

The *General Epistle of James

The Argument

James the Apostle and son of Alpheus wrote this Epistle to the Jews which were converted to Christ, but dispersed throughout divers countries, and therefore he exhorteth them to patience and prayer, to embrace the true word of God, and not to be partial, neither to boast of an idle faith, but to declare a true faith by lively fruits, to avoid ambition, to bridle the tongue, to rule the affections, to be humble and love their neighbors, to beware of swearing, to utter their fautes when they have offended, to pray one for another, and to bring him which is out of the way, to the knowledge of Christ.

Chapter 1

2 He exhorteth to rejoice in trouble, 6 To be fervent in prayer with steadfast belief, 17 To look for all good things from above. 21 To forsake all vice, and thankfully to receive the word of God, 22 Not only hearing it, and speaking of it, but to do thereafter in deed. 27 What true religion is.

James a servant of God, & of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, to the twelve Tribes, which are scattered abroad, salutation.

2 My brethren, count it exceeding joy, when ye fall into divers [^]tentations,

3 *Knowing that the ^atrying of your faith bringeth forth patience.

4 And let patience have *her* ^bperfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing.

5 If any of you lack ^cwisdom, let him ask of God, which giveth to all men liberally, and reproacheth no man, and it shall be given him.

6 *But let him ask in faith, and waver not: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, tossed of the wind, and carried away.

7 Neither let that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 A ^dwavering minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is ^eexalted:

10 Again he that is rich, in that he is made ^flow: for as the flower of the grass, shall he ^{*}vanish away.

11 For *as when* the sun riseth with heat, then the grass withereth, and his flower falleth away, and the beauty of the fashion of it perisheth: even so shall the rich man fade away in *all* his [^]ways.

12 *Blessed *is* the man, that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

*That is, writ to no one man, city or country, but to all the Jews generally, being now dispersed.

2 [^]Or, afflictions

3 *Rom. 5.3

3 a Afflictions try our faith and engender patience.

4 b Our patience ought to continue to the end till by working it has polished us, and made us perfect in Christ.

5 c To endure patiently whatsoever God lays upon him.

6 *Mat. 7.7, Mar. 11.24, Luk. 11.9, John 14.13 and 16.23

8 d Doubting in doctrine, or of God's will.

8 [^]or, double

9 e That he is called to the company of Christ and his Angels.

10 f Or contemptible to the world.

10 *Isa. 40.6, Eccles. 14.18, 1 Pet. 1.24

11 [^]Or, in all his thoughts and deeds.

12 *Job 5.17

13 Let no man say when he is [^]tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own concupiscence, and is enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Err not, my dear brethren.

17 Every good ^hgiving, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, ⁱneither shadowing by turning.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be as the first fruits of his creatures.

19 Wherefore my dear brethren, ^{*}let every man be ^kswift to hear, slow to speak, and ^lslow to wrath.

20 For the wrath of man doeth not accomplish the ^mrighteousness of God.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of maliciousness, and receive with meekness the word that is ⁿgrafted in you, which is able to save your souls.

22 ^{*}And be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any hear the word, and do it not, he is like unto a man, that beholdeth his natural face in a ^oglass.

24 For when he hath considered himself, he goeth his way, and forgetteth immediately what manner of one he was.

25 But who so looketh in the perfect Law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, shall be blessed ^pin his deed.

26 If any man among you seemeth religious, and refraineth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

27 Pure religion & undefiled before God, even the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless, and widows in their adversity, *and to keep himself unspotted of the world.*

13 [^]Or, moved to evil

13 g He means now of the inward tentations as of our disordered appetites, which cause us to sin.

17 h Seeing all good things come of God, we ought not to make him the author of evil.

17 i He alludes unto the sun which in his course and turning sometime is clear and bright, sometime dark and cloudy: but God's liberality is ever like itself, bright and continually shining.

19 *Prov. 17.27

19 k That is, prompt to learn.

19 l For we can not hear God except we be peaceable, and modest.

20 m But hinders God's work in us.

21 n By hearing the word preached.

22 *Mat. 7.21, Rom. 2.13

23 o So God's word is a glass wherein we must behold ourselves, and become like unto him.

25 p In so behaving himself.

Chapter 2

1 He forbiddeth to have any respect of persons, 5 But to regard the poor as well as the rich. 8 To be loving and merciful, 14 And not to boast of faith where no deeds are. 17 For it is but a dead faith, where good works follow not.

My brethren, have not the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ ^ain [^]respect of persons.
 2 For if there come into your company a man with a gold ring, and in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment,
 3 And ye have a respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place, and say unto the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool,
 4 Are ye not partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil ^bthoughts?
 5 Hearken my beloved brethren, hath not ^oGod chosen the poor of this world, *that they should be rich in faith, & heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him?*
 6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not the rich oppress you by tyranny, and do not they draw you before the judgment seats?
 7 Do not they blaspheme the ^dworthy Name after which ye be named?
 8 But if ye fulfil the ^eroyal Law according to the Scripture, *which saith, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.*
 9 *But if ye regard the persons, ye commit sin, and are rebuked of the Law, as transgressors.
 10 For *whosoever shall keep the whole Law, *and yet faileth in one point, he is guilty of all.*
 11 For he that said, *Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill. Now though thou doest none adultery, yet if thou killest, thou art a transgressor of the Law.
 12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shalbe judged by the Law of ^fliberty.
 13 For there shalbe judgment merciless to him that sheweth no mercy, and mercy ^grejoiceth against judgment.
 14 What availeth it, my brethren, though a man saith he hath ^hfaith, when he hath no works? Can the faith save him?

1 a As esteeming faith and religion by the outward appearance of men.

1 ^Or, acception.

4 b That is, are you not evil affectioned?

5 c Seeing God esteems them, we may not contemn them.

7 d The Name of God and Christ, whereof ye make profession: and in that they dishonor God, it is not mete that you his children should honor them.

8 e Which is here taken proverbially, for the high or broad way, wherein there is no turnings, and every man can go it: so every man is our neighbor, as well the poor as the rich.

8 *Lev. 19.18, Mat. 22.39, Mar. 12.31, Rom. 13.9, Gal. 5.14

9 *Lev. 19.15, Deuter. 1.17 & 16.19,

10 *Mat. 5.19

11 *Exod. 20.14, Deut. 5.18

12 f By the mercy of God which delivered us from the curse of the Law.

13 g And feareth it not

14 h S. Paul to the Romans and Galatians disputes against them, which attribute justification to the works: and here S. James reasons against them which utterly condemn works: therefore Paul shows the causes of our justification, and James the effects: there it is declared how we are justified: here how we are known to be justified: there works are excluded as not the cause of our justification: here they are approved as effects proceeding thereof: there they are denied to go before them that shalbe justified: and here they are said to follow them that are justified.

15 For if a brother or a sister be *naked and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace: warm yourselves, and fill your bellies, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what helpeth it?

17 Even so the faith, if it have no works, is dead in itself.

18 But some man might say, Thou hast ^lthe faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith out of thy ^kworks, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that there is one God: thou doest well: the devils also believe it, and tremble.

20 But wilt thou understand, ^othou vain man, that the faith *which is* without works, is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified through works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the Altar?

22 Seest thou not that the faith ^lwrought with his works? and through the works was the faith made ^mperfect?

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.

24 Ye see then how that of works a man is ⁿjustified, and not ^oof faith only.

25 Likewise also was not ^pRahab the harlot justified through works, when she had received the messengers, and sent them out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, even ^qso the faith without works is dead.

Chapter 3

1 He forbiddeth all ambition to seek honor above our brethren. 3 He describeth the property of the tongue, 15-16 And what difference there is betwixt the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of the world.

My brethren, be not ^amany masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

2 For in many things we ^bsin all. *If any man sin not in ^cword, he is a perfect man, and able to bridle all the body.

3 Behold, we put bits into the horses mouths that they should obey us, and we turn about all their body.

15 *Luk. 3.11, 1 John 3.17

18 i In thine own opinion.

18 ^Or, without works

18 k Here deeds are considered as joined with true faith.

22 l So that faith was not idle.

22 m The more his faith was declared by his obedience and good works, the more was it known to men to be perfect, as the goodness of a tree is known by her good fruit, otherwise no man can have perfection in this world: for every man must pray for remission of his sins, and increase of faith.

23 *Gen. 15.6, Rom. 4.3, Gal. 3.6

24 n Is so known and declared to man.

24 o Of that barren and dead faith whereof ye boast.

25 *Josh. 2.1

25 p Meaning hereby all them that were not Jews and were received to grace.

26 q Wherefore we are justified only by that lively faith, which doeth apprehend the mercy of God toward us in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 3

1 a Usurp not through ambition authority over your brethren.

2 ^Or, stumble

2 b He that well considers himself, shall not be rigorous toward his brethren.

2 *Eccle. 14.1 & 19.16 & 25.8

2 c He that is able to moderate his tongue, hath attained to an excellent virtue.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, & are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small rudder, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth of great things: behold, how great a ^athing a little fire kindleth.

6 And the tongue is fire, yea, a ^dworld of wickedness: so is the tongue set among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ^esetteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell.

7 For the whole nature of beasts, and of birds and of creeping things, and things of the sea is tamed and hath been tamed of the nature of man.

8 But the tongue can no man tame. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 Therewith bless we God even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

10 Out of one mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing: my brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at one place sweet *water* and bitter?

12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bring forth olives, other a vine figs? so can no fountain make both salt water & sweet.

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew by good conversation his works in meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, rejoice not, neither be liars against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, and devilish.

16 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* sedition, and all manner of evil works.

17 But the wisdom that *is* from above, is first ^fpure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without ^gjudging, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the ^hfruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.

Chapter 4

1 Having shewed the cause of all wrong and wickedness, and also of all graces and goodness, 4 He exhorteth them to love God, 7 And submit themselves to him, 11 Not speaking evil of their neighbors, 13 But patiently to depend on God's providence.

From whence *are* wars and contentions among you? are they not hence, *even* of your lusts, that ^afight in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye envy, and have indignation, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, and get nothing, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not because ye ask a miss, that ye

5 [^]Or, matter

6 ^d An heap and full measure of all iniquity.

6 ^e The intemperateness of the tongue is as a flame of hellfire.

17 ^f Without mixtion and dissimulation.

17 ^g And examining things with extreme rigor as hypocrites, who only justify themselves, and condemn all others.

18 ^h So that their life is according to their profession.

Chapter 4

1 ^a For the Law of the members continually fighteth against the Law of the mind.

might consume it on your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and ^badulteresses, know ye not that the amity of the world is the enmity of God? **Whosoever* therefore will be a friend of the world, maketh himself the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, The ^cspirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth after envy?

6 But *the Scripture* offereth more grace and therefore saith, **God* resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

7 **Submit* yourselves 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, ye sinners, & purge your hearts, ye wavering minded.

9 Suffer afflictions, and ^dsorrow ye, & weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning, and *your* joy into heaviness.

10 **Cast* down yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, or he that condemneth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and ^econdemneth the Law: and if thou condemnest the Law, thou art not an observer of the Law, but a judge.

12 There is one ^fLaw giver, which is able to save, and to destroy. **Who* art thou that judgest another man?

13 Go to now ye that say, ^gToday or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain,

14 (And yet ye can not tell what *shalbe* tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and afterward vanisheth away)

15 For that ye ought to say, **If* the Lord will, and, If we live, we will do this or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore, ^hto him that knoweth how to do well, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

Chapter 5

2 He threateneth the wicked rich men, 7 Exhorteth unto patience, 12 To beware of swearing. 16 One to knowledge his faults to another, 20 And one to labor to bring another to the truth.

4 ^b He calls adulterers here after the manner of the Scriptures, them which prefer the pleasures of the world to the love of God.

4 ^{*} 1 John 2.15

5 ^c The imagination of man's heart is wicked, Gen. 6.5 and 8.21.

6 ^{*}Prov. 3.34, 1 Pet. 5.5

7 ^{*}Ephes. 4.27

9 ^d The Greek word signifies that heaviness, which is joined with a certain shamefastness, as appears in the countenance.

10 ^{*}1 Pet. 5.6

11 ^e In usurping the authority of judging, which is due to the Law

12 ^f He shows that this severe judging of others is to deprive God of his authority.

12 ^{*}Rom. 14.4.

13 ^g We ought to submit ourselves to the providence of God.

15 ^{*}Acts 19.21, 1 Cor. 4.19

17 ^h He answers to them, which said they knew what was good, but they would not do it.

Go to now, ye rich men: weep, and ^ahowl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

2 Your riches are corrupt: & your garments are moth-eaten.

3 Your gold and silver is cankred, and the rust of them shalbe a ^bwitness against you, and shall eat your flesh as *it were* fire. *Ye have heaped up treasure for the ^clast days.

4 Behold, the hire of the laborers, which have reaped your fields (which is of you kept back by fraud) crieth, and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, & in wantonness. Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of ^dslaughter.

6 Ye have condemned *and* have killed the just, and he hath not resisted you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the ^eformer, and the latter rain.

8 Be ye also patient therefore and settle your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth near.

9 ^fGrudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the Prophets for an example of suffering adversity, and of long patience, which have spoken in the Name of the Lord.

11 Behold, we count them blessed which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have known what end the Lord *made*. For the Lord is very pitiful and merciful.

1 a He menaces them with the vengeance of God, which shall not only make them to weep, but to howl and despair.

3 b And kindle the wrath of God against you.

3 *Rom. 2.5

3 c To suffice till the end of the world.

5 d Which were the days of the sacrifices, or feasts when they used to banquet and feed more abundantly than other days.

7 e Which is when the corn is sown, and a little before it is mown.

9 f Be not grieved nor ask vengeance.

12 But before all things, my brethren, *swear not, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath: but let your ^gyea, be yea, and *your* nay, nay, lest ye fall into ^hcondemnation.

13 Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing.

14 Is any sick among you? Let him call for the ⁱElders of the Church, and let them pray for him, and anoint him with ^joil in the ^kName of the Lord.

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sin, it shalbe forgiven him.

16 Acknowledge ^lyour faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: for the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, if it be fervent.

17 *Helias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 Brethren, if any of you hath erred from the truth, and some man hath converted him,

20 Let him know that he which hath converted the sinner from going astray out of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

12* Mat. 5.34

12 g That which must be affirmed, affirm it simply and without oath: likewise that which must be denied: by this he taketh not from the magistrate his authority who may require an oath for the maintenance of justice, judgement, and truth.

12 ^hOr, hypocrisy.

14 h The gift of healing was then in the Church.

14 *Mk. 6.13

14 i Which in those days was a sign of the gift of healing, but now the gift being taken away, the sign is to no use.

14 k In calling on the Name of the Lord.

16 l Open that which grieveth you, that a remedy may be found: and this is commanded both for him that complaineth, and for him that heareth that the one should show his grief to the other.

17 *1 Kings 17.1, Eccle. 48.3, Luke 4.25