2/20-2-pp113-121\\_JETS.pdf](http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/20/20-2/20-2-pp113-121_JETS.pdf). [Accessed 17 May 2016].
38. *The Expositor's Greek New Testament*, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/james/2-7.htm> Accessed 17 May 2016]; cf. "Blasphemy" in Holman Bible Dictionary, [www.studydrive.org/dictionaries/hbd/view.cgi?number=T971](http://www.studydrive.org/dictionaries/hbd/view.cgi?number=T971) [Accessed 17 May 2016]; Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology Online, [www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/blasphemy.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/blasphemy.html). [Accessed 17 May 2016].
39. cf. Moxnes, *A Short History Of The New Testament*, 34.
40. cf. Joseph F. Kelly, *An Introduction to the New Testament for Catholics* (Collegeville Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006), 222.
41. Scott Hann and Curtis Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible, The Letter of St. James, the First and Second Letters of St. Peter and the Letter of St. Jude: Commentary, Notes & Study Questions – Revised Standard Version*, Second Catholic edition (Ignatius: San Francisco, 2008), 13.
42. Sophie Laws, quoted by Alec Motyer, *The Message of James* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), 19.
43. Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, second edition (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2014), 668.
44. Alec Motyer, *The Message of James* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), 17.
45. *ibid*, 18.
46. Moo, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: James*, 36.
47. On the translation of these phrases compare <http://biblehub.com/james/1-19.htm>, <http://biblehub.com/james/2-7.htm> & <http://biblehub.com/james/2-5.htm> with <http://biblehub.com/acts/15-13.htm>, <http://biblehub.com/acts/15-17.htm> & <http://biblehub.com/acts/15-25.htm>. [All accessed 17 May 2016].
48. cf. James Patrick Holding, "The Authorship of James" in James Patrick Holding (ed.), *Trusting the New Testament* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2009), 221.
49. Scott Hann and Curtis Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 13. cf. Douglas J. Moo, *James*, 13.

50. *ibid.*

51. “A pseudonymous author, hoping to borrow the reputation of James for himself, would more likely have described him in exalted rather than humble terms. Or, at least, he would have given a sufficiently explicit description of James to help readers identify which of the ancient Jameses he was claiming to be” *ibid.*

52. Peter H. Davids, “James” in D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer & G.J. Wenham (eds.), the *New Bible Commentary*, 21st century edition (Leicester: IVP, 1994), 1354.

53. J.D. Doulas and Merrill C. Tenny, revised by Moises Silva, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 2011), 691.

54. Alister McGrath, *NIV Bible Handbook* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014), 477.

55. cf. James Patrick Holding, “The Authorship of James” in James Patrick Holding (ed.), *Trusting the New Testament* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2009), 221-224; Steven R. Cook, “Introduction to the Letter of James” <https://youtu.be/hYc9cdUgQfQ> [Accessed 17 May 2016]; Timothy Howe, “The Letter of James” <https://youtu.be/nT3FNt4i7w4>. [Accessed 17 May 2016]. James B. Adamson affirms the ‘probability that the Epistle is by James, the Lord’s brother.’ in *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1977), 22; Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough write that the author of James ‘is most likely James the (half-) brother of Jesus...’ in *Encountering the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), 345; Luke Timothy Johnson argues that ‘there are strong reasons for arguing that the extant letter was composed by James of Jerusalem, whom Paul designates as “brother of the Lord.”... the preponderance of evidence makes that position one that can be held with a high degree of confidence.’ in Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother Of Jesus Friend Of God: Studies In The Letter Of James* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 3; Whilst allowing for the involvement of an editor, Craig S. Keener rejects pseudonymy and states that ‘the material in the letter should be viewed as genuinely from James.’ in Keener *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, second edition, 668; I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis and Ian Paul agree that: ‘There is... no strong reason to question the tradition of authorship by James of Jerusalem.’ in *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters & Revelation*, second edition (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011), 266; Douglas J. Moo argues for ‘James, the Lord’s brother, as the most likely author of the epistle.’, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: James*, 20.

56. cf. Douglas J. Moo, *James*, 21.

57. Ben Witherington, as quoted by Chad V. Meister, *Building Belief: Constructing Faith from the Ground Up* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 146.

58. Hershel Shanks in *The Brother of Jesus: The Dramatic Story & Meaning of the First Archaeological Link to Jesus & His Family* (Continuum, 2003), 64.

59. Paul L. Maier, “The James Ossuary”, [www.mtio.com/articles/bissar95.htm](http://www.mtio.com/articles/bissar95.htm). [Accessed 17 May 2016].

60. Hershel Shanks, “The James Ossuary is Authentic”, *Biblical Archaeological Review* 38:04, July/August 2012, <http://members.bib-arch.org/publication.asp?PubID=BSBA&Volume=38&Issue=4&ArticleID=2>. [Accessed 17 May 2016].

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62. Holden & Geisler, *op cit*, 314.

63. “The Aucenticity of the James Ossuary”, *Open Journal of Geology* 2014, 4, 69-78.

64. *ibid.*

65. Walter A. Elwell & Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998), 345.

66. Wikimedia Commons, “The James Ossuary”, Paradiso (2005), *The James ossuary was on display at the Royal Ontario Museum from November 15, 2002 to January 5, 2003*, <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JamesOssuary-1-.jpg>. [Accessed 17 May 2016].

67. Scott Hann and Curtis Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 13.

68. John Drane, *Introducing The New Testament* (Oxford: Lion, 1999), 415.

69. For a defence of the earlier dating of *The Shepherd of Hermas* cf. J.A.T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976).

70. cf. “The Authorship of James” in James Patrick Holding ed., *Trusting the New Testament* (Xulon Press, 2009), 221.

71. J.D. Douglas and Merrill C. Tenny, revised by Moises Silva, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 2011), 692.

72. Scott Hann and Curtis Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 13. cf. Douglas J. Moo, *James*, 13.

73. Drane, *Introducing The New Testament*, 415.

74. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, second edition, 668.

75. See Peter H. Davids, “James” in D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer & G.J. Wenham ed.’s, the *New Bible Commentary*, 21st century edition (Leicester: IVP, 1994). Alister McGrath suggests the Epistle was written ‘at some point in the late 50’s or early 60’s.’ *NIV Bible Handbook*, 477 and I. Howard Marshall, Stephen Travis



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and Ian Paul suggest a date ‘between AD 50 and 66’ in *Exploring the New Testament: A Guide to the Letters & Revelation*, second edition (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2011), 267.

76. Moo, *James*, 35.

77. Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey Of The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 243.

78. Drane, *Introducing The New Testament*, 414.

79. Peter H. Davids, “James” in D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer & G.J. Wenham (eds.), the *New Bible Commentary*, 21st century edition (Leicester: IVP, 1994), 1354.

80. Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother Of Jesus Friend Of God: Studies In The Letter Of James* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004), 38.

81. Johnson, *Brother Of Jesus Friend Of God: Studies In The Letter Of James*, 154.

82. cf. Peter S. Williams, *Understanding Jesus: Five Ways to Spiritual Enlightenment* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2011).

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84. cf. Austin Cline, “Dating and Origins of Mark’s Gospel”

<http://atheism.about.com/od/biblegospelofmark/a/dating.htm> [Accessed May 17 2016];

Halvor Moxnes, *A Short History Of The New Testament* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 44.

85. Moo, *James*, 36.

86. *ibid.*

87. *ibid.*, 36-37.

88. Barry D. Smith, “James” [www.mycrandall.ca/courses/NTIntro/Jas.htm](http://www.mycrandall.ca/courses/NTIntro/Jas.htm) [Accessed 17 May 2016].

89. *ibid.*

90. Johnson, *Brother Of Jesus Friend Of God: Studies In The Letter Of James*, 122.

91. Scott Hann and Curtis Mitch, *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 13. cf. Douglas J. Moo, *James*, 13.

92. Paige Patterson, *Holman Bible Dictionary* (1991), [www.studydrive.org/dictionaries/hbd/view.cgi?n=3230](http://www.studydrive.org/dictionaries/hbd/view.cgi?n=3230). [Accessed 17 May 2016]. For example, Craig L. Blomberg writes: ‘The Epistle of James may in fact be the earliest of all the New Testament documents, written in the late 40s.’ in Blomberg, *Making Sense of the New Testament: three critical questions* (Leicester: IVP, 2003), 60.

93. Phil Fernandes and Kyle Larson, *Hijacking The Historical Jesus: Answering Recent Attacks on the Jesus of the Bible* (Bremerton, WA: IBD Press, 2012), 144.

94. *Idem.*

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96. Moo, *James*, 35.

97. Fernandes and Larson, *Hijacking The Historical Jesus*, 144.

98. McGrath, *NIV Bible Handbook*, 477.

99. Moo, *James*, 35.

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