

Studies from the Epistle of James

Chapter 1

Greetings

¹James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

Trials

²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The Rich Man

⁶But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

⁹But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position; ¹⁰and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

Trials

¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

¹⁵Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

¹⁸In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

Reception of the word

¹⁹This you know, my beloved brethren But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

²¹Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

²⁵But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

True Religion:

²⁶If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

²⁷Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Questions:

¹James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

James writes his epistle to "the twelve tribes of Israel, who are dispersed abroad"

- To Jewish Christians not living in Israel

- To Christians around the world

²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

- Why does James consider encountering trials to be "Joy"? How do we normally react to trials?

- Note, he uses the word when, not if. What does this indicate?

- He uses the term "Various trials" Does this mean all trials?

³knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

- What does James mean when he writes "testing of your faith Produces endurance"?

⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

- What is the perfect result of endurance?

- What does it mean if we are "Perfect, complete, lacking in nothing"?

⁵But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

- Do we lack wisdom?

- "God, who gives to all generously and without reproach" ... What does God give?

- Definition of reproach - To express disapproval of, criticism of, or disappointment in (someone). To bring shame upon; disgrace.

- Is wisdom a gift of God?

⁶But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

- There is a condition associated with our request for faith. What is it?
- What is the downside of doubt?

⁷For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, ⁸being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

- Should a doubting man expect to receive his request for wisdom from God?
- Why?
- What are the things James could mean when he talks about rich men and men of humble circumstances?
- Looking back at verses 6-7, is it any easier for a humble man to be more stable than a rich man?
- Is it any easier for him to be unstable?

⁹But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position;

- Why does James consider the “brother of humble circumstances” to be a person in a high position.

¹⁰and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

- What is the humiliation that a rich man faces?
- How can he glory in his humiliation?
- What does James mean when he writes that a rich man is like flowering grass?
- What things will pass away?
- What are the problems with the pursuits of a rich man?

- James writes that "the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away".
What does he mean with this statement?

¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

- "The man who perseveres under trial is _____."
- Our persevering under trial makes us _____ for the _____ of _____ which the Lord has _____ to those who _____ Him.

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

- Why is God not tempted by evil?
- Why does God not tempt us?
- We are enticed (carried away) by what?
- From where does the temptation from lust come?
- "each one is tempted when he is carried away by _____ lust."
- Our lustful temptation comes from where?

¹⁵Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

If James writes that death is conceived in lust and born through sin:

- What kind of death is he referring to?
- Lust leads to what?
- Sin, when it matures (is accomplished) leads to what?
- When the serpent was told by Eve that God had told Adam and her not to eat the fruit because they would die, what did Satan say to her?

¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

- Where do good things and perfect gifts come from?
- Why do we think of God as the "Father of Lights"?
- What would James consider when he says that with God, there is no variation or shifting shadow?

¹⁸In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

- What is God's will toward his creation?
- What is the word of truth?
- Why are we the first fruits among his creatures?
- What applies to the first fruits?

¹⁹This you know, my beloved brethren But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

- What makes the characteristics "quick to hear", "slow to speak", and "slow to anger" desirable in a Christian?
- Why does the anger of man fail in achieving the righteousness of God?

²¹Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

- Why is it necessary that we put aside filthiness and wickedness to receive God's word?
- If we keep these things, are we able to receive the Word?
- Why do we need to receive the word in humility?
- What does James mean when he uses the words "word implanted"?
- How is God's word able to save our souls?

²²But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

- What is James writing about when he mentions doers of the word and not merely hearers?
- Why is it necessary that we prove ourselves?
- Hearers "delude themselves". What does this mean?
- What does James mean when he writes about the "hearer/not doer" man looking at his natural face in the mirror forgetting as he walks away?
- What kind of person he was? Not what he looked like? What is the significance of James' words?

²⁵But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

- James calls the law "perfect" and "the law of liberty" What does he mean with these words?
- James writes that it is important that we look intently at the law and then abide by it. Why is this important?
- What is the difference between a forgetful hearer and an effectual doer?
- James writes that these things will bless us in what we do. What does he mean when he writes this?

True religion:

²⁶If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

- James writes that one who thinks that he is religious, but does not bridle his tongue deceives his heart; and that his religion is worthless. What does he mean with this statement?

²⁷Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

- James indicates two activities characterize "pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God." They are:
 - To visit orphans and widows in their distress.

- To keep oneself unstained by the world.

- Why are these important? What do these actions indicate about a person's character?

Micah 6:8

⁸He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

- How does James' description of Pure and undefiled religion compare with Micah's words?