



# James the Brother of Jesus: The Key to Unlocking the Secrets of Early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls

By Robert H. Eisenman

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James was a vegetarian, wore only linen clothing, bathed daily at dawn in cold water, and was a life-long Nazirite. In this profound and provocative work of scholarly detection, eminent biblical scholar Robert Eisenman introduces a startling theory about the identity of James—the brother of Jesus, who was almost entirely marginalized in the New Testament.

Drawing on long-overlooked early Church texts and the Dead Sea Scrolls, Eisenman reveals in this groundbreaking exploration that James, not Peter, was the real successor to the movement we now call "Christianity." In an argument with enormous implications, Eisenman identifies Paul as deeply compromised by Roman contacts. James is presented as not simply the leader of Christianity of his day, but the popular Jewish leader of his time, whose death triggered the Uprising against Rome—a fact that creative rewriting of early Church documents has obscured.

Eisenman reveals that characters such as "Judas Iscariot" and "the Apostle James" did not exist as such. In delineating the deliberate falsifications in New Testament documents, Eisenman shows how—as James was written out—anti-Semitism was written in. By rescuing James from the oblivion into which he was cast, the final conclusion of **James the Brother of Jesus** is, in the words of **The Jerusalem Post**, "apocalyptic" —who and whatever James was, so was Jesus.

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Robert Eisenman, one of the most eminent researchers of early Christianity working today, has produced an exhaustive study of the historical milieu at the time of Jesus and come to the conclusion that James, rather than Peter, was heir to his teachings. Because the historical material regarding James is actually quite plentiful, a clear picture arises not only in regard to who James was, but by extension, who Jesus was also. Controversy is assured; still, given a patient reading, one will discover that Eisenman's research is meticulous, his arguments cogent, and his conclusions persuasive. This should prove to be a popular and influential book.

#### From Library Journal

In previous writings (most recently, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered*, LJ 2/1/93), Eisenman drew attention to apparent parallels between the Qumran community reflected in the scrolls and the early Jewish Christian community led by James, the brother of Jesus. In his latest work, he attempts to examine further those parallels and to rescue James from "the scrapheap of history." Eisenman believes James's role in early Christianity has been downplayed in the tradition(s) preserved in the New Testament, primarily the Gospels and Acts. Vestiges of the real James are blurred. Eisenman, therefore, chooses to place more confidence in extra-biblical writings, especially the Dead Sea Scrolls, for understanding James and his role in early Christianity; he takes every opportunity to deprecate the writings of the New Testament (except where they can be pressed into service to strengthen his case). At times it is difficult to determine whether the author's goal is to reclaim James or defame the New Testament. This piece of tendentious research is not the key to unlocking anything about early Christianity. *?Craig W. Beard, Univ. of Alabama Lib., Birmingham*  
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#### From Booklist

For those interested in early Christianity and the Dead Sea Scrolls, this hefty volume looks irresistible. Not only does Eisenman, a longtime scrolls scholar, cast his gaze on James, the brother of Jesus, a fascinating but little-understood biblical character, but he also links early Christianity with the community at Qumran, whose members are thought by many to be the writers of the ancient scrolls. Unfortunately, those eager to be educated on those topics will find Eisenman rough going. Not only is the book almost 1,000 pages long, a good part of it will be comprehensible only to those with advanced knowledge of the subjects. Eisenman himself suggests that readers of his book should have in front of them a copy of the New Testament, a translation of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the works of the ancient Jewish historian Josephus. Actually, this is a helpful suggestion, but how many of us can find our copy of Josephus? This is the sort of book that will attract considerable attention and even some requests in public libraries. Whether it will be read is another issue. *Ilene Cooper*

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