

Bible Commentary on James

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Bible Commentary on James

by Jonathan Cooper

First Edition on 7/7/2019

Second Edition on 11/8/2022

Third Edition on 11/8/2022

The dates before each chapter reflect the date it was written, and the dates it was edited or expanded.

Introduction

This is not your typical commentary, so I'd like to give a few words of explanation before you begin. As a child I was taught to read the Word of God on a daily basis. Our goal as a family was to read through the Bible once a year, and that is what we did. When I became an adult I kept reading the Bible from cover to cover.

One day, however, I realized that I wanted something more. Reading the Bible was good, but I wanted to actually *study* it. Could I explain what each verse meant? Did I really understand what each chapter was saying? I decided to start writing daily commentary instead of just reading the Word.

This commentary was put together to help me study the Bible. I have no plans to release it, for there are far better commentaries out there that were written by much wiser men. This document is simply a tool to help me understand what the Word of God has to say.

Jon Cooper
4/14/2019

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4/8/2022

Introduction to James

Scholars believe that the book of James was written around 47 AD (see Resource 2, "Timeline"). This means James wrote it about 17 years after the resurrection. It was the 1st book of the New Testament to come into existence.

3/21/2011, 9/22/2018, 7/7/2019

James 1

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

James was actually the half-brother of Jesus, but he doesn't mention this amazing fact in his introduction! Instead he simply calls himself "a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ". He identifies himself without drawing attention to who he is or what his credentials are. Many modern pastors are obsessed with their personal fame and go to great lengths to make sure everyone knows how great they are, but that isn't how the Bible says we are to behave. We should be drawing attention to God, not to ourselves, and boasting in Him and Him alone. If you're trying to draw attention to yourself or boasting about the great things you've done then you have drifted far from God.

"2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let

patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James 1)

This is a hard one. James says we should rejoice when our faith is tried and we are put through hard times. In fact, we should view these difficult times as blessings because "the trying of your faith worketh patience".

Patience is a *really big deal* to God. He wants us to learn to wait on His timing. God didn't change Abram's name to Abraham until he was in his 90s. Abram knew he was promised a son but God made him wait a very long time for it. The Lord was testing his faith to see if Abram would still believe God even after it looked hopeless. Would Abram believe in God's promise to him in spite of his circumstances?

It's hard to learn to wait. Jesus said that He would return (John 14:3), but it's been almost two thousand years and the church is still here. Will we continue to believe in His promise and patiently keep watching, or will we give up as so many others have?

God will often put us in situations that are designed to put a lot of stress on our faith, in order to demonstrate *to us* if our faith is real or not. When tragedy strikes (such as the death of a loved one) there are some people who abandon their faith in God. Through these tests God shows them that their faith is fake; it looked real from the outside but it was actually a fraud. As soon as they were asked to believe God in spite of their circumstances they buckled. They would only believe God as long as He did exactly what they wanted Him to – which is not faith at all. It's extremely important for us to know if our faith is genuine or not, because fake faith cannot save us.

God requires us to have *real* faith and *real* patience. He commands us to wait patiently even when we're suffering and our lives are difficult. He wants us to be content in the midst of hard times and patiently endure.

When we've mastered patience and contentment, and have learned to wait on the Lord and hold on to our faith no matter what the circumstances, then we are "perfect and entire, wanting nothing". That should be our goal.

"5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1)

That is the secret: if you lack wisdom then ask God! If you wish to understand the Bible then ask God. If you want understanding then ask God. It's not any more complicated than that! All wisdom comes from God. The Bible tells us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of both wisdom (Proverbs 9:10) and knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). All you have to do is ask.

However, let me be clear: this does *not* mean that if you ask God for wisdom and then go home and watch television, wisdom will magically fall upon your head the way it did for Solomon. If you want wisdom then you need to ask for it *and diligently study the Word*. God can open your eyes and show you amazing things in the Bible (Psalms 119:18), but you will never encounter those truths if you don't do any studying!

"6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. 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." (James 1)

This doesn't mean that if you want something and believe in it hard enough then you will get the thing you asked for. God is

not a magical genie who grants wishes! There are times when God will grant your prayer (2 Kings 20:1-6), and there are other times when He will not (2 Corinthians 12:7-9). It all depends on what His will is for that particular circumstance.

This verse is telling us to not be double-minded. In other words, do not abandon faith in God for something else! If you don't believe in God, or you reject the promises of God, or you don't believe in His Word, then you will not receive any of His promises. God rewards those who have faith in Him, but He does *not* reward the faithless or unbelieving. There are some who start out believing but then abandon their faith as time goes on and reject the Scriptures. That is a double-minded man, and he will not be blessed.

If we don't stay firmly rooted in the Scriptures then we will be tossed around with every wind of doctrine and will end up very far from the truth!

"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." (James 1)

If we're going to boast then let's boast in the Lord and who He is. Let's not boast in ourselves, or in what we own, or in anything we have done. The Lord will not share His glory with another (Isaiah 42:8), and He resists the proud and brings them low (James 4:6). We can do *nothing* without God – not even draw a single breath! We depend entirely upon Him and yet we act as if *we* are the ones who are really amazing. God sets up kings and kingdoms, and He tears them down as He sees fit. Without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5). He and He alone is worthy of all our praise (Psalms 18:3)!

"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." (James 1)

The Bible never says it's a sin to be wealthy, but it does warn us that wealth doesn't last (Proverbs 23:5). Wealth can be very helpful in life (Proverbs 10:15) but it cannot deliver us from the wrath of God (Ezekiel 7:19), and we cannot take it with us when we die (1 Timothy 6:7). It's easy for the wealthy to think that they've got it all and have need of no one, but that is an illusion! We all need God, because without Jesus we are facing an eternity of torment in Hell. What we need are the true riches (Luke 16:11) – not the material goods of this world.

"12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (James 1)

Here we find one of the crowns – the crown of life. This heavenly reward (which I believe is an actual, physical crown, for how else could we cast it before the throne of God?) is given to those who endure temptation. You see, Jesus said that if we love Him we should keep His commandments (John 14:15). That is how we demonstrate our love for God! Therefore, those who have endured temptation have demonstrated genuine love for God – a love that was proven through their obedience. (For more information about heavenly rewards see Appendix H, "Treasure in Heaven".)

"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: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1)

Some have asked whether it was possible for Jesus to sin when He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. My answer to this is that Jesus was God, and verse 13 says that God cannot be tempted by evil. It's true that Jesus was man as well, but He was a man without a sin nature (otherwise He would not have been sinless). That leads me to believe that although the devil tried to tempt Jesus, it was not possible for Jesus to sin because sin is not a part of His nature. As Hebrews 4:15 says, He was tempted as we are and yet never sinned. God simply does not find evil tempting – and that is a very good thing!

Likewise, God does not tempt any man to sin. He tests them and tries them, but He does not tempt them. People are actually tempted by their own lusts and sinful desires. If you want to defeat sin in your life then you have to deal with the lusts of your flesh; you have to die to the things in this world that you desire. If you no longer have the desire then the temptation will not be there anymore. We are tempted by the things we *want*, so temptation won't be as effective if we don't want it.

"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, neither shadow of turning." (James 1)

Did you realize that every single good gift comes from God Himself? Everything that you have received was a gift from God! You might think "Well, I earned it", but your talents and abilities and health were all gifts from God as well. Since all these things are gifts from God, imagine how grateful we should be and how much we should be praising Him for all He has done for us!

Verse 17 also tells us that God never changes. This is one of the most important truths in the Bible! If God changed then there would be a chance that one day He might get tired of us, or might become evil, or might decide to stop having mercy on us. However, since God never changes our salvation is eternally secure. We can rest easy because we worship an unchanging God.

"18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (James 1)

How grateful are we for the Scriptures? They contain the revelation of God – things that we would never have known if God had not revealed it to us. We could never have deserved this amazing gift, and yet God gave it to us freely out of His love for us. The best way to honor this gift is to *study the Word*, not put it on a shelf and ignore it.

Do you see how this verse says that we are a firstfruits of His creatures? If something is "first" then that implies there will be more stuff later, doesn't it? Now, I do *not* believe that Jesus will ever be sacrificed for sin again. The Bible is clear that He was sacrificed once for all, and that was the end of it (Hebrews 7:27, 9:26). Our salvation depends upon Him being a man forever (Hebrews 7:15-17), which means He will never take upon Himself

another form to save another fallen race. (The only other fallen race that we are aware of are the fallen angels, and Matthew 25:41 tells us that God is not going to save them.)

What we do know, though, is that His kingdom and government will continue to increase *for all of eternity* (Isaiah 9:7). If His kingdom will never stop growing then that means new things will be added to it forever! We are the firstfruits, but apparently others will follow. I don't know what that is going to look like because we are not given the details, but it's something exciting to think about.

"19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: 20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." (James 1)

There are times when it's appropriate to be angry. Even Jesus was angry on occasion (Matthew 21:12-13), and He never sinned. However, the wrath *of man* is not a righteous thing. We need to be careful because it's easy to become angry over things that do not anger God, or in cases where anger is not justified. That's why we should listen first and speak second, and get to the bottom of a situation before becoming angry.

"21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." (James 1)

If only the church would do this! If only our churches would receive "with meekness" the Word of God. Do you know what that means? It means that instead of judging the Word of

God, or criticizing it, or condemning it, or rejecting it, you humble yourself and *believe it*. The meek are not proud or arrogant or lofty; they do not raise themselves up over others. Instead they are small and submissive and obedient. That is the sort of attitude we should have to the Word of God!

Yet what we find in our age is widespread unbelief. We find people in our churches who think nothing about disagreeing with the Word of God, or who casually reject God's commands and say they will never obey them, or who state that the Bible is wrong and they will not believe it. Instead of receiving the Word with meekness they have elevated themselves above the Word and declared themselves to be gods. They have told God that He is a liar and they know better than He does. Such people are not saved! You cannot call God a liar in one breath and then call Him your Savior in the next. Either you have submitted to Him and to His Word, or you are in rebellion against God and on the side of the devil. There is no middle ground.

"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: 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 liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." (James 1)

Later in this book James will make the point that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). If you say you have faith but your life lacks the fruit of the Spirit then that means your life lacks the Spirit as well. Your actions prove the true condition of

your heart! If your life lacks works then your life lacks faith as well, for *genuine faith always produces works*. You can claim all you want that you believe the Bible, but if you never obey it and you live as you please then you are a liar.

"26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James 1)

You can claim to be a Christian all you want, but your words will reveal much about your true condition. If you constantly curse God and curse others, and you breathe out threats against Christians and talk about how much you hate people and wish you could kill them, then you are far from God. You cannot love a God you have not seen while hating people you have seen (1 John 4:20)! If your words are full of hate and unkindness then your soul is as well.

"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." (James 1)

The greatest commandment is to love God, and the second is to love our neighbors (Matthew 22:36-40). Do you know how we love our neighbors? It isn't by saying nice things when they're standing in front of us; no, it's by meeting their needs. The fatherless and the widows have very dire needs, and stepping up to meet those needs is an act of genuine love. That is the sort of love that God is looking for – love that demonstrates itself in good works, by meeting the needs of others.

What is the last thing this verse says? To keep ourselves

"unspotted from the world". That means we must fight against sin and pursue holiness. A spot is a very small and minor thing – a thing so small it hardly seems worth bothering about. Yet we are called to be "unspotted", aren't we? God doesn't seem to think that we should focus on the major issues and ignore the minor ones. Instead He has called us to be perfect (Matthew 5:48). There are no issues so small that we can ignore them! There are no spots of worldliness that we can accept.

3/22/2011, 9/22/2018, 7/7/2019

James 2

"1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. 2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; 3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: 4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James 2)

The church is forbidden from showing partiality. It is required to treat the rich and the poor, the famous and the unknown, the weak and the strong exactly the same. It must never honor one at the expense of the other. God shows no partiality, and we must not either. The same respect must be shown to everyone regardless of their position in life.

One thing I do find a little amusing is that in the early church people were apparently competing to get the best seats! In modern churches people try to sit as far away from the pastor

as possible, at the very back of the church, in the worst possible seats. In football games people prize the seats that are closest to the action, but in churches people sit at the back, not the front. I suspect this is because people are excited to attend football games and don't want to miss anything, but people really aren't excited about attending church and desire a rear seat so they can leave early, or fall asleep, or goof off. (They might claim to be excited to be there, but their actions indicate otherwise.)

"5 Hearken, 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 that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (James 2)

James is pointing out that the rich people the early church was giving honor to were actually dangerous. The poor had no ability to drag people into court and cause trouble, but the rich did. The rich were blaspheming the Lord and yet the church honored them above poor people who were faithful and kind. In other words, the church coveted their money so much that they were willing to ignore their evil and blasphemous lives, and were willing to hurt the poor and faithful people to get it. That sort of greed has no place in our churches!

Would a modern church show preference to wealthy donors over poor people who can give very little to the church? If that seems unlikely to you then consider the fact that churches are desperate to keep their tax-exempt status. In order to obtain tax-exempt status you must be registered as a nonprofit corporation, and you must comply with regulations and make

sure your message is pleasing to the government. Because churches covet money they've organized themselves as businesses and avoid ever teaching what the Word of God has to say about any political subject. Now, the Bible actually has a great deal to say about minimum wage, and the healthcare debate, and every other political issue you can imagine, but no pastor will ever touch any of those subjects because it might endanger the tax-exempt status of the church. Given the choice between faithfully preaching the entire counsel of God and being declared tax-exempt, the church has universally sacrificed the Word of God in exchange for money. In other words, they show favoritism to the government that oppresses them, and don't preach truths that common people need to hear. Isn't that exactly the sort of favoritism and bias that James is condemning?

"8 If ye fulfil the royal law 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." (James 2)

God requires us to treat others the way we want to be treated. Do you want the church to show favoritism to others at your expense? Then don't do that! You hate it when you are unjustly passed over due to favoritism, so you should obviously never do that to others. Notice how clearly James condemns favoritism as a *sin*.

"10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 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." (James 2)

If you break any part of the law then you are a lawbreaker. You don't get points for keeping some laws that then makes it acceptable for you to break others! All it takes to become a lawbreaker is to break a single law. God never says "As long as you get the big things right, you can ignore everything else and you'll be fine". No, God requires us to be without spot and unrebukable (1 Timothy 6:14). Everything matters to God!

"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." (James 2)

If you are merciless and cruel in your dealings with others then why would you ever expect God to show you mercy? That's why the Lord said that if we do not forgive the sins of others then He will not forgive our sins either (Matthew 6:15). Treat others the way you want to be treated – and treat others the way you want God to treat you.

"14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" (James 2)

The point James is making is that if your faith doesn't produce any works then it is empty and dead and it isn't real, saving faith. The Bible is clear that we are saved by grace through faith and not of works (Ephesians 2:8-9), but this faith is more

than just empty words! Real faith in Jesus *always* produces a changed life, a hatred for sin, a love for others, and a desire to do good (not to earn points with God, but to please Him). A faith that produces no works, no repentance, and no love is *not* real faith at all.

"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?" (James 2)

God commands us to love one another. If we say that we love someone but we do nothing to meet their urgent needs then we don't really love them, do we? How can we claim that we love someone if we refuse to lift a finger for them in their hour of crisis? In that case our professed love is actually a lie, and the reason we know it's a lie is because it isn't accompanied by works.

Faith is the same way. We can claim all we want that we have faith, but our life will prove it one way or another. If we truly have faith then our life will demonstrate it. However, if our life lacks works then it also lacks faith, because works are the result of genuine faith.

"17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. 18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2)

Our works is how we *demonstrate* our faith. It shows that our faith is real and alive. As James says in verse 17, faith without works is dead. As we will see in the next few verses, people demonstrate their faith through their works. For example, Abraham demonstrated his faith in God by being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac. Yet the Bible tells us that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). It was his *faith* that saved him – and he demonstrated that faith by the way he behaved.

It's fine to tell someone "I trust you", but if it comes right down to it and you refuse to depend on them then you don't actually trust them at all. Your words is empty and your supposed faith is a lie.

Works do not save us and will *never* save us. However, if we lack works then that can only mean we lack faith as well. Works always follows from genuine faith, just as a living, and healthy, and mature apple tree will always produce apples.

"19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."
(James 2)

You are not saved by saying "Yes, I think there's a God out there". You are not saved by saying "Yes, I think that Jesus was a real person who lived a long time ago". Even the *demons* believe that, and they are far from saved! Salvation comes by repenting of your sins and submitting to the authority of Jesus Christ. It comes by surrendering to God and giving your life over to Jesus and making Him your master. In order to be saved Jesus must be your Savior *and* your Lord. If you refuse to make Him your Lord, and you refuse to obey His commands, and you instead live as you please then you are lost. You can claim to be saved all you want and you can claim to have great faith, but your life shows

that you are lying.

"20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? 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 with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God." (James 2)

How do we know that Abraham had real, saving faith? By his actions! Abraham proved that his faith was real by the actions he took. If he had instead refused to obey God and lived as he pleased then that would be evidence his claims to faith were all lies.

If a person's life lacks works then it lacks faith as well, because genuine faith will always produce works. Always! People act according to what they believe. If they aren't acting like they believe God then *they don't believe God*. That is the point James is making.

"24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, 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?" (James 2)

In our churches there is an epidemic of people who claim to have faith but have absolutely no works at all. They don't love the things of God, their life is full of sin, they mock the

Scriptures, and they live as if they are lost. These people may claim to have faith, but the fact that they lack works proves that they are lying. If they actually had faith then they would have works as well! The way they are living their life proves that they don't really believe in God at all. *If they did then they would be living differently.*

How do we know that Rahab meant the things she claimed? She proved it by the actions she took: she risked her life to save the Israelite spies. Her actions demonstrated her faith. People's actions will always tell you what people really believe.

"26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2)

Here we have the Biblical definition of death. When the body is without the spirit it is dead. Now, I don't know how a person can tell when the spirit leaves the body, but that is when death occurs. A body that does not have a spirit within it is dead.

Incidentally, that is why the Bible speaks of people "giving up the ghost" when it speaks of death (Genesis 25:8, 17; Genesis 35:29, Lamentations 1:19; Mark 15:37). It is telling us that the spirit has left the body, which is the key sign that the body is now dead. The spirit gives life to the body.

A dead body lacks life and cannot produce any works. Likewise, if your faith is not producing works then it is fraudulent and cannot save you! It is utterly worthless. Do you love sin and hate righteousness? Do you mock the Bible and refuse to believe it? Do you attack the church for being faithful to the Scriptures, and do you have a hatred for Christians who believe the things the Bible teaches? Then your faith is worthless and you are on the road to Hell. You may claim to be a Christian but you are just deceiving yourself.

3/23/2011, 9/22/2018, 7/7/2019

James 3

"1 My brethren, be not many masters, 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 man, and able also to bridle the whole body." (James 3)

These verses are a little tricky. At first it seems to be saying "Don't be a leader if you can help it, because leaders are held to a higher standard and will be condemned more harshly." That interpretation would go along with "To whom much is given, much is required." But verse 2 says the reason for this command is because "in many things we offend all". James then talks about speech and controlling your tongue. So what's going on here?

I think it helps to take a step back and look at the chapter as a whole. James is telling us that it's vital to learn how to control our words. We must be very careful about what we say and how we say it. Even when we're simply speaking the truths of God's Word we are still going to offend a lost and dying world that hates that truth with a passion. How much worse will it be if we compound that through poor or unwise speech!

The answer to this is *not* to be quiet and say nothing. Jesus commanded us to be salt and light in this world (Matthew 5:13-14). We cannot remain at home and do nothing; we need to go out and be a part of the body of Christ. No, the answer is to control our words with wisdom and grace.

At the same time we do need to be careful about seeking positions of leadership and teaching. God will hold leaders accountable for how they lead their flocks (see Ezekiel 34), and He will hold teachers accountable for what they have taught. This

doesn't mean that it's better for us to bury our talent in the ground and do nothing with it, like that wicked servant Jesus spoke of (Matthew 25:24-28). James is saying that we need to realize how dangerous our words can be, and we must control them and use them wisely. Don't just say whatever you want, but instead remember that God will bring every idle word into judgment (Matthew 12:36). Be very careful what you say and what you teach!

"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 listeth. 5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3)

James points out how dangerous the tongue can be. It's easy for a few words to spark an enormous fire of hate and rage! Words can stir up an angry mob or burn a city down.

Notice, though, that James does *not* say "The best solution is to sit at home and watch television and do nothing. That way you stay out of trouble." Instead James says we need to tame our words as if they were wild animals. We need to understand how dangerous words can be and control them so they accomplish what is right and good. Ships are not allowed to drift wherever they please and go along with the external pressures of the wind and the ocean; instead the captain guides the ship to its intended destination.

"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."
(James 3)

James is telling us to be very careful about what we say! Words can be incredibly dangerous and damaging. Look at the strong language he uses: "it defileth the whole body"; it "setteth on fire the course of nature", and – last but not least – "it is set on fire of hell".

People say that "actions speak louder than words". That may be true, but that doesn't mean we can neglect our words! Words can cause *immense* damage and destruction.

"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." (James 3)

Men cannot tame their speech by their own power, but God can! All things are possible with God (Mark 9:23). It is far harder to tame our tongue than it is to tame the most dangerous wild animal. Words can be full of grace and truth, or they can be full of poison and hate. They can be instruments of righteousness or evil.

"9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (James 3)

The message is pretty clear, isn't it? James is condemning people for going to church and praising the Lord with great and flowery language, and then going home and using their words to destroy people. That doesn't mean we should only use nice words in all circumstances; after all, Jesus called the Pharisees whitewashed tombs full of dead men's bones in Matthew 23:27. However, it *does* mean that cursing an innocent person who has done you no harm is very, very wrong (Matthew 5:22). The wicked may try to bully people into doing what they want by being hostile and hateful toward them, but that is an abomination to God and a sign that they are of the devil (1 John 2:9-11).

"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."

Another way to put this is that wicked trees bring forth wicked fruit, and good trees bring forth good fruit. If your words are full of hate and malice then your heart is as well. Your words reveal who you really are.

"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 hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom 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, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (James 3)

Here James is explaining the difference between heavenly wisdom and earthly wisdom. Earthly wisdom (by which he refers to evil, not the physical sciences) leads to strife and envy. Heavenly wisdom (which is only found in the Word of God) is peaceable and gentle; it's easy to be intreated and is full of mercy. It is not partial or hypocritical. If you trade the Scriptures for the wisdom of this world then you are throwing out good and replacing it with evil, and the end result will be death and destruction.

What we see in this chapter is the difference between good speech and bad speech, and good wisdom and bad wisdom. You can tell the nature of a thing by the fruit it bears!

Now, this doesn't mean that good wisdom will never cause strife. After all, Jesus was full of God's wisdom and He was hated for it. The world will never come to love the truths in the Bible. However, if you are acting out of bitterness and hate then your words and wisdom are not from God.

"18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." (James 3)

Righteousness is very closely related to peace. The world is full of strife, hatred, and bitterness because it has rejected God and every man seeks to be master of everyone else. Everyone wants to be the center of attention, and have their way, and force everyone else to buy them the things in life that they want. People try to take advantage of one another and force them to

bow down. The result is endless strife, hatred, murder, and war. That is where sin always leads – to suffering and death (Romans 6:23).

The righteousness of God is different. He offers us real, lasting peace! He commands us to love one another (John 13:34-35), to consider others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3), to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), and to forgive one another (Matthew 6:14-15). That is the only path to peace. The world has endless schemes that they believe will lead to utopia, but in the end they all lead to Hell. Peace only comes from God and cannot be had anywhere else.

3/24/2011, 9/22/2018, 7/7/2019

James 4

"1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? 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." (James 4)

James paints a pretty brutal picture, doesn't he? If you ever wondered where conflict came from then here is your answer. People want things, and when they don't get them they start taking aggressive action. Someone wants something that belongs to someone else (whether it's a possession, or position, or power), so he tries to take it in one way or another. One person is an obstacle on the path to success, so someone tries to remove him. The root of it all is *desire* – a desire for the things of this world, which ultimately cannot satisfy anyway. We passionately want things that we cannot keep, and we harm other people to get it. That is where a lot of conflict comes from.

If we instead desired the things of God then a lot of problems would be avoided.

There is a much better way: if you want something then ask God for it.

"3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." (James 4)

Jesus said that if we ask then we will receive (Matthew 7:8), but what are we asking for? Does our heart long after the temporary and fleeting pleasures of this world, or are we seeking after the desires of God's heart? Are we longing to save them which are lost, or are we trying to get all the wealth and power and prestige we can? What is it we really want – and do you honestly think God is going to answer prayers that come from covetousness and greed?

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

This is the key point when it comes to following God. We have two choices: we can be a friend of the world and an *enemy* of God, or we can be a friend of God and an enemy of the world. There is no such thing as neutrality! You can't be neutral when it comes to God.

Modern church leaders have picked up on this fact. They've realized that standing for the Bible means the world will hate them, so in order to be more popular they've made the terrible and wicked decision to reject the Bible. Scholars now

teach that we can't really know what the Bible says. They claim it's full of myths and you have to decide for yourself what the truth is. Many pastors teach that God would never judge anyone or send anybody to Hell, and many churches say terrible things about the holy, inspired, and infallible Word of God. These churches have chosen their side: since they've sought to become friends with the world, they are now the enemy of God.

But what about us – what side are we on? The way we can tell is by looking at our life and examining the things we love. What do we seek after: is it money, fame, respect, houses, cars, and possessions? Or is it the Most High God and His kingdom?

James points out that we are controlled by the things we desire. If we desire things of this world (money, houses, goods, and so forth) then we have become carnal and lost our way. God commands us to not be materialistic, for the things of this world are passing away and will not last (1 John 2:17). He told us to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15-17). He was very clear: while the Gentiles may seek after all these things, we are required to be different (Matthew 6:31-33). We must seek after the kingdom of God. That is where our heart should be.

As it says in Psalms, "there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee" (Psalms 73:25). We are commanded love God *passionately* with all our heart and soul and mind and strength (Mark 12:30) – not the world and its riches and pleasures. *He* is to be our joy and delight! When this is the case and God alone is all that we desire, then things are as they should be. Then we can serve God and sin cannot take root, because it doesn't offer us anything we want.

"5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain,
The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? 6
But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith,

God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4)

God hates pride! Let him who boasts boast in the Lord. Pride is an abomination to God and He resists those who are proud, but gives grace to the humble. What we need in this life isn't fame or fortune or high self-esteem. No, what we need in order to resist temptation and covetousness is *His grace*. That's the only thing that will enable us to get through the trials of this life. We need to learn to think less of ourselves and more of God.

God will give grace to those who humble themselves and meekly ask for it. However, those who are too proud to seek God's help and who believe they don't need the Lord will soon learn that He has all sorts of ways to humble them.

"7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4)

If you want to win the battle against sin then fight back! If you resist the devil then he will flee from you – but if you fail to resist then you have essentially surrendered. Ephesians 6:10-18 has more to say about this topic. (For more information on this topic see Appendix 13, "Demons".)

Does God require us to submit to Him? Does He require us to obey His commands and believe in the Scriptures? *Absolutely!* If you refuse to submit to God but instead insist that God ought to submit to you then you are on the side of the devil. If you refuse to submit to the Word of God and instead elevate yourself above it then you are the enemy of God, because God has elevated the Scriptures *above even His name* (Psalm 138:2) and you are dishonoring them and calling God a liar.

"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. 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4)

James isn't saying that laughter is bad or it's wrong to be happy. These verses are telling us what genuine repentance looks like. In genuine repentance a person humbles themselves before God. They are deeply sorry for their sins and cry out for forgiveness, mercy, and grace. Genuine repentance involves a humble and contrite spirit – one that's fully submitted to God and is no longer rebellious.

James is *not* saying that Christians should be upset all the time. What he is saying is that we need to repent of the sin in our life. The only way to accomplish this is to seek God – to be afflicted and mourn, and cry out for mercy and grace. This is absolutely critical! Apart from God we can do nothing. We must have Him for nothing else will do. If we cry out to God then He will hear us.

Yet many today teach that God would never ask anyone to repent because God doesn't judge anybody. They teach the abominable doctrine that you can be saved without ever repenting, and that you never have to be sorry for your sins, or submit to God's will, or turn from them. So many people think that they can be saved by Jesus without ever submitting to His authority. These people believe that they can be saved while telling Jesus "You have no right to tell me what to do! I'm going to live as I please and You have no say in the matter."

God disagrees with this *very strongly*. (It's worth noting that Jesus spoke more of Hell than of Heaven.) The Bible is quite clear on this issue! If we don't humble ourselves before God and

instead refuse to seek His forgiveness then we *will not be forgiven* – and if we don't obtain His forgiveness then we will face His wrath. He will give forgiveness freely to all those who ask for it (John 6:37), but those who reject His mercy will not receive mercy.

If you tell God that you will never obey His commands and you plan on continuing to live in sin then *you will not find forgiveness*. God will not forgive anyone who isn't sorry.

"11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4)

This passage does *not* mean that we shouldn't confront people who are caught up in sin. All too often when a pastor preaches against sin someone stands up and says "Don't judge me!" That is *not* what this verse is talking about. Telling someone what the Bible teaches about sin is *not* speaking evil – it's actually love! There is nothing loving about seeing someone caught up in sin and then doing nothing about it. After all, the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and what kind of love allows a person to continue down a course that leads to death and Hell? Christ condemned the Pharisees for sin *many times* (Matthew 5:20, 9:13, 12:7, 31-36; 15:7-9, 23:13-15, just to name a few). Paul didn't hesitate to name names when it came to people caught up in sin, or preaching heresy, or opposing the gospel (see 1 Timothy 1:20 and 2 Timothy 4:14). James is *not* telling us to stop fighting sin or opposing heresy.

So what are these verses saying? It's right there in verse

11: "speak not evil one of another". I think that's a pretty straightforward concept. This is something James talked about earlier – how we use our tongues to bless God and curse men. If we are cursing men who have done no wrong and are speaking evil of people who aren't guilty then we are very much in the wrong. God hates this! However, telling people that sin is sin is *not* speaking evil; instead it is actually commanded.

"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." (James 4)

In other words, don't boast about tomorrow! After all, you aren't God and you have no idea what's going to happen. Maybe things will work out as you expect, or maybe God will bring some unexpected event into your life that will change everything. The truth is you have no idea, and acting like you're in control of the future is very foolish. You have no idea what tomorrow is going to bring! For all you know the rapture is going to happen tomorrow afternoon and the whole world will be plunged into darkness.

Instead of boasting about things that haven't even happened yet, try boasting in the Lord instead. Instead of telling people how great you're going to be in the future, tell people how great God is right now.

Your life is a vapor; when you compare it to eternity it's like a tiny grain of sand on the beach. Why on earth are you boasting about yourself when you could be telling others about Jesus? We aren't here to draw attention to ourselves; instead we

ought to be pointing everyone to Christ! We think far too much of ourselves and too little of God.

There is nothing wrong with buying and selling and getting gain; the Bible never condemns it. But take heed where your heart lies and who you are trying to glorify with your words.

"15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. 16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil." (James 4)

Do you see how this small change redirects the glory to God? Now the focus of the conversation is different. Now it's clear that God is the one who's in control, and if we succeed it's because of the hand of the Lord. Now man is in his proper place – not in charge of history, but submitted to the will of God.

Is it evil to boast about yourself – either in the things you've already done, or the things you are going to do? That's what verse 16 says.

"17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4)

There may be times when we're in a situation and just don't know what to do. This verse is not talking about those cases. Instead it's addressing the times when it's very clear what we ought to do, and instead we do something else. We may not be committing an overt sin, but we have an opportunity to do good and we deliberately avoid doing it. This is what's called a "sin of omission" – we fail to do something we ought to have done.

The solution is *not* to be an idiot so we're blind to

opportunities to do what's good and right. No, the solution is to do good when the opportunity arises. That is where our heart should be, after all.

3/25/2011, 9/23/2018, 7/7/2019

James 5

"1 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 motheaten. 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. 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, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. 8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (James 5)

I had to quote the entire passage. There's something so striking and comforting here! Throughout history there have been wicked men who oppressed millions and caused wars in

order to grow wealthy and powerful. There have been dictators who ruthlessly oppressed their people in order to amass staggering wealth. The wicked have killed so many innocent people and stolen so much money, and instead of being punished they've continued to prosper. (Psalms 73:3-12)

But the day of judgment is coming! The Lord is well aware of what's going on. He sees what these wicked people are doing and He knows how they got their wealth. The cries of millions of oppressed people "are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth". Utter destruction is in the future of these wicked men and horrific misery awaits them. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." They have taken great pains to "heap treasure together for the last days", but it will be for naught. Their wealth is not going to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord! Instead it "shall eat your flesh as it were fire". Their very wealth will be a witness against them!

The Lord knows that they have "condemned and killed the just". He knows their sins and He sees their wicked hearts, and His judgment is going to come upon them. It may seem like they've won and have gotten the upper hand, but appearances are deceiving. God has promised that judgment is coming, and if they do not repent they will not escape.

There are two parts to this judgment. We know that all those whose sins are not covered by the blood of the Lamb will be judged after death. They will stand before their Maker and be forced to give an account of all the evil they've done (Revelation 20:12). But there is another part to it too. This world system itself is going to be judged. God is going to destroy the kingdoms of this world when He pours out His wrath during the seven-year tribulation. He will bring them to an end – and not a peaceable end, either. The Lord Jesus Christ will return and put an end to all of these things, and then the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord (Revelation 11:15). Jesus will rule over the nations with a rod of iron (Psalms 2:9, Revelation 2:27) and

will make sure that the old system and its oppressive ways never returns.

Verse 8 charges us with our task: "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." The Lord's coming is rapidly approaching; it is nearer now than when we first believed (Romans 13:11). We must patiently wait for Jesus to return and make all things right. We must establish our hearts and hold fast to the faith. Although there is evil all around us and the love of many has grown cold, we must overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). We cannot let our love grow cold! We must pursue God with single-minded purpose and great passion. We cannot allow ourselves to be drawn away by the lusts of the world or fall in love with the pleasures of this life (1 John 2:15-17). We must die to ourselves and seek God alone, and put our treasure in heavenly things (Matthew 6:20). Delight in God, for that is a worthy thing to do. Establish your heart and refuse to be drawn away from Him. Be patient, for the coming of the Lord draws near.

In this passage the Lord makes it clear that He knows exactly what's going on and He promises judgment upon all the wicked who are oppressing and murdering the just. He sees what is going on and He is going to put an end to it, but we must wait.

"9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door." (James 5)

Yes, the Judge of all the Earth really is standing at the door! He is there and may come in at any moment. If you don't want to get caught up in the wrath that He's going to pour out upon the wicked then don't join them in their sins!

Once He returns it will be far too late to change anything. Now is the time to act, for now is the only time you have.

"10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." (James 5)

The prophets often prophesied about things that didn't come to pass until they were long dead. (For example, the Messianic prophecies fall into this category.) In some cases their prophecies didn't happen until they had been dead for centuries! They were patient, and we must be also.

"11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5)

Why do we count them happy which endure? Because those who endure to the end will be saved (Matthew 10:22)! Those who remain faithful and don't cast away the gospel will be forgiven, and will not face the wrath of God, and will be resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:51), and will go on to live in the new Heaven and Earth (Revelation 21:1). That's a lot to be happy about! The Lord is merciful indeed – and we will see His mercy in action at the rapture when He returns for His church.

The Lord is not a hard master, and He is not cruel or uncaring. What we must learn to do is wait upon Him to act. Remember, many of the prophets had to wait until *long after their death* in order to see the prophecies come to pass. Waiting is really pretty routine for Christians.

"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." (James 5)

Jesus said the same thing (Matthew 5:33-37). Making enormous, flowery oaths does not honor God. Instead of swearing an oath, the Lord simply wants you to keep your word and do the things you said you would do. Let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, and leave it at that. Anything more than that is sin.

"13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms." (James 5)

If we are afflicted then the answer is to pray. Cast all your cares upon Jesus for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). If we are merry then we should sing praises to God. Either way – in affliction or joy – we are still to seek the Lord.

"14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: 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." (James 5)

This is a very interesting passage, because it says that if *anyone* in the church is sick they should call the elders, who will anoint that person and he *will* be healed. It doesn't say he might be healed; it says he *will* be healed, period! That is how you deal

with sickness: you call for the elders and they will do this procedure and heal you of whatever is wrong.

It should be pretty clear that this passage is no longer operational. You simply can't get guaranteed healing by calling for the elders and having them anoint you with oil. It just doesn't work! The reason this worked in apostolic times and not now is because in the early church there was an establishing gift known as the gift of healing. This gift only existed in the very earliest days of the church, and after a while it vanished. That's why Paul could raise the dead in Acts 20:9-12, but in 2 Timothy 4:20 he had to leave people behind who were sick. The miraculous establishing gifts (prophecy, healing, and tongues) were given to aid in the founding of the church, but once the canon of the New Testament was complete those gifts were removed. Things have changed.

"16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5)

One of the many problems I have with the modern church is that we've trained people to arrive at church at the last possible minute, sing a few songs, sit quietly while the pastor monologues for half an hour, and then go home. If there's any contact at all between church members it's for 30 seconds during a time set apart for shaking hands (which is probably the shallowest kind of interpersonal communication possible). We definitely do *not* go to church and talk about the challenges we're facing and the problems we're having, or seek help from others to fight our battles. That definitely does *not* happen – but if it did I think we would be much better for it! How can we help one another if we never talk about our lives?

Now, this passage is *not* talking about confessing your sins to a Catholic priest so that he can go to God and ask God to forgive you. That is a blasphemous practice, for Jesus alone is our priest and intermediary! Only God can forgive sins. If a man tells you to go to him to obtain forgiveness from God for your sins then you are dealing with the devil. Notice the very clear order in the passage: we talk to one another about our faults, then we pray for one another, and then *God* brings healing.

"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." (James 5)

Is James really saying that we can pray that it might not rain, and in response God can send a three-year drought? Yes, I think that's exactly what he's saying. You see, the reason Elijah was able to do that was *not* because Elijah was some sort of superhuman being who had supernatural powers. Elijah was just a normal man who prayed earnestly to the all-powerful God, and God made it happen out of His infinite power. We can pray to the same God that Elijah did, and God is *absolutely* capable of doing the same sort of miracles today that He did back then!

James is telling us to pray passionately no matter how enormous our request is, for God is able to do all things. It may be that God will grant it, or it may be that it's not the will of God. But we should pray all the same, for God does answer prayer. (That's the whole point of these two verses, after all!)

"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." (James 5)

There's a lot of ground to cover in these verses. If we see someone who's sinning then we ought to do something about it. We need to share the gospel with the lost, for without it they are going to Hell. However, we also need to rebuke fellow Christians if they're caught up in sin because sin has devastating consequences – up to and including death (Acts 5:1-10). We really *do* need to get involved and let him know that what he's doing is wrong, and not simply let the person continue to slide down to their destruction! Souls can be saved, but only by the truth of the gospel and only through faith and repentance.

Christians are not in danger of losing their salvation. However, they could face the chastening of the Lord, and sometimes that includes both sickness and death (1 Corinthians 11:30).

Appendix H: Treasure in Heaven

It's extremely important to give your life to Jesus. All too often we use that as a rather meaningless phrase, but the truth is that Jesus really *does* want you to give your life to Him. He wants you to give up who you are to become His servant, dedicated solely to doing His will, glorifying Him, and building His kingdom. God wants all of your heart, all of your passion, and all of your energy. He literally wants you to live for Him.

Now we are going to explore one of the facets of what it means to live for Him. Living for Christ means a complete change in the way that we think. It alters our priorities, our desires, our dreams, and our ambitions. It is a complete lifestyle change. It alters who we are and what we do. We can't possibly explore everything that it means in a single sermon, but we can take a look at one piece of it, and the piece that I would like to take a look at is our *stuff*.

In this life people spend a great deal of time getting as much stuff as they possibly can. This is a pretty universal trait for the entire human race. No matter how much stuff we have, people generally want even more. People who have thousands of dollars want millions of dollars; people who have millions want billions; people who have billions want billions more. People spend their entire lives trying to accumulate as much stuff as they possibly can.

Some people have responded to this in the past by saying that Christians should take a vow of poverty. They claim that since Jesus was poor then we ought to be poor as well. They condemn the accumulation of stuff and they condemn the wealthy. Wealth, they say, is bad. Christians just shouldn't live like that.

That all sounds very spiritual, but it's not Biblical. God gave Abraham an incredible amount of wealth – so much so that when Lot was carried away captive by an invading army,

Abraham trained 318 of his servants in order to defeat the army and rescue his nephew. You've got to be pretty well off if you have more than 300 servants! Likewise, God gave David an incredible amount of wealth – so much so that David donated *billions* of dollars worth of material in order to build the Temple. God also gave Solomon a *staggering* amount of wealth – not because Solomon asked for it, but just because God wanted to. God never chastised any of these people for being wealthy. *Having money is not a sin.*

Jesus had a lot to say about the subject of money, but He never condemned wealth. What He actually did say is quite startling. Jesus told us to **lay up our treasures in Heaven:**

Matthew 6:19-21: "19 Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:
20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

There's a lot in these verses and I'd like to take some time to delve into them. First of all, notice that Jesus doesn't prohibit the accumulation of treasure. Jesus has no problem with people storing up wealth. He could easily have said "Don't you dare lay up treasure; that is a sin, and it's bad." Instead He said something very different: He wants us to lay up our treasures in Heaven instead of Earth.

Now, this verse tends to get spiritualized quite a bit. People read this and assume that it's talking about spiritual blessings. They interpret these verses to mean something like this: "If I work for God then God will bless me spiritually." That may sound plausible, but it's *not* what the verse means.

Stop and think about it for a moment. Jesus said if we store our treasures on Earth then they are subject to decay and might be stolen; however, if we store them in Heaven then they cannot be stolen and they will last forever. These statements make a lot of sense if we are talking about physical treasure, but they make *no sense at all* if we are talking about spiritual blessings. It is absolutely *impossible* for moths to eat your spiritual blessings or for a thief to steal them. Just take a moment to think through the various spiritual blessings that God has given you. God has promised us eternal security in Christ; can a moth eat that? God has promised to always be with us and to never forsake us; can a burglar steal that promise while we're away on vacation? Of course not! The only things that moths can eat and thieves can steal are *physical goods*. Christ is saying exactly what He seems to be saying: we should relocate our physical goods to Heaven so that they can't be stolen. In other words, God wants us to use Heaven like an *offshore bank account*.

I realize this sounds crazy, but that's because we have a very unbiblical view of Heaven. When many people think of Heaven they picture a big white place with lots of clouds and harps, where people spend eternity strumming their harp and not really doing much else. That picture of Heaven is *not remotely Biblical*. The place that the Bible describes is completely different – and the Bible actually spends a great deal of time describing it. The Bible has far more to say about Heaven than we realize, and it's a real shame that we get most of our ideas about Heaven from Hollywood.

First of all, Heaven is not a vague place with clouds. The Bible tells us that ***Heaven is actually a city***:

Hebrews 11:16: "But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a

city."

What has God prepared for us? A *city*. Notice that it doesn't say "a cloud"! We are *not* going to spend eternity floating on a cloud somewhere; we're going to spend it living *in a city*. The last two chapters of the Bible spend a lot of time describing this Heavenly city, which the Bible names "the New Jerusalem". This incredibly large city has trees, and streets, and a stream, and walls, and food, and God Himself.

Now, all of us know a great deal about cities; after all, most people have spent their lives living in a city or near one. One of the things we know about cities is that they have places for people to live, and the New Jerusalem is no different. The Bible tells us exactly what we can expect as far as living accommodations go:

John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."

I realize that a lot of modern Bible translations have rendered this verse as "many rooms", and I think that's deplorable. I don't have time right now to delve into why that's the case, but I can say that Jesus is *not* talking about rooms here. Jesus is not saying "When you get to Heaven I've got a spare closet that you can spend eternity living in." That's ridiculous! The New Jerusalem is full of *homes*. It is an enormous city that covers more than *2 million square miles*. God is not hurting for space, and He does not have to stuff all of us in closets in order to make room for everybody. Do you seriously believe that your home on Earth, regardless of how nice it is, can even remotely compare to what God Himself has spent *two thousand years* preparing for you?

On top of that, I assure you that when you reach your

heavenly home you are not going to find a big building that is completely empty. You are not going to spend eternity wandering around an empty building, wishing you had a chair to sit on. Houses are furnished on Earth and they will be furnished in Heaven. They will have *things* inside them. There is nothing wrong with this; physical goods are not evil. If they were then Jesus would not be urging you to accumulate them in Heaven.

So, then, in Heaven you will have a place to live and your home will have stuff in it. What Jesus is saying in these verses is that you should take the stuff that you have here and relocate it to Heaven so that you will still have it when you reach Heaven. It's true that you cannot take it with you, but you *can* send it up ahead. That is the point of this passage.

Now, I'm not saying that there is some magical way you can mail your baseball card collection to Heaven so that you can have it in the ages to come. You cannot take your favorite shirt and mail it to the New Jerusalem so that you'll have it in the future. There is no way to actually move an item from this world into the next. However, there *are* ways that you can use your Earthly possessions in order to lay up real, actual treasures in your Heavenly home.

Now, there are some people who claim that there's no such thing as treasure in Heaven because in Heaven everyone is equal and everyone has exactly the same thing. They reject the idea that some people in Heaven might have more than other people, or that some people might have a higher status than others. This is a very common belief, but it's not Biblical. In fact, I Corinthians 3 says quite the opposite:

I Corinthians 3:11-15: "11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the

day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

This passage is clearly saying that every man's work will be tested, and anything that does not pass the test will be lost. A reward will be given to some people, and it will *not* be given to others. You see, ***God actually cares how we spend our lives***, and He will reward us accordingly. God is not going to say "Bob spent his life faithfully serving me, while Fred spent his entire life lying drunk on the floor; I'm going to give them both the same reward because I don't care what they did with their time." That's insane. As Paul explains, people who wasted their lives will still be saved, but they will suffer loss. They will attain eternal life but they will receive no reward. Those who faithfully served God, though, *will* be rewarded. The idea that "everyone will have the same thing" is just not Biblical.

So just how *do* you lay up treasure in Heaven? One key way is to **give to the poor**:

Matthew 19:21: "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."

Luke 12:31: "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves

bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Jesus is *very* clear about this: if you give to the poor then you *will* have treasure in Heaven. Jesus does not say "you might", but "you *will*". This is a guaranteed, ironclad way of transferring your wealth from this life into the next. If you give to the poor then God will give you "bags which wax not old", a treasure in the heavens that does not fail.

There are countless ways that we can give to the poor in the name of Christ. This church in particular is really great when it comes to giving to the poor; there are all sorts of opportunities all throughout the year. In fact, every time we have communion the offering goes straight to feeding the poor. The Navajo bucket ministry was another opportunity to give to the poor. If you don't want to wait until another opportunity comes up you could always give to Compassion International. They are a highly competent and respected Christian ministry that cares for poor people all over the world. They offer many ways to give – ranging from sponsoring a child to providing a family with clean water. If you want to give to the poor then there are a *lot* of poor people out there, and there are a lot of ways to do it. You really don't have to look very hard.

Now, I'd like to point out once again that Christ describes this Heavenly treasure as something that is *real and tangible*. He talks about bags that do not wear out and goods that are not eaten by moths. If Christ was talking spiritual blessings He could easily have said "Seek the kingdom of God and you will be drawn closer to God, which is your reward.", but that's *not* what He said. Instead He talked as if the treasure was some type of physical good that would ordinarily be subject to the wear and

tear of this life. (There is a reason for this, and I will get to it, but you'll have to wait until the end. Just be patient and bear with me.)

Another key way to amass Heavenly treasure is **to be persecuted for serving God:**

Matthew 5:11: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake."

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Luke 6:22: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake."

23 Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."

If you are persecuted and suffer for the sake of Christ then you will be rewarded. In fact, your reward in Heaven will be *great*. Keep in mind that *Jesus*, the creator of the Universe, is the one who is saying "Yes, your reward will be truly astonishing." *God* is the one who is saying that your reward will be so amazing and mind-blowing that you should be leaping for joy. You have hit the jackpot; you have it made.

As Americans we're really not very persecuted. Our life is nothing like those who live in nations like Iran, where being a Christian can send you to jail or get you killed. We simply don't face situations like that here. However, that is rapidly changing. The day will come when we will suffer greatly for being faithful to Christ and standing by His Word. When that day comes, Jesus commands us to *leap for joy* because of the great reward that we

will have in Heaven.

Now, a lot of Christians have this idea that rewards are somehow unspiritual or bad. Some people claim that wanting a reward is a sign of immaturity. I'd like to point out that the person who commands us to *want* these rewards and *get excited* over them is actually *Jesus Himself* – and He said this not once, but *twice*. He *wants* us to be excited about what He's going to give us.

This really shouldn't surprise us. After all, how would you feel if you gave a present to someone and found out that they weren't excited about it, didn't particularly want it, and were bored with the whole thing? Isn't it much better when you give a gift that you *know* is wanted and longed for, and will be enjoyed and appreciated? Do you really want to give someone a gift just to hear them say "No thanks; I'm not interested. I'm too spiritual to care about gifts. Just keep it."? Of course not – and God doesn't want that either. God is going to give us something, and He really does *not* want us to spend our lives saying "No thanks; I don't want it.". That attitude does not honor God.

We've talked about amassing Heavenly treasure by giving to the poor, and about amassing it by being persecuted for following Christ. There is another way to amass treasure, and that is to receive the servants of God as who they are, or by helping others in the name of God:

Matthew 10:40: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these

little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

This isn't as difficult as you might think. As the world becomes a darker place, the world will pressure us to distance ourselves from people who are the faithful servants of God. When the prophets were alive they were hated; people despised them, refused to hear what they had to say, and executed them. Those who stood by the prophets and supported them were doing something daring, and God promised to reward them. Likewise, when we stand by the faithful people of God and help them, instead of joining with the world to attack them, then God will reward us.

Also, as you can see, helping others in the name of God will result in a reward. Giving a cup of water in the name of Christ is not as hard as it seems. Compassion International actually has a program where they give water filters to families and villages that provides them with a clean and disease-free source of water – and they do so in the name of Christ, and use it as an opportunity to share the gospel. Their website allows you to sponsor a water filter for a family for \$50. That filter can provide a *lifetime* of clean water for a family that otherwise would not have it.

The reason I mention this isn't to single Compassion out, but to say that the world is full of people who need help, and there is no shortage of opportunities to help them. If we are willing to act then there is a lot that we can do.

Now that we've spent some time discussing *how* you amass rewards, I'd like to talk about an entirely different class of rewards. One of the things the Bible says is that it is possible to earn certain types of crowns. These crowns are not crowns of authority (although we will reign on the Earth) but crowns of

victory. The Bible refers to these as **incorruptible crowns**:

1 Corinthians 9:24: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

As you can see, you have to *earn* these crowns. Some people will get them and some people won't. Paul urges us to run the race faithfully and to discipline ourselves so that when we are judged we will not come away empty-handed. If you want an incorruptible crown then you are going to have to work for it. You see, God puts a difference between Christians who live faithfully for Christ and Christians who don't. Those who serve well will be rewarded, and those who couldn't be bothered will not. The way that we live our lives, and the choices that we make, really does matter.

One of the crowns that we can earn is the **crown of righteousness**:

2 Timothy 4:7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth is laid up for me a **crown of righteousness**, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

This crown is an easy one to earn: all you have to do is

long for the return of Christ. Those who are looking forward to the Rapture and who eagerly want Jesus to return will be given the crown of righteousness. That's all you have to do.

The sad truth is that if Christ were to return today there would be very few people who would receive this crown. There are many Christians in the world today who do not want Jesus to come back. They are actually terrified that Jesus might come back at any minute and interrupt all the stuff they have going on. They want Jesus to stay away until they've finished their plans and have accomplished everything they want to do. If God were to send us a message saying that He would return at noon tomorrow, a great many Christians would be beside themselves because that would interrupt their plans. The things of the world have so ensnared us that many people see the return of Christ as a serious problem.

This is a truly terrible attitude to have. Imagine a bride telling her groom "No, I really don't want to marry you just yet. I've got a life to live, and things to do, and dreams to accomplish, and you are just a hindrance to all of that. You just need to stay away until I'm done." No groom is going to be happy about hearing that – and Christ does not want to hear it from His Bride either. He wants us to long for His return, to eagerly hope for it, and to wish each day that perhaps today He would finally come for us.

Think of it this way: is your life, and your dreams, and your desires, really more important than the *Rapture*, the *raising of the dead*, and the translation of all saints into *incorruptible immortals*? I mean, *really*? You are more important than all of that? You want Christ to delay coming back and rescuing all the Christians all over the world who are being *persecuted, tortured, and executed* just so you can finish your plans? You are so important that you want all those people to keep on suffering just so you're not inconvenienced? If you seriously believe that then you have issues.

Those who long for the return of Christ will receive the crown of righteousness; those who do not will not receive it.

Another type of crown is the **crown of life**:

James 1:12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

As we can see, the crown of life is given to those who *endure temptation*. Christ wants us to love Him, and the way we show our love for Him is by keeping His commandments (John 14:15). This means that those who keep His commandments prove that they really do love Him. Those who endure temptation and defeat it, choosing to walk in the ways of God instead of the ways of the flesh, will be given the crown of life. In other words, the way that you live your life *really matters*. It is not ok to just keep living in sin. God does put a difference between those who fight and overcome sin, and those who can't be bothered.

Peter speaks of the third type of crown – the **crown of glory**:

1 Peter 5:1: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not

for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The only people who are eligible to receive this crown are pastors, evangelists, and elders. This crown is given to church leaders who faithfully and selflessly take care of the Church. Those who are good examples, who preach the whole Word, who take care of the flock, and who do so not for wealth and power but out of an earnest desire to help, will receive a crown of glory. On the other hand, those who are faithless, or who set a terrible example, or who preach heresy, or who abuse the flock for their own gain, will lose this crown. Once again we see that faithfulness is rewarded. God really does care about what you're doing.

Some people will receive these crowns, and other people will go away empty-handed. Jesus Himself said that we must be careful because these crowns *can* be lost:

Revelation 3:11: "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Now, our *salvation* cannot be lost and *eternal life* cannot be lost, so Christ is not talking about either of those. What *can* be lost are our crowns, because they are rewards for a life well-lived. This also puts crowns in a bit of a different category from other Heavenly treasure. If you give to the poor then God will reward you, and that reward cannot be lost no matter what. Crowns, though, are trickier to earn because they can only be earned by a lifetime of faithful service. They are harder to get, and few people will get them.

The idea of being rewarded for our service makes some

people uncomfortable, but *this is Christ's idea*, not our own. God is *not* doing something wrong by generously rewarding people. We also need to keep in mind what people in Heaven will do with these rewards. On Earth people earn rewards by faithfully serving God. In Heaven people will take their rewards and use them to bring glory and honor to God:

Revelation 4:9-11: "9 And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever,
10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,
11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

What are these people doing with their crowns? They are casting them before the throne of God and worshiping Him. The Lord had glorified them, and they have used their glory to worship the Father.

Which brings us back to where we started this morning. God wants us to use the possessions that He has given us to honor Him. When we do that – when we give to the poor, help others in the name of Christ, and suffer for His name – then God has promised to reward us. When we get to Heaven and receive the rewards that God chose to give us, we will take them and use them to glorify God – which is how we got them in the first place.

So, spend your life serving God. Lay up rewards in Heaven. Provide for yourself bags that do not wax old, and an incorruptible crown that does not fade away – so that when the day comes, you can honor the Lord and glorify Him with all the things He has given you.

When we glorify God, the Lord will reward us in Heaven. When we receive our reward in Heaven, we will use it to glorify God. You might say that the reason God rewards us is so we can use that reward to glorify Him. Of course, you have to have a reward in order to do that, don't you? After all, you can't cast your crown before the Throne if you don't have a crown in the first place.

Appendix 13: Demons

In this discussion we are going to take a close look at the subject of demons. This actually overlaps our previous discussion about angels because demons are actually fallen angels, and Satan was originally the highest created angel – and that is where we will begin our study.

Only One-Third Of Angels Fell

The Bible tells us that demons are *not* a separate class of creatures. Demons are actually fallen angels – angels that rebelled against God. We find the account of this in the book of Revelation:

Revelation 12:3: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

There is a great deal going on in this passage, and what makes things even more challenging is its heavy use of symbolic language. Thankfully, the Bible explains the terms that it uses. Later on in the chapter we are told that the dragon is actually Satan:

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was

cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Notice that the verse mentions "his angels". This makes it clear that the beings we refer to as demons are actually fallen angels. They are angels who have gone bad and allied with Satan. They are now the devil's angels, not God's angels.

Verse 4 tells us that when Satan rebelled he took one third of all angels with him. The phrase "stars of heaven" symbolizes angels. We saw this same usage earlier in Job 38:7. When the Bible speaks of stars in a symbolic way, it is referring to angels (either good ones or evil ones). Since one-third of the angels rebelled with Satan, that means that God has twice as many angels as Satan does (two-thirds vs one-third).

Angels have what theologians refer to as a "fixed will". The fallen angels (also known as demons) are evil and will always be evil. The holy angels are good and will always be good. When Satan launched his rebellion against God, each angel chose to either side with God or side with the devil. That choice, once made, was permanent.

It should be noted that fallen angels *cannot* be saved. Salvation only applies to mankind. The reason for this is because in order for salvation to be possible, an innocent party has to suffer on behalf of the guilty party. Mankind can be saved because Jesus Christ became *a man* and died in our place, suffering for our sins. Since He did not become an angel and die in *their* place, forgiveness is not possible for angels. Jesus died for mankind, not for the angels. We can be saved, but they cannot.

Satan Was Once The Highest Angel

The reason that demons exist is because of Satan's rebellion against God. The Bible tells us that Satan was once the highest classification of angel:

Ezekiel 28:12: "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.

13 Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created.

14 Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire."

Even though this passage seems to be talking about the King of Tyrus, it is actually referring to Satan, not to a human king. No human king in Ezekiel's day had ever set foot in Eden! This passage is talking about what Satan was like *before* he fell and became the devil. As you can see, God created him as a perfect being. He was full of wisdom and perfect in beauty, and he was arrayed in precious stones.

Verse 14 tells us that he was "the anointed cherub that covereth". As we mentioned in our last lesson, cherubs are one of the types of angels. All of the cherubs were stationed below the throne of God, except for the covering cherub. That angel

was stationed *above* God's throne and acted as a covering. This means that the covering cherub was the highest rank of cherub – which means that Satan was created to be the highest ranking angel.

At first Satan was perfect, but then he became proud and that led to his downfall:

Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.

17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."

His beauty led to pride, and he decided to exalt himself still further:

Isaiah 14:12: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

The devil (who was originally called Lucifer, which according to Strong's Concordance means "light-bearer") decided that he wanted to be God. The gifts, beauty, position, and wisdom that God had given him were not enough; he demanded more. His pride led to his rebellion, and one third of the angels joined him.

No one knows when this happened, but it was apparently pretty soon after the angels were created. There doesn't seem to be much time between the creation of man on day six and Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden. By the time that happened Satan had already fallen and become the deceiver.

Satan's Doom Is Assured

We have discussed that Satan rebelled against God and created an army of demons, so now let's take a look at how God is going to punish the devil. God did not stand idly by while Satan worked his work; the book of Isaiah tells us what God is planning on doing to him:

Isaiah 14:15: "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit."

The devil tried to exalt himself above God, but he will be brought down to Hell. This will happen after the Millennial Kingdom is over. When the thousand-year reign of Christ has ended, God will release Satan from his prison. The devil will then launch one final war against God, but he will be defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire:

Revelation 20:7: "And when the thousand years

are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

That is the ultimate fate of the devil – he will be cast into the Lake of Fire, where he will be tormented day and night, forever and ever. He will no longer be able to spread evil, or deceive the nations, or accuse believers. His reign of terror will be over forever.

This brings up an important point. Many people have this idea that Satan is the CEO of Hell and spends his time managing Hell and tormenting the people who are there. However, the Bible tells us that that is *not* the case. Satan actually spends his time roaming around the Earth:

Job 1:7: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

Notice that Satan did *not* say "Oh, I've been in Hell tormenting all the new arrivals." You see, Hell is not a fun playground for demons. The truth is actually the opposite: Hell was instead created *to torment them*:

Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:"

Hell was created as a place to torment the devil and his angels. The demons are very aware of their fate and they are terrified of it. When Jesus walked the Earth the demons had a question to ask him:

Matthew 8:28: "And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

The demons are *not* going to spend eternity tormenting all of the lost souls that they have managed to deceive. No, their future is quite different: they are going to spend eternity *being tormented* in the place of eternal fire that God has prepared for them. They are not going to be Hell's management, but Hell's *occupants*. They will be tormented along with everyone else.

One day Satan's power will be utterly broken. The book of Isaiah speaks of this time:

Isaiah 14:9: "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.

10 All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?

11 Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. . .

16 They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;

17 That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

18 All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.

19 But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet."

Notice what happens when Satan finally is cast down to Hell! He is not greeted as some sort of dignitary. Instead people look at him in amazement that his power is finally broken and he has become as weak as the rest of the tormented dead. He is not reigning over Hell; instead he is described as a carcass trodden under foot that is covered by worms. He is not reigning; he is suffering along with everyone else. The one who made the world tremble and who destroyed cities will one day become nothing more than another tormented soul in Hell.

The War In Heaven Has Not Happened Yet

The book of Revelation speaks of a time when there will be a great war in Heaven, and the devil and his angels will be cast out:

Revelation 12:7: "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.
10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.
11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Here we see that Michael and his angels fought against Satan and his angels. When Satan lost, he and his angels were cast out of Heaven forever. Now, when people read this they commonly assume that this event happened long before mankind was created, but that is *not* the case. This is a *future* event, not a past one. It has not yet taken place.

There are several reasons for this. First of all, this passage tells us that when this war happened the "accuser of our brethren is cast down". Satan had been accusing Christians to God day and night, but when he is evicted from Heaven he loses

the power to do that. However, if Satan was thrown out of Heaven before mankind was created then it would have been impossible for him to accuse anyone *because no one existed for him to accuse!* If you read the book of Job you will see that Satan actually *does* still have access to Heaven, and he uses that access to accuse the brethren – just like Revelation 12:10 says:

Job 1:6: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face."

Here you can see Satan going before God Himself and accusing Job. The devil accused believers back in Job's day, and he is still doing it today – but one day there will be a war in Heaven and his access will be revoked. He will be cast down to the Earth.

If you study Revelation 12 (which is well outside the scope of this lesson) you will see that this event happens

immediately after the rapture. As I have discussed elsewhere, before the Tribulation begins the Lord will come to Earth, Rapture the Church, and take them with Him to Heaven. This means that when the war in Heaven happens and Satan is cast out, *we will actually be in Heaven*. We will not participate in the battle (as verse 7 explains, it is a war among angels), but we will be there.

The Devil Is Our Adversary

There are many people today who do not believe in the devil. They think of him as some sort of ridiculous cartoon character. However, the Bible paints a very different picture. It teaches us that the devil is very real – and very dangerous. We are told in no uncertain terms that the devil is our adversary, and he will try to destroy us if he can:

I Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:
9 Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

The devil is not imaginary. He exists, he is real, he opposes us, and he searches the world for people that he can destroy. Peter urges us to be sober and to watch vigilantly, and to resist him by remaining steadfast in the faith. We really *do* have an enemy, and we should take him seriously. We are told to *resist* him, not ignore him. If we resist the devil he will flee from us:

James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God.
Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

We must fight him, because he is exceedingly dangerous. Jesus told us that when the gospel is preached, Satan and his minions are standing by so that they can snatch the word out of people's hearts:

Mark 4:4: "And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. . .

15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts."

The devil actively opposes the spread of the gospel. He wanted to destroy Peter:

Luke 22:31: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:"

He persuaded Ananias to lie:

Acts 5:3: "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?"

He is actively seeking to gain an advantage over us:

2 Corinthians 2:11: "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices."

He actively seeks to hinder us:

1 Thessalonians 2:18: "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us."

He provokes us to do evil:

1 Chronicles 21:1: "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."

There are even some illnesses that are his handiwork:

Luke 13:11: "And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these

eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?"

There are also trials and tribulations in our life that are a result of his work:

2 Corinthians 12:7: "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure."

In fact, there are times when Satan not only strikes people with disease, but even kills them outright:

Job 1:12: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

17 While he was yet speaking, there came also

another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

As we know, Satan later struck Job with a terrible disease:

Job 2:6: "And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

7 So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."

Not only does Satan tempt people to do evil, but he also has the power to strike people with diseases – and *he can even kill people*. The case of Job makes this very clear.

As if all of that were not enough, the devil and his minions can even perform miracles:

2 Thessalonians 2:9: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,"

Revelation 16:14: "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto

the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

Paul explains that our chief problem in life is not other people or wicked men, but the evil spirits of darkness. He warns us that we are not wrestling against flesh and blood (that is, against human enemies) but instead we are fighting demonic powers and darkness:

Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

Now we will take a look at how to fight the devil.

Fighting The Devil

The book of James tells us that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us:

James 4:7: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

How do we resist the devil? By doing the other activity

the verse talks about – we need to submit ourselves to God. When we submit ourselves to God and choose to do His will, we are taking a stand for what is right and against what is wrong. We are choosing to side with God and against the forces of darkness. Submitting ourselves to God is an active measure – it attacks that which is evil.

The book of Ephesians has a lot more to say about this. Paul tells us to take on the whole armor of God so that we can resist the devil and fend off his attacks (because he is going to attack us). This is a long passage, so I'm going to take a look at each piece.

First, we are told to put on the armor of God:

Ephesians 6:11: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

As we saw earlier, we *do* have an adversary. The devil is going to attack us, and when he attacks we will need to put up a fight. Putting in the armor of God will help us stand against him. Paul goes on to explain that the real problem in our life is our struggle against the forces of darkness:

Ephesians 6:12: "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

When the Bible says "spiritual wickedness in high places", it actually means spiritual wickedness in *heavenly* places. Think back to the book of Job. Do you remember how Satan went before God Himself and accused Job? That is the sort of "spiritual wickedness" that the verse is talking about. Our real enemy is the

devil and his minions. Our real problem are his attacks against us. We are not wrestling against flesh and blood, but against the rules of the darkness of this world. Our true enemy – whether we realize it or not – is demonic.

In order to fight them we must take the whole armor of God, so that we may stand against them:

Ephesians 6:13: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

It *is* possible to stand against them. It is possible to overcome their attacks and find victory. In order to get that victory, the first thing we need is the truth:

Ephesians 6:14: "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;"

The truth is a critical defense against evil. The Bible tells us that the devil is the father of lies (John 8:44). Satan often uses lies in his attacks – for example, look at the lies he told to Eve in order to tempt her to eat the forbidden fruit. When he tempted Jesus in the wilderness he used half-truths and deception. We need to possess the truth and understand it, so that we can spot his lies and reveal them for what they truly are. Knowing the truth is a solid defense against evil.

However, just knowing the truth is not enough. It is possible to know the truth and still do evil. That is why we also need the second thing the verse talks about – righteousness. We must not simply know the truth; we also have to live in the truth. It is not enough to just understand the truth; we must walk in it. If we seek righteousness, do what is right, and submit ourselves

to God, then that is a very powerful defense against evil. That is how Jesus Himself defeated Satan – He revealed Satan's lies for what they were, and He refused to fall into temptation but instead chose the path of righteousness. Walking in righteousness – and seeking righteousness – is a powerful defense against evil.

But that is not all that we need. There is still more:

Ephesians 6:15: "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;"

It may seem strange that the gospel is part of the equipment that we need, but remember that we are called to do more than simply withstand attacks – we must be on the offensive! We are not called to simply stand still and let evil attack us; we need to be on the move, preaching the gospel and spreading the message of Jesus Christ far and wide. The gospel should be literally moving us to action – in fact, it should be *the very reason why we are moving*. If we have left it behind then we have lost something critical. Jesus has called us to spread the gospel to every person, and that is exactly what we should be doing.

Another critical part of our armor is faith:

Ephesians 6:16: "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

When evil attacks it tries very hard to spread fear and doubt. Fear is one of the greatest tools of demons – they try very hard to terrify people and make them so full of fear that they are unable to do anything productive. Fear, however, does not come from God. God has not given us a spirit of fear! When we are afraid and are in doubt, we should take up the shield of faith in

use it. Faith is the antidote to fear. When we are in fear we *must* choose to trust the promises of God. When things look dire we *must* take God at His Word and believe. Fear can be conquered by faith. Doubt can be destroyed by faith. It is our shield, and it is well able to quench the devil's fiery darts. We will not get very far without faith.

There are a few other things that we need:

Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"

Salvation is *vital* when fighting the devil. If you are not saved then you have already lost. No one can successfully fight the devil without the Holy Spirit. If you have rejected God and are out on your own then you are guaranteed to lose. Your only hope is to become a Christian. All Christians in this age are sealed with the Holy Spirit – and it is impossible to be possessed by the Holy Spirit and by an unholy spirit at the same time. Not only are Christians immune to demon possession, but since they have the Spirit of God in them they have the power they need to resist the devil and actually defeat him. Salvation is *essential!* It is the only way to achieve victory.

We also need the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Note that while shields are defensive, swords are offensive weapons. The Bible tells us that this sword is a very powerful and potent weapon:

Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

When the Bible is preached – when we tell others what it has to say – it has an enormously powerful impact. It changes hearts and minds. It turns sinners into saints. It convicts and chastises. It is *powerful*, and it should not be abandoned. We should stand by the Bible and use it at every opportunity. There is a great power in the Word – a power that is often neglected in our time. The devil very much wants to move us away from it, and there is great pressure on the Church to neglect the Bible and talk about something else. This is a tremendous mistake. The devil is not threatened by other things; he is threatened by God's words. It is the Bible that is a threat to him, and it is the Bible that we should be using.

Finally, we must also remember to pray – not just for ourselves, but for all the saints:

Hebrews 4:18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

There is great power in prayer. We should cast all our cares upon God, for He cares for us. We should ask, so that we might receive. We should pray for one another so that we might be healed. Prayer is not futile; it is vital. When a Christian prays he is making a request to an all-powerful God – a God who not only loves him, but who sent His Son to die on his behalf. The book of James tells us that the prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Armed with the armor of God, we will have what it takes to stand in the evil day and to resist the wiles of the devil. He will attack us, but God has given us what we need to withstand him. We have the ability to overcome him – but the lost do not. They are utterly helpless, and that is what we will look at next.

Demon Possession

As was said earlier, it is impossible for any Christian to be possessed by a demon. This is because, in this age, all believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit:

Ephesians 1:13: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

This is so important that Paul said that if you do not have the Holy Spirit then you are not a Christian at all:

Romans 8:9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Having the Holy Spirit within us does *not* make us immune to the devil's attacks, but it *does* make us immune to demon possession. Satan may still attack us, tempt us, and perhaps even make us sick (as he did to the apostle Paul) and kill us (as he did to Job's children), but he *cannot* possess us. It is utterly impossible for the devil to force us to do his bidding. He can tempt us to sin, but he cannot *force* us to sin. That is a very

big deal. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, we *can* resist the devil and we can overcome him. We do not have to give in to temptation and we do not have to do evil. We have the power to win.

The lost, however, are in a very different situation. Since they are not filled with the Holy Spirit, there is nothing in their lives that is keeping demonic influences out. They actually *can* be possessed by demons, and that is a very serious matter.

Demon possession is a rare thing, especially in this country. Possession is not the same thing as being tempted to do something that is wrong. In cases of possession, demons (which, remember, are actually spirits, so they are not physical beings) take up residence inside a person and force them to do their bidding. They act like parasites – powerful, evil parasites. The effects of this are catastrophic.

We can find a number of cases of this in the New Testament. For example:

Mark 5:2: "And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:
4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.
5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones."

This passage gives quite a ghastly description of demon possession. First, we see that this man had incredible, supernatural strength. People had tried to bind him with chains, and the man utterly tore them apart. There was simply no way to

bind or imprison this person. Supernatural strength is not unusual in cases of demon possession; we see it in other cases as well. For example:

Acts 19:14: "And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

This demon-possessed man was able to overcome *seven other people* and abuse them to such an extent that they fled from him naked and wounded. Seven people should have been able to restrain one man, but not this time. Likewise, in the case that Mark related, chains should have been able to imprison him, but they were useless because he had supernatural, demonic strength.

This man was also wild and out-of-control. He dwelt among the tombs and spent night and day howling. He was out of his mind and utterly out of control. He could not dwell among civilized people; he was wilder than any animal and was extremely dangerous. Not only was he dangerous to others, but he was also dangerous to himself – the Bible says that he cut himself with stones. He was possessed with an evil spirit of destruction.

Also notice that in these cases, when the person spoke the people were actually talking with the demon. In Acts 19:15 we see that it was the *evil spirit* who answered him.

Now, in some cases demon possession results in a *loss* of senses:

Matthew 9:32: "As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel."

Since the man was possessed he could not talk. That does not always happen, but it did happen in this case.

Adults are not the only people who can be possessed. Children can be possessed as well:

Mark 9:17: "And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child."

Here we find out that this particular person had been possessed *since he was a child*. Children are *not* immune to this. You can see that this child exhibited many of the same symptoms of the case we looked at earlier – the same violent, out-of-

control, self-destructive behavior.

It turns out that even animals can become possessed:

Matthew 8:31: "So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters."

Demons prefer to possess people, but when that is not an option they are willing to possess animals as well.

To the best of my knowledge, there are no cases of demon possession mentioned in the Old Testament. All of the cases that we read about are in the New Testament. This may seem strange, but it makes sense if you think about it. Demonic activity was at its height when Jesus walked the Earth. During that time Satan concentrated all of his efforts on the places where Jesus was located. The reason why he would do this is obvious – he wanted to hinder Jesus from carrying out His ministry. It's really not at all surprising that Jesus would constantly be coming across people who were possessed.

Jesus explained this when He said that He was binding the strong man so that He could loot his house:

Matthew 12:29: "Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house."

Jesus went through the countryside, casting out demons and driving the darkness away – and then He sent out His

disciples, who preached the gospel. Since Jesus had first bound the strong man, His followers were able to spoil the devil's house. Since Satan had already been pushed back, the disciples were able to be much more effective and met with much less resistance. Yes, they were still persecuted, and yes, they still had problems, but things were not as bad as they could have been.

However, demon possession has not gone away. It still exists. The difference is that it is rare – just like it was in the Old Testament. Satan is no longer concentrating all of his efforts on one tiny piece of real-estate, the way he did back in the time of Christ; now he has an entire world to trouble.

Demon possession is much more common in countries that either have a heavy occult presence or that worship demons. They are very rare in Christian nations or in areas with a strong Christian presence. Think of it this way: Christians are the light of the world, and demons cannot stand the light – they vastly prefer the darkness. In places that are saturated with the light, there is very little room for darkness to exert its influence and power. However, places that are filled in utter darkness are very inviting. Those are the sort of places where you would expect to find possession – and that is why possession is rare in all but the very darkest of places.

Now, it is possible to *invite* demons into your life. There are real Satanists who actually do delve into the occult, and who worship demons and invite them into their lives. These people actually *try* to become possessed. I am not going to go into the details of this because there are some things that should not be discussed. You are *much* better off not knowing how to worship or summon demons. The Bible says that we should be wise concerning righteousness and ignorant concerning the deep things of evil. It is a very bad idea to know the deep things of Satan.

So, unless you spend a great deal of time in parts of the world that are filled with devil-worship, you will probably not

come across anyone who is actually possessed. Remember, mental illness and demon possession are two very different things. It is possible to be mentally ill without being possessed. When it comes to possession, it is really best to let a seasoned professional study the case and make a determination. How that determination is made is a question that is well outside the scope of this paper.

Exorcism

Let me say right up front that it is probably a bad idea for you to try to perform an exorcism. If this is the first time you have ever studied this subject then I can say with confidence that you have no idea what you are doing. The reason I bring this subject up is *not* so that you can go out there and start trying it on your own; it is so that you will have an understanding of the Biblical principles that are involved. I want you to know enough about this subject so that the next time you see an exorcism performed on television, you will be able to point at it and laugh at how ridiculous it is. I want you to understand the truth.

However, exorcisms are a serious business. It takes a professional to diagnose true possession (and tell it apart from mental illness), and actually casting the demon out is not something to be taken lightly. All demons are not the same, and all cases of possession are not the same either. Some demons can be cast out immediately while others require fasting and prayer. If you are not experienced in this sort of thing and if you do not have a really good grasp of the finer details then you should avoid this as much as you possibly can. Do not perform exorcisms yourself; instead have someone do it who is trained and who knows what they are doing.

Exorcisms are not a joke. In true cases of possession you

are dealing with a person who has supernatural strength, demonic fury, and who is absolutely out-of-control. When the seven sons of Sceva attempted an exorcism in Acts 19:14 they were very nearly beaten to death by a single possessed man. Trying and failing this can injure or even kill you. It can be done – and Christians have the power to do it – but it is *not* a game and it should *not* be treated lightly.

To understand how exorcisms work, let's take a look at how Jesus cast out demons. During His ministry Christ actually used a couple different methods. The common method in His day for casting out demons was to ask the demon its name and then use that name to cast it out. For example:

Mark 5:6: "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,
7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.
8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.
9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many."

The reason Jesus asked its name was so He could use its name to cast it out by saying something along the lines of "Legion, come out of the man". In order to do that, though, you had to find out the demon's name. That meant it was impossible for anyone to cast a demon out of a man who couldn't talk – and that was why people were shocked when Jesus did exactly that:

Matthew 9:32: "As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel."

When Jesus cast a demon out of a man who could not talk, He amazed Israel. What He had just done was impossible without the power of God; Jesus had just done something that had never been done before. According to their traditions, the only person who had that kind of power was the Messiah. By doing this Jesus was demonstrating that He really was the Messiah, the Son of God. This miracle was every bit as astonishing to ancient Israel as raising Lazarus from the dead. It was proof that Jesus was exactly who He said He was.

As you can see, the way Jesus cast out demons was simply by ordering them out. Jesus would say "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit", and the demon would come out. It was not any more complicated than that. Unlike what you see on television, there was no fancy ritual that had to be performed. You did not need a crucifix or holy water or a special incantation. Jesus simply told them to come out, and they came out. There was no special magic words involved. What made it possible was the power that Jesus had. Since *He* told them to come out, the demons had to obey. They had no choice.

Jesus gave His followers the power to cast out demons:

Matthew 10:7: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."

The disciples cast out demons the same way that Jesus did – they just commanded the demon to come out, and it did:

Acts 16:16: "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

The reason that Paul was able to cast our demons was because he did it in the name of Jesus Christ. Now, let me be clear about something. The reason it worked was *not* because he uttered the words "Jesus Christ" in his exorcism. As we saw earlier with the seven sons of Sceva, the phrase "Jesus Christ" is not a magical incantation. The reason it worked was because Paul did it as a Christian, *on behalf* of Jesus Christ. It is like when the American ambassador to France does something in the name of (or on behalf of) the United States. Since he is the American ambassador, he has the power to do things in the name of our country. Since we are Christians, we have the power to do things in the name of (or on behalf of) Jesus Christ. *That* is what "in the name of Jesus" means. It means we are taking that action on Christ's behalf. It is as if Christ was there doing it Himself – and since demons cannot resist Christ, they could not resist Paul either.

The reason the seven sons of Sceva failed is because they were not Christians. Since they were not Christians, they could not do things on behalf of Christ. They just invoked the name of Jesus like some magical good-luck charm – and that mistake very nearly killed them.

Does that mean that all we have to do is walk up to someone who is possessed and order the demon to depart? Sometimes that works, but sometimes it is more complicated than that. Jesus told us that there are certain demons that can only be removed by fasting and prayer:

Mark 9:28: "And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."

There are times when it is possible to battle a demonic presence by casting it out in the name of Christ, and that alone is enough to defeat it. There are other times when it cannot be done without fasting and prayer. It simply depends on the type of possession. Of course, before any of this will work at all you must make sure that you really *are* dealing with demons, and not with something else entirely. You will never be able to cast a demon out of a man who is just confused or mentally ill, and that is where wisdom comes into play.

One critical thing to remember when dealing with this is that casting a demon out of someone can have very serious consequences if the person does not become a Christian afterward. In fact, it can actually make their lives much worse. Jesus explained why:

Matthew 12:43: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and

they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

As you can see, demons are different, and some demons are more wicked than others. All of them are bad, but some are much *more* wicked than others. When a demon is cast out, the person's body is emptied of the evil spirit that used to be in it. If that person becomes a Christian then the house (or "body") becomes filled with the Holy Spirit, and that defends the house against invaders. However, if the person does *not* become a Christian then the house stays empty – and an empty house is defenseless against evil spirits. In that case, the spirit that was cast out goes and finds other spirits that are even more evil than itself, and they *all* take up residence inside the person. In the final end, the person becomes much worse off than they were originally. The problem is not that the exorcism failed; it is that the person did not take advantage of the cure to fill himself with the Spirit. If you have the Holy Spirit then you can defeat the devil, but if you lack the Holy Spirit then you are defenseless against him.

Resource 1: Chapter Summary

James

James 1

- JAMES, TO THE TWELVE TRIBES SCATTERED ABROAD
- THE TRYING OF YOUR FAITH WORKS PATIENCE
- IF ANYONE LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK GOD
- LET THE POOR REJOICE WHEN HE IS EXALTED, BUT LET THE RICH REJOICE WHEN HE IS HUMBLED
- BLESSED IS THE MAN WHO ENDURES TEMPTATION, FOR HE WILL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE
- GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED, NEITHER DOES HE TEMPT ANY MAN; EVERY MAN IS TEMPTED BY HIS OWN LUSTS
- EVERY GOOD AND PERFECT GIFT IS FROM ABOVE
- LET EVERYONE BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK, SLOW TO WRATH
- BE DOERS OF THE WORD AND NOT HEARERS ONLY
- IF ANYONE SEEMS RELIGIOUS BUT DOES NOT BRIDLE HIS TONGUE, HE DECEIVES HIS OWN HEART; HIS RELIGION IS VAIN
- PURE RELIGION IS TO VISIT THE FATHERLESS AND WIDOWS AND TO KEEP HIMSELF UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD

James 2

- DO NOT HAVE RESPECT OF PERSONS
- IF FAITH DOES NOT HAVE WORKS, IT IS DEAD, BEING ALONE; DEMONSTRATE YOUR FAITH BY YOUR WORKS
- YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ONE GOD; THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE AND TREMBLE

James 3

- BE NOT MANY MASTERS
- THE TONGUE IS AN UNRULY EVIL, FULL OF DEADLY POISON
- LET THE WISE SHOW HIS WORKS WITH MEEKNESS – BUT IF YOU HAVE ENVYING AND STRIFE THEN YOUR WISDOM IS DEVILISH
- WISDOM FROM ABOVE IS PURE, PEACEABLE, GENTLE, EASILY ENTREATED, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS

James 4

- THE FIGHTS AMONG YOU ORIGINATE FROM YOUR LUSTS
- YOU HAVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK NOT; YOU ASK AND RECEIVE NOT BECAUSE YOU ASK AMISS
- FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD
- GOD RESISTS THE PROUD BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE
- RESIST THE DEVIL AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU; DRAW NEAR TO GOD AND HE WILL DRAW NEAR TO YOU
- HUMBLE YOURSELVES IN GOD'S SIGHT AND HE WILL LIFT YOU UP
- DO NOT SPEAK EVIL OF ONE ANOTHER
- DO NOT SAY "TOMORROW WE WILL DO THIS AND THAT"; INSTEAD SAY "IF THE LORD WILLS, WE WILL LIVE AND DO THIS OR THAT"
- TO HIM THAT KNOWS TO DO GOOD AND DOES IT NOT, TO HIM IT IS SIN

James 5

- YOU RICH MEN, WEEP FOR THE MISERIES THAT ARE COMING
- YOUR RICHES ARE CORRUPTED; THEIR RUST WILL BE A

WITNESS AGAINST YOU AND EAT YOUR FLESH AS IF IT WERE FIRE

- THE CRIES OF THE WORKERS YOU DEFRAUDED HAVE ENTERED INTO GOD'S EARS; YOU HAVE CONDEMNED AND KILLED THE JUST
- PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE LORD'S COMING; ESTABLISH YOUR HEARTS, FOR HIS RETURN DRAWS NEAR
- DO NOT GRUDGE ONE ANOTHER, LEST YOU BE CONDEMNED
- TAKE THE PROPHETS AS AN EXAMPLE OF SUFFERING AFFLICTION
- SWEAR NOT; LET YOUR YES BE YES AND YOUR NO BE NO
- ARE ANY AFFLICTED? LET HIM PRAY. ARE ANY MERRY? LET HIM SING PSALMS. ARE ANY SICK? LET HIM CALL FOR THE CHURCH ELDERS
- CONFESS YOUR FAULTS TO ONE ANOTHER AND PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER SO THAT YOU MAY BE HEALED
- THE FERVENT PRAYER OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN AVAILS MUCH
- HE WHICH CONVERTS A SINNER FROM THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS SHALL SAVE A SOUL FROM DEATH AND HIDE A MULTITUDE OF SINS

Resource 3: The Teachings Of The Bible

James 1

- This letter was written by James (v1)
- James identifies himself as a servant of God (v1)
- James identifies himself as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ (v1)
- James wrote this letter to the Jews who had been scattered throughout the world (the "twelve tribes which are scattered abroad") (v1)
- James sent his greetings to the Jews (v1)
- At the time this letter was written there were Jews scattered throughout the world (v1)
- Jesus is Lord (v1)
- Jesus is the Messiah (the Christ) (v1)
- James refers to fellow Christians as "brethren" (v2)
- James calls his fellow Christians "brethren", not "brothers and sisters"; that is not seen as sexist or inappropriate (v2)
- Christians should look at trials and suffering as a source of joy (v2)
- Christians should rejoice when they encounter periods of their lives that are full of suffering (v2)

- Christians should expect to encounter times of suffering; this should not be unexpected or surprising (v2)
- If suffering should be a cause of rejoicing among Christians, then there is a positive aspect to it that Christians should value (v2)
- James depicts suffering as something that Christians "fall into" (like some sort of unexpected trap or hole) (v2)
- The reason that Christians should rejoice at times of suffering is because times of suffering test our faith, and the testing of our faith is what produces patience (v3)
- It is extremely important for Christians to develop patience (v3)
- Patience is an important virtue that Christians should have (v3)
- The way to develop patience is through times of trial and suffering (v3)
- The way to develop patience is through times when our faith is being tested, which happens during times of suffering (v3)
- Times of suffering test our faith (v3)
- The testing of our faith produces patience (v3)
- There are times when our faith will be tested (v3)
- It is good for our faith to be tested through suffering, because the fruit of that suffering is patience (v3)
- Christians should endure suffering in order to develop patience (v4)
- Patience is important; Christians need patience in order

to be perfect (v4)

- A Christian who lacks patience is lacking something important, and is not perfect (v4)
- If we want to be perfect, and have everything that we need to faithfully serve God, then we need patience; the way to develop patience is through suffering (v4)
- James said that the work of developing patience is a "perfect work"; it is a work that helps us toward perfection, and is a work that we should rejoice over (v4)
- James sees value in suffering, because of the fruit that it produces in a person's life (v4)
- There are some people who lack wisdom (v5)
- Christians should seek after wisdom (v5)
- It is good to seek after wisdom (v5)
- If anyone lacks wisdom, he should ask God to give him wisdom; if he asks God for wisdom then God will give him wisdom (v5)
- Wisdom comes from God (v5)
- God has the ability to give us wisdom (v5)
- God is willing to give us wisdom (v5)
- God will give us wisdom, if we ask Him for wisdom (v5)
- God is willing to give an abundance of wisdom to those who ask for it (v5)
- God is willing to give wisdom to everyone who asks for it (v5)
- God does not condemn those who ask Him for wisdom

(v5)

- God will surely give wisdom to those who go to Him and ask for it (v5)
- The way to get wisdom is to go to God and ask for wisdom (v5)
- Those who ask God for wisdom must have faith that He will grant that prayer, and must not waver in that faith (v6)
- Those who pray without faith (who "waver") are like items in the sea that are tossed around by currents in the wind; they are unstable and are unable to stay firmly rooted in one place, and cannot go in the direction they would like (v6)
- It is bad for a Christian to be tossed around; Christians should stay firmly rooted in the faith, and not tossed from one doctrine and belief to another (v6)
- Those who pray but lack faith will not receive anything from the Lord (v7)
- Those who waver in their prayers will not receive anything from the Lord (v7)
- If you want to receive something from the Lord then you must ask in faith and you must not waver; those who ask in faith and remain firm will be given wisdom (v7)
- It is foolish to pray without faith and expect God to hear and answer that prayer (v7)
- God has the power to grant our prayers (v7)
- Prayer is important (v7)

- There are some prayers that God hears and answers (v7)
- People who are double minded are unstable; they are like an item in the sea that is tossed about by the wind and waves (v8)
- Christians should not be double minded; we should be firmly rooted in the truth (v8)
- It is bad to be double minded (v8)
- It is bad to be unstable (v8)
- People who are double minded are unstable in everything that they do (v8)
- It is important to be single minded (v8)
- It is important to be stable (v8)
- Being double minded and full of doubt is not a virtue or a sign of maturity; instead it is a sign of instability (v8)
- There are some Christians who are "of low degree" (poor) (v9)
- Those who are poor should rejoice when they are exalted (v9)
- It is good to rejoice when you are exalted (v9)
- There are times when Christians who are poor are exalted (v9)
- There are some Christians who are rich (v10)
- Those who are rich should rejoice when they are humbled (v10)
- The riches of the wealthy will one day pass away (v10)

- James compared the wealthy to a flower that blooms for a time and is then gone (v10)
- The wealth of the rich is not as secure as people believe; it is something that exists only for a time and is then gone (v10)
- If wealth is temporary and quickly lost then it is foolish to trust in it, or look to it for safety; this is because it is a passing thing, like a flower (v10)
- James did not want the rich to set their heart on their riches; instead he wanted them to understand that their wealth was not going to last (v10)
- James saw value in the rich being humbled (v10)
- When the sun rises with burning heat, it withers both grass and flowers; the burning heat of the sun causes the glory of flowers to be lost (v11)
- Just as the glory of flowers is destroyed by the burning heat of the sun, so the rich man will also fade away; (this may be talking about persecution, or may be talking about some sort of end times judgment) (v11)
- The wealth of the rich is just as fleeting as the glory of flowers; once the heat of the sun comes, the glory will be gone (v11)
- The ways of the wealthy will not endure; they will not be able to stand the coming heat (v11)
- Wealth is temporary (just like the glory of flowers) (v11)
- Blessed is the man that endures temptation; those who endure trials and keep the faith will be greatly blessed (v12)

- There is a great blessing promised to those who endure trials and do not fall away (v12)
- Those who endure temptation and keep the faith will be given the crown of life (v12)
- God has promised to give the crown of life to all those who love Him (v12)
- The reward for those who love Him is the crown of life (v12)
- The way that we demonstrate our love for Jesus is by enduring trials; those who endure the trials and keep the faith are the ones who genuinely love Him (v12)
- It is very important to endure temptation (trials) (v12)
- God does promise a reward for those who endure temptation (trials) (v12)
- The crown of life will only be given to those who endure temptation (trials) (v12)
- God cannot be tempted with evil; evil is not tempting to God in any way (v13)
- God does not tempt anyone; He is not the one who tempts us (v13)
- We must never say that God is tempting us (v13)
- There are times when we will be tempted; however, God is not the one who will tempt us (v13)
- Everyone is tempted by their own lusts (desires) (v14)
- Temptations come from the things that we desire; we are enticed to sin by the desires that we have (v14)

- Temptation comes from desire (v14)
- The source of temptation is within ourselves; our own desires are the root of temptations (v14)
- The reason it is possible to tempt us is because of the things that we desire (v14)
- The fruit of lust is sin (v15)
- The fruit of sin is death (v15)
- Sin always leads to death in the end (v15)
- The Bible does not teach that all desire is sinful; however, desires that lead to sin are evil (v15)
- Christians should be very careful about the things that they desire, because sinful desires lead to sin, and sin leads to death (v15)
- Christians must not sin, for sin leads to death (v15)
- James affectionately referred to other Christians as "beloved" (v16)
- James calls other Christians "brethren"; this is something that is done consistently throughout the New Testament (v16)
- Christians are beloved (v16)
- Christians are brethren (v16)
- Christians must not commit error (v16)
- Christians do not have a license to sin; we must flee from error and do what is right (v16)
- James did not say that Christians should focus on gospel matters and leave the rest alone; instead he said we must

be free from error; James did not allow any level of error (in any matter) that was acceptable (v16)

- Every good gift comes from God (v17)
- Every perfect gift comes from God (v17)
- God is the one who gives us the good things that we have in this life; all of them come from God (v17)
- The good things that we have in this life are all gifts from God (v17)
- God has the ability to give us good things (v17)
- There are some things in this life that are good (v17)
- There are some things in this life that are perfect (v17)
- Things that are good and perfect come from above (from God in Heaven) (v17)
- God is the Father of lights (v17)
- There is no variableness in God; He never changes (v17)
- God does not grow over time, nor does He change; instead He remains exactly who He is (v17)
- God is the one who gave us the word of truth (v18)
- The reason God gave us the word of truth is because He decided to do so; it was His will to give it to us (v18)
- The reason we have the word of truth is because of God, not because of us (v18)
- The word of God is the truth (v18)
- The word of truth comes from God (v18)
- The only way we could ever get the word of truth is if God

gave it to us (v18)

- Christians are the firstfruits of His creatures (v18)
- The reason God gave us the word of truth is so that we could be the firstfruits of His creatures (v18)
- Christians must be swift to hear (v19)
- Christians must be slow to speak (v19)
- Christians must be slow to wrath (v19)
- It is good to listen to others (v19)
- Christians should prioritize listening over speaking (v19)
- The Bible does not say we should be swift to speak; instead it says we must be swift to hear, and slow to speak (v19)
- It is good to be slow to speak (v19)
- It is good to be slow to wrath; James does not say that wrath is evil, but instead that Christians must be careful with their wrath (v19)
- The wrath of man does not result in the righteousness of God (v20)
- The wrath of man is at odds with the righteousness of God (v20)
- Christians should pursue the righteousness of God, not the wrath of man (v20)
- Christians should pursue righteousness (v20)
- Righteousness comes from God, not from the wrath of man (v20)

- Christians must lay aside all filthiness (v21)
- Every type of moral filthiness is bad, and is something that Christians must distance themselves from (v21)
- Christians must not engage in any type of filthiness (v21)
- Christians must not engage in naughtiness; we must pursue righteousness, not wickedness (v21)
- There is no filthiness that Christians are allowed to pursue; we must seek to be completely pure in all areas (v21)
- James does not teach that we should make sure we get the main things right, and the rest doesn't matter; instead he says we must lay apart all filthiness of all types in our lives (v21)
- Christians must seek to be holy; we must never be morally filthy (v21)
- Christians must meekly receive the word of God (v21)
- Christians must be meek before God; we must humble ourselves before His Word (v21)
- The word of God is able to save our souls (v21)
- People have souls (v21)
- Our souls need to be saved (v21)
- If we want to be saved then we must meekly accept the word of God (v21)
- In order to be saved we need to meekly accept the word of God, and lay aside everything that is filthy and sinful and evil (v21)

- The word of God is opposed to everything that is filthy and evil (v21)
- Christians must be doers of the Word (v22)
- The Word of God commands Christians to do things (v22)
- It is not enough to simply hear the word of God; we must also do what it says (v22)
- Those who simply hear the word of God but do not obey it are deceiving themselves; they are not actually saved at all (v22)
- There are some people who deceive themselves; they believe they are saved, but in reality they are not (v22)
- The way you can tell the difference between a genuine Christian and a false one is by obedience: those who do not obey the Word of God are not saved (v22)
- Christians must know what the Word of God says, and we must do what it says (v22)
- Genuine Christians are those who do what the Word of God says; (this does not mean we are saved by our works, but instead that genuine salvation always produces obedience to God; the reason the lost do not obey is because they lack salvation) (v22)
- People who hear the Word of God but do not obey it are like people who look at themselves in a mirror; they see their true appearance but they walk away without doing anything about it (v23)
- James compares the Word of God to a mirror that shows us who we truly are (v23)
- When we see what the Bible has to say about us, we

should take action; we should not just ignore it and go on (v23)

- It is a waste of time to look at yourself in a mirror and then do nothing to fix your appearance; likewise, it is foolish to discover the truth in the Word of God and then do nothing to obey it (v24)
- The Word of God should motivate us to action; we should respond to it with meekness and obedience (v24)
- The Word of God shows us who we really are; it tells us what manner of person we are (v24)
- The Scriptures contain the perfect law of liberty (v25)
- The law that is contained in the Scriptures is perfect, and is the law of liberty; it does not need any additions, corrections, or modifications (v25)
- The Scriptures give us liberty; freedom from sin is liberty, for slavery to sin is the path of death (v25)
- People must not just read the Scriptures; we must walk in their ways (v25)
- Christians are those who continue to live by what the Scriptures have to say (v25)
- We must not be forgetful hearers; we must remember what the Scriptures have to say (v25)
- We must be more than just hearers; we must be doers of the Scriptures as well (v25)
- It is good to hear the Word of God; it is even better to obey it (v25)
- Those who hear the Scriptures and obey them, and

continue to walk in its ways, will be blessed (v25)

- There are some people who seem to be religious, but who are not actually saved (v26)
- It is possible for a person's religion to be in vain (v26)
- Those who do not control their tongue are not saved; their religion is vain (v26)
- Christians must learn to control their tongue (v26)
- Our words are very important, and we must be careful with them (v26)
- Those who deceive their heart and do not walk in God's ways are not saved; their religion is vain (v26)
- The Bible does not teach universalism; not everyone is saved (v26)
- Christians should seek after pure religion (v27)
- Christians should seek undefiled religion (v27)
- Pure and undefiled religion (true religion) is to visit the fatherless in their affliction, and help them (v27)
- Pure and undefiled religion (true religion) is to visit the widows in their affliction, and help them (v27)
- Genuine religion involves helping the fatherless and the widows (those who need help); it is helping the afflicted (v27)
- Christians must seek to be unspotted from the world (v27)
- Christians must be without spot (v27)
- Pure and undefiled religion (true religion) is to keep

unspotted from the world (v27)

- The Biblical standard is not "major on the majors and minor on the minors"; it is to remain unspotted (v27)

[Last updated 10/31/2022, 11/1/2022]

James 2

- James refers to other Christians as "brethren" (v1)
- The faith of Christians is in the Lord Jesus Christ (v1)
- Jesus is Lord (v1)
- Jesus is the Messiah (the Christ) (v1)
- Jesus is the Lord of glory (v1)
- Christians must not have "respect of persons"; we must not show partiality (v1)
- It is wrong to judge a person based on who they are; instead we must judge people by their actions (v1)
- James referred to the "assembly", which was a gathering of Christians; James did not call this "going to church" because the church is the people (and therefore the church is not something you go to); the gathering of those people is the "assembly" (v2)
- There were poor people who attended the assembly of Christians (v2)
- There were rich people who attended the assembly of Christians (v2)

- Those who had a gold ring were the rich people (v2)
- Those who had good clothing were the rich people (v2)
- Those who had vile clothing were poor people (v2)
- Some people visited the assembly of believers wearing good clothing, while the poor wore vile clothing (v2)
- Not everyone came to the assembly of believers wearing fancy clothing (v2)
- The rich people and the poor people attended the same assembly; there were not separate assemblies for the rich and poor (v2)
- It was wrong to show favoritism to the rich over the poor, and to treat the rich differently than the poor (v3)
- It was wrong to give the rich a better seat in the assembly than the poor; it was wrong to give the rich good seats, and the poor bad seats (or none at all) (v3)
- James expected both the rich and the poor to be treated equally (v3)
- Treating the rich better than the poor is an example of showing partiality; Christians must not show partiality or respect of persons (v4)
- It is bad to treat one person better than another on the basis of their wealth (v4)
- Those who show partiality or respect of persons have evil thoughts; such a thing is evil (v4)
- Christians should not have evil thoughts (v4)
- Christians should not show favoritism to the rich over the poor (v4)

- Even when James is rebuking people for sin, he still refers to fellow Christians as "beloved brethren" (v5)
- God has chosen the poor (v5)
- Since God has chosen to save the poor, we must not discriminate against them (v5)
- God has given the poor much faith (v5)
- God has made the poor heirs of the kingdom (v5)
- God has promised the kingdom to those who love Him (v5)
- Since the poor have been chosen by God, and since they are rich in faith, and since they are heirs, we must not discriminate against them; we must not discriminate against those God loves, and God has blessed, and God values (v5)
- God values those who are poor (v5)
- God has the ability to give faith to those whom He chooses (v5)
- Faith comes from God (v5)
- James rebuked Christians for despising the poor (v6)
- It is wrong to despise the poor (v6)
- Since God loves the poor and has blessed them, we must not despise them (v6)
- Christians are often oppressed by rich people; it is unusual for them to be oppressed by the poor (v6)
- Christians are often the targets of lawsuits from rich people; it is unusual for the poor to file lawsuits (v6)

- James rebuked Christians for showing favoritism to the rich and despising the poor, and yet the rich oppressed them and filed lawsuits against them (v6)
- James said that the rich blasphemed the name of the Lord (v7)
- Christians were showing favoritism to the rich, in spite of the fact they were blasphemers (v7)
- It is wrong to blaspheme the name of the Lord (v7)
- Christians are called by the name of the Lord (v7)
- The name of the Lord is worthy; it should be honored by Christians (v7)
- Christians should not show favoritism to people who blaspheme the name of the Lord (v7)
- Christians must love their neighbor as themselves (v8)
- Having respect of persons (showing partiality) is a violation of the commandment to love our neighbors as we love ourselves; (after all, we don't want to be discriminated against, and other people don't want that either; showing partiality is not an act of love) (v8)
- Those who love their neighbors as they love themselves do well; that is what God commands (v8)
- The commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is the royal law (v8)
- Christians must love their neighbors (v8)
- Having respect of persons (showing partiality) is a sin (v9)
- It is wrong to show partiality; it is a violation of God's law (v9)

- Those who sin are transgressors; transgressors are those who break the law of God and sin (v9)
- Those who break even one commandment are guilty of breaking the whole law (v10)
- Christians must keep the whole law; even breaking a single commandment is a violation of the whole law (v10)
- God does not tell us to keep the big commandments and that's good enough; instead we must keep all of them, for any violation of any commandment is a violation of the whole law (v10)
- God commanded us to not commit adultery (v11)
- God commanded us to not kill (v11)
- Christians must not commit adultery (v11)
- Christians must not kill (v11)
- If a person does not commit adultery but does kill someone, then he is a transgressor of the law (even though he only broke one of the commandments) (v11)
- You do not have to break all of the commandments in order to become a transgressor; instead you only have to break a single one (v11)
- Christians will be judged by the law (which James calls the law of liberty) (v12)
- When Christians speak, we must remember that our words will be judged by the law (v12)
- When Christians act, we must remember that our actions will be judged by the law (v12)
- Christians will be judged; our actions matter, and we will

be held accountable for them (v12)

- Those who showed no mercy will be judged without mercy (v13)
- Mercy rejoices against judgment (v13)
- Christians must show mercy; we must have mercy on others (v13)
- If we want to receive mercy from God then we must show mercy to others (v13)
- Mercy is a good thing (v13)
- There are people who claim to have faith, but who do not actually have faith at all (v14)
- It is not enough to simply claim to have faith; if we don't actually have faith then claiming to have faith doesn't do us any good - we are only deceiving ourselves (v14)
- Those who have faith will also have works, because genuine faith always produces works; if a person lacks works then that is proof that he lacks faith as well (v14)
- A person cannot be saved by false faith, or by claiming to have faith; they can only be saved by genuine faith, which always produces works (v14)
- There is no profit in claiming to have faith; there is only profit in actually having faith, which produces works (v14)
- There may be times when fellow Christians do not have sufficient clothing to wear (v15)
- There may be times when fellow Christians do not have food (v15)
- God never promised that Christians would always have

sufficient clothing (v15)

- God never promised that Christians would always have food (v15)
- Christians should provide clothing to fellow believers who need it (v15)
- God expects Christians to watch out for one another and to provide for their needs (v15)
- Christians should provide food to fellow believers who need it (v15)
- When a person lacks clothing, he needs more than just kind words; he needs someone to provide him with clothing (v16)
- When a person lacks food, he needs more than just kind words; he needs someone to provide him with food (v16)
- Christians should give clothing to fellow believers who need it; they should not just give them kind words and send them on their way, destitute and suffering (v16)
- Christians should give food to fellow believers who need it; they should not just give them kind words and send them on their way, destitute and suffering (v16)
- Food is needful to the body; it is something people need to have, and is a genuine need (v16)
- Clothing is needful to the body; it is something people need to have, and is a genuine need (v16)
- If a Christian only gives kind words to those who are suffering, and does nothing to help them, then they haven't done any good at all; their words are empty and vain (v16)

- Faith without works is dead (v17)
- The reason faith without works is dead is because genuine faith will never lack works; if faith lacks works, and is alone, then it is a false faith that does not save (v17)
- It is impossible to demonstrate faith if a person has no works, because works is the way that a person demonstrates their faith (v18)
- Genuine faith is demonstrated by works (v18)
- The way that we can tell whether others have genuine faith is by looking at their works; if they have no works then they have no faith either (v18)
- Works are the proof of faith (v18)
- The way that we can tell if our faith is genuine is by examining our life and looking for works; if we have no works then our faith is dead and vain (v18)
- It is good to believe that there is one God (v19)
- God is real; He truly exists (v19)
- There is one God (v19)
- The devils also believe that there is one God (v19)
- The devils tremble before God (v19)
- It is not enough to simply believe that there is one God; even the devils believe that (v19)
- Those who do not believe in God at all are very foolish; even the devils believe in God (v19)
- Faith without works is dead; if you have no works then

you have no faith either, for genuine faith always produces works (v20)

- It is not enough to simply have faith that God exists, for even the devils believe that (v20)
- Those who claim to have faith, but have no works, are believing in God in vain; their faith is worthless, and they are no better than devils (v20)
- Abraham really existed; he was a real historical figure, and was not a myth (v21)
- Abraham is the father of the Jews (v21)
- Abraham's faith was accompanied by works: he proved his faith when he offered his son Isaac on the altar (v21)
- Isaac was the son of Abraham (v21)
- Abraham really did offer his son Isaac upon the altar; that was not a myth (v21)
- Abraham proved his faith by his works (v21)
- Abraham's faith produced his works; since his faith was genuine, he had works as well (v22)
- Abraham's faith was made perfect by works; his works were the fruit of his faith, and his works proved that his faith truly existed (v22)
- A faith that produces no works is meaningless, for that would mean that a person's beliefs do not influence their actions in any way; a belief that does not change anything in a person's life is a meaningless belief, and is worth nothing (because it produces nothing) (v22)
- Abraham believed God (v23)

- Since Abraham believed God, he obeyed God; since he obeyed God, his obedience was imputed to him for righteousness (v23)
- Abraham proved his belief in God by his obedience; the reason he obeyed God was because he believed in God (v23)
- Since Abraham's belief in God was real, and produced obedience, his obedience was imputed to him for righteousness (v23)
- Abraham was called the friend of God (v23)
- The reason Abraham was called the friend of God is because he believed in God, and his belief resulted in obedience (v23)
- People are not justified solely by faith; if their faith does not produce works then it is a dead faith, because a belief that does not change a person's behavior is a dead and worthless belief (v24)
- People who claim to have faith but do not have works are not actually saved; genuine faith always results in works, so a lack of works means that there is a lack of true faith as well (v24)
- A faith that produces no works is like a dead tree that produces no fruit; a living faith will always produce works, so a faith that does not produce works is dead and worthless (v24)
- Rahab was a prostitute (v25)
- Rahab really existed; she was a genuine historical figure, and was not a myth (v25)

- Rahab really did rescue the spies who were sent to Jericho (v25)
- Rahab's faith was proven to be genuine by her works; she demonstrated her faith by rescuing the Israelite spies (v25)
- Rahab's faith was a living faith because it produced works; since it produced works, it was not a dead and useless faith (v25)
- The body without the spirit is dead; once the spirit leaves the body, the body is dead (v26)
- We have both a body and a spirit; our body is alive as long as our spirit is within it (v26)
- We are more than just a body; we have a spirit as well, which is separate from the body (v26)
- Our spirit resides within our body while we are alive (v26)
- Our spirit does not need a body in order to survive; it can exist outside of our body (which is what happens when we die) (v26)
- Faith without works is dead (v26)

[Last updated 11/1/2022, 11/2/2022]

James 3

- James refers to other Christians as "brethren" (v1)
- Christians should avoid being masters over many people, because those who have authority over more people will

receive greater condemnation (v1)

- James said that Christians should try to avoid holding positions of authority over people, because doing so will lead to condemnation (v1)
- Christians should not seek to hold positions of authority (v1)
- Christians who are in positions of authority will receive greater condemnation than those who lacked authority (v1)
- God will judge people based on how much authority they had over others (v1)
- In many areas Christians offend everyone (v2)
- Those who do not offend in their speech are perfect, and are able to control their whole body (v2)
- It is very important to learn to control our words (v2)
- Self control is very important (v2)
- In order to gain control over our own body (self control) we need to learn to control our words (v2)
- Christians need to learn to control their bodies (v2)
- Christians need to learn to control their words (v2)
- James said that horses are controlled by putting "bits" in their mouths; by turning their mouth people can turn the whole horse (v3)
- James pointed out that horses are controlled by putting something in their mouth; he did this to point out that people are controlled by their tongue; the key to self control is learning to control our words (v3)

- James said that ships are controlled by a helm that is much smaller than the ship (v4)
- James pointed out that ships are controlled by a small helm; he did this to point out that people are controlled by the tongue, which is also very small (v4)
- James said that ships are very large (v4)
- James said that ships are driven by fierce winds (v4)
- Even though ships are large and are driven by fierce winds, the governor (captain) is able to direct them using a very small helm (v4)
- The tongue is very small (v5)
- Even though the tongue is a small body part, it makes great boasts (v5)
- The ability of the tongue to impact the world is far greater than its small size (v5)
- James pointed out that a small fire can cause a very great disturbance; a small fire can quickly grow very large (v5)
- James pointed out how quickly a small fire can grow out of control; he did this to point out that even though the tongue is small, it can create enormous issues that grow rapidly (v5)
- The tongue is very dangerous (v6)
- The tongue is a fire (v6)
- The tongue is a world of iniquity (v6)
- The tongue defiles the whole body (v6)
- The tongue sets the course of nature on fire (v6)

- The tongue is a fire that comes from hell (v6)
- Every kind of beast is tamed and has been tamed (v7)
- Every kind of bird is tamed and has been tamed (v7)
- Every kind of serpent is tamed and has been tamed (v7)
- Everything in the sea is tamed and has been tamed (v7)
- People have been able to tame all sorts of beasts, birds, serpents, and aquatic life (v7)
- No man can tame the tongue (v8)
- The tongue is unruly (v8)
- The tongue is evil (v8)
- The tongue is full of deadly poison (v8)
- It is possible to tame animals, but not the tongue (v8)
- With the tongue we bless God (v9)
- God is the Father (v9)
- With the tongue we curse men (v9)
- People are created after the image of God (v9)
- People bless God and curse others with the same tongue; the tongue is used for both blessing and cursing (v9)
- It is good to bless God (v9)
- It is bad to curse others (v9)
- People bless and curse with the same mouth (v10)
- It is bad that people both bless and curse; that is not a good thing (v10)

- Fountains either send forth sweet water or bitter water (v11)
- Fountains do not send both sweet and bitter water at the same place; it is one or the other (v11)
- Just as a fountain only sends out one kind of water, so people should only use one kind of speech; we should bless, and not curse (v11)
- Fig trees do not grow olives; instead they grow figs, which reflects their nature (v12)
- Vines do not grow figs; instead they grow grapes, which reflects their nature (v12)
- Fountains do not yield both salt water and fresh water; they either yield one or the other (v12)
- Christians should not speak both blessings and curses; instead we should bless others, and not curse them (v12)
- There are some among the church who are wise (v13)
- There are some among the church who have knowledge (v13)
- Not everyone is wise (v13)
- Not everyone has knowledge (v13)
- Those who are wise should demonstrate their wisdom through a good "conversation" (a good lifestyle) (v13)
- Those who are wise should demonstrate their wisdom through good works (v13)
- Those who are wise should demonstrate their wisdom through meekness (v13)

- Those who are wise should demonstrate their wisdom through their actions (v13)
- It is good to be wise (v13)
- It is good to have knowledge (v13)
- It is good to be meek (v13)
- It is good to pursue good works (v13)
- It is good to seek to live a righteous lifestyle (v13)
- It is bad to be bitter (v14)
- It is bad to envy others (v14)
- It is bad to have strife (v14)
- The heart may be a place of bitterness (v14)
- The heart may be a place of envy (v14)
- The heart may be a place of strife (v14)
- Those who are bitter, or envious, or full of strife, should not glory in themselves (v14)
- It is bad to glory in ourselves and boast in ourselves (v14)
- It is bad to lie (v14)
- We must not lie about the truth (v14)
- Those who are bitter, or envious, or full of strife, should not tell lies (v14)
- Wisdom that leads to bitterness, or envy, or strife, is not from God (v15)
- Wisdom that leads to bitterness, or envy, or strife, is earthly and not heavenly (v15)

- Wisdom that leads to bitterness, or envy, or strife, is sensual and not holy (v15)
- Wisdom that leads to bitterness, or envy, or strife, is devilish and not godly (v15)
- Not all wisdom is good (v15)
- Wisdom that bears bad fruits is devilish and evil (v15)
- Godly wisdom will bear godly fruit (v15)
- Not all wisdom comes from God; there is evil wisdom that bears evil fruits (v15)
- If there is envy, there is also confusion (v16)
- If there is envy, there is other evil as well (v16)
- Envy leads to other sins (v16)
- If there is strife, there is confusion (v16)
- If there is strife, there is other evil as well (v16)
- Strife leads to other sins (v16)
- Strife is bad (v16)
- Envy is bad (v16)
- Confusion is bad (v16)
- Evil works are bad (v16)
- Christians should not envy one another (v16)
- Christians should not have strife in their hearts (v16)
- Confusion is bad thing, not a good thing; it is a sign of evil (v16)

- The wisdom that comes from above is pure (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above is peaceable (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above is gentle (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above is easy to be intreated (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above is full of mercy (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above is full of good fruit (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above is without partiality (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above is without hypocrisy (v17)
- Purity is good (v17)
- Christians should seek to be pure in the sight of God (v17)
- Being peaceable is good (v17)
- Christians should seek to be at peace with one another (v17)
- Gentleness is good (v17)
- Christians should be gentle (v17)
- It is good to be easily intreated (v17)
- Mercy is good (v17)
- Christians should be merciful (v17)
- It is good to bear good fruit (v17)
- Christians should seek to bear good fruit (v17)

- Showing partiality is bad (v17)
- Christians should not show partiality (v17)
- Hypocrisy is bad (v17)
- Christians should not be hypocrites (v17)
- The wisdom that comes from above bears good fruits, and leads to godliness and righteousness (v17)
- The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace (v18)
- The fruit of righteousness is sown by those who make peace (v18)
- Christians should sow peace (v18)
- Christians should make peace with others (v18)
- Christians should be characterized by peace (v18)
- There are fruits of righteousness (v18)

[Last updated 11/2/2022]

James 4

- The source of conflict in the church is lust; people are fighting with each other in order to obtain the things that they desire (v1)
- The root of conflict is desire (v1)
- People lusted after things, but they didn't get them (v2)
- People desired things, but they weren't able to obtain them (v2)

- People fought one another to get things, but they weren't able to get them (v2)
- People killed one another to get things, but they still weren't able to get what they wanted (v2)
- Lusting after something, and desiring it, does not get you the thing that you desired (v2)
- The reason people did not have things was because they did not ask for them (v2)
- If we want something then the path to getting it is to ask God, not to fight with one another (v2)
- People asked for things, but they did not receive them (v3)
- The reason people did not receive the things that they asked for is because they asked amiss (v3)
- Those who ask for things based on sinful desires should not expect to get them (v3)
- Those who ask for worldly and sinful things should not expect to get them (v3)
- James called the Christians he was writing to adulterers and adulteresses; the reason he did that was because they had made friends with the world, which was a form of spiritual adultery (v4)
- Those who make friends with the world are making an enemy of God (v4)
- It is bad for Christians to make friends with the world (v4)
- Those who are friends with the world are the enemy of God (v4)

- The church should not make friends with the world (v4)
- Those who make friends with the world are adulterers and adulteresses in the sight of God (v4)
- The world is opposed to God (v4)
- God is opposed to the world (v4)
- If we desire worldly things then we are making ourselves the enemies of God (v4)
- One of the root causes of conflict in the church is the desire for worldly things (v4)
- The Scriptures do not speak in vain; the Bible means what it says, its words are true, and its words carry weight (v5)
- Christians should know the Scriptures (v5)
- Christians should believe the Scriptures (v5)
- Christians should obey the Scriptures (v5)
- We have a spirit that dwells in us (v5)
- Our spirit is full of lust (v5)
- Our spirit is full of envy (v5)
- There is a spirit within us that is full of lust and envy; it is a dangerous spirit that seeks to lead us to sin, and that causes much conflict in the church (v5)
- James, when speaking to Christians, told them that their spirit was full of wicked and sinful desires (v5)
- God gives us more grace (v6)
- We have a spirit within us that is full of sinful desires, but God gives us grace; His grace is what enables us to

overcome those desires and do what is right (v6)

- In order to overcome our sinful desires we need the grace of God; the path to overcoming sin is grace (v6)
- The Bible does not say that we can overcome sin all on our own; instead it says that we need the grace of God (v6)
- God resists the proud (v6)
- God hates pride (v6)
- Christians should not be proud (v6)
- God gives grace to the humble (v6)
- God loves humility (v6)
- Christians should be humble (v6)
- Christians must submit themselves to God (v7)
- It is good to submit to God; that is what God requires (v7)
- Christians must resist the devil (v7)
- The devil is dangerous (v7)
- The devil will attack us (v7)
- The key to overcoming the attacks of the devil is to resist him (v7)
- If we resist the devil then he will flee from us (v7)
- Christians must seek to draw near to God (v8)
- If we draw near to God then He will draw near to us (v8)
- It is good to draw near to God (v8)

- It is possible to draw near to God (v8)
- Christians must cease from sin; we must cleanse our hands from sin (v8)
- Christians must purify their hearts (v8)
- Our hearts need to be purified (v8)
- It is bad to sin (v8)
- It is bad to have an unclean heart (v8)
- It is possible to purify our heart (v8)
- Christians must not be double minded; instead we must do what is right, and turn away from sin (v8)
- The way to draw near to God is to cleanse our hands of sin and do what is right; we need to be holy in order to draw near to a holy God (v8)
- Christians should afflict themselves; (this seems to be a reference to mourning over sin) (v9)
- Christians should mourn and weep; (this seems to be a reference to mourning over sin) (v9)
- Christians should weep over their sin (v9)
- Christians should not laugh and rejoice when their life is full of sin; instead we should mourn over our sin and weep over it; our sin should lead to a spirit of heaviness (v9)
- Our sin should bother us; it should lead to mourning and tears (v9)
- Christians must humble themselves in the sight of God (v10)

- It is good to humble ourselves in the sight of God (v10)
- When there is sin in our life, we should mourn and weep over it; we should humble ourselves before God and seek His grace (v10)
- God will lift up those who humble themselves in His sight (v10)
- If we want God to lift us up then we must first humble ourselves before Him (v10)
- Christians must not speak evil of one another; (this is different from rebuking sin, or disciplining church members who are living in sin; for example, this letter is full of rebukes, but it is not evil) (v11)
- Those who speak evil of others are speaking evil of the law; (however, rebuking people for sin - which this letter does - is not seen as speaking evil, because the things it speaks are good) (v11)
- Those who judge one another are judging the law; (this seems to be in the context of speaking evil against someone) (v11)
- Those who speak evil of others are not a doer of the law; instead they are a judge of the law (v11)
- God commands us to obey His law, not judge it (v11)
- There is only one lawgiver (God) (v12)
- The God who gave us His law is able to save us (v12)
- The God who gave us His law is able to destroy us (v12)
- Christians do not have the right to judge one another; (however, this seems to be different from rebuking one

another for sin; in this letter James calls people adulterers and adulteresses, and that is not seen as speaking evil of others or judging them) (v12)

- James rebukes people for boasting about the things that they are going to accomplish in the upcoming year (v13)
- It is foolish to boast about the future because no one knows what the future will hold (v14)
- Christians should not boast about the future (v14)
- Christians should not boast about the things that they plan to accomplish in the future (v14)
- Our life is a vapor (v14)
- Our life lasts for a short time and then ends (v14)
- It is foolish to boast about the future because we have no idea how long our life will last (v14)
- Christians should say that if it is the will of God, we will live and accomplish whatever we are planning on doing (v15)
- Whether or not we accomplish something is up to the will of God; we will only accomplish it if it is His will (v15)
- We cannot accomplish anything that God does not want us to accomplish; if He does not bless us and give us life then it will not happen (v15)
- Whether we continue to live is up to the will of God; our life will only continue if it is His will for it to continue (v15)
- Our lifespan is determined by God (v15)
- Our accomplishments are determined by God (v15)

- If we continue to live, we should give the credit to God (v15)
- If we accomplish anything, we should give the credit to God (v15)
- It is evil to boast about the future, and to rejoice in things that we have not yet accomplished (v16)
- It is evil to act as if we are in control, and we will decide whether or not we live, and we are responsible for our accomplishments; it is evil to act as if our future is in our hands, and we are the captains of our fate (v16)
- If a person knows to do good, but does not do it, then that person is committing a sin (v17)
- It is a sin to know to do good, but fail to do it (v17)
- Sometimes sin is not doing something evil; sometimes the sin is failing to do something good (v17)

[Last updated 11/3/2022]

James 5

- James told those who were rich to weep and howl because they were going to face great suffering (v1)
- The day is coming when the rich will suffer; in that day their riches will not save them (v1)
- There is great misery in store for the wealthy; (James seems to be referring to people who obtained their wealth through fraud and oppression) (v1)

- The riches of the wealthy are corrupted (v2)
- The garments of the wealthy have been eaten by moths (v2)
- This passage seems to be a prophecy: the day is coming when the wealth of the rich will not save them; their wealth will be corrupted and their garments will be eaten, and they will have nothing (v2)
- The gold of the wealthy is cankered (morally corrupt) (v3)
- The silver of the wealthy is cankered (morally corrupt) (v3)
- The corruption of the riches of the wealthy will be a witness against them (v3)
- The corruption of the riches of the wealthy will eat their flesh as if it were fire (v3)
- God cares about where the riches of the wealthy came from; He is against ill-gotten wealth (v3)
- The day is coming when the ill-gotten riches of the wealthy will testify against them (v3)
- This verse seems to be saying that the ill-gotten riches of the wealthy will actually physically devour them in some way (v3)
- The rich may think that their ill-gotten riches are a great blessing, but in reality they are a curse that will destroy them (v3)
- The rich have heaped treasure together for the last days; they are amassing wealth because the end times are coming (v3)

- The wealth that the rich have gathered in order to protect themselves in the last days will not save them (v3)
- James does not show favoritism to the rich; instead he condemns them for their wickedness, and warns them that judgment is coming upon them (v3)
- The rich hired laborers to reap their fields (v4)
- The rich owned fields (v4)
- The rich defrauded the laborers who reaped their fields (v4)
- The laborers who were defrauded cried out to God (v4)
- The ill-gotten wealth of the rich, which they obtained by defrauding the people who worked for them, cries out to God (v4)
- God hates it when laborers are defrauded of their wages (v4)
- It is bad to defraud people (v4)
- God will punish those who defraud laborers (v4)
- God hears the cries of those who are unjustly defrauded (v4)
- There is a day of judgment coming for those who have defrauded others (v4)
- The cries of the defrauded laborers have entered into the ears of the "Lord of sabaoth" (the Lord of the hosts of heaven) (v4)
- The rich have used their ill-gotten wealth to live in pleasure on the earth (v5)

- The rich have used their ill-gotten wealth to live wanton (malicious and unjust) lives (v5)
- The rich have used their ill-gotten wealth to nourish their hearts "as in a day of slaughter" (a day when animals are killed and a feast is held) (v5)
- The rich live extravagant, unjust, and malicious lives, using the wealth they obtained through fraud; they live in great pleasure while denying their laborers the money they need to feed themselves and their families (v5)
- God has noticed the incredibly wicked lives of the wealthy, and He knows the wicked ways they obtained their wealth; the day is coming when God will hold them accountable for it (v5)
- The rich have condemned those who are just (v6)
- The rich have murdered those who are just (v6)
- Those who are just have not resisted the rich; they have not fought back against them; (this seems to be a reference to rising up and taking matters into their own hands, as some sort of mob violence or personal vengeance) (v6)
- The Bible forbids mob violence and personal vengeance, even in cases of robbery and murder; it has placed criminal justice in the hands of the government, and does not allow vigilante justice (v6)
- James tells Christians to be patient and wait for the coming of the Lord (v7)
- When the Lord comes, He will put things right; He will bring to justice the rich, who have done great evil (v7)

- James does not tell Christians to take matters into their own hands; instead he tells them to wait until the Lord comes (v7)
- Christians must be patient (v7)
- Christians must patiently wait for the justice that the Lord will bring when He comes (v7)
- A day of justice is coming (v7)
- Even though the just are being killed, James tells Christians to wait for the Lord instead of taking matters into their own hands (v7)
- Farmers wait for their crops to yield fruit; they have patience while their crops are going (v7)
- Farmers wait for the early rain to come (v7)
- Farmers wait for the latter rain to come (v7)
- Just as farmers wait for their crops to grow, so Christians should wait for the Lord to return (v7)
- Christians should be waiting for the Lord to return; they should be watching and waiting with hope and expectation, just as farmers wait for their crops to grow and yield fruit (v7)
- Christians must be patient, for the Lord is coming (v8)
- Christians must establish their hearts, for the Lord is coming (v8)
- Christians must patiently wait for the Lord to return (v8)
- The coming of the Lord draws near (v8)
- Christians must not hold grudges against one another (v9)

- Christians who hold grudges against others will one day be condemned (v9)
- There are some Christians who will one day be condemned for what they have done (v9)
- God hates it when Christians hold grudges (v9)
- God is the judge (v9)
- The judge is standing before the door (v9)
- Christians should live with the knowledge that the Lord is coming, and the day of His return is drawing nearer; we should be careful how we live our lives so that we are not condemned (v9)
- The prophets of the Old Testament spoke in the name of the Lord (v10)
- The prophets of the Old Testament were faithful (v10)
- The prophets of the Old Testament suffered affliction (v10)
- The prophets of the Old Testament were patient (v10)
- The prophets of the Old Testament serve as examples for us; even though they spoke in the name of the Lord, they were afflicted; they suffered with patience, and serve as an example to us of being patient through suffering, and remaining faithful through affliction (v10)
- Those who endure affliction and patiently endure suffering are happy; the day is coming when they will not regret their faithfulness (v11)
- It is good to patiently endure affliction (v11)
- There is joy in store for those who patiently endure

affliction (v11)

- Job was patient (v11)
- Job was a real person who actually existed; he is not a myth (v11)
- The Lord is full of pity toward those who are suffering (v11)
- The Lord is full of tender mercy (v11)
- In the end the Lord had pity toward Job, and showed him tender mercy (v11)
- Job serves as an example for us - an example of someone who endured suffering, and who God had mercy on in the end (v11)
- Christians must not swear oaths (v12)
- Instead of swearing oaths, we must let our yes be yes and our no be no; we must not go beyond that (v12)
- Those who go beyond a simple "yes" or "no" and swear oaths will fall into condemnation (v12)
- Christians must not swear by heaven (v12)
- Christians must not swear by earth (v12)
- Christians must not swear by anything (v12)
- Christians must keep their word; we must let our "yes" be yes and are "no" be no; we must do what we say we will do (v12)
- It is bad to swear an oath (v12)
- Those who are afflicted should pray; our response to affliction should be prayer (v13)

- There are times when we will be afflicted (v13)
- It is good to pray; prayer is a meaningful thing to do (v13)
- Those who are merry should sing psalms (v13)
- Christians should sing the psalms that are in the Bible (v13)
- The psalms were meant to be sung (v13)
- There are times when we will be merry (v13)
- If anyone in the church is sick, he should call for the elders of the church; the elders will pray over him and anoint him with oil, and he will surely be healed; (these instructions seem to date from a time when the gift of healing was still present, since there was absolutely no doubt the person would surely be cured of his illness every time) (v14)
- James said that the prayer would absolutely bring healing, and the Lord would surely raise up the sick person every time with no exceptions; this is more evidence that these instructions were intended for a time when the gift of healing was still present (v15)
- We need forgiveness for our sins (v15)
- James said that the prayer of healing, which would always heal those who were sick, also forgave sins (v15)
- Christians should confess their faults to one another (v16)
- Christians should pray for one another, so that we may be healed; (this also seems to be a reference to the miraculous gift of healing, since James expects prayer to always result in healing every time) (v16)

- The righteous should pray (v16)
- The righteous should pray fervently (v16)
- The fervent prayers of the righteous are very effective (v16)
- If we want our prayers to be effective we need to be righteous, and we need to pray fervently (v16)
- Elijah was like us; he had passions just as we do (v17)
- Elijah earnestly prayed that it might not rain (v17)
- Elijah was a real person who actually existed; he is not a myth (v17)
- When Elijah prayed that it might not rain, it didn't rain for 3 years and 6 months (v17)
- James used Elijah as an example that the fervent prayers of a righteous man avail much; Elijah is an example of the power of prayer, not power of Elijah (v17)
- When Elijah prayed again, the heaven gave rain (v18)
- When the rain came again after Elijah prayed, the earth brought forth its fruit (v18)
- Elijah is an example of the power of prayer (v18)
- There may be times when a Christians errs from the truth (v19)
- When a Christian errs from the truth, we should try to convert him and bring him back to the truth (v19)
- It is bad for a Christian to depart from the truth (v19)
- It is important to bring Christians back to the truth (v19)

- Christians need to remain firmly grounded in the truth; we must not depart from it (v19)
- James believed that departing from the truth was a very serious thing (v19)
- Those who err from the truth are sinning (v20)
- Those who err from the truth are putting their soul to death in some way; the end result of error is death (v20)
- Those who save sinners are saving a soul from death (v20)
- Those who convert Christians who have fallen into error are saving a soul from death (v20)
- Those who save sinners are hiding a multitude of sins (v20)
- Those who convert Christians who have fallen into error are hiding a multitude of sins (v20)
- It is good to save sinners (v20)
- It is good to bring Christians back to the truth (v20)

[Last updated 11/4/2022]