

INTRO TO JAMES

James 1:1-18 (NIV) James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings. [2] Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. [4] Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [5] If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. [6] But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. [7] That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. [8] Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. [9] Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. [10] But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. [11] For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business. [12] Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. [13] When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; [14] but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. [15] Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. [16] Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. [17] Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. [18] He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Jas 1:1-18 (NIV) James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

- James was written by the brother of Jesus who was the co-leader of the Jerusalem church
- The book was written early – in ~ AD 45 (about 12 years after Jesus Crucifixion)
- It was written to from the "Home office" to Jewish believers all over the world

James History

Unbelief

- Jhn 7:3-5 (NIV) Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so that your disciples there may see the works you do. [4] No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." [5] For **even his own brothers did not believe in him.**
 - o This was early in Jesus ministry – James did not believe in Jesus

Pentecost

- Act 1:12-14 (NIV) Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. [13] When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. [14] They all joined together constantly in prayer, **along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.**
 - o James was present at Pentecost
 - Something happened during between the early ministry of Jesus and Pentecost

James Calling (Jesus appearance)

- 1Co 15:3-8 (NIV) For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, [5] and that **he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.** [6] After that, **he**

appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. [7] **Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,** [8] and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

- Jesus appeared to James after He was raised from the dead
 - Was it a personal appearance or with the other Apostles.

The Position of James

- Gal 2:8-9 (NIV) For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. [9] **James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars,** gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.
 - James (son of Zebedee, brother of John) was first martyr in AD 44 Killed by sword - Herod
 - Every reference to James in the New Testament is James the Brother of Jesus
 - James was called “the Just” because of his reputation for Holiness and Fairness

James Opened the door for Gentiles

- Act 15:13-21 (NIV) When they finished, **James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me.** [14] Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. [15] The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: [16] "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, [17] that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things'— [18] things known from long ago. [19] **"It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.**

The Purpose of Trials

[2] Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3] because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. [4] Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

- Respond with Joy to trials
 - Reason: Because trials produce maturity by giving us perseverance
 - PERSEVERANCE – doing what God has called us to do no matter how we feel about it
 - THE FRUIT OF PERSEVERANCE – maturity and completeness (lacking nothing)

The Source of Wisdom

[5] If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

- WISDOM = is “spiritual intelligence” “a heavenly perspective” = (Sophia)
 - Wisdom (heavenly perspective) is not obtained by study of Human resources
 - We must SEEK THE FACE OF GOD – continually
 - ASK GOD – “to implore, to cry out, to beg”
 - God give GENEROUSLY to those who speak with Him about it...
 - Does not come by reading books

The Enemy of Faith

[6] But when you ask, **you must believe and not doubt**, because the **one who doubts is like a wave of the sea,** blown and tossed by the wind. [7] **That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.** [8] **Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.**

- What is Faith?
 - It begins with a choice to believe

- BELIEF = (put your trust in) God – What God says/what He is doing
- How does Faith come?
 - Rom 10:17 (NKJV) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - You hear the call of God and AGREE/ Trust – WALK IN OBEDIENCE TO IT
 - Faith has no foundation in how I feel about it...
- What Does faith Look like
 - Heb 11:1 (NIV) Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.
 - Believing God - leads to CONFIDENCE, HOPE and ASSURANCE about what we cannot see
 - FEELING OUR WAY = Doublemindedness leads to INSTABILITY
- What is Enemy of faith?
 - Unbelief? – No! Unbelief is not at war with faith – it is the condition of being OUTSIDE of faith
 - If someone does not believe God then they don't even CONSIDER FAITH
 - Doublemindedness! YES! = is the enemy of faith
 - Means “having two opinions” (double spirited)
 - It means standing with one foot in FAITH and another foot in DOUBT
 - It simply means “feeling your way” (living by what seems to feel right)
 - Doublemindedness is the ENEMY of Faith
 - FAITH IS A CHOICE – cannot be driven by feelings
 - FAITH IS A DECISION THAT PERSISTS THROUGH ALL FEELINGS
- What happens to those who leave FAITH and enter into “Feeling”
 - THEY ARE UNSTABLE – in everything
 - Emotionally unstable
 - Spiritually unstable
 - THEY GET NOTHING FROM THE LORD
 - The Lord cannot reward them because they do not have faith
 - FAITH allows God to MOVE
 - Doublemindedness – keeps God from doing what He wants to do

Humility and Riches

[9] Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. [10] But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. [11] For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, **the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.**

- THOSE WITH A SIMPLE LIFESTYLE WILL BLOSSOM AND GROW
 - THOSE WITH A LAVISH LIFESTYLE WILL FADE AWAY...

TWO “POSITIONS”

- Simple lifestyle = HIGH SPIRITUAL POSITION
 - People with less temptation to materialism are
 - Simple lifestyle can come by...
 - Choice – you can choose to live simply even if you have means
 - Situation – You can rejoice because you MUST live simply
- Rich lifestyle = LOW SPIRITUAL POSITION
 - Riches WILL pass away
 - Can expect to experience the loss of riches

THE DIFFICULTY OF RICHES...

- Jesus response to RICH YOUNG RULER

- Mrk 10:17-27 (NIV) As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" [18] "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. [19] You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" [20] "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." [21] Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." [22] At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. [23] Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, **"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"** [24] The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! [25] **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.**" [26] The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" [27] Jesus looked at them and said, **"With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."**

- Jesus Teaching
 - A SIMPLE LIFESTYLE (having just enough resources to live)
 - Is advantageous to the Kingdom of God
 - YOU HAVE VERY LITTLE CHOICE but to Trust in God for your life
 - Jesus teaches that "having a lot of resources is a handicap to the kingdom of God"
 - It's hard to be a part of God's Kingdom if you can build your own
 - Nearly all of us are rich according to this teaching

Why are riches a handicap?

- 1Ti 6:6-10 (NIV) But godliness with contentment is great gain. [7] For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. [8] But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. [9] **Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.** [10] For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. **Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith** and pierced themselves with many griefs.
 - People who love (desire) riches
 - FALL INTO THE TEMPTATION
 - GIVE INTO MANY FOOLISH/HARMFUL DESIRES
 - EXPERIENCE RUIN and DESTRUCTION
 - Example: Sports Heroes/Rock Stars
 - Don't grow up with money
 - Give into temptation – commit many sins – Get destroyed

The purpose of Trials and Consequences of Sin

[12] **Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial** because, **having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life** that the Lord has promised to those who love him. [13] When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For **God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone;** [14] but **each person is tempted** when they are **dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.** [15] Then, **after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.**

- THE REASON FOR TRIALS
 - TESTING OF OUR FAITH
- The goal of Testing
 - A crown of life

- Source of Testing
 - EVERYONE IS TESTED BY THE ENEMY
- The Process of Sin
 - DESIRES CONCEIVED = THE FLESH is given priority (Desire for fleshly satisfaction)
 - “dragged away by personal desires”
 - Comfort, leisure, sexual pleasure, materials,
 - SINS COMMITTED = Riches + fleshly desires = Sin
 - Faith is putting hope in God
 - Carnality – putting hope in flesh
 - Enter in to sin
 - DEATH
 - Separation from the life of God
 -

The Gift of New Birth

[16] Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. [17] Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. [18] He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.