

The Letter From JAMES

Greetings! to all of you who are members of the twelve tribes of Israel, scattered throuout the world!

This is from James, a servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith and Wisdom

²My dear brothers and sisters:

Even when you go thru various harsh experiences, face them with pure joy.^a

³Because you know that as your faith in God is being tested by these trials, the end result will be that your power to continue to hang in there^a will be greatly strengthened.^b

⁴So continue to build up your endurance to the greatest extent possible, so that you may be fully developed and perfectly equipped, lacking nothing.

⁵But if any of you lack wisdom, you must persevere with God! You must keep looking for help from the God who is generous with everyone, and who won't scold you for bothering Him—and wisdom will be given you.

⁶But you must ask in faith, without a single doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave on the ocean that's blown and tossed about by every wind that comes along.

⁷Don't ever think you will receive anything from God if you come to Him in that frame of mind!

⁸A person who is not sure of what he really believes or wants is unstable^a in everything he tries.

⁹But even the poor follower of Christ should

rejoice, because he has been lifted to such a high position, into God's family, thru Christ.

¹⁰And the rich follower should rejoice even when he loses his wealth, because like the flower of the grass in the field, he will soon pass from this life anyway.^a

¹¹Because in the same way that the scorching heat of the risen sun soon withers the grass, and the flower falls off, and its beauty is destroyed — the rich man will also fade away right in the middle of all his busy endeavors.

Trials and Temptations

¹²Happy is the person who remains faithful to the Lord when he is being tempted. Because when he has been tested and has proved himself to be a true follower of Christ, he will receive the crown of Eternal Life, which the Lord has promised to all who truly love Him.^a

¹³When you are being tempted, never say, "God is tempting me," because God can never be tempted to do evil, and He never tempts anyone else.

¹⁴But each of us is tempted when we are lured with a strong pull to do wrong by our own cravings of the flesh and mind.

¹⁵And if a person's will yields to the impure desire, conception takes place, with the result that the monstrosity called sin is born. And when sin has finished its evil work, the result is death.^a

¹⁶The following is a matter, my dear brothers and sisters, about which you must not allow yourselves to be deceived.

¹⁷What comes to us from above, coming down from the Father who created all the lights in the

1:2a ... as you look forward to see what God will do in the situation, as you pray and trust Him completely with the problem.

1:3a Or your endurance, power to endure.

1:3b ... as you see God undertake for you as you sincerely pray, and trust Him to step in and help you.

1:8a Or is double-minded or has a divided desire.

1:10a He won't have any need or desire for his worldly wealth then.

1:12a Read what Jesus says about this in Revelation 2:10-11.

1:15a Notice that, contrary to many evangelistic sermons, James' warning here is not directed to unbelievers. It is not possible for sin to result in death in them, because they are already dead because of their lawlessness and other sins. Ephesians 2:1. James is not directing his solemn warning here to outsiders who make no profession of faith in Christ, but to my dear brothers and sisters. v 16. They are the ones who face the peril of spiritual death by surrendering to habitual, deliberate sin.

This is a horrendous fact, but true nevertheless, and is clearly stated throuout Scripture. The result of

heavens, are all the gifts that are so good and perfect. He is always the same, in all seasons of the year and in all ages. There is never any change in His intellect, character, or in His purposes and plans.^a

¹⁸And according to His own will and purpose He gave spiritual birth^a to us by means of the words of His Truth.^b He did this so that we might become, as you might say, the first of the harvest of those who would become truly His.

Listening and Obeying

¹⁹For that reason, my dear friends, we must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.

²⁰Because when you're angry, you don't produce the right actions and attitudes that God requires of us.

²¹So strip yourselves of every filthy habit, and all the evil thoughts and actions that are overwhelming so many lives. Instead, humbly submit yourselves to obey God's message that's been implanted in you, which is able to save your souls.

²²You must make it your practice to obey what God is telling you, and not just listen to Him. If all you do is listen, you're just fooling yourselves.^a

²³Because the person who only listens to God's message but doesn't obey it, is like the man who only looks at his face in the mirror.

²⁴He sees what's wrong, but does nothing about it. As soon as such a person leaves the place where he heard God's word, he forgets all about what kind of person he really is.^a

²⁵But the one who carefully looks into God's per-

fect way of setting us free from the guilt and power of our sins, and continues to do so, not forgetting what he has learned, but obeying it—he will be blessed by God in what he does.^a

²⁶If anyone among you thinks he is right with God, but doesn't strictly control his sharp tongue, he's only fooling himself, and his religion is worthless.

²⁷The kind of religion that our God and Father accepts as pure and genuine is this: to visit and help widows and orphans in any of their troubles, and to keep one's self from being polluted by^a the world.

Warning against Having Favorites

2 My dear friends, as followers of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, make sure that you don't practice favoritism.

²Suppose a person comes to your meeting wearing fine clothes and gold rings, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes.

³If you fawn over the person wearing the fine clothes, and say, "Here, take this good seat over here," but say to the poor person, "You can stand over there, or sit here on the floor by my feet,"

⁴have you not shown favoritism among yourselves? And you've become a crooked judge with an evil motive!

⁵Listen, my dear friends: Hasn't God chosen the poor people of this world who are rich in faith to inherit the Kingdom He has promised those who love Him?

⁶But you have despised the poor! Isn't it the rich who push you around and drag you into court?

sin is death, both temporal and eternal death—the second death—the lake of fire! Revelation 20:11-15.

But sin does not need to take its toll in your life. You can be forgiven by God because of what Jesus Christ has done for you in suffering and dying because of your sins. But unless you turn to God for forgiveness (1 John 1:9), and ask Him to make of you a truly new person who lives to please Him, you will die in your sins and reap the awful reward.

But why settle for such a frightening future? Why not surrender to God now? His great love provided for your salvation, and He waits even now to forgive and bless you. If you haven't done so before, read *The Amazing Story of God* in Appendix 247, p 520.

1:17a The last two sentences literally ... *with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning*. What He was, millions of ages before the worlds were made, He is now. What He is now, He will still be countless millions of ages in the future.

1:18a Regeneration, reconstruction, restoration, new birth. See John 1:13; 3:1-8; Galatians 4:29; 1 Peter 1:23, and notes.

1:18b This refers to the message of the Great News that there is forgiveness, salvation, and everlasting life by obeying and trusting in Jesus Christ—by sincerely receiving Him as both Lord and Savior. See 1 Peter 1:23 and the note.

1:22a Obeying God is not optional for those who desire eternal life. It is an essential aspect of saving faith. There is no saving faith apart from obedience. See Hebrews 5:9. Obedience is the necessary, radiant response of saving faith.

The first response to God of any person must be the willingness and strong desire to be done with sinning, and by faith accept His forgiveness for all past sins. Then, as a follower of the Lord you are responsible to find out from His word just how He wants you to live and serve Him.

1:24a ... *and the awful hell toward which he is*

⁷Aren't they the ones who blaspheme the noble name of the One to whom you belong?

⁸If, on the other hand, you are indeed fulfilling the Royal Law of the Scripture that says, **You shall love and care for others in the same way that you love yourself,**^a you are doing well.

⁹But if as a result of wrong motives, you treat some people better than others, you are doing wrong, and you are charged by the Scriptures of being a sinner!

¹⁰Because whoever obeys all that God has commanded, except for one command that he neglects or refuses to obey, is just as guilty as if he had broken every command.^a

¹¹Because the One who said, **You shall not commit adultery,**^a also said, **You shall not murder.**^b So if you commit murder you are a breaker of the law, even if you don't commit adultery as well.

¹²So whenever you speak or act, you must realize that you will be judged by whether or not you have taken advantage of the power that is yours to be free from the domination of sin.^a

¹³Because on Judgment Day, God will show no mercy to the person who has shown no mercy to others.^a On the other hand, any judgment against you will be conquered and thrown aside by evidence of a life that has been dedicated to being merciful and helpful to others.^b

Faith and Obedience

¹⁴What good does it do, dear friends, if someone says he believes in God and His promises, but he doesn't do what God has told him to do? Can that kind of faith save him?

¹⁵Suppose you know a man or a woman who is in dire need of clothes and daily food.

¹⁶If you should say to them, "Have a good day now. Be warm and well fed," but you don't do anything about their needs, what good would that do?

¹⁷It's the same with faith. If you claim to have faith, but your faith doesn't lead to obedience to God—separate, by itself—your faith is dead!^a

¹⁸Furthermore, a person would be right in saying, "You say, the way to God is by faith in Jesus alone, plus nothing, but that I'm depending on what I myself do. Well, show me your faith that doesn't lead to obedience to God, and I'll show you the proof of my faith by the kind of life I now live."

¹⁹You believe there is only one God. Very good! But even the demons believe that—and it makes them tremble with fear.

²⁰You foolish man! Is it proof you want, that the faith that doesn't result in obedience to God is dead^a?

²¹Didn't Abraham our forefather gain right standing with God because he obeyed God, when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

²²So you see, his faith and his obedience were working together, and his faith was revealed as genuine faith by what he did.

²³That's when the Scripture was fulfilled that says, **Abraham believed God, and it was that genuine faith that gave him right standing with God.**^a And because that strong faith was proved by his obedience, he was called the friend of God.

²⁴So you see, we gain right standing with God not only by what we believe, but by what we do.^a

²⁵This was true of Rahab the harlot as well. She

plunging.

1:25a He will have a clear conscience and a deep assurance that all is well between himself and God—besides God's blessing on what he does. See 2:12 and the note.

1:27a ... *the corruptions and worthless ambitions that dominate the lives of those who live only for the brief and uncertain time given them in ...*

2:8a Leviticus 19:18.

2:10a "God requires perfect, not partial, obedience. We are not to choose to obey parts of His commands, which suit our whim, while we neglect others."—*Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown*. The same is true of Christ's commands.

2:11a Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18.

2:11b Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17.

2:12a ... *thru God's help*. See Philippians 2:13 and note.

2:13a Matthew 18:23-35.

2:13b This does not mean that we gain Heaven by

good works. But it does mean that we will make a practice of doing what is right and good if we are truly born again. 2 Samuel 22:26-27; Proverbs 21:13; Matthew 5:7; 6:15; 7:1-5. And it does mean that we will be held accountable by God for being merciful to others by sharing the Great News with them, no matter what the cost. Ezekiel 33:1-9; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:9-10; Revelation 21:8.

2:17a Without a faith that's alive, you don't have saving faith. So come alive!

2:20a ... *and is therefore not saving faith at all?*

2:23a Genesis 15:6.

2:24a Both are necessary. How you live in obedience to God after accepting His forgiveness will prove just how genuine your conversion really was.

It is easy enough to sit there in the pew in church and drink in the truth. What is difficult is rousing yourself to action, to obey and live the truth that's been called to your attention. You don't get points

gained right standing with God by what she did when she welcomed the Israelite spies, and then helped them escape by a different route.^a

²⁶So just as the body is dead if it doesn't breathe, faith is also dead if it doesn't produce obedience to God.^a

Controlling the Things We Say

3 My dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers of God's word, because you know that we who teach will be judged by God more severely than others.

²For we all make many mistakes. But if you are able to control your tongue, you are a mature person, and one who is able to keep his whole body under control.

³By putting a bit in the mouth of a horse, we can make its whole body go in any direction we want.

⁴It's the same with sailing ships. Even though they're so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder in whatever direction the pilot wants to go.

⁵The tongue is also a small part of our body, but it can rightly boast about the great things it can do. Just think of the great forest that can be set aflame by one tiny spark.

⁶That's what the tongue is—it's fire! It's capable of being a whole world of evil in itself. The tongue is that part of our body which can pollute the whole person. It can set the direction of one's whole life on fire—after being ignited by the forces of Hell.

⁷Every kind of animal and bird, and even reptiles and sea creatures, can be tamed, and have been tamed by man.

⁸But no human being has ever been able to fully tame the tongue. It's an uncontrollable evil that's full of deadly poison.

for merely sitting in church. It's the action you take during the week after the sermon that counts with God.

2:25a Joshua 2:1-24. See Hebrews 11:31 and note.

2:26a As Melancthon, the associate of Martin Luther, said, "It is faith, alone, that saves; but the faith that saves is not alone."

A so-called "faith" in Christ which leaves the "believer" free of any obligation to be submissive and devoted to Him is sheer presumption. A so-called "plus-nothing" faith is a dead faith. Only an obedient, living, conquering faith that "overcomes the world" is saving faith. Rev. 2:7, 11, etc.

3:14a ... *when you testify that you believe in Jesus, and that you love, serve, and obey Him* ...

3:15a This behavioral description is extremely to

⁹We praise our God and Father with it, and then turn right around and curse people with it who have been created in the likeness of God.

¹⁰Both praise and cursing flow out of the same mouth. My dear friends, that should never happen!

¹¹Does both fresh and bitter water flow from the same spring?

¹²Can a fig tree, dear friends, produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a spring yield both salt water and fresh.

True Wisdom

¹³Is there anyone among you who is truly wise and understanding? If so, he will reveal his wisdom by living right. And he will do his good deeds in humility, without boasting.

¹⁴But if you are bitterly jealous, and always looking out for yourself, don't brag about what you know is not true,^a and thereby lie about what is really true about you.

¹⁵This kind of "wisdom" doesn't come down from Heaven, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.^a

¹⁶Because when people are envious and have selfish ambition, they cause turbulence and indulge in every kind of evil practice.

¹⁷But the true wisdom that comes from God is first of all pure, then peaceful, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good deeds, impartial, and without hypocrisy.

¹⁸Those who work for peace in a peaceful way will reap a harvest that will be a blessing to all concerned.

Friendship with the World

4 What is it that causes quarrels and bitter arguments among you? Aren't they caused by the strong desires for pleasure^a that are constantly

the point in understanding what is going on in most of our public educational systems in America today. The behavioral outcome of Godless education is always selfishness, violence, perversion, and filth, under demonic influence. There is no such thing as a moral vacuum. Where God is ignored or forced out, Satan will move right in — and he has.

4:1a The pleasures here include all that will bring you satisfaction. Many are legitimate wants that can be satisfied in a legitimate way, but are satisfied all too often at great cost to others.

4:2a Hebrews 11:6.

4:4a Spiritual adulterers and adulteresses, who have turned from loving God to other loves.

4:4b ... *which is revealed by your intense interest in the temporary pleasures and material*

fighting within you to be satisfied?

²Your strong desires persist, but you still don't have what you so earnestly hunger after. You are so jealous of others that you would actually kill, but even then you wouldn't find happiness. You keep arguing and fighting without getting what you want because you don't persist in asking God to undertake for you in the matter.^a

³Yes, do persist in your request before God! But even then you won't get what you're asking for, because your motives are wrong! What you really want is to waste what you receive on satisfying your own sensual desires!

⁴You adulterers and adulteresses^a! Don't you know that your love affair with the world^b is revealing how much you really despise God? Whoever chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God!

⁵Or do you think the Scriptures have no good reason for teaching that the Spirit of God, who has come to live within us, longs for us with envy, and fiercely desires us for Himself alone?

⁶And God has great desire to help the one whose sincere intent is to live to please Him. That's why the Scripture says:

God continues to work against those who are proud, but He continually helps those who are humble.^a

⁷So surrender your will completely to God. Then take a strong and determined stance like a soldier against the devil, and he will run from you.^a

⁸But you must draw close to God. Then God will draw close to you. But you are sinners, so you must wash those soiled hands! And you must purify your hearts, because you have conflicting desires.^a

⁹Intensely grieve, therefore, over your sins. Mourn and weep before God! Let your laughter be

turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.^a

¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord,^a and He will lift you up.^b

¹¹Brothers and sisters, don't say evil things about one another. Anyone who speaks evil about a Christian brother and judges him is actually undercutting the command Christ has given for handling such cases^a and is judging that command. When you disregard Christ's command, you are not only disobeying it, but you are setting yourself up as one who has a better way than Christ for handling the situation.

¹²There is only one Lawgiver, and He alone is able to save, or destroy. So what right do you have to judge or condemn your brother?

Don't Boast about Tomorrow

¹³Now listen to me, you who say, "Either today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there, buying and selling and making a lot of money."

¹⁴But the truth is, you have no way of knowing what will happen tomorrow. Just what is your life? It's like a vapor that appears for a moment and then disappears.

¹⁵Instead, you should say, "If the Lord is willing, and we continue to live, we may do this or that."

¹⁶But instead, you are proud, and bragging in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

¹⁷So anyone who knows the good action he should take, but refuses to do it, is sinning by that failure and refusal to act!^a

A Warning to the Rich

5 Attention, you who are rich! Weep and wail because of the misery that's coming your way!

²Your wealth will soon be worthless trash and your beautiful clothes, merely food for moths.

³The gold and silver and other investments

things of the world ...

4:6a Proverbs 3:34.

4:7a But how does one go about taking an effective stand against Satan? Realize that the devil is a real person indeed. Those who don't believe in a personal devil are already duped by him. When tempted to sin in thought or action, command Satan in no uncertain terms, "Satan, I command you in Jesus' name: Get out of here! I want nothing to do with you and your evil suggestions!" It works. If you really mean what you say, Satan must go.

Another means is, start praising God when temptations come. Satan and his demons cannot stand being around where God is sincerely being praised.

4:8a ... *wanting all that God can do for you and*

at the same time wanting all you can get from the world.

4:9a ... *because of how sinful you have been.*

4:10a As the Being against whom we have sinned, He is the only One who can pardon. It is proper that we should humble ourselves before Him with repentant confession.

4:10b He will forgive you and wipe away your tears, and give you joy — immense joy.

4:11a Matthew 18:15-17.

4:17a This certainly includes obeying the command of our Lord to share the Great News with others, at every opportunity, both near and far. But it also includes much more.

5:3a ... *in your judgment in the lake of fire,*

you're selfishly hoarding for your own enjoyment and retirement will soon be of no value to you at all! In fact, the rust of their corrosion will be used in testimony against you and will eat away at your flesh like fire.^a

⁴Listen! The indecent wages you paid the workers who harvested your crops are crying out against you. And the cries of those reapers have reached into the ears of the Lord God Almighty!

⁵You have lived it up on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves like animals being fattened up in preparation for being butchered.

⁶You have condemned and put to death innocent people who weren't able to fight back.

Patiently Persevere

⁷So, my brothers and sisters, be patient *by continuing to do what's good and right*^a until the Lord comes for you. Notice how the farmer keeps patiently waiting for both the early and late rains^b to water the earth and make his valuable crops grow.

⁸You too must be patient. Stand firm for the Lord and for what pleases Him, because He is coming very soon.^a

⁹Don't grumble and make charges against one another, dear friends, or God may condemn you for it. Look! The Judge is standing at the door *right now, watching and listening to everything you say and do.*^a

¹⁰And dear friends, follow the example of the prophets who spoke out for the Lord. They continued patient and faithful in spite of all the troubles and abuse they had to endure.

¹¹We can be sure that those who remained faithful to the Lord then are happy now. You've heard about how Job endured all that happened to him, and how blessed he was by the Lord after those trials. This shows how very compassionate and merciful the Lord is!

¹²Another matter of highest importance, dear friends, is that you never seal a promise with an oath. Don't swear by Heaven or by earth or by anything else. Simply say "Yes" when you mean yes, and "No" when you mean no, so that you don't come under God's judgment.^a

The Prayer of Faith

¹³Is anyone among you suffering trials and afflictions? He should keep on praying for deliverance.^a Does anyone have much to be cheerful about? He should sing praises to God.

¹⁴Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

¹⁵The prayer offered in faith will bring healing to the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. And if his sickness was caused by some sin, the Lord will forgive him.

¹⁶So confess your sins to one another,^a and pray for one another that you may be healed. The fervent, persevering prayer of a person who is living to please God is powerfully effective, and accomplishes great things.

¹⁷Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it wouldn't rain, and it didn't rain in Israel for 3 1/2 years.

¹⁸When he prayed again that it would rain, the rain came down from the skies, and the crops again sprang up from the earth.

¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you strays from believing and living as the truth teaches and requires, and one of you brings him back to faith and obedience to the truth,

²⁰let him be encouraged to know: Whoever turns a sinner away from the sinful life he is living will save that person's soul from death,^a and will bring about the forgiveness of many sins.

Most sincerely in Christ,
James

because you had little concern about others. Revelation 20:11-15.

5:7a Implied.

5:7b Joel 2:28-32; Zechariah 10:1; Acts 2:16-21.

5:8a ... *to take you by death, or in the Rapture.*

5:9a Implied. Proverbs 15:3; Hebrews 4:13.

5:12a You do not need to swear to tell the truth in court. When asked to do so, simply say, "I affirm, your Honor, that I will tell the truth." That will be

accepted in any court. If they should object, refer them to the above Scripture.

5:13a Matthew 7:7-11.

5:16a Your confession should be to the one you sinned against (not to everyone, unless you sinned against everyone), and ask his or her forgiveness.

5:20a ... *in Hell, and later in the lake of fire* ... Revelation 19:20; 20:10-15.

