

# CLASS NOTES - JAMES

Taught by Robert Stapleton



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## **CLASS INSTRUCTIONS JAMES**

### **Robert Stapleton**

#### **CLASS DESCRIPTION:**

1. This class will provide a verse-by-verse study of the book of James.
  - A. We will note the emphasis James placed on practical principles in the life of the Christian.

#### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:**

1. The book of James is to be read weekly during the quarter, with a reading log kept.
2. Instructions concerning reading log.
  - A. Keep a typewritten log of your reading, with dates and chapters read.
    1. Your log is to be turned in to instructor no later than the beginning of class day during the finals week.
3. Read and critique the book, World Video Bible School Class Notes on James with a reading log kept.
  - A. Instructions concerning critique and reading log.
    1. Critique should be a three to five page double-spaced paper, Times New Romans, 12 font, 1-inch top, and bottom and side margins.
      - A. Watch your grammar and spelling.
    2. Turn in critique and reading log to instructor no later than the beginning of class day during the finals week.
    3. Critique will count for 20% of your total grade.
4. Tests:
  - A. Two scheduled tests will be administered.
    1. Each will account for 40% of your total grade.
    2. Any additional credit will be at the instructor's discretion.
5. Memory Verses:
  - A. The following verses are to be committed to memory:

James 1:21, 22  
James 1:25  
James 1:27  
James 2:10  
James 2:19  
James 2:26  
James 3:1  
James 4:14  
James 4:17  
James 5:16

- B. Memory work must be done in the American Standard Version, English Standard Version, King James Version, or New King James Version unless the instructor grants permission to use another version.

## **JAMES - THE EPISTLE OF COMMON SENSE**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Practical principles of Christianity are emphasized in this book.
  - A. James has been referred to as the “epistle of common sense.”
  - B. Also has been referred to as the “book of Proverbs of the New Testament.”
2. It is the first of seven books, which are known of as the general epistles.
  - A. These are not addressed to specific churches or individuals.
  - B. They are James, 1, 2 Peter, 1, 2, 3, John and Jude.
3. James has been referred to as being the most Jewish book in the New Testament.
4. In many ways it is similar to the Sermon on the Mount.

### **BODY:**

#### **1. WHO WROTE THE BOOK?**

- A. Three important men in the New Testament who bear the name James.
  1. The son of Zebedee and brother of John who was one of the original apostles - Matthew 4:21; Luke 5:10.
  2. The son of Alphaeus, who was also one of the original apostles - Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13.
  3. The son of Mary and Joseph, the younger half-brother of Jesus - Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:18, 19.
- B. James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, was ordered to be killed by Herod Agrippa I a few years after the church was begun - Acts 12:1, 2.
  1. It is not normally believed that this James is the author as it appears he died before the book was written.
- C. So far as James the son of Alphaeus is concerned little is known about him.
  1. The writer of the book bearing his name seems to have been well known.
  2. Due to the obscurity of this James very few have suggested it could have been him.
- D. It is James, the son of Mary and Joseph, who is believed to have authored this book.
  1. He was one of the four fleshly brothers of Jesus - Matthew 13:55.
  2. He, along with the other brothers, did not believe in Him until after His resurrection - John 7:1-5.
  3. The Lord appeared to him following His resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:7.
  4. He, along with the other brothers and Jesus’ mother Mary, assembled in Jerusalem after Jesus’ ascension - Acts 1:13, 14.
  5. He became a leader in the church at Jerusalem after it was established - Acts 15:13; Galatians 2:9.
  6. Two views are given concerning his death in early writings.
    - A. Josephus claims he was stoned at the order of the high priest.
    - B. Eusebius claims he was thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple and beaten to death with clubs.

#### **2. TO WHOM WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?**

- A. “The twelve tribes which are scattered abroad” - James 1:1.
  1. Term “twelve tribes” was a designation for Israel.

2. Jews were scattered throughout the world due to captivities and commercial reasons.
- B. Reference is made to Christians who are the “Israel of God” - Galatians 6:16.
  1. Many of them were scattered due to persecution - Acts 8:4.

### **3. WHEN AND WHERE WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?**

- A. James is one of the earliest books of the New Testament to be written.
  1. Josephus indicates that James was killed around A.D. 62 or 63.
  2. Since James makes no reference to Gentile Christians, it seems the book was written before the Jerusalem meeting to discuss circumcision - Acts 15.
    - A. This would place the time of the writing of the book before A.D. 48.
  3. Reference to “the worthy name by which ye are called” indicates it was written after A.D. 40 when the name Christian was given - Acts 11:26; James 2:7.
  4. Conclusion then is that the book was written between A.D. 40 and 48.
- B. The numerous references to Palestine indicate James was writing from there.
  1. Reference is made to the “early and latter rain” which occurs in Palestine - 5:7.
  2. Reference is made to the scorching winds, which were known as the “simoon” and were common in Palestine - James 1:11.
  3. Reference is made to fresh water and salt water springs of which both are found in Palestine - James 3:11.
  4. It is likely that the epistle was written from Jerusalem since James lived there.

### **3. WHY WAS THE BOOK WRITTEN?**

- A. Due to the persecutions and unfair treatment the Christians were facing they were in need of patience - James 1:12-15; 2:6, 7; 5:1-11.
- B. There was the need for teaching concerning respect of persons of which the Christians were guilty - James 2:1-10.
- C. There was the need of correcting their understanding of faith - James 1:22-27; 2:14-26.
- D. There was the need of correcting their attitudes concerning worldly thoughts, envy, and covetousness - James 3:13-4:12.

### **4. LESSONS WE LEARN FROM JAMES**

- A. Prayers which lack faith will not be answered - James 1:6.
- B. Source of sin is man’s lust - James 1:13-16.
- C. The Christian is begotten by the Holy Spirit through the Word - James 1:18.
- D. The Christian must learn to control his tongue - James 1:26; 3:1-12.
- E. Showing respect of persons is sin - James 2:1-10.
- F. Saving faith is a working faith - James 2:14-26.
- G. Earthly life is short and should include God in all things - James 4:13-16.
- H. Prayer that comes from a life of faithfulness is powerful - James 5:13-18.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. James describes himself as a servant of Jesus - James 1:1.
  - A. This goes beyond the fleshly kinship that many desire to have.
  - B. James realized that the spiritual relationship between God and man is most important - Mark 3:31-35; Luke 11:27, 28.

## COMMENTARY, JAMES

### CHAPTER ONE:

#### Verse 1

1. James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, . . .
  - A. The word “servant” is from the Greek word “doulos,” referring to one that gives himself fully to the will of another.
    1. This would be a bond servant rather than a forced slavery.
    2. This would refer to one that served another with joyful service.
    3. In contrast to this, the Greek word “andrapodon” would describe one captured in war and made a slave contrary to his will.
  - B. James was careful to explain as to whom he submitted himself as a servant.
    1. He was not only a servant of God (i.e. the Father), but also of “the Lord Jesus Christ.”
      - A. The word “Lord” (“kuriou”) had reference to His Lordship while the name “Jesus” referred to His being Savior while the word “Christ” (“Christou”) had reference to His being the anointed one.
2. . . . to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, . . .
  - A. This epistle was written to Jewish Christians who were scattered outside of Palestine.
    1. The phrase “twelve tribes” was used to describe those that were true servants - 1 Peter 1:1.
3. . . . greeting.
  - A. The word here is “chairein” in the Greek, and used nowhere else in the New Testament epistles.
  - B. It literally meant to “rejoice.”

#### Verse 2

1. My brethren,. . .
  - A. The Greek word “adelphos” used here.
    1. James used the word “brethren” in some form 17 times in this epistle.
  - B. “Adephos” refers to a brother, a near relative or, in this case, a larger community of people brought together by origin or life.
    1. Here, of course, used in the spiritual sense relative to their relationship to one another in the family of God - 1 Timothy 3:15.
  - C. As used here, James does not address those to whom he wrote as a superior, but as one brother to another.
2. . . . count it all joy . . .
  - A. James presented a paradox with this statement, as usually men do not count temptations as a source of joy.
    1. To “count” (hegesasthe”) as used here referred to the idea of placing a certain value on something.
      - A. In this case, temptations.
    2. James’ point was, when the Christian understands the value of temptations, they will receive great joy from doing so.
  - B. The word “joy” (“charan”) had to do with the sense of full or unmixed joy - Philippians 2:29.

1. Basically, his point was that no matter what the situation, the Christian can and should experience unspeakable joy - 1 Peter 1:8.
3. . . when ye fall into divers temptations;
  - A. The word “when” (“otan”) suggests uncertainty as in the idea of “in case it happens.”

#### Verse 3

1. Knowing this, . . .
  - A. James appeals to their knowledge to inform them as to why temptations are valuable in the Christian’s growth.
  - B. The word “knowing” (“ginosko”) referred to knowledge that was gained by experience and observation.
    1. It had to do with the practical experiences of the brethren to whom he wrote.
2. . . . that the trying of your faith worketh patience.
  - A. The word “trying” (“dokimion”) referred to the process of going through a furnace in order to separate the genuine sterling from the dross.
    1. James’ point was that the trying of their faith was the furnace through which they passed and proved them to be genuine.
  - B. The word “worketh” (“katargazetai”) referred to the concept of something being worked out or brought about.
    1. Reference was to a specific goal, in this case, patience.
  - C. The word “patience” (“hupomeno”) referred to that which would be seen as abiding - Colossians 1:11.
    1. In the end, such trials would provide the necessary strength to overcome even greater trails as they come.
      - A. Much like the weight lifter that starts out with a lesser weight and progresses to a heavier one over time if he sticks with the plan.

#### Verse 4

1. But let patience have her perfect work, . . .
  - A. James’ point here was that faith must not be set aside until its work is finished.
  - B. The word “let,” present active imperative, referred to the command that patience was to keep on having its perfect work until its work was completed.
2. . . . that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.
  - A. The word “perfect” here (“teleion”) had reference to that which was to be complete or whole and not perfection as we think of sinlessness.
    1. The child of God that continues to walk in the light has the blood of Jesus continually applied in order for him to be cleansed on a regular basis - 1 John 1:7.
  - B. The word “entire” (“holokleros”) had reference to the whole.
    1. As a puzzle is complete when all its parts are together, so is the Christian that is fully being steadfast in the faith.
  - C. The phrase “wanting nothing” referred to the concept of nothing having been left behind.
    1. It has been said that it pictures a racing horse that was left behind in a race.
    2. We are reminded that Christians are running a race - 1 Corinthians 9:24-26; Hebrews 12:1.
  - D. In this overall context, we find four products of trials that result in the child of God being spiritually mature.

1. Patience
2. Perfect
3. Entire
4. Wanting nothing

Verse 5

1. If any of you lack wisdom, . . .
  - A. To “lack” was to come up short of wisdom.
    1. Robertson indicated that it is a “banking figure” as one would “lack” sufficient funds in their bank account (Robertson, A.T., Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. VI, p. 13).
  - B. “Wisdom” had reference to something other than knowledge.
    1. Some people have considerable knowledge, but show little wisdom.
    2. Literally, what we see here would be the practical use of knowledge.
      - A. Perhaps the idea of good old “horse-sense” or what we call “common sense.”
    3. It is from the Greek word “sophia,” found 51 times in the New Testament, referring to the proper use of knowledge.
    4. Take note that the scriptures make one “wise unto salvation” - 2 Timothy 3:15.
      - A. So what we see here is a “lack” of knowledge of God’s Word to the point wherein such persons are lacking wisdom from God.
      - B. Study of the Scriptures provides the solution to the problem at hand - 2 Timothy 2:15.
2. . . . let him ask of God, . . .
  - A. Prayers for wisdom are seen numerous times in the Scriptures - 1 Kings 3:5-15; 4:29-34; Proverbs 2:6.
    1. In such cases as these, we may see a direct impartation of the wisdom under consideration due to the circumstances or era of time.
    2. Here, all that we really know is the fact with nothing being said about the medium regarding prayer and wisdom.
      - A. One thing that would be sure, though, is that however it is bestowed, it would not contradict the operation of God today.
      - B. J.W. Roberts wrote of this, “We need not to worry as to how God will impart that wisdom. If we ask, he will give.” (Roberts, J.W., 1977, The Living Word Commentary, p. 38).
      - C. Guy N. Woods wrote, “Of the *manner* in which God bestows this wisdom the writer does not deal; it is fact of it which is here affirmed” (Woods, Guy N., 1964, A Commentary on The Epistle of James, p. 41).
      - D. Lenski wrote, “God has his means for giving additional wisdom. This is his word. Wisdom does not come down out of the sky. God’s Spirit instructs, enlightens, makes wise by means of the word. This angel of the matter James takes up again in verse 21” (Lenski, R.C., 1954, Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle to James, p. 525).
  3. We take note that “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” - Proverbs 9:10.
3. . . . that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; . . .
  - A. Literally, the idea here is to ask of the “God who is giving.”



- B. The word “liberally” (“haplos”) indicated the concept of “simplicity,” “sincerity,” “unconditionally.”
- C. The phrase “upbraideth (“oneidize”) not” referred to the idea of reproach or to cast in one’s teeth - Matthew 5:11.
  - 1. The point James made was that God would not reproach His children for asking of Him for wisdom.
    - A. Man may give grudgingly, but God will not - Luke 11:9-11.
- 4. . . . and it shall be given him.
  - A. Similar to the promise seen in Matthew 7:7, 11.
    - 1. Of course, this promise is qualified by asking according to the will of God, as is going to be stressed - 1 John 5:14.

#### Verse 6

- 1. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.
  - A. The word “faith” (“pistis”) had reference to assurance, confidence, and reliance upon.
    - 1. We see the idea of an active dependence on Deity by the child of God - Hebrews 11:6.
    - 2. Asking in faith is asking according to the will of God as reflected in the Scriptures - Romans 10:17; 2 Peter 1:3.
    - 3. The Lord, while on earth, stressed this - Mark 11:24.
    - 4. What needs to be seen here is that faith is the springboard to getting from God what He would desire to give us.
      - A. Whether salvation, that starts with faith (Mark 16:16), or the Christian graces that are added to faith (2 Peter 1:5-7) or answered prayer, faith is the prerequisite.
  - B. “Wavering” would be seen as “doubting” as seen in the American Standard, English Standard and other modern versions.
- 2. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.
  - A. The illustration here is that of the tide rushing in, pausing for but a moment, and then rushing out again.
    - 1. Paul addressed the attitude of stability with the Ephesians - Ephesians 4:14.
  - B. The emphasis here is that the child of God had constant faith in God and relies upon Him with a constant understanding of His faithfulness.

#### Verse 7

- 1. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.
  - A. One that prays doubting God might as well not pray!
  - B. There are several things that Jesus emphasized relative to prayer either by example or by teaching.
    - 1. Expectance - Mark 6:5-8.
    - 2. Humility - Luke 18:9-14.
    - 3. Persistency - Luke 11:5-10.
    - 4. Simplicity - Matthew 6:5-8.
  - C. The Bible points to several ways in which prayers are answered.
    - 1. God may give what is asked for - 1 Kings 17:1; 18:41; James 5:17, 18.
    - 2. God may say “no” - Matthew 26:39.
    - 3. God may delay His answer - Jeremiah 42:1-9; Luke 18:1-8.

4. God may give us something different - 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.
5. God may give more than what was asked for - 1 Kings 3:5-15.

Verse 8

1. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.
  - A. The phrase “double minded” (“dipsuchos”) referred to one that has two minds.
    1. Found only here and in James 4:8 in the New Testament.
    2. What we see is a person who had an inner struggle, going one direction and then the other.
      - A. It is important to understand, that the faithful child of God cannot have his mind upon God and the world at the same time - Matthew 6:24; 1 John 2:15-17.
  - B. “Unstable” (“akatastatos”) referred to one that was disorderly, such as one that is drunk who staggers this way and that way.
    1. It pointed to one that is inconsistent in prayer, but also in every area of their life.
      - A. One that is such when it comes to prayer will be the same in all other areas.

Verse 9

1. Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:
  - A. The first of two examples given by James relative to the testing of faith.
    1. Here, the contrast of poor brethren with rich brethren.
  - B. The phrase “of low degree” (“ho tapeinos”) referred to those of humble station in life.
    1. It could be said that such were poor in the fullest sense, literally being at the poverty level.
    2. Many Jews that converted to Christianity lost their property and status in the community as other Jews pressured them to return to Judaism.
  - C. To “rejoice” or “glory” (“kauchaomai”) would be the result of their being exalted in Christ - Romans 5:11.
    1. The reason for the “rejoicing” was that they now had a “high estate” as seen in the English Standard Version which referred to their spiritual condition.
      - A. You might consider James 2:5 on this.
    2. Several things can be seen that are found in the New Testament that were made possible by their faith and obedience.
      - A. Name written in heaven - Luke 10:20.
      - B. Spiritual blessings - Ephesians 1:3.
      - C. Being joint heirs with Christ - James 2:5.
      - D. To sit in heavenly places - Ephesians 2:6.
  - D. It is important to remember, that those that are exalted shall be humble - Matthew 23:12.

Verse 10

1. But the rich, in that he is made low: . . .
  - A. The second contrast given by James is seen here.
    1. His point is that the Christian that is wealthy does not depend on his wealth to help him through times of trial.
  - B. Too often, those who are wealthy put their trust in their wealth rather than the Lord - Matthew 19:23; 1 Timothy 6:9.
2. . . . because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.
  - A. Even the wealthy face death.

1. As beautiful as the flower is, its beauty is temporary.
  - A. Likewise, the eternal benefits of wealth do not exist - Mark 8:36, 37; Luke 12:20.
- B. Recall the story of the “Rich man and Lazarus” - Luke 16:19-31.
  1. Even the wealthy need to put their trust in the Lord - Ephesians 2:7.

Verse 11

1. 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: . . .
  - A. This portion of this passage comes from Isaiah 40:6-8 where Isaiah made the statement relative to the brevity of life in contrast to the eternal word of God.
    1. We may also recall James 4:14 and 1 Peter 1:23-25.
2. . . . so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.
  - A. James makes application of Isaiah 40:6-8 to the wealthy person who has learned the point of Matthew 6:19-21 concerning laying up treasure in heaven rather than on earth.

Verse 12

1. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried . . .
  - A. The Christian that endures temptation is blessed or happy as a “reward” for his faithfully facing trials.
    1. Far too many are of the mindset that happiness comes from material things, yet here we see that it comes from enduring (“hupomeno”) temptation.
      - A. Enduring suggests the idea of one bearing up under temptation - 1 Peter 2:20.
      - B. What we see is that after temptation come the blessedness that James wrote about.
2. . . . he shall receive the crown of life, . . .
  - A. This is the “crown” (“stephanos”) of victory over trials.
    1. This would be a crown composed of garland placed on the head.
      - A. To the Jew, it represented great joy or happiness.
    2. This crown was worn by several.
      - A. Royalty - Psalm 21:3; Jeremiah 13:18.
      - B. Those that participated in a feast of happiness - Song of Solomon 3:11; Isaiah 28:1, 2.
      - C. Winner of an athletic contest - 2 Timothy 4:8.
  - B. This crown is the “crown of life,” which would be literally understood as being life itself as expressed by Jesus - John 10:10.
  - C. Recall that for one to receive this crown there must be faithfulness unto death - Revelation 2:10.
3. . . . which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.
  - A. These would be the recipients of the promise.
    1. Of course, the reason behind one’s faithfulness to God would be their love for Him - 1 John 4:19.
    2. Our proof of our love is found in our keeping His commandments - John 14:15.

Verse 13

1. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: . . .
  - A. Prior to this (verses 2-12), James wrote of external trials, but now switched to internal ones.

1. In doing so, it may be that he was dealing with either an argument or anticipated argument coming from those that had given into temptation which leads to sin in their lives.
- B. So, where did these temptations come from?
  1. Some must have been claiming from God.
    - A. But this type of temptation originated in the one that succumbed to them, rather than from God or others.
      1. James used the verb form of the word temptations here instead of the noun form previously used.
    2. It might seem normal for people tempted to sin to place the blame on others - Genesis 3:12, 13.
  2. . . . for God cannot be tempted with evil, . . .
    - A. Scripture reveals that God the Father has never experienced evil and because of this, He does not entice man to sin.
    - B. The word “tempted” (“apeirastos”) is in the negative indicating the idea of God being not capable of temptation.
      1. The reason this is true is that temptation is contrary to the holiness of God - Habakkuk 1:12, 13.
      2. Temptation referred to the solicitation to do evil.
        - A. As such, God cannot be thusly tempted.
    - C. We should recall that sin is that which separates humanity from God - Isaiah 59:1, 2.
  3. . . . neither tempteth he any man:
    - A. It is one thing to see that external trials are used by God to test Christians and to suggest that God leads them to temptation and sin.
      1. So we see the conclusion of all of this.

#### Verse 14

1. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.
  - A. Herein we see the progression that man experienced as temptation turns to lust and lust to sin.
  - B. “Lust” (“epithumia”) referred to a strong desire for something or to do something.
    1. Such comes from within, i.e. the heart.
      - A. It can be either good or bad.
        1. Good - Luke 22:15; Philippians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:17.
        2. Bad - Matthew 5:28; Romans 13:14; Galatians 5:16.
  - C. The phrase “drawn away” metaphorically referred to a fish swimming along, seeing the bait before it, and having a strong desire to eat it.
    1. This leads to the fish eventually being caught.
    2. Perhaps we see this in what happened to Eve (Genesis 3:6) and Achan - Joshua 7:21.
    3. So what we see is that there is no external power that causes man to sin, but he does so due to the unwillingness to keep his internal desires under control.

#### Verse 15

1. Then when lust hath conceived, . . .
  - A. A sequence of events is seen here with one thing leading to another.
  - B. “Lust” here would be in the sense of unbridled desire.

- C. To “conceive” is from the Greek word “sullambano,” having reference to the conception that comes about due to the desire seen here relative to lust.
- 2. . . . it bringeth forth sin: . . .
  - A. Literally, to bear sin as one would bear a child after conception.
  - B. “Sin” in the Greek is “he hamartia,” and referred to “the sin” that results from conception.
- 3. . . . and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.
  - A. “When it is finished” referred to sin reaching the state of being “full-grown” as to its function.
    - 1. This, of course, would be in it bringing “forth death” - Romans 6:23; 8:6.
  - B. Literally, what we see here is the birth of death.

#### Verse 16

- 1. Do not err, my beloved brethren.
  - A. The word “err” is from the Greek word “planasthe,” and had reference to one being deceived as seen in the English Standard Version.
    - 1. It was often used to refer to one being deceived by doctrinal error - Mark 12:24; 1 Timothy 6:10, 21.
  - B. It is used later in James (James 5:20) referring to one that left the truth and was in need of being converted from the error he was now in.
    - 1. Recall how Satan “beguiled” Eve - Genesis 3:1-6; 1 Timothy 1:13-15.
  - C. Of course, Satan is still practicing deception today - 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 6:7-9; Ephesians 5:20.
    - 1. Due to this, caution must be exercised - 1 Peter 5:8.
  - D. James was warning those to whom he addressed this epistle that they be careful to not to allow themselves to be deceived and, therefore, blame God for their sin.

#### Verse 17

- 1. Every good gift . . .
  - A. Carrying on with the point made in verse 16, James stressed the fact that the “gifts” (“dosis”) that came from God were “good” (agathos).
    - 1. Literally, what we see is a reference to the acts of giving - Philippians 4:15.
  - B. Since God is “good,” we would expect that which came from Him to be “good” - Psalms 52:1; 107:8.
- 2. . . . and every perfect gift is from above, . . .
  - A. “Perfect” here would have reference to that which is complete.
  - B. Keep in mind that these “gifts” that come from God are spiritual in nature rather than physical - Ephesians 1:3-14.
- 3. . . . and cometh down from the Father of lights, . . .
  - A. The phrase “cometh down” indicated the sense of such blessings being constant in their bestowal.
  - B. As “the Father of lights” we see a reference to God as Creator of the heavenly bodies - Psalms 8:3, 4; 136:1, 7.
- 4. . . . with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.
  - A. Here we see a reference to the immutability of God - Psalm 102:27; Malachi 3:6.
  - B. Although the heavenly bodies may change location on a regular basis, God remains the

same - Psalm 90:2.

1. James' point was that they needed to be careful not to be deceived into believing that God would change in some way and lead them into sin.
2. As He had been the source of "good gifts," He remained the same so they were cautioned not to accuse Him of leading them into sin.

#### Verse 18

1. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, . . .
  - A. To "begat" would be to be brought forth as per the will of God via the Scriptures as seen in the English Standard Version.
    1. With the text in mind, it would make no sense for God to save man and then lead him into sin.
    2. To do so would be to make the sacrifice of Jesus of no value - John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:2-7; Hebrews 5:8, 9.
    3. The "new birth" (John 3:3, 5) that the Christian experiences is in direct contradiction to temptation to sin.
  - B. It is "with" or "by" the "word of truth" that man is begotten - John 8:32; 17:17; 1 Peter 1:23-25.
2. . . . that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.
  - A. Here is the result of being "born again" by the Word of God.
    1. The word "firstfruits" ("aparchen") comes from the Old Testament where the farmer would pick a sampling from his crops.
      - A. When they were good, it indicated a good harvest - Leviticus 23:10; Deuteronomy 26:2.
    2. The early Christians served as evidence that there would be even more that would be converted as time passed.
    3. The word "firstfruits" is found in a number of New Testament passages - Acts 13:46; 1 Corinthians 15:20; 16:15; Revelation 14:4.
  - B. As the Israelites consecrated their firstfruits to God, Christians are to consecrate themselves to His service - Romans 8:23; 12:1, 2.
  - C. Staying, again, with the context, James continued to emphasize that they had not been saved in order to be lead into sin by the One that saved them.

#### Verse 19

1. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, . . .
  - A. The English Standard Version's reading is "Know this, . . ." indicating that those to whom James wrote should be aware of what he had just written about.
    1. The child of God's responsibility toward the Scriptures does not come to an end at the point of their obedience to the gospel.
    2. Instead, this is only the beginning.
2. . . . let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
  - A. James here provided information that informed those to whom he wrote as to how they should act now that they were Christians.
    1. To be "swift to hear" indicated a sense of eagerness when it comes to the hearing of the Word.
      - A. A similar thought is seen elsewhere in the Scriptures - Mark 4:24; 8:18; Luke

8:18.

2. To be “slow to speak” would have reference to their being warned concerning hastily blaming God for their sins.
  - A. The thought of being hasty in general is seen elsewhere - Proverbs 13:3; 17:27; Ecclesiastes 5:2.
3. To be “slow to wrath” had reference to uncontrolled anger which should be kept under control by Christians.
  - A. Too often excuses are made for those who fail to do so.
  - B. It has been said, “If Christianity hasn’t done anything for your temper, it hasn’t done anything for you.”
  - C. Being “slow to anger” in a general sense is seen throughout the Scriptures - Proverbs 14:29; 16:32; Ecclesiastes 9:9.

Verse 20

1. For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
  - A. Here James provided the reason as to why they should heed the previous warning given.
    1. One that is angry will never please God.
    2. Likewise, such a one will never be righteous in the sight of God, which is of great importance - Acts 10:35.

Verse 21

1. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, . . .
  - A. Because of what had just been written, those to whom James wrote were to take action.
    1. To “lay apart” was to “put away,” coming from the Greek word “apothemenos,” which carried with it the idea of “stripping off” as one would clothing.
    - A. Of course, that which was to be “stripped off” was “all filthiness.”
      1. This was from the Greek word “ruparia,” and referred to that which was dirty.
        - A. In this case, sin or moral defilement - Acts 13:46; 1 Timothy 1:19; 1 Peter 3:21; 2 Peter 1:14.
    - B. We may think of the “works of the flesh” - Galatians 5:19-21.
    - C. We may, also, take note of the list of things that Paul instructed the Colossians to “put off” seeing they had “put on the new man” - Colossians 3:8-10.
      1. This helps us to see that there is place for but one, either the “old man” or the “new man” - Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22.
  - B. The word “superfluity” should be seen as “overflowing,” as seen in the American Standard Version or “rampant,” as seen in the English Standard Version.
    1. “Superfluity” comes from the Greek word “perisseia,” and referred to a sense of excessiveness.
  - C. The word “naughtiness,” had reference to “wickedness,” coming from the Greek word “kakia.”
    1. Thus, all vice was to be put away, as one would put away filthy clothing.
2. . . . and receive with meekness the engrafted word, . . .
  - A. Having put away malice and vice the child of God was to then put on the “engrafted word” as one would remove dirty clothing and redress with clean clothing.
  - B. The word “receive,” was from the Greek word “dechomai,” and had reference to that which was deliberately received.

1. Thus, the “engrafted word” was deliberately accepted by its hearers.
- C. The word “meekness,” was from the Greek word “prautes,” and had reference to one who was in control of himself and accepted God’s dealing with him as being good.
  1. There is no resistance here to the word, thus leading the one to be “blessed” - Matthew 5:5.
- D. As to the phrase “engrafted word,” the English Standard Version states “implanted word.”
  1. This is from the Greek word “emphutos,” and referred to the sowing of the Word in the human heart - Luke 8:11-15; 1 Corinthians 3:6.
  2. As seed that is planted does not simply lie there, the “implanted word” is to grow when handled aright - Luke 8:12-15; 2 Timothy 2:15.
3. . . . which is able to save your souls.
  - A. Here is why one should actively receive the Word - Romans 1:16.
    1. Literally, the expression here meant that it was able to keep one’s soul saved.
    2. So, if one wished to be saved, they first obey the Word and then keep on obeying it - Hebrews 5:9.

#### Verse 22

1. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, . . .
  - A. The word “doer” here is from the Greek word “poietai,” and had reference to creative action such as seen in a poet - Acts 17:28.
    1. Actually, the English word “poet” is derived from this word.
    2. Literally, the word indicated that the “doer” is one that exhibits their self as one who keeps on doing whatever is under consideration.
    3. This refers to an individual responsibility.
      - A. For example, the Christian is to love his enemy - Matthew 5:44.
      - B. Likewise, the Christian has the individual responsibility to do good - Galatians 6:10.
      - C. This helps us to see that the Christian is responsible to put into practice all that God has said in His Word.
2. . . . deceiving your own selves.
  - A. The word “deceiving” here is from the Greek word “paralogizomai,” and referred to one coming to an incorrect conclusion due to false reasoning - Colossians 2:4.
  - B. It must be understood that as powerful as the gospel is (Romans 1:16), it is powerless unless put into action - Luke 6:46.

#### Verse 23

1. 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:
  - A. Here James provided an example of what he was referring to in the previous verses.
  - B. The one who beholds his face in a glass is one that is giving careful attention to what he is looking at in the mirror.
    1. This is more than a casual glance.
  - C. The phrase “natural face” is used here to refer to one’s face at birth, and was used to indicate the actual spiritual condition that is reflected back by one that honestly examines himself by the Word of God - 2 Corinthians 13:5.



1. Literally, they were what they saw.
- D. The Word of God is viewed as a “glass” (mirror), from the Greek word “esoptron.”
  1. The point was the child of God looked at the revealing of himself by the Word and was confronted with a decision that must be made - Hebrews 4:12.
  2. The faithful child of God must have “open eyes” to see his condition - Psalm 119:18.

Verse 24

1. For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.
  - A. The one described here is one who received no benefit from seeing himself in the mirror.
    1. Note that it was not that he did not see his condition, although the look was more of the nature of a glance.
    2. He carelessly glanced at himself, turned away, and forgot what he saw.
      - A. This would be similar to the “way side” hearer - Luke 8:4, 12.

Verse 25

1. But whoso looketh . . .
  - A. James, now, presents the opposing picture.
    1. The one that “looketh,” (“parakuptoo”) is the one that exerts effort as they look at something.
      - A. This is seen in Peter “stooping down” and looking into the tomb where Jesus had been laid - Luke 24:12; John 20:5.
      - B. It is also seen in Mary doing the same - John 20:11.
      - C. This indicated more of a penetrating nature of the look, since it is in contrast to the previous verse.
2. . . . into the perfect law of liberty, . . .
  - A. This is the complete “law of liberty.”
    1. “Perfect” is from the Greek word “teleion,” indicating fullness or completeness - James 1:17.
    2. Take a look at Romans 7:12-14 on the law of God.
    3. The sense of it being “perfect” is seen in the fact of the work of Christ, who gave the law - John 8:32; Romans 8:2; 2 Corinthians 3:16.
  - B. The sense of it being “law” (“nomos”) was indicative of it being viewed as a rule of action that was to be followed or adhered to.
    1. Subjection was seen here.
3. . . . and continueth therein, . . .
  - A. Literally, meaning to stand beside - Philippians 1:25.
  - B. It has to be understood, that the one who wished to be blessed is the one that continually earnestly looks into and practices the law of God - Matthew 7:21; Hebrew 5:9.
4. . . . he being not a forgetful hearer, . . .
  - A. The Greek word used here (“epilesmone”) is used only here in the New Testament.
  - B. Such a one as described here must not forget, but must continue to remember and practice what he had heard.
    1. This would indicate a sense of deliberate action - 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2.
  - C. This goes beyond the memorization of Scripture for memorization purposes only.
    1. It is the memorization so as to practice what one has learned.

5. . . . but a doer of the work, . . .
  - A. The one doing what he has been told to do is marked by his obedience.
    1. We know a person by his fruit - Matthew 3:8; 7:13, 14.
6. . . . this man shall be blessed in his deed.
  - A. "Blessed," from the Greek "makarios," similar to the Beatitudes of Jesus - Matthew 5:3-12.
    1. Seen in James 1:12.
    2. Consider Jesus' words as seen in John 13:17.
  - B. The phrase "in his deed" is seen as "in his doing" as per the English Standard Version.
    1. From the Greek word "poiesis," used only here in the New Testament.

#### Verse 26

1. If any man among you. . . .
  - A. This seems to indicate that James may have had a certain person in mind.
2. . . . seem to be religious, . . .
  - A. The reading as per the English Standard Version is closer to the actual statement here, "If anyone thinks he is religious . . ."
  - B. This person either thinks to himself, or others may view him as being "religious" due to a number of external factors - Matthew 6:1-18.
    1. Consider how we often determine one's "faithfulness," i.e. the frequency they attend services, which proves nothing other than they attend services frequently.
      - A. What about other things?
        1. Evangelism?
        2. Prayer?
        3. Study?
    - C. The word translated "religious" is from the adjective "threskos," and is not found elsewhere in the Scriptures.
      1. It seems to refer to one that was motivated to serve God out of fear.
      2. James, though, sought to show that the manifestation of true religion was seen in acts prompted by love - John 14:15.
3. . . . and bridled not his tongue, . . .
  - A. "Bridled" is from the Greek word "chalinagogeō," and was used here of one that puts a bridle in his own mouth in order to control himself when it came to speech.
    1. Note a similar metaphor seen in Matthew 22:12.
    2. Note, also, Jesus' instructions in Matthew 12:34-37
4. . . . but deceiveth his own heart, . . .
  - A. "Deceiveth" is from the Greek "apaton," and referred to the idea of one playing a trick on himself.
  - B. Recall that the issues of one's life comes from their heart - Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:19; Mark 7:21.
  - C. It is one thing to be deceived by others, and a totally other thing to practice deceit on yourself.
5. . . . this man's religion is vain.
  - A. The one described here had caused his religion (his external observance) to be "worthless" as per the English Standard Version.

B. The Greek word “mataios” is found in 1 Corinthians 3:20; 15:17 and 1 Peter 1:18, as well as here.

1. James’ point was that the end result of this person’s religion was that it was of no value.

Verse 27

1. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, . . .

A. A contrast is being drawn here with what had just been considered.

1. James added to the need to control the tongue additional characteristics needed in order to practice the pure religion that God demands of His saints.

B. The word “pure” here is from the Greek word “katharos,” and had reference to that which had been “cleansed.”

1. Literally, it referred to that which began in a polluted condition, but had been cleansed.

A. One that had become a Christian had gone through that cleansing process - Matthew 26:28; Acts 22:16; 1 John 2:2; Revelation 1:5.

B. We, also, take note that this process is one that is ongoing as one walks in the light and is continually cleansed by the blood of Christ - 1 John 1:7.

C. The word “undefiled” was from the Greek word “amiantos,” and had reference to one being contamination free.

2. . . . To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, . . .

A. To “visit,” (“episkesthai”) literally meant to look after, with a view toward providing the necessary assistance needed - Matthew 25:36, 43.

1. There was, also, the sense of the continuation of visits and assistance as needed.

B. Two categories of those in need are mentioned.

1. There is no reason to assume that James was saying that only these two were “worthy” of such care.

2. The “fatherless” (“orphanos”), had reference to those bereft of their father, mother, or both by death or desertion (abandonment), which was a common pagan practice at this time.

A. Used only here and John 14:18 in the New Testament.

B. The kind of care seen here is indicative of the same care that God shows - Psalms 68:5; 146:9; Luke 20:45-57.

3. The “widows” (“chera”), had reference to those bereft of a husband.

A. There seems to be a broader perspective seen here than just “widows,” as it appears this may well speak to wives that had been deserted by their husbands.

1. Taking care of “widows” was something done frequently by the early church - Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 5:3-10.

3. . . . and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

A. James now moved to the personal responsibility of taking care of one’s self spiritually wise.

B. The word “unspotted” came from the Greek word “aspilos,” and referred to being free from blemish, spot or stain.

1. Undoubtedly, this had been taken from the practice under the Law of Moses with the Israelites being commanded not to defile themselves by coming in contact with that

- which was considered to be unclean.
2. Since the Christian had been cleansed by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18, 19) he was to take caution to be sure not to be polluted by the things of the world - Romans 12:1, 2; 1 John 2:15-17.
    - A. It is understood that the Christian is in the world, but not of the world - John 17:14-16; 1 Corinthians 5:10.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### Verse 1

1. My brethren, . . .
  - A. James looked upon them as “brethren,” even though they had sinned.
2. . . . have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, . . .
  - A. The English Standard states, “My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, . . .” which provides us with some clarity here.
  - B. The point James was making was that Christians were prohibited from showing partiality since, as Paul put it, they “are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” - Galatians 3:26-28.
  - C. A similar condemnation against partiality was seen under the Law of Moses - Deuteronomy 1:17.
    1. However, it seems that many of the Jews paid no attention to what they were commanded, bringing such into the church, thus causing James to address the matter here.
  - D. James’ point here was that since they had faith in Christ, they could not practice partiality since Jesus did not practice it - Luke 15:1, 2; 20:10-26; 10:25-37.
3. . . . the Lord of glory, . . .
  - A. James’ reference to Jesus being “Lord of glory” had reference to His being God incarnate - John 1:1-7; Philippians 2:5-8; Hebrews 1:8.
    1. Robertson indicated that “James thus terms ‘our Lord Jesus Christ’ the Shekinah Glory of God” (Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. VI, p. 27).
4. . . . with respect of persons.
  - A. “Respect of persons” came from the Greek word “prosopolempsiais,” and was seen in Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25 and had reference to one looking with favor on the countenance of another.
  - B. The prejudice that was forbidden here would cover all types such as national, racial and social.

### Verse 2

1. For if there come unto your assembly . . .
  - A. There is an indication that this was a visitor, which was a common practice - 1 Corinthians 14:23.
  - B. The American Standard Version states, “For if there come into your synagogue . . .” which comes from the Greek “sunagogen.”
    1. This would be in reference to an assembly of Jewish Christians, assembled to worship - Luke 12:11.
2. . . . a man with a gold ring, . . .

- A. Literally, “a gold fingered man.”
  - 1. The wearing of rings by men on every finger was a common practice as it represented wealth.
    - A. It was not uncommon for men to rent rings, especially Jews who wanted to be looked upon as wealthy - Luke 15:22.
- 3. . . . in goodly apparel, . . .
  - A. This would be bright colored clothing as seen elsewhere in the New Testament - Luke 23:11; Acts 10:30| Revelation 18:41.
- 4. . . . and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;
  - A. This would, also, be a visitor.
  - B. The word “poor” here is from the Greek word “ptochos” literally referring to a beggar - Matthew 19:21.
    - 1. Thus an extreme contrast, as this person depended upon others for sustenance - Luke 16:20-23.
  - C. The phrase “vile raiment” referred to shabby or vile clothing, indicative of their filthiness.
    - 1. The Greek word “ruparos” was used only here and in Revelation 22:11.

#### Verse 3

- 1. And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, . . .
  - A. The “respect” here was of the nature that those in the assembly gazed upon the one that wore such fine clothing.
    - 1. The Greek word “epiblepo” is found only here and Luke 1:48 and 9:38.
  - B. The word “weareth” is from the Greek word “phorounta” and referred to one that regularly wore such clothing.
  - C. The phrase “gay clothing” would be the “goodly apparel” seen in verse 2.
- 2. . . . and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; . . .
  - A. This would be instructing this person to sit in the place of honor similar to Matthew 23:6.
    - 1. We see an imperative here, indicating the sense of this one being commanded to do so.
- 3. . . . and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:
  - A. Basically, the one that is poor and poorly dressed was being told to either stand out of the way, or sit in such a place that would be humiliating.

#### Verse 4

- 1. Are ye not then partial in yourselves, . . .
  - A. The English Standard Version asks, “Have you not then made distinctions among yourselves . . .” similar to the American Standard Version.
  - B. The word “partial” is derived from the Greek word “diakrino,” and indicated the idea of a separation.
  - C. The question here was rhetorical in nature.
    - 1. The answer was obvious!
  - D. Once again, a double-minded person was seen here as in James 1:6-8.
    - 1. Literally, this person was at odds with himself, as in the long run he knows his actions are contrary to being a Christian.
- 2. . . . and are become judges of evil thoughts?

- A. Judging others was not the problem here.
  - 1. The problem was the standard used to judge them.
- B. Christians are to use the standards set forth by God in His Word to judge by, not the standards of the world - John 7:24.
  - 1. The Greek word “kritai,” used here, referenced the idea of proper reasoning that was equitable.
    - A. Literally, the translation is “judges with evil thoughts” (Robertson, p. 29).
- C. Improper judgment is seen in Jesus’ words on the matter - Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 6:37.

Verse 5

- 1. Hearken, my beloved brethren, . . .
  - A. To “hearken” is to listen with attention, as seen in the Greek word “akouo,” - Acts 4:17; 7:2; 15:13.
  - B. In the previous verses, James indicated error of which he now will tell them why what they were doing was wrong.
    - 1. James was now going to provide three reasons as to why the brethren to whom he wrote should be willing to accept the poor into fellowship with them.
- 2. . . . Hath not God chosen the poor of this world . . .
  - A. The word “chosen” is from the Greek word “eklego,” and referred to the choosing or selecting for oneself without indicating rejection of that which was not chosen.
    - 1. The choosing here was indicative of favor, kindness or love - Mark 13:20; Acts 1:2, 24; 15:22.
    - 2. Of course, one becomes a Christian, not based on his financial status, but on whether he has obeyed the gospel - Mark 16:15, 16; Romans 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14.
    - 3. God had chosen that the gospel be preached to the poor - Matthew 11:5; Luke 4:18.
      - A. Not to be understood, that the gospel was preached to the poor to the exclusion of the rich.
- 3. . . . rich in faith, . . .
  - A. The riches here are of a spiritual nature similar to that which Jesus counseled the church at Laodicea to obtain - Revelation 3:18.
    - 1. Herein is the means whereby the child of God can lay up treasure in heaven - Matthew 6:19-21.
  - B. Even though poor, they could rejoice in their condition - James 1:9.
- 4. . . . and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?
  - A. The word “heirs” had reference to the one that obtains a portion of an inheritance.
  - B. The word “kingdom,” here referred to the Messianic kingdom - Matthew 16:19; Colossians 1:13.
    - 1. The “kingdom” had been promised by Jesus to the poor in spirit - Matthew 5:3.
  - C. The manifestation of this love is seen in the keeping of the commandments - John 14:15.

Verse 6

- 1. But ye have despised the poor.
  - A. It is a sin to “despise” another - Proverbs 14:21.
    - 1. Here, they withheld the honor due those described in the previous verse.
  - B. The word “despised” was from the Greek word “atimazo,” and had reference to treating another shamefully.

1. It is often translated “dishonored,” as seen in the English Standard Version.
2. One can “dishonor” another various ways.
  - A. In deed - Mark 12:4; Luke 20:11.
  - B. In word - John 8:49.
2. Do not rich men oppress you, . . .
  - A. The word “oppress” here (“katadunasteuo”) had reference to harsh treatment brought on them by the wealthy - Proverbs 22:7.
    1. The Sadducees were known to be oppressors of the poor, both Jews and Christians.
      - A. Because of this, the Christians should have been sensitive to doing the same to others, especially their brethren!
3. . . . and draw you before the judgment seats?
  - A. The “drawing” here is better seen as their being “dragged” before the judgment seat - Luke 12:58; Acts 8:3; 16:19; 21:30.
  - B. The American Standard Version states, “Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seat?”
    1. James’ point was that the ones of whom the Christians were showing partiality to were the ones that were dragging them to court.
  - C. History reveals that the Jews looked for any reason they could to drag others to the court.
    1. Jesus warned of this - Matthew 10:17.

#### Verse 7

1. Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?
  - A. The word “blaspheme” is from the Greek word “blasphemousin,” and referred to the idea of speaking evil of another - Luke 22:65; Romans 3:8; Titus 3:2.
    1. There is a sense of slander that goes along with this.
  - B. The American Standard and English Standard Versions translate the phrase “worthy name” to “honorable name.”
    1. Robertson translated it as “The beautiful name.” (Robertson, p. 30).
    2. Undoubtedly, reference to the name of Christ.
      - A. Those that spoke against Christ were guilty of blaspheming His name - Acts 13:45; 1 Corinthians 12:3.
    3. Clearly we can see from this the error of “Christians” who would honor those that blasphemed Christ.

#### Verse 8

1. If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, . . .
  - A. It appears that either James anticipated an argument that may be used against what he had just written, or he was aware that some were already arguing thusly.
    1. The argument would be along the line of their claiming that in doing what they were doing they were simply fulfilling of the law to love their neighbor.
  - B. So far as the law being viewed as the “royal law,” we would take note of the point of the origin of this law.
    1. Since it came from God, we see the nobility associated with it.
    2. The Greek word “basilikos” referring to that which came from a king.
    3. Of course, this law was actually broken by the partiality that was being shown.
  - C. As to the phrase “according to the scripture” we see reference to Leviticus 19:17, 18.

2. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:
  - A. The word “neighbour” is from the Greek word “plesion,” and had a broader emphasis than our English word neighbor.

Verse 9

1. But if ye have respect to persons, . . .
  - A. Directly in reference to the partiality discussed above.
2. . . . ye commit sin, . . .
  - A. Sin is the transgression of the law - 1 John 3:4.
  - B. Their appeal to Leviticus 19:17, 18 actually worked against them.
  - C. Literally, the idea of working at sin as per Jesus’ words - Matthew 7:23.
3. . . . and are convinced of the law as transgressors.
  - A. Appealing to the Law brought up the obligation to comply with all of it, not just the parts they liked - Galatians 5:3.
  - B. The word “convinced” is better understood as “convicted,” from the Greek word “elencho.”
    1. The idea was they were convicted by the evidence of their guilt - John 3:20; 1 Corinthians 14:24.

Verse 10

1. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.
  - A. With 613 laws in the Torah, the Jews were “good” at viewing many of them as non-binding - [http://www.hisglory.us/DOCUMENTS/613\\_biblical\\_laws.htm](http://www.hisglory.us/DOCUMENTS/613_biblical_laws.htm).
    1. Because of this, they kept the ones they liked and rejected the ones they did not like.
  - B. When tempted by Satan, Jesus stressed that one lives by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” - Matthew 4:4.
    1. Of course, He was quoting Deuteronomy 8:3.
  - C. This was no doubt the issue that Jesus had in mind when He spoke concerning vain worship associated with “teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men” - Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7-9.
  - D. It is seen here, that one may be viewed as guilty before God by breaking of the Law in one point.
    1. He did not have to break every commandment to be guilty - Romans 6:23; Galatians 3:10.
    2. By the way, it is important to see that it was the Law of Moses that was under consideration here.

Verse 11

1. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, . . .
  - A. Reference to God Who had, through Moses, instructed the Israelites not to commit adultery - Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18.
    1. The word “adultery” is from the Greek word “moicheuo,” and referred to sexual intercourse outside of marriage, involving, at least, one married person.
2. . . . said also, Do not kill.
  - A. Reference to Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17.
    1. The word “kill” is from the Greek word “phoneuo,” and is better understood as “murder,” which is the premeditated killing of another.



3. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.
  - A. James' point was that as the Law of Moses was to be taken as a unit, to transgress one law was to transgress the whole - Leviticus 19:37.
  - B. Jesus had previously pointed out that man could be in danger of judgment even though he had not committed murder - Matthew 5:21, 22, 43, 44, 46-48.
    1. Recall the words of Moses to Israel concerning the obligation to hear, learn and obey the ordinances of God - Deuteronomy 5:1.

Verse 12

1. So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.
  - A. James now called their attention to the fact that their standard of conduct did not involve an appeal to the Law or traditions of men, since they were now under the authority of Christ.
  - B. Every accountable person will be judged by God's Word - John 12:48; Romans 2:16; 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Verse 13

1. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; . . .
  - A. Those that were mistreating the poor were failing to show the kind of mercy that God extends to the poor, as previously noted.
    1. Such mercy is seen as an attribute of God - Exodus 33:19; Numbers 14:18.
    2. "Mercy" is from the Greek word "eleos," and had reference to pity that was acted upon.
  - B. Basically, they would reap what they sowed.
2. . . . and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.
  - A. Those that show mercy have no reason to fear judgment to come - Matthew 5:7.
    1. This is not indicating that showing of mercy is the only thing necessary to please God.
      - A. Rather, the one that is a child of God should be merciful and, as such, has no reason to fear judgment.

Verse 14

1. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?
  - A. A subtle change of direction here by James, as he now addressed faith, especially as it related to the manifestation of faith by proper treatment of others.
    1. This may be an occasion where James, like Paul, anticipated an objection - Romans 6:1, 2.
  - B. His point was that there is no advantage, from the Greek word "ophelos," for one to claim they have faith if it is not sustained by actions.
    1. It is important to take note of the tense here which indicated the sense of continued action in association with both word and deed - Luke 6:46.
  - C. The question, ". . . can that faith save him?" was posed clearly looking for a negative response.
    1. Once again, very similar to Paul's question - Romans 6:1.

Verse 15

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

- A. James argued that for a fellow child of God to come into the assembly in need, and for that need to be overlooked, was contrary to the active faith that the Christian is to possess.
- B. The word “naked” is from the Greek word “gumnos,” and referred not only to the case of one wearing no clothing, but also to one dressed insufficiently - Matthew 25:36; Acts 19:16.
  - 1. We should think about this when we dress to go out in the public.
- C. Being “destitute of daily food” reminds us of the daily allotment that Jesus referred to - Matthew 6:11.
  - 1. This refers to a lack of sufficient food to sustain them.
- D. Of course, James’ point was that those that have the active faith required of the child of God will take action - Galatians 6:10; James 1:27.
  - 1. This “Christian” responsibility is not something we can “pawn off” on someone else!
  - 2. The kind of love that God would have the Christian to possess would be active - 1 John 3:18.

#### Verse 16

- 1. And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; . . .
  - A. To “depart in peace” was to say something like “be safe.”
    - 1. It was a common Jewish farewell message - Judges 18:6; Mark 5:34.
    - 2. Note, though, it was nothing more than words.
  - B. Literally, James was saying that the one that entered the assembly was being told to “warm and fill” themselves - John 18:18.
- 2. . . . notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?
  - A. Robertson wrote, “. . . to give, cold deeds with warm words . . .” (Robertson, p. 35).
  - B. Once again, a question posed in such a way so as to elicit the negative answer, “nothing!”

#### Verse 17

- 1. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.
  - A. The condition of the faith that James had been writing about was dead through and through.
    - 1. Here is an absence of the works necessary to prove one’s faith.
      - A. Literally, the idea that this faith keeps on not having works and is, therefore, dead.
  - B. James’ point here stressed the connection of faith and works since works would be the natural product of faith.

#### Verse 18

- 1. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: . . .
  - A. Whether James had himself in mind or some other unnamed objector is not known.
    - 1. This could be a similar situation as Paul’s reference to “a man” that had been caught up to Paradise - 2 Corinthians 12:2-4.
      - A. Who it was really made no difference, just like in Paul’s case.
  - B. The separation of faith and works here resulted in the one that possessed one without the other being in a condition wherein he could not please God.
- 2. . . . shew me thy faith without thy works, . . .
  - A. The point that James made was that faith apart (“choris”) from works places one in a

condition similar to what is seen in Hebrews 11:6.

3. . . . and I will shew thee my faith by my works.
  - A. One that is a child of God will do the works necessary for God to be glorified - Matthew 5:16.
    1. Such would be seen as the natural by-product of faith, much like action being the natural by-product of love (“agape”).

Verse 19

1. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: . . .
  - A. The doctrine of monotheism is seen in both Judaism and Christianity.
    1. The phrase that begins this verse is the first line of the Shema, which was a quotation as part of the twice daily Jewish prayers - Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:13, 21; Numbers 15:37-41.
  - B. James pointed out that their belief in one God was good, so far as it went.
    1. It just did not go far enough!
2. . . .the devils also believe, and tremble.
  - A. The demons go as far as believing in one God, but that belief does not cause them to seek for righteousness.
    1. There is no doubt that Satan could easily indicate his belief in God, but you will not find him working works of righteousness!
  - B. The demons have sufficient faith in God to “tremble” or “shudder” as seen in the English Standard Version.
    1. James pointed out that the demons took their faith one step further than those to whom he wrote.
      - A. That is a scary thought, when you think about it!

Verse 20

1. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?
  - A. James turned to a new argument here.
    1. He asked them if they were willing to know the truth.
      - A. Truth is available, but one must be willing to accept it - John 8:32; 17:17; Acts 2:41.
  - B. The phrase “vain man” is “o anthrope kene” and literally indicated that those to whom he wrote were “empty headed” when it came to having the faith necessary to do the good works expected of them.
  - C. The American Standard Version states, “. . . faith apart from works is barren.”
    1. “Barren” was from the Greek “arge,” and suggested the idea of inactivity.
      - A. Literally, there is no profit to having such a faith as a barren land would produce no crops.

Verse 21

1. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?
  - A. James now turned to the Scriptures to prove his point, using Abraham as an example.
    1. The point here was since Abraham and Sarah were justified by their faith, which was an active one, how could they believe they could be justified by a dead faith?
  - B. Justification referred to a decision of a judicial nature wherein one that was guilty

being freed from his guilt, therefore resulting in his being seen as righteous.

Verse 22

1. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, . . .
  - A. Although Abraham “believed God,” his faith was not what it needed to be until it was coupled with works - Galatians 3:6.
    1. Had Abraham not followed through with God’s instructions concerning Isaac, his faith would not have resulted in his being viewed by God as righteous - Genesis 22:1-12.
  - B. We also, need to take note that we see that Abraham’s works of faith were perpetual.
    1. His faith was not shown to be what it was by the onetime event involving the sacrifice of Isaac!
2. . . . and by works was faith made perfect?
  - A. Perfection here was in the sense of something being carried to the end.
  - B. It is important to see that this had nothing to do with the Law of Moses, thus Martin Luther’s comments that “James’ epistle is really an epistle of straw” and that he did “not regard it as the writing of an apostle” all came from a misunderstanding of what he believed to be a contradiction between James and Paul.  
([http://assets.bakerpublishinggroup.com/processed/esource assets/files/530/original/hyperlink-24-05.pdf?1375210274](http://assets.bakerpublishinggroup.com/processed/esource/assets/files/530/original/hyperlink-24-05.pdf?1375210274))
    1. Further, it should be seen that their teachings concerning faith came from two perspectives.
      - A. Paul, Romans chapters 3, 4, from an initial perspective.
        1. This faith and works had to do with faith in relation to obedience to the gospel - Romans 1:16.
        2. Remember, Paul pointed out that faith worked through love - Galatians 5:6.
      - B. James, from a later perspective.
        1. This faith and works had to do with the good works the child of God is obligated to do after obedience to the gospel - Ephesian 2:10.

Verse 23

1. And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: . . .
  - A. James, here, quoted from Genesis 15:6 as evidence that what he wrote above was true.
    1. Paul had previously quoted the same passage showing that Abraham’s faith existed prior his circumcision.
2. . . . and he was called the Friend of God.
  - A. A reference to 2 Chronicles 20:7; and Isaiah 41:8.
  - B. We might remind ourselves that only those that keep the commandments of God will be considered His friends - John 14:15.

Verse 24

1. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.
  - A. From what James had just written they should be able to “see” his point.
    1. Justification does not come from meritorious works.
      - A. There is nothing being written by James regarding their need to keep the Law of Moses.

2. Keep in mind that the “gift of God is eternal life” - Romans 6:23.
  - A. Gifts involve two people, the giver and the recipient.
    1. There may be “strings” attached to gifts, such as those “attached” to salvation, i.e. faith, repentance, confession and baptism.

#### Verse 25

1. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?
  - A. Another familiar person brought up by James to “argue” his point.
    1. Taken from Joshua 2:1-21; 6:17, 22-25.
    2. Rahab was not of the family of Abraham, so it appears the reason James used her was to show that for anyone to be justified in the sight of God, no matter who they may be, justification comes from works associated with their faith.
  - B. There is no reason to not believe that Rahab was a prostitute.
    1. The Greek word “porne” means a prostitute.
    2. However, keep in mind her lineage associated with the birth of Christ - Matthew 1:5.
  - C. The Hebrew writer included Rahab in his list of men and women of faith - Hebrews 11:31.
    1. In examination of the list found in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews, we see that repeatedly the message was they “by faith”, i.e. an active faith, accomplished what God asked of them and were blessed accordingly.

#### Verse 26

1. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
  - A. The body without the spirit is dead, as the spirit is what animates it - Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7.
    1. Think of an electric fan with no electricity.
  - B. Faith without works is dead, as works is seen as the demonstration of faith and if there is no demonstration, there is no life in that kind of “faith.”

### CHAPTER THREE:

#### Verse 1

1. My brethren, . . .
  - A. It is evident that James was addressing those that were his spiritual brethren, i.e. members of the church.
2. . . . be not many masters, . . .
  - A. Better as per the ASV, “be not many of you teachers,” the ESV, “Not many of you should become teachers,” or the NKJV, “let not many of you become teachers.”
    1. James’ point was that they needed to exercise care in being teachers due to the serious nature of being one.
  - B. The word “masters” (“teachers”) here is from the Greek word “ginesthe,” and literally gave instruction for them to “stop being teachers.”
    1. It seems that there were those that wanted to teach, but they were not possessive of sufficient knowledge to do so.
    2. The situation seems to be that there were those who wanted to be teachers for no other reason than the prestige that went along with being one.

- C. Being afforded the opportunity to teach was something common among the Jewish people.
  - 1. In study of the public ministry of Jesus, we take note that He often used such opportunities to teach in the Synagogues of His day - Matthew 12:9-13; Mark 1:39; Luke 6:6.
- D. The Apostle Paul wrote concerning those who sought to be teachers, but who had no idea what they were teaching - 1 Timothy 1:7.
  - 1. Roberson's words are interesting here, "Teachers are necessary, but incompetent and unworthy ones do much harm." (Robertson, p. 39).
- 3. . . . knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.
  - A. James stressed the fact that they were well aware of the consequences associated with their actions.
  - B. The phrase "greater condemnation" ("meizon krima") is translated "heavier judgment" in the American Standard Version; "will be judged with greater strickness" in the English Standard Version; and "stricter judgment" in the New King James Version.
    - 1. No doubt due to the fact of the existence of false teachers, and the value of the truth, God will judge those that pervert the gospel strictly - Matthew 7:15; Acts 20:28-30; Galatians 1:6-9; 2:5; 1 John 4:1; John 8:32; Romans 1:16.

#### Verse 2

- 1. For in many things we offend all.
  - A. James' point here was that in many ways and on numerous occasions ("polla") the child of God "stumbles" ("ptaiomen").
    - 1. This would apply to the teachers introduced in verse 1, as well as all others.
- 2. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, . . .
  - A. The phrase "in word" ("en logoi") would be inclusive of all speech, but would specifically apply to teaching.
    - 1. To teach error places one in dire condition before God.
  - B. The typical Biblical meaning for "perfection" should be seen here, i.e. the idea of spiritual character and maturity.
    - 1. James was not suggesting that men possessed the level of "perfection," only that it was available by proper control of the tongue, and improper use of the tongue easily prevented man from attaining that goal.
- 3. . . . and able also to bridle the whole body.
  - A. This would also carry with it the implication that those that can control the tongue, which is seen as being uncontrollable, could then easily control the rest of themselves.
    - 1. We might connect this back to James 1:26.
  - B. The idea of bridling the tongue is not new - Psalm 39:1.
  - C. We can easily see how an unbridled tongue could be destructive when it comes to teaching.

#### Verse 3

- 1. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.
  - A. James sets out here to illustrate his point by the use of the horse and ship and how even small things control much larger ones.

1. We might envision the proper use of the tongue and the benefit that comes from it - Proverbs 21:23.
- B. As the horse must be trained concerning the bridle, so the child of God must be trained to properly use his tongue.

Verse 4

1. 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.
  - A. Depending upon which way the steersman turns the rudder, the ship will move in the appropriate direction.
    1. This would be something they were well aware of as they viewed the ships on the Mediterranean Sea.
  - B. The word “governor” here is better seen as “steersman,” referring to the one that piloted the ship.
  - C. In consideration of this metaphor, we see control emphasized, indicating how important it is for the child of God to control his tongue.

Verse 5

1. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.
  - A. A member of the human body - 1 Corinthians 12:12.
  - B. The tongue is used here as a metaphor to point to the boastful words that may come from the heart of man.
    1. We see arrogance and pride, all of which are contrary to the spirit of Christianity - James 4:10.
    2. The one that is exalted in the sight of God is the one that is humble - Matthew 23:12; Luke 18:14.
2. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!
  - A. A spark not under control can destroy a large forest.
    1. The unwise use of words has destroyed congregations, homes, lives and nations.

Verse 6

1. And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: . . .
  - A. Few sins are committed that do not in some way involve the tongue.
    1. A common metaphor - Proverbs 16:27; 26:18-22.
  - B. The tongue is seen by James as “a world of unrighteousness” as it partakes in the sins of so many.
    1. Expressions of pride.
    2. Expressions of lust.
    3. Lying.
    4. Words of hatred.
    5. Words designed to deceive.
    6. Gossip.
    7. Profanity.
    8. False teaching.
2. . . . so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; . . .
  - A. The tongue, as part of the human anatomy, defiles (“spilousa”) the body in that it “stains”

or “spots” it in contradiction to the command to keep oneself “unspotted from the world” - James 1:27.

1. Recall the words of Jesus concerning that which defiles man - Matthew 15:11.
- B. The “course of nature” here would have reference to the life cycle from birth to death.
  1. As a fire would spread from the axle to the spokes of a wooden wheel, so the sins of the human tongue spread throughout man’s life.
  2. I have said of some people that once they die someone will have to take a club and beat their tongue to death.
    - A. The sins of the tongue so often begin early in life and end only at death.
3. . . . and it is set on fire of hell.
  - A. We see the origin of the sins of the tongue.
    1. Remember, Satan is seen as the father of lies - John 8:44.
  - B. The word “hell” here is from the Greek word “gehennes,” and would call their attention to the Valley of Hinnom, located outside of Jerusalem.
    1. There Molech, the fire god, was worshipped and the sons of Ahaz were burned - 2 Chronicles 28:3.
    2. Later, Gehenna was associated with the eternal place of punishment for the wicked - Matthew 25:46; Mark 9:47, 48.
      - A. From this, we see the picture of the endless pain that comes from the misuse of the tongue.

#### Verse 7

1. 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:
  - A. James next pointed out that all the wild beasts had been tamed - Genesis 1:28.
    1. The four classes are derived from Genesis 9:2, 3.
  - B. By use of the present tense “is” we take note that this taming was of the nature of an ongoing process, beginning in Genesis 1:28.
  - C. On the other hand, with the phrase “hath been tamed of mankind” we see reference to what we would refer to as domesticated animals indicative of that which had already been tamed.
  - D. So, even the wildest of animals may experience some degree of being tamed.

#### Verse 8

1. But the tongue can no man tame; . . .
  - A. Not suggesting that it is impossible for the tongue to be tamed in some temporary way but, rather, it cannot be tamed once and for all.
    1. I am sure we would agree that Jesus “tamed” the tongue.
      - A. Go back and look at the list of the sins of the tongue and see if there is any there that we could truthfully accuse Him of.
2. . . . it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.
  - A. The tongue is not naturally evil, but has been “set on fire by hell.”
  - B. To be “full of deadly poison” brings to mind the sting of the viper - Psalm 58:4; 140:3; Acts 28:1-6.
    1. We can picture sins of the tongue here - Leviticus 19:16; Psalm 41:7; Proverbs 11:13; 16:28; 25:23.



#### Verse 9

1. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.
  - A. James here referred to the contradictory use of the tongue.
    1. Reference was made to the “Shemoneh Esreh,” which was 18 prayers or eulogies said three times a day with each beginning with the phrase, “Blessed be Thou, O God.”
      - A. For further information - [http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Prayers/Daily\\_Prayers/Shemoneh\\_Esrei/shemoneh\\_esrei.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Prayers/Daily_Prayers/Shemoneh_Esrei/shemoneh_esrei.html)
    2. It was common for the Jews to add words indicative of a blessing whenever God was mentioned - Mark 14:61; Luke 1:68.
  - B. Blessing God, and turning to curse man who was created in His image makes no sense - Genesis 1:26, 27; Malachi 2:10.
    1. By the way, the “curse” here is not in the modern sense of the use of profanity.
      - A. Rather, it was in the sense of putting a “curse” upon someone - Luke 6:28.
        1. This would be in the sense of invoking evil upon another, perhaps by calling upon God to do so, as is commonly done today.

#### Verse 10

1. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.
  - A. A summation here.
    1. Seen in the actions of the Pharisee - Luke 18:10-14.
2. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.
  - A. Literally, these things should not keep on happening.

#### Verse 11

1. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?
  - A. The first of several examples used by James to illustrate his point.
    1. Notice that there is a sharp contrast between “bitter and sweet water.”
  - B. There is a strong negative here, impressing upon those to whom James wrote the impossibility of both “bitter and sweet water” coming from the same location.
    1. Of course the point showing the impossibility of both “blessing and cursing” coming from the same “tongue.”

#### Verse 12

1. Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.
  - A. The arrangement of the questions here is such so as to require a negative response.
  - B. Near the Salt Sea were both fresh water and salt water wells.
    1. Thus, the reason James indicated he was referencing a single well as the wells were distinctive, not capable of producing both fresh and salt water.
      - A. This would be seen in the phrase “out of the same mouth” as seen in verse 10.

#### Verse 13

1. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you?
  - A. Here James emphasized wisdom, which was needed in order to teach properly.
    1. There is no implication that James believed that none of the brethren to whom he addressed this were wise and knowledgeable.
    2. Only that they needed to be cautious, practicing wisdom in conjunction with

knowledge.

- B. Wisdom and understanding go “hand in hand” - Proverbs 4:7.
- 2. . . . let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.
  - A. The teacher should show by his good life and his teaching the wisdom that he possesses - 1 Timothy 4:12.
  - B. There is a coupling of these things together for the end result of the teacher being the kind of one that will accomplish God’s will.
    - 1. For true “wisdom” to be had, there must be humility found in the life of the one that would be wise.

Verse 14

- 1. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.
  - A. Now the contrast, resulting in the one that possessed such negative qualities failing to be the teacher God approves of.
  - B. The sin of jealousy is often seen in a negative way in Scripture - Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 3:3; Galatians 5:19-21.
  - C. The word “strife” (“erithian”) referenced the idea of “factions” or a “factious” spirit in one’s heart.
    - 1. Such a person was more interested in what they can get out of their actions, than the good that would come from teaching the truth.
      - A. This is why they were being told to “glory not.”
    - 2. Such a boastful person would be the absolute opposite, to the humble teacher God desires to serve Him.
  - D. By their actions, they were to take care that they did not belie the truth they claimed to love and teach.
    - 1. The Christians deeds should always be for the glory of God - Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31.

Verse 15

- 1. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.
  - A. The above described actions did not come from God.
    - 1. Only wisdom that could be described as true wisdom comes from God.
  - B. The type of “wisdom” just described fits well within the list of the “works of the flesh.”
    - 1. The word “earthly” comes from the Greek word “epigeios,” and referred to that which had its origin here on earth.
    - 2. The word “sensual” comes from the Greek word “psuchike,” and referred to that which came from animal life or the sensuous.
    - 3. While the word “devilish,” came from the Greek word “daimoniodes,” and referred to that which was demon-like.

Verse 16

- 1. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.
  - A. This would lead to one “biting and devouring” others as the fruit of envy and strife - Galatians 5:15.
    - 1. “Confusion” comes from the Greek word “akatastasia,” and referred to the state of disorder - 1 Corinthians 14:33.
      - A. It is easily seen as the opposite of the conduct Christians should display.

2. The phrase “evil work” is from the Greek “phaulon,” and had reference to that which would be viewed as vile actions.

#### Verse 17

1. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, . . .
  - A. Contrasting that which comes from God to that which comes from the flesh.
  - B. The word “first” here referenced both rank and time or order.
    1. “Pure” is from the Greek word “hagne,” and had reference to one that was free from evil.
    2. The wisdom that comes from God, since He is pure and holy, is similarly pure and holy.
2. . . . then peaceable, . . .
  - A. A clear contrast here with the jealousy and selfishness seen above.
    1. From the Greek word “eirenike,” and referred to one that was a peace loving person who would be viewed by God as “blessed” - Matthew 5:9.
3. . . . gentle, . . .
  - A. From the Greek word “epieikes,” and referred to those that were fair or reasonable.
  - B. Robertson indicated that there is no English word that “renders it clearly” (Robertson, p. 47).
4. . . . and easy to be intreated, . . .
  - A. Here an attitude that was derived from the wisdom that is from above that results in such persons being easily reasoned with.
    1. This person is easily approached.
5. . . . full of mercy and good fruits, . . .
  - A. “Mercy” is from the Greek word “eleous,” and had reference to compassion toward others.
    1. Mercy is seen in the Scriptures as one of the many attributes of God - Psalm 86:5.
    2. Mercy is also seen in the Beatitudes - Matthew 5:7.
  - B. It only makes sense, that those that have received mercy will show mercy.
6. . . . without partiality, . . .
  - A. “Partiality” is seen as “variance,” from the Greek word “adiakritos,” pointing to the fact that wisdom is without prejudice and doubt.
7. . . . and without hypocrisy.
  - A. The wisdom that is from above is sincere.
    1. There is no hypocrisy associated with it - Romans 12:9.

#### Verse 18

1. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.
  - A. Righteousness has its “fruit” - Philippians 1:11.
    1. Basically, we can say that those that act according to peace reap peace.

### CHAPTER FOUR:

#### Verse 1

1. From whence come wars and fightings among you? . . .
  - A. An occasion where the chapter change causes us to think we are having a new subject introduced when such is not the case.

1. Having addressed the subject of peace, James now addressed the opposite.
- B. Of course, James was addressing the matter of quarrels and inward fighting among the brethren.
  1. This would have reference to the spiritual warfare that Paul addressed - Ephesians 6:10-13.
- C. There seems to be a distinction between the words “wars” and “fightings” wherein “wars” (“polemos”) had to do with the state of condition while “fightings” (“mache”) had to do with the various and separate conflicts that erupted among the brethren.
2. . . . come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?
  - A. James pointed out that such activities came not from God, but from within.
    1. The Apostle Paul wrote concerning the inward battle that rages within the child of God - Romans 7:23.
  - B. Specifically, as members of the church battle among themselves, such resulted in strife within the body, which was not supposed to be - Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 3:3.

#### Verse 2

1. Ye lust, and have not: . . .
  - A. “Lust” is seen here in the sense of selfishness which, in the end, did no one any good.
    1. Keep in mind that the root thought of a deep passion or desire is not the problem.
      - A. We should understand that God has a deep desire for mankind to be saved - 2 Peter 3:9.
    2. Here the desire is one involving the “lust of the flesh” - 1 John 2:15.
2. . . . ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: . . .
  - A. The word “kill” here is in reference to “murder,” from the Greek word “phoneuete” while the phrase “desire to have” is from the Greek “zeloute,” and referred to a strong desire as seen in 1 Corinthians 12:31.
    1. There is no reason to assume that actual murder is under consideration here but, rather, as per 1 John 3:15.
  - B. Some, such as Robertson, have suggested that there should be a period following the word “kill,” indicating that due to lusting and having not, they commit “murder.”
3. . . . ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.
  - A. This would be the inward turmoil within the congregation as expressed earlier.
    1. You might, also, note that James wrote here in such a way to express continuous action, indicating that they were “fighting and warring.”
  - B. Their asking not was not in reference to their refusing to pray, but to their refusing to pray as God would have them.
    1. Their prayers were turned inward due to their selfishness.
    2. They desired for that which God was not going to give them, so they acted in a way so as to get what they wanted.

#### Verse 3

1. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.
  - A. Here we see confirmation of the point made previously.
    1. They asked, but received not.
    2. Did not the Lord say, “Ask and it shall be given unto you?” - Matthew 7:7.
      - A. So what was the problem?

- B. They asked “amiss.”
  - 1. The word “amiss” is from the Greek word “kakos,” meaning to ask with evil intent.
- C. They were seeking to squander what they asked for, which was in contradiction of how and what the faithful child of God should pray, and pray for.

Verse 4

- 1. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? . . . .
  - A. Better as per the English Standard, “Ye adulterous people . . .”
    - 1. The phrase “ye adulterers” has little lexicographical support for its inclusion.
    - 2. The feminine form would better represent the church, which is seen as the bride of Christ - 2 Corinthians 11:2.
  - B. The “adultery” here would be of a spiritual nature.
  - C. Literally, one that is a “friend of the world” would be indicative of one that would love the world and the things therein - Matthew 6:24; 1 John 2:15-17.
    - 1. A clear contrast with that which is spiritually pure - Romans 12:2.
  - D. The word “enmity” is from the Greek word “echthra,” and had reference to being an enemy, such as one was before he became a child of God - Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:12-16.
- 2. . . . whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.
  - A. Embracing worldliness is turning away from God, making an enemy out of Him - Matthew 6:24; Romans 8:7, 8; 1 John 2:15-17.

Verse 5

- 1. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, . . .
  - A. There is no specific scripture referred to here.
    - 1. Perhaps a combination or a summary of several scriptures.
    - 2. The use of a collective sense is seen elsewhere - John 7:38, 42; Acts 8:32; Romans 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; Galatians 4:30; 1 Timothy 5:18.
  - B. James’ point was that if it were possible for man to have friendship with both God and the world at the same time, then the scripture which taught otherwise would be viewed as speaking in vain.
    - 1. The word “vain” comes from the Greek word “kenos,” and had reference to that which did not mean what it said.
- 2. . . . The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?
  - A. The “spirit” referred to here is the “spirit” that is within the human body.
  - B. The English Standard Version helps to give some clarity to this, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he had made to dwell in us?”
    - 1. So, what we see is God “yearning” for or over the spirit of man who He created.
    - 2. We think of God not being “willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” - 2 Peter 3:9.
      - A. What is it that God does not want to perish?
        - 1. The body or the spirit?
          - A. Clearly the spirit, which is eternal!
      - 3. We are reminded of the tears shed by Jesus as He looked over Jerusalem - Matthew 23:37, 38; Hebrews 5:7.

#### Verse 6

1. But he giveth more grace. . . .
  - A. Just the opposite of what some might think.
    1. Rather than God turning away from them because of their pride, He increased His grace - Romans 5:20.
2. . . . Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.
  - A. James quoted here from Proverbs 3:34.
    1. The resistance is in the nature of to battle or fight against the prideful - Proverbs 6:17; 16:5.
    2. The “proud” are seen as haughty or stuck up.
  - B. The giving of grace here was in the nature of that which God continues to do, coming from the Greek word “didosin.”
    1. As there is the continued need for grace, that grace is given.
    2. Caution needs to be used here, such as Paul did when addressing the matter of sin and grace - Romans 6:1, 2.
  - C. The opposite of the proud is those that are humble, from the Greek word “charin,” referring to an attitude of lowliness such as was seen in the life of Christ - Philippians 2:5-8.

#### Verse 7

1. Submit yourselves therefore to God. . . .
  - A. To have the humility that God demands, one must cease seeking their own way and submit themselves unto God.
    1. The idea here is putting oneself in subjection to the will of another as in a military role.
  - B. There is a sense of urgency seen in this imperative, as is expressed by the aorist tense.
    1. This is the first of ten imperatives that are found in verses 7-10.
      - A. Subject to God - v. 7.
      - B. Resist the Devil - v. 7.
      - C. Draw nigh to God - v. 8.
      - D. Cleanse their hands - v. 8.
      - E. Purify their hearts - v. 8.
      - G. Be afflicted - v. 9.
      - H. Mourn - v. 9.
      - I. Weep - v. 9.
      - J. Laughter to be turned into mourning - v. 9.
      - K. Humble themselves - v. 10.
2. . . . Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.
  - A. The word “resist” is from the Greek word “antistete,” and had reference to the idea of taking a stand against something; in this case the devil.
    1. The word “devil” is from the Greek word “diaboloi,” referring to Satan.
  - B. The Devil’s fleeing is seen as the results associated with proper resistance - Ephesians 6:11; 1 Peter 5:8, 9.

#### Verse 8

1. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. . . .

- A. The imperative here goes hand in hand with the previous ones.
  - 1. As one moves away from the Devil, they move closer to God.
    - A. The reality is, accountable humanity will either be close to God or close to the Devil - Matthew 6:24.
- B. When man makes an effort to draw nigh to God He, in turn, will draw nigh to His children - Psalm 145:18; Acts 17:25-30.
- C. The drawing nigh indicated a change in the life of the one who had done so by faith.
  - 1. There is a change of direction - 2 Corinthians 5:17.
  - 2. The one that used to be a servant to sin now becomes a servant of righteousness - Romans 6:17, 18.
- 2. . . . Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; . . .
  - A. A figurative cleansing, indicative of the moral or spiritual cleansing that is seen in the life of the child of God - 1 Timothy 2:8; 1 John 3:3.
    - 1. The picture here is taken from the practice of those of olden times - Exodus 30:19-21.
    - 2. The child of God that sins is in need of repentance and confession of sin - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.
  - B. Even though they were children of God, they were still viewed as “sinners” because of their friendship with the world.
    - 1. James’ words seen later should be considered here - James 5:19, 20.
- 3. . . . and purify your hearts, ye double minded.
  - A. This would be a moral purification - 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3.
    - 1. This makes sense when we understand that it is from the heart that the issues of life come forth - Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:19.
  - B. The “double-mindedness” that is seen here was in relation to their attempt to both serve God and the world at the same time.
    - 1. Remember, “no man can serve two masters” - Matthew 6:24.

#### Verse 9

- 1. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: . . .
  - A. Signs (fruit) indicative of their repentance - Matthew 3:8.
  - B. The “affliction” was of a spiritual nature.
    - 1. Indicative of a spiritual state of misery brought on by knowledge of sin in their lives.
  - C. “Mourning,” from the Greek word “penthesate,” and “weeping” (“klaio”) are often connected in the New Testament and would be associated with “godly sorrow” - 2 Corinthians 7:9, 10.
    - 1. How sad it is that this seems to have escaped us today when it comes to sin.
      - A. Too many of us are like the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 5:2.
- 2. . . . let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.
  - A. “Laughter” was associated with their worldly association, thus the need to make the change.
    - 1. It needs to be understood that “man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” - Luke 12:15.
    - 2. Scripture teaches that God intends for His children to have joy - 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 1:4.
      - A. But, there is a time to mourn - Ecclesiastes 3:4; Matthew 5:4.

Verse 10

1. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.
  - A. Similar point to that which is found in 1 Peter 5:6.
  - B. His point here was in reference to their submitting themselves to the will of God rather than a character trait.
    1. It boiled down to action on their part.

Verse 11

1. 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.
  - A. They were told to not speak in a disparaging way of one another, which would not be done if they humbled themselves as they should.
    1. Speaking evil (i.e. slandering) of one another would be indicative of something other than the love Christians are to have for one another - John 13:35, 35.
  - B. “Judging” here was in reference to the kind of judgment that Jesus spoke of that is to be avoided - Matthew 7:1; Luke 6:37.
  - C. The “speaking evil of the law” was in reference to the fact that they, by their turning against the law of God, caused the law to be set aside as if it was not to be obeyed.
    1. Possible reference to the “royal law” - James 2:8.
    2. By treating the law this way, it was as if they judged it as unworthy of their compliance with it.
    3. Of course, it should be understood that the child of God is not a law unto himself.

Verse 12

1. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?
  - A. Although, they left the impression they were setting up law by which to judge others, the truth was, there was only one lawgiver, the Lord.
    1. There is a total exclusion here of all others but God.
      - A. This reminds us of John 14:6 and Acts 4:12.
  - B. God’s preeminent power is seen in his authority over life and death - Matthew 10:28; Romans 14:4.
  - C. Setting themselves up as judge put them in contradiction with scripture - Matthew 7:2.
    1. Keep in mind, not a forbiddance when it came to righteous judgment - John 7:24.

Verse 13

1. 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:
  - A. Nothing was being said here about preparing for the future in so far as their being forbidden to do so!
    1. That wasn’t the problem.
      - A. The problem was, as they made plans God was not the center of them.
    2. It amazes me the number of people that plan vacations right down to the minutest detail, but leave God out.
      - A. Bibles are left at home.
      - B. Clothing suitable for attendance with a local congregation is not packed.
        1. By the way, where’s the passage that suggests that modesty should not be a



- concern while on vacation?
- C. Travel schedules are not set with Sunday or Wednesday services in mind.
1. Are we not to “seek first the kingdom of God” while on vacation? - Matthew 6:33.

#### Verse 14

1. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. . .
  - A. More of a negative here in that they had no idea what the “morrow” holds, although man often acts in such a way that suggests they know exactly what will and will not be.
    1. In the end, only God knows - Psalm 139:1-12.
2. For what is your life? . . .
  - A. Quite a question!
    1. Turner listed the follow.
      - A. Life is a gift from God - Genesis 1:26, 27.
      - B. Life is full of problems - Job 14:1.
      - C. Life is beset by sin - Romans 3:23; 6:23.
      - D. Life is a time of opportunity (Today is the day of salvation).
      - E. Life has many happy moments (the birth of a child, marriage, etc.).
      - F. Life can be eternal - John 3:16; Mark 16:15, 16.
      - G. Life, physically speaking, is very brief - Job 14:2-5; James 1:10, 11.
      - H. Life, that is life indeed, is made possible by Jesus Christ - John 10:10.
        1. J.J. Turner, The Book of James, p. 138.
3. . . . It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.
  - A. The brevity of life is seen here as the answer to the question - Job 8:9; Isaiah 40:6-8; 1 Peter 1:24.

#### Verse 15

1. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.
  - A. Here is how the child of God should respond when it comes to plans for the future.
    1. Doing this is following the example set by Jesus - Matthew 6:9-15; 26:39.

#### Verse 16

1. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: . . .
  - A. Not only was it a problem that they were making plans excluding God from those plan, but they boasted about their plans.
    1. The word “boastings” came from the Greek word “alazoneiai,” and had reference to loud boastful expressions.
      - A. The English Standard Versions states, “As it is, you boast in your arrogance.”
      - B. You can picture them loudly bragging about what they were going to do, all with the exclusion of God from them.
2. . . . all such rejoicing is evil.
  - A. Such boasting is a complete contrast to the humility that the child of God should have.
    1. The word “evil” is from the Greek word “poneera,” and had reference to that which was worthless.
      - A. Thus, all of the bragging they did was of no value as any glory one has should be that which is “in the Lord” - 1 Corinthians 1:31.
  - B. Recall how Paul gloried in the cross - Galatians 6:14.

Verse 17

1. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.
  - A. Here in reference to the one that would travel to another location without including the Lord in his plans.
    1. When God is included, he has done well.
    2. When God is left out of the plan, he has not done so.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

Verse 1

1. Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.
  - A. In chapter five, James switched gears and wrote to those that were rich, instructing them concerning judgment to come.
    1. There was nothing said relative to instruction for them to correct their lives.
    2. It seems that James was, in essence, telling them to go ahead and start suffering now in view of the absolute judgment that was evidently coming upon them.
  - B. The phrase “weep and howl” had reference to the sorrow that was to come as those that would be terrorized in eternity.
    1. The sense here was they were to do so at that time, knowing what was in store for them.
  - C. The word “miserias” (“talaiporiais”) had reference to suffering or affliction that was to come at judgment.
    1. This reminds us of the “rich man” - Luke 16:24.

Verse 2

1. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.
  - A. Although, James pointed out that their riches were “corrupted,” (“sespen”) literally “worthless,” the problem wasn’t wealth per se, but how they used their wealth.
    1. Remember the situation with the “rich fool” - Luke 12:16-21.
    2. Recall that Scripture teaches the difficulty for the wealthy to be saved, not the impossibility - Matthew 19:23-26.
  - B. The same was true of their “garments” that were “motheaten.”
    1. This was something that had already happened.
    2. Go back and take a look at the problem James addressed in James 2:2-6.
    3. Since this was an ongoing matter, it seemed that James saw no reason to write them encouraging them to turn from their ways as they would not do so.

Verse 3

1. Your gold and silver is cankered; . . .
  - A. For “cankered,” better as per the English Standard Version, “Your gold and silver have corroded.”
    1. That which would normally hold its value was considered, so far as God was concerned, valueless.
    2. Of course, the lack of value was not of a monetary nature, but relative to matters pertaining to assistance of human needs which bring glory to God.
2. . . . and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, . . .
  - A. The “rust” (“ios”), i.e. the sign of the lack of proper usage, served as a “witness against”

them.

1. Consider the idea of the laying up of treasure in heaven as a contrast to this - Matthew 6:19-21.
2. Wealth can be either a plus or a minus, depending on its usage.
3. . . . and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.
  - A. Their misused wealth condemned them to hell (Gehenna).
4. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.
  - A. Three possible meanings here.
    1. Their death.
    2. The Destruction of Jerusalem.
    3. The Judgment.
  - B. In the end, possibilities one and two eventually lead to number three.
    1. The “last days” in reference to the Christian era would well fit this.
    2. If reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, some twenty-five or so years away, history reveals a horrible scenario that unfolded with approximately one million Jews dying.
      - A. Many of whom were wealthy Sadducees.
    3. If we never know for sure, it doesn’t change anything.

#### Verse 4

1. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, . . .
  - A. James proceeded to deal with the deceitful practice of the wealthy when it came to defrauding laborers by wrongly withholding a portion of their daily wages.
    1. At the time James wrote this epistle, it was common for laborers to receive daily payment for their labor - Matthew 20:1-16.
      - A. The practice of defrauding laborers had been around a long time and was condemned in the Old Testament - Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:14; Jeremiah 22:13; Malachi 3:5.
      - B. Recall that the “laborer is worthy of his hire” - Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:18.
2. . . . crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.
  - A. Literally, the idea expressed here was that at the Judgment such actions would “cry” forth for judgment of the injustice.
    1. This, clearly, would be a violation of the “golden rule,” in addition to the principles seen above - Matthew 7:12.
    2. Similar usage of the phrase is seen in both the Old and New Testament where various situations indicate a “crying” forth - Genesis 18:20; Psalm 34:17; Luke 19:40; Hebrews 12:24.
  - B. The phrase “Lord of sabaoth” had reference to the “Lord of hosts” from whom vengeance would come - Psalm 18:6; Romans 12:19.
    1. Although, found only here in the New Testament, the phrase “Lord of hosts” is found in some 235 verses in the Old Testament.
    2. From this phrase, we get the point that God was paying attention to the abuse of the poor - Psalm 140:12.

Verse 5

1. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; . . .
  - A. Like the “rich man” of Luke 16, these had “fared sumptuously every day” - Luke 16:19.
    1. Nothing was held back that gave them pleasure.
    2. The English Standard Version states, “You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.”
  - B. The word “pleasure” is “ettruphesate,” and had reference to leading a soft life.
2. . . . ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.
  - A. Literally, they had fattened themselves as one would fatten an animal for the day of slaughter.
    1. Very similar to the actions of Belshazzar - Jeremiah 12:3.
  - B. All in all, what they were doing from an eternal perspective was useless.

Verse 6

1. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.
  - A. The English Standard Version states, “You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you.”
    1. The “condemning” here would have been through the legal system as the wealthy controlled the judicial system.
    2. As to the phrase, “the just” there is some conflict as to who this may be.
      - A. Some have suggested a reference to Christ.
      - B. However, it seems more likely this is not a reference to any specific person.
        1. It could be inclusive of a number of persons including Jesus (Acts 7:52), James (Acts 12:1, 2) and Stephen - Acts 7:59, 60.
        2. It might be considered in the sense of Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:40.
  - B. Whoever James had in mind, they offered no resistance, even in the face of death.

Verse 7

1. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . .
  - A. In view of the desire for judgment James wrote encouraging them to be patient.
    1. Vindication would eventually come, as the Lord will “repay” - Romans 12:19.
    2. You might take note of Revelation 6:10.
    3. The word “patient” (“makrothumeo”) in reference to being “long tempered” or “longsuffering.”
  - B. The time of “the coming of the Lord” is uncertain.
    1. Perhaps the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
    2. Perhaps the Judgment.
      - A. I tend to think this was what was in mind.
      - B. Keep in mind the uncertainty of the time of the coming of Jesus - Matthew 24:42.
2. . . . 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.
  - A. An illustration of patience.
    1. Reminds us of Luke 8:1-11.
      - A. Also of God’s patience - Luke 18:7.
  - B. The “early rain” would be those that came in October or November while the “latter rain” would be that which came in April and May.

1. Keep in mind their growing season would be opposite of ours.

Verse 8

1. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.
  - A. Encouragement to wait for the judgment that was to come that would bring them vindication.
  - B. The phrase “stablish your hearts” referred to their making them stable - Luke 22:32; 1 Thessalonians 3:13.
  - C. As to the nearness of the “coming of the Lord,” one of two things must be in mind.
    1. Either, the destruction of Jerusalem or the coming of Christ.
    2. It seems to me, that as we view the destruction of Jerusalem as the final act that was planned by God before Jesus could come again, James was simply pointing out that following that event Christians could look at each day as the day of the Lord.
      - A. We have to remember, that God is not working on our time schedule - 2 Peter 3:8, 9.

Verse 9

1. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: . . .
  - A. Better seen as per the English Standard Version, “Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; . . .”
    1. Literally, the idea of “stop grumbling,” indicating an ongoing problem due to the issues at hand.
      - A. God has provided the means as to what is to be done when problems arise among brethren - Matthew 18:15-18.
        1. Grumbling or complaining against another is not part of that plan!
  - B. Doing so puts one in opposition to God’s directions, therefore sin, therefore condemnation - Romans 6:23.
2. . . . behold, the judge standeth before the door.
  - A. Jesus, of course, is the judge, standing ready to open the door when so directed by God.
    1. Jesus used similar terminology - Matthew 24:33; Mark 13:29.

Verse 10

1. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.
  - A. James here switched to the Old Testament prophets as examples of patience.
    1. Recall how Jesus used them - Matthew 23:34, 35.
    2. Recall how the author of Hebrews called attention to the same afflictions - Hebrews 11:36-38.
  - B. We can see, in looking at the Old Testament, a number of examples of the suffering of the prophets - 2 Chronicles 36:16.
    1. Daniel - cast into the lion’s den - Daniel 6:16, 17.
    2. Elijah - threatened by Jezebel - 1 Kings 19:1-3.
    3. Jeremiah - cast into prison - Jeremiah 32:1-5.
  - C. The prophets, although having suffered greatly for their faith, continued to speak “in the name of the Lord” - Jeremiah 4:19; Micah 3:8.

Verse 11

1. Behold, we count them happy which endure. . .

- A. Earlier, James had written concerning the “blessedness” that is for the “man that endureth temptation” - James 1:12.
  - 1. Daniel 12:12 refers to the one that “waiteth” as being “blessed.”
- 2. . . . Ye have heard of the patience of Job, . . .
  - A. Here we have James’ third illustration of patience.
    - 1. In study of the Book of Job we note that he complained but never renounced God - Job 1:21, 22; 2:10; 13:15; 16:19; 19:26-29.
- 3. . . . and have seen the end of the Lord; . . .
  - A. A reference here to the reward associated with the patience of Job.
    - 1. The “end” would be in reference to the conclusion of the matter with Job - Job 42:12.
    - 2. Of course, the “end” relative to those that were defrauding their laborers would be Judgment.
    - 3. As with the prophets, though, even though these to whom James wrote were defrauded, they still were encouraged to speak for the Lord.
- 4. . . . that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.
  - A. God being described here as “very pitiful” had reference to His being “very kind.”
    - 1. The English Standard Version states, “. . . the Lord is compassionate and merciful.”

#### Verse 12

- 1. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: . . .
  - A. A switch in topics is seen here.
    - 1. James addressed the problem of taking the name of God in vain along with the improper taking of oaths.
  - B. The phrase “swear not” had reference to the swearing of vengeance upon another, in addition to the use of profanity.
    - 1. Perhaps, the specific reason for his addressing this here was due to their having been defrauded and the tendency to retaliate in one way or the other.
    - 2. It was common practice for the Jews, to loosely use either the name of God or other things when an oath was taken.
    - 3. It is important to understand that James was not writing to forbid what might be seen as the proper taking of an oath, but forbidding those who improperly did so.
      - A. A number of Scriptures should be considered relative to properly doing so - Leviticus 10:12; Deuteronomy 6:13; 23:21; Matthew 26:63; Romans 1:9; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 5:27.
  - C. James’ reference to not swearing “by heaven, neither by the earth,” centered in on why it was wrong to do so.
    - 1. It was common practice for the Jews, to avoid swearing with the use of God’s name, as to do so was seen as one being obligated to fulfill whatever it was they swore.
      - A. However, to swear by something else, i.e. “heaven or earth,” it was felt did not carry with it the same degree of obligation.
        - 1. One should, though, be aware of Jesus’ words concerning this - Matthew 5:34-36.
  - D. James went further by stating “neither by any other oath,” which had reference to similar oaths to those affirmed “by heaven or earth.”

1. This would eliminate all swearing along the lines of that which was specifically stated here.
  - A. This was kind of like the “and such like” used by Paul when specifically mentioning the works of flesh - Galatians 5:19-21.
    1. This covered “all the bases.”
2. . . . but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.
  - A. The child of God, like their Father, must be seen as a person of truth.
    1. Remember, Satan is the father of lies - John 8:44.
    2. We, also, recall that “vengeance” belongs to God - Romans 12:19.
  - B. The person that falls under the condemnation of James’ words here is the one subject to judgments - Matthew 12:35-37.

#### Verse 13

1. Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.
  - A. Three questions were asked by James in this and the following verse.
    1. The first pointed to the affliction or suffering that many of them were experiencing.
      - A. The word “afflicted” was from the Greek “kakopatheo,” and referred to the suffering of hardship.
    2. The answer to the problem of such affliction was to petition God through prayer for His divine assistance - Matthew 7:7.
2. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.
  - A. As is common with affliction, there were differing responses to that which came on them.
    1. Some retaliated with oaths while others found reason for joy - James 1:2.
      - A. This, of course, would be the one commendable.
  - B. The singing of “psalms” would be the singing of songs of praise to God from whom the joy came.
    1. Although in prison, Paul and Silas sang psalms - Acts 16:25.
    2. See Appendix # 1, pages 48-51.

#### Verse 14

1. 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:
  - A. The word “sick,” (“theneo”) had reference to the idea of being without strength and was used extensively for physical illness - Matthew 10:8; John 5:7; Acts 9:37; Philippians 2:27.
  - B. For the remainder of the passage, see Appendix # 2, pages 52-54.

#### Verse 15

1. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; . . .
  - A. The word “save” (“sosei”) here is better understood as to heal the sick, or to make one that is sick well.
    1. Note that James did not say that it was the anointing with oil and prayer that caused the sick person to become well.
    2. Of course, there should be seen a qualification here concerning the healing in that there would be other factors that would intervene.
      - A. For example, Paul was not healed of his “thorn in the flesh” because there was something greater that was in store for him - 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

- B. We take note in the phrase “and the Lord shall raise him up” that although the elders were fulfilling their responsibility, in the end, it was the Lord’s authority and power that caused those that were sick to be healed.
  - 1. Healing comes from God, not man.
  - 2. It may not always be easy to understand how God is providentially involved in the healing of the sick or injured.
    - A. But if He is not in some way helping with the healing, then there is no reason to pray for His involvement.
- 2. . . . and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.
  - A. This phrase indicated, at least to me, that physical “sickness” is in mind rather than spiritual.
    - 1. If it was spiritual, then there would be no “if he have committed sins” here.
      - A. That would be an absolute!
  - B. Keep in mind that repentance, confession and prayer are all a part of God’s plan for the erring child of His - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.
  - C. This, also, helps us to see that the idea that illness was the direct result of sin is untrue - John 9:1-3.

#### Verse 16

- 1. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.
  - A. “Confess” is from the Greek “exomologeo,” and had reference to confession of the public nature.
    - 1. Of course, one would also be confessing to God since sin committed against man is committed against God - Genesis 39:9.
  - B. Prayer for the one that confessed sin would be the natural response.
    - 1. When one confesses sin, they do so in view of forgiveness.
  - C. The healing here is of the nature of the provision of a cure, whether physical or spiritual.
- 2. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
  - A. The English Standard Version states this phrase this way, “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”
    - 1. There is an affirmation of force seen here.
  - B. The word “effectual” (“energeo”) had reference to the idea of putting forth the power necessary to accomplish whatever was under consideration.
  - C. The phrase “righteous man” would be generic, but perhaps specific to the elders under consideration.
    - 1. Previously, James had written concerning the “double-minded” man who would not receive an answer to his prayers - James 1:6-8.

#### Verse 17

- 1. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, . . .
  - A. Give some consideration to 1 Kings Chapters 17 and 18.
    - 1. The point that was made here was that Elijah, who was known to be a great prophet, suffered similarly as they were.
      - A. Jesus called attention to Elijah and the great famine in the land - Luke 4:25.
- 2. . . . 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.



- A. 1 Kings 18:20-45 reveals to us that Elijah prayed seven times before the answer he looked for was seen.
  - 1. The expression that he “prayed earnestly” literally meant he “prayed with prayer” indicating the perseverance of Elijah.
  - 2. This event in the life of Elijah served as evidence of the value of the earnest prayer of the righteous person.

Verse 18

- 1. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.
  - A. In looking at this event we see that the factor of grave importance was the prayer of Elijah.
    - 1. This was what James wanted those to whom he wrote to grasp when it came to the availing power of persistent prayer - Luke 18:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

Verse 19

- 1. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;
  - A. The word “err” (“planao”) had reference to one that either wandered away on his own, caused another to be lead away, or to lead astray.
    - 1. It was used to make reference to one that “erred” when it came to doctrinal error - Matthew 22:29; Mark 12:24, 27.
  - B. You will notice that there was erring “from the truth.”
    - 1. We know the value of truth - John 8:31, 32.
    - 2. The child of God has the responsibility to love and obey the truth - 2 Thessalonians 2:10; Galatians 5:7.
  - C. To “convert” (“epistrepho”) had reference to turning about as one would think of an “about face” command.
    - 1. Those that are “spiritual” have the responsibility to seek to “restore” those who have been “overtaken in a fault” - Galatians 6:1.

Verse 20

- 1. 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.
  - A. In bringing this person back to the truth, the one that has done so knows what he had done.
    - 1. Literally, the snatching out of the fires of hell the soul of the one that erred.
    - 2. We can see from this, why it is so important to seek to bring about such restoration.
  - B. “Death” here would be as per Romans 6:23.
  - C. The hiding here would be as one that puts a veil over them - 1 Peter 4:8.

## APPENDIX # 1

### PSALLO and PSALMOS

**Do These Greek Words Authorize the  
Use of Mechanical Instruments of  
Music?**

#### **Considerations from the Original Language of the New Testament**

The American Encyclopedia, Vol. 7, page 688 states, "...Pope Vitalian is regarded to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe about 670; but the earliest trustworthy account is that of one sent as a present by the Greek emperor Constantine to Pepin, King of Franks in 755."

#### **Considerations from the Original Language of the New Testament**

It is often claimed that the Greek word *psallo* implies accompaniment with man-made mechanical instruments of music. The practice of the early church shows that this claim is not true. The reason for this is, if *psallo* meant to sing with mechanical instrumental accompaniment, the apostles and early church violated the command, as they did not use mechanical musical instruments.

### **Considerations from the Original Language of the New Testament**

The word Greek word *psallo* is found five times in the New Testament - Romans 15:9; 1 Corinthians 14:15 (used twice herein); Ephesians 5:19; and James 5:13. Without exception, standard translations such as King James, New King James, English Standard, and American Standard, render *psallo* as “sing, sing psalms, sing praise, make melody.” None of these versions translates the meaning to perform on mechanical instruments.

### **Considerations from the Original Language of the New Testament**

Additionally, leading modern versions, such as Goodspeed, Weymouth, Moffatt, and Knox, translate *psallo* essentially the same as the standard translations. These versions, both standard and modern, are among the world's most competent translations. If playing on mechanical instruments of music is expressed in the meaning of the word *psallo*, is it not exceedingly strange that these translators failed to render it so?

### **Considerations from the Original Language of the New Testament**

Numerous competent lexicographers of New Testament Greek could be cited to show the meaning of *psallo* as it is used in the New Testament. I will list two with precise references: Moulton and Milligan (Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament, p. 697), gave the following definition of *psallo* as it is used in the New Testament: “sing a hymn.” Abbott-Smith (A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 487) essentially gives the same definition: “...in N.T. to sing a hymn, sing praise.”

## **Considerations from the Original Language of the New Testament**

Additional Greek authorities express the view that *psallo* in the New Testament means “to sing praises” or “to sing hymns.” Vine says it, “denotes, in the N.T., to sing a hymn, sing praise.” Bagster says, “in N.T. to sing praises,” this same definition is provided by Perschbacher, and H.K. Moulton. Kittle affirms that *psallo* and the Greek word *ado* are synonyms, and defines the latter as “to sing.”

## **PSALLO AND PSALMOS’ CONNECTION TO THE INSTRUMENT AT THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The Greek words *psallo* and *psalmos* had not lost all connection to the instrument by the time of the writing of the New Testament, or even to this date. At the time of the writing of the New Testament *psallo* could mean “sing” or “play,” depending on what the writer had in mind.

## **PSALLO AND PSALMOS’ CONNECTION TO THE INSTRUMENT AT THE TIME OF THE WRITING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The Apostle Paul commanded the Ephesian Christians to do two things: “*aido*” and “*psallo*” (Ephesians 5:19). If he meant to command them to sing exclusively, with no reference to instrumental accompaniment, and “*aido*” meant the same as “*psallo*,” then he commanded them “singing [*aidontes*] and singing [*psallontes*],” which would not make sense. The truth is, Paul was commanding they “sing and play.”

**PSALLO AND PSALMOS' CONNECTION TO  
THE INSTRUMENT AT THE TIME OF THE  
WRITING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

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The question is, on what was the "playing" to be done?

It is easily seen, he did not command it to be done on a mechanical musical instrument, but "in your heart to the Lord" (Ephesians 5:19) which would allow each Christian to participate, as is done in all aspects of worship.

The instruments specified were their hearts, on which literal playing was impossible.

*Psallo* here cannot mean "singing," but only "playing," and the playing has to be figurative. It is the, "plucking of the strings of the heart," with no reference to mechanical instrumental accompaniment.

## **APPENDIX # 2**

### **ANOINTING WITH OIL**

**Robert Stapleton**

Anoint, to apply oil to a person or thing, a practice common in the East. (Pictorial Bible Dictionary) Use of oil on the head or any object to be honored, (Smith's Bible Dictionary)

1. A distinction was made by the ancient Hebrews between anointing with oil in private use, as in making one's toilet, and anointing as a religious rite.

A. Religious use:

1. Anointing as a religious rite was practiced throughout the ancient East in application both to persons and to things.

A. Things:

1. The primary meaning of "mashah" seems to have been "to daub" or "smear," – I.S.B.E., Vol. 1, pg. 138.
2. See Jeremiah 22:14 (painted); Isaiah 21:5; Exodus 29:36; Genesis 31:13; Exodus 30:30-33.

B. People:

1. The most significant uses of "mashah" are found in its application to certain sacred persons.

A. Kings: Judges 9:8, 15; 1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1; 2 Samuel 19:10; 1 Kings 1:39, 45; 2 Kings 9:3, 6; 11:12.

B. Prophets: 1 Kings 19:16 (Only occasion of the anointing of a prophet.)

B. Ordinary use:

1. The native olive oil, alone or mixed with perfumes, was commonly used for toilet purposes, the very poor naturally reserving it for special occasions only - Ruth 3:3.
2. It was applied freely to exposed parts of the body, especially to the face - Psalm 104:15.
3. This practice was in vogue before David's time, and traces of it may be found throughout the Old Testament - Deuteronomy 28:40; Ruth 3:3; 2 Samuel 12:20; 14:2; 2 Chronicles 28:15; Ezekiel 16:9; Micah 6:15; Daniel 10:3.  
A. Also, found in the New Testament - Matthew 6:17; James 5:14.
4. To abstain from it was one token of mourning - 2 Samuel 14:2; Matthew 6:17.  
A. To resume it was a sign that the mourning was ended - 2 Samuel 12:20; 14:2; Daniel 10:3.
5. It often accompanied the bath - Ruth 3:3; 2 Samuel 12:20; Ezekiel 16:9.
6. It was a customary part of the preparation for a feast - Psalm 23:5.
7. It was also used as a mark of hospitality - Matthew 26:6-13 (also used as preparation for burial, as seen by this text); Mark 14:3-9; Luke 7:36-40; John 12:1-8, Psalm 23:5.

C. Medicinal purpose:

1. Luke 10:34 - Note wounds, note poured, no mentioned of anointing.
2. Isaiah 1:6 - Mollified, soften; note wounds.
3. If oil was to be used for a medicinal means it must come in contact with the injury,

i.e. wound.

4. Would only be useful under certain circumstances.
- D. Occasion of anointing by Jesus - John. 9:6-11.
  1. Applied - The Interlinear, Greek English, New Testament.
  2. Put - N.I.V.
  3. Applied - N.A.S.V.
  4. Applied - Phillips
  5. Spread - N.E.B.
- E. Occasion of anointing by disciples - Mark 6:13.
  1. The anointing was not done because there were any healing attributes to the oil, but to make preparation for these who had been sick to assume the normal role in society.
  2. Note that the actual healing came after the sick had been anointed, and was done by the disciples.
    - A. “. . . and healed them.”
  3. The anointing was done as a token of faith by the disciples that the sick were to be healed.
2. James 5:14:
  - A. First note that the text speaks of the sick, and not the injured.
    1. Remember oil would be of some value to an injury if it could come in contact with it - Isaiah 1:6; Luke 10:34.
  - B. Secondly, note that they were to call for the elders and they were to do the anointing
    1. Note 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
    2. Elders, not doctors, were to be sent for.
      - A. Had the healing art, through usual means, i.e. anointing with oil, been intended the instruction would have been, “Call for the doctors and let them diagnose his case and prescribe the proper treatment. . .”
  - C. Thirdly, note that the healing came about because of the prayer of faith - James 5:15.
    1. Thus it was not prayer and oil; nor prayer and medicinal treatment; nor prayer and laying on of hands; but the prayer of faith.
  - D. If this practice were applicable in our day, and the elders did their duty, none in the church would ever die, thus contradicting - Hebrews 9:27.
  - E. Evidently, for a limited time, and for a special purpose, God ordained that when the forgoing conditions were met healing, in the apostolic age occurred.
    1. That it was not widely followed, or even intended to apply to all saints, is clear from the fact that many sickened and died, and others suffered affliction - Acts 9:32-43; Philippians 2:19-30; 1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Corinthians 12:7.
    2. It follows, therefore, that James 5:14 was applicable to a situation, and not all situations, existing in the day of miraculous gifts and terminated with those gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:28-31; 13:8-13; James 1:25; Ephesians 4:11-16.
    3. It seems quite clear from all the facts involved that the elders, under consideration in James 5:14, were miraculously endowed through the laying on of the apostle's hands (Acts 8:18) and were, thus, able to participate in miraculous acts of healing in the manner described.
    4. Today it is as foreign to God's plan to expect miraculous healing independent of

means as it is to expect Him to feed us as Jesus did when he multiplied the loaves and the fishes - Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 6:34-44.

5. It is right and proper for us to pray for the sick, but we must realize that God works through means today such as medicine, surgery, and all other approved techniques.
3. The allegation that anointing with oil is a necessary action along with prayer for the healing of the sick does not follow from an induction of passages dealing with such healing – Isaiah 38:1-5; Matthew 8:5-13; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 9:38-43; John 4:47-54.
  - A. There are many more occasions of people being healed apart from the use of oil than those who used it.

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. Thus it seems evident, then, that the anointing with oil in James 5:14 was for the purpose of getting this person ready to assume his regular role in society, taking its normal place in the daily toiletry. It seems that it served in a similar manner, as would the getting ready of a person's clothing so that they could assume their regular role in society today (See references on page 52 concerning this). There are, by far, more passages that deal with the use of oil for these purposes than for the using it as a means of healing.