

"THE EPISTLE OF JAMES"

Chapter One

OBJECTIVES IN STUDYING THE CHAPTER

- 1) To appreciate the value of enduring trials
- 2) To understand how sin develops, from temptation to death (separation from God)
- 3) To note the importance of being doers of the Word, and practitioners of religion that is pure and undefiled before God

SUMMARY

Following a simple and humble salutation (1), James begins his epistle with a call to view trials as occasions to rejoice, understanding they can produce patience which leads to maturity (2-5). If wisdom is needed, he counsels his readers to ask God with faith and no doubting (5-8). In the meantime, the poor are encouraged to rejoice in their exaltation, while the rich are to be thankful for their humiliation (9-11).

Motivation to endure temptation is given, along with an explanation as to the true source of temptations and the development of sin which leads to spiritual death (12-15). Let no one be deceived, God is not the source of temptation, but the Father of every good and perfect gift which comes down from above, who has brought us forth that we might be the firstfruits of His creation (16-18).

With admonitions to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath, James then expounds upon a major theme of this epistle: to be doers of the word and not hearers only. Illustrating the folly of being a hearer only, he contrasts the difference between religion that is useless and that which is pure and undefiled before God (19-27).

OUTLINE

SALUTATION (1)

I. TRUE RELIGION ENDURES TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS (2-18)

A. WITH JOY AND PATIENCE (2-4)

1. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience
2. Letting patience produce its perfect work

- a. That you may be perfect and complete
- b. That you may lack nothing

B. WITH WISDOM FROM GOD (5-8)

- 1. If you lack wisdom, ask God
 - a. Who gives to all liberally and without reproach
 - b. It will be given to you
- 2. But ask in faith, with no doubting; for he who doubts...
 - a. Is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind
 - b. Should not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord
 - c. Is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways

C. WITH A PROPER PERSPECTIVE (9-11)

- 1. If a lowly brother, glory in your exaltation
- 2. If rich, glory in your humiliation
 - a. For as the flower of the field you will pass away, as the grass withers with the burning heat of the rising sun
 - b. So the rich man will fade away in his pursuits

D. WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF TEMPTATION (12-15)

- 1. The man who endures temptation will be blessed
 - a. For he will receive the crown of life when he is proven
 - b. Which the Lord has promised to those who love Him
- 2. Temptations do not come from God
 - a. God cannot be tempted by evil
 - b. He does not tempt anyone
- 3. The source of temptations
 - a. One is tempted when drawn away by his own desires and is enticed
 - b. When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin
 - c. Sin, when full-grown, brings forth death

E. WITH AN AWARENESS OF THE FATHER'S GOODNESS (16-18)

- 1. Do not be deceived, beloved brethren
- 2. Every good and perfect gift is from above
 - a. Coming down from the Father of lights
 - b. With whom there is no variation or shadow of turning
- 3. Of His own will He brought us forth
 - a. By the word of truth
 - b. That we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures

II. TRUE RELIGION CONSISTS OF DOING, NOT JUST HEARING (19-27)

A. ONE SHOULD BE SWIFT TO HEAR (19-20)

- 1. Let every one be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath

2. For the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God

B. ONE SHOULD NOT BE HEARERS ONLY, BUT DOERS (21-27)

1. What to lay aside, and what to receive
 - a. Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness
 - b. Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls
2. Be doers of the word, and not hearers only
 - a. Otherwise you deceive yourselves
 - b. You are like a man who after looking in mirror soon forgets what he looked like
3. One who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it...
 - a. Is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work
 - b. Will be blessed in what he does
4. Your religion is useless...
 - a. If you think you're religious, but do not bridle your tongue
 - b. You deceive only your heart
5. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this...
 - a. To visit orphans and widows in their trouble
 - b. To keep oneself unspotted from the world