

Friday Men in Christ – with Gary Henecke

July 12, 2024

The Epistle of James is first mentioned by name by Origen, (185 - c. 253) who apparently regards it as scripture - and apparently accepts it as from the hand of James, the Lord's brother. Eusebius, however, classes it among the antilegomena and Jerome seems to imply that another wrote in James' name or later edited the work. Before Origen, however, there does seem to be a definite strain of allusions to James in early Christian writers. But the generally negligible attestation for James may well be due to a cause other than inauthenticity:

Its limited circulation would be due no doubt to the fact that it was sent to Jewish Christians of the East Dispersion.¹⁹ And its limited interest would be due to several factors: (1) it does not claim to be apostolic; (2) it is not controversial—i.e., it is not the kind of document which could be used in the second century battle against the Gnostics; (3) it lacks the dynamics, passion, and persuasiveness of the Pauline letters; (4) it is neither Christological nor theological in its thrust, but merely ethical; and (5) in the one place where it does appear to be theologically oriented (2:14-26), it seems to contradict the theology of the Pauline letters.

In sum, in light of the fact that there is no good reason to consider the work pseudonymous, its limited recognition must be due to reasons other than inauthenticity. The traditional view, that James the

James 2 - GODLINESS (1-13)

A. SUCH AS SHOWING PREFERENCE TO THE RICH (1-3)

B. REASONS NOT TO SHOW PARTIALITY (4-13)

- a. It reveals that we judge with evil intent.
- b. God has chosen the poor to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom.
- c. Have not the rich oppressed and blasphemed you?
- d. Whoever fails at one point of the Law fails at all.
- e. Live as one who is to be judged - We shall be judged by the law of liberty, in which judgment without mercy is given to those who show no mercy

C. TRUE RELIGION SHOWS FAITH THROUGH WORKS (14-26)

James 2:14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but does not have deeds? Can this kind of faith save him? If a brother is poorly clothed and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm and Can eat well," but you do not give them what the body needs, what good is it? So it is with faith, if it has no works, it's dead.