

Book of James

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Chapter 1

Greeting to the Twelve Tribes

¹ James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.

Profiting from Trials

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,

³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

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

⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;

⁸ *he is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The Perspective of Rich and Poor

⁹ Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,

¹⁰ but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.

¹¹ For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So, the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Loving God Under Trials

¹² Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Qualities Needed in Trials

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Doers—Not Hearers Only

²¹ Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;

²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it and* is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless.

²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Chapter 2

Beware of Personal Favoritism

¹ My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with partiality.

² For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes,

³ and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool,"

⁴ have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵ Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

⁶ But you have dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?

⁷ Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are called?

⁸ If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you do well;

⁹ but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

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

¹¹ For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

¹² So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.

¹³ For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith Without Works Is Dead

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?

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

¹⁶ and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit?

¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

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

²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?

²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God.

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

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

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

Chapter 3

The Untamable Tongue

¹ My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

² For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he *is* a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

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

⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

⁵ Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

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

⁷ For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

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

⁹ With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God.

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

¹¹ Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening?

¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus, no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom

¹³ Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom.

¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth.

¹⁵ This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.

¹⁶ For where envy and self-seeking *exist*, confusion and every evil thing *are* there.

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

¹⁸ Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Chapter 4

Pride Promotes Strife

¹ Where do wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires* for pleasure that war in your members?

² You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

⁴ Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, “The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously”?

⁶ But He gives more grace. Therefore, He says: “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Humility Cures Worldliness

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded.

⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom.

¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Do Not Judge a Brother

¹¹ Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

¹² There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

Do Not Boast About Tomorrow

¹³ Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”;

¹⁴ whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

¹⁵ Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

¹⁶ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

¹⁷ Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin.

Chapter 5

Rich Oppressors Will Be Judged

¹ Come now, *you* rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!*

² Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

³ Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days.

⁴ Indeed the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

⁵ You have lived on the earth in pleasure and luxury; you have fattened your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

⁶ You have condemned; you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

Be Patient and Persevering

⁷ Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.

⁸ You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰ My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience.

¹¹ Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end *intended by* the Lord—that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

¹² But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and *your* “No,” “No,” lest you fall into judgment.

Meeting Specific Needs

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.

¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? 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.

¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶ Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.

¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Bring Back the Erring One

¹⁹ Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,

²⁰ let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.