

**Subject:** Re: You might be interested in this

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**From:** Jeff Stanley (jstanley01@yahoo.com)

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**To:** gideonfe@bellsouth.net;

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**Cc:** rbartonx@yahoo.com;

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Hi Gary,

Thanks again for sending me the excerpt from Barnes' commentary. The issues he raises definitely need to be taken into account. For one, I was wrong when I taught in Part 1 that "everyone says" that the book of James was written by James the Lord's brother. As Barnes canvasses, there is actually "a wide variety of theological opinion," lol.

Here is my take on some major points he hits, not necessarily in the order he presented them. I'd be thankful, as always, to get any observations or insights that you have.

"There have been more difficult questions raised in regard to the Epistle of James than perhaps any other portion of the New Testament..."

That may be true in theological circles, but when it comes to sorting out the usages of *pneuma* as they relate to the Holy Spirit field, I think Dr. Wierwille had a much harder task.

"...Those questions it is of importance to examine as fully as is consistent with the design of these notes; that is, so far as to enable a candid inquirer to see what is the real difficulty in the case, and what is, so far as can be ascertained, the truth.

"The first question is, Who was the author? It has been attributed to one of three persons: to James 'the elder,' the son of Zebedee, and brother of John; to James 'the less,' son of Alphaeus or Cleophas; and to a James of whom nothing more is known. Some have supposed, also, that the James who is mentioned as the "Lord's brother," Gal\_1:19, was a different person from James, the son of Alphaeus.

"There are no methods of determining this point from the Epistle itself. All that can be established from the Epistle is:

"(1) That the name of the author was James, Jam\_1:1

"(2) That he professed to be a "servant of God," Jam\_1:1

"(3) That he had been probably a Jew, and sustained such a relation to those to whom he wrote, as to make it proper for him to address them with authority; and,

"(4) That he was a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jam\_2:1; Jam\_5:8"

This is wrong, and on a basic biblical research principle too. Namely previous usage, which

I haven't gotten into yet, because I hadn't seen it when I taught Part 1. But I will get into tonight in Part 2, as well as below, when I show that, of the two possible apostles who could have written the book of James, it had to be James the brother of John, not James the son of Alphaeus.

"There are two persons, if not three, of the name of James, mentioned in the New Testament. The one is James, the son of Zebedee, Mat\_4:21; Mar\_3:17; Luk\_6:14; Act\_1:13, et al. He was the brother of John, and is usually mentioned in connection with him; Mat\_4:21; Mat\_17:1; Mar\_5:37; Mar\_13:3, et al. The name of their mother was Salome. Compare Mat\_27:56, with Mar\_15:40. He was put to death by Herod Agrippa, about 41 a.d. Act\_12:2. He was called the major, or the elder - to distinguish him from the other James, the younger, or the less, Mar\_15:40; called also, in ancient history, James the Just.

"The other James was a son of Alphaeus or Cleophas; Mat\_10:3; Mar\_3:18; Act\_1:13; Luk\_24:18. That Alphaeus and Cleophas was the same person is evident from the fact that both the words are derived from the Hebrew ??? h-l-p-y. The name of the mother of this James was Mary, Mar\_15:40; and James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, are mentioned as brethren; Mat\_13:55. There is also a James mentioned in Mat\_13:55; Mar\_6:3; and Gal\_1:19, as a 'brother of our Lord.' On the meaning of this expression, see the notes at Gal\_1:19"

This is exactly what a straightforward reading of the Scripture shows: that there were three individuals named James, two who were apostles, and one other who was the Lord's brother.

"It has been a question which has been agitated from the earliest times, whether the James who is mentioned as the son of Alphaeus, and the James who is mentioned as the "Lord's brother," were the same or different persons. It is not necessary for the purposes of these notes to go into an examination of this question. Those who are disposed to see it pursued, may consult Hug's Introduction, Section 158, and the works there referred to; Neander's *History of the Planting and Training of the Christian Church*, vol. ii. p. 2, following, Edin. Ed.; and Michaelis' *Introduction*, vol. iv. 271, following. The question, says Neander, is one of the most difficult in the apostolic history. Hug supposes that James the son of Alphaeus, and James the brother of the Lord, were the same. Neander supposes that the James mentioned by the title of the "Lord's brother" was a son of Joseph, either by a former marriage, or by Mary, and consequently a "brother" in the stricter sense.

One of the most difficult questions in "apostolic history" my eye. How can Hug "suppose" that James the son of Alphaeus was actually the son of Joseph when the Word calls him the son of Alphaeus? It's senseless.

"It is remarked by Michaelis, that James may have been called "the Lord's brother," or mentioned as one of his brethren, in one of the following senses:

"(1) That the persons accounted as the 'brethren of the Lord' (Mat\_13:55, et al.) were the sons of Joseph, not by Mary the mother of Jesus, but by a former wife.

This, says he, was the most ancient opinion, and there is in it nothing improbable. If so, they were older than Jesus."

Actually, Matthew 2:13-14 not only make this improbable, they make it *impossible*:

And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

So all the supposed elder children of Joseph were abandoned to fend for themselves? I doubt it. Let's not forget, if Josephus is right, James the Lord's brother was alive in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. So he could not have been an adult when Jesus was born. Just the opposite, he must have been younger than Jesus.

"(3) a third opinion in relation to James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, is, that they were the sons of Joseph by the widow of a brother who had died without children, and to whom, therefore, Joseph, by the Mosaic laws, was obliged to raise up issue. This opinion, however, is entirely unsupported, and is wholly improbable, because:

"(a) the law which obliged the Jews to take their brothers' widows applied only to those who were single (Michaelis); and,

"(b) if this had been an instance of that kind, all the requirement of the law in the case would have been satisfied when one heir was born."

Spurious, for the reasons cited and more.

"(4) it might be maintained that, according to the preceding opinion, the brother of Joseph was Alphaeus, and then they would be reckoned as his sons; and in this case, the James and Judas who are called the brothers of Jesus, would have been the same as the apostles of that name. But, in that case, Alphaeus would not have been the same as Cleopas, for Cleopas had a wife - the sister of Joseph's wife."

Spurious, for the reasons cited and more.

"5) A fifth opinion, and one which was advanced by Jerome, and which has been extensively maintained, is, that the persons referred to were called "brethren" of the Lord Jesus only in a somewhat lax sense, as denoting his near kinsmen. See the notes at [Gal 1:19](#). According to this, they would have been cousins of the Lord Jesus, and the relationship was of this kind: James and Judas, sons of Alphaeus, were the apostles, and consequently Alphaeus was the father of Simon and Joses. Further, Alphaeus is the same as Cleopas, who married Mary, the sister of the mother of Jesus [Joh 19:25](#), and, consequently, the sons of Cleopas were cousins

of the Saviour."

"Which of these opinions is the correct one, it is impossible now to determine. The latter is the common opinion, and perhaps, on the whole, best sustained; and if so, then there were but two Jameses referred to, both apostles, and the one who wrote this Epistle was a cousin of the Lord Jesus."

I disagree completely that it is impossible to determine who is who in the Word of God. Furthermore, on what basis is this "lax sense" the "best sustained"? Especially when Matthew 13 makes it wholly unsustainable.

Matthew 13:54-58

And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

It's safe to say that Jesus Christ's neighbors were hardly speaking in any kind of "lax sense," like as if these were really cousins. Ridiculous.

That leaves point two, which I have saved for last:

"2) It may mean that they were the sons of Joseph by Mary, the mother of Jesus. Compare the notes at [Mat 13:55](#). If so, James was an own brother of Jesus, but younger than he. There is nothing in this opinion inconsistent with any statement in the Bible; for the notion of the perpetual virginity of Mary is not founded on the authority of the Scriptures..."

Exactly right, so far.

"...If either of these suppositions were true, however, and James and Judas, the authors of the Epistles which bear their names, were literally the brothers of Christ, it would follow that they were not apostles; for the elder apostle James was the son of Zebedee, and James the younger was the son of Alphaeus.

Wait a minute. How can the writer of this commentary all of a sudden assert what is supposed to be in question? He is the one who stated in his second paragraph of his Section 1 regarding the book of James:

"The first question is, Who was the author?"

Why assume that if there was a James and a Jude who were the literal half-brothers of Christ – separate from the two apostles named James and the apostle named Jude – that it had to be the brothers who wrote the books? Hardly logical.

My default assumption is just the opposite of this writer in the case that number 2 is right (and it is): that it was the apostles who must have written the epistles with their names on it – including both James and Jude.

The brethren of the Lord are the least likely candidates, given the track record of unbelief clearly demonstrated in the Word by all of them collectively (John 7:1-10; note especially verse 5), notwithstanding their continuing association with the disciples (John 2:12; Acts 1:14). And specifically the unbelief of James, who it is clear became foremost in the church after the murder of James the brother of John, despite being off the Word (compare Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18 with Galatians 1:15-2:14).

The only remaining question, for me at least, is which apostle named James wrote the book of James. Biblically, because of previous usage, the nod has to go to James the brother of John. Because he is the only James in the Word, up until Herod murdered him, whose name ever stands in the record of the Word unqualified (Matthew 17:1; Mark 9:2; 13:3; 14:33 Luke 8:51; 9:28, 54; Acts 1:13). Whereas the name of James the son of Alphaeus is always qualified (Matthew 10:3; 27:56; Mark 3:18; 15:40; 16:1; Luke 6:15, 16; 24:10; Acts 1:13).

Which means, if it had been James the son of Alphaeus who wrote the book of James, he would have identified himself as such. And the reason why is simple for anyone who believes that the Scriptures are God-breathed: because, given that precedent in the revelation, neither God nor James the son of Alphaeus acting as a holy man of God would have been that stupid.

Of course, this means that the record in God's Word of James the son of Alphaeus ends in Acts 1:13. But it also ends for the apostles Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Simon Zelotes, and Matthias. It does not end, however, Matthew, because he wrote the book of Matthew. Or for Judas the brother of James, in that there is no biblical reason whatsoever to believe that anyone other than the Apostle Judas wrote Jude.

"It is a circumstance of some importance, in showing that there was but one James besides James the brother of John, and that this was the apostle, the son of Alphaeus, that after the death of the elder James Act\_12:1, no mention is made of more than one of that name. If there had been, it is hardly possible, says Hug, that there should not have been some allusion to him. This, however, is not conclusive; for there is no mention of Simon, or Bartholomew, or Thomas after that time..."

So once again Hug is easily discounted.

"...There is but one serious objection, perhaps, to this theory, which is, that it is said Joh\_7:5 that "his brethren did not believe on him."

Indeed.

"It is possible, however, that the word "brethren" in that place may not have included all his kinsmen, but may have had particular reference to the larger portion of them Joh\_7:3, who were not believers, though it might have been that some of them were believers."

Personally as a workman of the Word of truth, I prefer not to wind myself around like a pretzel.

Especially upon realizing that *adelphos* is never used as a synonym for "kinsmen" anywhere in the New Testament. It is used either for a literal brother, or a fellow-countryman of Israel, or of a fellow-believer in the Church.

"On the whole, it seems probable that the James who was the author of this Epistle was one of the apostles of that name, the son of Alphaeus, and that he was a cousin of our Lord. Entire certainty on that point, however, cannot be hoped for."

*Au contraire*, lol. And I think that's as far as I need to go with Mr. Barnes on this subject.

Once again, thanks for sending his comments Gary. It has been great working them in order to nail down most of, if not all, the loose ends.

Jeff