

James

1 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, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

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

6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;

8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

9 The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position.

10 But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he 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 man will fade away even while he goes about his business.

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God 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 one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away 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.

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.

19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,

²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

²¹Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror

²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

²⁵But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it--he will be blessed in what he does.

²⁶If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.

²⁷Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

2My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism.

²Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine

clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in.

³If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet,"

⁴have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

⁵Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

⁶But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court?

⁷Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong?

⁸If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.

⁹But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

¹¹For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do

commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

¹²Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom,

¹³because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?

¹⁵Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food.

¹⁶If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

¹⁷In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

¹⁹Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

²¹Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?

²²You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.

²³And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend.

²⁴You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.

²⁵In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?

²⁶As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

3Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

²We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check.

³When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal.

⁴Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

⁵Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

⁶The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man,

⁸but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

¹⁰Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be.

¹¹Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?

¹²My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth.

¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.

¹⁶For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

¹⁸Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

4What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.

³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

⁵Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?

⁶But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

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

⁸Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

⁹Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom.

¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

¹¹Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it.

¹²There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you--who are you to judge your neighbor?

¹³Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money."

¹⁴Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.

¹⁵Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

¹⁶As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

¹⁷Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

5 Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail because of the misery that is coming upon you.

²Your wealth has rotted, and moths have eaten your clothes.

³Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days.

⁴Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty.

⁵You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.

⁶You have condemned and murdered innocent men, who were not opposing you.

⁷Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.

⁸You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.

⁹Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

¹¹As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

¹²Above all, my brothers, do not swear--not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. Let your "Yes" be yes, and your "No," no, or you will be condemned.

¹³Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise.

¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him

and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

¹⁷Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years.

¹⁸Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

¹⁹My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back,

²⁰remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.