

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

Chapter One

I. James, the “Brother of Jesus” (Gal. 1:19)

- A. The conception of Jesus in the virgin Mary was of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 1:18-25; Lk. 1:26-36); Jesus was called “the Holy One”
- B. James and his brethren were born of the seed of Joseph (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3; 1 Cor. 9:5)
- C. James called himself “a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (see also Jude 1)
 1. In God’s house there should be no respect of person (Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; Jm. 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:17)
 2. No partiality or favoritism
- D. To the 12 tribes (the Hebrew Christians) scattered among the nations
 1. They were under much persecution from their fellow Jews in Judaism
 2. James (like 1 Pet. 1:1, 6) wrote the epistle to encourage, to strengthen, and to guide them

II. Various Sufferings <Trials> Are Used by God to Test Our Faith

- (Jm. 1:2-4, 12; 1 Pet. 1:6-7; 4:12; Heb. 2:10; 12:2-11; Acts 20:19; Job 23:10; Mal. 3:3)
- A. Especially the sufferings/persecution for the Lord’s name and righteousness (Mt. 5:10-12; Lk. 6:22-23; Acts 5:41; Rom. 8:18; Heb. 10:32-34; 1 Pet. 4:13-14; Phil. 1:29; 2 Tim. 3:11-12)
 - B. Count it all joy instead of having a negative and sad attitude
 - C. The testing of our faith produces patience <endurance> (Col. 1:11; Rom. 5:3-5)
 - D. Let endurance finish its perfecting work in us
 1. Bringing us to perfection (Heb. 2:10)

2. And lacking in nothing (1 Thess. 5:23; Col. 2:10; Heb. 7:25)

E. The purpose <goal> of suffering for Christ's sake - perfection

III. The Need of Wisdom from Above to Achieve the Goal

(Jm. 1:5-8)

A. Ask of God <pray to God>, Who gives liberally and without reproach <without upbraiding> (Mt. 7:7)

B. Ask in faith without doubting (Mt. 21:21; Jm. 1:6-8; Heb. 10:23; 11:6; 1 Tim. 2:8; Rom. 4:19-24)

1. Doubting is compared to a wave tossed to and fro by the wind – unstable (Eph. 4:14)

2. A man who is double-minded <double souled> will receive nothing from the Lord

C. Have this mind <thought or mindset> in us which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5-10; Jm. 1:9-11; Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25)

1. Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation (Lk. 6:20; Jm. 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:24)

2. But the rich in his humiliation (Jm. 2:6b; 1 Tim. 6:17)

3. Trials and afflictions happen to all believers, to both the poor and the rich

IV. Blessed is the Man who Endures Trials (Jm. 1:12)

A. To pass the test <be approved>

B. To receive the reward – the crown of life at the Lord's coming

C. The Lord's promise to those who love Him

V. Do Not Blame God When Faced with Trials/Temptation

A. Do not say "I am being tempted by God"

1. God cannot be tempted by evil (*untemptable*)

2. God Himself tempts no one

B. While being tested <suffering trials> the evil one will also come to tempt <entice> us

1. To "draw us away" by our own lust

2. When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin
 3. When sin is fully developed, it brings forth death
(Ps. 7:14)
- C. Do not be deceived
- D. Every good and perfect gift is from above
1. From the Father of lights (1 Jn. 1:4)
 2. With Whom there is no variation or shadow of turning
(Heb. 1:10-12 < Ps. 102:25-27>; Heb. 13:8; Mal. 3:6)
 3. By His divine will <*His own will*> He brought us forth
(Jm. 1:18; Jn. 1:12-13; 3:6) to become children of God
 - a. By the word of truth (1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:13-14;
Mt. 13:23)
 - b. To be the firstfruits of all He created (Rom. 8:23;
16:5; 1 Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 14:4;
Exod. 34:19; Num. 3:13; 8:17)

VI. Wherefore, Knowing This, We Must Exercise to Cooperate
(Jm. 1:19-27):

- A. Be swift to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger <*when faced with afflictions*> (Prov. 13:3; 14:29; 17:27; Ec. 5:2)
1. For man's wrath does not produce <*work out*> the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:3; Phil. 3:9)
 2. The need to deny our "self" – cast away all filthiness and overflow <*excess*> of wickedness <*malice*>
(1 Pet. 2:1-2) – which is necessary to receive the word
- B. Continue to receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able save our souls (Jm. 1:21)
1. Be doers of the word and not hearers only
(Jm. 1:23-25)
 2. Look into the perfect law of liberty and continue in it
(Jn. 8:32, 36; Rom. 7:22-23; 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:16-17;
Ps. 19:7-10; 119:96-105)
 3. Then we will be blessed in what we do (Jn. 13:17)
- C. Conclusion of chapter one (Jm. 1:26-27):

1. Those who are hearers only and not also doers of the word are deceiving their own heart – all their outward religious practices are useless
2. Pure and undefiled religion before God has this evidence
 - a. Caring for the needy saints (the orphans and the widows) in their trouble (Ps. 68:5; Is. 1:16-17; Gal. 6:9-10; 1 Jn. 3:17-19)
 - b. Keeping oneself unspotted from the world (Jm. 4:4; Rom. 12:2; Gal. 1:4; 6:14; 1 Jn. 2:15-17; 1 Jn. 5:19, 21)
- D. Then our Christian life, church-life and services will not be in vain (Jm. 1:26-27; Mt. 23:23)
 1. But pure and undefiled before God and our Father
 2. Not in outward ceremonial services, but in deeds (2 Tim. 3:5; Col. 3:17)

Chapter Two

VII. The Godly Way to Practice (to Hold, to Keep, to Live Out)

Our Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

- A. The just shall live and walk by faith, not by sight (Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 14:23; Phil. 1:21a)
- B. Holding the mystery of faith with a pure conscience (1 Tim. 1:5; 3:9)
 1. Without partiality, favoritism, bias, or discrimination (Jm. 2:1-7)
 - a. Example of a wealthy man and a poor man (vv. 2-4)
 - b. Our choice is different from God's choice (vv. 6-7)
 2. Fulfill the royal law – love your neighbor as yourself (Jm. 2:8; Mt. 22:38-40)
 3. To show partiality is to commit sin – the one practicing it becomes a transgressor of the law (Jm. 2:9-11)

- a. Making yourself a judge of others with evil thoughts, showing no mercy (v. 4)
 - b. You will be judged by God without mercy (v. 13a)
 - c. Mercy triumphs over judgment (v. 13b)
- C. Therefore, so speak and act as those who will be judged by the law that gives freedom <law of liberty> (v. 12)
- D. Then the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ will be expressed (v. 1)

VIII. Faith Without Works Is Dead (Jm. 2:14-26)

- A. Faith must be substantiated by deeds and with evidence (Heb. 11:1)
1. Example of the poor brother (Jm. 2:15-16)
 2. Example of Abraham offering up Isaac (vv. 21-23)
 3. Example of Rahab (v. 25)
- B. Faith and works (action) must work together
1. By works faith will be made perfect (v. 22)
 2. A man is justified by his works and actions, not by faith alone (v. 24)
 3. As the body without the spirit is dead; so faith without works is also dead (v. 26)
 4. However, works without faith are also dead <*dead works*> (Heb. 9:14)

Chapter Three

IX. The Taming of the Tongue (Jm. 1:19, 26; 3:1-12; 1 Pet. 3:10; Prov. 13:3)

- A. Do not be eager, brethren, to become teachers (Mt. 23:7-8 <Rabbi> means “the great and honorable one”)
1. He who teaches shall receive stricter, greater judgment (Mt. 12:36-37; 23:14; Rom. 2:21-29; Job 42:7-8)
 2. For we all stumble <*fall, err, fail, and offend*> in many things – offending and misleading others and ourselves; even worse – like Peter in Mt. 16:22-23

3. Isaiah 6:5: “I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips”; experience of Moses (Exod. 4:10; 6:12, 30; Jer. 1:6)
 - B. The absolute necessity and responsibility of teachers to tame their tongue
 1. Although a little member, the tongue boasts great things – able to exercise tremendous influence over our whole body
 - a. Like the bridle of a horse
 - b. Like a small rudder of a big ship
 - c. Like a little fire that kindles a big forest fire
 2. It is a fire from hell, a world of iniquity which defiles our whole body (different from the tongues of fire on the day of Pentecost)
 3. An unruly, restless evil, full of deadly poison (Ps. 140:3; Rom. 3:13), which no one can tame (except the Holy Spirit)
 - a. Causing much trouble, problems, and division
 - b. Defiling the whole body (of Christ)
 - c. Like every kind of beast that needs to be tamed
 - C. The need to bridle our deceitful tongue (Jm. 3:8-12; 1:26; Ps. 120; 39:1)
 1. For out of it comes blessing and cursing
 2. Flowing out fresh and bitter (salt) water
 3. Like a fig tree bearing olives, a grapevine bearing figs
 4. This kind of situation should not be in Zion
- X. Two Sources of Wisdom That Control the Tongue**
(Jm. 3:13-18)
- A. The wisdom from below
 1. Earthly, soulish, demonic
 2. Causing bitter envy, self-seeking in the heart, boasting and lying against the truth
 3. Confusion and every evil thing
 - B. The wisdom from above

1. From God: first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.
2. Bringing forth the fruit of righteousness sown in peace by those who make peace

Chapter Four (continuation of Chapter 3)

XI. What Happens if the Tongue Is Not Tamed (Mt. 12:34)

- A. The lust of the flesh will come out – wars and fights, the desires for pleasure, covetousness (see IX-B-2&3 under Chapter 3)
- B. Even in our prayers – we ask amiss <κακῶς>
 1. With evil intent
 2. To spend it on our pleasures
 3. God will not answer such prayers
- C. We become adulterers and adulteresses –
 1. Making friendship with the world – instead of condemning the world
 2. Making ourselves enemies of God
 3. Quenching and grieving the indwelling Holy Spirit
- D. We become proud (Jm. 4:6)
- E. We speak evil of one another (v. 11)
 1. Judging and accusing one another
 2. Even speaking evil of the law and become judges of the law
- F. Boastful and arrogant about our “achievements” (vv. 13-17)
 1. Riches and success – businesses and professions
 2. Warning – No one knows what will happen “tomorrow”
- G. Knowing the good that we ought to do and not doing it is sin
- H. Conclusion: points A-G indicates the wisdom from below

XII. Admonition from James (vv. 6-10)

- A. Humble yourself before God (Rom. 12:16; Jm. 4:6, 10; 1 Pet. 5:5-6)
 - 1. God resists the proud
 - 2. He gives grace to the humble
- B. Submit to God; resist the devil and he will flee from you
- C. Draw near to God daily and He will draw near to you
- D. Cleanse your hands, you sinners
- E. Purify your hearts, you double minded <double souled> (Jm. 1:8)
- F. Repent (Jm. 4:9; Is. 22:12; Mt. 5:4; 2 Cor. 7:10)

Chapter Five

XIII. Warning to the Rich of the Coming Judgment – the Terrible Miseries That Are Coming Upon Them (Jm. 5:1-6; 1 Tim. 6:17)

- A. Their riches are corrupted, deceitful – the mammon of unrighteousness (Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:9; 1 Tim. 6:9-10, 17; Prov. 23:5)
- B. Their gold and silver are corroded
 - 1. Their corrosion will be a witness against the rich
 - 2. And will eat up their flesh like fire
 - 3. To heap up treasure is to heap up judgment in the last days
- C. To live on earth in pleasure and luxury is to fatten your hearts as the cattle in the day of slaughter

XIV. Encouragement to Those Who Are Going through Trials to Be Patient until the Coming of the Lord (Jm. 5:7-12)

- A. As the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth
 - 1. The Lord will send the early and latter rain
 - 2. Be patient to establish your hearts
 - 3. The coming of the Lord is at hand (Heb. 10:35-37; Ps. 27:14)
- B. Do not grumble against one another, brethren
 - 1. Lest you be condemned

- 2. Behold the Judge is standing at the door
- C. Count those blessed who endure suffering
 - 1. Example of Job – see the end intended by the Lord
 - 2. The Lord is very compassionate and merciful
- D. Do not be crooked, do not swear (Mt. 5:33-37; 2 Cor. 1:17-20)
 - 1. Let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No” be “No”
 - 2. Lest you fall into judgment

XV. The Power of the Prayer of Faith (Jm. 5:13-20)

- A. For those who are sick (vv. 13-16)
- B. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man avails much (Ps. 34:15; Prov. 15:8, 29)
- C. Example of Elijah (1 Ki. 17:1; 18:44; Lk. 4:25)
- D. To turn those who err from the truth
 - 1. Will save them from death
 - 2. Will cover a multitude of sins