

## The letter of James

<sup>1:1</sup>James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus the Anointed One, to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion: greetings.

<sup>1:2</sup>Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you are encircled with various trials, <sup>1:3</sup>knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. <sup>1:4</sup>And let patience work *in you* until it is complete so that you may be mature and perfected, with not one *virtue* missing.

<sup>1:5</sup>But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives to everyone liberally without criticizing them and it will be given to him. <sup>1:6</sup>But let him ask in faith without vacillating *in his commitment to the Lord*, for he who vacillates is like the waves of the sea driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*. <sup>1:7</sup>For that man should not imagine that he will receive anything from the Lord <sup>1:8</sup>*since he is a person of two minds and, therefore, is unstable in all his ways.*

<sup>1:9</sup>But let the brother of low social status rejoice in his high *spiritual* ranking <sup>1:10</sup>and the rich *rejoice* in his abasement because like the flowers of the grasses, his riches will disappear. <sup>1:11</sup>For *when* the sun rises with the scorching wind and dries out the grass, *it causes* the flowers to fall off and the beauty of their "faces" is lost. So also the wealthy man, together with his activities, will fade away.

<sup>1:12</sup>Blessed is the man who endures trials, for after he has been *thoroughly* tested and approved, he will receive the crown of *God's* life which *the Lord* promised to those who love him. <sup>1:13</sup>Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God, for God is incapable of being tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one. <sup>1:14</sup>But each man is tempted when he is lured away by his own carnal cravings

and caught in a trap. <sup>1:15</sup>Then the carnal craving, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it grows up, produces death. <sup>1:16</sup>Don't be led away from the truth, my beloved brethren!

<sup>1:17</sup>Every good thing and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the *heavenly* lights with whom there is no uncertainty or shadow of deviation. <sup>1:18</sup>Through his own decision he generated his *own* life in us through the word of truth so that we would be a kind of crowning glory of his creation.

<sup>1:19</sup>With this in mind, my beloved brethren, let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to get angry, <sup>1:20</sup>for human anger does not result in *the expression of God's* righteousness.

<sup>1:21</sup>Therefore, having put aside all *immoral* filth and abundant evil, receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to [completely] save your souls. <sup>1:22</sup>But be those who put the word into practice and not someone who just hears it, deceiving yourself.

<sup>1:23</sup>For if anyone is *merely* a hearer of the word but doesn't practice it, *he is* like a man who sees his natural face in a mirror: <sup>1:24</sup>he sees himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what he looked like. <sup>1:25</sup>But he who looks deeply into the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and continues there – not being *merely* a forgetful hearer but one who practices it – this man will be blessed in what he does.

<sup>1:26</sup>If anyone among you thinks of himself as being "religious," yet doesn't keep a reign on his tongue but *instead* deceives himself, this man's religion is useless.

<sup>1:27</sup>Religion which is spotless and pure before our God and Father is this: to visit the orphans and widows in their distress *and* to keep oneself uncontaminated by the world.

## CHAPTER 2

<sup>2:1</sup>My brethren, don't discriminate *between people* in *your walk* in the faith of the glorious Lord Jesus the Anointed One. <sup>2:2</sup>For if *someone* comes into your gatherings wearing a gold ring *and* dressed in expensive clothing, and

*another* also comes in who is poor, wearing dirty clothing, <sup>2:3</sup>and you treat the one who wears the expensive clothing with special respect and say, "Sit here in a good place," but you say to the poor man, "You can stand over there," or "Sit here on the floor beside my chair," <sup>2:4</sup>then aren't you showing favoritism among yourselves and *so* have become like a corrupt judge?

<sup>2:5</sup>Listen my beloved brethren, didn't God choose those who are poor in this world *to be* rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to those who are loving him? <sup>2:6</sup>But you have dishonored the poor man. Isn't it the rich who oppress you and take you to court? <sup>2:7</sup>Aren't they the ones who slander the honorable name by which you are called?

<sup>2:8</sup>If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the scriptures: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well. <sup>2:9</sup>But if you discriminate between people, you commit sin *and* are exposed by the law as violators.

<sup>2:10</sup>For whoever keeps the whole law and yet errs in one *point*, he is as guilty *as if he had broken* all of them. <sup>2:11</sup>For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you don't commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a violator of the law.

<sup>2:12</sup>*Therefore*, you should speak and act as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>2:13</sup>For *the coming judgment will be* without mercy for him who did not show any mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

<sup>2:14</sup>How is it beneficial, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but doesn't do anything? Can this *kind of* "faith" be saving him? <sup>2:15</sup>If a brother or sister is lacking clothing and doesn't have enough to eat every day <sup>2:16</sup>and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," and yet you don't give them the things which are necessary for the body, of what use is it?

<sup>2:17</sup>In the same way faith, if it doesn't result in actions, is *exposed as being* dead in itself. <sup>2:18</sup>But someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith without any actions and I will show you my faith through my actions.

<sup>2:19</sup>You believe that God is one? That's good. The demons also believe *this* and shudder *with fear*. <sup>2:20</sup>But would you be happy to know – you fruitless man – that faith separated from *the resulting* actions is dead?

<sup>2:21</sup>Wasn't Abraham our father justified by his actions when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? <sup>2:22</sup>Here you see that faith was working together with his actions and that through these actions *his* faith was consummated. <sup>2:23</sup>So the scripture was fulfilled which says: "And Abraham believed God and he was, *therefore*, considered righteous," and, "He was called the friend of God."

<sup>2:24</sup>You see then that a man is considered just by actions and not by faith alone. <sup>2:25</sup>And in the same way also, wasn't Rahab the prostitute considered just because of *her* actions when she received the messengers and *then* sent them off another way? <sup>2:26</sup>For as the body separated from the spirit is just a corpse, in the same way faith separated from actions is dead [and dead faith justifies no one].

### CHAPTER 3

<sup>3:1</sup>Don't many of you be teachers, my brethren, knowing that we will receive *the* more severe judgment. <sup>3:2</sup>For we all make many mistakes. If anyone never sins in his words, he is a perfect man, able to control the rest of his body also.

<sup>3:3</sup>Now when we put bridles into the horses' mouths so that they obey us, we direct their whole body also. <sup>3:4</sup>Think about the ships too. Even though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the helmsman wants to go.

<sup>3:5</sup>So also the tongue is a little member yet boasts about great things. Look at how much wood is kindled by a small fire! <sup>3:6</sup>And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is a whole world of sin among our members which defiles the entire person, *often* creating a whirling fire of trouble among others and is itself set on fire by hell.

<sup>3:7</sup>For all *kinds of* animals and birds, even reptiles and marine life, can be tamed or have been tamed by man's powers. <sup>3:8</sup>But no one is able to tame the tongue. *It is* an unrestrained evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>3:9</sup>With it we bless

our God and Father and with it we curse *other* men who are made after the likeness of God.

<sup>3:10</sup>Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brethren, things should not be this way. <sup>3:11</sup>Does a spring from the same source, gush out both sweet *water* and bitter? <sup>3:12</sup>My brethren, can a fig tree produce olives or a grapevine figs? Neither *can* one spring produce salt water and fresh water.

<sup>3:13</sup>Who is *someone* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good life *that* his works are a *product of* the gentleness *which* wisdom brings.

<sup>3:14</sup>But if your heart is full of sharp envy {rivalry, ambition} and contention, don't rise up against and pervert the truth [to achieve your objectives]. <sup>3:15</sup>This wisdom is not *the wisdom* that comes down from above, but is earthly, soul-ish, and demonic. <sup>3:16</sup>For where envy {rivalry, ambition} and contention exist, there is confusion and every kind of evil work.

<sup>3:17</sup>But the wisdom *which comes* from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, easily persuaded, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and without hypocrisy. <sup>3:18</sup>And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

## CHAPTER 4

<sup>4:1</sup>Where do the disputes and contentions among you come from? Isn't this the source? It comes from the desire for personal gain which produces this "war" among you. <sup>4:2</sup>You want something but you don't have it so you are jealous *of others* and *even want* to kill *them*. But *when* you still don't get what you want, you quarrel and fight *trying to get it*. *The truth is:* you don't have something because you don't ask for it.

<sup>4:3</sup>*Further*, you ask and don't receive *it* because you ask wrongly, intending to waste *it* on self-satisfaction.

<sup>4:4</sup>You adulteresses, don't you know that loving the things of this world puts you in opposition to God? Whoever, therefore, chooses to be friendly with the system of this world makes himself an enemy of God. <sup>4:5</sup>Or do you

imagine that the scripture has no purpose when it says "The Spirit which lives in us longs *after our heart* with jealousy?" <sup>4:6</sup>But he gives abundant grace. Therefore, *the scripture* says: "God arrays himself in battle against the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

<sup>4:7</sup>Therefore, be submitted to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. <sup>4:8</sup>Draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you who are vacillating *in your commitment to the Lord*. <sup>4:9</sup>Be afflicted, mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into sadness. <sup>4:10</sup>Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and he will exalt you.

<sup>4:11</sup>Don't speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks *according to* the law and judges *using* the law. But if you judge *using* the law, you aren't someone who keeps the law, but a judge. <sup>4:12</sup>There is only One lawgiver and judge, *even* he who is able to rescue or to destroy. But who are you who judges your neighbor?

<sup>4:13</sup>Listen here you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to a certain city, spend a year there, do some business, and make money." <sup>4:14</sup>*But the truth is* you have no idea what will happen tomorrow. What is your life really? For you are just *like* a vapor which appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

<sup>4:15</sup>Instead you should say, "If the Lord wills, we will both *continue to* live and do this or that." <sup>4:16</sup>But now you boast with your self-confidence. All such boasting is evil. <sup>4:17</sup>To him, therefore, who knows what is right to do and doesn't do it, to him it is sin.

## CHAPTER 5

<sup>5:1</sup>See here you rich! Weep and howl over the calamities that are coming upon you. <sup>5:2</sup>Your riches have rotted and your clothes have been eaten by moth larva. <sup>5:3</sup>Your gold and your silver are corroded. Their corrosion will be a testimony against you and will consume your flesh like fire. You have accumulated riches in the last days.

<sup>5:4</sup>Remember the wages of the laborers who reaped your fields, the ones whom you took advantage of and underpaid? *Those laborers* are crying out and the cries of the reapers have entered into the ears of the Lord of the Sabbath.

<sup>5:5</sup>You have indulged yourselves on the earth and lived luxuriously. You have fattened up your hearts as in a day of slaughter [like a calf fattened in confinement]. <sup>5:6</sup>You have condemned and murdered the righteous *One* and he didn't resist you.

<sup>5:7</sup>With all this in mind, brethren, be patient until the appearing of the Lord. Look, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it until it receives the early and *the* later rain. <sup>5:8</sup>You also be patient. Stand firm in your hearts for the coming of the Lord approaches.

<sup>5:9</sup>Brethren, don't murmur against one another so that you won't be judged. Look, the Judge is standing just outside the door.

<sup>5:10</sup>Brethren, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord as an example of suffering and patience. <sup>5:11</sup>See, we call those who endured "blessed." You have heard of the patience of Job and you know the end which the Lord *planned, thus showing* that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

<sup>5:12</sup>But above all things, my brethren, do not swear an oath, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath, but let your "yes" mean "yes," and your "no," "no" so that you don't fall into hypocrisy.

<sup>5:13</sup>Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. <sup>5:14</sup>Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the older, *spiritually* mature brothers of the gathering of the called-out ones and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>5:15</sup>And the prayer of faith will heal the one who is sick and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

<sup>5:16</sup>Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another so that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous man is very effective. <sup>5:17</sup>Elijah was a man with similar passions as we have, yet he prayed fervently that it would not rain and it didn't rain on the earth for three years and six months. <sup>5:18</sup>And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain and the earth brought forth its fruit.

<sup>5:19</sup>My brethren, if anyone among you deviates from the truth and someone helps him turn around, <sup>5:20</sup>*let him* know that he who recovers a sinner from the delusion of his way saves a soul from death and covers a multitude of sins.

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