

James 1

Commentaries used: *Gospel Advocate NT Commentary (James)*, Guy N. Woods (excellent), *Beacon Bible Commentary (James)*

Background: There are at least three prominent men in the New Testament named James:

1. James the son of Zebedee and Salome, one of the original apostles

- Who was the brother of this James?** Apostle John
- Why is it unlikely that this James was the author of the book of *James*?** He does not identify himself as an apostle
- Think about the trouble that Paul had in establishing himself as an apostle
- It would have been natural for James the Apostle to have called himself an apostle
- Also, the Apostle James was killed by Herod in *Acts 12.1-2*

2. James the less, the son of Alpheus

- We know very little about this man, and it is unlikely that he was the author

3. James the half-brother of the Lord Jesus Christ (*Matthew 13.55, Mark 6.3, Galatians 1.18-19*)

- Does the author of James call himself the half-brother of Jesus?** No
- Why not?** The step-brothers of Jesus did not believe in him until after the resurrection (they were embarrassed of him – *John 7.5*)
- Also, he did not want to take advantage of his physical kinship with Christ
- There would have been all kinds of theological problems if he had played up his kinship with Christ
- What other half-brother of Jesus wrote a book in the New Testament?** Jude (See *Matthew 13.35* for list of the brothers of Jesus)
- How did this James function in the First Century church?** *Acts 15* – James was chairman of the Jerusalem conference, and it was James who seems to have made the final decision on the wording of the letter to the church at Antioch

Optional material:

Application: Read *Galatians 1.18-19* – several possibilities

1. That James was made an apostle (as Paul was)
2. The term for apostle was not being used in the official sense: Barnabas (*Acts 14.14*), Andronicus, Junias, others (*Romans 16.7*) – just means "someone sent out"

There are several Christian writers who wrote that James died because of his faith in Christ

- Book of *James*: the most practical book in the New Testament, very similar to the book of *Proverbs* in the Old Testament

James 1.1-Introduction

V1 – **What was the traditional first century way of starting a letter?** Name of writer, to whom it was written, a word of greeting

- Look at the letters of Paul for great examples of this pattern

-**How does James identify himself in v 1?** Bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ

- To whom was the letter addressed?** Twelve tribes dispersed abroad
- Literally to the Jewish Christians?** *Galatians 4.21-31* – Christians are the “Jews” in the mind of God (son of Sarah vs. son of Hagar)
- In other words, just being a physical descendant of Abraham meant nothing, but being a son of the promise meant everything
- There is nothing in this letter about dangers of going back to Old Testament, no special warning for Jewish Christians (nothing like the book of *Hebrews*)

Application:

- Were there really 12 tribes?** No – 13 tribes (Joseph = Manasseh and Ephraim – *Genesis 48.17-22*)
- Why then do we call them the 12 tribes?** Levi did not have a land promise (there are 19 different lists of the 12 tribes in the Bible)
- “Dispersed Abroad” – “Diaspora” (the Assyrian and Babylonia Captivity in the Old Testament)
- Why were they scattered?** Persecution against the church
- Also, many converts were made on the Day of Pentecost in *Acts 2* (from 14-15 nations), so they were going home, etc.

James 1.2-4 – Dealing with suffering

V2 – **What apparently was the state of the readers of this letter?** Persecution, distress, hardship (we learn more about this as the letter goes on)

- What is our attitude toward hardship?** We don’t like it, and we want out of it - we hate to suffer
- What did James say should be our attitude?** Joy
- This goes just the opposite of what the world tells us today
- The advertising world wants every need to be taken care of
- This is the most pampered generation in the history of America
- We have the feeling that life ought to be painless and sterile and without problems
- Americans are afraid that a germ might get on them and they might suffer a little
- So here is a radical idea: joy from distress

V3 – **What is the value of hardship?** It is a test that produces endurance

- What do we call the kid who gets everything that he wants while growing up?** Spoiled brat
- Is he ever happy?** No, always crying (for more, etc.)
- God does not tempt us (*James 1.13*), but he does test us (*Genesis 22.1*)
- What is the result of that testing of our faith?** Endurance
- When we go through some awful experience, we are stronger because of it (sickness, handicaps, a birth defect, bad parents, etc.)
- When we break a bone, it is stronger at the break than it was before
- When we go through some church battle, we come out stronger; we are like tempered steel
- We are much better able to deal with later false teachers because of that experience
- Satan wants to destroy a congregation, because of the good that we are doing, but we have been made stronger
- But Satan will continue to attack us
- James did not say to just pray to God that the problem might be taken away

-Rather, what was his first response? To try to learn from the experience

V 4 – What would it produce in us? We will be perfect (mature) and complete

-Acts 4.29 – Concerning the imprisonment of Peter and John, what did the church in Jerusalem pray for? Strength, not release

James 1.5-8 – Praying for wisdom

V 5 – Maybe, the average Christians were saying at this point: "How can I get enough wisdom to do what James was talking about?"

-What was James' answer? Ask God for wisdom

-What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? Knowing the facts vs. knowing how to use the facts for good

-To whom does God give wisdom? To all Christians liberally

-What has to be our attitude to ask God for wisdom? Humility (that in itself is the beginning of wisdom) – there are people with high IQs who cannot humble themselves before God and are therefore not wise

-Meaning “without reproach”? He doesn't say to us, “Why are you so dumb? Why are you asking for wisdom again?”

-God therefore gives us wisdom – from the Bible and from experiences in life

-This is not the "gift of wisdom" (a gift of the Holy Spirit, as they had in the First Century)

-Through his providence, these experiences (like having teenagers, suffering, bad experiences) give us wisdom

Poem: I Walked a Mile with Pleasure

I walked a mile with Pleasure;
She chatted all the way;
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow,
And ne'er a word said she;
But, oh! The things I learned from her,
When sorrow walked with me.

-Robert Browning Hamilton

-Ernest Hemmingway said, "Nothing bad can ever happen to a writer, because he can always write about it"

-Also: (in one sense) nothing bad can every happen to a Christian, because it will always give him wisdom

V 6 – How should we ask God for wisdom? In faith

-What is the person like who does not ask in faith? Like surf of the sea being tossed around

V7 – **What about the person who does not ask in faith?** God will not answer his prayer

V8 – **How does James describe that man?** Double minded and unstable

-**Interesting:** the world today considers “doubt” to be a good thing, but James says that is the mark of an unstable person

-**Review:** Some good will come from persecution – we should ask God for wisdom in dealing with it

James 1.9-11 – The curse of wealth

V9 – **What does the poor Christian have to be happy about?** That he is poor

-Incredible – another concept exactly opposite to what the world says to us today

-**What is the real position of the poor person?** “High position”

-We seek to be rich, but look at what James is saying here

-**How many really wealthy people have you known who were also faithful Christians?**

-For the writer of these notes, only one: A.M. Burton, who gave millions of dollars to David Lipscomb University and to many missions works of the church

V10 – **What did James say about the rich man?** He has been humiliated (just opposite of the world’s view)

-**Why is wealth considered to be a humiliating state?** Because that wealth can be taken away so quickly

-Wealth for a Christian would require using it for glory of God (might be very stressful)

V11 – **How quickly can wealth disappear?** Like the flowering grass

-**How long do flower blooms last?** A few days

-**Why would wealth be bad for a rich person?** He would grow dependent on his money

-**What did our Lord say on this subject? Read Matthew 6.28-30 and Isaiah 40.6-8**

-Consider the "curse" on the Kennedy family (JFK, JFK Jr. and plane crash, Robert Kennedy, etc.)

James 1.12-18

V12 – **What did we call “blessings” in the New Testament?** Beatitudes

-A beatitude really is a statement on how we can be happy in this life

-**On what person is the blessing given?** The one who perseveres under trial

-**What will he receive?** The “crown of life” (eternal life)

-**Is there a blessing to all who persevere under a lot of trials?** No, a lot of people suffer

-The promise is to those who love the Lord

V13 – **What is tendency for us to do?** To say that God is tempting us

-**Did people in the Bible ever blame God for sin?** Yes: Adam said “You gave me this woman!” (*Genesis 3.12*)

-**What are we to pray for (regarding temptation)?** *Matthew 6.13* – *Lead us not into temptation...*

-**What has God promised in regarding to temptation?** *1 Corinthians 10.13* – God will always

provide a way of escape

V 14 – What is the real problem with temptation? Lust that we have in our hearts as humans

-**What does this word “entices” suggest?** Satan advertises sin

-Beer commercials: "good old boys" getting together - they are not selling beer, they are selling friendship

V 15 – Three steps to sin and our downfall? Lust – sin – death (sometimes physical, always spiritual death)

V 16 – How does James warn us here? Do not be deceived

-**Application to "Once Saved Always Saved"?** Why warn people about being deceived, if there is no possibility of falling away from the Father?

V 17 – What does James say about the good things that we enjoy in this life? It all comes from God.

-The things that really bring us joy in life come to us from God (our marriages, our children, pets, food, lives, church membership, sunlight, beauty in nature, etc.)

-**Which lights?** Sun, moon, stars

-**Implication to astrology?** Don't worship stars, but worship the Father (the Creator of the stars)

-**Is there a variation with light in the sky?** Yes (planets moving, etc.)

-**Contrast with God?** No variation with God

V 18 – How has God blessed us? He gave birth to us by the Word of God and made us his first fruits

James 1.19-25 – Being doers of the Word, and not just hearers

V 19 – Three steps to controlling our tempers? Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger

-A command, not a suggestion (See: *Proverbs 10.19* and *Proverbs 29.20*) – “must be”

-Remember that God gave us two ears and only one tongue – a great lesson there, but many people talk twice as much as they listen....

V 20 – Meaning? When humans get mad, it is not like the anger of God (He knows what he should do)

V 21 – Notice what James calls sin: filthiness and wickedness

-Our world tries to soften the view of sin

-**Two steps to salvation, according to James?** Put sin away and receive the Word of God

-**What has to be our attitude toward the Word of God?** Humility

-According to Guy N. Woods, the Greek word for "filthiness" is from a root word “ear wax” (*Gospel Advocate NT Commentary (James)*, p. 84)

V 22 – What did James tell us to be? Doers, not just hearers

-Sometimes Christians need this – there will be some Christians who never do much for the church (except come and listen to sermons, etc.)

-**In what sense are they deluded?** Thinking they will be saved

-**Read Matthew 7.21-23** – We must do the will of Jesus to be saved – Please remember that James is not talking to the alien sinners here, but to Christians in the Lord's church.

V 23-24 – **What comparison does James make?** Like a person who looks at himself in a mirror

- What happens?** He goes on to something else and forgets what he looks like
- Researchers have found that the average person would not recognize himself if he saw himself walking down the street
- We really don't know how we look (good for most of us)
- Some people hear the gospel and say, "Oh, that's good," and then go out and forget all that they learned in church

V 25 – **What should we be looking at?** The perfect law

- Is there an imperfect law?** Yes: Old Testament
- Are we under a law today?** Yes: New Testament law
- Very important: Some claim that we are not under law, but grace**
- “Liberty” = free from all the minute commandments of the Old Testament (read *Leviticus* sometime) – we don't have to be perfect to be saved
- We still must do some things, but not like the Old Law
- The denominational churches claim to be liberal, but they bind little picky rules on their members (lighting candles, having masses, using human titles, instrumental music and rock bands, etc.)
- Let us not be guilty of binding popular things that are not found in the Bible
- Salvation comes from responsibility to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross

James 1. 26-27 – True Christians

V 26 – **What is worthless religion?** Not to bridle the tongue and to deceive the heart

- What is a bridle?** Goes in the mouth of a horse to control him
- Just the appearance of religion will not be good enough for God

V 27a – **Two parts of pure and undefiled religion?** Widows and orphans

- Note for "non-cooperation" churches: *1 Timothy 5.16* – widows can be taken care of out of the church treasury
- Therefore, so can orphans
- Does this verse tell us how to take care of the widows and orphans?** No, it is left up to the judgment of the congregation (the elders)
- It can be by adoption, by organized homes like Shults-Lewis, or in small group homes....
- The "non-cooperation" churches bind where the scriptures do not bind!

V 27b – Unstained (when we come into contact with dirt, we get dirty)

What has James said in *chapter 1* that would encourage disheartened and persecuted Christians in the First Century?

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James 2

James 2.1-4 – Sin of partiality

V1 – Notice the use of "*my brethren*" (2.5, 14) – James uses this term in the letter to signal the beginning of a new thought

-**Remember the setting for the book?** Christians were being persecuted and were suffering, while they could see others who had everything they wanted

-**What temptations might that give to Christians?** To show favoritism toward the rich people

-**What is the significance of the word "*glorious*" in *verse 1*?** Jesus Christ was glorious, but was not received

-**How poor was Christ? Read Matthew 8.20**

-**What was the only thing of any value that he owned?** His seamless robe

-**Which apostle had to learn that God did not show favoritism?** Apostle Peter (concerning the Gentiles) - **Read Acts 10.34-35**

-**Read Hebrews 11.36-38** – Great men and women of the Old Testament had just about nothing, according to the views of the world

V2 – **Who would come into the assembly of the Christians?** A rich man and a poor man

-**Do we have cases like that today?** Yes

-Several years ago at our congregation we had a visitor who arrived in a Porsche 944 – we have also had poor people who have walked to the church building

-And several months ago, a man wanted to sleep at the foot of the steps on the south side of the building - we took him to a motel in town for the evening

-We have some members today who are out of work, others are poorly paid, and sometimes they apologize for dressing poorly, but that is not necessary!

-According to James, all people are equal in the eyes of God, and the cost of our clothing does not matter at all

-**How does James describe the rich man?** Gold ring, dressed in fine clothes

-**How does he describe the poor man?** Dressed in dirty clothes

V3 – **But what is the human tendency?** To show favoritism toward the rich

-It has been said that if suddenly all people around the world had exactly the same skin color, by noon the next day there would be prejudice on the basis of eye color or height or some other distinction

-**Why does Satan encourage favoritism and special treatment of certain people?** Because it is against the will of God, and all sin has some enjoyment to it

-**What are people tempted to do to the rich man?** Sit him in a "good" place (at the front of the auditorium)

-In First Century Judaism, the "good place" was at the front near the scrolls and the rabbis

-Remember that Jesus had a parable about those who wanted to sit at the head table

-**Read Luke 14.7-11** – Parable of the Guests

-**Read Luke 14.12-15** – We are to give preference to the poor among us

-**What are people tempted to do to the poor man?** Stand (not sit, as with rich man) "*over there*" or sit on footstool

-**Does clothing identify people and their class today?** Yes

-Example? Designer labels, latest colors and styles, expensive shoes, expensive hand bags

V 4 – What was James' conclusion? People are judging with evil motives

-What kind of judging are we to have today? Read John 7.24 - We are not to judge by outward appearance

-So what is judging with evil motives? Going by outward appearances, clothing, money, etc.,

James 2.5-7 – God's love for poor people

V 5 – How do we know that God loves poor people? Because there are so many of them in the church - **Read 1 Corinthians 1.26-30**

-Abraham Lincoln said, "God must have loved poor people, because he made so many of them"

-Generally, we do not have too many members who are rich

-What did our Lord say about the chances of a rich person being saved? – Read Matthew 19.16-26 (eye of needle...)

-Can rich people be saved? Yes, but the point of Jesus is that it is hard for them to be saved (because of their temptations)

-Rich man and Lazarus, rich fool, rich young ruler (all in the gospel of *Luke*)

-Read 1 Timothy 6.6-10

-What kingdom have we inherited? The Kingdom of God (the church)

-So if we are poor according to the world, what can we rejoice in? That we are rich in the eyes of God

-Read Proverbs 30.8-9 – We need a balance in our lives (between riches and poverty)

V 7 – What had rich people done to the name of Christ? Blasphemed it

-How had the rich blasphemed the name of Christ? They had called themselves Christians and then had denied the faith (name "Christian"): *Acts 11.26, 26.28, 1 Peter 4.14-16*

James 2.8-13 – Condemnation for mistreating the poor

V 8 – What were the Christians to be fulfilling? The royal law

-Notice again that Christians are under a law (it is different from the Old Law, but it is still a law)

-Point: we are not free to do whatever we want to do and think that God will be pleased

-In what sense is this a "royal" law? It came from our King, not from the fathers as in the Patriarchal Age, not from the prophets and priests as in the Law of Moses

-Jesus quoted *Leviticus 19.18* (love neighbor as self) in the passage about rich young ruler (*Matthew 19.19*) – so this Old Testament passage became a part of the New Covenant

-What lessons do we learn from *verse 8b* (loving neighbor as self)? We are not to love our neighbor instead of ourselves

-But we are to love ourselves (some people have a self-hatred, because of things that they have done in past years, or because they were abused while growing up)

-But this passage tells us that we need a healthy love of ourselves, and we need to extend that love to others

-What parable do we have about loving our neighbor? Parable: Good Samaritan (*Luke 10.30-37*)

-So how does the Bible define our "neighbor"? Anyone in need (not just a person of the same race, color, even religion)

V 9 – What about the person who is good, but he shows partiality? He has violated the whole law of God

- This passage has tremendous lessons for us today:
 - racial prejudice
 - prejudice against the poor
 - prejudice against other nationalities
 - prejudice against those who are different from us
 - slanted eyes
 - different skin color
 - different kind of hair
 - different height, etc.

In a healthy congregation of the Lord's church, there will be people who are different (but who are faithful Christians and well within the guidelines of the Scriptures)

- We should be careful not to want to homogenize to church, so that the church is so composed only of people just like us
- Several years ago the writer of these notes visited the Strathmore congregation in Toronto, Canada, and in talking to people after the service my wife and I noticed nine different nationalities there for that one occasion – very remarkable – all worshipping together in peace
- James is very forceful here:** we are not to show any trace of partiality in the Lord's church
- Out there in the world, partiality is widespread, and more laws will not fix it
- It requires a change in the human heart, and the only thing powerful enough to change the human heart is the gospel of Jesus Christ
- The church, therefore, is to set the example when it comes to acceptance and love (within the guidelines of the Scriptures)
- Remember the shock in *Acts 11* when Peter baptized the first Gentiles into the body of Christ

V 10 – What about the person who is good, but shows partiality? He has violated the whole law

V 11 – What two commandments are quoted here? No adultery, no murder

- What does it mean to violate one of these laws of God?** We have broken the whole law, and unless we are sinless, we are lost
- In the *Gospel Advocate NT Commentary (James)*, Guy N. Woods talks about sheep that are surrounded by a wooden fence – a sheep jumps over one wooden panel
- He is outside the fence - he does not have to jump over every panel to be outside – one is enough
- So if we violate one part of the law of Christ (and do not repent), we have violated the entire law
- We must not say, “This is just one little part of the law of God – he won’t care if we treat the rich man in a special way and have the poor man sit at the back of the auditorium”

V 12 – Another reference to the law of liberty

- Do people try to take advantage of the law of liberty?** Yes, “We’re under grace, so we don’t have to be perfect”
- Where did Paul speak of people who abuse the Word of God that way? Read Romans 6.1-2** (speaking of giving in to sin because we are covered by grace)

V 13 – **How will God treat those who have not shown mercy to the poor?** No mercy will be shown to them in the Judgment Day

-and we will have to have mercy to be saved on that day

(*Matthew 5:7*) *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy*

-At our local congregation the elders have stopped the selling of items at the building (not that the building is sacred – if we were meeting in a house, it would be the same)

-The ban is on selling anything when the church assembles for worship – people may not be able to afford to buy candy bars that support the local band or hockey team (remember the money-changers in the temple)

-We don't want anyone to be offended by not having the money to buy those things, and we try to keep expenses down for church activities

James 2.13 should scare us – we cannot be saved without the mercy of God

-Let us do all we can to avoid offending the poor among us and the “different” among us

James 2.14-17 – Faith must also have works

V 14 – Notice the use of “*my brethren*” again

-This is the passage that caused Martin Luther to condemn the book of *James*

-He called it an “epistle of straw” – he did not believe that it should be in the Bible

-In Martin Luther's German translation of the Bible, he inserted the word “*only*” in *Romans 3.28* (we are saved by faith only, which is not correct)

-Luther was reacting to the sale of indulgences (permission slips to commit some sin) by the Pope to finance the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome

There are two kinds of works in the New Testament:

1. Works that people claim will cause them to be saved (meritorious works)

2. Works that are an expression of our faith - **Read Ephesians 2.8-9**

-Paul was writing against works that make people think that they are going to be saved

-But James is writing about works that we do, not to be saved, but because our faith is so strong

-Can faith without the second kind of works save us? No

-So having a weak faith is no good

V 15 – **What “hypothetical” situation does James bring up?** A fellow Christian is in need of clothing and food

V 16 – **Does this apply to non-Christians who are in need?** - **Read Galatians 6.10** – we are to help fellow Christians first, then help those outside the church (if we have the means to do so)

V 17 – Remember James is talking about works that demonstrate our faith, not works that we use to try to earn our salvation (meritorious works)

James 2.18-24 – Practical examples

V 18 – James pretends that there is someone who objects to his comments

-James: Is it possible to have faith without works? No – James will show that a person's faith

will produce works

V 19 – What great illustration does James use at this point? The demons have “*faith*” – they believe and shudder – **Read Mark 1.23-26**

-**Are the demons going to be saved?** Of course not – just believing in God will not save a person

V 20 – James' conclusion? Faith without works is useless

V 21 – What is James' next illustration? Abraham when he offered up Isaac

-**Did Abraham actually offer up Isaac on the altar?** No

-**So why did James say that Abraham offered up Isaac?** He would have done it, if the angel had not stopped him

V 22-23 – So what saved Abraham? His faith (“he believed”)

-**But how strong was his faith?** Strong enough to produce works

V 24 – So are we justified by faith or works? By a faith that produces works

James 2.25-26 – A final example

V 25 – What other examples did James give? Rahab the harlot

-**Who was she?** The prostitute in Jericho – *Joshua 2*

-**Could she have rejected the spies?** Yes – she could have said, “I believe in the one true God, but I cannot take you in. It is too dangerous.”

-**But what saved Rahab?** She acted on her faith

V 26 – Very interesting – What is the Biblical definition of death? The body without the spirit

-So death is the separation of the body and the spirit (rules out people dying and coming back to life and having “near death experiences”)

-It also rules out ghosts, vampires, spirit beings, mummies, etc.

-A person cannot die and come back from the dead (without a miracle from God)

Read Hebrews 9.27

-**What is James' point?** Faith without works is dead, just as the body without the spirit is dead

Lessons from James 2:

1. No discrimination or partiality against the poor
2. The importance of works and obedience

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James 3

James 3.1-5 – The misuse of the tongue

V1 – Notice “*my brethren*” – a favorite phrase of James – It shows his love and the intensity of his writing

-**What warning does James give in v 1?** Not many should become teachers

-**Why not?** They will be judged more strictly

-**Why would teachers be judged more strictly?** Because of their influence over others

-**Was Jesus ever called a teacher?** Yes, 45 times in the New Testament (he was never referred as a preacher)

-If a congregation has a false teacher at the head of a class, imagine the damage that such a person could do, especially with our young people

V2 – **What does it mean to stumble?** To fall into sin (when not being careful, when not looking where we are going)

-**How can we be saved if we stumble in many ways?** Read 1 John 1.7-9

-**How can we be perfect people?** By not stumbling with our tongues

-**Is that possible?** No, as hard as we try, we all talk when we should keep quiet, and we say things we later regret

-**What famous people in the Bible stumbled with their tongues?**

-Sarah laughing at the three angels

-Zaccheus not believing the angel about the birth of John the Baptist

-Apostle Peter (bragging about how he would never deny Christ)

-**What is the relationship between the tongue and the rest of the body?** It controls the whole body

V3 – **Where does a horse’s bridle (bit) go?** In the mouth and under the tongue

-So here is this gigantic animal weighing hundreds of pounds that is controlled by its tongue and mouth

-**What is the size of the bit compared to the size of the horse?** Very tiny

-But James' point: when we control the tongue of the horse, we control the entire horse

V4 – **What is James' next point?** A small rudder can control a giant ship

-So we can control a huge ocean ship a thousand feet long with a small rudder – sometimes we see a ship out of water, and it is amazing how small the rudder really is

-In canoeing, just one paddle in the water can control the direction of the canoe

V5 – **How does the size of the tongue compare to the rest of the body?** Very, very small – tongue weights 1-2 pounds

-**But what do we do with the tongue?** We boast great things (we all like to brag, as Peter did)

-The tongue is like a small fire – it can start forest fires – **Read 1 Peter 3.8-9**

-We are not to exchange insults with each other (it takes two people to carry on an argument; if one refuses to participate, then there will be no argument)

-**How did the Great Chicago Fire (October 8, 1871) get started?**

-Mrs. Patrick O’Leary’s cow kicked over a lantern – the fire burned for 24 hours, 300 people

killed, 90,000 people homeless, and the center of the city was destroyed

Show a match or light a match – What can I burn down with this flame? This church building?

-If I can burn down this church building with this little flame, can the human tongue destroy this congregation (which meets in this building)? Of course

-Read Proverbs 26.18-28 – Many dangers of the human tongue

-This is what James is talking about: one person who does not have his or her tongue under control can create a lot of trouble and cause grief for the elders

James 3.6-12 – More thoughts on the tongue

V 6 – What is James' assessment of the tongue? A dangerous fire

-What is good and bad about a fire? It can be used for heat in a house and for cooking, but can also be so destructive

-Some of us have seen a house on fire – it is a frightful thing to see!

-Guy N. Woods (p. 164) says in his commentary that he believes that if we also were to suddenly lose our power of speech, the number of sins that we commit would go down very sharply –

Agree?

-James is not too optimistic about the tongue

-Remember the speeches of Hitler - he was able to inflame an entire nation

-But there were the fireside chats with President Roosevelt that encouraged people, and there were the speeches of Winston Churchill

V 6c – **Meaning: “set on fire by hell”?** – A reference to gehenna (the garbage dump outside the city of Jerusalem) and a reference to hell

-It is hell that sets our tongues on fire

-Conclusion? If people would study this passage carefully, they would not talk so much, and they would guard their words very closely

V 7 – What are some ferocious animals that have been tamed?

-We can go to a circus and see a giant elephant controlled by a little short guy (maybe 120 pounds)

-Elephants do everything the trainer wants them to do

-Examples from James? Beasts, birds, reptiles, creatures of the sea

-Our navy has trained dolphins to assist in detecting mines in harbors

-Can you think of other animals that have been trained? Many animals can be trained by behavior modifications (positive and negative responses to their behavior)

V 8 – But we cannot tame the human tongue

-What did James mean here with the word “restless”? Always trying to get out of control, never fully under control

-Remember that the tongue is always wet and in a slippery place; it has no bones, so it is hard to grasp

-If it is left unguarded for a moment, we can say something that we will regret for years

-What sins can be committed with the human tongue? Blasphemy, gossip, slander, lying, perjury, discord among the church members

-We must ask ourselves: **Is this how God wants us to use our tongues?**

Take the sin of lying (that is usually committed with the tongue)

-Mark Twain: "One of the most striking differences between a cat and a lie is that a cat has only 9 lives"

-Saying in World War II: "Loose lips sink ships"

V 9 – Is there any good that can come from the human tongue? Yes, with it we bless the Lord (we preach the Word of God to the dying world)

-Some people are converted through the written word, but most are converted because of the spoken words of another person or of the preacher or elders

-But evil? We also curse people (frequently done)

-What is so bad about cursing people? They are also made in the image of God

V 10 – Apostle John asked Christ to bring down fire from heaven to destroy a certain Samaritan village, but then John went on to record the Fourth Gospel – very inconsistent

V 11 – What illustration from nature does James use here? A spring does not produce both good and bad water

-Some wells and springs produce bad water (sulfur, etc.)

-Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park smells terrible – we would not want to drink that water (one geyser is called "Devil's Breath")

-Point? We can use our tongues for both good and evil – we have to make a decision about the tongue

V 12 – Other illustrations? A fig tree does not produce olives, and a grape vine does not produce figs

-Salt water does not produce good water

-Will there be people who will be lost in the Day of Judgment because of their tongues?

Read Matthew 12.36-37 and Proverbs 15.1-2

James 3.13-18 – Some thoughts on wisdom

V 13 – Again note the similarity of *James* and *Proverbs*

-*James 3.13* seems to be a reference back to *Proverbs 3.1-2* (teachers)

-Maybe a teacher in James' day claimed to be wise

-How does James describe wisdom? It is demonstrated by good deeds (same as in *Ch. 2*)

-Why "gentleness of wisdom"? Because an arrogant person cannot be a wise person

-Godly wisdom produces gentleness, as in the life of Christ

V 14 – Sounds as if some people were bragging about themselves, when in fact they were suffering from jealousy, etc.

V 15 – There is the false wisdom that comes from below

-How is this wisdom "demonic"? It makes people act like demons

V 16 – What is the result of jealousy and selfish ambition? Disorder and evil things

-Not all ambition is bad, just selfish ambition

V 17 – James begins to list the characteristics of wisdom from above

[See: Guy N. Woods, p. 190-196 for commentary on these terms]

V 18 – What did Christ say about peacemakers?

-Matthew 5.9 - Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

-How does a congregation have peace? People have to make it (it does not come by accident)

-What does peace produce in a congregation? Righteousness

-We have to work at having peace in a congregation, by keeping our tongues under control

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James 4

James 4.1-4 – The cause of conflicts

V1 – **Generally speaking, are human beings peaceful characters?** No

- According to historians, there have been only about 130 years of peace out of last 3000 years
- The Roman Empire was constantly at war; they conquered over 50 nations of the world (all the way from the Hadrian Wall in northern England to the Persian Gulf)
- At the War Memorial Auditorium in downtown Nashville, there are huge marble slabs listing people from Tennessee killed in WWI, but it is not called World War I - it is called "The Great War"

-**Why?** Because they could not imagine anything worse than World War I – they never dreamed that there would be a World War II

-**Were the Jewish people in the First Century peaceful people?** No:

- Pharisees
- Sadducees
- Herodians
- Essenes
- Zealots (believed in assassinating Roman officials)
- They become so rebellious against the Roman Empire that the Romans had to destroy the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., along with Masada and the rest of Palestine
- Peace is one of the greatest blessings of mankind – it is so good to have peace in a nation
- Why is James saying those things about conflicts and quarrels?** Apparently because congregations were having major problems and divisions
- And the some things that causes warfare between nations can cause warfare within a congregation
- What question therefore does James ask?** What is the source of warfare among us?
- The answer?** People seeking their own pleasures, wanting more things, more territory, more power, more goods, more pleasures of the flesh, more money, more prestige, wanting to have their "needs" met, wanting more natural resources such as oil
- But James says that this is all sin!
- Many times even in neighborhoods, there are neighbors who cannot get along together

V2 – **Who in the Old Testament lusted after something and eventually ended up committing murder?** David and Bathsheba, also Ahab and Naboth's vineyard

-**Why do people not have things?** Because they do not ask God for them

V3 – **Why don't we get what we ask for in our prayers?** We ask with the wrong motives, to spend things on ourselves

-**Are those charges of James still true today?** Unfortunately

James 4.4-6 – Sins that cause strife

V4 – **Why does James use the female form here?** Guy N. Woods: because the church is the bride of Christ (*2 Corinthians 11.2, Ephesians 5*)

- So Christians were in friendship with the world
- What does it mean to be a friend of the world?** We are enemies of God

- Popular bumper sticker today: "COEXIST," but as Christians we have to be distinctive
- Those people who believe in peaceful coexistence, who just want to go along to get along, who don't want to rock the boat or cause any problems at work – they are enemies of God, even if they attend church and claim to be Christians.
- The truth: there is to be a fundamental difference between the people of God and the people of the world.
- Mark 13:13 - You will be hated by all because of My name, but the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.*

V5 – There is no specific Scripture that says this, but it seems to be a combination of several Scriptures: *Genesis 6.3-7, Exodus 29.5, Deuteronomy 32.1-21, Job 5.12, Ecclesiastes 4.4, Proverbs 27.4*

-How can James say that the Bible says this, when no one Scripture says this? Our concept of a direct quote is different from the ancient concept

-*Merriam-Webster* dictionary (ninth edition), p. 968 – quotation marks date from 1883 (quote = 1582, quotation = 1646) (KJV has no quotations marks)

-Why did James talk about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a passage about warfare and strife and adultery? Because if we have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we ought to be behaving better

-So he is reminding them of the same thing that Paul talked about in *Romans 8* and the gift of the Holy Spirit that Peter talked about in *Acts 2.38*

-Message of v 5: God the father is proud of the Holy Spirit, which dwells in Christians – therefore, let us not dishonor the Holy Spirit by fighting and causing strife

V6 – God hates the proud people, but loves the humble

James 4.7-10 – How to overcome strife and a warlike attitude

V7 – **How do we overcome wars, conflicts, and arguments?** Submitting to God and resisting Satan

-**What will Satan do?** Flee from us

-**Thought question: How do we resist Satan?**

-Too many people today want to flirt with Satan, rather than resist him

V8 – **How do we get God to come near to us?** We have to get near to God

-**What does it mean to cleanse our hands?** To no longer do evil things

-**Is that enough?** No – We must cleanse our hearts also

-**Who in the Bible cleansed his hands but not his heart?** Pilate (*Matthew 26.24*)

V9 – **Why did James tell the Christians to mourn and weep?** To realize how wicked they had been and to be conscious for their need for forgiveness

-*Matthew 5:4 - Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*

V10 – **What does James recommend here?** We must humble ourselves, then God will exalt us

James 4.11-12

V 11 – What sin is James talking here? Slander

- The emphasis should be on the word “*against*”
- What is the result when we slander a fellow Christian?** We are attacking the law (notice “law” again) **Read 1 John 4.20**
- In other words, to keep peace in the church, we must not slander each other
- What does James recommend in the place of slander?** To carry out the law of Christ
- “Slander” = unjust criticism
- James is criticizing his fellow Christians in this verse – so there must be times when we have to correct a brother or sister who has departed from the faith, but that is not the same as slander

V 12 – Christ will be the judge of us all

- Who is the lawgiver?** Christ
- Matthew 28:18 - All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

James 4.13-17

V 13 – James is still dealing with pride in the hearts of Christians

- “*Come now...*” = Listen here...
- What is the implication of these words?** Something was seriously wrong with the attitude of some of the Christians James was writing to in this letter
- What were some of them saying and bragging about?** What they were going to do the next day
- We have plans for retirement, the golden years, for next year
- We have it all planned out
- We even worry about things years away from now, don’t we?

V 14 – **What is the problem when we worry about tomorrow and make plans for tomorrow?** We don’t know what will take place tomorrow

- What are the implications of this verse to psychics, fortune-tellers, palm readers, tarot card readers?** They are wrong!
- What do we not know about tomorrow?** If we will even be alive
 - If we will be healthy
 - If the world will still be here
 - If the country will still be in existence
- What nation mentioned in the Old Testament fell in one night?** Babylon (*Daniel 5*)
- To what does James compare our lives?** A vapor - **Read Job 7.6-10**
- Over and over, the writers of the Bible try to tell us that this life is going to be very short

V 15 – **What does be our attitude?** If it is the will of God

- People use to put at the end of their letters: D.V. = Latin: *Deo volente* – “If the Lord permits”
- Not just a rote phrase that we put at the end of a sentence, but it should mean something to us
- Today, many Christians will put at the end of their letter: *Lord willing* (same message)

V 16 – **What does James say about boasting about tomorrow?** Evil

V 17 – Sin of omission

-People will be lost for not doing some good deed

-**Two kinds of sins?** Commission and omission

-**Sin of Omission?** If we admit that something is good to do (for example: to come to church on Wednesday night), then we ought to do it

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James 5

James 5.1-6 – More dangers for rich people

V1 – Is James talking to rich Christians here? He does not seem to be - no reference to “my brethren” (*verse 7*)

-**What should be the attitude toward rich people?** Sadness over their wealth (remember *James 1*)

“**Coming upon you?**” 70 A.D. and general persecution of Jews or the Day of Judgment

-If this is a reference to 70 A.D., the poor but faithful Christians would have escaped the destruction, because of Jesus' warning in *Matthew 24.1-35*

V2 – Is it a sin for a Christian to be rich? No, it is one's attitude towards money that is important

-**Any rich Christians in the New Testament?** Philemon (the church met in his house, and he had a slave) – also, Joseph of Arimathea

-**Why should we not place our trust in money?** It will all rot in time anyway

V3 – Do gold and silver rust? Not literally, but they do become tarnished

-**If we misuse money, what will happen?** It will testify against us in the Day of Judgment

-**What is the greatest danger in being rich?** It will become a god to us (See: *Matthew 6.19-21*, *Mark 10.23-34*)

V4 – What had the rich people done wrong, according to James? They had not paid their workers on time

-**Have you ever not been paid on time? How did you feel?** Enraged, bitter, hurt, etc.

-**Who hears the cries of the workers not paid properly or not paid on time?** Heaven

-**Notice:** Lord of Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts), **not** Lord of Sabbath (day)

V5 – Does this remind us of a account in the New Testament? Rich man and Lazarus

-The rich man had gotten fat when others were in great suffering

V6 – What else had the rich done? Killed the righteous men

-James was very hard on rich people, as was also the Lord Jesus Christ

James 5.7-11 – Having patience when suffering

V7 – Notice “brethren” again = James talking to Christians once again

-**What does James recommend?** Patience

-**What illustration does James use?** The farmer who is waiting for his crop

-The farmer has to believe that the harvest is coming, so he is patient and knows that God will not fail the farmers

V8 – There is no way to speed up the harvest, so Christian also should be patient

-**What does “at hand” mean?** The coming of Jesus Christ

-**In what sense?** Always at hand (or: the coming of Christ in punishment on Jerusalem)

-**Imminent?** Always ready to take place

-If the coming of the Lord is at hand, then what should our lives be like? Ready at all times
(See: *2 Peter 3.10-13*)

-Meaning of "Maranatha"? Come, Lord Jesus (*1 Cor. 16.22, Rev. 22.20*)

V 9 – We are to put away a quarrelsome attitude

-Why? Because Christ is watching, and Satan is at the door

V 10 - Name some prophets who showed great patience? Jeremiah, Elijah, Elisha

V 11 – What character of the prophets was the greatest? Their endurance

Read Hebrews 11.32-38

-So many times people ask us to explain why Christians suffer in this world today - we can point them to the book of *James*

-In the end, what happened to Job? Everything he lost was restored

-Lesson for First Century Christians? Don't give up, and have the endurance of Job

James 5.12 – No swearing

V 12 – Notice “my brethren”

-What does James tell them not to do? Not to swear – See *Matthew 5.34-37*

-We are not to use God's name to “reinforce” our statements

-Our statements should not need to be bolstered by those words

-Examples of how some people swear: "On my mother's grave...."

James 5.13-18 – The power of prayer

V 13 – What are we to do when we are suffering? Pray

-Do we have examples in the New Testament for that? Paul prayed about his thorn in the flesh
(*2 Corinthians 12*)

-What is the cheerful person to do? Sing (note: sing, not play musical instruments)

V 14 – What is the sick person to do? Call the elders

-Notice **he** is to call the elders, not the other way around

-“Why didn't you come to see me?” “Because we didn't know that you were sick”

-The elders cannot keep up with the health of all the members, so it is the responsibility of sick member to notify elders or their wives that they are sick

-What are the elders to do about a member who is sick? Pray over them and anoint him with oil

-What kind of oil? Olive oil (used both as medicine and for ceremonial purposes in the First Century)

Two viewpoints on this scripture:

1. The “oil” represents the best medical care that can be given to a person

-Remember the Parable of Good Samaritan – *Luke 10.34* – the Good Samaritan poured oil in the wounds of the victim for healing purposes (not for ceremonial purposes)

-The elders can arrange for the person to go to a doctor or hospital or whatever it takes to help the

sick person – the elders are to help that person get well (if he is poor and destitute)

2. This may be a reference to a miraculous gift of the Holy Spirit in the First Century for healing

-The elders would have had the power to heal a person, but these gifts ended in 95 A.D. (with the completion of the New Testament)

V 15 – What would the prayer do if it is offered in faith?

-Restore sick person, and his sins would be forgiven

-Notice that Christians can get sick, contrary to the teaching of the Christian Scientists

V 16 – What does this have to say about the confession of sins to Roman Catholic priests and prayer partners in Boston movement, etc.)? Not just limited to “clergy”

-**What sins are we to confess to a fellow Christian? Read Matthew 5.23-24** – before worship

-**How public should the confession be?** As public as the sin

-**Healing?** Spiritual sins and forgiveness and relief from guilt

-**What can the prayer of a righteous person do?** Accomplish much (not everything, but much)

V 17 – What is James’ example of this? Elijah

-**What did Elijah do?** Prayed that it would not rain

-**Did it work?** There was no rain for 3½ years (*1 Kings 17*)

-**What are we told about Elijah?** He was a man just like us

V 18 – *1 Kings 18.41-45*

James 5.19-20 – Farewell

V 19 – Notice “my brethren” (the usage of this word would make an interesting study in the book of *James*)

-**Is it possible for us to stray from the truth?** Yes, according to *v 19*

V 20 – What does James say about a Christian who brings another Christian back to the church? It will cover a multitude of sins

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JAMES

CHAPTER 1

1 James, a bond-servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,
3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.

6 But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,
8 being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

9 But the brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position;
10 and the rich man is to glory in his humiliation, because like flowering grass he will pass away.

11 For the sun rises with a scorching wind and withers the grass; and its flower falls off and the beauty of its appearance is destroyed; so too the rich man in the midst of his pursuits will fade away.

12 Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

14 But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

18 In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

19 This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;

20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

21 Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

22 But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror;

24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

25 But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless.

27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit."

14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.

15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that."

16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.

CHAPTER 5

1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you.

2 Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure!

4 Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.

6 You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.

7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.

8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.

9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.

10 As an example, brethren, of suffering and patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

11 We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful.

12 But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath; but your yes is to be yes, and your no, no, so that you may not fall under judgment.

13 Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises.

14 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

18 Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit.

19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back,

20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

CHAPTER 2

1 My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism.

2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes,

3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,"

4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?

5 Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?

7 Do they not blaspheme the fair name by which you have been called?

8 If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.

11 For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not commit murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can

that faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,

16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

17 Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."

19 You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.

20 But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

22 You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected;

23 and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God.

24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

25 In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?

26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

CHAPTER 3

1 Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we will incur a stricter judgment.

2 For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.

3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us, we direct their entire body as well.

4 Look at the ships also, though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, are still directed by a very small rudder wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.

5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!

6 And the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell.

7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.

8 But no one can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.

9 With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God;

10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.

11 Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water?

12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.

15 This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.

17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.

18 And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

CHAPTER 4

1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?

2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"?

6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom.

10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

11 Do not speak against one another, brethren. He who speaks against a brother or judges his brother, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it.

12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?