

# **Sermons on James**

## **5 Facts About Faith**

By A. S. Copley

## PREFACE

Suddenly, on short notice, my spirit was stirred one evening to speak on James. After giving one address, I was persuaded that God was leading me to expound the epistle in succeeding sermons. This I did and a stenographer took them down, so that they might appear in Grace and Glory. We are glad also to give them a place with our list of other publications. We believe that this treatise will clear away some fog that has gathered needlessly around the writings of the “apostles of the Lamb.” Therefore, ask us for “Sermons on James.”

If some of the quotations are different from the Authorized Version, it is because we quote another translation. These sermons have been out of print for some time; hence we include them with the notes on Hebrews to save expense and work. They go together nicely.

A. S. Copley

### REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest**: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

**Note:** *Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.*

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### DISCLAIMER

This document has been formatted, proofed, and its verbiage modernized so as to save it into an easily read and/or printed electronic format.

## INTRODUCTION

*"James, a bondman of God and of the Lord Jesus Anointed, unto the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion, greeting." [Jam.1:1]*

In the New Testament, there are 2 men called James. The one was slain by Herod [Act.12]. The one who wrote this letter was the pastor in Jerusalem [Act.21]. He is called "*James the little*," being probably small of stature [Mar.15:40]. He is also termed "*the Lord's brother*" [Gal.1:19]. **James** is **IAKOBOS** in Greek; while Jacob is **IAKOB** but both James and Jacob are **IAKOB** in German. The meaning of these names is the same, and it is truly interesting; **James** ("*he that takes hold of the heel*" or "*he that supplants*"). In this particular, Jacob was a type of Christ, who has supplanted the old Adam indeed. By name and by faith, James is in the line of supplanters, as are all those who believe on Jesus Christ.

**THE 12 TRIBES:** James wrote to the whole house of Israel. About 750 years previously, the 10 tribes had been carried captive to Assyria by Shalmeneser [2Kg.17]. Nevertheless, there were representatives of all the 12 tribes still in Palestine in those days (study 2Ch.11:13-16). Jesus chose the 12 apostles from the 12 tribes, though their tribal identity is not indicated. Paul addressed King Agrippa as if he knew where Israel were; for he said, "*Our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come*" unto the resurrection from the dead [Act.26:6-8]. Furthermore, James wrote, not only to the Israel at the beginning of this age, but more especially to those at the end of this age. His words in Chapter 5 are positive proof hereof. For example, "*Ye have heaped together treasure IN the last days*" [Jam.5:5]. Bear in mind, then, that James did not write to The Church. He was one of the kingdom apostles with a kingdom message. His ministry was distinct from that of the Apostle Paul; his Gospel apparently was different from Paul's Gospel. Many ministers and Bible teachers fail to observe these facts; hence, they make a huge jumble of doctrine, and in order to escape confusion, they unchristianize Paul's followers, or the promulgators of his teaching. Perhaps you ask, "Why, then, do you read James' epistle to us?" Because it is written, "*All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness*" [2Ti.3:16].

## GIST OF JAMES EPISTLE

The theme of this epistle is **Faith Made Practical**. Some people think that James contradicts Paul by this letter. How could that be? If that were true, then either the writings of the one, or the other would be spurious, and hence, not inspired by the Holy Spirit. One or the other would not have a right to a place in the Bible or Word of God. If these books are inspired portions of the Holy Bible, there must be perfect agreement. Thank God, by our study, we shall see that James wrote in harmony with Paul; though he did not go as far in the truth. Therefore, I repeat that faith made practical is the gist of James' Epistle. Paul teaches salvation by faith. James comes along and exclaims, if you are saved by faith, prove it by your works and walk. Do not talk faith with your lips while talking unbelief by your conduct. True it is that we find the word **grace** but twice, namely in James 4:6. Also, we find the words **faith** and **works** each 14 times in this letter. Hence, its theme-words are **faith** and **works**. Paul emphasizes **grace**; because he puts God's side of salvation to the front. James here emphasizes **works**, not as a means of salvation, but as a proof of the possession of salvation. "*Show thy faith by thy works*" [Jam.2:18], he shouts. If you believe in divine grace, demonstrate your faith therein by good works—deeds of kindness, etc.

## DIVISIONS IN THE BOOK OF JAMES

Since I know of none better, I have adopted the following chapter headings of this letter. They are plain and unique.

1. The Trial of Faith	James 1
2. The Works of Faith	James 2
3. The Victory of Faith	James 3
4. The Dependence of Faith	James 4
5. The Power of Faith	James 5

We see a beautiful gradation, an unfolding and culmination in this outline. First, our faith is tried. Then tried faith works effectually. Effectual works of faith result in victory. Then the victory of faith becomes fiercely assaulted by Satan. Therefore, a deeper sense of need arises, and we learn the rare lesson of absolute dependence upon the Arm Omnipotent. Thus we reach the 5<sup>th</sup> stage, and the divine power of faith becomes manifested, as we shall see in our study. Finally, Faith shall triumph into glory through Christ's coming and His millennial reign.

*"Sound doctrine that cannot be condemned"* (*"healthful teaching"* [Tit.2:8 RV]) was the Apostle Paul's practice and exhortation to other ministers. There is abundance of so-called doctrine, or teaching; but it is not sound, or healthful. It is not food suitable for the new creation. Years ago, the writer, not knowing the Scriptures, was entertained by such writings. They were interesting and entertaining at the time of reading them; but they left no lasting effect. It is very much like eating watermelon or drinking clabber; it fills up, but in an hour afterward, one feels hungry and faint. Men say and write bright things, even "truths culled," as one puts it; but saints are not fed and built up thereby. *"Feed my sheep,"* [Joh.21:16-17], was Jesus' exhortation. *"Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"* [Deu.8:3] is the bill of fare from both the Old Testament and the New, even Jesus' own words [Mat.4:4]. Men give "truths culled" because of their own pampered appetites, the meanwhile opposing other portions of the blessed Book of God, portions which are absolutely necessary for full growth in Christ. Learning and brilliance receive a reward of human applause here; but what about the hungry hearts who are robbed of necessary nourishment? What about the reward of such teachers at the judgment seat of Christ?

### DIVISION 1, THE TRIAL OF FAITH [JAM. 1]

*"Esteem it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into divers temptations."* [Jam.1:2]

Although this Epistle was written primarily to Israel, yet it is replete with practical instruction and comfort for us. How do we come into temptations? We fall into them. Before we are aware of it, a conflict is on. We are driving at high speed, shouting the victory, and suddenly we take a tumble into temptation. Of course we are dumb and feel fretted and perhaps look sad. James says, *"Esteem it all joy"*; God has allowed it. A victory is to be won, a lesson to be learned. What a bit of advice. Shall I say, "I am having a fiery trial today, thank God" or "Everything is against me, bless the Lord?" That is not easy to say. *"No chastening (temptation) for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous"* [Heb.12:11]. Oh, it is very easy to

rejoice when we get out; but that is not what the Apostle requires. But pray tell, why should we rejoice in the trial?

God be praised, here is the answer:

*"Knowing that the trying of your faith works out patience (or endurance)." [Jam.1:3]*

Patience is an indispensable trait of Christian character, and the only way it can be obtained is through falling under trial or temptation. We learn to be patient with ourselves, with others and even with God; the meanwhile we are learning to cling to Him. We learn to give Him time to work for us. We cease our fretting and complaining; we quit asking...Why does God not arise for me? Why is He so late? We are to count though we cannot shout. The Lord sees that we need the test; therefore, He permits us to have it. He doeth all things well. *"But let patience have its perfect work."* Do not take the temptation into your own hands. Pray and let God act. Move with Him. Look for His steppings. Patience will have a perfect work if you remain in the trial till He delivers you. To what end? *"That you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing."* What is the difference?

**Perfect** refers to each particular part, and

**Entire** refers to the whole, complete in every part.

It is not enough to be perfect in some things (perfect in faith, etc.). We should be perfect in love, perfect in obedience, etc., *"lacking nothing."* Is it possible that temptation is conducive to Christian perfection? Yes, for *"it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby."*

*"And if any one of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth freely to all and upbraideth not."*  
[Jam.1:5]

Surely, we need wisdom in time of temptation, to know what to do and what not to do. The importance of it is indicated by the attention that the Apostle gives to it here. Neither can anyone but Jehovah give us the wisdom that we need in the hour of trial. Here also we behold His grace. He giveth freely. He giveth to all. He does not reprove the petitioner. He is no respecter of persons.

*"But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting; for he that doubteth is like the wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed."* [Jam.1:6]

This does not sound like James was unduly given to works. With earnestness, he exhorts to believing prayer. Later on, he declares that *"faith without works is dead"* but here with equal emphasis he shows that prayer without faith is dead, firmly asserting, *"Let not that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord."* Works of faith follow the prayer of faith.

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## THE TWO CREATIONS TAUGHT

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*"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways."* [Jam.1:8]

We praise God for this verse in particular. Men make so much of the Gospel of Peter and James, but fail to see that they, as well as Paul, taught the two natures in a believer. The phrase **double-minded** is one compound word in the Greek **DIPSUCHOS**. It is from **DIS** ("twice, double") and from **PSUCHE** ("breath, life, spirit, heart, soul"; especially the last). The

sinner has only one life...that of the old Adam; but the believer on Jesus has two lives. He is two-souled, possessing at the same time the old Adam life and the new Adam, or Christ life. It is of unspeakable importance to see this truth and understand it. All the troubles and perplexities of believers are traceable to these facts. Therefore, James exhorts to *"purify your hearts, ye double-minded"* [Jam.4:6]; and Paul exhorts to *"reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin"* [Rom.6:11]. *"The flesh (old life) lusts, or clamors, against the spirit (the new life, or soul); and these (two souls or lives) are contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not do the things that ye would"* [Gal.5:17]. The old life wants one thing; but the new life wants something else. No honest person can deny such an experience; not even they who boast so loudly that they are "sanctified wholly, sin taken out root and branch." I am glad that James declares this doctrine. Oh, that his auditors would understand and receive it.

Will you believe me that this truth is taught plainly in the Old Testament? The Psalmist arraigns the double-minded, saying, *"They speak vanity every one with his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart do they speak"* [Psa.12:2]. The words **double heart** in Hebrew are **LEB VA LEB** (or, heart and heart). In 1 Chronicles 12:33, is a similar but more powerful verse, *"Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert (ranked) in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank; they were not of double heart"* (Hebrew: *"they were without a heart and heart"*). Oh my beloved, consider what the Spirit says about the two-souled. They are unstable; they are easily storm-driven; they are doubters; they need to expect no answers to prayer; they are **double-tongued** (*"two-worded"*; Greek: **DILOGOS**) [1Ti.3:8]. Their word is not to be relied upon; they are not safe in war; they may turn traitor; they cannot set the battle in array; they cannot handle weapons of war. Oh, beloved, have you learned to reckon the old Adam dead? Are you counting on the new life only? Do you firmly believe, and boldly declare that Christ is indeed your life? Is Paul's testimony yours? *"It is no longer I that live; but Christ that liveth in me"* [Gal.2:20]. Believe me; you never will have complete victory over sin and the world until you take that stand. You never will grow in grace and truth; you never will become of full age in Christ; you never will be of much substantial use to God until you count old Adam out entirely and Christ in as all-sufficient, though you be ever so active in religious service. Only thus can one be single-minded, and hold *"a single eye to the glory of God"* [Mat.6:22], which Jesus taught and lived.

When people agree with us today and with our enemies tomorrow, we know what ails them. When people can endorse our doctrine today, bid us Godspeed, and tomorrow have fellowship with those who are against the truth, we know they are double-minded. They who see no difference between meetings and meetings, between teaching and teaching, between folk and folk, but pronounce everybody good—the Word declares them two-souled. They are neither true to the first Adam nor faithful to the Last Adam. Indeed, such are the saints whom James endeavors to haul onto the carpet and demand of them to live an overcoming life through faith in God's grace; as he remarks, *"He (God) giveth more grace ... giveth grace unto the humble"* [Jam.4:6], that is, those who need and desire His aid. Behold how beautifully this merges into the next statement.

*"Let the brother of low degree boast in that he is exalted."* [Jam.1:9]

That is the one who feels his need, because of a sore temptation. He may be weak in body, defeated in spirit, poor in money, or learning, or influence. He may be bruised and bleeding through trial and trouble. He is helpless. But through the wisdom which God gives, he finds deliverance. Tears give way to laughter. Praise to God mounts the throne. The new man is in the ascendancy. *"Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but*

*under grace*" [Rom.6:14]. The voice of the flesh is hushed. The spirit of the new man reigns. Hallelujah!

In a different translation, James 1:10 reads: "*And let the rich boast in that he is made low*".

"They who are rich in themselves, self-sufficient, wise in their own conceits", is James' meaning; not simply those who possess houses and lands. Jesus said, "*The rich He sent empty away*" [Luk.1:53]. Saints who really want the will of God, but find that they have been strong in themselves and lifted up, will rejoice in their humiliation, which is probably wrought through temptation and defeat. They thank the Lord for arresting them and bringing them down, by means of the temptation. The Apostle's further words show how weak are the strong and how poor are the rich before a fiery trial: "*for as the flower of the grass passeth away*" [Jam.1:10-11] before the scorching sun; so fleshly strength and wealth quail before trouble. Then it is proven that "*the lame take the prey*" [Isa.33:23] but "*the rich in his goings shall wither*." Dispensational facts are hidden here also. In the end of this age, the Jews in their helplessness, bending under the tribulation days, will cry to Jehovah and be delivered; while those enriched by their own efforts, aided by Antichrist, will wilt and wither away forever.

*"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive a crown of life."*  
[Jam.1:12]

Remember, that it is the weak who endure. They, who are of low degree and cry to God, endure by the wisdom and power that He grants them. The weak stand up under trial. That is a paradox indeed. "When I am weak, then am I dynamited," said Paul [2Co.12:10]. And as a reward for endurance, which God enables, such a one "*shall receive the crown of life*" [Jam.1:12]. Jesus said to the church in Smyrna, "*I know thy works and tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich)*" [Rev.2:9]. Yes, the true wealth of this suffering, self denying assembly is in parenthesis. It is hidden; but to her is promised "*a crown of life*" [Rev.2:10]. It is worthy of special note that the promises of rewards are never for mighty achievements, or stupendous miracles wrought, or, notable philanthropic deeds, but invariably for suffering, for endurance, for faithfulness, for love toward God, and especially for overcoming. These latter things are the essentials. Works, achievements, etc., are incidental.

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## THE SOURCE OF TEMPTATION

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*"But every one is tempted, being drawn out and allured by his own desire."* [Jam.1:14]

We dare not blame the Lord for our temptations; for He cannot be tempted of evil, neither can He tempt His creatures. Because we are still in a sinful body, selfish, or wrong desires may spring up within us. They may seem to be right, or wise; but their fruit proves them otherwise. Such a desire becomes the mother of sin. The number of inordinate religious desires is "legion." And religious crimes are their offspring. Anyone marvel that spiritual death stalks abroad everywhere? For the Holy Spirit does not limit these sayings of James to common carnal conduct. "*Do not err*," he adds: "Do not blame God for everything in Christendom."

*"Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."*  
[Jam 1:17]

There are acts of giving, which are not from the Father. Many gifts are bestowed, but they are not of God: hence, they are imperfect and not good. The most subtle temptations are pious deeds, freely offered. This is Satan's effective scheme to hinder men from getting the real saving and sanctifying truth today. Therefore, James exclaims, "*Be not misled.*" The devil is actually making people liberal with their money and with their destructive literature. There are many false lights in Christendom today. True, scriptural luminaries are born of God, "*the Father of lights,*" for saints "*shine as luminaries in the world*" [Phi.2:15]. False lights are variable, turning to suit the occasion, producing the color most conducive to their purpose, like a chameleon. Divinely appointed luminaries are like God Himself, "*with whom is no variation, nor shadow of turning.*" They remind me of the street lamps in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which are electric chandeliers of perhaps half a dozen lamps, suspended about 150 feet high, each one giving light to several blocks. They never turn, but steadfastly hang there and perpetually illuminate the city.

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### ISRAEL'S PLACE ON THE PROGRAM

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*"Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."*  
[Jam.1:18]

God's sovereign dealings with men are overlooked continually. People think that they seek the Lord, when He comes to their aid. They do not know that "*Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost*" [Luk.19:10]; that is, that God is the first seeker. "*Noah found grace*" with God, not because he was better than other men, but because God showed him grace. Abraham was sovereignly chosen of God and called out of idolatry for a distinct purpose. Israel was in His mind before they were in existence. If you doubt my word, slowly read Deuteronomy 32:7-14 and James 1:8 in particular. Hence, James writes "*Of His own will begat He us.*" The natural birth is by the will of man but the supernatural is not by the will of man "*but of God*" [Joh.1:12]; and, thank God, "*by the word of truth.*" The Holy Spirit is the power of the new birth; the Word is the instrument of the new birth. Calvary is the provision for the new birth, because it is God's will to save all who will believe. Dispensationally, "*Israel is holiness unto the Lord, the firstfruits of His increase*" [Jer.2:3]; that is, the first product of redemption; and those saved from the Gentiles will be the after fruits (or last fruits). "*To the Jew first and also to the Gentiles*" [Rom.1:16], is the divine order. The mighty Pentecostal wave swept first over Israel [Act.2-9]; then it fell upon the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius [Act.10]. And yet those of Israel, who will share in the translation, will be the last company seen at the marriage supper (compare Rev.14:4 with Mat.25:10). Jesus also declared that "*the first (Israel) shall be last; and the last (the Church) shall be first*" [Mat.19:30]. Because Israel nationally refused to accept Christ and the Holy Spirit, they were broken off and the Gentiles came in. But God will graft them in again in the closing days of this age.

*"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."*  
[Jam.1:19]

Because of such sovereign grace, such wonderful deliverance out of temptation, and such a great reward, the following exhortations are exceedingly befitting. Men should be swift to hear God's Word of grace, and receive it with meekness; for that Word alone is able to save the soul. Let the tongue be used for God's glory, and let all the conduct be as becometh a righteous man. Neither should the Word be accepted as a theory only. Many hear the Word and are convinced of their wrong, seeing themselves in God's mirror, but turn away to live after the flesh still. There is no blessing for them.



*"But he that looks into the perfect law of the freedom and continues in it (and takes not a side glance simply), but being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work; this man shall be blessed in his doing."*  
[Jam.2:25]

Do you perceive how James emphasizes the importance of God's Word? For His Word of grace is that "*perfect law of liberty*." It is the mirror, looking into which gives us a clear, full view of the old creation, from which we turn away forever. On the other hand, by gazing perpetually into the same divine mirror, we behold the Christ, like unto whom we are fashioned, and we become changed from glory to glory. That "*perfect law*" makes a perfect people. The glorious Image, Christ, makes a glorious people. After saints stand before God's looking glass awhile, they become so entranced by the gracious and glorious Person which it mirrors, that they sit down before it forever. This is the effective way to heed the exhortations, which James enjoins. Thereby we imbibe the life that lived and walked perfect once on earth.

*"If any man among you seemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue; this man's religion is vain."*  
[Jam.1:26]

The image in the mirror has not yet captured him. "*He deceiveth his own heart*" by pretending to be pious, the meanwhile he is employing his tongue for his own carnal ends. Christ is not real to him. Finally, salvation by Grace through faith produces a "*pure religion and undefiled before God the Father*" [Jam.1:27]; a religion that is exemplified in good works, ordained of God for us to walk in [Eph.2:10]. It visits the fatherless and widows in their affliction—not only when they are well to have an enjoyable time together. They, who behold Christ effectively as He is, really live as He lived; pouring out their lives for others. Christ is reproduced in them. His life is lived again in this world. Thus divine grace is proven to be entirely enough to save and keep. Faith is tried and proven to be the only necessary link between need and grace, between man and God, between earth and heaven. Brother, have you caught the vision? Do you see the Image, Christ, in the mirror, the Word? Has the Image seized your heart and blinded your eyes to all but Himself? "*Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the faith*" [Heb.12:2], should be the mainspring of our lives.

## DIVISION 2, THE WORKS OF FAITH [JAM.2]

*"My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Anointed (the Lord) of glory with respect of persons: for if there may have come into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in splendid apparel, and there may have come in also a poor man in vile apparel; and ye may have looked upon him that wears the splendid apparel and may have said to him, Sit thou here comfortably, and to the poor man, may have said, Stand thou there, or sit thou here under my footstool; did ye not also make a difference among yourselves and become judges of evil reasonings?"* [Jam.2:1-4]

In bringing out the practical side of a believer's life, James sets before us a number of practical, every-day events as illustrations of his meaning. He shows the experimental power of living faith in God. He resorts to this one, because there were men of means, as well as poor people, in the Jerusalem congregation and in others. Barnabas, who became an apostle after Pentecost, was a possessor of houses and lands, which he cheerfully sold, according to Leviticus 27, and laid it at the apostles' feet. He took the place of poverty and dependence upon the Lord and was sent out with Paul on his first Gospel journey. Barnabas always fared well thereafter. The faith that dares to pour out all its affluence into God's hands will never come to want; for "*there is that scattereth, but increaseth*" [Pro.11:24].

Of course we need to look deeper here than material wealth only. A man may be a millionaire in the natural; but if he is not born again, he is worth nothing in God's sight. Neither does He care how much men may seem to weight in moral scales. Or if one is born again, but lean in spirit, weak in faith and love Godward, carnal in his conduct; he is of little value to the Lord, being poor spiritually, notwithstanding all his riches of money, or learning, or influence in this life. On the other hand, people may be poor in the things of this world, but "*rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom*" [Jam.2:5]. These are God's pets. It has been said that "God has no pets." Oh yes He has. John was called "*the beloved disciple.*" James informs us that "*Abraham was called the friend of God*" [Jam.2:23]. Who is "*my darling*" [Psa.22:20] if not a choice company of saints? God puts a difference between cattle and cattle or His "*flock*" [Eze.34:17-22]. By their talk and walk they compel Him to do so. Does this not contradict what James is teaching here? Oh, no. Men's ungracious attitude to God's impartiality of grace necessitates Him to give them different rewards. Why does James exhort us to have no respect of persons? He read it in Deuteronomy 10:17 where Peter also had read and from which he quoted in Cornelius' house, saying, "*I perceive that God is no respecter of persons*" [Act.10:34]. He saves whosoever believes. There is another reason. Jesus was poor. You remember our sister preached that superexcellent sermon Thursday afternoon from Paul's words, "*Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich*" [2Co.8:9]. Therefore, to show respect to people because they are rich in the things of this world, rich in money, or rich in influence, in position, in learning, or in any natural things; to show respect for people on these accounts is to reflect on the Lord Jesus Christ, who chose to be poor that He might make men rich. As James says here, we commit sin if we do so. It is as if I would say to a rich man, Sit up here on the platform, and to the poor, you sit down there because you are poor. That would be having respect of persons and that would be committing sin.

I am struck with the following question,

*"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith?" [Jam.2:5]*

I tell you that it is so. Again, I remark, that the poverty here is not primarily in dollars and cents. The poverty here meant is a sense of need. God blesses people that feel their need, for they are poor in spirit when they come to Him. They acknowledge their helplessness, their need, and cry to Him. It may be that they feel their awful sinfulness and that their need is great. It may be that they are sick in body, down and out, and they need a touch from the hand of the Divine Healer. It may be that they are financially in need. Whatever their condition, there is a sense of need and they come to the Great Supplier, Jesus Christ. They keep on believing and become "*rich in faith.*" God looks upon our faith. He acts and answers according to our faith. "*When Jesus saw their faith*" [Mar.2:5], He healed the afflicted one. Thank God! He does not look at our clothes, or adornment. Maybe it never dawned on you that He beholds faith and pays His respects to our believing. Think of it, my friends. It is not a question of whether you are rich in brains, or rich in learning, or money, or talkativeness, etc. Do you believe God? Have you a bank account of faith in God? Have you sent a lot of believing on ahead? Are the shelves in the corridors on high stocked with faith from your little heart? Faith from a simple, little heart is what counts with God; not self-sufficiency from a supposed big fellow; not any natural gift apart from faith, and thus setting God aside. James continues, as if to ask, "Will you despise the poor, who need your love and aid? Will you respect the rich?"

He points out their arrogance and selfishness, saying,

*"Do not rich men oppress you and bring you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy Name by which ye are called?" [Jam.2:6-7]*

Here the Apostle refers to the rulers and priests, who boasted in their wealth of authority and self-righteousness. The religious powers did these very things to Jesus and to His followers. However, *"if ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself...ye do well"* [Jam.2:8]. The royal law is the law, or rule of the kingdom of God. Jesus said that on the 2 commandments—love to God and love to man—hang all the Law and the prophets. James here emphasizes the second. He shows that *"love is the fulfilling of the Law"* and that if his Jewish auditors actually do as they claim to do, keep the Law, they will *"love their neighbors as themselves."* He teaches the impossibility of doing God's will without being born again, the very essence of which is love; for the new creation has a nature which cannot sin, because it is born of God. Paul teaches that *"what the Law (the Mosaic code) could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (the old creation can never keep a holy law); God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness (ordinance, requirement) of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* [Rom.8:4, compare Luk.1:6]. James implies the same doctrine and declares that to show preference is to contradict it, and to be convicted as transgressors, by the very law which they claimed, or sought to observe.

*"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend (or stumble) in one point, has become guilty of all." [Jam.2:10]*

This is certainly a hard blow at would-be law-keepers. Note exactly what the Apostle says. One sin, even showing respect of some natural superiority, breaks that holy law. One sin. think of it. Just one act of sin separated Adam from God and placed him outside of the garden. Keeping all, but breaking one ordinance of the Law, is like breaking one link of a chain; for God's Law is one great chain of requirements. If you break one link of the chain, the chain is broken. I was a farmer's boy. My father had some long chains of large links, each chain having a hook on each end. To break any one link rendered the whole chain useless till it was mended, or a new link put into its place. Just so, no matter what pretensions of keeping the Law men may make; if they violate one item, they are not keeping the Law. All their other good acts are as nothing. We see, in God's sight, how fruitless all man's boasted Law-keeping truly is (compare also Rom.13:8-10).

*"So speak and so do as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty." [Jam.2:12]*

Thank God for this exhortation. Though James shows that the Law condemns sin; yet he shows also that saints will not be judged by the Mosaic code, but by the Word of grace (see notes on Jam.1:25). Even of the sinner. Jehovah does not ask, "What are you doing with my law?" But what are you doing with Jesus, who is called the Anointed? *"What think ye of Christ?"* [Mat.2:42]. If we accept the perfect law of liberty and become fashioned by its mighty in-workings, we will be happy to be judged thereby; for we will be rewarded for living faith, which is daily being demonstrated by good works. If we show our faith by our works here, God will prove our faith by His reward over there. Hallelujah!

*"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy: and mercy rejoiceth against judgment." [Jam.2:13]*

God showed mercy to all mankind by giving His Son to die for them. They who accept that mercy receive the forgiveness of their sins and deliverance from the power of the devil. And they are expected to show mercy to their fellows by telling them of God's amazing

grace. "Have you had a kindness shown? Pass it on. It was not given for thee alone; pass it on." On the cross, mercy rejoiced against judgment, when our sins were made to meet upon Christ, our sin-bearer; for there and then the righteous claims of justice against us were met and satisfied. Mercy triumphed over judgment for all who will believe on Jesus. Mercy shouts in behalf of all who receive her, saying to judgment, "Hush thy voice; thy demands are met. Christ hath died, the Just One for the unjust ones." Therefore, *"there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"* [Rom.8:1]. But they who show no mercy to their fellows, notwithstanding their religious boasts, will have no mercy shown to them in the day of the Lord. They prove by their conduct that they never accepted the judgment of God against their own sins. They really deny the need of a Redeemer and of deliverance from sin. For those who turn away from mercy's stream, now flowing; there will be no mercy hereafter, *"but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries"* [Heb.10:26-27]; for *"Now is the day of salvation"* [2Co.6:2]. Tomorrow, after this life, will be the day of judgment. Let no one deceive you by a false future hope.

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### FAITH DEMONSTRATED BY GOOD WORKS

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*"What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him?" [Jam.2:14]*

Someone may exclaim, James here contradicts Paul; for the latter teaches that *"by grace are ye saved, through faith; not of works lest any man should boast"* [Eph 2:8-9]. Nay, there is no contradiction. Paul speaks of initial salvation and of our standing in Christ. James speaks of the progress and proof of salvation by our walk. Paul sees us justified before God. James wants us to be justified before men. "God justifieth the ungodly who believeth on Jesus." Men justify the believers who prove their faith by good deeds. James' illustration is exceedingly practical and needs no explanation.

*"If a brother, or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" [Jam.2:15-16]*

Certainly, there is no profit, either to the sufferer, or to him who has it in his power to help. Hence, he adds, *"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone"* [Jam.2:17]. In other words, dead faith is no faith. With this, Paul agrees perfectly, instructing saints to labor with their hands, that they *"may have to give to him that is needy"* [Eph.4:28]. When the kingdom apostles imagined that perhaps Brother Paul was neglecting the poor, he declared that he *"was forward in remembering the poor"* [Gal.2:10]. In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, he gives 2 whole, long unselfish chapters on unselfish liberality.

The Apostle continues his argument, demanding the proof of faith by works, and adds, *"Thou believest that God is one; thou doest well. Demons also believe, and shutter. But wilt thou know, O empty man, that faith without works is dead?"* [Jam.2:19-20]. There is an intellectual assent to the truth, because of conviction, but it affords no practical benefit. Do you see friends that men may believe, and yet not be saved? Christ did not die for demons; hence, there is no salvation for them, though they are convinced and admit that He is the Son of God. Men may do the same and yet never be saved. When men believe with the heart, they obtain salvation, which produces a holy awe, or reverence toward God. Hence, James insists that living faith, even **"the faith of God"** is intensely practical. He brings forth from the Old Testament two invincible examples to vindicate his doctrine:

**1<sup>st</sup>** “*Was not Abraham our father, justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?*” [Jam.2:21].

Yes, of course he was; but he had been justified before God by faith many years prior, even when he believed God, who called him from Ur and started him toward Canaan (compare Gen.12:4 and Gen.15:6 with Heb.11:8). Now, remember that Abraham was 75 years old at that time, but 100 years old when Isaac was born. Then add 20 years, the age at least when Isaac was offered, and we find Abraham justified by faith in God’s sight for 45 years before James speaks of him being justified by works in man’s sight. Do you see it, my friends? James does not hereby teach that the patriarch was saved by offering up Isaac or that he was any more righteous before God after so doing, but that “*his faith was made perfect.*” [Jam.2:22].

Thus the Scripture—the whole record concerning Abraham—was fulfilled which said that Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness; and Abraham was called the “*friend of God*” [Jam.2:23]. By his initial faith he was justified from sin and became a child of God; then by his perfected faith he became the friend of God (compare 2Ch.20:7 and Isa.41:8). For 25 years Abraham went on believing the Word of the Lord, walking in the light and learning God’s will as it was unfolded to him, so that his faith reached its climax in offering up his son.

Beloved, if you wish to become a friend of God, walk in the light as it comes to you. Do not yield to your own carnal thoughts and ambitions. Keep on trusting in the unfailing Arm and keep close to His loving heart. Imitate the patriarch, and never neglect the altar. Worship God and believe His Word continually. That was what Abraham did. You do the same, and your faith also will be perfected in due time.

**2<sup>nd</sup>**: “*Likewise also, was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers and had sent them out another way?*” [Jam.2:25].

Paul declares that “*by faith, Rahab received the spies with peace*” [Heb.11:31]. Who is right? Both are right without contradiction, each statement strengthening the other. As to her acceptance before God, she was justified by faith; hence, “she perished not.” The scarlet line in the window was a symbol of the blood, by which all are provisionally justified [Rom.5:9]. Doubtless she had heard that Israel was delivered out of Egypt by blood [study Jos.2:9-11]. God counted her faith to her for righteousness and saved her and her house. But James shows that Rahab’s faith was not a dead faith, but a living, active faith. She showed her faith by her good works. She proved to the spies that she believed. She was justified by her heroic deed before the people.

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### CONSIDER AND MARVEL

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Let me startle you. Did you observe that James, who is considered a legalist, here employs law-breakers to prove his point? Those who use James to prove salvation, not by faith alone, but by works, overlook this fact. Abraham had 2 wives, which was a violation of the Law, afterward given to Israel. He was guilty of adultery in the eyes of that law. Furthermore, the patriarch was guilty of murder in the sight of that law; for it said “*Thou shalt not kill.*” What do you think of an apostle using an adulterer and a murderer to demonstrate the faith of God by works? Ah, he simply proves what Paul boldly declares, that salvation is by faith apart from works. He shows that the Ten Commandments were not given to save men, nor as a rule by which saints are to walk. “*The Law is not made for a righteous man, but*

*for the lawless and disobedient* [1Ti.1:9]. *“The Law entered that the offence might abound”* [Rom.5:20]. *“It was added* (to the promise to Abraham 430 years after), *because of transgression”*; that is, to expose it by provoking sin to the full [Gal 3:19]. Then, *“where sin abounded* (that is, on the cross), *because of the intervention of the Law, “grace did much more abound”* through the death of Christ for us. Therefore, salvation is by grace through faith, wholly apart from works.

From a legal point of view, Rahab was no fit illustration. She was a harlot. She lied to the city authorities; for she hid the messengers in the loft of her house, but informed the authorities that they had left the city. How could God justify a harlot and a liar? This is how. He justifies the ungodly who believeth; and every man is ungodly until he believes. We all were sinners and ungodly until we believed on Jesus, no matter how amiable, how sweet, or how kind we may have been in the natural. *“All have sinned”* [Rom 3:23]; *“there is none good, no not one”* [Rom.3:12]. All men need a Redeemer, a Savior. God delivered Rahab from death, not because she “quit her meanness,” but because she believed in the God of Israel. Though she prevaricated, yet she believed God; and James declares that she showed her faith by her works. James also teaches by these examples of faith that what men call good is not always good; and what men call evil is not always evil with God. The Lord authorized Abraham to slay Isaac and He allowed him, at least, to take Hagar, because those things *“happened unto them for types”* (for our instruction) [1Co.10:6, 11 RV]. The same is true of Rahab. Because of ignorance concerning the Bible way of salvation and God’s dealings with His people, men set up false standards of righteousness and seek to bring others under their **yoke** (or **RULE OF RECTITUDE**). Hence, there are scores of religious beliefs and all under the name of “Christian religion.” God’s Word to Abraham, who is *“the father of all them that believe”* [Rom.4:11], is indeed our rule of action. *“I am the Almighty God* (the One all-sufficient); *walk before me and be thou perfect”* [Gen.17:1]. Abraham was under grace and grace alone; and so are we. They who see the grace of God and believe it as did Abraham, “our father,” do not abuse their liberty in Christ, *“using it for an occasion to the flesh, but in love serve one another”* [Gal.5:13]. They appropriate God’s grace to do for His glory what He requires, but they do not take advantage of it for selfish ends.

*“For as the body apart from the spirit is dead; so the faith apart from works is dead.”* [Jam.2:26]

Again observe that the Apostle James does not deny the wholesome doctrine of righteousness by faith, nor aim to teach salvation by self-effort. He seeks to shut the mouths of those who boast of their supposed faith, but really have none. Our spirit is the living, active energy in our body, the proof of life therein. Good deeds are the living, active proof of the presence of faith. If we believe that God heals the sick, we will not resort to medicine and doctors. If we believe that we should *“live by every word of God”* [Luke 4:4], we will be diligent in studying it. If we believe that God is our all-sufficient source and recourse of supply for all things, we will not “go down to Egypt for help” nor “lean upon the arm of flesh” but we will trust God absolutely and always.

### DIVISION 3, THE VICTORY OF FAITH [JAM.3]

*“Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment.”* [Jam.3:1]

There is nothing popish in this epistle. The Apostle addresses his readers 15 times as **brethren** or **my brethren**, thus taking them on his heart as one with them. Accordingly, he begins this chapter with *“My brethren”* (“TEACHERS” is the correct word here; from the Greek word DIDASKALOI). Teachers have graver responsibility than others because they are in the

place of Christ, the Great Teacher. If they teach error; if they mislead the people, they will suffer the greater loss. If they teach the truth and build up the people, they will obtain greater reward, *“for we all (believers) shall receive for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad”* [2Co.5:10]. Observe that the holy writers never discourage service. They never say, “Be not many servants”; indeed, *“he that is servant is greatest of all.”* If a teacher renders the best service in lowliness they will receive the best reward.

*“For in many things, we all stumble.”* [Jam.3:2]

The word here for **offend** (Greek: **PATIO**) means to *“strike the foot, make a misstep, stumble, blunder, fall.”* This is not the Greek word **SKANDALIZO**, which means *“to cause offense, or make one to offend* [as in Mat.15:12 or 1Co.8:13]. In this chapter, James teaches victory and shows that the main channel of failure is the tongue. Therefore he adds at once, *“If any one stumble not in word, this one is a perfect man, able to bridle also the whole body”*. Oh, what a use and misuse of the tongue. James shows that the tongue is the index to our inward condition. If we have victory within, we will talk victory. If we are doubting and defeated, we will express it through this little member, in case we do speak. The victory gained also by controlling the tongue is declared in the following illustrations:

- The **BIT IN THE MOUTH OF THE HORSE**: With a bit and bridle, a boy can govern a strong horse, making him turn to the right at will. A man may pull a horse backward and make him sit down, by means of simply a bit and bridle. Thus we should make our own bodies obey us by the right use of our tongues.
- The **RUDDER IN THE STERN OF A SHIP**: The ship, which is tossed by a tempest and rocked on billows of the sea, yet obeys the impulse of the steersman as he turns the rudder at his will. Oh, think of it, my friends. Our safety is in the power of our own tongues. The perfection of our walk is dependent upon this little member.

*“Even so the tongue also is a little member and boasteth great things. Behold, how large a matter a little fire kindleth” ... and “the tongue is a fire, the world of the wickedness.”* [Jam.3:5-6]

Ah, the power of this member does not stop with the individual. Neither blessings, nor cursings go singlehanded. Doubtless that is why the Greek word for **stumble** was translated **OFFEND** in the Authorized Version. It either blesses, or curses others. If it boasts great things; if it teaches error with vehemence, its hearers are influenced to go wrong. One match may ignite a whole forest, or set on fire an entire city. Thousands of acres of western prairie have been set ablaze by one spark from a passing locomotive. God alone can know the incalculable harm and destruction wrought by one word of wrong teaching. Hence, there is a hidden meaning to the Apostle’s words here *“able to bridle also the whole body.”* Paul wrote that *“a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”* [Gal.5:9]. All the assemblies in Galatia, planted by his ministry, were afterward poisoned by the devilish doctrine of salvation by works, and thus they were plunged into bondage and darkness and falling away from grace. What was the instrument of scattering that leaven? The tongue of Phariseism, of course. A flame of evil doctrine was kindled, which has not died out to this day.

But, on the other hand, thank God; by the pure Word of grace, set forth in the sweetness and power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, we may *“bridle the whole body”* of Christ. Each pastor has it in his power to guide his own flock to the right way. And to the extent that the shepherds everywhere bridle their own individual bodies by the correct use of their own little member, and thus direct their own flocks; to that extent the whole Church, or Body of

Christ, will be guided and governed and landed finally into the glorious haven on high. The tongue may be a fire, flaming out good to mankind and blazing forth glory to God. If a little fire kindleth a great wood, or forest; this ought to encourage us to push on in our small spheres, giving out that Jesus Christ is the Great One, never slacking in telling forth the marvels of His grace. Each of us is starting a conflagration, which can never be extinguished. Your testimony to the truth is one small spark. The woman of Samaria gave one word of witness, and the whole city turned out to hear the Great Prophet, many of whom believed on Him. Hallelujah! If in the flesh we speak, we speak in vain. If in Christ we speak, a reward we gain.

By saying that in many things we all stumble, the Apostle expressed the prevailing condition of believers; but he did not mean that there were none who do not stumble. He declared that the one who does not stumble in word, that one is a perfect man. He contrasts the **all** with the **one**. The latter indicates the very small minority who use their tongue for the glory of God. Reader, to which do you prefer to belong? The uncontrollable little member is the one chief instrument of distributing wickedness throughout the world. James calls it, indeed, "*The world of the wickedness.*" What a statement! When saints misdirect the tongue, they imitate the world; they move in the flesh. Not only does this apply to worldly things; but it applies to religious matters also. Men presume to speak forth spiritual things, not in the Holy Spirit, but in the flesh. Their carnal minds control their tongues.

If anyone here does not believe in speaking in tongues, he surely has the proof positive before him that the speaking in other tongues is of God; for when the Holy Spirit gets absolute control of this unruly member it shows He has control of us for the time being. This is why the speaking in tongues is such a signal evidence, or the distinctive sign of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is the last part of our body to be surrendered to God. People surrender their knees and get down to an altar, but they are mum. After a while they surrender their mouth and begin to pray. Then they surrender their hands and raise them up. Maybe they surrender their backs, relax, and take an easy position with the head on a pillow. By and by the Holy Spirit gets control of the uncontrollable member and turns it about wheresoever He will and makes it speak in a language it never learned. We never know how unruly a member we have in the mouth until we endeavor to yield it wholly to the Holy Spirit.

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## WHAT IS THE BRIDLE?

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What is the bit and bridle which the Holy Spirit uses in our behalf? We find the answer in Psalm 32:9, "*Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle.*" The Bible is the bridle. Each particular portion is a bit. The Lord says, "*I will teach thee; I will instruct thee; I will guide thee with mine eye*" [Psa.32:8]. The horse has no understanding. You cannot teach him the Bible, though you might teach him some funny carnal tricks. We have understanding. We can learn the Bible. It checks us up. The Word speaks to our hearts and turns us to the right, or left, or turns us back, if need be. One **bit** of truth spurs us on; another slows us down. Let us take God's truth into our hearts. The Holy Spirit will hold the reins and guide us unerringly. The Word will be to us a rudder and the Holy Spirit the Steersman, guiding our ship all our days over life's ocean. Multiplied times the Holy Spirit has whispered one little word into my heart, which turned my course of action. One **bit** of His guiding hand kept me from great trouble, or danger. Another **BIT** started me in the direction of increased happiness, or enlarged usefulness, or broadened my vision of divine things. Thank God, for the **bit** and bridle of His precious Word. Multiplied numbers of saints are defeated today and fail in their walk and in their



service, because they do not yield to the Hand that seeks to check them up, or turn them in the right way.

*"The tongue defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course (or wheel) of nature." [Jam.3:6]*

The damaging force of the tongue is like a wheel of eleven spokes; for eleven evil things are said about it in this lesson. Indeed, the tongue misdirected defiles the whole company of saints. If one person begins to gossip in a meeting presently someone else picks up that gossip and passes it on. Presently the entire assembly is more or less defiled. If one introduces error, soon that pervades the entire body and it is doctrinally defiled. The whole meeting will need a fresh dip into the laver of cleansing—only the pure Word proclaimed or read in the unction of the Spirit, will cleanse it. If the unruly member is the inlet of disease into the physical body; if the very motions of the body are set aflame by an evil tongue: how terrible and far-reaching may be the operations of a tongue of strife and of heresy. One wrong word from one person may corrupt every department of an entire religious system. When we meet with some religious people, with whom we may have much teaching in common, there may be a conscious difference, perhaps not to be accounted for by the majority. Why this? The one meeting has become saturated with error in doctrine, or practice, so that the spirit of defilement prevails, with which the pure, modest spirit of truth has no fellowship. It has to retire into its own sphere of moving on alone with its Author, God.

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## THE SOURCE OF EVIL SPEECH

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*"It is set on fire of hell (gehenna)." [Jam.3:6]*

The word **hell** occurs at least 21 times in the New Testament 10 times it is from the Greek word **HADES** and 11 times from the Greek word **GEENNA** which is a transliteration from the Hebrew word **GEHENNA** (meaning "*the valley of Hinnom in which the corpses of the worst malefactors were burnt*"). Those who deny the eternal punishment of the wicked endeavor to confine the word **GEHENNA** to this "physical" meaning. Even a casual reading of all its uses in the Gospels and here by James, proves such an attempt to be silly and futile. For instance, Jesus did not mean that men should pluck out the offending eye or cut off the offending hand, literally or physically, but inwardly. No more did He mean that the disobedient would land in the valley of Hinnom [Mat.5:29-30]. Men might kill and cast others into the valley of Hinnom, but not into the **GEHENNA** of which Jesus was speaking. Did Jesus mean that the Pharisees made a proselyte "*twofold more the child*" of the valley of Hinnom than themselves [Mat.23:15]? Were the Pharisees born of the valley of Hinnom? Nay, yet such is the logic of some. Candidly, my friend, could a tongue be set on fire with error, or strife, or immorality from a burning of dead human bodies? Such a thought is preposterous. Therefore, there remains but one explanation of these citations where **hell** (**GEENNA**) is mentioned. The burning valley of Hinnom was used to illustrate the eternal burnings of Satan and rejected mercy. James means that an evil tongue is from the devil. Oh, how terrible is this. All error, all strife, every destructive word flows from the father of lies. How eager we should be to know the truth and be filled with the Spirit of truth, that we may communicate burning words of living truth with flaming tongues, and set aflame from heaven. Why not?

*"For every species of beasts and of birds and of creeping things and things of the sea, is subdued and has been subdued by the species of the human; but the tongue no man is able to subdue" [Jam.3:7-8]*

What a contrast. Men have great menageries of various kinds of animals tamed and under their control. Men attempt to conquer their own tongue, but all in vain. Men declare in the morning that they will not swear that day. Nine o'clock has scarcely come when they break forth in hotter rage than before. A new creation is the only remedy for a bad tongue. It has been said that the path to hell is paved with good resolutions; that is, with efforts to tame the unruly member. Man is a sinner. His nature is evil. A new creation only will produce a good tongue. Wild beasts may act devilish; but they do not have a devilish nature. Satan controls them and makes them do his bidding. Hence, when Satan and his hordes of demons shall be cast into the bottomless pit, then the lion will eat straw like the ox; the lion and the bear will lie down together and a little child shall lead them; the child also will play over the cockatrice's den [Isa.11:7-8]. The ferocity of the lion will be gone. The cockatrice will be no more dangerous than a canary bird. They will be absolutely harmless; for the devil will not be here to control them. Yet their natures will not be changed. But Satan has poisoned man's nature. He has ejected evil into our very being. Through redemption and salvation, God offsets that wicked nature by giving us a new nature, which is holy. The tongue of the new man never can speak wrong. Praise God! He can do what man cannot do. He can subdue the unsubduable member.

What, then, is the use of talking reform? What folly to preach a do-better religion, or turning over a new leaf? What have saints to do with reformatory schools? They may be necessary to prevent outlaws from harming other folk but they never change the outlaws. All schemes and movements to change outward conditions belong to the world. God's people should not take part therein. "*Let the dead* (dead in sins) *bury the dead*" (physically dead)," said Jesus [Mat.8:22]. Let the world look after its own. "*Go thou and preach the Gospel*" [Mar.16:15]. Ours is to tell men that they may have a new nature, a new tongue. No marvel that James speaks in his first chapter of the new birth [Jam.1:18].

*"Therewith we bless our God and Father and therewith we curse the men, who are made according to a likeness of God." [Jam.3:9]*

Here again, the Apostle teaches the two natures in a believer. With the same member, believers bless and curse. Saints get saved and filled with the Spirit. Then they exclaim, "I am so happy; I am so free; oh what peace and rest! I did not know that one could be so blessed!" Of course, that is the new life. It now has control of the same tongue that the day before perhaps was cursing. But that life is not yet in a glorified and sinless body. It is still in a body of humiliation, which is more, or less subject to earthly surroundings. Possibly within a week, the above mentioned wonderfully blessed soul becomes ruffled, speaks harshly, being offended, or injured. Then probably the devil informs him that he was never saved, nor filled with the Spirit. His joyful experience was an illusion; it was all in his imagination. Of course, he is down and has no testimony. Others hearing him and not knowing the Scriptures agree with the devil and exclaim, "How can a man be saved and anointed with the Spirit and act like that?" Oh, if the doctrine of the two creations were clearly taught, thousands of helpless saints would be kept on their way with the Lord; for they would soon understand themselves and the cause of their own contradictory experiences. Believers would have pity one for another and be able to help one another. James here shows the two creations and the need of a remedy. He declares that "*these things ought not so to be*" [Jam.3:10]; but he does not set forth the remedy. We must call on Brother Paul to help us out. We turn to the sixth pocket of his golden Roman handbag, where we learn that "*our old man was crucified with Christ*" [Rom.6:6] hence, those old habits have no rights about our new spiritual premises. As we reckon, or count, that is, agree with God, the members of our body and mind yield to the "new Man," even to Christ, who is our

life. We actually find ourselves in a new realm of divine grace, where *“sin shall not have dominion over us”* [Rom.6:14]. We can boldly shout, *“Sin shall not, shall not have dominion; for we are not under law, but under grace.”* Instead of the little compass wagging for the world and the flesh, it warbles for God and His glory. Instead of the tongue being *“an unruly evil, full of deadly poison”* [Jam.3:8], it becomes a rule and a ruling good, full of living food. It becomes a continual instrument of blessing to others and of giving glory to God. It ceases to be said of us, *“Therewith we bless God and therewith we curse men”* [Jam.3:9]; for we bless only and curse not. That is victory. That is an overcoming life. Above James said, *“That is a perfect man”* [Jam.3:2].

We can hardly emphasize too much the need of knowing this doctrine of the two natures in believers. No matter who we are, nor how far we have gone on with Jesus; we have an old nature that does not love God nor His Word. The old man, *“the carnal mind, or mind of the flesh”* [Rom 8:7], is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. It is subject to death only; that is why we must count it dead. But in being saved, we have deposited within us, by the Holy Spirit, a new life, a life sent from heaven, a heaven-bound life, which loves God and His people. That is the new creature, which, unlike the beasts, “has understanding” and is teachable by the Lord. Let us put it in practice. Because we are in this unmanageable body of humiliation, we need the **BIT** or **RUDDER** of the Word to guide us. The new man responds to the truth; the old man does not. If you say “No,” to the call of the Scripture, when you read it, or hear it read; that is the flesh, or old man. If you say, “Thank God,” or “Yes, Lord, that is the truth though it hurts me,” that is the new man. If a new ray of light strikes you and it seems that it would kill you, or at least strip you, and you say “Amen, praise God, I take it”; that is the new man gaining the ascendancy over the old man. You are growing in grace. If it comes into your mind to say something against someone and a voice speaks within you, not to say it; that is the Spirit addressing your new man. Obey and you gain a victory. Christ is growing up in you. By and by your tongue will become a flaming instrument of richest and choicest blessing to mankind, for which you will obtain an eternal reward.

*“Doth the fountain pour forth out of the same opening both sweet and bitter?” [Jam.3:11]*

“Well, Brother Copley, I thought that you were reading about the tongue.” So I am; but the tongue reaches clear down to the heart, the fountain of our being. Jesus said, *“Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh”* [Mat.12:34]. There is no poison, no fire, no life, no death in the tongue itself. It is only the outlet for the fountain, the heart. *“As he thinketh in his heart, so is he”* [Pro.23:7]; and as he speaks, so is he too. The spigot, or faucet, is simply the instrument of conducting the water from the reservoir, which is supplied from the river, or lake. Our tongues communicate the contents of our hearts, which are supplied from the inexhaustible Reservoir, Infinite Jehovah, as we trust Him and reckon with Him. The day of Pentecost is a powerful illustration of the communicative possibilities of the tongue. There were 120 men and women filled with the Holy Spirit. Upon their heads, were seen sitting divided tongues as of fire, the indices of the new dialects with which they spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. With burning words, those disciples spoke of the marvels of grace and the wonderful works of God. From the reservoir, the fullness of God on high, flowed down upon Israel the Mighty Holy Spirit, *“floods upon the dry ground”* [Isa.44:3]; and out from the mouths of those quickened saints, flowed streams of unspeakable blessings to the multitudes gathered there. Likewise, our tongues should be similar means of constant blessing; and they will be if we yield them to the Spirit of God. Proverbs 3:26 is a splendid remedy against the wrong use of the tongue, *“My son, give me thine heart and let thine eyes observe my ways”* [Pro.23:26]. That was not addressed to the wicked. That is no text from which to preach to sinners, as I often heard it used. A sinner is not a **son** until he becomes such

through a new birth. The son is invited to commit his heart into the keeping of Almighty Love; then the tongue will never fail. As a brother remarked, "When I feel weak and trust God, I never fail."

## RESULTANT AND CONCLUDING EXHORTATIONS

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*"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show out of the good conduct his works in meekness of wisdom." [Jam.3:13]*

The direction the ship goes indicates the utility of the rudder. Likewise, our conduct indicates the use we have made of the tongue. Bitterness, envy, and strife may be considered wise by the world but such wisdom is not from above, not from God. Instead He says, It is "earthly" and can find no place in heaven. Only sweetness, meekness, and harmony obtain there. The same are found also in a heavenly heart, though on earth. **Sensual** ("soulish" or "natural") is opposed to spiritual and supernatural. Spiritual people never strive, are never envious, nor bitter, even against their foes. **Devilish** ("demoniacal") the ultimate source of bitterness, emulation, and contention is Satan himself. He is the parent of all evil. Every evil work, though it appears ever so religious, is from Satan.

Finally, with what a beautiful octet the apostle closes this chapter:

*"But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, yielding, full of mercy and of good fruits, impartial and unfeigned." [Jam.3:17]*

The wisdom from beneath may be tactful, sagacious, cunning, catchy; but it is not "pure." Wisdom from above has nothing satanic, or carnal in it. It is transparent and innocent, straightforward and guileless. It is not corrupt, no corrupting. Of course, it is peaceable, or easy to get along with. It seeks peace; it pursues peace; it makes peace if possible. Purity and peaceableness are 2 happy P's in one pod. **GENTLE** and **YIELDING** with **PEACEABLE** are triplets. They form a triangle of heavenly disposition, which only God can produce. Some folk are given to make disturbance. Some are hard on others, always sitting in judgment upon their actions. Some refuse to be taught, or influenced by other saints. Certainly such traits are carnal. They are foreign to the new man. These first 5 qualities overflow into the news "full of mercy," a state of mind standing ready to bless the undeserving who is in any need. To show love to the unlovely and unlovable, to bestow kindness upon the unthankful and incorrigible, requires divine mercy indeed. That can only be of God. Any wonder that this characteristic is coupled with "good fruits"?

**IMPARTIALITY** is the 6<sup>th</sup> quality of the Christ spirit. This was emphasized in James 2. The wisdom from above allows no preferences to be shown to the wise and wealthy of this world. "God is no respecter of persons" [Act.10:34]; neither is the life of Christ in saints. The tongue of divine wisdom speaks just as gently to the poor as to the rich. It reproves the wealthy in the same scathing terms as it does the poor. It speaks instruction to the ignorant, whether they are in poverty or in affluence. It speaks help to the needy, comfort to the oppressed, healing to the sick and deliverance to the captives, whatever may be their condition. The wisdom from above cannot dispense with the poor, nor is it dependent upon the rich of this world. And finally, this divine wisdom is **unfeigned**. Oh, the pretences among some religious people. Oh, how men pose as pious. What sanctimonious airs they exhibit. What faith they pretend to have. Their fabulous results are all on paper, or in their own tongue. But their disguised boasting captures and carries away the untaught in divine things. As James intimates, "they boast great things" [Jam.3:5]; but

really never do anything else. They do not possess “*unfeigned faith*”; for they talk about believing God, but by begging and hinting for help, they prove their unbelief toward Him. They advertise their needs instead of advertising Jesus Christ as the Supply. The wisdom from above is unfeigned as to its purity (for there is a make-believe purity), as to its peaceableness, as to its gentleness, as to its yieldedness, as to its mercy and fruitfulness and as to its impartiality. Unfeignedness is the crowning virtue of them all. Oh, thank God, some saints are transparent. Their countenances are indices to their inner man.

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## A FINAL SWEET VERSE

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*“And the fruit of righteousness in peace is sown by those who are making peace.” [Jam.3:18]*

Bear in mind that the Apostle has been dwelling upon the misuse of the little indoor member. He showed the baneful consequences of envy, bitterness, and strife, and that the tongue is the effectual instrument thereof. Now he closes this interesting and needful chapter by pointing out the possibility and blessed results of divine mastery over the tongue. Jesus said, “*Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God*” [Mat.5:9]. Imagine a large western ranch and a few men walking forth and back with grain sacks on their shoulders, scattering the grain broadcast, and you have a material picture of what James says. In a little while, hundreds of acres of land are covered with a rich carpet of green, without any weeds or grass. A few months later, those acres are proud of high standing, waving, golden grain, which invite the husbandman’s reaping and gathering into the garner. Just so do those who proclaim the peace God already made by Christ for men. Just so do those who endeavor to quell strife by sowing the Word of God. Peace and quietness are maintained, even though at times a wagging tongue may operate. As Elisha cast some meal into the pot of poisoned pottage and allayed all harm, so by casting the pure meal of divine truth amidst contention, both gossip and strife are made to flee. By making peace, we sow peace; and for sowing peace, we reap a bountiful harvest of peace. “*Deceit is the heart of them that imagine evil; but to the counselors **PEACE** is joy. When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at **PEACE** with him*” [Pro.12:20, 16:7].

### The Burning Truth

Discouraged? Yes, disheartened did I feel,  
Because the truth, so wonderful,  
So poorly to the saints did we reveal.  
I ne’er again this world would tell,  
But burning truth, no man can quell.

Discouraged? Yes, disheartened was my soul,  
Because this message glorious,  
So few would join in faith and might to roll.  
O, who would dare the ranks to swell,  
Whose burning message none can quell?

Discouraged? No! no more perplexed I feel,  
Because the Grace and Glory band  
Increases with the Master’s fiery Seal.  
With one accord we will repel  
All wrong. God’s fire no man can quell.

## DIVISION 4, THE DEPENDENCE OF FAITH [JAM.4]

*"Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not; ye kill and are emulous, but cannot obtain." [Jam.4:1]*

The root-remedy for all ills is the dependence of faith, as proven by James 4.

James 4:1-3 expresses the prevailing state of believers to whom James is writing, even the religious people today, if I may so say.

James 4:4-5 shows The Church flirting with the world.

James 4:6 indicates that this condition is not necessary; for God "*giveth more grace*." Thus the Apostle admits that the grace message alone can set matters right.

One phrase "*double minded*" [Jam.4:8] clearly declares what is taught throughout the chapter, namely the 2 natures in a believer. Even in James 4:6, he refers to the "*proud*" old man and the "*humble*" new man; for the old creation cannot be humble; nor can the new man be proud.

Finally from the James 4:7-17 we find 10 exhortations whereby these conflicting conditions may be remedied.

It will help us, if we bear in mind continually, that the doctrine that Paul taught and the doctrine that James taught supplement each other. They are not contradictory of each other. Paul emphasized God's side of salvation, the divine provision for our salvation and the way to come into possession and into the enjoyment thereof. James writes to people that profess to enjoy the salvation of God and exhorts them to bring their state up to their standing; to walk according to their talk and talk according to their standing. This view simplifies the relationship of James' writings to the writings of the Apostle Paul. Another thing that will help us, friends, when we read this book or hear it preached from, is to bear in mind that it is not the writing of a man, or of men, but of the Holy Spirit.

Now customarily we say that Paul wrote so and so and John and James spoke so and so. That is true; but they were "*one crying in the wilderness*" [Mat.3:3]. If that were not so, then we could not say that the Bible is inspired; but if this is the inspired Word of God, and if as Peter said, "*Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*" [2Pe.1:21], we need to regard these writings as the writings of holy men of God, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The disciplines and theological works of all orthodox denominations exclaim, "The Bible is inspired."

2 Timothy 3:16 gives us 1 verse which proves that "*all Scripture was God breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*." Why is it that men are getting away from God? It is because they are denying the inspiration of the Scriptures; they are bringing them down on a level with other writings. Men want to get rid of the supernatural. They deny the miraculous conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ; and of course the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a myth in their eyes. If that were true, we would have nothing but a strange book of fiction; that is all. If we burn the fiction and read the truth, we get something that will do us good for time and for all eternity. Thank God for the Apostle James. He was one of the 12 apostles that Jesus Christ chose to stand with Him, and

Jesus said to James and the other 12 apostles, that they should sit on 12 thrones and judge the 12 tribes of Israel.

Then also remember that James was a Pentecostal man. He was filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, in the same fashion that the folks get filled now. He spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. If there is anybody here tonight that does not like the tongues people, you better go home, because I am going to read a letter from a man that spoke with other tongues. Oh, that gives me courage. I am about to read a portion of a letter that a brother of mine, a brother in the Spirit, in the truth, wrote nearly 2,000 years ago, and God in His infinite goodness has seen to it that the devil was never able to destroy the little letter that James was moved by the Spirit of God to write.

James was writing to 2 classes in this chapter. He calls them "*brethren*." This first verse sounds as if they were anything but brethren. James was writing especially to Israel, the 12 tribes scattered abroad. The conduct of the people to whom he wrote, is expressed in this eighth verse, in which he addressed them as sinners and double minded. They were all professors of faith in Jesus Christ; but some of them were only professors; hence, he called them sinners. They had a profession without the possession; others made a profession because they had a possession; but they had not all learned the way of victory over sin in the flesh; consequently he called them double minded, or two-souled, as we saw in the second chapter. Now a sinner is not double minded. A sinner is single-minded. He has only one mind, and that is carnal and sinful. He is minded to do as he pleases; he is minded not to yield to God; he is minded not to seek the Lord. But a double minded man has a new life, and there are times when the old life, which he also has, gets the ascendancy over the new life.

In Galatians 5:17 we read,

*"For the flesh lusteth (or desireth) against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye may not do the things that ye would."*

That is, a double-minded man has a fleshly mind and a spiritual mind, the old man and the new man in one body. Notice that the cause of this state is given in the first verse, "*From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members?*" That word **lusts** means "*desires that operate in our members*." Our feet want to go in forbidden paths; our hands want to steal; our tongues want to curse (the tongue is full of deadly poison); our eyes seek to see wrong objects. Oh, what things tempt the optic nerve! Our stomachs are tempted to eat more than is needful and our ears to listen to things fleshly. We go in the direction of the sounds that attract our hearing. Jesus went right to the root and said, "*Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh*" [Mat.12:34]. We read in the Old Testament, "*As he thinketh in his heart, so is he*" [Pro.23:7]. That is, the conduct of our members has its roots in the depth of our being and that is the old creation. All the above named evil flows out of the old creation. James is showing here that the conduct of the old creation in a believer, if it is uncurbed by the Spirit of God, is just as bad as in the unbeliever, and sometimes people act worse after they are saved than they did before. Why? Because the Lord lets them act up and show off their old nature, that they may learn by experience how exceedingly sinful and weak is the old man.

Some years ago a woman came to our meeting, who was a very beautiful specimen of ladyhood. She was nice and sweet and lovely and amiable and pleasing. It seemed that nothing ever disturbed that serenity. After she received the Holy Spirit, she began to do some things which she herself did not understand. Those things made her ashamed. The

woman could hardly believe that she was every guilty of such things. When the truth was preached that the old man is the same in everybody, that we are all “chips out of the old block,” and God sees no difference, we are all the offspring of the one bad lump; that woman did not want to believe it. Therefore, God had to let her experience it. Well, so here now there is fighting and warring, envying and lusting, desiring everything, contending, all springing out of the old creation; for the new man never acts that way. Do you not remember how the last verse of the preceding chapter ended? *“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, gentle, easily to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace”* [Jam.3:17-18]. That is a description of the inner man, the new man that is born from above.

Now notice that all of this evil springs out of *“the desires in our members.”* It is *“sin in the flesh”* [Rom.8:3]. Then the people who yield to those desires James calls *“adulterers and adulteresses”* [Jam.4:4]; not necessarily physical adulterers but spiritual adulterers. The verse itself is self-explanatory. It goes on to say, *“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?”* So to be a friend of the world is to be an adulterer in God’s sight. If you want an extensive commentary on spiritual adultery, just open your Bible to Ezekiel 16. There God upbraids His ancient people Israel and charges home to them the terrible crimes of falling in love with the nations round about them and leaning on the arm of flesh.

This chapter is fittingly given the heading of the “dependence of faith” because true love depends upon its lover in whom it believes. But see the background of all this in James 4:7. Friendship with the world is of the devil whom you should resist. He will steal a march on you if he can. If you have unwarranted desires after the things of this world, it is because the devil is working through your members. If you want anything out of the will of God, the devil is using that to get you away from the Lord and get your mind off of Jesus and cause you to walk in the flesh. You will resist the leadership and power of the Holy Spirit. You will be a friend of the world.

Then the Apostle points the way out, thank God forever! First he says, *“He (God) giveth more grace.”* If you think you do not have grace enough to get the victory, *“He giveth more grace.”* You may think James is a legalist; yet he talks about grace and *“the law of liberty”* [Jam.1:25]; and then he speaks about faith and here he teaches that **grace** is the only remedy against sin. He proves it from the Old Testament by quoting, *“God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble”* [Pro.3:34]. That reminds me of another point. Spiritual adulterers are proud because pride is the nature of the old creation. That is the way the chapter ends. Men glory in their vaunting, that they are having their own way and having a good time. They throw off restraint of the Spirit and truth of God and go at loose reins, and then boast in their vaunting; but the new creation is always humble, humility being its nature. James adds,

*“Submit yourselves therefore to God.”* [Jam.4:7]

When people yield to the Holy Spirit, they are always safe; for when people are yielding to God they are resisting the devil and they are separated from the world. They are going in the way of the truth. They are bound to have the victory, because men cannot yield to the devil and yield to God at the same time. No one can serve two masters at the same moment.

*“Draw nigh to God.”* [Jam.4:8]



Those people who are away from God in experience are exhorted by James to draw nigh to Him. Here again we see the difference between the apostle Paul's provisional teaching and James' experimental teaching. James says we are to draw nigh to God by the blood of the cross. Paul says, Lay hold of this provisional grace; make the promises yours. We are near to God in Christ. Let us believe it. We were made nigh by the blood of the cross [Eph.2:13,17]. Many religious professors do not really believe. There may be 2 men in 1 pew, both professing Christ; one possesses Him, the other has only a profession; the one is a saint, the other is a sinner. The believer may be a full overcomer or he may be a double minded believer like those to whom James was writing. *"Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded"* [Jam.4:8]. He could not say that to the man who is walking in the light. If we are doing the will of God, we cannot get any closer to God than we are. We are as near as we can be. We are not only near provisionally; but we are near experimentally and we walk and talk with the Lord and have fellowship with Him.

*"Be afflicted and mourn and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness."*  
[Jam.4:9]

James means the people that have grab-bag socials and neck-tie parties, etc., to raise money to pay for their synagogues and then have a jollification. They are going so far as to dance in the basement of the churches, tell funny jokes, and play pranks on one another. To them James says, "Let your carnal hilarity be turned to weeping, to mourning and let your carnal joy be turned into an altar of penitence." James was not reproving them for being glad in the Lord. He would be at home with us in our happy meeting when we are rejoicing and praising the Lord. If we were walking in the flesh, fighting and devouring one another, envious of one another, seeking one another's downfall, talking evil and endeavoring to make trouble; then he would stand up and read this chapter to us. We read in Proverbs, *"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted and he that exalteth himself shall be abased"* [Pro.15:33, 29:23; Mat.23:12]. Jesus and Paul taught the same thing as did Solomon.

*"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law and judgeth the Law: but if thou judge the Law, thou art not a doer of the Law, but a judge."* [Jam.4:11]

The Law justifies the righteous and condemns the guilty. Now if we judge a brother who is righteous, we are judging the Law, we are condemning the Law and sitting in the place of the Judge and of the Law-giver. We are not to be judges, but doers, liver. Notice they were yielding to the world, yielding to carnal desires, all of which are against God and cause men to seek one another's discomfort and take advantage of one another. Such a career goes on from bad to worse; then to the worst. Finally, those people say, "We are going to St. Louis tomorrow, to straighten up a business there, stay a year, and get gain. I have a prospect before me of making \$5,000 and I think it is a fine hit." This is the way saints often talk, never stopping to ask if God is in it, never praying about it and asking Him whether He is leading that way or not. They say, or think, "Just let me have that \$5,000, and I will be satisfied then." That might be their everlasting ruin.

A minister in Grand Rapids had a brother in Fort Wayne. That minister made a trip on purpose to talk salvation to his brother. He did get him quiet long enough from his maelstrom of business to talk about the Lord. He replied, "Brother, that is the truth; that is right; I know you are right; I am glad you are saved and on this way; but I am in such a maelstrom of business that I cannot get out of it." Why, he had a nightmare, day and night,

because of his business. He was in such a terrible whirl that he could not be still long enough to think about God and eternal things and get really saved.

Friends, you can thank God that you have been poor and that you have been hindered from getting rich. Your efforts have been defeated and you have been cast on the Lord and compelled to cry out to God in time of distress. Whatever the trouble, family trouble, or otherwise, all have been good for us, it being God's opportunity to help us. Just look at the millionaires today. They are cursed with their wealth. Many of them are on the way to hell because money has gotten them by the throat and they are going pell-mell down to eternal destruction. The thing that troubles them, the thing that keeps them awake at nights is that they might lose their wealth. We can thank God that we are dependent on Him. Those to whom the Apostle wrote were getting their eyes off of the Lord and were becoming avaricious. They were lusting for better things financially, socially. James was warning them.

*"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." [Jam.5:1]*

Although this Epistle was written back yonder, it is to be read today. Do not feel bad if your nose is on the grindstone. Let it grind and keep grinding; you will still have a good nose. Thank God that you are wealthy enough to afford a grindstone. I never was sorry that I was poor. I used to be sorry that I did not have a big library like other preachers; sorry I was poor in that respect. But God opened my eyes to the real need of knowing His Word and being filled with the Spirit. Having a big library now would be to me just like one of those 5-year-old children having a book on astronomy. I would not have time to wade through it. If I did, it would not do me any good. When we come face to face with the Lord and we get acquainted with this little Book, this mighty Book, that has been hundreds of years in making; then all these big and great and wonderful and magnificent things of the world, pale into insignificance. They look to us just about like the fellow that sat on a throne and declared his independence, and when his throne was examined, it was found to be made of soap boxes. That is about how big the world looks to us after a sight of Jesus Christ.

Therefore James says, *"Go to now."* The world says, *"Go to it."* Here is where they get it. Wicked men are all the time borrowing from the Scripture. They are uttering bright statements which they get from the Bible. The rest of the world does not know where they get them.

*"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." [Jam.4:14]*

This natural life is just like a vapor which is here today and tomorrow it is gone. The Old Testament tells us that our life is as a hand breath; it is like the weaver's shuttle, which operates today and tomorrow is silent.

*"For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will we shall live and do this, or that." [Jam.4:15]*

If the Lord will, we shall live for Him; if it is not His will, we will not live. We are dependent upon God absolutely. Put the Lord's will into your purposes. Oh, it is a beautiful life to say every day and every hour in your heart at least, *"If the Lord will."* If we leave our will out of it except as it is yielded to His will, how much worry and how much trouble we are saved from.

*"But now ye rejoice in your boastings; all such rejoicing is evil. Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." [Jam.4:16-17]*

We are indebted to Paul for teaching us how to get the victory that James tells us we ought to have. This is an old story to some of you; but it is such a precious story, a true story. James shows us that we have sin in the flesh, and Paul adds, *"It is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me"* [Rom.7:17]. James says that lust is in our members; hence it is not the new creation that does wrong. *"When I would do good evil is present with me"* [Rom.7:21], wrote Paul. When I would be sweet, I am ugly. When I would be calm, I am all nervous. When I would hold my tongue, I just spit fire. When I would pray, I scold the children. *"The good that I would, I do not; and the evil I would not, that I do"* [Rom.7:19]. That is the way with the double minded man. He has not learned the way of victory from Romans 6. But Paul gives the cause and remedy. He explains, by saying, *"but sin that dwelleth in me"* [Rom.7:20]; not in my heart, but in my flesh; *"for I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"* [Rom.7:18]. Then he ends that chapter by saying, *"O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* [Rom.7:24]. Finally he sees the victory in Christ, *"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord"* [Rom.7:25]. I was delivered through Christ's death.

Paul carries us back to the cross where our old man, sin's residence, was crucified with Christ. Our unruly members with their lusts and ambitions were all nailed to the cross. We are to agree with God and declare that to be true. That is the way to reckon. We are not to try to put the old man to death, but reckon him to be dead. Indirectly, James means the same thing when he says, *"Yield yourselves unto God"* [Jam.4:7]. Paul says, *"Yield yourselves unto God and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God"* [Rom.6:13]. Make it practical thus; Lord, I yield my hands to you. If you do not take charge of them, I will steal sure enough. I yield my feet, Lord, to you. If you do not control them, they will walk in forbidden paths. If we yield our will to the Lord; if we let Him have control; if we count the old man dead and count Christ to be our life; if we thus reckon with God, we find ourselves getting the victory and holding the victory and walking on in victory. The Victor dwells within us. The victorious Christ grows up in us. He becomes our life more and more. We find that we are sustained in the victory. We walk every day and every hour in the victory in the will of God. As we learn the way of victory over the sin in the flesh; we also get victory over sickness and grow strong. We take Christ for strength and health in our physical frame. The resurrection life of Christ operates in us. Thus only by following Paul's instruction can we heed the exhortation in James 4. We obey James in obeying Paul.

## DIVISION 5, THE POWER OF FAITH [JAM.5]

*"Go to now, ye rich men; weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you." [Jam.5:1]*

With this address, we complete our series of lessons on the Epistle of James. When we began these lessons, we stated that James wrote, not only to the 12 tribes of Israel, to whom his letter was directly addressed; but that he wrote also to the Israel at the end of this age. This last chapter is a positive proof of that fact. There are 3 divisions to this last chapter:

- The first 6 verses speak to the rich.
- The next 6 verses speak of the coming of the Lord.
- The last 8 verses give some instructions concerning divine healing.

Is that outline not a miniature picture of the time in which we are living? This is indeed the time in the history of the world, when rich men are abounding and increasing. This is the time when thousands of saints are speaking and writing about the coming of Jesus. And this is emphatically the hour when divine healing is made prominent; for God is preparing those of the “UPWARD CALLING” for the rapture, and those who will “DWELL ON EARTH” for the millennial reign.

The chapter begins by addressing the wealthy. There are many rich men, even millionaires, identified with Christendom today. They are Christians professedly at least, and claim to be the Israel of God. Therefore, the Lord speaks to them according to their profession, as well as according to His purpose and plan. Hence, this letter was written to sinners in the professed church rather than to those outside.

*“Ye have heaped treasure together IN the last days.” [Jam.5:3]*

This is an invincible proof that these words are spoken to the present generation. The preposition “for” is “in” according to the Greek. It does not mean that the rich in the past amassed wealth for these days; but now, “IN the last days” men are piling up riches. The number of men in Christendom is a fabulous number. The census of millionaires is staggering. A poor man is almost out of the question. He has hardly any chance. Hear what God, through the Apostle, says to this wealthy horde, “Weep and howl for your miseries that are come upon you.” Awful times are coming upon the earth. They who are having the best time now are going to have the worst time when God’s judgment falls upon the world. If the rich would use their substance unselfishly, how much suffering and squalor they could alleviate; how much good they could do.

I read a statement which illustrates the wealth and the hard-heartedness of some people. Mr. Carnegie made a donation to some benevolent institution. The man who saw him sign the check for \$10,000, said to him,

“Mr. Carnegie, you must feel a deep joy and a great thrill in having the privilege of giving this money for such a noble purpose.” The millionaire replied, “I feel no thrill whatever. I have simply subscribed my name to a piece of paper, and feel just like I did before signing it. It does not affect my feelings a particle.”

That man was so extremely wealthy that such a sum did not affect his heap. And he was a religious man. God is going to deal with all such religious grafters. He says “*Your riches are corrupted and your garments are moth-eaten*” [Jam.5:2]. Their wealth is ill-gotten gain. It is at the expense of the laboring men and the poor people. “*Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you and shall eat your flesh as it were fire*” [Jam.5:3]. Oh, what a judgment men will have, because they reject Jesus Christ and have not used the opportunity that was in their hands for the betterment of the people and the glory of God. Elsewhere in the Scriptures, we learn that we are not rewarded according to what we do not have but according to what we have. God will bring men on the carpet and punish them not according to the evil they do but simply because they fail to do the good which they might have done. They might have a reward by surrendering to God and using their substance for His glory. That is, Christians will be rewarded.

*“Behold, the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down 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 sabaoth.” [Jam.5:4]*

Kept back by fraud. Why, we are witnessing this all the time. That is why the laboring men rise up in arms and organize. You cannot blame the poor laboring men for organizing unions, if they cannot trust God. The rich men are organized into gigantic combines which nobody can break up but God Himself. No marvel if the poor laboring men, whose life is crushed out of them, rise up and try to better their condition. I do not say that saints should join these unions. They ought to trust God. We have to learn all these things. I say that we have no right to blame the poor hard working fellow that might be helped if the man who has means would do his duty. James declares the cries of them, which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Do you believe that friends? God hears the cry of the poor man. He hears the cry of the widow whose husband was driven to straits and died a premature death because he was over-worked and under-paid. The Lord hears the cries of the children of those homes and He is going to have revenge in their behalf; for many of those poor toilers are God's dear children, or their wives and little ones are saved and depending upon the Lord. Many unsaved husbands work for wealthy concerns because their wives believe God and look to Him alone; He answers their cry.

*"Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter." [Jam.5:5]*

Yes, men live in the middle of a block and glory in their ill-gotten wealth, which they obtained by oppressing the poor toilers who did the hard, dirty work for them. They ride around in \$5,000 automobiles, living in mansions that cost enough to keep an ordinary family for a while lifetime, while two blocks away there may be a family famishing with hunger and cold. And such rich kings claim to be religious. They occupy front pews in their churches and forbid anyone else sitting there; because they pay for it. Ah, it is nothing to belong to a church. It is nothing to be religious and own a fine pew in a fine meeting house. Friend, is your name written in the Lamb's book of life? Have you a pew, purchased by the blood of Christ, by the side of the righteous Judge? Have you been born of the Spirit into The Church of the firstborn?

*"Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you." [Jam.5:6]*

The just man does not resist the wicked oppressor; because God has said, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay*" [Rom.12:19]. God does not resist him; because there is coming a day of reckoning, when the secrets of men's hearts will be disclosed and He will reward the righteous and punish the wicked.

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### CHRIST'S COMING FORETOLD

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*"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." [Jam.5:7]*

Here is further evidence that the foregoing words refer to people in the end of this age. Wickedness and wealth are signs of the near advent of Jesus. The saints suffer persecution and privation at the hands of the wealthy and wicked; but they are encouraged to be patient in the midst of their hardships, seeing that the end is nigh. The Apostle makes use of a well-known fact among farmers to illustrate the truth. He says, "*Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it*" [Jam.5:7]. He plants early in the spring, cultivates during the summer, and then harvests in the fall. His planting must receive the early and the latter rain. Likewise, the early spiritual rain came at the beginning of this age; for the Holy Spirit was poured out upon Israel on the day of

Pentecost and a few years later upon the Gentiles. The latter spiritual rain began to fall about 1906. The promised revival preceding the Lord's advent is now on. God is preparing the world for judgment, by offering them abundantly of His marvelous grace. Salvation and healing and the fullness of the Spirit are being proclaimed everywhere; so that men will be without excuse when the judgment thunders peal and roll. God is granting great signs and miracles as precursors of the end.

God is preparing His people also for the rapture. The anointing with the Holy Spirit is not only for service, but for translation as well. "*They that were ready (with the oil in their vessels and lamps) went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut*" [Mat.25:10]. And the divine purpose of the world-wide healing wave is that the saints may be prepared for translation; for some believers are growing up into Christ in all things, taking Him as the life and health and strength of their bodies and thus become victors over death. They are laying hold of Paul's prayer, that their "*whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*" [1Th.5:23]. Many believers, which Jesus likened to the five "*foolish virgins*," will miss the translation and not be present at the marriage of the Lamb; because they reject the latter rain out-pouring of the Holy Spirit. They are being prepared to be the nucleus of Christ's kingdom on earth during the millennium.

Oh, praise God for the latter rain. What a time this has been and is still. Oh, I praise the Lord that I was not born 50 years sooner. I would have missed this glorious fruit-ripening hour, this hope of translation. Thank God, I was born on schedule time. I was saved on schedule time and endued with power from on high on schedule time. By God's wondrous grace, I expect to be translated on schedule time also.

*"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold the Judge standeth before the door."* [Jam.5:9]

Doubtless this has reference primarily to ministers. They become envious of one another's gifts and successes. If ever this admonition was needed, it is needed now. We are living in the most critical moment of the history of Christendom. Very few preachers, or people, understand the doctrine of the 2 natures in a believer. Therefore, they fail to understand the truth as it is in Jesus. Some honest hearts are having a trying time, a struggling time, in the Lord's work. They are tempted with envy at the success of some "big fellows," who seem to have "wonderful meetings, wonderful success," and who are called "wonderful men," etc. James comforts these true-hearted soldiers by saying, "Do not yield to envy, brother. God is the Judge. He stands at the door." Thank God! He knows who is who. He knows what each one is doing, and what motive prompts the doer. He weighs our works, not in the balance of man's reason, but in the scales of divine truth. "*The righteous Judge*" [2Ti.4:8] will reward the worker in that day according to his deserts.

*"Take for example the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience."* [Jam.5:10]

Yes, they had discouraging times. Their messages were not wanted. They suffered privations, ostracism, imprisonment, and death. What big meetings did any of them ever conduct? We read of "the school of the prophets," who are supposed to have God's message and declare His will; but pray tell of one thing that is recorded to their credit. However, Elijah, who traveled on foot, lived a lonely life, and was hunted by the religious king, is the one whom the Holy Spirit honors with a record as "*the man of God*," who wrought great and mighty things. Elisha also, whom the school of the prophets ridiculed, and who

lived in one room with the simplest furniture, never was much in evidence in public; yet the divine record gives him the highest honors. Oh, thank God! He knows who is who.

James cites Job as an example of patience under severest trials and the end of the Lord in his behalf. There is nothing great and wonderful recorded of Job, except that he was a “*righteous*” man [Eze.14:20], and “*patient*.” What did he ever do but suffer affliction from Satan and persecution from his would-be friends, whom he called “physicians of no profit,” and “miserable comforters”? Yet God pronounced him “*the greatest of all the men of the East*” [Job 1:3]. Eliphaz (the religious philosopher), Bildad (the traditionalist), and Zophar (the legalist) with one consent withstood Job and sat in judgment over him when they should have soothed, comforted, and prayed for him. James says, “*Ye have heard of the patience of Job and of the end of the Lord*” [Jam.5:11]. God made those 3 critics come and bow before Job and acknowledge him, and God accepted his intercessory prayer in their behalf. God gave him children for those whom he lost and doubled all his wealth, and added 40 years to his life. That was “*the end of the Lord*” for Job; for Job “*the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy*” [Jam.5:11]. Such is the unexpected comfort that the Holy Spirit makes James write to the true-hearted saints of this end-time. These words of solace will be needed still more after the first-rank overcomers will have gone to glory at the first sounding of the trumpet. There are many self-denying believers today, who do not understand fully God’s plan and movements. They are honestly ignorant. They will suffer more and more as the days go by and the spirit of Antichrist increasingly takes hold of things; for his spirit is creeping into religious circles, and ever into the supposedly spiritual circles. The patience of Job, yea the book of Job and the comforts of James will be sorely needed. Job, indeed, in his affliction, is a type of Israel in their affliction during these many years of Gentile times. Job’s deliverance and multiplied wealth are types also of Israel’s deliverance and millennial prosperity. Hence, the reason that James alludes to him in particular.

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## FAMILY PRESCRIPTIONS

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*“Is any among you afflicted, let him pray. Is any merry; let him sing psalms.” [Jam.5:13]*

James 5:13-16 are our family prescriptions; our Physician’s pillbox. If you are stuck in the side with a pain, pray. If you have a toothache, pray. Individual believers should learn to take their petty weaknesses to the Lord in prayer and not run to the elders with every ache and pain. But the typical life, the growing and useful life, is not limited to prayer and burden bearing. There is a triumphant side also. The assembly needs some **merry saints** also. “*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine*” [Pro.17:22]. Thank God for the sons of Asaph who can sing. How often we have observed the power and blessing of a sweet, happy, melodious hymn, especially when someone else had given a long, doleful tale of woe, or a dry, heady dissertation. How the hearty singing of a psalm drives away the gloom from the home in an hour of heaviness. Indeed, often it requires the song of the merry heart as well as the prayer of the afflicted to bring deliverance from the affliction.

Is there help for the shut-in and the bedridden? Most certainly. Happy for me the day when I saw that I, as an elder, could go and pray for the sick and suffering and God would heal them. And to this day, it is such a privilege to call upon the Lord in the behalf of others. To me it continues to be a great wonder and an honor and a glorious opportunity thus to glorify God and magnify the death of Christ by lifting saints from a bed of suffering and pain through the simple prayer of faith. My amazement is sometimes painful that ministers still insist on opposing the now common practice of divine healing. How can they be saved and believe the Bible and reject such a necessary and scriptural custom and

privilege? An **elder** is not necessarily a pulpit performer. He may be one who preaches the Word, or he may not. He is one who is older in the Lord and has some official prestige. God honors the faith of sisters also in this capacity. In fact, when Jesus announced the going forth of the Gospel, He said, *“These signs shall follow them that believe”* [Mar.16:17], and placed no restriction on anyone. *“Them that believe,”* certainly includes believing women. God’s answers to their cries today in behalf of the afflicted, are evidence enough of this view.

*“Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.”* [Jam.5:14]

This refers primarily to the members of the assembly and not to sinners. Therefore, the further instruction *“let him call.”* The sick one, the helpless one, the saint who is unable to go to the meeting, should call for the elders. That call indicates faith. It is easy to go and pray for such a one; for faith makes the call. Then let the elders *“Pray over him, anointing with oil in the name of the Lord.”* It has always been God’s way that saints pray one for another. How much better than to rush the sick off to a hospital. How precious for the believer. How it glorifies Jesus. How it fulfills the Word. How it magnifies the power of the Holy Spirit, of which the anointing oil is only a symbol.

Note several facts about **ANOINTING WITH OIL**. Today there is a wholesale use of the oil among those who practice divine healing, which is not scriptural. According to James’ words here, the oil is to be used in the sick room only. Hence, in our public ministry of healing, we never use the oil unless saints call for it and insist on it. As far as we know, Paul did not use the oil. Some saints fear to use the oil, lest the faith of the sick one stand in the oil rather than in the Lord. But the anointing is to be *“in the name of the Lord.”* The oil simply reminds us of the Holy Spirit, even as water baptism reminds us of our death with Christ. The oil speaks of power, of healing, of life, which the Spirit alone can give. Our faith is in the Lord, the Healer. The Spirit answers to that faith. Anointing with oil is an outward expression of faith in the Healer, Christ.

*“And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.”* [Jam.5:15]

Preachers do not have faith; hence, they do not pray for the sick ones. They are worldly and popular. Jesus said, “How can you believe, when you receive honor one of another and receive not the honor that cometh from God only?” They have fine doctors in their meetings, to whom they accord healing honors. Of course they cannot believe God for healing. Nevertheless, some pastors believe and pray, and the Lord answers and raises up the sick. *“The prayer of faith”* [Jam.5:15] is not some strange, wonderfully worded, mysterious petition of the elders, as some have supposed. It is simply a petition indicted by the Holy Spirit in accord with the desire and faith of the sufferer. Therefore, it is a settled fact that *“The Lord shall raise him up.”* The Lord gets the glory. That is why some physicians hate us. They are robbed of healing glory. Their material medic is not wanted nor needed.

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## A FURTHER WORD ABOUT JOB AND ELIJAH

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They were alike men of great faith, but of two different kinds. Job had faith to be patient under sore trials. The word faith, or faithful, is not once named in his book. Believe is mentioned five times. His faith in God was hidden. Nevertheless, it was there. We learn



in Romans 5:1-4 that peace is the result of justification by faith; but tribulation connects that faith with patience. Faith is the great grandfather of patience. Faith was the deep root of Job's patience. Therefore, let us not only admire his patience, but let us bear in mind his faith, for which God proclaimed him "*perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil*" [Job 1:1].

Elijah had faith to work miracles. He shut up the heavens; he precipitated a flood upon the land; he raised the dead; he slew 400 false prophets, and he went to heaven without dying. Job did none of those marvelous things; yet his faith in God was as great as that of Elijah. Jesus promised to reward "*faithfulness*" [Mat.25:21 and Rev.2:10].

*"If he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him." [Jam.5:15]*

This implies that sickness may come upon a believer without him having anything to do with it at all. The cause is altogether outside of the will or the conduct of the sick one. It implies also that in some cases, the believer has done something which became an inlet for the enemy to inject his poison. In either case, the advocacy of our Elder Brother on high [2Jo.1:1] and the intercession of the elders here below, prevail and deliverance comes. The following verse shows that prayer is not heard because a man is an elder, but because he is "*a righteous man*" [Jam.5:16], one who is proven to be righteous. It shows also that the ministry of healing is not confined to the elders, but granted to others as well. And confession of faults is sometimes necessary to have faith for healing.

*"Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." [Jam.5:16]*

God's estimate of divine healing in the assembly of the saints and the importance of the simple prayer of faith are illustrated by pointing back to Elijah's cry, the cry of a righteous man, for a three year's drought and then for the rain to be poured out on the land. Healing of the sick in answer to prayer is no small item.

But here again we have a wonderful and final type of Israel. The sick man is the Jew during the tribulation days. He is greatly at fault. He is the one in James 5:19 who has erred from the truth. Elijah's antitype, the 2 witnesses [Rev.11], will prophesy to the Jews and pray for them. The "*Spirit of grace and supplication*" [Zec.12:10] in the latter spiritual rain, falling on Israel, will be poured out [Eze.39:29]. The heavens will pour down copious showers of rain upon the land of Palestine and make it productive after several years of drought [Joe.2:23 and Zec.10:1]. The sinner of James 5:20 (the Jew) will be converted from the error of his way and God will thus hide a multitude of sins. Then will be fulfilled Hebrews 8:12, "*I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*"

The Epistle of James has no formal ending. It stops without a benediction. This too is typical of what is written of the Jew after his conversion "Judah shall dwell forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation." That will end the history of the wandering Jew. It is evident that James wrote this epistle before 63 A.D. when he was killed.

### The Little Foxes

Solomon had a vineyard great below a hill,  
On which the wind moved like unto amber flame.  
And light of love divine there kindled to distill  
A nectar sweet and precious with secret name.

Solomon had a thousand men to tend his tender vines  
And gleaming grapes that drank the rays of sun.  
Their perfume fragrant on the air as Babylon's enticing wines,  
When they were crushed in press and nectar run.

The Shulamite, the undefiled, the Only One,  
Was privileged oft to walk and gaze upon those vines.  
(The grapes were ripening for Solomon, David's son.)

Alas, one night, when full and shining was the moon  
And tilted high; foxes, little mischievous apes,  
While we thought the harvest would be soon,  
Came upon that vineyard great, and spoiled the grapes.

Mary M. Bodie

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