

# A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

- 1) **The epistle of James** is a book of divine and practical wisdom for the Christian life
- 2) Author is almost certainly “James, the Lord’s brother” (Gal. 1:19); written mid-first century
  - a) Well-known and important figure in the church at Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9; Acts 15:13; 21:18)
  - b) James, the apostle and brother of John, was killed by Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:2)
- 3) The inspired message of James is needed as much today as ever – let us be challenged to live better as we are instructed by “the wisdom that is from above” (Jas. 3:17)

### I) **Gaining Endurance and Wisdom (1:1-8)**

- A) “My brethren” (1:2; see also 1:16, 19; 2:1, 5, 14; 3:1, 10; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 19) – spiritual family
- B) **Endurance** and **wisdom** are vital and emphasized again later in book (3:13-18; 5:10-11)
  - 1) *Hupomone* (Gk) – endurance, steadfastness; one unmoved from faith by outward trials
- C) Testing of faith produces endurance (v. 3) and wisdom is given when asking in faith (v. 5)
  - 1) Falling into various trials results in greater endurance, thus why to “count it all joy” when it happens – the difficult times of life strengthen faith (vv. 2-3; 1 Pet. 1:6-8; Rom. 5:3)
    - a) The “perfect work” of endurance helps create a perfect and complete individual (v. 4)
    - 2) If lack wisdom, ask of God, the perfect and available source of wisdom (vv. 5-8; Prov. 2:4-6)
      - a) Ask in faith/trust – doubting divine wisdom causes instability in all areas of life (cf. 4:1-4)
      - b) The double-minded man becomes infected with worldly impurities, and will not enjoy divine blessings – must cleanse ourselves of the filth of this world (1:21; 4:8; Job 28:28)

### II) **God Gives Good and Perfect Gifts (1:9-18)**

- A) The poor have exaltation and the rich humility as they endure trials and gain wisdom (vv. 9-10)
  - 1) Things of this earth are not enduring – not a measure of true spiritual wealth (v. 11; 2:5; 5:1)
- B) Promised crown of life awaits the one approved by enduring trials and temptations (v. 12)
  - 1) Wrong to blame God for evil temptations that entice one to sinfulness and death (vv. 13-15)
  - 2) God has no desire for evil, therefore could never desire to cause anyone to do evil
- C) To avoid deception about God and His deeds, remember that every good and perfect gift comes down from “the Father of lights” in whom is no change or turning shadow (vv. 16-17; cp. v. 6)
  - 1) Greatest gift is our salvation (“brought us forth” – birth) by the word of truth (v. 18; 1 Pet. 1:23) – firstfruits = special. As His new creation, how should we live? (cf. Matt. 4:4)

### III) **The Importance of Hearing and Doing (1:19-27)**

- A) Swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath – spiritual “speed limits” (v. 19-20)
  - 1) Swift to hear the word of truth, slow to blame with wrath over trials and temptations
- B) To produce the righteousness of God, lay aside filthiness and wickedness [unrighteousness], receive humbly [hear] the implanted and saving word, and be doers of it (vv. 21-22)
  - 1) Hearing only is like seeing oneself in the mirror then immediately forgetting (vv. 23-24)
  - 2) “Looks intently” and “continues in” the work of the law of liberty = blessed (v. 25; Jn. 13:17)
- C) True, pure, and undefiled religion is one that “does” (v. 26-27)
  - 1) “Does” bridle tongue (cf. v. 19) – if not, being self-deceived, religion is useless, vain
  - 2) “Does” visit orphans and widows in distress, and “does” keep unspotted from the world
    - a) Showing compassion and standing against evil must both be involved in true religion

### Conclusion

Gaining endurance and divine wisdom will help us toward the promised crown of life, as we hear and obey our Father’s word of truth and are blessed thereby. Will you hear and obey?