

James

James was the oldest half-brother of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 13:55). He witnessed Christ's appearance following His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7), and he was among those who assembled together following the Ascension, to await the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14). Later James became a leader of the believers in Jerusalem (Acts 12:17; Gal. 1:18, 19). Even Paul took his advice on how to deal with the new Gentile converts (Acts 21:18-26). James kept the potentially explosive situation concerning Gentile evangelism under control. In addition, he helped draft a very tolerant letter to the Gentile Christians in Antioch regarding their status (Acts 15:13-19). James was cognizant of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles, but concentrated his own efforts on winning his Jewish brethren to faith in Jesus.

The phrase "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1) is symbolic reference to the Jews in general (cf. James 1:2, 18). The phrase "scattered abroad" denotes those Jews who were living outside of Palestine, due in great part to the intense persecution of Christians living in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Since the letter was written in the Greek language, it is logical to assume that these Jews had been scattered far enough north to have ended up in a locale chiefly populated by Greek speaking peoples (Acts 11:19).

Most scholars suggest that this book was written shortly before James' martyrdom in A.D. 62. There are some, however, who place the time of writing closer to the time of the Jerusalem council in A.D. 46.

The book of James is a simple, yet organized and logical treatise of the ethical aspects of the Christian life. This fact, along with the realization that the book is largely composed of general exhortations and admonitions, has led some to call the Book of James the "New Testament Book of Proverbs." The major theme of the book is James' appeal to the believer that true faith results in outward acts of obedience and righteousness (James 1:22). (Key Word, page 1528)

Mathew 12:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

Two books of the New Testament are written by Judas and James half-brothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

Key Word Bible's commentary is that the tribe of Juda, Jews, is referred to as all 12 tribes. We see in 1 Kings 11:

31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)

33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and

have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.

These ten tribes are to the north of Jerusalem and Judea and referred to as Israel also. The ten tribes started to worship false gods and were scattered around the world. So he very well may be speaking to the ten scattered tribes. Jeremiah chapters 36 – 19. In Tracing Our Ancestors by Frederick Haberman discusses the scattered tribes.

*Ezekiel 6:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
2Son of man, set thy face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them,
3And say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD; Thus saith the Lord GOD to the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys; Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.
4And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols.
5And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars.
6In all your dwellingplaces the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.
7And the slain shall fall in the midst of you, and ye shall know that I am the LORD.
8Yet will I leave a remnant, that ye may have some that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries.*

Prayer of Faith

2My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;
3Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
4But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
5If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.
6But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

Wavereth – Romans 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

7For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.
8A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.
9Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:
10But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.
11For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

Enduring Tests

12Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Be Doers of the Word

19Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

27Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Chapter 2

Respect for Others

1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons.

2For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

4Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

7Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

9But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

11For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

12So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

The literal translation of these two verses is “Thus speak and thus do, as if you are going to be judged by a law of freedom or liberality.” James tells us that the believer is going to be judged (2 Cor 5:10). The Judge, of course, is Jesus Christ. However, He is not going to be absolutely rigid, but He is going to exercise liberality or generosity in many cases toward those who are judged. In verse thirteen, James explains how this judgement is going to be determined: “For judgement will be merciless to those who has shown no mercy.” This explains the fifth Beatitude in Matthew 5:7, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” The Judges generosity toward a believer will be in proportion to the amount of mercy that believer showed while on earth. If he or she showed no mercy, that one will receive no mercy. Entrance into heaven is a result of the work that Christ alone did, yet the believer’s enjoyment of heaven and its rewards will be reflected in what he or she did for Christ in the live of faith on earth. Then follows the last part of James 2:13, which literally translated says, “Mercy or mercifulness boasts against judgement.” This means that the believer whose life has been full of mercifulness will face the Judge unafraid, because the Judge in His liberality will take into account the mercy that the believer demonstrated on earth. (Key Word, page 1530)

“Faith Without Works Is Dead”

14What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

17Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

In Romans 3:20 Paul says, “By the works of the law no flesh will be justified.” On the other hand, James 2:21-24 apparently states that a man is not justified by faith only but also by works. The difficulty of the seeming contradiction is accentuated by the statement of Paul himself in Romans 2:13, “The doers of the law will be justified.” How can these two statements be reconciled? James 2:14 does not say, “What doth it profit...though a man have faith?” rather, “What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith.” A mere profession of faith does not mean the possession of faith or the natural accompaniments of faith. Faith that is not

accompanied by its inevitable and expectant fruits of faith is no faith at all. It is a mockery, and James calls such a faith as "dead." (Key Word, page 1530)

20But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

22Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

23And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

24Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?

26For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Chapter 3

Control the Tongue

1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

2For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.

3Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4Behold also the ships, which though *they be* so great, and *are* driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

People can be controlled by one mouth, and lead to follow someone who speaks. We see this in politics and the media.

5Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

Tongue 1100 glossa, gloce'-sah; of uncertain affinity; the tongue; (by implication) language (specially on naturally unacquired): -tounge.

It doesn't take much, saying much, to start a fire, or trouble.

6And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

8But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?

12Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so *can* no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

True Wisdom Comes From God

13Who *is* a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

16For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work.

17But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

Chapter 4

Warnings Against Loving the World

1 From whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts that war in your members?

2Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

No diplomacy or trying to work out differences.

3Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts.

4Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

It's somewhat natural for men to lust or want something.

6But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded.

9Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

10Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Cautions Concerning Criticism

11Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

*The Lord is the only Judge, not us. Jesus said;
Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.*

“If the Lord Will”

13Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

15For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin.

Chapter 5

Warnings to the Rich

1 Go to now, *ye* rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon *you*.

2Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

3Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

5Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

Luke 18:

24 *And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!*

25 *For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

6Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

7Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

13Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

14Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

20Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

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