



The Lighthouse

NEW TESTAMENT NOTES

James

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Introduction to the Letter from James

Theme: The practicality of the Christian faith is the theme of the book of James. James is concerned about where the rubber meets the road or the practical application of the Christian faith to circumstances (ch. 1) and to others (chs. 2-4); while waiting for the Lord's return (ch. 5).

Date: There is no date given in the epistle. The approximate date can only be surmised by the contents of the epistle. There are four characteristics of the epistle that lead to an early date for this epistle. First, the writer is so well known among these dispersed believers that he simply introduces himself as "James." Second, he addresses the "twelve tribes scattered abroad" and third, he speaks of them in congregational order (James 2:1-10). These first three characteristics will be dealt with more fully when considering the writer and occasion of this epistle. Fourth, and finally there is absolutely no mention of the issue of circumcision in regard to the Jerusalem counsel in Acts 15. Hence, when all of these factors are considered, the letter had to be written previous to Acts 15 or prior to 49 A.D. Most likely the letter was written by James after the dispersion of preachers but earlier than Antioch dispatching Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles. The most likely date is 44 A.D. or the time that Peter was placed in prison and James the brother of John was killed by King Agrippa in Acts 12.

Writer: It was the half-brother of Jesus that was nicknamed "James the just" because he emphasized that grace did not do away with the righteousness demanded by the Law. This book has all the earmarks of James "the Just." Secondly, although Peter seems to be the leader of the congregation at Jerusalem between Acts 1-8, it appears that he leaves to do missionary work (Acts 10) along with Philip and other ordained church leaders in Acts 8-10. Paul says that when he first came to Jerusalem in Acts 9 that it was James the brother of the Lord that he sought (Gal. 1:19). In Acts 12 there is another local persecution by Herod Agrippa with Peter placed in jail and James the brother of John being killed. James the half-brother of Christ seems to be the leader from Acts 9 to Acts 21 which covers the time from 35 to 57 A.D. There is no indication that he died prior to the conclusion of the book of Acts in A.D. 62 or else Luke would have certainly noted the passing of such a well known leader.

Occasion: The occasion of the letter seems to be the problem of persecution as James opens his letter with that theme. The period of persecution in Palestine occurs in Acts 8-12 or from 35-44 A.D. This is the same period when the church at Jerusalem sends out ordained preachers (Peter to Joppa; Philip to Samaria and then to Azotus and Caesarea (Acts 11:40); male preachers all along the way to Antioch (Acts 11:19) and Damascus (Act 9) and Barnabas all along the way to Antioch (Acts 11:22-27). The congregation at Jerusalem would send ordained men to follow up the missionary endeavors of these preachers to make sure all things were in order (Acts 8:14; 11:22). It would seem natural that James would write such a letter during this period before Paul was sent out by the congregation at Antioch (Acts 13:1-4) in order to provide guidance for those brand new early struggling Christian assemblies scattered abroad outside of Jerusalem.

Audience: The twelve tribes had been dispersed throughout the gentile world by the destruction of Jerusalem in 596 B.C. In Acts 2 at least 3000 of this dispersion were converted on the day of

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Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11) and disciplined in the faith (Acts 2:41-42) before returning to their homes throughout the Roman Empire. In Acts 8 there was another dispersion of preachers from the congregation at Jerusalem throughout Judea, Samaria all the way to Phenice, Cyprus and Antioch (Acts 11:19). These dispersed 12 tribes are regarded in a structured disciplined state or in assembles (James 2). They no doubt included the congregations outside of Jerusalem in Judea (Acts 9:31) as well as the congregations gathered by those disciplined and sent back to their homes on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11). The congregations at Rome seem to have been constituted by those saved Jews which had been disciplined in the congregation at Jerusalem before being sent back home (Acts 2:41-42).

Outline:

A. The Wise Christian Man – ch. 1

1. Understands the purpose of Trials
2. Understands the conditions for wisdom
3. Understands the nature of Temptation
4. Understands the source of all good things
5. Understands the purpose of salvation
6. Understands the power of God's Word
7. Understands the character of true religion

B. The Justified Christian Man – Ch. 2

1. His faith harmonizes the Law of liberty – vv. 1-13
2. His faith harmonizes with works – vv 14-33

C. The Mature Christian Man – Ch. 3

1. His tongue is under control
2. His walk manifests wisdom from above

D. The Worldly Christian Man – Ch. 4:1-5:6

1. Characterized by dissension
2. Characterized by lust
3. Characterized by pride
4. Characterized by greed

E. The Patient Christian Man – Ch. 5:7-22

1. The Patient man waits for the appointed times
2. The Patient man endures
 - a. Endures through prayer
 - b. Endures in the way of truth

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The Letter from James to the Hebrew Congregations

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

2 My brethren, count¹ [to regard as such] it all joy when ye fall into divers [different] temptations [trials];

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience [steadfast endurance].

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting [lacking] nothing.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth [find fault, scold, reprove] not; and it shall be given him.

6 But let him ask in faith,² nothing wavering [unstable]. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For 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.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life³, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

¹ “**Count**” – Troubles do not feel good or are they a “joy” to experience. James calls on his readers to “count” or reckon it so, based upon “knowing” God’s purpose behind trials. Trials make us recipients of God’s comfort (2 Cor. 1:3) and provide experience of God’s grace in troubles whereby God can comfort others through us (2 Cor 1:3b). It is a mark of identification with Christ and of genuine salvation (2 Cor. 1:4-6). It drives us away from self-dependence to God dependence (2 Cor. 1:8-10). It brings Christians together in prayer for one another (2 Cor. 1:11-12). It manifests our faith and strengthens it. It produces hope (Rom. 5:3-5). It is used to chasten us demonstrating God’s love for us as children (Heb. 11:5-10). It prepares us for better understanding some scriptures. It produces humility (v. 10). It provides opportunity for rewards in heaven (vv. 12).

² “**In Faith**” – This kind of faith is not a product of our flesh. The flesh is naturally opposed to the Spirit and therefore manufactured faith by the flesh will be unstable. To ask “in faith” is to operate “in the Spirit” according to the power and leadership of the Spirit. The “double minded man” is the lost professor trying to live the Christian life and trying to deal with trials in the power of the flesh – “let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.”

³ “**Crown of life**” – Salvation or entrance into heaven is not a reward or crown, but a free gift of grace. The use of “crown” refers to the ultimate reward for service that will be received in the life to come or part of the bride of Christ and residence in the New Jerusalem. This is an “incorruptible” crown (1 Cor. 9:25) for faithfulness to your calling as a church member. It is a crown of “righteousness” for those who have fought a good fight, have finished their course and have kept the faith (2 Tim. 4:8). It is the crown of “glory” for church leaders who were faithful in

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13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:⁴

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

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.⁵

their duties (1 Pet. 5:4). It is the crown of "life" in the coming era for faithfulness in the face of temptation and physical death (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10).

⁴ "**Neither tempteth he any man**" – When God created the heavens and the earth, he could look upon everything he created and declare it was "very good" (Gen. 1:31). From whence did evil arise then? It was derived from "good" as there was nothing existent that was not "good." For example, in the case of Satan it is said that sin was "found" in him. It was "good" for Satan to admire and want to be like God, however, not to the point of wanting to replace God. For example, it was good for Adam to love Eve and be willing to sacrifice himself for her; however, it was not good for Adam to love Eve more than God. In both cases, it was something good that became evil due to abuse. The temptation for evil originates within the creature and the improper response or use of that which was designed by God for "good."

⁵ "**Conceived**" – James mixes the metaphors of hunting with conception and child birth. The Greek terms translated "drawn away" (*exelko*) and "enticed" (*deleazo*) come from fishing or hunting where an animal is drawn out of its hiding place by bait. The evil temptation is the bait. What is drawn out are "evil lusts." **The source within a saved man from which these evil lusts are drawn is "in my flesh"** (Rom. 7:17, 18, 20), but in the lost man they reside in the heart, according to Christ ("out of the heart proceed" - Mt. 15:19).

Rom. 7:17 – Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin **that dwelleth in me.**

Rom. 7:18 – For I know that in me (**that is, in my flesh,**) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Rom. 7:20 – Now if I do that I would not, **it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.**

Matthew 15:19 – **For out of the heart** proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

In either case, evil lusts are RESIDENTS in whatever remnant of the fallen nature exists in a person. Indwelling sin does not need to be "conceived" but simply drawn out from its hiding place. The fallen nature (unregenerate heart in the lost or "the flesh" in the saved) is where resident evil lusts reside. **What is "conceived" is the specific sin corresponding to the specific temptation?** However, resident evil **lives** continually in the unregenerate nature.

These unrestrained lusts employ the human will to manifest the evil thoughts and feelings in evil words and deeds. The decision to manifest evil thoughts in evil words and deeds may be due more **to** intellectual considerations (*boulomai*) than emotional (*thelema*), or vice versa. There are restraining factors that influence a person not to manifest their desires. However, if such restraints (fear, providential hindrances, conscience, self-imposed standards, etc.) are not present factors, the lusts will employ the will to carry out their agenda. Your will is the servant of your heart (thinking/feeling). Both Greek words translated "will" in the New Testament. These terms demonstrate that the will always serves to express one's thinking [*boulomai*] or feeling [*thelema*]. The will is inseparably involved in the entire process of choice, from the deliberations and intent of the heart to the implementation of it as manifest action. Hence, the will joins the lust generating the external act of sin, and thereby completes the transition of sinful intent **into** sinful actions. Therefore, the will is the author of sin as it embraces what is conceived in the heart and joins it with the act of sin.

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16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness [inconsistency], neither shadow of turning.⁶

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,⁷ that we should be a kind of firstfruits⁸ of his creatures.

The intent of the fallen nature is inseparable from all lusts of the fallen nature. The “intent” is the motive that drives the fallen nature to pursue whatever it lusts after. God looks upon the heart and considers the motive behind every desire and its fruits of attitude and action. The only proper motive is “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1Cor. 10:31), and sin is coming “short of the glory of God.” Any motive behind any attitude and/or action that “comes short of the glory of God” is sin. Hence, all Adam’s posterity is born without the proper motive behind all that they think and do. They are sinners by practice because they are sinners by nature from their mother’s womb.

How was sin conceived in a pre-fallen Adam versus a post-fallen Adam? The difference is between outside and inside. In pre-fallen Adam, sin had no internal residence in the heart because Adam was created “upright” in heart. He did not know sin experientially, although he did know what sin was intellectually because God told him what sin and its consequences were. Therefore, for sin to be conceived in the heart of a pre-fallen Adam, it had to be introduced into his heart from the outside. Sin was conceived in Adam’s heart when he refused to resist the temptation to eat the fruit given unto him by Eve. The “lust” that may have been the factor of his lack of resistance may have been his desire for Eve’s companionship over God’s companionship. What God created as a good “desire” became evil when it was chosen over God.

On the other hand, the post-fallen Adam needs no external introduction to sin because it already has gained access and indwells his nature by Adam’s choice. By one man’s offense sin was introduced to the human nature and so “many” (all his posterity) were made sinners by that one act. The Post-fallen Adam is separated from God and his heart is dominated by sin because Pre-fallen Adam gave sin permission to enter and indwell him. Free will was the modus operandi that joined and completed the internal processes (lustful intent) unto the manifest act of sin – eating the fruit. Free will was vehicle for the entrance of sin and thus the author of sin in Adam and the will surrendered its freedom by that very act. The will in the pre-fallen Adam was free to make contrary choices. However, in choosing to introduce sin into the heart it produced a new master called indwelling sin. Now, the human will is in bondage to sin and is simply the servant of a sinful nature.

No rational or emotional decision is necessary for sin to be “conceived” within fallen man because sin already is a resident within man by the invitation of Adam’s free choice. Babies do not have an innocent heart. They manifest the influences of indwelling sin even before they can reason or talk and their death is proof of its presence. Hence, free will is the author of the bondage of the will in fallen man.

⁶ **“Shadow of turning”** – He is the Father of “lights” or the source of light and there is no darkness at all in light, as light produces no shadows in itself. Shadows may be produced by objects outside of the source of light, but shadows cannot be found in the source of light. He is immutably holy and righteous and no taint of evil can be found within his being. Therefore, He is not the source of temptation or the source of evil. The source of temptation is found within the lusts (desires) of the creature and that is where the source of sin originates.

⁷ **“Of his own will”** – Regeneration is a creative act of God’s will that is brings into existence a new inward man. God speaks it into existence as he spoke light into existence (2 Cor. 4:6). The human messenger of the gospel brings the gospel to the outer ear, but it is the power of the Holy Spirit takes it from their by making it his creative word to speak into existence the new inward man (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24). Hence, it is in this sense that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation” when it comes in power, in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance to the elect of God (1 Thes. 1:4-5). The gospel empowered by God is the effectual call that creates the new inward man or new heart.

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19 Wherefore,⁹ my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath [anger]:

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

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

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

23 For 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 [mirror]:

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

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty¹⁰ and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth [to restrain] not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.¹¹

27 Pure 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.

⁸ **“Firstfruits”** – The salvation of Hebrews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and throughout Acts 2-8 were the “firstfruits” of a coming harvest of Israel at His return (Rom. 9:25-28; Rev. 1:7; 7:1-8; 14:1-5). Between this “firstfruits” and the final harvest of Israel, God turns his redemptive attention upon the Gentiles (Rom. 11:11-25).

⁹ **“Wherefore”** – The righteousness of God within man is a creative act of God’s will. “Wherefore.....Wherefore” (vv. 19, 21) the power or the producing of righteousness is not in man’s own actions but in the “engrafted word” as empowered by God. Therefore, we need to approach life through the Word of God as that is the vehicle of God’s power to transform our lives.

¹⁰ **“Perfect law of liberty”** – The scriptures are not to be regarded as mere words on paper, but regarded as God’s “perfect” or complete vehicle for transforming our lives through the power of His Spirit. The Scriptures are better revelation than “dark” speeches of dreams and visions or temporary revelatory gifts in many ways. Such revelatory gifts were only partial (“in part” – 1 Cor. 13:9) and thus immature (1 Cor. 13:11) so that those exercising them could only see “darkly” (1 Cor. 13:12) whereas, the scriptures as they are being completed are their “perfect” product that is available to all believers equally regardless of individual gifts. When a believer looks into the perfect law of liberty he can be seen as he is seen by God (1 Cor. 13:12b) *“beholding his...face”* as God empowers the word to reveal or see himself as God sees him. All revelatory gifts were given and confirmed by signs and wonders in the process of completing the Biblical canon and anticipated its completeness and final authority in all faith and practice (2 Tim. 3:16-17). As the Biblical canon neared completeness, the “in part” or immature revelatory gifts and their confirming signs and wonders ceased (1 Cor. 13:10).

¹¹ **“This man’s religion is in vain”** – He does not say he is lost but his “religion is in vain.” Religion saves no one and damns no one. However, it is a barometer of one’s spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity or immaturity is first manifested in the manner of speech. You can tell an infant by the utterances from the mouth. You can tell a young man by the utterances of their mouth. You can tell a father or spiritual mature person by the utterances of their mouth. Maturity is then seen in the manner of religious actions (v. 27) toward the needy and toward himself in relationship to the world system that opposes God.

Chapter 2

My brethren, have not the faith¹² of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect [partiality, giving preference] of persons.

2 For if there come unto your assembly¹³ a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay [elegant] 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:

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

5 Harken, 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?

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

7 Do not they blaspheme [speak injuriously, profanely] that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law¹⁴ according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

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

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.¹⁵

¹² **“Have not the Faith”** – The KJV reading is difficult here. It is better understood in the form of a question: “My brethren, have you not the faith or religion of our Lord Jesus Christ in regard to respect of persons?” In other words, how do you compare with Jesus when it comes to treating people equally? “The faith” or the religion of Christ does not distinguish people according to their race, social status or gender in life.

¹³ **“Your Assembly”** – The Greek term translated assembly is “synagogue.” The “synagogue” worship arose during the Babylonian captivity when the children of Israel were taken away from Jerusalem and the temple had been destroyed. Therefore, the “synagogue” replaced the temple at Jerusalem for public worship and was a local visible assembly. This is a perfect synonym of the ekklesia of Christ or the congregational body of Christ which replaced the temple in Jerusalem. He is referring to the congregational body of Christ as he later instructs the sick among them to call the elders of the church to pray over them (James 5). He is writing to Hebrew Christians who are found in congregations scattered throughout the Roman Empire. No doubt, these congregations were the consequences of those who were saved on Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11) and then discipled (Acts 2:41-42) and sent back home by the church at Jerusalem.

¹⁴ **“Royal law”** – Under the New Covenant administration, the members of the congregation in their public act of worship are called a “royal” priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5) distinguishing them from the priests serving in the temple at Jerusalem. Under the New Covenant administration the moral law is called the “royal” law as it provides the rule or standard of righteousness for the regenerate man who “delights in the Law of God” (Rom. 7:22). The term “royal” translates the Greek term *basilikos* and refers to the King. Thus, the “King’s law” for the “king’s priesthood.”

¹⁵ **“Guilty of all”** – He is speaking of the Ten Commandments (v. 11). This law reflects the moral nature or “the righteousness of God (Rom. 3:21-22). God’s righteousness is without “shadow of turning” or without sin of any kind. Therefore, to violate any point of the Law is to “come short of the glory of God” and come under the condemnation of the Law that would be equally applied to violation of any point, thus “guilty of” violating “all” the law. This is why justification can only be found in the works performed by Christ in his own body, rather than any

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11 For 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.

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

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

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

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

16 And 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?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead,¹⁶ being alone.

works performed in our bodies regardless of the source or power behind those works in our body, as we can never produce an entire life that does not violate "one point."

¹⁶ **"Dead Faith"** –There is no contradiction between James and Paul. There are several contextual differences. Paul is presenting justification without works theologically in its vertical relationship between the believer and God (Rom. 3:24-5:2). James is dealing with its horizontal relationship between men and the pragmatic evidence that one is justified before God. James introduces his practical treatise on justification by defining the type of person he is writing about. This is a person who has not only already claimed to be a regenerated and justified person (James 1:18) but has been accepted into the assembly (James 2:1-9) as "one of you" (2:16) recognized as a "brother" or "sister" but whose claim does not harmonize with his actions (2:14-16). James demands that the visible evidence of a profession of faith is works ("shew me your faith without works...I will shew you my faith by my works."). James is dealing with justification as Paul dealt with it in Romans 6-8, where Paul denies that a person can be justified by faith without being regenerated by the Spirit of God. Theologically "good works" are the product of regeneration (Eph. 2:10 "created in Christ Jesus unto good works") but there is no justified person who is not also a regenerated person and so, "good works" will be the pragmatic evidence of all who are justified by faith. Hence, from a horizontal and pragmatic level, they are justified by their works before each other.

The term "salvation" is a broad term which involves various aspects that are distinct from each other in regard to cause, effects, and sometimes in regard to time of occurrence.

For example, the new birth and glorification are two different aspects that occur at two different times and yet inclusive in the overall picture of salvation. Hence, if we are looking at the whole picture of salvation they are both included and yet without confusing either with their own unique nature and time of occurrence. The new birth occurs at the beginning of the Christian experience, whereas glorification occurs at the end of the Christian experience. The former has to do with the internal nature of man, whereas the latter has to do with the removal of the indwelling principle of death residing in the physical nature of man.

However, there are other aspects of salvation that are just as distinctly different from each other in nature, in cause, and effect but occur at the same time. For example, repentance and faith are not to be confused with each other in regard to their nature or their logical order relative to each other. However, in regard to time, one cannot occur without the other, since they are two sides of the same coin. When we turn from sin (repentance) we are turning to Christ (faith).

Now, the same is true with justification "without works" and regeneration which produces "good works" (Eph. 2:10). Regeneration and justification should not be confused in regard to their distinct and separate nature or their logical cause and effect relationship with each other, and yet one does not exist without the other. There is no such thing as a man who has been justified by faith "without works" who also has not been regenerated "unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). This is James' point! Paul is breaking down each aspect of salvation abstractly and theologically

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

19 Thou believest that there is one God¹⁷; thou doest well: the devils [demons] also believe, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?¹⁸

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

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

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed [to make count] unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.¹⁹

in their cause and effect relationship, whereas James is looking at the unified state of regeneration and justification within a child of God just as Paul does in Romans 6-8. James is interested in providing pragmatic evidence that distinguishes a false profession of faith before men from a true profession of faith. Before men a profession of justification by faith has no pragmatic credibility without works. Take note that James is not speaking of a profession of faith that is attended by few works but rather he is comparing a profession of faith with those who have no works ("have not works" v. 14, "have not works" v. 17, "without thy works" v. 18, "faith without works" v. 20).]

This does not mean that regeneration is to be confused with justification, or that their logical cause and effect relationship with each other should be confused, because they are each distinct units of salvation considered separately. However, it does mean the justified man is also a regenerated man, so where justification by faith "without works" exists, so must "good works" by regeneration exist. The man that is truly justified by faith can "shew you" his faith by his "good works." The man who cannot show his faith by his good works is a spiritually dead man with a "dead" faith.

¹⁷ **"One God"** – Biblical monotheism is not the monotheism of the modern Jews or the Moslems. Biblical monotheism is one triune God consisting of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:13). It is the singular "God" that can say "we" and "us" and "our" singular "image" (Gen. 1:26-27). Modern Jews do not worship the same God as Christians and neither do Moslems (Allah). They are idolaters along with the eastern polytheistic religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.). God has designed the universe to manifest his Triune nature. There is one universe but it is manifested in three forms – space, time and matter. Remove one and you destroy the universe. Without space, neither matter nor time can exist. Matter takes space to exist and time is merely the measurement of created existence. Each of these is also trinities in themselves. Space consists of length, breadth and depth. Remove one and space no longer exists. All must exist for space to exist. Time is past, present and future. Remove one and time no longer exists, as all time was once present, all time was once future, all time will be once past. Matter consists of energy, motion and phenomena. Remove one and matter ceases to exist. Where there is no energy there is no motion or phenomena (form). Where there is no motion there is no energy or form. Where there is no form there is no energy or motion. Creation declares the "godhead" (Rom. 1:20).

¹⁸ **"Faith without works is dead"** – Faith worketh by love and therefore faith without works is without love. Love is something foreign to fallen man. Love is the product of regeneration (1 Jn. 4) and therefore faith without works is faith without life – regeneration. Therefore, faith is the product of regeneration (life) or it is dead (without life). God creates a new believing heart and it with this new heart that man "believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:8). Indeed, this new heart created by God is created with all the fruit of the Spirit, thus create in righteousness and true holiness (Col. 3:10). This new heart is the spoken into existence as God spoke light into existence (2 Cor. 4:6) and the "word of God" that calls it into existence is the gospel when it comes in "power, and in the Holy Spirit" to the elect (1 Thes. 1:4-5). Therefore, faith is the product of the *rhema* or God's word of command (Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 4:6).

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24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified [declared to be righteous], and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?²⁰

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.²¹

Chapter 3

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

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

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

4 Behold 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 [person steering a ship] listeth [determinately driven].

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

6 And 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.

¹⁹ “**And he was called a friend of God**” – When was Abraham justified? Was he justified in Genesis 11 when he left his home? Was he justified in Genesis 12:1-3 when he departed Haran and came to Palestine? Was he justified in Genesis 15:6 where the actual words are found that he believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness? Was he justified in Genesis 22 as quoted by James above? Paul explicitly denies that he was justified “in circumcision” (Rom. 4:9-11) which occurred in Genesis 17 and characterized the rest of his life until death. Hence, he was justified “before God” (Rom. 4:1) somewhere between Genesis 11-16. Genesis 15:1-7 merely repeats the former promise that Abraham had already believed in Genesis 11:31 according to Genesis 12:1 and Galatians 3:8. He entered the perfected state of justification at the point he received the gospel in the land of Ur before leaving Haran. The promise was reaffirmed after he left Haran to Palestine (Gen. 12:1-3) and then again reaffirmed in Genesis 15:6. In Genesis 12:1 and Genesis 15:7 the perfect tense is used to show that He had already entered into this completed state of justification by faith, and these two times are simply reaffirmations rather than points of origin. With the sign of circumcision in Genesis 17 forward his works justified him in the sight of men. He was not called “the friend” of God in the book of Genesis until long after his death by the prophets (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8). His obedience to God demonstrated that God was his friend and that is the point James is making.

²⁰ “**Rahab**” Rahab did not hide the spies or hang out the scarlet rope in order to be justified before God, but to demonstrate her faith in God before the two spies and all of Israel. She feared God and believed in Him as the true God and that faith was manifested by her actions. Her faith was justified before men.

²¹ “**Without works is dead**” – What are works? Works begin in the heart according to Christ (Mt. 15:17) with the intent and workings of the intellect, affections and will before they are manifested by words and actions. Thus works are inseparable from the heart and its internal function and external expressions. Good works are produced by a good heart as an evil heart cannot bring forth good works (fruit). Just as the spirit is what activates the body as its life source, so are the works or the functioning new regenerative heart the life source of faith. Where there is no regenerative new heart there is no faith, no good works, only death and evil works.

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

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.²²

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

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

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

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

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

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts²³, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom²⁴ descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

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

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

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

²² **“It is an unruly evil”**- The tongue is simply the revelation of the heart and so what can be said about the tongue can be said about the heart and what can be said about the heart can be said about the tongue. The fallen heart is said to be “deceitful above all things” and thus the expression of that heart is an “unruly evil.” The good heart obtained by God in new birth cannot bring forth such evil, but the child of God still has the law of sin ruling in his members which cannot bring forth good (Rom. 7:18). He is addressing the brethren and their fallen nature which is what is in need of control or a bridle.

²³ **“Heart”** – Where motives, thoughts, affections, attitudes and choices originate. The daily life is the expression of the heart in words and actions. The Biblical definition of works includes both the internal operations of the heart as well as its external manifestations (words and actions) – See Matthew 15:17-18.

²⁴ **“Wisdom”** – His audience have two natures within them. One is set on fire by hell and is from beneath, while the other is born from above. They are at war with each other and the battle ground is the soul or the conscious self – mind, emotions and will. The wisdom of the world is the wisdom that is derived from a system of thinking and actions that are in opposition to God and His revealed will – the word of God.

Chapter 4

From whence [where] come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence [here], even of your lusts [passions, desires] that war in your members? [Romans 7:23]²⁵

2 Ye 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.²⁶

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss,²⁷ that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses,²⁸ know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity [at war] with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world²⁹ is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith³⁰ in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

²⁵ **“Lusts that war in your members”** – It is in your “members” where the law of sin dwells (Rom. 7:23). The only way to stop its expression through you is to mortify, put to death the flesh by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:10-12). Jesus expressed it in the form of daily denial of self by crucifixion of self (Lk. 9:23). The source of all divisions, fighting and schisms can be traced to the law of sin in our members that is given free reign.

²⁶ **“Ye have not because ye ask not”** – The age old struggle to get what others have or what they want to have in order to fulfill their desires. Such conquests lead them into conflicts with others seeking the same thing. They “kill” others in their attitudes and words and perhaps take physical life to achieve their goals, and still cannot attain what they pursue. That is the wisdom from beneath at work. The source of all good things is the Father (1:12) but fleshly wisdom does not “ask” the Father, when it does, it fails to obtain because it asks “amiss” or not in keeping with the will of God.

²⁷ **“Because ye ask amiss”** – Everyone talks about how God always answers prayer and He does but sometimes the answer is no. What? Why would He say no? We do not always know what is best for us (Rom.8:26) and we often ask things from God that are not according to His will for our lives. He always knows what is best and does all things well (Mk. 7:37). Let us learn to pray unselfish prayers that always seek God’s will to be done in our lives. Prayer is not dictating orders but asking that our will might be in tune with the will of the Lord (Lk. 22:42).

²⁸ **“Ye adulterers and adulteresses”** – Literal adultery may be involved, but the idea is spiritual adultery or an illicit union between the child of God and the world. Churches can have an illicit union with the world and no longer be a metaphorical “chaste virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2) but metaphorical “harlots” (Rev. 17:5) polluted by false doctrine (2 Cor. 11:3-4) and worldliness. True children of God are among such metaphorical harlots (Rev. 18:4).

²⁹ **“Friend of the world”** – He is referring to the worldly system of thinking, values and priorities that exclude God and violate the precepts and principles of God and those who embrace such things. You can be “in” the world but not “of” the world. You can love the lost without partaking of their lifestyle. You cannot be a “friend” of the world and have the love of the Father abiding in you (1 Jn. 2:15), nor can you be a friend with the world system and be a friend of God. The world system is the enemy of God and His people. We send our children off to be indoctrinated by the educational system of the world and its values that despise God and His Word.

³⁰ **“The scripture saith”** - The difficulty of this verse is resolved by identifying “the spirit” that dwells “in us” or within children of God. God’s spirit is a jealous spirit. There are several Old Testament passages that declare God is jealous over his people. Dr. A.T. Robertson says, “*Long unto envying (προς φθονον επιποθει). A difficult phrase. Some even take προς φθονον with λεγει rather than with επιποθει, as it naturally does go, meaning “jealously.” But even so, with God presented as a jealous lover, does το πνευμα refer to the Holy Spirit as the subject of επιποθει or to man’s spirit as the object of επιποθει? Probably the former and επιποθει then means to yearn after in the good sense as in - Php 1:8.*” – Word Pictures. The Holy Spirit within children of God is jealous and desires them for himself as opposed to friendship with the world.

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6 But he giveth more grace.³¹ Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil,³² and he will flee from you.

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

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.³³

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

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren.³⁴ 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 [Rom. 14:10; 2Cor. 5:10].

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

13 Go 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:

14 Whereas 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.

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will,³⁵ we shall live, and do this, or that.

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

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.³⁶

³¹ “**He giveth more grace**” – He gives grace to the proud Christian or he would not continue to live and to enjoy the things he has. Indeed, resisting the proud is grace being given to them to restrain their sin. However, “more” grace is given to the humble saint.

³² “**Resist the devil**” – We resist the devil by submitting to the Lord. We bring every thought into subjection to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). We cannot resist in our own strength as we are no match for his power. The way to flee fornication is to flee to Christ. The way to overcome evil is to admit you cannot do it and flee to Christ and then step out in his strength and armor (Eph. 6:12-18).

³³ “**Your joy into heaviness**” – He is referring to their joy in worldly things and in those things that are self-centered and worldly.

³⁴ “**Speak not evil one of another**” – *This, unfortunately is a plague among our brethren. We have enough enemies out there in the unbelieving world to fight. God deliver us from the practice of shooting our wounded (Rom. 14:1; Gal. 6:1-4). We ALL have our own weaknesses; this is who we are (1Cor. 1:27-31). This is not to say that we are to compromise on the word of God. There may be many true believers that are in false “congregations” but if they are believers indeed, we may count them as brethren in the Lord and if we show a little of the compassion of Christ, perhaps God would use us to lead them to the truth about Christ’s true congregations. As long as they do not attack the truth, let them do their own thing, if that is what they want to do, but let us by the grace of God continue on in His way (Mk. 9:38-40).* – Larry Killion, **The Landmark Edition of the King James New Testament Study Bible.**

³⁵ “**If the Lord will**” – The future is determined by God alone. It is the height of presumption to boast or claim what you are going to do in the future when you might not even live till the end of the day.

Chapter 5

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.
2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth eaten.

3 Your 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.

4 Behold, 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.³⁷

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

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

7 Be patient therefore,³⁸ brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman [**caretaker of the vineyard**] waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.³⁹

9 Grudge [**murmur or complain**] not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

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

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

³⁶ **“To him it is sin”** – We are judged by our own conscience, whether that conscience is correct or not. When we violate our own conscience we violate the most basic law of our own being. Therefore, when we fail to do what we believe is right, that is the sin of omission. This is precisely the basis for which God shall judge gentiles who never were exposed to his written law or gospel (Rom. 2:14-15). Their own conscience will serve as the basis to judge them as sinners against the law that governs their own being.

³⁷ **“Lord of sabaoth”** – Don’t confuse “sabaoth” with “Sabbath.” The term “sabaoth” refers to the “armies” of the Lord as representative of God’s power. Throughout the book of Revelation it is the angels of the Lord that administer judgments. The Lord’s armies in heaven consisted of his angels. He is saying that those who defraud others will not escape the power of God’s judgment.

³⁸ **“Be patient therefore”** – He is referring to enduring until Christ comes (v. 8). Here James repudiates the doctrine of Pre-trib imminence. He clearly teaches that waiting for the Lord does not exclude known preceding events in his analogy of the farmer. Before there is a harvest he must wait patiently until both the former and latter rains occur. Likewise, before the coming of the Lord we must patiently endure those things that Jesus Christ plainly and clearly declared must precede his return (Mt. 28:32-36).

³⁹ **“The coming of the Lord draweth nigh”** – Again, the “nigh” coming of the Lord does not deny necessary preceding prophetic events as illustrated in the farmer waiting patiently through the times of the former and latter rains.

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12 But 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.

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

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the congregation; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil⁴⁰ in the name of the Lord:

15 And 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.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another,⁴¹ that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias 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.

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

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

20 Let 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.⁴²

⁴⁰ “**Anointing him with oil**” – Olive oil was commonly applied medicinally, as in the case of the parable of the good Samaritan. Luke was called the beloved “Physician.” Faith in God does not exclude responsible use of medicine. God uses medicine to heal the body.

⁴¹ “**Confess your faults one to another**” – He did not say confess your sins to a Priest! He is not teaching that you should reveal all your faults. Some faults should be confined to you and God. However, there are faults in which we struggle, and need a support team for wisdom and prayer to overcome.

⁴² “**Err from the truth**” – He is not talking about false professors or the lost. He is not talking about gaining entrance into heaven. He is talking about one who is “one of you” or of the “brethren.” He is talking about straying from “the truth” or the apostolic doctrine, the faith, the tradition passed down to the churches. He is not talking about being saved from hell, but saving the “soul” or “life” (Gr. *psueche* is translated “soul” or “life”) from being lost to the glory of God. There is spiritual death. There is physical death and there is eternal death. However, there is another kind of death and that is the separation of the daily life of a Christian from the way of truth. Instead of “redeeming the time” by walking in the Spirit, Christians may walk after the flesh and that time is lost for the glory of God and it is lost forever. Whenever we do not “mortify” or put to death the flesh, the life we are living is dead or separated from obedience to God.