

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

BELOVED BRETHREN

A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

PART TEN OF SIXTY FOUR

In his short epistle, James addresses his readers over a dozen times as "brethren" (James 1:16,19). The term is used to show the fraternal relationship of those born into the family of God through the word of truth (James 1:18). James' frequent use of the term, especially with the adjective "beloved," shows his affection for those addressed. His love for his "beloved brethren" did not preclude his rebuking them for their transgressions. He said, "Out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (James 3:10). His rebukes were given in love as a spokesman for God (Hebrews 12:6).

When James rebuked the people for showing partiality (James 2:1), he began by calling them "my brethren". What more appropriate way to show the folly of exalting one person over another than by reminding the people "ye are all brethren" (Luke 8:21; Galatians 6:1; Matthew 23:8).

To emphasize the necessity of a working faith, he uses "a brother or sister" in need (James 2:15). The bond of brotherhood compels Christians to do good "especially to the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10).

In the fifth chapter, James appeals to his readers five times as "brethren." He encourages them to be patient, not to murmur, to recall the heroes of the past, and to swear not. In each case he addresses them as "brethren."

The book closes with an earnest reminder to be concerned over the brethren who have been overcome in sin and are lost (James 5:19,20). This is a much needed lesson. Many of our number are no longer worshipping God with us. The family circle is missing some members. They are our "beloved brethren". Can we claim the blessings of our heavenly Father while our spiritual brethren are lost in their sins? How much we need to fan the flames of love between brethren! For too long we have lived to ourselves while our "beloved brethren" have fallen away. Let us go to our "beloved brethren" with tears and prayers to save their souls from death.

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