

# Book of James ~ Chapter One

**Verse 1.** *Go to* is the same phrase as that in James 4:13. There it is a rebuke for those who are boastful of their expected gain, here it is against those who have obtained it by wrongful means which will be considered at verse 4. The miseries will come upon them at the day of judgment.

**Verse 2.** Wealth that is not needed and especially that has been accumulated in an evil manner, will deteriorate by the simple fact of hoarding.

**Verse 3.** *Witness against you* means that the fact of their cankering and rusting will prove they did not need them and that they had been hoarded. For the last days denotes that these treasures will be against them at the last great day of judgment.

**Verse 4.** The mere possession of wealth does not condemn one as may be seen from Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50-51; Mark 10:24; 1 Timothy 6:17-19. The question is as to how a man obtains his wealth and the use he makes of it. In the present verse the men became rich by withholding the wages of their employees. This does not have any bearing on disputes about what should be the wages, but is considering only what was kept back by fraud. Sabaoth means "hosts" or armies, and the thought is that He who is able to command the armies of Heaven will be able to deal with all unjust men.

**Verse 5.** *Day of slaughter* signifies a day of great preparation for gratification of self at the expense of others. Been wanton means they had lived in luxury upon the things they had fraudulently taken from the poor.

Verse 6. This verse might seem to be a break into the line of thought but it is not. The poor people who had been imposed upon were not receiving their just dues, and they would naturally feel disturbed over the seeming neglect of the Lord. James mentions the fact of the condemnation and *slaying of the Just One*, meaning Christ, that even He did not resist. (See Isaiah 53:7 and Acts 8:32.)

**Verse 7.** James now addresses the poor brethren who had been unjustly treated, and on the basis of facts and truths just revealed, exhorts them to be patient unto the coming of the Lord when all wrongs will be adjusted. As an example of patience he refers to the husband-man or farmer as he proceeds in his business. Early and latter rain actually means the fall and spring rains. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "In the Bible 'early rain' signifies the rain of the autumn, and 'latter rain' the rain of spring. For six months in the year, from May to October, no rain falls, the whole land becomes dry, parched and brown. The autumnal rains are eagerly looked for, to prepare the earth for the reception of the seed."

**Verse 8.** Also patient has reference to the patience of the husbandman commented

upon in the preceding verse. Christians can well afford to be patient for their interests are far more valuable than those of a farmer. Draweth nigh. Whether James has reference to the destruction of Jerusalem which was then only a few years away, at which time the persecutions of the disciples were to be somewhat eased, or to the personal appearance on earth of Jesus for the judgment, the time would be comparatively short when the endless duration after the judgment is considered.

**Verse 9.** To *grudge* means to murmur against another because of oppression. Christians not only were told to be patient under the persecutions from enemies in the world, but to exhibit the same patience toward their brethren who are so unthoughtful as to mistreat them. Lest ye be condemned when Jesus comes to summon all before the judgment, at which time he will condemn all who did not maintain patience under difficulties as well as those who caused the difficulties. ***Judge standeth at the door*** is explained by the comments on the preceding verse.

**Verse 10.** A few verses above James refers to the farmer who sets an example of patience under times of anxiety. He now makes reference to the teaching prophets of old time for the same purpose of a lesson in patience.

**Verse 11.** Those who endure afflictions are to be counted happy because of what it indicates for them. (See James 1:2-3.) Just after using the word endure James makes mention of the patience of Job which verifies the definition often given of the word patience, namely, that it means endurance. End of the Lord means the outcome of the case under the blessing of the Lord. It shows that He is merciful even though he suffers a righteous man to be afflicted for a good purpose (Job 42:12-17).

**Verse 12. *Swear not.*** Jesus taught that his disciples should not make oaths in Matthew 5:34-35, and the reader should see the comments at that place. Sometimes an attempt is made to justify making oaths by saying Jesus was only condemning false oaths. But James spoils that theory by his words neither by any other oath, which rules out every shade and grade of swearing. Besides, there is nothing that should urge the Christian to make oaths, for this is a case where he can obey the command of the Lord and satisfy the laws of the land also. Instead of making an oath the Christian can notify the officer saying "I will affirm," and his word will be taken for the same value as an oath. That is what the scripture here and at Matthew 5:37 means by directing that your yea be yea and your nay be nay. The fundamental difference between an oath and an affirmation is that the latter does not use the name of God; also that one says "I affirm" instead of "I swear." Lest ye fall into condemnation is another way of saying that if a disciple makes an oath he will be condemned, because both Jesus and James have forbidden it.

**Verse 13. *Afflicted*** is from KAKOPATHEO, and Thayer defines it, "To suffer evils; hardship, troubles." It does not refer to physical diseases which will come in the next verse. When a disciple is beset with these trials he should be in the frame of mind that

would lead him to go to God in prayer for strength and encouragement. **Merry** does not mean to be gay or frivolous, for the original is defined to denote "Be of good cheer." The phrase **let him sing psalms** is from the noted Greek word PSALLO, and Thayer defines it as follows: "In the New Testament to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song." There are times when a person is not in the "mood" for singing and James recognizes that truth in this verse. David also recognizes it in Psalm 137:2-4. Solomon likewise had the thought in mind when he spoke of the inappropriateness of the man "that singeth songs to an heavy heart" (Prov. 25:20).

**Verse 14.** The word **sick** is from ASTHENEIO, which Thayer defines at this place, "To be feeble, sick." Robinson defines it, "A sick person, the sick." It is the word that is used in the Greek text at Luk\_7:10; Joh\_4:46; Joh\_11:3; Acts 9:37 and other similar passages. From the above information we are sure the word in our passage has the regular sense of bodily disease, and not a figurative or spiritual condition as some teach. This verse should be regarded in the same light as Mark 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; 1 Cor. 13:1-13; 1 Cor. 14:1-40; Ephesians 4:8-13; Hebrews 2:3-4 and all other passages dealing with the subject of spiritual gifts. In the early years of the church the Lord granted miraculous demonstrations to confirm the truth that had been preached while the New Testament was being completed. Among those miracles was that of healing the sick and since elders (or pastors, Ephesians 4:11) were among those receiving such gifts, it is reasonable that they should be called in such a case. The use of oil does not signify anything contrary to these remarks, for Jesus sometimes used material articles in connection with His miraculous healing, such as clay in the case of the blind man in John 9:6-7. Just why such things were done in connection with the miracles we are not told and we need not speculate as to why.

**Verse 15. Prayer of faith** means miraculous faith which was one of the spiritual gifts discussed in the preceding paragraph (1 Cor. 12:9). The forgiveness of sins is mentioned in addition to the healing of sickness. This shows that sickness is not spiritual for that would be the same as guilt of sins. It would be meaningless to speak of healing spiritual sickness or a condition of sin and then add that the man's sins also would be forgiven. That would be equivalent to saying the Lord would heal a man of his sins (would forgive him) and would also forgive his sins. It would not alter the discussion to say that the sins were what caused the man to be sick, for that would still leave the truth that it refers to sickness of the body.

**Verse 16. Confess your faults** does not mean merely to confess that we have faults, but the faults themselves are to be acknowledged. One to another denotes that we are to confess the faults that we have committed against another; we are to confess such faults to him. Sins which are known to God only need only be confessed to Him. **That ye may be healed.** This is said in direct connection with the mention of faults, hence we know the last word is used figuratively or concerning a spiritual cure. No man can do another man's praying for him, but both can pray together for the forgiveness of the one at fault. **Effectual** means active or practical, and it is used to indicate a man who

not only prays to God but who also makes it his business to serve Him. The prayers of such a man will be regarded by the Lord.

**Verses 17-18.** The account of this event with Elias (Elijah in the Old Testament) is in 1 Kings 17:1-7; 1 Kings 17:1 Kings 18:41-46. The prophet did not perform the feat merely to demonstrate his miraculous power, for such kinds of evidence were not necessary at that time. The connection shows that Ahab was a wicked king of Israel, and the Lord saw fit to punish him with a dearth by withholding the rain. The prayer of Elijah is not recorded, but he was a righteous man and realized that the wicked king would not be brought to repentance but by some severe judgment. Accordingly, when he prayed to the Lord on the subject his prayer was accepted as just and the chastisement was sent on the king and his country. It was therefore a miracle granted because of the righteousness of the request. Yet even at such a time, had he not been a righteous man his prayer would not have availed any, to say nothing about its availing much. ***Subject to like passions*** means he was only a human being, yet because of his good life his prayer was heard, since that was yet in the days of special providence.

**Verse 19.** To ***err from the truth*** means to wander to one side according to the comments at James 1:16. To ***convert such a person*** means to induce him to turn and reenter the pathway of truth. since the word convert literally means to reverse a direction.

**Verse 20.** A ***sinner*** is any person who is doing wrong, whether he be a man of the world or an erring disciple. No man can repent for another but he may be able to persuade the guilty one to repent. If he succeeds he will save a soul from death because the one in error was going the way that leads to spiritual death. Hide is from KALUPTO. and both Thayer and Robinson explain it to mean that by reason of the repentance of the erring one, the Lord will overlook and not punish the one who had gone astray. This act of the Lord's mercy would be equivalent to hiding the sins because they would not be brought up to judgment afterward.

# Book of James ~ Chapter Two

**Verse 1.** Have is from ECHO which requires two full pages in Thayer's lexicon for definitions. The specific meaning of it in any given passage must therefore be determined by the way it is used. In this verse the writer discusses the subject of proper treatment for others and hence it means they are not to hold or exercise the faith as stated. Respect of persons comes from one Greek word that means "partiality." The faith is used as a term for the whole system of religious practice under Christ. Therefore the verse means they should not show partiality in the exercises that pertain to the public assembly. (See James 2:4.)

**Verse 2.** This verse merely describes two men in different classes as to their possessions and personal appearance. Nothing is said of character or anything that pertains to actual merit.

**Verse 3.** This verse indicates they had the services of ushers, and they would seat the audience as they were coming in, showing a preference for the "well-dressed" ones by giving them the most

**Verse 4.** Here the writer uses the very word of our definition by saying they are partial. Judges of is rendered "judges having" by The Englishman's Greek New Testament. The passage means those people had evil thoughts when they were judging or deciding on who should sit where.

**Verse 5.** A man will not be given any special credit in the kingdom of heaven by virtue of his being poor. The conditions of salvation are such that the poor have the same chance as the rich. Moreover, since the conditions require a great deal of humility and sacrifice, the poor generally are the more ready to accept it. In that sense the poor are chosen to be rich in faith. Such richness in faith is what makes them heirs or entitles them to the advantage of the kingdom. This is also according to the promise that has been made by Christ and the apostles.

**Verse 6.** To *despise* means to belittle or look down upon, and some of the disciples had been guilty of such an attitude toward people who were poor. It is usually the rich people who resort to the courts in suits of oppression in order to squeeze a little more money out of unfortunate debtors.

**Verse 7.** Thayer defines the original for *blaspheme* as follows: "To speak reproachfully, rail at, calumniate [accuse falsely]." The worthy name is Christ whom oppressors would be inclined to belittle because His teaching condemns their practices.

**Verse 8. *Royal*** means kingly and the greatest laws ever given to men have come from the King of heaven. Among those laws is the one which commands to "love thy neighbor as thyself." James says if we obey this we will do this.

**Verse 9.** No man who loves his neighbor as himself will mistreat him because he is poor. Hence he will not show respect to persons which we have seen is defined as "partiality." ***Convinced of the law*** denotes that the one who shows partiality is guilty under the law of being a transgressor of that law.

**Verse 10. *Whole law*** as James is using it refers to the ten commandments. Not that the decalogue is still the law of God as it once was, for it has been replaced by the law of Christ. But it is used to illustrate the point which the writer has under consideration, because it is formed into a certain number of separate commandments -each of which is a complete unit of law. Thus if a man rejects a single one of these ten commands he is guilty of all because they all were given by one authority.

**Verse 11.** The command at the end of verse 8 (James 2:8) is not in that exact form in the first account of the decalogue but it is so worded in Lev\_19:18. It is also virtually included in the last six of the ten, for if a man loves his neighbor as himself he will observe all those six. In our verse the writer mentions two of the original ten commandments. The point he is making is that since the same God who gave one of them gave the other also, therefore no matter which a person rejects he is rejecting God. So the verse has no application to the mistakes that all people are liable to make through forgetfulness or other weaknesses of the flesh. In other words, the whole matter that James is considering pertains to the question of the Lord's authority.

**Verse 12. *Law of liberty*** is the one named in James 1:25 and refers to the New Testament. So speak ye and so do. Since that law is the one by which we will be judged, our lives should be regulated by it now.

**Verse 13.** Matthew 5:7 says the merciful shall obtain mercy, which is the affirmative side. The present verse deals with the negative and teaches that if a man shows no mercy to others, he likewise shall have no mercy given him at the day of judgment. Mercy rejoices against judgment. If a man is merciful to others he will not have any fears of the judgment day as far as this subject is concerned.

**Verse 14.** The writer is still treating the subject introduced in the early verses of the chapter which concerns the proper conduct toward the poor. This verse states a principle that has general application in the Christian life, but it will be used for a specific purpose at present with reference to those in need.

**Verse 15.** The conditions mentioned designate needs that are actual and not merely some imaginary ones, so that the persons deserve assistance of their brethren.

**Verse 16.** It is well to have sympathy for those in need if the expressed wishes are supplemented with actions. But the most touching sentiments that can be spoken will not put any clothing upon a naked body.

**Verse 17.** James 2:17 is a grand principle and no man can be a Christian without it. Neither will he be regarded by the Lord as one unless he makes his faith a living one by good works, such as supplying the comforts of life to those in need and worthy.

**Verse 18.** The first sentence represents a man who seems to think that faith and works are two distinct virtues of equal worth, and that a person is at liberty to make his own choice of them and the reward from the Lord will be the same in either case. James replies with a remark that shows he will not endorse either without the other. ***Show me thy faith without thy works*** only states what the pretender claims to show, not that James is admitting that the claim is true. He does not ask anyone to take his word but proposes to prove his faith by actions.

**Verse 19.** It is well to believe there is one God if a man does not stop there; if he does he is no better than the devils (or demons). Matthew 8:29 gives one account of the trembling of these beings. But while they trembled their expressions of terror did not bring them any benefit, which shows that trembling or belief is not enough.

**Verse 20.** ***Vain*** means empty or useless, and James so considers a man who makes a profession of faith but does not back it up with something helpful.

**Verse 21.** Hebrews 11:17 says Abraham's faith was tried by the event about his son. The present verse says it was works that did it or that justified him. There is no disagreement between the passages. It was his faith that caused him to offer up his son; his works put his faith into a practical proof.

**Verse 22.** The word ***perfect*** means complete, and thus the works of Abraham completed or rounded out the character which was founded upon his faith.

**Verse 23.** Scripture was fulfilled or made good. This refers to Genesis 15:6 where God had just assured Abraham that he would have a great many descendants. He knew that Abraham would finally prove his faith by his works, and hence he was regarded as a righteous man. Abraham is called the friend of God in 2 Chron. 20:7 and it is repeated by James. This is on the same principle that Jesus uses the word "friend" in John 15:14. He says they are His friends "if ye do whatsoever I command you." There are people today who glory in calling themselves "friends," yet they stoutly disobey and even resist many of the commands of Christ. According to Jesus they are not His friends; if not friends then they must be considered enemies.

**Verse 24.** The *works* that James means consist of doing what the Lord commands. He is not considering the works of the law of Moses, for at the time of this epistle those were termed "dead works" (Hebrews 6:1; Hebrews 9:14).

**Verse 25.** Rahab was *justified by works* in the same sense as that of Abraham. (See the comments at verse 21.)

**Verse 26.** The spirit or soul of a man does not operate in this world separate from his body. Neither can the body act without the spirit and hence when alone the body is dead. The circumstance is used to illustrate the difference between faith and works.



# Book of James ~ Chapter Three

**Verse 1.** *Masters* is from DIDASKALOS, and it is the same word rendered "teachers" in Hebrews 5:12. In that place Paul says the brethren ought to be teachers, using the word in a good sense, while James says for the brethren not to have many of them. We must therefore consider the connection in which it is used in order to get the meaning in any given case. In our verse it is plain that James is writing of men who put themselves up as teachers who do not properly control their tongues. Such people are to be condemned all the more because they do harm by their words.

**Verse 2.** *For in many things.* If we do have too many of such professed teachers we will offend all or all (of us) will offend or stumble. The importance of our language is the subject in several verses. If a man does not offend (or stumble) with the improper use of his tongue he will prove to be a perfect or complete man, controlling even his body.

**Verse 3.** The great influence of apparently small things is the idea James is illustrating in this and the next verse. In size and weight a bridle bit is very small, yet with it we control the direction of the entire animal.

**Verse 4.** The same thing is true of the helm or rudder of a ship. It is but a few inches or feet long, yet it may guide a ship that is many hundreds of feet in length.

**Verse 5.** The application of the illustration is made to the tongue. The last word is from GLOSSA, which means as its first definition the literal organ that is a member of the fleshly body. The Greek term is used because the tongue is the instrument by which the speech or words of a person are produced. Actually it is the language of the individual that is being considered, although the form of the phrases is related to the physical organ of speech. James uses another illustration for the same purpose as that in verses 3 and 4. If a man wished to burn a structure as tall as a tower, he would need only to use a torch an inch long.

**Verse 6.** James calls the tongue a *fire* because he had just used the illustration of "a little fire." It is called a world of iniquity because the original word for world means mankind. The evil use of the tongue will affect mankind in general if it is not curbed. *Defiles the whole body.* Our organ of speech if allowed to work sinfully will result in evil conduct of the whole body. *Course* literally means "a wheel" according to Thayer, and nature means the procedure of human existence. The figure represents it as a wheel that is rolling onward. James means that the evil tongue sets this wheel on fire. It is set on fire of hell (GEHENNA); not literally, of course. But a torch has to be "lighted" from some source, and James regards a wicked tongue as so bad that he represents its owner as having applied to hell to "get a light."

**Verse 7.** The facts of *controlling a horse with a bit*, guiding a ship with a rudder or training a beast by man all have one thing in common, namely, the feat is accomplished by another party; the things controlled are acted upon by an outside force.

**Verse 8.** Such a feat cannot be accomplished upon the tongue "because of its characteristic of poison which defies being subdued by another man than its owner. James does not say a man cannot subdue his own tongue; in truth he teaches that a man can and should bridle his own tongue.

**Verse 9.** The main point in this and the next verse is to show the inconsistency in the uncontrolled tongue. Man is made after the similitude of God, therefore He should be regarded with respect. Yet the evil tongue will bless one and curse the other.

**Verse 10.** This repeats the thought of the preceding verse in another form of expression. The words same mouth emphasize the inconsistency in a more direct way.

**Verses 11-12.** In Verses 11-12 James refers to the consistency of the things in the natural creation, to shame the man who is *double-minded* in the use of his tongue. The same God who made the inanimate things named also created man and gave him a tongue wherewith to express his intelligence. How inexcusable it is therefore in him to make such an evil use of the blessing of speech.

**Verse 13, *Wise man*** is one who has learned to exercise good judgment, and *knowledge* means information concerning which he may exercise that good judgment. James gives some specific suggestions on how such a man may manifest those traits in his conversation, which means conduct or manner of life. He is to do it with meekness of wisdom; a truly wise man will be meek or humble and not boastful of his knowledge.

**Verse 14. *Bitter envying*** denotes a mind that is resentful toward another person who is fortunate. The original word for strife means an attempt to outdo some other person by fair means or otherwise. Should such a person succeed he is admonished not to glory in it. Lie not against the truth. Certainly all lies are against the truth, but the special thought is that an envious person cannot oppose a righteous or fortunate one without contradicting the truth involved.

**Verse 15. *Wisdom*** is from a Greek word that has a great variety of meanings. Thayer comments on this phase of the subject as follows: "Used of knowledge of very diverse matters. so that the shade of meaning in which the word is taken must be discovered from the context [connection] in every particular case." In general the word refers to knowledge or information that a person may have (or claim to have), whether it be good or bad. true or false. This should prepare us to see why James calls something by the word -wisdom when he is speaking of that which he disapproves. Earthly is used as

a contrast to above; sensual pertains to the natural or animal part of our nature; devilish, is an adjective and means something that has the character of demons.

**Verse 16.** James verifies his description of this wisdom (preceding verse) by repeating virtually the sentiments of verse 14. He emphasizes it by adding the results of such "wisdom" namely, confusion and every evil work.

**Verse 17.** In James 3:14-16 James designates the kind of wisdom that does not come from above (or heaven); the present verse describes the kind that does come from the higher source. **First pure** signifies that it is of the most importance for a man's information to be pure or unmixed with anything false. Then peaceable indicates that peace is not to be desired unless it is according to the truth. That is why Paul placed it on condition in Romans 12:18. **Gentle** means to be mild and fair in one's temperament even when insisting on truth as being preferable to peace. **Easy to be intreated** is all from one Greek word that means to be of a yielding disposition and not stubborn when the heavenly wisdom is presented. **Full of mercy** means that one's life is merciful toward those in difficulties whenever the occasion arises, and not only when it is the most convenient to be so. **Fruits** are the deeds that are performed and heavenly wisdom will prompt one to produce good deeds. **Without partiality** denotes an attitude that does not show respect of persons. (See James 2:1-4.) **Without hypocrisy** means that our expressions of friendliness to others will be sincere and not a mere pretense. A tree is known by its fruit, hence if a man is being influenced by the wisdom that is from above, he will exhibit the characteristics that are described in this verse.

**Verse 18.** If a man possesses good fruit he usually wishes to reproduce it by sowing or planting it. Hence he will sow it righteously by conforming to the rules of peace that have been formed in harmony with the pure wisdom.

# Book of James ~ Chapter Four

**Verse 1.** *Wars and fightings* are virtually the same except the first refers to a state of conflict in general and the second to the single battles of the war. James is writing of spiritual or moral things and not of warfare in its usual sense. *Lusts* refers to unrighteous pleasures and the strife after such gratifications is bound to bring conflicts between different members of the body of Christ.

**Verse 2.** *Lust and have not.* They had the unholy desires but were not always able to obtain what they craved, and that caused them to kill (have murderous thoughts, 1 John 3:15) those who resisted their unrighteous desires. *Fight and war* is the same as wars and fightings in the first verse. In some cases they might have obtained things they had asked for had they asked for them in a lawful manner.

**Verse 3.** While they did not ask in the proper way, some did make unlawful demands but were refused because of the impure motive that prompted the requests. That unrighteous motive was that their personal cravings might be gratified and not that lawful benefits might be obtained. The passage as a whole (verses 1-3) pictures a group of professed disciples who were confused and unsettled in their lives, trying to partake of the same practices as those of the world, at the same time pretending to be serving the Lord in things spiritual.

**Verse 4.** In the temporal world a person who commits unlawful intimacy is guilty of immorality. Likewise in the realm of the family of God, those who are intimate with the sinful pleasures of the world are guilty of spiritual adultery because they are untrue to Christ, who is their lawful partner. This intimacy is here called *friendship* and James says it is *enmity* (at war) *with God*. On this principle James declares that a person cannot be a friend (be intimate with) of the world without being an enemy of the Lord. This is the same thing that Jesus teaches in Matthew 12:30.

**Verse 5.** *Envy and jealousy* have some phases of meaning in common and hence are used to show God's great concern for the purity of His people. Exodus 20:5 says He is a jealous God and Paul writes on behalf of the Lord and says he is jealous about his brethren (2 Cor. 11:2). In Genesis 6:3 the Spirit of God is said to be striving with man, that is the same Spirit that our verse says dwelleth in us. James asked if they think that this concern of the Spirit is in vain or to no purpose. A negative answer is implied and means that the brethren should take the admonition seriously and not provoke the Lord too far.

**Verse 6.** James does not wish his brethren to become too downcast over the stern remarks of the preceding verses, hence the consoling remark that *he giveth more grace* (or favor) is made. In order to profit by His grace it is necessary to be submissive, so the statement is made concerning the proud and the humble.

**Verse 7. *Submit yourselves*** calls for a voluntary act on the part of man, else his pride will come up against the resistance of God. ***Resist*** requires more than a mere aversion to the devil; it calls for active opposition. If a disciple will put up that kind of fight he is assured of victory over the enemy.

**Verse 8.** This verse also indicates a voluntary action on the part of man. The Lord has made full provision for the spiritual welfare of the human creature, hence it is necessary for man to make the next move. Cleanse your hands specifies what is to be done, and ye sinners designates to whom the demand applies. No person is accused nor even specifically admonished except the guilty ones. To purify means to remove all mixture of evil desires, and the heart can be thus purified only "by [the] faith" Acts 15:9. ***Double-minded*** is explained at James 1:8.

**Verse 9.** This verse is directed toward those who are unconcerned about their worldliness, and who are finding joy in such activities. They should reverse all of such false grounds of gratification, after which they will have something real and lasting in which to take joy.

**Verse 10.** This is virtually the same admonition as in verse 6.

**Verse 11. *Speak not evil*** means to say that which slanders another and injures his reputation. This bad use of the tongue is treated in several verses of the preceding chapter. Speaketh evil of the law. One of the commandments is not to bear false witness against another (Exodus 20:16), and the same is taught in many places in the New Testament (Matthew 19:18; Romans 13:9). If a man claims the right to ignore this law he is thereby assuming that such a law is unnecessary. That is why James says such a person becomes a judge of the law instead of a doer.

**Verse 12.** There is one lawgiver who is the Lord, and no man should dare put himself up as a judge of His law. The author of the true law is able either to save or destroy ("To give over to eternal misery"—Thayer). Who art thou—why do you dare judge another or slander him?

**Verse 13. *Go to*** is from AGE, a Greek word that Thayer defines, "Come! come now!" It is a pointed expression made to someone, calling attention to foolish presumptions. The things mentioned are not necessarily wrong in themselves, but the folly is in taking it for granted that nothing can prevent it.

**Verse 14.** The foolishness of the matter is in the uncertainty of human existence. Regardless of what one plans to do as to whether it is right or wrong, it cannot be carried out unless he lives. The comparison to a passing cloud by James shows this to be his principal thought.

**Verse 15. *If the Lord will*** has been much strained by many whose intentions were good toward God. The expression is made to mean if the Lord does not interfere with some "providential act" that will make the plan impossible. God is not doing such things as that in these days. During the formative centuries while the Bible was being revealed and God's dealings with man were not yet fully made known, He performed various miracles to demonstrate in the ears and before the eyes of man what it means to displease Him. That is all past now and no special act is threatened to show God's favor or disfavor for what man does; that has to be learned from the written word. The thought is, therefore, that we should make all our plans subject to two provisos, namely, that the Lord wills (that it is according to His will as revealed in the Bible), and that we live to do it. The additional conjunction "and" that is in the Greek text has been omitted by the King James Version. The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders this verse as follows: "Instead of your saying [the saying expressed in verse 13; the thing they should say is], if the Lord should will and we should live, also, we may do this or that." This shows the two conditions mentioned above, and rules out any need for "special providence."

**Verse 16. *Rejoice in your boastings*** denotes they first presumed they could do whatever they wished, then used the presumption as a basis of boasting. Such rejoicing is evil because it ignores the truths set forth in verse Verse 17. ***Knoweth to do good*** has special reference to the information offered in the preceding verses. We should first learn if what we plan is right, then also remember the frailty of human life and plan accordingly. This is the way to do that which is good and not in the boastful manner as described. But the principle expressed for this special -case would apply to all other relations of life.

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# Book of James ~ Chapter Five

**Verse 1. *GO to*** is the same phrase as that in James 4:13. There it is a rebuke for those who are boastful of their expected gain, here it is against those who have obtained it by wrongful means which will be considered at verse 4. The miseries will come upon them at the day of judgment.

**Verse 2.** Wealth that is not needed and especially that has been accumulated in an evil manner, will deteriorate by the simple fact of hoarding.

**Verse 3. *Witness against you*** means that the fact of their cankering and rusting will prove they did not need them and that they had been hoarded. For the last days denotes that these treasures will be against them at the last great day of judgment.

**Verse 4.** The mere possession of wealth does not condemn one as may be seen from Matthew 27:57; Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50-51; Mark 10:24; 1 Timothy 6:17-19. The question is as to how a man obtains his wealth and the use he makes of it. In the present verse the men became rich by withholding the wages of their employees. This does not have any bearing on disputes about what should be the wages, but is considering only what was kept back by fraud. Sabaoth means "hosts" or armies, and the thought is that He who is able to command the armies of Heaven will be able to deal with all unjust men.

**Verse 5. *Day of slaughter*** signifies a day of great preparation for gratification of self at the expense of others. Been wanton means they had lived in luxury upon the things they had fraudulently taken from the poor.

**Verse 6.** This verse might seem to be a break into the line of thought but it is not. The poor people who had been imposed upon were not receiving their just dues, and they would naturally feel disturbed over the seeming neglect of the Lord. James mentions the fact of the condemnation and slaying of the Just One, meaning Christ, that even He did not resist. (See Isaiah 53:7 and Acts 8:32.)

**Verse 7.** James now addresses the poor brethren who had been unjustly treated, and on the basis of facts and truths just revealed, exhorts them to be patient unto the coming of the Lord when all wrongs will be adjusted. As an example of patience he refers to the husband-man or farmer as he proceeds in his business. Early and latter rain actually means the fall and spring rains. I shall quote from Smith's Bible Dictionary as follows: "In the Bible 'early rain' signifies the rain of the autumn, and 'latter rain' the rain of spring. For six months in the year, from May to October, no rain falls, the whole land becomes dry, parched and brown. The autumnal rains are eagerly looked for, to prepare the earth for the reception of the seed."

**Verse 8. *Also patient*** has reference to the patience of the husbandman commented upon in the preceding verse. Christians can well afford to be patient for their interests are far more valuable than those of a farmer. Draweth nigh. Whether James has reference to the destruction of Jerusalem which was then only a few years away, at which time the persecutions of the disciples were to be somewhat eased, or to the personal appearance on earth of Jesus for the judgment, the time would be comparatively short when the endless duration after the judgment is considered.

**Verse 9.** To *grudge* means to murmur against another because of oppression. Christians not only were told to be patient under the persecutions from enemies in the world, but to exhibit the same patience toward their brethren who are so unthoughtful as to mistreat them. ***Lest ye be condemned*** when Jesus comes to summon all before the judgment, at which time he will condemn all who did not maintain patience under difficulties as well as those who caused the difficulties. Judge standeth at the door is explained by the comments on the preceding verse.

**Verse 10.** A few verses above James refers to the farmer who sets an example of patience under times of anxiety. He now makes reference to the teaching prophets of old time for the same purpose of a lesson in patience.

**Verse 11.** Those who ***endure afflictions*** are to be counted happy because of what it indicates for them. (See James 1:2-3.) Just after using the word endure James makes mention of the patience of Job which verifies the definition often given of the word patience, namely, that it means endurance. End of the Lord means the outcome of the case under the blessing of the Lord. It shows that He is merciful even though he suffers a righteous man to be afflicted for a good purpose (Job 42:12-17).

**Verse 12. *Swear not.*** Jesus taught that his disciples should not make oaths in Mat\_5:34-35, and the reader should see the comments at that place. Sometimes an attempt is made to justify making oaths by saying Jesus was only condemning false oaths. But James spoils that theory by his words neither by any other oath, which rules out every shade and grade of swearing. Besides, there is nothing that should urge the Christian to make oaths, for this is a case where he can obey the command of the Lord and satisfy the laws of the land also. Instead of making an oath the Christian can notify the officer saying "I will affirm," and his word will be taken for the same value as an oath. That is what the scripture here and at Matthew 5:37 means by directing that your yea be yea and your nay be nay. The fundamental difference between an oath and an affirmation is that the latter does not use the name of God; also that one says "I affirm" instead of "I swear." Lest ye fall into condemnation is another way of saying that if a disciple makes an oath he will be condemned, because both Jesus and James have forbidden it.



**Verse 13. *Afflicted*** is from KAKOPATHEO, and Thayer defines it, "To suffer evils; hardship, troubles." It does not refer to physical diseases which will come in the next verse. When a disciple is beset with these trials he should be in the frame of mind that would lead him to go to God in prayer for strength and encouragement. Merry does not mean to be gay or frivolous, for the original is defined to denote "Be of good cheer." The phrase let him sing psalms is from the noted Greek word PSALLO, and Thayer defines it as follows: "In the New Testament to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song." There are times when a person is not in the "mood" for singing and James recognizes that truth in this verse. David also recognizes it in Psalm 137:2-4. Solomon likewise had the thought in mind when he spoke of the inappropriateness of the man "that singeth songs to an heavy heart" (Prov. 25:20).

**Verse 14.** The Word *sick* is from ASTHENEIO, which Thayer defines at this place, "To be feeble, sick." Robinson defines it, "A sick person, the sick." It is the word that is used in the Greek text at Luk\_7:10; Joh\_4:46; Joh\_11:3; Act\_9:37 and other similar passages. From the above information we are sure the word in our passage has the regular sense of bodily disease, and not a figurative or spiritual condition as some teach. This verse should be regarded in the same light as Mark 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:1-31; 1 Cor. 13:1-13; 1 Cor. 14:1-40; Ephesians 4:8-13; Hebrews 2:3-4 and all other passages dealing with the subject of spiritual gifts. In the early years of the church the Lord granted miraculous demonstrations to confirm the truth that had been preached while the New Testament was being completed. Among those miracles was that of healing the sick and since elders (or pastors, Ephesians 4:11) were among those receiving such gifts, it is reasonable that they should be called in such a case. The use of oil does not signify anything contrary to these remarks, for Jesus sometimes used material articles in connection with His miraculous healing, such as clay in the case of the blind man in John 9:6-7. Just why such things were done in connection with the miracles we are not told and we need not speculate as to why.

**Verse 15. *Prayer of faith*** means miraculous faith which was one of the spiritual gifts discussed in the preceding paragraph (1 Cor. 12:9). The forgiveness of sins is mentioned in addition to the healing of sickness. This shows that sickness is not spiritual for that would be the same as guilt of sins. It would be meaningless to speak of healing spiritual sickness or a condition of sin and then add that the man's sins also would be forgiven. That would be equivalent to saying the Lord would heal a man of his sins (would forgive him) and would also forgive his sins. It would not alter the discussion to say that the sins were what caused the man to be sick, for that would still leave the truth that it refers to sickness of the body.

**Verse 16. *Confess your faults*** does not mean merely to confess that we have faults, but the faults themselves are to be acknowledged. One to another denotes that we are to confess the faults that we have committed against another; we are to confess such faults to him. Sins which are known to God only need only be confessed to Him. That ye may be healed. This is said in direct connection with the mention of faults, hence

we know the last word is used figuratively -or concerning a spiritual cure. No man can do another man's praying for him, but both can pray together for the forgiveness of the one at fault. Effectual means active or practical, and it is used to indicate a man who not only prays to God but who also makes it his business to serve Him. The prayers of such a man will be regarded by the Lord.

**Verses 17-18.** The account of this event with Elias (Elijah in the Old Testament) is in 1 Kings 17:1-7; 1 Kings 17:1 Kings 18:41-46. The prophet did not perform the feat merely to demonstrate his miraculous power, for such kinds of evidence were not necessary at that time. The connection shows that Ahab was a wicked king of Israel, and the Lord saw fit to punish him with a dearth by withholding the rain. The prayer of Elijah is not recorded, but he was a righteous man and realized that the wicked king would not be brought to repentance but by some severe judgment. Accordingly, when he prayed to the Lord on the subject his prayer was accepted as just and the chastisement was sent on the king and his country. It was therefore a miracle granted because of the righteousness of the request. Yet even at such a time, had he not been a righteous man his prayer would not have availed any, to say nothing about its availing much. Subject to like passions means he was only a human being, yet because of his good life his prayer was heard, since that was yet in the days of special providence.

**Verse 19.** To *err from the truth* means to wander to one side according to the comments at Jas\_1:16. To convert such a person means to induce him to turn and reenter the pathway of truth. since the word convert literally means to reverse a direction.

**Verse 20.** A *sinner* is any person who is doing wrong, whether he be a man of the world or an erring disciple. No man can repent for another but he may be able to persuade the guilty one to repent. If he succeeds he will save a soul from death because the one in error was going the way that leads to spiritual death. Hide is from KALUPTO. and both Thayer and Robinson explain it to mean that by reason of the repentance of the erring one, the Lord will overlook and not punish the one who had gone astray. This act of the Lord's mercy would be equivalent to hiding the sins because they would not be brought up to judgment afterward.